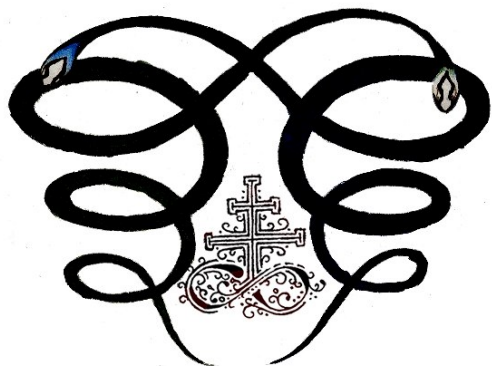


TRADITIONAL
WITCHCRAFT
A Cornish Book of Ways



Gemma Gary

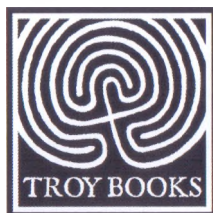


TRADITIONAL
WITCHCRAFT
A Cornish Book of Ways

by

Gemma Gary

with line illustrations by
the author and photography
by Jane Cox



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The human skull is the symbol of death. For the witch death holds a strange fascination. Each and every one of us is born to die, but is death a final end to life? The witch says no. For she knows that: "there are other places and other things". Her whole life and being is devoted to the ever present but unseen world of spirit. To the witch the spirit world is a reality, a living thing. To her everything has a spirit, a soul, a personality, be it animal, mineral, vegetable. That is why to us in the south west we know and believe in the little people, oh, you may laugh, my fine up country folk, but beware for indeed you are in the land where ghoulies and ghosties, and long legged beasties still romp, stomp and go bump in the night. Come, let us show you what the witches and their spirits do...'

Cecil H. Williamson 1909 – 1999

2014 Preface

IN 2008, 'Traditional Witchcraft *A Cornish Book of Ways*' first became manifest as a small paperback, each copy individually printed and hand bound by Jane Cox in our little home in the West of Cornwall. My intentions for the book back then were simply to place copies in a few local shops, and to make it available online, in the hopes of stirring a little interest locally in 'modern traditional witchcraft' with a Cornish slant, or even discovering and making contact with other traditional witches in the area. Believing that such interests might possibly be found within the local pagan community, the book was written, as far as possible, with a neo-pagan audience in mind.

However, I quickly grew out of my naïve enthusiasm to uncover plenty of traditional witches on my doorstep and began to accept that such a thing is a rarity. Whilst a few copies were sold locally, we were amazed to find the book taken up enthusiastically far and wide to the point that thousands of copies have now gone out to many parts of the world.

Of course, the home binding of the books became an impossibility; the printing and binding was outsourced and a revised edition produced in paperback and hardback.

So what exactly is this little book about that has gone to so many far-flung places and where does its content come from?

My own experiences of the Craft began as a solitary, instinctual and self motivated affair. I dove headfirst at an early age into the reading, and practice, of all things witchcraft and folk-magical, absorbing all I could from as much time as I could spend in school and later college libraries rather than

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getting any 'proper' work done! It felt natural to explore the folklore and magic of Cornwall, to adapt and incorporate these into my practice and ponderings in the West Cornish landscape. Brief involvement within Gardnerian and Alexandrian covens proved valuable, yet not entirely my 'cup of tea' and it was not until entering into correspondence and friendship with certain witches outside of Cornwall that I discovered the existence of 'traditional witchcraft', allowing me to realise that there were others practicing in a similar way. This was to be most dramatically illustrated to me when a friendship began with JackDaw, whose Craft, built upon a magical inheritance from his Devonshire Grandmother, tallied with my own so uncannily in a number of ways.

It was around the time of this important contact that I became aware of the existence of a loose network of individuals and a couple of small groups in West Cornwall, most, if not all, it now seems had some connection or lineage, initiatory or experiential, to what claimed to be an 'Old Craft' tradition that arrived at some point in Cornwall, rather circuitously, from another area of England. Interestingly, this lineage, into which I was also to be initiated, seems to have had a habit of identifying local god forms and loci of power to incorporate into its ways. The witches I encountered and worked with in West Cornwall revered the Bucca and incorporated Cornish folklore into their rites, and Cornish Charms and magic into the operative side of their Craft. It is the friendship, group working and initiatory experience with the West Cornwall witches, the formation of my own working group and my own early and ongoing personal Craft practice which all coalesced to give rise to the ideas presented within this book.

Preface to the Second Edition

In case any should believe otherwise, it is necessary to repeat my clarification in the original preface; I make no claims that the content of this book represents a historical Cornish witch tradition. There was no such 'set in stone' organised Cornish witchcraft. Traditional magical practice has always been largely unique to the individual practitioner, and it is an organic way that evolves and changes. The 'tradition' presented within this book is my own invention, drawing from and inspired by my own response to Cornish witch-lore, magic and folklore, modern traditional witchcraft and my experiences with witches and magical practitioners in Cornwall and beyond the Tamar. It is for these very reasons that I was careful to give the book the subtitle of '*A Cornish Book of ways*' rather than '*The Cornish Book of Ways*'.

Why 'Traditional Witchcraft'? This is of course a term which has arisen since the emergence in the 1960s of Robert Cochrane's Craft writings, and the name given to a varied yet particular witchcraft movement inclusive of non Gardnerian/Alexandrian witchcraft, witchcraft that is pre 1939 in origin or revivalist forms that are inspired by historical witchcraft practices.¹

Often there is confusion by some of 'traditional' with 'historical' despite the fact that the two words have entirely different meanings. The word 'tradition' is derived from the Latin *tradere* or *traderer* meaning simply to transmit. A tradition is thus a transmission or sharing of ideas, concepts, beliefs, practices etc. amongst groups or individuals. There is in fact no official definition or rule as to how 'old' such transmissions have to be in order to qualify as 'traditional'.

Witchcraft in Cornwall, as elsewhere, has been subject to a pattern of revival. From the 16th to the 19th centuries, a

1. Howard, Michael, *Children of Cain*, p. 15

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tradition of professional operative magical practice existed in the form of 'white witches' and cunning folk. It is from this tradition that the 'pellar cult' of Cornwall seems to have arisen amidst an environment of numerous revivals of witchcraft, ritual magic, occultism and cunning throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.²

The emergence of other forms of popular occultism and spiritualism however may have played a part in the gradual decline of the pellar cult as a prominent presence, alongside other rapid changes in society. A certain interest in such things lingered however, and it is from the work of William Bottrell and Robert Hunt, who both collected a fascinating body of material from the people of Cornwall in the mid 19th Century, that much of Cornwall's folklore relating to witchcraft and magic comes and is often revisited.

As an inclination and a way of being, rather than a professional service, the cult of the pellar is not reliant on supporting social structures in order to continue. The concept of 'witch-blood' familiar to modern traditional witchcraft was also known within the pellar cult. Pellar-blood is suggestive of not only familial lineage, but of an innate 'otherness', and a heritage of spirit.³ Such individuals may arise in any period of history, and indeed the present.

A landscape such as Cornwall's would seem to be a natural environment to nestle and nurture those given to magic and exchange with the spirit world, and in which the individualistic rather than organised way of the pellar may perennially arise. It is a landscape that possesses a powerful attraction to artists, poets, mystics and eccentrics, amongst whom there have always been those given to communion with the spirits

2. *Ibid* & Patterson, Steve, *Serpent Songs*, p. 95

3. Patterson, Steve, *Serpent Songs*, p. 98

Preface to the Second Edition

and shadow forms of the wild and lonely places.

One such figure was the surrealist, occultist and author Ithell Colquhoun, who was an influence on my parent Craft group via her friendship with its 'Devil'. At a time when mid 20th century folklorists and historians were taking a more academic interest in Cornish witchcraft, it was figures like Ithell Colquhoun who were active in the revival of the actual practice of Cornish methods of magic.⁴

Of course, a hugely important figure in the revival of Cornish magic and the pellar cult is Cecil H. Williamson, founder of the Museum of Witchcraft. Cecil dedicated a lifetime to studying the work of the 'wayside witch', and, in particular, the ways of Cornish witchcraft and magic which were vivified within his research and operative practice.

The old ways of regional magic are quietly kindled and developed for the present day within the living and evolving currents of modern Traditional witchcraft, amongst hidden gatherings and individual practitioners.

In the fields, wooded valleys, cottages and craggy cliff-tops of Cornwall, old charms are re-worked by new hands, guided by the spirit presences and unseen potencies of the Cornish landscape which continues to feed, as but one tributary, the far flowing living streams of magic making.

Gemma Gary,
West Cornwall, February 2014

4. Ibid p. 112



Introduction

Cornwall's Witch Heritage

THE Traditional Craft, with its many and various branches, is a Craft born largely from the very landscape in which it is practiced. There exist common threads that run throughout the various recensions of the 'Elder Faith', but the precise traditions, ways and practices of the 'Old Craft' will always differ and be flavoured by the preserved folk beliefs, traditions, customs, lore, historical magical rites, charms and impedimenta of the region in which its practice is rooted. Traditional witchcraft is regional witchcraft, it is not and never has been a standardised practice and long may this continue to be the case. The day witchcraft loses regional variation is the day traditional witchcraft ceases to exist.

On top of the well established regional variation, there is also the fact that a traditional witch's practice is born from their own response to the ways of their particular locality and landscape, and an individual's instinct, insight, inspiration and creativity come into play. If one were to ask a traditional folk-magic practitioner of Cornwall and of Norfolk, both today and in the 19thC, to speak of

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the ways of their Craft one would hear of two practices, distinct in many details, and exactly the same result would occur if the same question were put to two practitioners operating in neighbouring villages in Cornwall.

Witchcraft has always been practiced in Cornwall, or at least that is how it would seem. In many ways the word witchcraft seems to be inextricably linked with Cornwall; a remote horn of land which is home to countless legends of old magic and sorcery, fantastical beings and many haunted ancient sites which inspire the imagination to ponder the mysterious midnight goings on of witches and joyous gatherings of Piskies...

Within the old folk tales of every land there are contained elements of truth and folk-memories of the 'Old Ways' passed down through legend and custom. Cornwall is certainly no different and behind the legends there is a 'faery faith' and a Wise-Craft that have continued to be observed and practised right up to the present day (although sadly to an ever decreasing extent) where they exist overshadowed by the modern, and in some respects unrelated, popular practices of Wicca.

Cornwall was indeed home to many folk-magic practitioners, a tradition that reached a climax in the 19thC. Such practitioners offered a range of services mostly involving the work of healing, curse lifting, exorcising of evil spirits, protection, love, and the restoring of lost or stolen property.

Clients were often provided with magical substances in the form of small bags of earth or prepared powders. Written charms are also a common feature of Cornish folk-magic, intricately folded and sewn shut inside small square bags.

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Some Cornish practitioners achieved a certain degree of fame, two of the most notable perhaps being Tamsin Blight and Granny Boswell.

Tamsin Blight, or Tammy Blee as she would have been known, lived from 1798 to 1856 and was perhaps the most famous historical practitioner in Cornwall. Plying her trade within the Helston area, she earned a well respected and feared reputation; for traditional Cornish witches have always maintained the ability to cure and to curse.

Clients were known to have travelled great distances for a consultation with her, and at certain times people would queue outside her small house in considerable numbers to purchase new charms or have old ones re-empowered, particularly in the springtime when, according to Cornish tradition, a witch's powers are renewed.

We know that she would provide the traditional written and sealed charm bags, as well as small bags of grave earth, bones and teeth, as well as magical powders; most notably 'Witch Powder'. She also had a strong reputation for removing curses and healing, working with not only people but cattle and horses.

Her powers of sight were also held in high repute for she would be consulted on the whereabouts of lost or stolen money, and the identity of malevolent witches and would work with spirits; making use of hallucinogenic substances to aid her visions and communications.

She had a husband, Jemmy Thomas, who also claimed the powers of a witch, but for the most part enjoyed a fluctuating reputation for magic, although his obituary celebrated his abilities in providing cures for people and animals and taming the unruly behaviour of cattle and

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of horses; a skill traditional among Cunning men across Britain.

The following account, by the 19thC folklorist William Bottrell (1816 – 1881) whose work recorded a vast body of traditional Cornish witch-lore, gives a fascinating insight into Tammy and Jemmy's Pellar's practice which they operated from their household:

From 'Annual Visit of the West-Country Folks to the Pellar of Helston, to have their Protection Renewed':

"...According to ancient usage, the folks from many parts of the west country make their annual pilgrimage to some white witch of repute, for the sake of having what they call "their protection renewed." The spring is always chosen for this object, because it is believed that when the sun is returning the Pellar has more power to protect them from bad luck than at any other season.

...There used to be rare fun among the folks in going to the conjuror in the spring, when they were sure to meet, at the wise man's abode, persons of all ages and conditions, many from a great distance. Then the inhabitants of the Scilly Isles came over in crowds for the purpose of consulting the white witches of Cornwall, and that they might obtain their protection, charms, spells, and counter-spells. Many of the captains of vessels, belonging to Hayle, St. Ives, and Swansea, often visited the Pellar before they undertook a voyage, so that, with seaman and tinnerns, there was sure to be great variety in the company.

...Though they arrived at the Pellar's by the middle of the forenoon, such a crowd was already assembled that they waited long before their turn came to be admitted to the presence of the wise man. The conjuror received the people and their offerings, singly, in the room by courtesy styled the hale (hall). Few

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remained closeted with him more than half-an-hour, during which time some were provided with little bags of earth, teeth, or bones taken from a grave. These precious relics were to be worn, suspended from the neck, for the cure or prevention of fits, and other mysterious complaints supposed to be brought on by witchcraft. Others were furnished with a scrap of parchment, on which was written the ABRACADABRA or the following charm:

S A T O R
A R E P O
T E N E T
O P E R A
R O T A S

These charms were enclosed in a paper, curiously folded like a valentine, sealed and suspended from the neck of the ill-wished, spellbound, or otherwise ailing person. The last charm is regarded as an instrument of great power, because the magical words read the same backwards as forwards. A gritty substance called witch-powders, that looked very much like pounded brick, was also given to those who required it. An aged crone of the pellar blood, mother or sister of the white witch in chief, received some of the women upstairs to cure such of the least difficult cases, as simple charming would effect; but the greatest part of them preferred the man, as his charms only were powerful enough to unbewitch them.

Instead of the earthy powder, some are furnished with a written charm, which varies according to the feelings of the recipients. Most of the very religious folks have a verse of scripture, concluded with the comfortable assurance that, by

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the help of the Lord, the White Witch hopes to do them good.

But those who have no particular religious sentiments he furnishes with a charm, of which the following is a literal copy: On one side of a bit of paper, about an inch and a half by one inch;

NALGAH.

Here follows a picture of what must have been the conjuror's own creation, as such an object was never seen by mortal eyes in the heavens above, the earth beneath, nor in the waters under the earth. The only object we can compare it to is a something which is a cross between a headless cherub and a spread-eagle. Underneath what might have been intended for angel or bird, there is an egg, on which the creature appears to be brooding. There is another egg at the extremity of one of the outstretched legs of the creature. This picture, which is the most singular part of the charm, can only be represented by the aid of the pencil. The word "TETRAGRAMMATON" is under it. On the reverse:

JEHOVAH.

JAH. ELOHIM.

SHADDAY.

ADONAY.

HAVE MERCY ON A POOR WOMAN.

From the worn condition of the charm (which had been in use many years before it came into our hands) it is difficult to make out the writing.

Another amulet, which is commonly given by the Pellar to his patients, to be worn suspended from the neck, is a small bag of earth taken from a man's grave.

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Besides the above-mentioned precious charms, the Pellar gives his neophytes powders, to throw over their children, or cattle, to preserve them against witchcraft, ample directions as to the lucky and unlucky times, and a green salve, which is said to be an excellent healing ointment. I have talked with many who have visited the Pellar every spring, for years running, that they might get their protection renewed. Yet there is no finding out all that takes place at the time of this important pilgrimage, as the directions are given to each individual separately, and all are bound to preserve the greatest secrecy about some portion of the charm, or it will do no good.

Others were supplied with blood stones, milpreves, or snake-stones, and other trumpery, manufactured by the pellar family, to be worn as amulets. The blue-stone rings, in which some fancied they saw the figure of an adder, or when marked with yellow veins the pattern of a snake, were particularly prized, because it was believed that those who wore them were by that means safe from being harmed by any reptile of the serpent tribe, and that man or beast, bit and envenomed, being given some water to drink, wherein this stone had been infused, would perfectly recover of the poison. The amulets, reliques, and charms supplied by the white witch served to tranquillize the diseased fancy as well as the bread pills, coloured waters, and other innocent compounds of more fashionable practitioners, or the holy medals and scapulars of other professors. There are no new notions under the sun; the only difference is the fashion in which they are disguised.

...After dinner, the afternoon was spent in telling witch stories. Everyone present had many cases, each within his own experience, to vouch for. They compared the merits of the different conjurors of repute, and all agreed that none could surpass the Pellar of Helston. Not even the "cunning man"

Traditional Witchcraft – A Cornish Book of Ways of Bodmin nor the “white witch of Exeter” could possess more power to lift a spell or to punish a witch, or to find out who had stolen whatever was missed, and to put out the thief’s eye.

Another renowned Helston Wise-woman was Granny (Anne) Boswell, 1813 – 1906. A practitioner known to be of Romany blood, she was widely consulted for her skills in magic and foresight.

She entered into the large Boswell Romany family via her marriage to her second husband Ephraim Boswell; son of a Gipsy King. She endured hard, little paid and long working days on Helston area farms alongside other women of her class and community, and was later burdened with the raising of six children; giving birth to them in her late forties.

The magical knowledge gained by her Romany upbringing served her in her later years as she was able to provide a number of charms, traditional to both the Cunning and Romany folk, to those who consulted her for assistance. Notably these included a small curative bag of black spiders to be hung in the bedchamber of the ailing client. She was consulted by girls and young women on matters of love, the lifting of curses, and was skilled in the curing of ringworm in cattle.

An amusing incident involving Granny Boswell, often recounted, illustrates perfectly the Cornish tradition of Wise-folk having the ability not only to provide cures, but to curse, or ‘blast’. During the 1906 elections, Granny Boswell was drinking herself into great intoxication in a Helston inn, as was her custom, when she walked out into the street to observe what may well have been the very first

motor car she had ever laid eyes on; brought into Helston to ferry voters to the poll. She stood there in the middle of the street fascinated by the polished, throbbing and ribbon-bow bedecked machine. The driver, frustrated by this obstacle, told Granny Boswell to move out of his way in a very harsh manner, blasting at her with the vehicle's horn. This made Granny Boswell furious and she began shrieking in the foulest of language at the motorist and informed him that the machine would not even get as far as the other end of the street. She stormed off in a fury, probably for another drink, as the vehicle attempted to continue upon its journey. The thing only managed to get half way down the street before one of the thick steel tension rods broke clean in two leaving it stranded and requiring a horse to tow it away.

Moving west from Helston, deep into remote Penwith, the village of St Buryan, and the outlying areas, have a long and deeply ingrained association with witchcraft. Cornish witch-lore is rich in stories, collected by folklorists – in particular William Bottrell, about one of St Buryan's witches; Betty Trenoweth. It is highly likely that these stories tell of a real figure, as with much of folklore there is no smoke without fire, and as Kelvin Jones explains in his book 'An Joan the Crone – The history and Craft of the Cornish Witch'; "nearly all of Bottrell's characters can be traced to real families in the west of Cornwall just prior to the time he was collecting his tales".

It is thought Betty worked at Trove Mill near Lamorna, grinding corn brought in from St Buryan and the surrounding areas. Trove Mill and Betty are associated with the Cornish play 'Duffy and the Devil', a 'Rumplestiltskin' type story in which Betty features as the leader of a

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coven of local witches. Featured also is Boleigh Fogou (a mysterious ancient underground chamber of which there are a number of examples in west Cornwall), the 'Buccaboo' (Bucca Dhu), synonymous in Cornish lore with the Devil, and an evocative description of a witches' meeting:

"...tearing through brakes of brambles and thorns, we found ourselves in the Grambler Grove. And now," continued he, after a pull from the flagon, "I know for certain that what old folks say is true how witches meet the Devil there of summer's nights. In winter they assemble in the Fuggo Hole, we all know; because one may then often hear the devil piping for their dance under our parlour floor that's right over the inner end of the Fuggo. And now I believe what we took for a hare was a witch that we chased into this haunted wood. Looking through the thickets I spied, on a bare spot, surrounded by old withered oaks, a glimmering flame rising through clouds of smoke. The dogs skulked back and stood around me like things scared. Getting nearer, and looking through an opening, I saw scores of women some old and ugly, others young and passable enow as far as looks go. Most of them were busy gathering withered ferns or dry sticks, to the fire. I noted, too, that other witches, if one might judge by their dress, were constantly arriving flying in over the trees, some mounted on ragworts, brooms, ladles, furze-pikes, or anything they could get astride of. Others came on through the smoke as comfortable as you please, sitting on three-legged stools; and alighted by the fire, with their black cats on their laps. Many came in through the thickets like hares, made a spring through the flame, and came out of it as decent lasses as one might see in Buryan Church of a holiday. A good large bonfire soon

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blazed up; then, by its light, I saw, a little way back sitting under a tree, who should 'e think? Why no less than old witch Bet, of the Mill. And by her side a strapping dark-faced fellow, that wasn't bad looking and that one wouldn't take to be a devil at all but for the company he was with, and the sight of his forked tail that just peeped out from under his coat-skirts. Every now and then Old Bet held to his mouth a black leather jack, much like ours, and the Devil seemed to like the liquor by the way he smacked his lips..."

"...The witches, locked hand-in-hand, danced madder and faster, pulled each other right through the fire, and they wern't so much as singed, the bitches. They spun round and round so fast that at last, especially when the Devil joined in, my head got light. I wanted to dance with them and called out as I advanced, 'Hurra! my merry Devil, and witches all!' In an instant, quick as lightning, the music stopped, out went the fire, a blast of wind swept away umers (embers) and ashes, a cloud of dust and fire came in my eyes and nearly blinded me. When I again looked up they had all vanished."

For those interested in learning more about the lives of Cornwall's historical witches, I can thoroughly recommend 'An Joan the Crone' by Kelvin Jones; Oakmagic Publications.

There are many stories of Betty Trenoweth's witchcraft and Wise-woman ways, one tells of how her powers were gained, and maintained, by her frequent conferences with the Devil. He would meet her, we are told, in the form of a great black bull on the northern side of St Buryan churchyard; an eerie place that is even today no stranger to the activities of witchcraft.

Traditional Witchcraft – A Cornish Book of Ways

Whilst undoubtedly there will have been much lost of the wisdom and practices of Cornwall's past Cunning folk, Charmers, 'White Witches' and 'Pellars' ('repellers' of evil spirits, illness, ill-fortune and ill-wishing in Cornish witch

tradition), there is also undoubtedly much that has survived and has been preserved.

Alongside the likes of William Bottrell and Robert Hunt, whose collected tales and conversations with the ordinary folk of Cornwall in the 19th Century preserved a great body of lore and folk-belief relating to Cornish witchcraft, we are greatly indebted to the work of the witchcraft practitioner, collector and researcher Cecil Williamson (1909 – 1999). The founder of the Museum of Witchcraft, first on the Isle of Man in the 'Witches' Mill' in 1951, relocating several times before settling in the North Cornish harbour village of Boscastle, in 1960, where the museum remains today. Cecil claimed to have first encountered the world of traditional West-Country witch beliefs as a child in the Devon village of North Bovey. Here he fought to protect an elderly woman, under attack on the village green, from thugs who suspected her of bewitching cattle. This incident sparked a life long interest in the ways of country witches and folk-magicians, not as a thing extinct but as a rare yet living practice.

Cecil's Craft interests were very much in the area of traditional rural folk-magic, and what he termed the Craft of 'the wayside witch'. He was not at all fond or approving of Wicca, however he inadvertently played a major role in its development when he introduced Doreen Valiente to Gerald Gardner, whom he had first

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met in 1946 and had employed as 'resident witch' in his museum. Following this introduction, of course, Doreen Valiente became one of Gardner's High Priestesses and went on to produce many beautiful Wiccan ritual texts in her co-authorship of 'The Book of Shadows' (it must be stated though, that Valiente was really, very much, a traditional Sussex witch).

Throughout his collectorship and research of witchcraft, Cecil remained particularly interested in the craft ways of his native West Country. He believed the best way to research was to actively practice his area of study. In addition to encountering witch beliefs through his own clients, it is believed he encountered and learned from eighty two practicing Wise-women. Evidence of his practice being maintained right up to his death exists in the 'active' magical and ritual items discovered in his rooms after his passing and it is clear he pursued the Traditional 'double-ways' of cursing and curing. Through his work, Cecil bequeathed a rich corpus of West Country witch ways including tools and working impedimenta of divinatory practice and magical rites of healing, curse lifting, exorcism and blasting.

Cornwall's rich and extensive array of preserved and surviving fragments of lore and practice relating to the rituals of healing, wort-cunning, procuring of love, luck and wealth, and the lifting and casting of curses, provides a rich and fertile foundation from which the ever living practice of traditional witchcraft and the 'Pellar Current' may flourish and continue as a contemporary observance; for it is a way of life that can never die out entirely. The ingredients necessary for such a continuation remain now as they did in 19thC

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Cornwall; now, as then, there are those called by virtue of their blood to the Pellar Way. Now, as then, there are those living in this mysterious and relatively unchanged rural landscape who fear supernatural harm, or who seek to improve their situation via supernatural means and are thus willing to seek out and consult a practitioner. Now, as then, there is a rich corpus of established Cornish magical lore and praxes to inspire and inform the work of the student Pellar.

It cannot be claimed that the ways of the contemporary practitioner remain unchanged from those of 19thC and earlier practitioners, for such would be absurd, and to attempt it via unchanging adherence to antiquity does not gain the 'badge of authenticity' but results only in empty 'historical re-enactment'. Authenticity rests in living practice, which must by its very nature change and evolve with the passage of time. Honesty and discernment in one's study and practice and the procuring of results are the only authenticity stamp there is.

The claims of some historians that traditional witch beliefs and magical practice in Cornwall had died out entirely by the 1940's and '50s are unsurprisingly often contradicted by evidence thrown up by their own research; for the age old beliefs in the power of the curse and of ill-wishing are still very much alive in this remote landscape. There have continued to be folk-magic practitioners tucked away quietly all over Cornwall, not only removing warts but providing charms and preparations for all manner of needs and reversing the power of the ill-wish. It is probably because Cornwall was rapidly becoming more influenced by modern ideas

by the 1940's and '50s, causing people to no longer admit openly to such beliefs, for fear of ridicule, that these activities ceased to be recorded in local newspapers. It would seem this is where historians like to do much of their research, instead of actually talking to ordinary folk, as the diligent folklore collectors of the past had done. It may also be safely said that the modern Cornish folkloric movement, which flourished in this period, was heavily the domain of the Christian middle class who would be keen to promote the idea that the witch beliefs of the ordinary Cornish people were a firmly extinct thing of the past.

However, farming families in Cornwall today still pay local practitioners to protect their land and livestock from supernatural and mundane harm, and ordinary folk do still consult Cornish Wise Folk to have curses removed. I have even known a Penzance estate agency call in the services of a local Wise-Woman when selling a certain property had become troublesome, whilst in other areas I believe they call in what is known as a 'house dresser' or 'house doctor'. Here, a house not selling might just as well be put down to negative energies, troublesome spirits or even the ill-wish of a begrudged witch, as it would poor taste in décor or excess clutter. I myself receive, on a regular basis, requests for curse-lifting. This, alongside magic for matters of love, is the most requested magic. What may be said to have changed is the request to divine and uncover the identity of the ill-wisher, a request often put to historical Cornish practitioners. People today, for whatever reason, seem content to just have the curse they are convinced they are suffering from removed and to receive protection from

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future ill-wishing. This is not always the case though, for such requests do arise on occasion but it must be said they are a rarity. Despite this slight change and the relative decrease in clientele, the Wise Folk of Cornwall have gone nowhere. Slight change and decrease are not by any stretch of the imagination the same thing as extinction. Neither can they be used to argue any unauthenticity of contemporary practice. This last matter is also true of the presence of ‘off the shelf’ magical and occult texts available to contemporary practitioners, when one considers that much of the working knowledge of historical Cornish Cunning folk, regarding the details of ritual practice, written charms, planetary virtues and the like, is known to have been learned from the well-known grimoires that were readily available in the 19thC from book dealers by mail order. Being inspired by published material is thus no deviation from tradition, it is simply the case that modern practitioners need to exercise greater discernment given the extraordinarily vast and diverse texts available today. Traditionally inclined practitioners tend anyway to draw from material complimentary to the preserved and established lore of their local Craft.

Some have also attempted to organise and ‘pigeonhole’ Cornish magical practitioners into distinct categories, each having their own distinct skills; Cunning Folk, Charmers, White Witches, Conjurers and Pellars - the most powerful of all. In reality however these terms were quite interchangeable; Tamsin Blight, one of Cornwall’s most famous practitioners, was recorded under most of these labels at one time or another. The skills that were offered did differ, sometimes only slightly, from

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practitioner to practitioner, but not with any real, discernable or strictly adhered to hierarchical structure. It was, and is, a Craft of service; employing whatever abilities were possessed by the individual practitioner to provide for need, be it through divination, spirit conjuration, the making of charms and substances, the laying on of hands or the sending forth of the spirit.



The Cunning Path

The Land, the Serpent, and Becoming

THE Craft of the Cornish witch and Pellar is one of practical 'get things done' magic, or what has been called by others 'operative' or 'results' witchcraft. Its practitioners; specialists in certain areas some, others being 'all-rounders', learn the practical arts of physical charm and substance making to serve an array of needs, and magical rites for the exorcising of evil spirits, healing, the lifting of curses, for making divinations and so forth. Such ways would be learned, by those with the calling, either alone via intuition, awareness of local traditional practice and study of magical texts, or via association and an 'apprentice' like relationship with another practitioner, be they a blood relative or not. Small associations, societies, 'lodges' and 'hearths' of traditional magical practitioners are known to have existed across the globe, and so it would seem reasonable to assume that our culture should be no different. However, where the Cornish Craft is concerned, the past unavailability of transport and the hard working lives of the poor would have meant that the opportunity and free time for such gatherings and

associations would be very scant indeed, and such things, if they occurred, would have been extremely rare, very small and 'close-knit'. Certainly traditionalist groupings in present day Cornwall, that exist with no such restrictions, may be described in the same way.

Once learned, by whatever means, this traditional Craft of service was nearly always provided in exchange for a fee or trade; for the traditional Craft of the village practitioner in Cornwall, as in other areas, was primarily a business, very much unlike more modern forms of the Craft which are primarily a religious pursuit and a form of spiritual self-help.

All this is not to say that the way of the traditional Cornish witch is without its spiritual side, for the relationship between the Pellar, the world of spirit and the unseen forces of the land was, and still is, a very important working relationship.

In order to be able to do their job effectively; to work magic, provide wisdom and divine people's fortunes, the witch needs first to develop this relationship and become attuned to both the physical and spiritual reality of the land in which they live. The turning of the seasons, the potent forces within the land and the 'hidden folk' all offer useful virtues, powers and wisdom that aid and inform the Pellars' Craft.

The Cunning Path is first trod out in the land where the 'novice Pellar' is called to go in search of the natural forces that will both empower and inform their Craft. For the Cornish witch, one of the most potent and useful forces is known as the *Red Serpent* or *Sarf Rjith*. This is the spirit force or 'sprowl' that flows within the land, animates all living things and empowers the spirit within all natural things; for traditional Cornish witchcraft is an animist

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path which acknowledges spirit within such things as stones, streams and buildings. Detecting and harnessing the serpentine flow is of great importance to the Pellar, and they must know the ways to this and the places where this force will be best drawn forth. The desire to seek these energies and draw upon them, and indeed the ability to do so, should be naturally held within the true witch. It is a thing 'deeply known' and the ways of it are not easily put into words. Often it is just a case of fine-tuning familiar senses, desires and abilities within those who are starting their way along the path, rather than something alien having to be learned from scratch.

It is a regular practice of witches in Cornwall to walk out into the land to gather sprowl to aid and empower their Craft, such journeys may be known as 'walking the serpent path'; a path of power and chthonic gnosis. The Pellar are very sensitive to the landscape in which they live and they know well the places of power around them from where the sprowl can be best drawn forth and stored for later use; this is how the Cornish witch gathers power. The highly important tool - the Pellar's staff is the traditional companion upon the serpent path, as the sprowl may be drawn forth and stored within this as well as within the body of the Pellar. The winding serpent-like paths that flow and meander through fields and valleys, alongside and through the magical thorn-hedge, following streams or along the towering and dramatic sea cliffs, are commonly travelled by the witch who 'picks up' sprowl along the way. These serpentine tracks also have magical and meditative uses. The hills, bolder strewn carns and other high places, where the serpent will coil cone-like in the land, are also places where this potent force may be accessed in abundance as well as within the ancient

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stone circles where the serpent is literally danced alive by the circumambulations of the witch. In Cornwall these ancient circles are known as 'dancing stones' and this is the literal translation of the Cornish name for the famous Merry Maidens stone circle; *Dans Maen*. The granite stones of these ancient and potent places contain a high quartz content which is held by the Wise to attract, and 'pool' the serpentine flow of sprowl.

The 'serpent of the land' may be an ancient cousin of the modern concept of 'leys'. Another, older relative is perhaps the 'fairy paths', 'ghost roads', 'spirit paths' or 'corpse roads'. These linear tracks link ancient tumuli, hill forts and burial grounds and even solitary thorn bushes. Building upon them or obstructing them was taboo and sure to bring ill fortune for they were held to be where the spirits of the dead would travel across the land, and those that lead to churchyards were processional funeral routes for carrying the body to burial. These spirit tracks hearken back to the ancestral processional routes across the ancient ritual landscape, and for the Pellar who walks such pathways, or holds vigil upon them, they offer communion with the powers, spirits, and wisdom of the places linked upon their ways. On the 'high nights', when the gates between the worlds may swing ajar, the Pellar might observe the old tradition of holding vigil in the churchyards; to see who in the village would die within the coming months by looking for their spirit approaching upon the 'corpse road'. It was also the practice of the Cornish witch to conduct spirit divinations by sitting upon a stone stile on a known fairy path in order to interrogate passing spirits for wisdom.

Wisdom may also be gleaned from the serpent. At times, especially at the full of the moon when the serpent

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is most potent and generative, the Wise are drawn down into the openings of the earth; down into the sea caves, fogous and the holy wells, for in these damp, dark wombs of the land a hypnotic force issues forth from the serpent and 'pools' in abundance, this is known as the 'serpents breath' or simply 'snake breath'. In such places haunted by the 'breath', the Wise drowse in this force to commune with the 'earth spirit' and receive visions, hear voices, heal and make magic.

In the time approaching new moon the Serpent becomes an introspective and consumptive force; the Pellar needs to take great care with it for it can be a destructive force, but if utilised wisely the dark serpent can be a useful force for traditional 'get-rid-of' magic, introspective vision and underworld encounters with the spirit folk.

The ability to work with 'spirit force' and the serpent, and indeed to better detect and perceive such things, requires the witch to enter a state of mind which takes the consciousness slightly 'between the worlds', or, as Cornish witches put it, 'between the horns' or 'between the Buccas'. This has also become known within the Traditional Craft as the 'mystery of Becoming'. The witch becomes more acutely aware of not only the physicality of their surroundings but the spiritual or ethereal reality of 'all', along with a strong sense or realisation that they are connected to and part of 'all', both in spirit and in physicality, to the furthest reaches – a state of being central to many Cunning traditions of the British Isles. For the witch, this state of awareness between the worlds and connection to 'all' is not restricted by distance. This is what allows the witch to perform acts of 'distant magic' or 'absent healing' and to direct their Will and power to wherever it is needed, to bring about the desired magical

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change in an act that is known as ‘sending forth the spirit’. Only when the witch has achieved this ability, can they then focus their intent upon the target and utilise and direct their powers, in accordance with their Will, to effect changes upon places, beings and objects.

As well as being proficient in ‘hands on healing’, many of the Cunning Folk of Cornwall were known to practice acts of absent healing in this way through ‘Becoming’, indeed one may hear of Charmers in Cornwall successfully healing clients as far away as Australia. Often, during an act of distant magic, the practitioner will make use of such things as cords, stones, candles and pins or ‘poppets’ representing the magical target. This gives the physical body, in particular the hands, something to do in tune with the working, whilst the magical Will and intent is ‘sent forth’ to the actual target or recipient of the spell; often with the aid of a familiar spirit.

Seeking to perfect and maintain this natural ability should be at first the sole work of the novice witch, for without this ability no magic or divinatory work is possible. Each practitioner will have their own way of Becoming and it becomes a quick and instinctive function for the experienced witch; only the individual can know when this has been achieved. There are traditional techniques that can aid the achievement of Becoming, using tools, ritual movement and the burning of certain herbs. For some, simply standing and feeling a connection with the land below and the sky above, letting the mind slip to a place betwixt, can induce Becoming. Another way is to do the same, but instead of being still, one might walk a slow sinistral or anti-clockwise circle, for all repetitive movements and tasks are helpful, turning the consciousness away from the everyday, rational world, to

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a place between the worlds. This method may also have the benefit, if it is done well, of stirring and gathering sprowl, which can be drawn upon when the desired state of mind is achieved.

A traditional Cornish witches' tool useful for inducing trances and the state of *Becoming* is the *Troy Stone*; also known as a 'Mazey Stone' from the Cornish 'mazed' meaning to be of a maddened, en-tranced or intoxicated state. This is traditionally a slab of slate carved with a uni-cursal labyrinth. One method of use is to sit with the stone on the lap, or on a table of comfortable height in a room lit dimly by a single candle, and to slowly follow the labyrinth's path repeatedly in and out with the left index finger whilst rocking or swaying gently and humming rhythmically.

However, by far the best way to achieve the states of mind and natural wisdom useful to the witch is to simply be in the land, to walk, find a place to settle, maybe in a place of liminality – 'places between' seen by the *Wise* as useful intersections between the worlds; such as a break in a hedge, a stile, upon a cliff or beside a stream, and simply sit, watch, feel and listen, but try not to think too much! One must become quiet in body and in thought to be receptive to the wisdom that deep observation of the comings and goings of nature can bring, and the potent forces of the landscape so vital to the working of the *Craft*. It is difficult to put such things into words; for the way of the *Wise* is instinctive and intuitive. It is the mark of the true witch for such things to come naturally and for it to be part of one's natural behaviour to seek this relationship with the land.



The Dead and the Otherworld

The Faery Faith in Cornwall

TODAY in Cornwall, at least a vague knowledge of the Piskies, Knockers and Spriggans as quaint elements of Cornish folklore and legend is fairly widespread; however, active belief and observance of the Cornish 'Faery Faith' is extremely rare, and only survives amongst a very few of the very elderly and of course the witches, Cunning, Wise-folk and Pellar of Cornwall.

In Cornwall, the Otherworld is never far away, it exists just at the liminal edge of normal sight, where the otherworldly comings and goings may occasionally be glimpsed out of the corner of one's eye. Slipping from this world into Annown, often quite accidentally, was never as difficult a thing as it may sound.

For the Cornish, the Piskies, have always been the spirits of the dead; a Piskie and a ghost were seen as being very much the same thing. It may confidently be said that Cornwall was long a place of dual-observance; for whilst the populace would almost always have professed to be good Christians, there is absolutely nothing Christian about the Faery Faith, and it was staunchly and steadfastly

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believed in, and observed, by the ordinary folk of Cornwall until relatively recently.

For the very Christian folk, who believed the souls of the dead must go to heaven, their parallel belief in the Otherworld and the Piskies presented a problem; a solution had to be found to accommodate these strong old beliefs which refused to be buried. One solution they thought up was that the Piskies were the spirits of the ancient dead, our Pagan ancestors who dwell in the Otherworld reality of the Cornish landscape, along side the living and having no knowledge of the heaven of the Christians. One old story collected by William Bottrell, 'Fairy Dwelling on Selena Moor', illustrates this view; the Piskies are described as being "not of our religion but star-worshippers". Other notions arose that the Piskies were the spirits of un-baptised children who could not be admitted into heaven, yet had not lived long enough to commit any sins to warrant their going to hell. Another interesting Christian justification for the Piskies was that they were the old Pagan Gods of Cornwall and that since the birth of Christ they had been forever diminishing in size, until they became *muryans* (ants), and would one day vanish altogether. It was thus taboo in Cornwall to destroy a *muryans'* nest, and it was believed that if a piece of tin were placed in such a nest during the time of the new moon, the old Gods, in their ant-form, still had enough power left to turn the tin into silver. This is interesting, for it is not normally the case for Christians to acknowledge the existence of other Gods, or to pay them respect through their harming being held taboo, nor to retain faith in their magical powers to transform the base into the precious. All this would again seem to point

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to attitudes of dual-observance amongst the nominally Christian Cornish populace.

The attempts of the new religion to accommodate the Cornish spirit world of the old were not taken on board by everyone, and for many the Otherworld was simply the dwelling place of the spirits of the dead, and to become a Piskie was the fate of all who pass from the world of the living. There are accounts in Cornish stories of people slipping accidentally between the worlds and observing the activities of the Piskies, where among their number are recognisable deceased loved ones and the familiar faces of the recently dead, but now in Piskie form. Descriptions of the Piskies or 'Pobel Vean' (small people) generally reveal them to be no more than two feet in height, the women of fair complexion, whilst the men are darker, swarthy in appearance. Red cloaks, or sometimes caps and clothes of green are described. By night they are described as young and beautiful, but if seen by day they appear old, wrinkled and liver-spotted. Behind the later attempts of Cornish Christianity to explain and accommodate the Cornish spirit-world (and we must be grateful that such attempts were made, for it allowed, in however small a way, the old Faery Faith to survive in Cornwall), there are very old death-traditions, which maintain that the deceased remain as spirit folk in Annown – the Otherworld, a world that was closely interwoven with the world of the living. An interesting relationship existed between the 'ordinary folk' and the inhabitants of the Cornish spirit world and there were a few traditional ways of interaction, which today continue mostly amongst those of the Cunning-way and those few elderly folk who remember.

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Like all things, the Piskie have their light and their dark sides. They were known to be compassionate to the poor, and would help by carrying out much of their labours through the night such as threshing corn or doing household chores. They were also known to take vengeance on rich folk who took advantage of the poor. If, however, the Piskie knew they had been spied upon whilst carrying out these helpful tasks, and were rewarded, they would disappear and never return, for it is a common thread that the Piskie hate being watched by the living. The only permitted interaction was for the living to make simple offerings of food and warmth to a Piskie, and the Piskie would be beneficial to the running of the household, but otherwise wished to be left well alone.

Table scraps would often be left over night for the Piskie, on the hearth (the ancient altar and original sacred centre of the home) or at the back door. A special treat for them was milk and a saffron bun with a knob of butter on it. Accounts in Cornwall tell of cats being ill after drinking milk left out for a Piskie, who would have drunk the 'astral' part of it; what remained would have disagreed with any living being who drank it, thus the physical remains of these offerings would be best poured away on the earth outside or buried the next morning. On particularly cold and stormy nights, old Cornish folk have been known to put down a good fire of furze (gorse) to provide the wandering spirits some comfort. Given that the Piskie were seen as the spirits of the dead, the regular provision of food offerings and comforting fires could be viewed as the survival of a form of ancestor worship amongst the Cornish.

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Piskie are also known for their mischievous tendencies; causing knocks and tapping noises around the cottage was a common annoyance, as was the hiding of small household objects. The usual remedy for this was to make food offerings to the spirits to calm their behaviour. A local Pellar could also be called in to provide, in exchange for the appropriate fee, a spirit house to calm troublesome spirits and keep them content.

Another Piskie mischief, often suffered by folk in Cornwall, and I admit to having been a victim myself, was that of becoming 'Piskie-lead'. There are many tales of people walking out in some lonely place when a strange mist descended and the walker completely lost their path, even if it was a route well known to them, often leaving the victim walking around in a circle for hours – a frustrating and sometimes frightening ordeal that still occurs today. Such occurrences of being Piskie-lead may occur at the liminal times of midnight or dusk, for these times are when the veil between the worlds grows even thinner and the paths of humans and the spirits may more easily cross. The traditional defence against being Piskie-lead was to turn an article of clothing inside-out. Usually, to stop the situation once it had begun a glove would be turned inside-out and thrown to the ground, whereby the mists would clear and the path would again be found. It became a common practice for folk to wear their coats inside out when walking from one village to another at night. Other tales tell of times when a human, out at night, has accidentally come upon a gathering of the Piskie, for they are fond of holding 'fairs' where music, dancing and feasting are enjoyed in some haunted and isolated spot. Such spirit revels remind one of the Otherworldly Sabbatic

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gatherings of witches. If the human onlooker made their presence known, the spirit gathering would vanish in an instant, and the human might be subjected to torments from many unseen hands, ranging from being relentlessly pinched to receiving a sound beating! Following tradition, the victim would struggle to remove a piece of clothing to turn inside out and stop the torment. Tales such as these again served to warn the Cornish of the dangers of spying on the activities of the Piskie Folk.

Cornish witches have knowledge of an ointment called 'Piskie Ointment' which, if used to anoint the corner of one eye, allows the user to see the spirits normally invisible to the living. This green salve is made from a recipe of herbs which some say are best gathered from Kerris moor. Once made it must be poured in to a croggan (limpet shell) to set. As Cornish tradition maintains; the Piskie cannot abide the sea, nor things that come from it, they will not be able to steal the ointment in order to prevent the witch from spying on them. Cornish witchlore teaches though, that the use of this ointment is very dangerous for two reasons: It can entrap the user into an obsessive desire to watch the spirit world, and lose interest in the world of the living, and secondly, the user must take the strongest care not to react in any way to what they see of the spirits' goings on. They must act as if they are oblivious to them, for if the Piskie become aware that they are being spied upon they will strike the anointed eye and it shall be rendered blind thereafter.

The Knockers, spirits of the mines, were another Cornish spirit tribe whose existence interwove with that of living folk. These underground spirits were said to be the spirits of the ancient miners, who were content to remain in a playful state, forever in the depths of



*Above;
The Helston home of
Cornish witch; Tammy Blee*



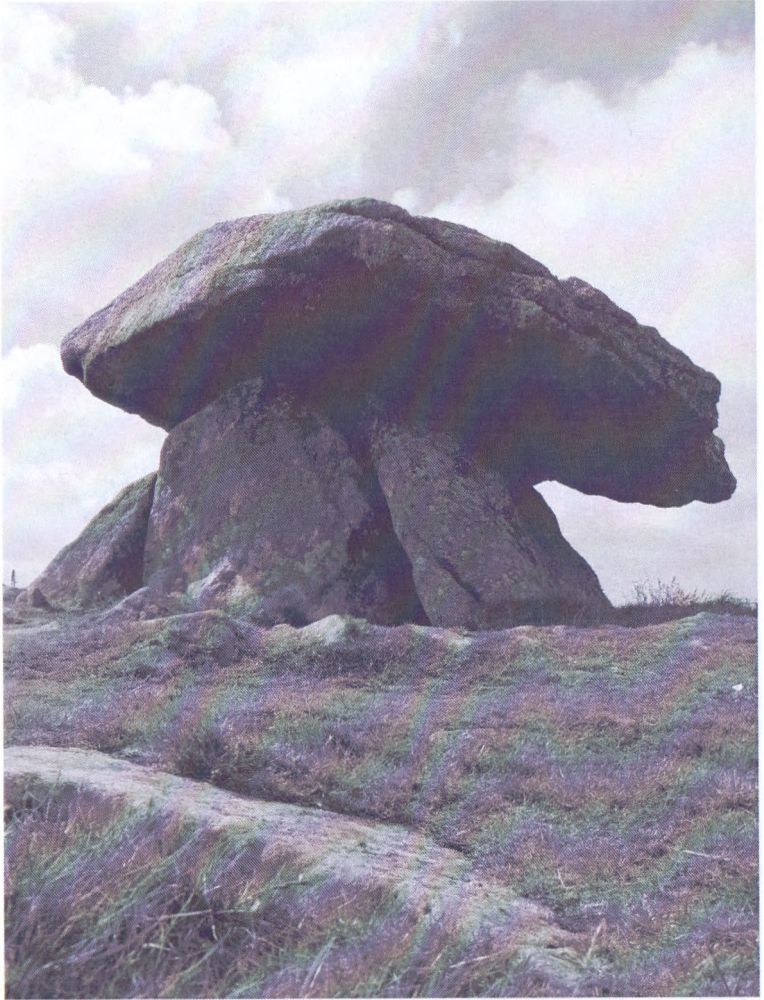
*Left;
Photo portrait of Helston Romany
Wise-woman; Granny Boswell.
Image courtesy of the Museum of
Witchcraft*



*Above;
The Cornish Wise-woman tableaux
in the Museum of Witchcraft, Boscastle, North Cornwall*



*Top; The Rocky Valley; a place of winding paths, a quartz-stream stream, of sprowl and the serpent's breath; all so very useful to the work of the witch.
Bottom; The Rocky Valley Labyrinths, thought ancient by some, and to have been carved by a 17th C 'witch cult' by others*



*Chûn Quoit - The House on the Downs
(3500-2500 BC)*

An ancestor spirit dwelling of the Cornish Landscape



*Dans Maen, the Merry Maidens dancing stones
near the village of St Buryan*



*Skull used to represent the Bucca during outdoor rituals,
and Bucca figure carved for the author by Bel Bucca*



*The author's hearth - a working place of power
in the home of the traditional witch*



*'Fuggy Hole'
The long passage of Carn Euny Fogou*



*The magical and healing Alsia Holy Well
near St Buryan*



Top;
Boscawen-Un (the elder tree on the downs) stone circle
near St Buryan.

Above;
A fellow witch assists the author to 'birth' a magical item for a client,
the Men-an-tol (stone with the hole), known also as 'The Devil's Eye'

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the earth. Miners would take great care to please the Knockers, for those who gained their favour would be lead by the spirits' tapping noises to rich lodes of ore, so they would leave a portion of their croust (lunch) to the Knockers. Swearing or shouting in their presence was said to anger them and would ensure bad luck in the mine. Given the extremely hazardous nature of mining, these taboos would be obeyed with some enthusiasm.

Spriggans are another tribe of Cornish spirits whose paths should hopefully never have to cross those of the living; for these entities are the fearsome spirit guardians of Cornwall's sacred landscape, and the hidden treasures of the ancient peoples. They are remarkably effective in striking terror into the hearts of those who attempt to damage the places of power, or dig the ancient sites in search of treasure. Legend tells of swarms of tiny Spriggans emerging from the land, and rapidly growing to gigantic stature to frighten off those digging for treasure. When the terrified treasure-hunter returned to the site they would find the hole they had dug filled in and re-turfed, with no sign that the ground had ever been disturbed.

In 1907 a farmer, who owned the field in which the Merry Maidens, stand decided to clear the ancient circle in order to make the field more workable and increase its value. The farm workers were reluctant, fearing the power of such places, but the farmer insisted and three shire horses were brought in to pull the stones from the ground. When they were hitched up, and began to pull on the first stone, the lead horse was struck by sudden panic and fell down dead. No further attempts were made to clear the site.



"Horned Bucca, both Dark and Fair, Divine Androgyne, be in all hearts and on the tip of every tongue. For your time has come again as it does with the beginning of each moment." JackDaw

*"...The breasts of Venus and the loins of Pan,
The antique world knew thee for Goddess-God.
Mystery manifest of woman-man,
Round thee of old the sacred dance we trod..."*
From Doreen Valiente's Hermaphrodite Panthea

The Bucca

THE Horned One is held as witch-deity in chief in most 'Old Craft' recensions and expressions, and as the very initiator of the Cunning Path itself. In Britain the old rural witches' god was often referred to as 'Devil', and this is still the case for many Crafters in many areas and is still true in Cornwall.

The Devil of the traditional witch is not quite the same thing, of course, as the Satan of 'Churchianity', but is instead intended as the old chthonic folk-god of the land mysteries and of seasonal changes (particularly the Autumn and Winter months), weather (particularly storms), death mysteries and the unseen forces and gnosis of use to witchcraft.

This concept of deity as the very embodiment of the land mysteries and the spirit of nature is found in the beliefs of the Romany folk, for whom God is *Devel* and the Earth is *De Develski*; the Divine Mother. The ways, beliefs and magic of the Rom and the witch have many similarities and it is certainly true that many practicing Cunning folk were, and are, of Romany stock.

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To traditional witches and Cunning folk in Cornwall, in particular the Penwith region, the old Horned One is known as *Bucca*, and in West Devon as *Buckie*. The meanings of this mysterious and misunderstood deity are complex and have been lost to most. Commonly thought of today as a kind of Cornish goblin or ‘naughty elf’, but still acknowledged as a powerful deity in Cornwall by those few aligned to Cunning practice and the Pellar way.

The most common misinterpretation is that *Bucca* was a sea deity. This idea has arisen chiefly from the fact that some fishermen in Newlyn used to offer a portion of their catch to *Bucca* on the sand and at the now lost Park-an-Grouse; ‘*The Field of the Cross*’, which is an area of Newlyn where a stone cross once stood and was a focus for *Bucca*’s veneration. The exact location of this site in Newlyn is now unknown. To offer something to a sea deity that already belonged to it in the first place just doesn’t seem to fit, and ritual offerings to the sea are usually of land produce such as ale or flowers. Also, offerings to the sea would normally be made to the sea itself, not to a cross on the land and (as anyone who lives in Cornwall should know) any fish left on the sand would stand a very slim chance indeed of remaining there long enough to be claimed by the incoming tide; they would more likely be swiped by the ever watchful seagulls who, by some unknown magic, descend en-masse out of nowhere the very moment something even vaguely edible hits the ground.

As well as fishermen, farmers also made offerings to *Bucca*. ‘Mouthfuls’ of ale would be spilled upon the ground and a portion of bread thrown over the left shoulder to ensure a good harvest. Areas of farm land were sacrificed and left to grow wild to become ‘*Bucca*’s Land’. The area

The Bucca

known as 'Chybucca', meaning 'Bucca's Dwelling', near Truro is about as inland as mid-west Cornwall gets. The site may once have been the location of some Bucca's Land. Farmers are very unlikely to have been bothered at all about sea deities and much less likely to sacrifice a portion of their land to one. However, one thing that is of vital concern to both fishermen and farmers alike is the weather. This reveals that Bucca is more properly a god of the weather, much of which comes inland over the sea, rather than a sea deity specifically.

In Cornish lore, Bucca manifests in the mysterious duality of Bucca Gwidder and Bucca Dhu; the White God and the Black God. Bucca Dhu is synonymous with the Devil of British folk belief, and is associated with storms and the winter months, whilst Bucca Gwidder may be associated with fair weather, nourishing rains and the summer months. As storms come rolling in across the land, it is said that Bucca Dhu is riding. On dark and cold nights of winter, Bucca Dhu is also described as riding a great black horse with blazing red eyes and smoky breath. Such lore surrounding Bucca Dhu is cognate with the widespread folk traditions of the Devil and Odin/Woden, as leaders of the Wild Hunt, which in British tradition runs along the Abbot's Way towards Cornwall; the last stop en route to the Otherworld. Each of these figures is heavily associated with the winter months, stormy nights, the death mysteries and passage to and from the Otherworld:

"Intimations of his approach can perhaps be sensed in dark windswept woods in early winter, when the roar of the gale shakes the tree tops and cloud-rack scuds over the cold stars – it is then that one truly knows that he is hunting..." Nigel Aldcroft Jackson, *Call of the Horned Piper*.

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The old associations between Bucca Dhu, the Devil and Odin, come together in the traditions surrounding another mysterious location in Newlyn - the Tolcarne. Known also as 'The Devil's Rock', the Tolcarne is a natural outcropping of rocks, high above St. Peter's Church. The legend of 'The Devil at the Tolcarne' tells of the day the devil fancied indulging in a spot of fishing and so stole nets from the Newlyn and Mousehole fishermen. When his theft was discovered, the Devil was pursued by members of Paul Church choir who chanted the Apostle's Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Distracted by this din, the devil tripped and left his footprint and markings from the nets in the rock where they fell. Furious, the Devil stood and flapped his great wings whilst fiercely spitting at the choir; "BUCKAH! BUCKAH! BUCKAH!!!" emitting all the time fire and sulphurous fumes from his mouth.

Another tradition, 'The Tolcarne Troll', tells of an entity dwelling within the rock itself 'since the time of the Phoenicians'. The Tolcarne Troll is interestingly known locally as 'Odin the wanderer', and is described as 'pleasant faced' and dressed in a tight-fitting hooded leather jerkin. According to local lore, it was possible to call upon the Tolcarne troll by reciting a secret Cornish charm whilst holding three dried leaves; one of oak, one of ash, and one of thorn. Once called, the Tolcarne troll had the power to grant insight into one's past lives by revealing himself as the enquirer in any state they had existed in previous incarnations. All one had to do was name the age or period.

Heavily associated with such Otherworldly and stormy divinities as Bucca Dhu/Devil and Odin, is the horse. Within the Cunning Craft traditions there exists a wealth of magical equine lore in which the horse is emblematic

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of the vehicle via which power may travel forth. In Heathen practice the horse became the vehicle for the power of blasting, via the 'spite stake' – being the skull of a horse, set open jawed upon a pole and, stood facing the direction of the quarry of the curse or banishment. Horse skulls, and carved wooden representations of horse heads, were also commonly hung high within the rafters of stables and livestock shelters, placed above entrances, or buried beneath thresholds and employed as 'concealed charms', all as powerful fetishes of protection. Horse skulls were also placed beneath, or even in, the sick bed; thus we see the horse was regarded as the vehicle also for the protections and healing blessings of the divine force.

Often it is the skull of a mare that is specifically called for; to protect the garden, encourage the healthy and abundant growth of plants, herbs and crops, and to ward off vermin, the skull of a mare was to be stood upon a pole within the garden. Such a charm reveals the Traditional Craft associations of the mare skull as vessel and representation of the Goddess of the fertile and verdant earth.

The witch's staff, within most expressions of the Traditional persuasion, is known as 'the horse'. Here the witch's staff is cognate with Yggdrasil – 'the horse of the hanged' or 'Odin's horse', via which the ways below, above, and the four ways of the middle world may be traversed and their virtues accessed. Thus the horse becomes the vehicle by which the Pellar may go forth in egress, and the vessel by which the virtues and powers are brought into the circle. Thrust into the centre of the circle, plunging deep into the chthonic waters, running up through the middle world where the cross-roads meet, and rising up into the heavens; here are embodied within

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the staff the three feminine principles of water, earth and air. Via these, the masculine principle of fiery force and 'witch power' may be drawn forth, from the depths to the heights. Likewise, these feminine principles are embodied within the traditional broom of the witch; constructed of an ashen staff (air), a birch brush (earth) and bound by willow (water). The traditional feminine broom becomes the steed and vehicle of fiery sexual force and spirit flight between the worlds, and is thus the 'bridge' in and out of the witch's circle.

Within the circles of the Cunning, the mare is not only the vehicle of force and virtue, be it drawn in or sent forth via the shaft of staff, broom, wand or cord, and a means of traversing the worlds, she is emblematic also of the dark Goddess as vehicle of the 'wild hunt' and night terrors. Her face is that also of the Ankow, drawing her death-cart to convey souls to the Otherworld. Hers is also the white face of the fertile goddess of the verdant earth; cross culturally also associated with seasonal change, the passage of the sun, and the very vehicle of its cyclic journey of growth and decline through the year. The Hindu god of the sun, Surya, is drawn forth by seven mares, vehicles of fiery divine force and seasonal changes. Closer to home we have the skull-topped pole 'Oss tradition, in Brittany and in Wales; where the various Mari Lwyd – 'Grey Mare' – 'Osses dance through the streets around the Winter Solstice; the time of the sun's death and rebirth. The pole 'Oss tradition exists also in West Cornwall where it is under revival. In Penwith, the Penglaz – 'Grey Head' – 'Osses have over the past eighteen or so years re-emerged to attend seasonal festivals with striking mare skulls crowned with appropriate greenery and draped in tatters. They stalk and leap through the streets with a 'Teazer', who, within one particular festival, interestingly

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became known to some locally as 'The Bucca'. Whilst a Penglaz 'Oss, as a revived figure, is essentially a mystery; a potent set of symbolism is undoubtedly presented, and it is only inescapable human nature to find meaning in such symbols; a process that has over the years undoubtedly occurred. It is perhaps fortuitous that Penglazes fit very nicely with already extant traditions of the mare as representative of seasonal passage, the mare skull as a protective fetish of divine blessing, the horse as the vehicle of power and likewise traditionally the vehicle of Bucca Dhu, the Devil and Odin.

Within Ros An Bucca, and the beliefs and practices of others within the Cornish Craft, Bucca Dhu is the storm god associated with the winter months, the inner worlds, introspection, dark and defensive magic and the new moon. Bucca Dhu is seen to rule from Allantide to May's Eve. Bucca Gwidder is thus the fair god, associated with fair weather, the summer months, light nourishing rains, generative and healing magic and the full moon. Bucca Gwidder is seen to rule from May's Eve to Allantide. Both Bucca Gwidder and Bucca Dhu however are associated traditionally with mischief and unpredictability (reminiscent rather of Cornwall's remarkable and famously changeable weather). This may be seen as something of a paradox when considering Bucca Dhu's introspective association; however, introspection can take us to the deeper animalistic parts of our being.

Bucca Gwidder and Bucca Dhu together embody the opposing forces within nature and within ourselves, the flip-side of each other; light-dark, life-death, generation-consumption, above-below etc. There is much wisdom to be gained in meditating on the opposing forces of Bucca Gwidder and Bucca Dhu; they are both intimately bound, each leading both from and to the other: Light

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emerges from the darkness, life leads ultimately to death from where life re-emerges, generation must be fuelled by consumption and what is generated will itself be consumed, as above so below... An understanding of this leads on to the realisation that the opposing are but different points of one process; opposite ends of a journey are still one journey and ultimately are the same thing, just as opposite points of a circle are still one circle, thus mystically Bucca Gwidder is Bucca Dhu; light is dark, life is death, generation is consumption and above is below.

Here we may ultimately find in Bucca a mystic triplicity; for Bucca Gwidder and Bucca Dhu conjoin in Bucca Gam; The Grand Bucca and the great Horned Androgyne, the Sabbatic Goat and Goddess-God of the witch-way. For some the Grand Bucca is simply referred to as Bucca, being the whole, with the two opposing aspects of that whole being given the distinction of Bucca Gwidder and Bucca Dhu. In Bucca we find the resolving of all opposites, the traditional candle betwixt the horns symbolising the light of 'All-Wisdom', and the mystic state of 'One-pointedness' which is the ultimate goal of the witch and is the light that illumines the Cunning Path. This state is achieved by the process of resolving all opposites within to become balanced and whole, rather than polarising and separating opposites; sticking them firmly at either end of an enormous imaginary pole, as has become the practice in some modern forms of the Craft. The Pellar will seek inwardly in their rites to become both female and male, dark and light, below and above and so forth in an act of inner alchemy. To embody this is a huge task, and is literally to seek to become 'as the gods', but nevertheless to walk the path of the Cunning is to strive ever towards the light of wisdom betwixt the horns of oppose.

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The Androgyne of the Wise, the Rebis, Double Matter and Hermaphrodite are well known to Alchemy, where transcendence of gender and the resolving of opposites are taught in the search for the *Occultum Lapidem*, the 'Hidden Stone', seen by some to represent the attainment of 'All-Wisdom'. However the acknowledgment of Hermaphrodite or Androgyne Deities may be seen to be relatively rare within Occult circles today. The most well known example of the Divine Androgyne today is perhaps the Baphomet; as depicted famously by Eliphas Levi.

The worship of the white and black Goat-Gods however was widespread amongst witches worldwide, and the goat image remains central to many Craft traditions today, although the true meaning behind the light betwixt the horns has been largely forgotten.

Could Bucca possibly have origins in a worldwide ancient androgyne or dualistic goat-form deity? We find traditional names for the Goat-God in Britain that seem to have a common derivation, such as *Bwca*, *Pwca*, *Pouca* and *Puck*, the latter still being used in parts of Ireland to refer to a goat. Abroad we find examples; along the northern border of Italy, witches acknowledge a nature spirit in the form of a great red goat with a white spot betwixt the horns, possibly representing the light of 'all-wisdom'. The names for this spirit are given variously as *Bec*, *Becco*, *Bouc*, *Boucan* and *Buc*. In Sweden we have the intriguingly named *Bukkerwise*, a mummers' play featuring the dying and resurrecting Goat-God, married to the Queen of the May. In Slavic Paganism we have the twin gods *Bielobog*, or 'white god' and his shadow-self, *Czernobog*, or 'black god' with the words 'bog' (god) and 'bucca' possibly sharing the same linguistic root.



Places of Power

MANY are the places that provide some useful virtue, wisdom or potency that the Pellar may draw upon to aid them in the working of their Craft. Let us begin at home...

The Pellar's Cottage

The home of a village practitioner will often contain signs of the domestic ingress and egress points between the worlds, in such a home there is a pervading reminder that the spirit realm is indeed always immanent. Charms hang in the portal points of the home where otherworldly forces may come and go; the windows, doors and at the fire, to repel unwanted or harmful influences and to attract helpful spirits and beneficial forces. Spirit houses adorn shelves and hang from beams to occupy spirits that may otherwise turn mischievous, or to ensure the continued presence of helpful spirits. In a dark and cobwebbed corner of the cottage may lurk the fearful tools of

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blasting, and black charms working their influence upon wrongdoers, and the enemies of the Charmer and those of their clients.

For our ancient ancestors, the hearth was at the very centre of the home and all domestic life, both mundane and spiritual, operated around it. The hearth provides warmth, food, and light in the dark. It gave life and thus was revered as the hallowed centre of the home. Sacred stories were told around the hearth-fire, guidance from the spirits was divined within its flames and the hearth was the very altar for all domestic rites of worship and communion with the gods, the land powers, and with the beloved dead.

For the witches, Charmers and Cunning folk, the hearth has retained many of these ancient associations and usages, and provides the 'working surface'. Where space is an issue another working surface, 'altar' or 'shrine' may also be arranged within a suitable spot. Some of the tools of charming may be kept at the hearth, ready for use upon the arrival of a client, the more 'religious' tools of the cult are kept there also for household rites and communion with the Otherworld. Divinations and counsel with spirits may be sought in the dancing flames of the blessed fire or within the swirling smoke issuing from a crucible placed on the hearth. Charms will be constructed at the hearthside, there empowered, and left on the hearth over night to 'cook'. Spells may be conjured and released to their destination via the chimney (the direction of the wind will always be noted here) and the most potent protective charms and physical anchors for household guardian spirits will be placed on the hearth or secreted within the chimney. As with spells, the witch's

spirit helpers or familiars or sometimes the spirit of the witches themselves in animal form, will be sent out to do their work via the chimney or otherwise through the window, which is also highly important as it allows one to keep a keen eye on what is going on outside...

The Village

Observation is a vital skill of the successful witch. The goings on of the village and the daily lives and behaviours of the villagers will be of great interest, quietly observed as a source of information, thus wisdom; for when a client comes knocking on the door of their village practitioner, the witch will more often than not already know what the problem is, who or what has caused it and how to go about rectifying it.

Times have changed, most villages and towns have lost their local community wise woman or Cunning man, thus the few still practicing as Cunning folk today no longer have the luxury of dealing almost exclusively with clients they already 'know' from their own community, but instead will receive requests from far and wide. This makes the skill of observation all the more important. It is a fact, known to the Wise, that people often make their own problems. It is also known that there are people who are very similar, in outlook, behaviour, personality and character, these people will often have similar problems with similar causes and more often than not the solutions will be similar. Keenly observing the lives of different people locally will help the wise to better 'know' and assist similar 'types' of client who come from afar. I realise that

this sounds as though I am denying individuality; I am not. I am speaking about peoples' 'types' and similarity on a more immediate outer level, observation of which gives the practitioner a head start before working to understand the individuality of the client on deeper levels and tailor their work accordingly.

The Churchyard

It may be an uncomfortable fact for some in the modern Craft that churchyards are seen as places of witchcraft. Yet historically this has always been so and is undeniable in Cornwall as elsewhere in Britain.

The attraction churchyards hold for the magically inclined is not a strange one, for they are places of the dead, and as such they are places between the worlds and such places have always been of use to the witch. They stand at the heart of the village and many an old church is built on a site once sacred to our ancient ancestors, often indicated by round or oval boundaries, or the presence of sacred stones and ancient Yew trees. Such locations have not been abandoned by followers of the 'Old Religion' despite their more common usage by those who follow the new.

Many a traditional rite or spell calls for the witch to make their way to a churchyard under midnight's cover, usually to work spells of good old Cornish 'get-rid-of' magic; the removal of curses, illnesses, and other such undesirable things on a client's behalf. Rites of Craft initiation, where a meeting with the Devil is desired are another traditional midnight churchyard occurrence, not unknown in Cornwall even today.

The Crossroads

The crossroads is another important traditional symbol of ingress between the worlds. To stand at the crossing of the roads is to be 'astride the hedge' or 'betwixt the horns'. The crossroads is a particularly potent and graphic form of such symbols, for the crossing of the two horizontal roads symbolise the gathering of, and access to, the spirits, powers, and virtues of the cross-quarter 'Ways'. The invisible vertical third road, which pierces the centre of this cross and provides the axis, is the road to the heavens, or Nevek and to the underworld, Annown. To effectively establish the Circle of Cunning the magical crossroads must be conjured and the sign of the three crossed roads is made at the start of each working to signify that contact with otherworldly forces is desired and is about to take place.

The crossroads is a place, traditionally, where the Cornish witch will make conjurations seeking the aid of the spirits or the old one, to make curses or to work traditional forms of 'get rid of' magic.

Fuggy Holes

Fuggy Holes; caves and fogous (ancient West Cornish underground passages or chambers) are purely places of the underworld, for there is nothing betwixt or between about them; when one enters such places one has crossed the hedge entirely from the world of the living into the world of spirits.

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Powerful places of vision, magic and initiation; they have much to offer the Wise. At the time of the new or dark moon, fuggy holes may be visited by the Cunning for silent rites of underworld journeying to encounter, commune with and seek visions from the dead and the black one of death herself; Ankow, and for rites of inward working to visit the depths of the inner under world that exists within us all; for the old maxim 'Know Thyself' holds true for witches in Cornwall as it does elsewhere.

At the time of the full moon the Wise are drawn into the fogous and sea caves by a force known as 'The Serpent's Breath', for the serpentine energies become extra potent and generative at this time, and exude a powerful and hypnotic force from within the dark earth. Here rites are worked with this potent force, drawing deeply of the Serpent's Breath, breathing it, drowsing in it, and becoming possessed by it; the Wise receive visions from which wisdom is extracted, and they are re-empowered and recharged with the chthonic serpentine and lunar virtue, which will provide extra potency to their workings of magic and healing.

Holy Wells

Cornwall's many holy wells, like fuggy holes, are also places where at the time of the full moon the Serpent's Breath may issue forth in greater and more concentrated abundance than at other places, for they are themselves otherworldly portals where the potent serpentine waters of the earth arise. Here also this force is traditionally utilised for magical potency, vision and healing.

Places of Power

As well as being places of inherent curative and divinatory powers, Cornish holy wells are seen to be places of indwelling spirits to whom offerings would be made in hope of vision, foretelling or healing. Fenton Bebibell near the Men-an-Tol stones, as its name in Cornish reveals, is quite literally the well of the little people. Here girls would venture on Good Friday to bless their dolls in the well water. This perhaps reveals folk memories of the worship of the ancestral spirits or little folk at this place, or the blessing and naming of babies. The lost well has recently been rescued by volunteers, and the tradition of Good Friday doll blessing has been revived at this enchanting and magical holy well.

There are traditional patterns of practice held in common by many of Cornwall's holy wells, and these practices were conducted quite regularly until a relatively late period. The better known practice of cloutie hanging, most notably at Madron, perhaps Cornwall's most famous holy well, is an old spell for healing.

The practice of leaving clouties survives at Madron Well with gusto, however most are left today in the trees where water lies beside the path to the old baptistery, for the actual location of the well is quite difficult to access and not widely known. Clouties are now a common sight at many other wells, although the very briefest examination of the vast majority of modern-day clouties reveals that the true meaning, and purpose of the spell, has been lost to most. Sadly it seems to have become habitual behaviour to garrotte the limbs of any tree that dares grow in the vicinity of a holy well with any old piece of synthetic tat.

The practice of bathing in, or passing children through, the waters are also healing rites that were once common at

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a number of holy wells. Divinatory practices, commonly involving throwing bent pins into the water and then reading the resulting bubbles, or other behaviour of the water, occurred at a number of wells, again notably at Madron and at Alsia (roughly pronounced locally as *ay-lee-ab*) Well, near St Buryan where bramble leaves were also used. The practice of bending pins to offer into the waters in return for divinatory counsel seems to hark back to the practice, common to many ancient cultures worldwide, of purposefully damaging fine metal objects, such as swords and jewellery, before offering them into the depths of sacred lakes and other bodies of water, which were regarded as doorways into the Otherworld.

For the Charmers, holy wells are places to commune with the spirits; to seek vision; to regain strength, magical potency and virtue from the serpentine flow; to empower their magic and their healing and also to bless and re-empower their tools of the healing Craft.

Sacred Stones

Cornwall, Penwith in particular, is extremely rich in ancient sacred sites of stone, including circles, menhirs and quoits. These enigmatic sites are of great importance to the Cunning folk, not least because they were of great importance and use to our ancient sacred ancestors. Whilst the exact details of the original ancient uses and meanings of many of these ancient sites may present us with a mystery, keys and clues may be seen held within their folklore, and the Charmers, Cunnors and witches of Cornwall have always had their very effective uses for these ancient and sacred places of power.

Places of Power

The great stone circles, also known by the local Wise-folk as 'dancing stones', are temples of the land and chthonic force, where the serpentine flow may spiral and pool within the rings of granite, a rock of high quartz content, which, like the serpentine flow, is held within the Craft to be responsive to the lunar tides. Here, at the full moon, the quartz rich stones channel and enhance the flow of the serpent, thus they become places where this potent, generative and hypnotic force can be danced alive, and utilised in great abundance so that very powerful, deep, and far reaching magic may be done.

At such places the witch may become the vehicle for an extremely potent force. When the moon is dark, the granite rings pool the serpentine force in its consumptive phase. Here magic to be rid of things, to end things and to curse may be done to great effect, but care is needed when working magic of this kind and with this dangerous force, concentrated at such places, for it can be costly.

The menhirs or standing stones, of which Cornwall has many, may be seen to be marker stones of the spirit paths, or paths of 'land force'. The archeological finding of human remains, as either bone or ash, reveals a link with the dead. Whether or not the stones were erected to mark these burials, or the burials were made as foundation offerings to the stones upon their erection is unknown. They are places for the Wise to commune with the ancestors, with the wisdom and forces of the land, to walk the paths of spirit and to travel the worlds above and below, for such stones unite the sky with the depths of the earth.

The Men-an-Tol (stone with the hole) is one of Penwith's most mysterious ancient sacred sites. It is almost

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certainly not in its original alignment or arrangement. The possibility that this site was once part of a circle, or twin circles, or even the remains of a chambered tomb where the holed stone may have formed the entrance is debated. However, like most of Cornwall's ancient sacred stones, the Men-an-Tol is alive and of use and great importance to the living today, despite the mysteries surrounding its uses and meanings to our ancient ancestors.

Like the holy wells, the magic made at the Men-an-Tol included workings of divination and healing. To employ the stone's divinatory powers, two brass pins would be crossed on the very top of the holed stone so that one was balanced across the other. The movement of the top pin would be read for the answers to any questions put to it, to point out a direction or to give a 'yes' or 'no'.

The holed stone has been seen very much as a powerful portal of healing, transformation and rebirth. It is most widely used today for healing, for it is not uncommon to see visitors climbing through the hole nine or three times against the sun, in hope of a cure for their ills, or to witness babies and young children being passed through the hole for the same.

The fact that these very old practices are still common occurrences at the Men-an-Tol is testament to the site's powerful and enduring reputation.

For the Pellar, this magical portal is also employed within rites of rebirth and renewal, and to symbolically 'birth' or give life to magical dolls, bones, skulls and other items to house a familiar or working spirit. Such objects have life breathed into them and are passed ritually through the stone, and then the spirit is named, perhaps by giving it a 'baptism' at the nearby Fenton Bebibell.

Places of Power

The 'spirit houses' of the Cornish landscape are the quoits, cromlechs (Cornish for curved place) and barrows. These are Places of the death rites of the ancients, of rituals of sacred ancestral bones, of offerings, of connection, of memory and wisdom. They are the dwelling places of the sacred dead, where they watch over the land and the living; places of direct contact with the spirit world, where the living may still visit to crawl inside and there speak with the ancestors and listen for their wisdom. For the Pellar they are places of important rites in which the vital bonds between the living and the dead are maintained.

Other than the sacred monuments of our ancestors, there are various features of the landscape that may be utilised as places of power. The vast rocky carns and hills are, in Cornish lore, places of giants and Spriggans. At their summits the raw energies of land, sky and the elements may be encountered in abundance and 'stored' for later use, or directed there and then in the casting of spells over distance. Beaches or even cliff edges are useful in acts of magic making, utilising the powerful tides of the sea to conjure or to exorcise. The flowing energies of a stream are good for workings to cleanse, to heal or to send a spell out on its way. A lonely wind-distorted thorn in a hedge is an excellent place for magic in which the conjuring of otherworldly forces or spirits is required.

"I went on my knees under a White-thorn tree by the crossroads, and there, for best part of that night, I called on the powers till they helped me cast the spells that gave old Jemmy and his family plenty of junket and sour milk for a time."

William Bottrell, around 1870 – Traditions and Hearthside stories of West Cornwall.



The Tools of Cunning

BEING out in the land, listening... watching... becoming... not only provides access to the most useful tools of all; wisdom and the natural forces of the serpent, the waters and the winds, it also equips the witch with many of the physical tools that are practical aids to the working of magic and the Cunning arts.

Many of the working tools of the village wise-folk are quite different to those immaculate, grand and expensive ceremonial tools found in the modern cults of Wicca, that most folk will be more familiar with. The tools of a traditional witch will often be found whilst poking around in hedges, or stumbled across whilst walking the land. The more 'elaborate' constructed tools will be made by the witch's own hand where possible, and will preferably be crafted from natural items found in the landscape, resulting in items with an often 'primitive' or 'rustic' appearance but always fit for purpose. Natural materials not only contain the very spirit or sprowl of the landscape in which they were found, they may also more easily become a vessel and conduit for magical

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forces employed and directed, and the working sprowl of the practitioner. Such tools become a magical extension of the practitioner's being and are seen as gifts directly from the land and the Old Ones. Others are passed down, or handed on as gifts, from other practitioners and are greatly cherished. Many witches of this persuasion refer to their tools as their 'friends' and as such they hold much affection for them.

There are many items, materials and substances, used within the making of charms and the working of magic, and all of these it could be argued are tools of the practice; however below can be explored only the more prominent working items that tend to feature within the Cornish Craft, including the tools of ritual:

Sticks

A number of stick-formed tools are used within the Traditional Craft and the most important, it could be argued, is the personal staff kept by nearly all Cunning folk. It is known in Cornwall as the gwelen, and often features a forked top to represent the Horned One, the dualities of nature and power flowing forth from the depths to the heights. It is a very useful multi-purpose tool, kept with many practitioners wherever they go. In many ways the staff is the Traditional Craft equivalent of the Wiccan athame, although more in the level of importance attached to it than the methods of use. It is a companion when walking in the land, where it may be a useful tool to gather and store land sprowl, and a handy weapon against unwanted attention! As the true witch's

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wand, it may be used to direct energy, to banish unwanted influences and spirits and conjure helpful ones. It is used to mark out and conjure the working circle and stood in the ground it forms the altar and a bridge between the worlds. Stood within the centre of the circle, the witch's staff connects earth and sky, giving the witch access to the virtues of the upper and lower worlds and those of the cross-quarter ways. The virtues, powers, spirits and influences of specific cardinal directions are accessed when the staff is stood at certain points of the circle's edge. Some practitioners like to keep a number of staves of certain woods for different uses, but most will have one main staff.

The Virtues of Woods for Working Staves:

Alder: Of fiery virtue, Alder is Bran's wood of fiery and divine oracular vision. It aids also workings of defensive magic and strength.

Ash: The Ash is of airy virtue. It is associated heavily in Cornish and West Country lore with healing and regenerative magic. As Yggdrasil, The Ash aids also workings of spirit, passage between the worlds, and drawing forth the virtues of the six ways. Thus it is often the wood of choice for the Pellar's main staff.

Birch: Also of airy virtue, and of earth, particularly when employed as the brush of the traditional Crafter's broom. The Birch offers a wood that aids purification, the initiation of inception, birth and fertility.

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Blackthorn: The feared and formidable Blackthorn is of fiery virtue. Associated within the Cornish Craft with Bucca Dhu, it is employed to aid workings of blasting, defensive magic, setting strong boundaries, toad magic and rites of the new moon.

Elder: Of watery virtue, Elder is of aid to workings of protection, exorcising illness and spirit conjuration.

Gorse: The Furze is of fiery virtue, it provides a wood to aid workings of purification, the conjuration of fair weather, and the discovering of useful information.

Hawthorn: The Whitethorn is of fiery virtue and is associated with the rites of May's Eve and Bucca Gwidder. It aids also dealings with spirit folk and workings of fertility, but is not to be employed as a walking staff for it may invite ill luck upon journeys.

Hazel: Of fiery virtue: the Hazel is traditionally of aid to the practices of divination, and the acquiring of wisdom, inspiration and visions.

Holly: The dark Holly is of fiery virtue, it is of aid to rites and workings of death and rebirth, and of exorcism, defensive magic, the overcoming of wrongdoers, and fiery potency.

Oak: Of fiery virtue; the Oak is of aid to solar rites and magic, and to workings of strength, steadfastness, wisdom, power and potency. To the old Cornish the Oak is sacred to *Taraner the Thunderer*.

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Pine: Of both fiery and airy virtue, of aid to the workings of healing, prosperity, exorcism, protection, wisdom, progress and the increase of power.

Rowan: The Mountain Ash is of fiery virtue and of aid to the rites of Candlemas and to workings of quickening, conjuring visions, lifting curses and the influence of ill wishing from people and cattle. A walking staff of Rowan provides protection from evil whilst journeying.

Willow: Of watery virtue; the Willow is of aid to rites and workings of the moon, emotional healing, love, fertility and intuition.

Yew: The revered Yew is watery in virtue; it is of aid to all rites of death mysteries, Ankow, atavistic wisdom, transformation, change and renewal.

Whilst different woods have their own associated magical virtues, the important thing is that the practitioner selects a staff that calls to them. They can have ways of making themselves known that range from the subtle to the fairly dramatic. I have known folk choose branches that they have tripped over, got their hair or clothes snagged on or that have literally smacked them in the face! I have often used 'dead' or fallen wood that is still strong. This for me feels 'complete', for it has risen up from the earth, lived, died and fallen back to the earth again. Green or living wood however is more reliably strong. When deciding to harvest such wood, it is good practice to let the tree know that you intend to take that particular branch, tie a piece of string around where you intend to make the cut and

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leave it there for a week or so, letting the tree get used to the idea. Do not take more than you need and never attempt to break off the branch; use a sharp pruning saw to make a clean cut. It is better to harvest green wood in the winter as there will be less sap, making the wood less likely to split as it dries. Drying can take around a year to do properly, and the ends should be sealed by dipping them in a pot of hot molten wax as they will otherwise quickly split. Dead wood of course does not suffer so much from splitting and is quicker to dry. A handy recipe, given by Cornish Pellar JackDaw, could reduce the drying time of 'green wood' sticks to three months: Mix 1 part Olive oil with 5 parts turpentine and rub the mixture into the stick once a week.

When it comes to finishing your staff, it is best to coat the wood several times with boiled linseed oil. This brings out the richness of the wood and can be polished pleasingly. Natural beeswax polishes are also good. Whether or not the bark is left on depends much on the type of wood and the drying process, where it may start to separate from the wood anyway and will have to be stripped, otherwise it may be best to leave the bark on.

The personal staff of a Pellar tends not to be overly dramatic, nor overtly occult in its appearance. Such a staff tends instead to appear much like any other thumb or walking stick, all be it a particularly fine and attractive example, with which its bearer wouldn't look at all out of place walking in the countryside, or into any country pub. However, within what may appear to others nothing more than decorative design, various pertinent witch signs may be concealed and made occult in plain sight. Carved and inscribed patterns containing rings, 'X' forms, zigzags

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and spirals, will convey to the witch's eye the old signs of oneness with all, the quarter-way virtues, the upper and lower worlds, the 'cauldron and the fire', the unification of form and force and the ascending and descending serpents.

The 'Talking Stick' is a forked staff used by West Country Crafters to gain visions via the serpentine force. It may be the witch's personal staff, or a special Hazel example kept only for this purpose. It is better used during the time of the full moon, and at a known place of power where the serpentine 'pulse' is strong. The witch will kneel and drive the stick into the ground at an angle, so that the rounded forked ends rest gently against the closed eyes. The Becoming will be undertaken, and then the witch will feel for the flow of the Red Serpent in the earth, conducted along the stick. The rhythm of this flow will eventually bring visions of foresight and the answers to questions, such as the whereabouts of anything that is lost or stolen.

Another stick tool for making discoveries is, of course, the better known Y shaped divining rod, cut also from Hazel. Wise folk traditionally employed these, when called in by farmers and land owners, to divine for water, a service still widely provided today. The diviner's rod can of course be used to locate other things. The two forks of the rod are held in the hands, palms upwards and pulling outwards, thus applying tension to the rod until it resembles the sign for Aries, with the lower point facing away from the body and the whole thing level with the ground. The diviner will then walk, holding in the mind that which is being sought without thinking too much. The 'body knows' when the thing has been found, and

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divining rods, pendulums and the like, provide external indications to let the diviner know when their body has made the discovery.

The 'Hook Wand' is another type of very useful stick employed within the Cornish Craft. It is a simple stick with a hooked end, formed by a small side branch, with a point shaped into the lower end of the main shaft. This stick is used within magical rites to 'gather in' desired virtues, by the witch gesturing repeatedly with it to literally 'hook' and pull in that which is required, whilst facing a pertinent direction within the circle. When sufficient required virtue has been gathered, it is sent forth, via the pointed end, in the direction of the place, person, animal or item intended to receive it.

The 'Blasting Rod' is the famous and feared blackthorn staff, employed by witches in Cornwall and other areas to direct curses or punishments upon wrongdoers, to send them 'the fear', and to stop the continuation of their wrongful ways.

The Knife

A blade used by the Pellar is sharp and it will cut, for that is the nature of the tool. It is usually single edged with a hilt of bone, horn or wood, and is traditionally crafted by the witch's own hand as far as their skills will allow, or received as a gift. The Pellar's knife is used for tasks both practical and magical, it can be used to cut and carve new wooden tools, to dig holes and even to open a tin of paint. If you make good practical use of your knife in the mundane world, your faith in its ability to aid you in magical matters will be all the greater. The knife or

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collel of a Cornish witch is used to send magic over long distances, for weather magic, to conjure and bless the ritual fire or simply the candle's flame. It is used to conjure the red serpent; the 'fire in the land', and to awaken the Cunning flame within. It can subdue troublesome spirits and exorcise, but it is not used to conjure the working circle.

The Cup

Materials that have had life are most favoured to fashion the cups used by Cunning folk, the majority of cups I know of are made from horn. They are used in the Troyl rite for the ritual sharing of drink and food that is so vital to maintain the bonds between witch, Bucca, the ancestors and the serpent.

The Bowl

This is used also in the Troyl rite to hold the sacramental food, and to leave food offerings overnight to the spirits, traditionally at the back door of the cottage or at the hearth – where the offering may also be made to the witch's familiar spirits and other serving spirits.

Newly prepared magical substances or charms are also left in the bowl on the hearth overnight, thus allowing the settling in of the prevalent planetary or lunar virtues for which their making was timed to coincide, along with other raised powers and intent. The bowl is often made from wood, clay or horn.

A good bowl or basin of copper is also sought after and kept by most Cornish witches. It has many uses and is most often employed in workings of healing, 'seeing' and of course love; copper being the metal sacred to Venus.

The Cauldron

Keep a good old cauldron; it is a useful tool for both magic and ritual use. Older ones are best for they are full of character, and usually a better quality casting. I must admit that of all my tools my dear big old cauldron, 'Old Bet', is perhaps my favourite. Along with a large cauldron, Cornish practitioners have also traditionally kept a small 'portable' example, handy when the Pellar is making visits to their clients. A cauldron has its most obvious use as the cooking vessel for magical ointments, or the food for a ritual feast, hung over the 'hood fire'. In ritual or magic, it is a symbolic portal of the Otherworld and a vessel of change; a womb of generation or a tomb of consumption, depending on intent and the phase of the moon. Herbs and magical substances can be cast into a cauldron with smouldering embers, or a small fire kindled within, and the required virtues stirred up with the Pellar's staff, conjuring that which is required into manifestation within the rising smoke issuing forth from the vessel's depths. Visions and spirits can be conjured in this way, to be born forth from the Otherworld during generative workings of the waxing and full moon.

Indoors, during workings at the hearth, a candle may burn within the cauldron, with herbs smouldering on charcoal and other symbolic items arranged also within.

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Above this are conjurations made with repetitive stirring gestures and muttered chants. During the waning or dark of the moon, those things that are required to be gone can be placed within the cauldron fire, in the form of symbolic items, images, knotted cords or pertinent substances, as the witch stirs or moves quietly about it in a sinistral circle, willing the undesired thing to be gone. In seasonal rites things may be born symbolically forth from the cauldron or sacrificed within, and it may become a vessel for sacred fires of the year.

Sweeping Tools

Sweeping magic was, and is, much used by Cornish practitioners. The most famous sweeping tool, the witch's broom, is symbolic of travel between the worlds, and passage from one phase into another. In ritual, it may sweep the working circle, not only as a tool of exorcism sweeping away influences that might impede or interfere with the work, but as a symbolic gesture to establish that exchange between the worlds is about to take place there. The broom is used in magic to sweep bad influences out of the house, and fortunate or lucky influences in at certain times of the year. In curse magic, ill-intent and bad or unlucky influences can be swept via the broom into the doorway of an enemy or wrongdoer.

Feather sweepers are traditional West Country working tools, most often fashioned from long goose feathers bound with wax, or goose fat and string, to form a handle. Sometimes a left hand and right hand sweeper will be kept; the left hand one to sweep harmful or unlucky influences

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away and the right hand one to sweep in fortunate or lucky influences; others have kept a single sweeper for both actions, switching hands according to intent.

The sweeping gestures may be made over a candle, charm, or symbolic item, or to sweep virtues and influences in, or out of a place such as a client's home. Magical sweeping gestures might also be made over a person or an animal. In this way, sweepers may also be employed within healing work; to sweep away the ailment from the affected part of the body with the left hand, and then to sweep in the healing influence with the right.

The 'witch's whisk' is a West Country sweeping tool purely used to exorcise evil spirits and negative influences from a place. It is made by binding thirteen dried and thorny blackberry twigs together, using the string binding to form a handle. The ends of the twigs are set alight in a blessed fire, and the smoking whisk is waved and danced around the place with vigorous gestures to ward off all evil and harmful influences.

Conversely, a similarly bound bundle of twigs, such as Pine, may be employed in a similar fashion. In this case however, the West Country witch is drawing helpful spirits to the working place, attracted by the pleasingly scented wood smoke.

Drums

Various kinds of drum may be kept by West Country witches, for they are useful within the circle for drumming up sprowl and the presence of helpful spirits. They may also be employed to drive away evil spirits and negative

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influences. Cecil Williamson gives two interesting recommendations for West Country witch drumsticks – ones made of glass, the handles of which must have unfinished ends, being useful for banishing harmful influences, calling upon the aid of helpful spirits and for drumming up changes in the weather.

Drumsticks formed from human arm bones however are recommended to drum up the presence of any required spirit.

Wind Roarers

Another noise-making ritual tool; wind roarers, or 'bullroarers' have been employed within traditional magical ritual and spiritual ceremony in many cultures and in many places across the globe, including here in the West Country.

They must be specially formed from hard wood, and spun above the witch's head in the air, they produce strange and otherworldly throbbing, moaning sounds. These are employed by the West Country witch to attract helpful spirits and to raise spirit forces at the creation of an outdoor working space, and to aid the achievement of trance states.

These may more usually be employed to begin simple, solitary workings, although I have heard three wind roarers used together during a working gathering of wise-women here in Cornwall, the sound was quite remarkable and the 'Hidden Company' left no doubt that they had drawn close to see what was going on!

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Stones would also be carried as protective amulets and provide warning of the presence of poison by sweating.

Devil's Fingers also known as *Thunder Bolts* are the belemnite fossil. They have been used in Cornwall by Cunning folk who also named them Sea Stones to make predictions by casting one or more and reading the directions in which they point. Water in which Devil's Fingers had been soaked for some time is seen in tradition to have curative powers against worms in horses as well as rheumatism and eye complaints. They are also used by the Cunning to add potency to workings, sometimes being incorporated into charms or set into the end of curative wands.

Tongue Stones are the fossils of sharks' teeth which, to the ancients, appeared to be the petrified tongues of serpents. Kept in the home they would ward off misfortune and prevent snakes from entering. Tongue stones are also worn as protective charms against evil and to protect the wearer from snake bites. Immersed in red wine they would provide a cure from venoms and poisons.

Toad Stones were believed by our ancestors to grow inside the heads of toads. Most known examples of Toad Stones have been found to be the fossilised teeth of the extinct fish *Lepidotes*. Toad stones were most often set into rings to provide protection and to aid healing rites. Stings and bites could be cured by the Charmer's Toad Stone ring being touched to the affected area and worked against all venoms and poisons. The Toad Stone ring will warn the wearer of poison by becoming warm in its presence.

Necklaces

West Country witches, male and female, will often wear a necklace or pendant of magical virtue. Such things as hag stones and bird's feet are used. Strung beads of serpentine, quartz and obsidian represent the serpent and the generative and introspective virtues.

A particularly potent and traditional West Country witch necklace consists of strung snake vertebrae, sometimes with the inclusion of glass beads, conferring upon the wearer serpentine powers and the ability to work with the 'spirit force' of the land.

To Hood the Tools

The ways to empower the tools and to charge them with life and virtue are many and are to be determined by the nature of the tool itself, it is also the case that each practitioner may have their own ways.

Following the exorcism of the item, with the aid of purging and cleansing substances, it will be charged with the powers and virtues pertinent to its nature and use. They may also be anointed with Witch Oil, and passed through the smoke of a pertinent suffumigation before being bound with the practitioner's working cord, to seal in the virtue, and left over night on the hearth.

There are also such traditional actions as the anointing of tools with three crosses of spittle, the breathing of life into tools and even taking them into the bed for three consecutive nights.

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Tools are also often buried beneath the ground at known places of power for varying periods to be infused with chthonic force, whilst tools for working with the dead are often charged by the virtues of the North Road and coated with ‘Spirit of Myrrh’.

The Cunning Altar

The altar and focus of operations within the rites and workings of the Pellar, either at the hearth or outside, traditionally includes four basic things which are the staff, stone, flame and bone. For the staff, the Pellar’s traditional working stick is of course most often employed, becoming a ‘bridge/vehicle’ to join and give access to the ‘Ways’, and a representation of Bucca. Pitch forks or hay forks are occasionally used instead. Within Ros An Bucca, we are fortunate to have a six tined threshing fork, which we employ as the altar within our six main seasonal ‘Furry’ rites.

The stone is the foundation stone or hearth stone around which the cultus of the Craft operates. In some traditional groups this is a whetstone that keeps the blade of Cunning ever sharp, but for the solitary witch any of the working stones may be used. Quartz is a good choice for it attracts and enhances the serpentine flow and the breath, whereas obsidian would be more fitting specifically to the new moon.

The flame is the flame of Cunning, the light betwixt the horns and the light on the heath that illumines the path of the Cunning Way. It may be a lantern or simply a candle. During indoor rites and workings, where a full

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'hood-fire' is not possible, a 'hood-lamp' may instead be employed upon the altar. Known examples are formed from horseshoes fixed to a wooden base, with a candle fixed between the upward pointing arms of the shoe, or a forked section of tree branch fixed also to a wooden base, with the candle stuck between the forks. This 'bewitched lamp' is both a devotional object, being a potent visual representation of the Horned One and the light betwixt the horns, and a practical item for magic. Just as the hood-fire may be employed magically, so may the hood lamp assist workings to attract that which is desired and banish that which is not, often by the aid of pertinently coloured glass headed pins once the candle is identified with the object of the working.

The bone is the representation of the Old Ones, the gods, spirits and ancestors of the Craft and the 'First One' of the Cunning Way. In grand rites this may be an actual human skull, although other smaller human bones are more usefully portable and thus more often used. Animal bones and carved skulls have also been employed for this. Alongside human bones, I also sometimes make use of a pre-historic, yet still sharp, flint cutting tool as a potent link to the ancestors.

Some will keep about their person a stone, bone and candle within a handkerchief that along with their stick/staff, a small flask of drink and a little food, may form a good and proper altar when out and about in the land. The Pellar's blade is also usually carried which doubles as a handy carving tool.



The Witches' Compass

THE practice of marking out a circular area to delineate a hallowed space for the performing of rites, the working of magic and to contain raised forces is a very ancient one. However the purpose of the true witches' circle, ring, or 'Compass Round' runs much deeper than mere delineation and containment. The most important function of the circle is that of access, for it is a place created and set aside for the ingress of virtues, powers, spirits, atavistic wisdom, and the manifestation of divine force into the Craft of those who work within its boundary.

Within the witches' circle may be found a map to the worlds that are to be drawn upon or traversed. The spirits, powers and virtues of the crossroads are conjured into the circle's midst, through which runs the great axial road or 'world tree' conjoining the depths, the quarter ways of the midguard and the heights. Within such a circle are the paths of access opened to the cross quarter Ways, the planetary, solar and lunar forces and virtues of the starry heights of Nevek, and the chthonic waters of

creation, death, atavistic memory and wisdom within the underworld realm of Annown. Via the axial road also is the chthonic fire; the serpent of the land, drawn forth from the depths to the heights.

The witches' circle is known also as the 'dancing ground' for the virtues, powers and spirits of the Ways are conjured, invoked and evoked into the centre of the circle to be gathered in and 'stirred' alive during acts of 'walking the round' and the use of 'mill dances' and 'mill chants'. It is for this reason that the circle's centre is called 'the cauldron'.

Within the circle, the Pellar's staff is a 'bridge tool' which, as 'The Horse', becomes both a vehicle of ingress, for force, spirit and virtue, via which the witch may access and draw upon the Ways, and a vehicle of egress should the witch desire to go forth to traverse and explore these roads. When placed in the centre of the circle it stands in representation of the axial road itself, giving access to all six Ways – above, below and the quarter crossroads. There is also the mystery of the seventh Way; the centre where 'all is one'. In some rites and workings, where specific virtues are required, the staff is set to stand at the circle's edge, at the pertinent quarter point, to become the vehicle of the required directional forces and virtues.

The cross quarter directions are assigned the following attributes by some Crafters:

The East Road

East is the direction of spring, dawn, and the red spirits of the powers of fire; above are the heavenly fires of the Sun, who rises in the East, the planetary fires and thunder.

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Below is the chthonic fire; the Red Serpent who is the fire and potency of the land and the 'totemic' familiar spirit of the East Road. East is also the direction of the inner flame of Cunning and the Will. Amongst the regalia of the East road are the knife, the broom and the spirit whip. The virtues of the East Road aid workings of defensive magic, exorcism, strength, power, sexuality, and potency.

The South Road

South is the direction of summer, noon, and the white spirits of the powers of earth; the land, the living body, and the physicality of all things. The South Road familiar spirit is the leaping white hare, the regalia of this direction include the magical stones (whispering stone, Troy stone, stroking stone etc.), the bowl, and the pentacle of manifestation. Workings in the areas of stability, healing bodily hurts, the wisdom and employment of plants, fertility, growth, abundance and wealth are all greatly aided by the virtues of the South Road.

The West Road

West is the direction of autumn, dusk, and the grey spirits of the powers of water; the rivers, streams, wells, seas, our own blood and the deep chthonic waters of transformation, emotion and atavistic wisdom. The grey toad is the West Road familiar spirit, and the regalia of this direction include the cauldron and horn-cup. Workings of the moon, sea witchcraft, well magic, transformation, cleansing, dreams, memory, emotions, and the healing of

emotional and psychological hurts are aided by the virtues of the West Road.

The North Road

North is the direction of winter, midnight, and the black spirits of air; the haunted winds of spirit, smoke, our own breath and the voice. The familiar spirit of the North Road is the black crow (or to some Cornish practitioners the chough). In some rites and workings the skull and staves/rods/wands are regalia of the North Road, but they are shared also with the East in others. Seeing tools, the censer and the bell are other regalia of the North Road. Workings aided by the virtues of this direction include spirit magic, atavistic communion, blasting, binding, wisdom, augury and communication.





*From left; a six tined threshing fork used as a seasonal altar,
a hazel 'talking stick' for chthonic vision,
the antler topped ashen altar staff,
an antler topped twisted/ serpent form personal ashen working staff,
a blackthorn staff, topped with a carved owl*



*A blackthorn and horse-hair 'spirit whip'
together with a hook-wand.
Author's collection*

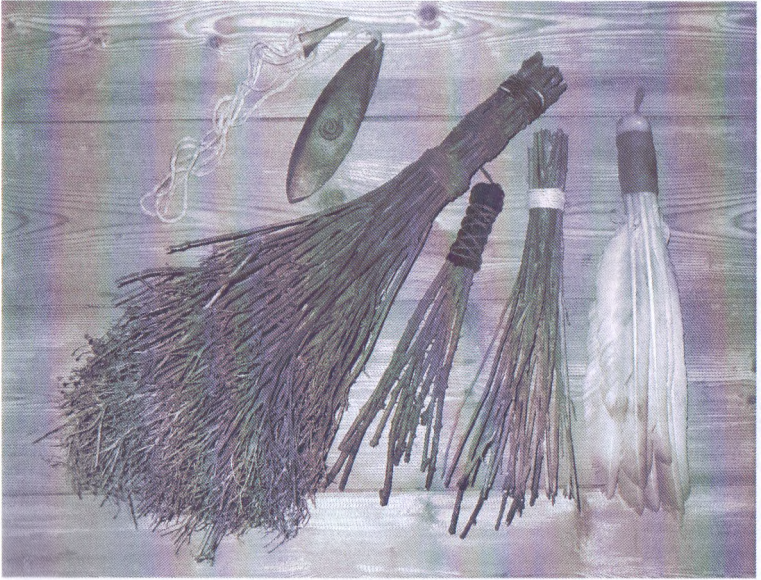


*A mysterious goat-headed knife, with cowrie shells and real horns.
The leather sheath is tooled with zig-zags and six-armed crosses.
It was found for the author in Hatherleigh, Devon, by a local antique dealer
friend. Whatever its origin, the knife exudes a powerful presence*



*A collection of Cornish working knives
in the Museum of Witchcraft.*

*A human bone hilted curved blade beside two hand forged wise-woman's
knives. We are told by Cecil Williamson that they were forged by the women
who used them*





*Above; an old snake vertebrae necklace from Somerset,
re-strung by the author with garnet beads.*

*Facing top; a blackthorn wind-roarer by Cornish Crafter Steve Patterson, a
ragwort hand broom, a bramble 'witch's whisk', a switch of sage twigs and
a goose feather sweeper. Facing below; A troy stone with examples of other
working stones.*

All author's collection



An indoor shrine and working surface, dedicated to the Bucca



The author lights a switch of twigs from the hood fire during an outdoor working



*The author uses the ignited and smoking switch
to draw helpful spirits to the circle to aid the working*



*Top; the staff, stone, flame and bone are the basis of the Cunning Altar.
Above; the skull may serve as an oracular vessel for ancestral presences or the
Old One in witch rites, as well as a familiar-spirit house, or as a 'wish box'.
Author's collection*

The Witches' Compass

The direction in which the Compass is worked differs according to intent, and the nature of the rite or working. 'Walking the Round' is always done first, after the ritual conjurations and calls of the Compass have been made, in a sinistral 'against the Sun' (anti-clockwise) direction. Within this 'walking meditation', the practitioner is seeking to achieve a number of things; firstly they are turning away from their mundane cares to enter into the deeper states of awareness 'between the worlds' required to make communion and congress with the 'otherworldly' possible. Walking the Round is also an act of conjuration; the witch, moving at one with the geomantic force, draws upon the serpent and 'gathers in' the virtues and powers pertinent to the rite or working. Calls are also made during the Round to the divine force. As the repetitive, insistent circumambulations of the witch draws the mind deeper into trance, yet fixed firmly on its goal, glimpses and perceptions of Godhead may well be achieved.

To end a rite, the Round is sometimes walked in a dextral circle 'with the Sun' (clockwise) direction; a return to 'the world of men'. Dextral and sinistral circles are also employed within the Compass during acts of magic. Gathering power is not quite the same thing as raising power. Once the power has been gathered in by the Round, it will then be 'raised' in acts of generative magic by walking an accelerating dextral circle around the fire, before directing the power to where it is required. In acts of banishing, binding, or blasting, a sinistral circle is employed again, here the gathered powers are used to restrict, or even consume, the focus of the working.

It is the intent, and fixed will of the Pellar, that determines the use and intended result of the working

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direction. In traditional witch rites, there is often much hard work to be done and the Round can be quite a strain, sometimes to the point that a practitioner will collapse in trance (a moment they will always make the fullest use of), but it is old wisdom that like attracts like. Energy must be used in order to raise it and work with it. The fire in the circle's centre consumes much energy, in the form of wood and oxygen, but it draws the serpent and produces heat and light. Likewise a circle of steadily circling witches uses oxygen in the blood, and can strain the muscles and the lungs, but it will also gather, stir and raise the powers within the circle, as well as producing vision. To raise energy, we must partake of it, just as an engine or mill uses energy to create energy and produce that which is desired.

Elderly and infirm Pellar within groups will be excused the Walking the Round, and will often be given the task of drumming, which not only aids the Round but will produce similar results; being a repetitive trance inducing, and power raising act in itself.

Always in magic, with the aid of a fire, the moon, and the serpent, a sinistral circle can be used to consume and restrict, whilst a dextral circle will generate, create, and bring forth potency.

It must also be remembered that all witches' circles are one circle. The rite of the Compass Round is not the creation of a circle, but a conjuration of the ancient Circle of Cunning. The true conjuration of the Compass is an invocation of the path itself. When the witch stands within the Compass proper, they stand with all those who have walked its Round from the very beginning of the tradition. Their ways and wisdoms are there to be

The Witches' Compass

revealed, by vision, and voice in the fire, and the swirling herb smoke, or in the wind through the trees.

The Hearthside Rite

For everyday and simple solitary rites and workings, each practitioner will have a quick and non elaborate way of conjuring the Compass and gathering in the powers. This is known as the Hearthside Rite because traditionally the everyday work of the Pellar is carried out at the household hearth, but in reality the rite may be used anywhere, indoors or out. One such rite will follow here. As the ways of the traditional witch are generally kept as simple as possible, this will be the method most often used, with the more elaborate Compass conjurations being kept aside for special occasions, group rites or workings and more complex needs.

The Charmer will first still their mind and focus their will to undergo the Becoming with slow and purposeful breath, to become more aware of things and connected with the hidden.

If it is sensed that the working area needs to be exorcised of impeding influences, the bell may be struck nine times, or, with the presence of a fire once lit, the whisk may be employed in the traditional way.

A candle, lantern or fire of focus will be lit with these words quietly muttered in conjuration:

*"I light this flame in Bucca's name,
Serpent arise, old ones draw near,
By my will and my ways may you appear."*

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The Charmer may strike their staff to the ground lightly and rhythmically whilst muttering these words to conjure the circle and the spirits:

*“I conjure thee Compass Round,
Be ye cast and be ye bound.
By road above and road below,
By snake and hare and toad and crow.
By red spirits, white spirits, grey spirits and black,
I conjure thee by threefold track.
Be ye cast and be ye bound,
Hallowed be O Compass Round.”*

In addition, or alternatively, the Pellar may make traditional use of either the drum or the wind-roarer to call the spirits, gather in the virtues, raise the powers, and strengthen the trance.

The Pellar is now ready to undertake the rite or working at hand.

The Compass Rite

If necessary the physicality of the circle may be described in the earth using the stick, or delineated with chalk, flour, ash or sand. A grove of trees or other feature of the land, such as a curved hedge or stream, may provide, at least in part, a natural physical circle, or an ancient circle of stones may be an ideal choice. Wherever the Compass is to be conjured one must be certain of its boundary.

The rite which follows is described for important solitary outdoor workings and rites. In rites of a Cunning Lodge

The Witches' Compass

or circle of fellows, the various tasks of the following rite will be shared by those present, each being allotted their task as decided before the gathering.

Set the staff, stone, flame and bone to stand in the centre of the circle or at the required quarter point, depending on the nature of the rite or working at hand. At the foot of the stick have also the bowl holding some bread or other food and the horn-cup holding mead, wine or ale for the Troyl. Have there also a crucible of burning coals and a pertinent substance to burn. Arrange also any other required items. Other staves and the broom may be laid along the East, South or West of the circle, but never the Northern portal where only the altar staff may ever be placed to stand. Have about your waist the cord and your knife hanging from it. The fire may be simply a lantern or small bonfire built within a cauldron. If the rite dictates that the stick and working items are set at one of the quarters at the circle's edge then a proper bonfire/bonefire can be built in the centre of the Compass.

If a bell is present, it is struck once to mark the commencement of ritual. Begin by the Becoming, then the broom is taken up to sweep the circle thrice against the Sun, to exorcise unwanted influences and to establish that work between the worlds is about to take place there, or else use the 'witches' whisk' in the traditional way when the fire has been lit. Start the sweeping or use of the whisk with an exorcising call:

"Hekas Hekas Este Bebeloi (Be ye far from here all ye profane)!"

*All that is unclean, evil, and impeding to our ways;
From here depart, depart, depart far and be gone!"*

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Place some of the incense on the coals, to draw the desired powers and spirits to the place and to raise further your inner flame with purposeful breath, sharpening the senses, strengthening and reaffirming the Becoming and the beginnings of trance.

When ready the fire must be lit. Take up the Cunning blade and hallow the fire with these words, with a slow and purposeful tone:

*“Be this fire hood by knife and will and breath,
A beacon to alight the paths of spirit.
Illumine my/our Craft, ablaze my/our calls,
For the hidden to draw with me/us.
I/we conjure thee oh serpent red, coiled in the land
Give unto my/our blood the breath,
And let my/our Cunning Burn!
I/we conjure thee, I/we conjure thee, I/we conjure thee”*

With your knife make the sign of the six ways over the fire, then, replace your knife in its sheath. Draw the serpent yet further with deep breath, fanning the inner fire to greater intensity.

Take up now the staff and conjure the Compass three times round, in the direction of the sun for generative workings otherwise against it, with these words:

*“I/we conjure thee Compass Round,
Be ye cast and be ye bound.
By road above and road below,
By snake and hare and toad and crow,
By red spirits, white spirits, grey spirits and black,
I/we conjure thee by threefold track.
Be ye cast and be ye bound,
Hallowed be O Compass Round.”*

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Bring the staff to the centre of the circle and hold it aloft to the sky, then firmly down to the ground, then crossing the arms at the chest, with these words:

*"As above...
So below...
And by the cross quarter ways,
So shall it be."*

In rites of greater importance, the quarter spirits may now be individually called by standing with one's back to each quarter; invoking the forces inward to the circle's centre.

East

"I conjure thee red spirits of the Eastward road, keepers of the flame of enlightenment and the blade of cunning. Hear the call, hail to thee, awake, arise and here be."

South

"I conjure thee white spirits of the Southward road, keepers of the stone of wisdom and the bones of memory. Hear the call, hail to thee, awake, arise and here be."

West

"I conjure thee grey spirits of the Westward road, keepers of the waters of life and the cauldron of transformation. Hear the call, hail to thee, awake, arise and here be."

North

"I conjure thee black spirits of the Northward road, keepers of the dark winds of spirit and the skull of initiation. Hear the call, hail to thee, awake, arise and here be"

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Replace the staff at the centre of the compass, or the chosen quarter, and raise the arms with hands in the sign of the horns and say:

“Bucca Gwidder!”

Bring right horned hand to touch the left shoulder.

“Bucca Dhu!”

Bring left horned hand to the right shoulder crossing the right arm:

*“Bucca, Bucca, Bucca!
Horned one, dark and fair,
shrine hearth and vessel of all dualities conjoined.
I/we dedicate this rite to thee!
Guide me/us upon the path of all wisdom,
by the light betwixt the horns.
Bucca, Bucca, Bucca!”*

Now is the time to walk the round. Begin with the traditional West Country call:

*“Thout a tout tout, throughout and about,
around and around in Bucca’s high name!”*

The Compass is now trod, slowly but steadily in a sinistral circle around the fire or central altar. In magical rites, the required virtues are ‘gathered in’ or ‘stirred into the cauldron’ via this act of ‘walking meditation’. In devotional and celebratory rites, the mind is focused upon the spirit of the season, and upon the divine. As the

The Witches' Compass

round is trod over and over, the trance builds to a greater and deeper intensity, bringing visions and ultimately perceptions and glimpses of Godhead. When such states are achieved, physical movement becomes difficult and it is not uncommon for a practitioner to collapse in trance and lie motionless between the worlds in communion with the forces, virtues and spirits gathered in.

It is following the Round that the rite or working at hand may begin. The compass may be trod further to 'stir the cauldron' and 'turn the mill' to aid acts of magic. In acts of generative magic, around the time of a waxing, or full moon, the Compass is trod in a dextral circle, raising the forces gathered in by the Round, and bringing forth from the cauldron that which is desired. Such workings may be aided by the repetitive use of a 'mill chant' as the generative 'mill' is trod:

*"Serpent red and fire burn
Work the round, the mill to turn
Work our will for which we pray
Io, dio, ha, hey hey!
Hare white and compass-ring
Work the round, the mill to spin
Work our will for which we pray
Io, dio, ha, hey hey!
Toad grey and cauldron boil
Work the round, the mill to toil
Work our will for which we pray
Io, dio, ha, hey hey!
Crow black and winds blow
Work the round, the mill to go
Work our will for which we pray
Io, dio, ha, hey hey!"*

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In magic to be rid of something, or in rites of blasting, around the time of the waning or new moon, the Compass is trod in a sinistral mill, as the object of the working is consumed within the cauldron of transformation.

The Troyl Hood

To conclude any rites or workings, the rite of the Troyl Hood (meaning ‘bewitched celebratory feast’) will be made.

It is begun by kneeling on one knee (a ‘betwixt’ posture traditional in the Cornish Craft, neither standing, sitting, nor entirely kneeling) before the bowl of bread and the horn-cup of mead. Touch the brow, then the navel, and cross the arms with horned hands, thus making simultaneously the sign of Bucca invocation and forming, with the body, the sign of the six ways and the hexagram of ‘force into form’ over the meal.

With bowed head, breathe deeply of the powers and say these words over the meal:

*“By stone by bone by staff and flame,
Be this Troyl hood!
Here where all conjoin betwixt the horns,
Are brought forth blessedness, truth and all wisdom.
In Bucca’s high name and by the serpent red,
I conjure thee, I conjure thee, I conjure thee!
Hallowed and hood,
So shall it be”*

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With index finger, or with wand, make the sign of the six ways and the pentagram of divinity descending over the mead and bread.

In a gathering of fellows, this is performed by a female witch assuming the role of mother. A male witch may assist by lowering the family's blade into the horn, in further symbolism of the congress of divine force into form to be imbibed in communion by those gathered.

First offer some bread into the fire before eating, with reverence, some of the bread yourself, and then hold the horn aloft with the toast:

"Here's to the devil with his wooden pick and shovel, digging tin by the bushel with his tail cocked up!"

Pour a little into the fire and drink, with reverence, some of the mead in communion with the powers there gathered and those who have gone before.

The rite of the Troyl-Hood, especially in the home at the hearth, is an important rite that it is wise to observe with some regularity, upon the moons and upon Saturdays; being the day of the home, of dealings with spirits and of the chthonic forces.

The rite provides spiritual strength and nourishment, and maintains the essential bond between the witch and the divine force, the spirits and forces helpful to the work of the witch. The rite also helps to ensure that household spirits do not turn troublesome by the pleasure of shared food left in offering upon the hearth.

A ritual of closing

The remainder of the bread and mead is offered to the four directions of the Compass, in the opposite direction to which it was conjured. If the rite was opened with a sun-wise Compass; the spirits of the cross-quarter ways are thanked against the sun; beginning at the Western quarter and ending at the North. If the rite was opened with a Compass against the sun, the closing thanks are given with the sun beginning in the East, ending at the northern direction.

First the bread is offered, then at each quarter the horn is held aloft, in thanks and kinship, before some of its content is poured upon the earth with the words:

*“Grey spirits on the westward way,
merry meet and merry part in Bucca’s high name!”*

*“White spirits of the southward way,
merry meet and merry part in Bucca’s high name!”*

*“Red spirits of the eastward way,
merry meet and merry part in Bucca’s high name!”*

*“Black spirits of the northward way,
merry meet and merry part in Bucca’s high name!”*

The staff is walked symbolically around the edge, again in the direction opposite to which the Compass was conjured. Turning finally to face the centre of the circle, the presiding witch may say:

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*"Merry meet and merry part,
rentum tormentum in Bucca's high name!"*

If a bell is present, it may be struck once to signal the end of the rite.

"Merry meet, and merry part", highly familiar to the modern Pagan community, is derived from the Somerset witch confessions and has entered into traditional usage within the West Country Craft.





The Trade

Village Cunning, Substances and Charms

WITCHCRAFT has for centuries been a trade. The Cunning path brings those who tread it with honesty, honour and dedication, the highly useful skills of wisdom, insight, and the ability to perceive and have dealings with spirits, spirit forces and to work magic. Life for many is hard, and the ability to make a good living is difficult enough today, but in the past life was much harsher. If you were in possession of such useful skills you made sure you turned them to profit in order to keep a roof over your head, fuel at your hearth, and food on the table. The Cunning have certainly always done so with theirs.

The problems that people consult the Pellar to solve have for centuries been mostly within the areas of love, luck, money, protection, healing, and curse lifting. Thus have they equipped themselves with traditional knowledge of a range of physical charms; some to be concealed or hung in some part of the home, and some to be carried or worn by the client. In Cornwall, and other areas, little 'charm bags' containing folded written charms, drawn symbols, and magical substances and powders were fairly

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common. Some consultations however would result in no actual charm being supplied to the client, and only involved ritual actions such as the use of sweeping tools, or stroking stones accompanied by muttered charms, or spells such as those by candle and needle might be employed.

Other acts of magic, performed by the Pellar, involved the powers of foresight and consulting with spirits to give predictions, answers to questions, and to discover the whereabouts of lost or stolen property. It was in the past fairly common for ordinary Cornish folk to possess at least one charm acquired from a local practitioner, and it is known that, at times, people would have travelled great distances and formed large queues outside a practitioner's home for a consultation.

Whilst the majority of these charms and practices were offered to help and to heal, it was also not uncommon for practitioners to receive requests for curse magic; usually to be cast upon an enemy of a client. The much written about 'Wiccan Rede' or 'Threefold Law' is entirely alien to the old practices of village witchcraft, Charming and Cunning. Practitioners would not normally be wealthy enough to turn down a client who was willing to pay good money for a bit of magical retribution. Times are not quite as tough today, and so practitioners can now afford morals, and will turn down what they deem to be unreasonable requests.

The absence of any such 'Threefold Law' does not mean that Pellar will curse everyone and anyone by whim; a very sensible approach to such things is taken by genuine Traditional practitioners. To curse can involve working with dark and very deep-set energies and emotions, it

can be very demanding, and not at all a pleasant way to spend your time and energy; therefore no experienced practitioner would ever do such a thing 'willy-nilly'. Curse magic, or 'Owl Blasting', as it is called in the West Country, is employed only in extreme and well deserved cases when no other course of action is available. An essential aspect to the Cunning Path is having the wisdom to know when such workings are appropriate, and when they are not. There are no blanket rules here, the Pellar will think, and if necessary, act for themselves on these matters.

The belief is held by most folk that there is either white magic or black magic, and that the white variety is that of good and helpful magic, whilst black magic is for all harmful and evil ends. For Cornish witches, things are understood differently. White magic is not known, and black magic has a different interpretation...

The colours of Cornish witch-magic are red, green and black. Red magic is ruled by the serpentine fire in the land, it is magic of potency and empowerment, to charge an item, being, or place with generative sprowl is an act of red magic, as are workings of sexual energy and the laying down or directing of protective spirit forces. The familiar spirit of red magic is the red serpent.

Green magic is ruled by physicality, the land, green and growing things, and living beings which are animated by sprowl. Workings of physical healing, herb craft and material gain are acts of green magic. The familiar spirit of green magic is the hare.

Black magic forms two areas of practice; dealings with the unseen, ethereal and eldritch forces, workings of spirit magic, ancestor magic, 'seeing' and some acts of divination. Also there is the area of practice involving

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influence, control, deep emotions and behavioural patterns, sleep and dreams, bindings, curses or 'Owl Blastings'. The spirit familiars of black magic are the crow, mostly associated with the former area of practice, and the toad being associated mainly with the latter.



The Hand of the Wise

To the Pellar, the gestures of the hand within traditional magic hold important meaning and virtue. The sinistral hand will be employed within acts calling for banishment, removal and diminishment. An exception unique to the sinistral hand is that it may be employed to gather, apply or direct baneful energies in the work of blasting. The dextral hand is of course employed in acts of positive conjuration, increase and regeneration; thus, for example, in acts of healing where the sinistral hand may first remove the ailment, the dextral hand will then apply the regenerative forces to the area in question.

The thumb and fingers also have their distinct virtues; the thumb is of earthly, material, and bodily virtue, the index finger is employed within work aided by the virtues of air, communication and thought. The middle finger aids all workings of spirit magic, the ring finger is of water, emotions and the deep self. The little finger aids workings of fire, sexual energy and strength.

Thus the thumb and fingers of each hand are of great use (yet subtle and occult to the observer) within magic, to generate or banish via the energies they represent, depending on the dextral or sinister hand being employed and the nature of the work. The thumb or fingers may thus be employed to stir certain mixtures, anoint certain items, or charge certain charms depending on the virtues required.

In the healing of a burn, a Charmer may first exorcise the fire from the injury by use of their little sinistral finger, and apply the soothing watery virtues of healing via the

ring finger of the dextral hand. I have found virtues directed via the dextral ring finger, to be marvellous for the soothing of tension headaches.

Planetary Virtues

Like most of the world's folk magicians, many Cornish practitioners were, and are, traditionally skilled in the preparation and use of magical substances, such as powders, suffumigations (incenses), oils and ointments. The virtues of the planets, the sun and the moon, were observed, and have long been employed by the Pellar. The life problems they are called upon to remedy, and the desired things they are sought to conjure, all come under the rule of one or more of the planets, thus the system most used by the Cornish practitioner to calculate the ingredients of their magical substances, and the timing of their work, was that of traditional planetary correspondence and moon phase. An individual's personal responses arising from working with the genius of certain plants is also an aid to the creation of preparations.

It was the system of the seven bodies corresponding to the seven days of the week that were traditionally used for these calculations. Thus certain days are appropriate for the working of certain charms, and the creation of certain substances.



The Sun is allied to the element of fire and the sign of Leo. His day is Sunday and he does greatly aid all workings of Strong bodily healing, protection against negative

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forces, the attraction of money, good fortune, happiness, leadership, positive strength and power. His colours are gold, yellow, orange and white.



The Moon is allied to the element of water and the sign of Cancer. Her day is Monday and her virtues are of aid to the workings of Gentle healing, emotional healing, the exploration or influence of emotions, the subconscious, dreams, psychic work, generative magic and increase upon the waxing moon to full, consumptive magic, decrease and gentle banishment upon the waning to dark. The empowerment of charms and magical substances and conjuration of the serpent's breath upon the full of the moon, well magic, sea magic, the ways of Annown and the dead upon the dark of the moon. The ways of Bucca Gwidder upon the full moon and Bucca Dhu upon the dark of the moon. Her colours are silver, white – full and black – dark.



The elemental ally of Mars is fire and the signs of Aries and Scorpio. His day is Tuesday and his virtues are of aid to workings of defensive magic, defensive powers and strength, assertive powers, exorcism, strong protection, victory in conflict, empowerment, fire magic, conjuration of the serpent and the raising of sprowl, lifting of curses, sexual potency and lust. His colour is red.



Mercury's ally is the element of air and the signs of Gemini and Virgo and hir day is Wednesday. Mercurial

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virtues are of aid to workings of communication, thought, memory, wisdom, study, travel, quickening, mending rifts and ending silences, transactions, locating lost property, discovering the identity of thieves, contact and exchange between the worlds, balance and Bucca Grand. Hir colours are violet and yellow.



Jupiter is allied to the elements of air and water and to the signs of Sagittarius and Pisces. Jupiter's day is Thursday and the virtues of Jupiter are of aid to workings of leadership and positions of power, the improvement of social standing and the achievement of recognition, reward, honour, responsibility, wealth, business success, expansion and legal matters. Jupiter's colours are blue and purple.



Venus has allies in the elements of earth and water and in the signs of Taurus and Libra. Her day is Friday and her virtues aid workings of love, friendship, compassion, enjoyment, pleasure, sensuality, the arts, beauty, prosperity, harmony, comfort, marriage, blessings and the family. Her colours are green and rose pink.



Saturn's allies are the elements of water and earth and the signs of Capricorn and Aquarius. Saturn's day is Saturday and the Saturnalian virtues are of aid to workings of

binding, limitation, restriction, discipline, grounding, solidity and physicality, the body, the home, land, death and the dead, wisdom, spirit magic and spirit conjuration and Bucca Dhu. Black is the colour of Saturn.

Magical Substances **Powders, Suffumigations and Liquids**

The working powders prepared and used by the Pellar, are highly important tools of their Craft. They are supplied to clients, and incorporated within the physicality of charms; adding to their potency. They may also be scattered during workings in the area a spell is to take affect, for example to bring fertility to a piece of land, or to protect a place from ill-influence. Powders are also cast into a working hood-fire, to empower it with the virtues appropriate to the working or rite at hand. Suffumigations, or incenses, are equally vital to a practitioner's trade. The appropriate preparations will be burnt on coals to conjure certain pertinent and useful virtues, as offerings and encouragements to helpful spirits, to release a spell within the rising smoke, or to enhance the potency of charms by passing them repeatedly through the smoke.

What follows are merely the physical lists of ingredients for the preparation of working powders, suffumigations and liquids. In order to be active, they must be prepared at a pertinent time, and date, and under the correct phase of moon. The appropriate virtues must be gathered, raised, and worked into the preparation as it is mixed by the Pellar. This process takes much time, as indeed it should. The grinding, mixing and stirring of all preparations is

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done alternately with the sun and against it repeatedly over a long period of time, some say seven stirs with the sun and seven against and so forth. Throughout the process, the practitioner is working their power, and the required virtues into the mixture. When this part of the process is done, the mixture is placed into the working bowl, where it is left on the hearth to 'cook'. Properly prepared, the result will be a truly potent magical substance. Suffumigations must be put into a glass jar, sealed, and left in a dark place for six months to settle and mature. Magic powders may be used the next day. Ointments must also be sealed within a dark place for six months before they are strained and bottled.

Planetary Substances

Sun Powder

Bay leaves – 1 tsp, Benzoin – ½ tsp, Cinnamon – ½ stick, Cloves – ∞ 7, Copal – 1 tsp, Frankincense – 1 ½ tsp, Juniper Berries – ½ tsp, Oak – 1 tsp, Patchouli – 1 drop, Rosemary – 1 tsp

Fire of the Sun Incense

Bay leaves – 1 tsp, Benzoin – ½ tsp, Cinnamon oil – 12 drops, Clove oil – 6 drops, Copal – 1 tsp, Frankincense – 1 ½ tsp, Juniper berries – 1 tsp, Marjoram oil – 3 drops, Oak bark – ½ tsp, Orange oil – 18 drops, Patchouli – 10 drops, Rosemary – 1 tsp

Sun Oil

In Olive oil gently beat Bay leaves – 2 tsp, Juniper Berries – 2tsp, Rosemary – 4tsp. Allow to cool and add Cinnamon oil – 20 drops, Clove oil – 10 drops, Orange oil – 10 drops.

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Moon Powder

Calamus – 1 ½ tsp, *Camphor oil* – 1 drop, *Dragon's Blood* – 1 tsp, *Jasmine Flowers* – 2 tsp, *Juniper berries* – 2 tsp, *Mugwort* – 3 tsp, *Myrrh* – 1 tsp, *Star Anise* – ½ tsp, *Ylang ylang oil* – 1 drop

Fire of the Moon – Full

Calamus – 1 tsp, *Camphor oil* – 13 drops, *Copal* – 1 ½ tsp, *Dragon's blood* – 1 tsp, *Frankincense* – 2 tsp, *Gardenia oil* – 3 drops, *Jasmine flowers* – 1 tsp, *Mugwort* – 3 tsp, *Orris root* – 1 tsp

Fire of the Moon Incense – New

Cypress oil – 13 drops, *Dragon's blood* – 1 tsp, *Juniper berries* – 2 tsp, *Mugwort* – 3 tsp, *Myrrh* – 3 tsp, *Star anise* – 1 tsp, *Wormwood* – 1 tsp, *Yew needles* – 1 tsp, *Ylang ylang oil* – 9 drops

Moon Oil

In Olive oil gently heat *Jasmine flowers* – 1 tsp, *Mugwort* – 3 tsp, *Star Anise* – 3 tsp. Allow to cool and add *Camphor oil* – 12 drops, *Cypress oil* – 6 drops, *Gardenia oil* – 3 drops, *Ylang ylang oil* – 2 drops

Mars Powder

Asafoetida – 1 ½ tsp, *Benzoin* – 2 tsp, *Bryony root* – 1 ½ tsp, *Colophony* – 1 tsp, *Cypress oil* – 1 drop, *Dragon's blood* – 1 ½ tsp, *Ginger* – 2 tsp, *Madder root* – 2 tsp, *Mullein* – 1 ½ tsp, *Patchouli* – 1 drop, *Pine needles* – 1 tsp, *Wormwood* – 1 tsp

Fire of Mars Incense

Asafoetida – ½ tsp, *Benzoin* – 2 tsp, *Bryony root* – 1 tsp, *Cinnamon oil* – 3 drops, *Cypress oil* – 6 drops, *Dragon's blood* – 3 tsp, *Ginger* – ½ tsp, *Geranium oil* – 7 drops, *Madder root* – 2 tsp, *Mullein* – 1 ½ tsp, *Patchouli* – 12 drops, *Pine needles* – 1 tsp, *Wormwood* – 1 tsp

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Mars Oil

In Olive oil gently beat Bryony root – 1tsp, Ginger – 3 tsp, Pine needles – 1 tsp, Rue – 2 tsp, Wormwood – 2tsp. Allow to cool and add Clove oil – 20 drops, Geranium oil – 7 drops, Patchouli oil – 7 drops.

Mercury Powder

Sage – 1 tsp, Heather flowers – 2 tsp, Horehound – 1 tsp, Lavender flowers – 3 tsp, Lemongrass oil – 2 drops, Lemon verbena – ½ tsp, Mandrake root – ½ tsp, Mullein – 1 tsp, Rowan berries – 1 tsp

Fire of Mercury Incense

Fern – ½ tsp, Grey sage – 2 tsp, Heather – ½ tsp, Juniper berries – 1 tsp, Lavender oil – 18 drops, Lemongrass oil – 6 drops, Mandrake root – 1 tsp, Marjoram oil – 3 drops, Mullein – 1 tsp, Rowan berries – 1 tsp, Vervain – 1 ½ tsp, Alum – 1 ½ tsp

Mercury Oil

In Olive oil gently heat Heather flowers – 1 tsp, Juniper berries – 2 tsp, Lemon balm – 1 ½ tsp, Mandrake root – ½ tsp, Sage – 2 ½ tsp. Allow to cool and add the oils of Lavender – 12 drops, Lemongrass – 4 drops, Marjoram – 8 drops

Jupiter Powder

Benzoin – 1 tsp, Betony – 1 tsp, Clove oil – 1 drop, Copal – 1 ½ tsp, Sage – 2 tsp, Hawthorn berries – 2 tsp, Honeysuckle – 2 tsp, Juniper berries – 3 tsp, Oud – ½ tsp, Poplar buds – 2 tsp

Fire of Jupiter Incense

Benzoin – 1 tsp, Betony – 2 tsp, Clove oil – 12 drops, Copal – 2 ½ tsp, Feverfew – 1 tsp, Grey sage – 2 tsp, Hawthorn berries – 1

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1/2 tsp, Honeysuckle – 2 tsp, Juniper berries – 3 tsp, Peppermint oil – 6 drops, Oak bark – 1 tsp, Oud – 1/2 tsp, Poplar buds – 2 tsp, Alum – 1 1/2 tsp

Jupiter Oil

In Olive Oil gently heat Bay leaves – x7, Juniper berries (lightly ground) – 4 tsp, Star Anise – 3 tsp, Sage – 3 tsp. Allow to cool and add Clove oil – 10 drops, Cinnamon oil – 3 drops

Venus Powder

Angelica root – 1 tsp, Benzoin – 1 tsp, Elder-flowers – 2 tsp, Honeysuckle – 1/2 tsp, Jasmine flowers – 3 tsp, Mugwort – 1 tsp, Orris root – 2 tsp, Rose petals – 1 tsp, Vervain – 3 tsp, Ylang ylang oil – 3 drops

Fire of Venus Incense

Angelica root – 1 tsp, Benzoin – 2 tsp, Elder flowers – 1 1/2 tsp, Geranium oil – 3 drops, Honeysuckle – 1 tsp, Jasmine flowers – 3 tsp, Marjoram oil – 6 drops, Mugwort – 1 tsp, Orris root – 2 tsp, Rose oil – 12 drops, Rose petals – 1 tsp, Vervain – 2 tsp, Ylang ylang oil – 2 drops, Alum – 1 1/2 tsp

Venus Oil

In Olive oil gently heat Angelica root – 1stsp, Jasmine flowers – 1 tsp, Orris root – 3tsp, Vervain – 2stp. Allow to cool and add Geranium oil – 7 drops, Patchouli oil – 10 drops, Rose oil – 12 drops, Ylang Ylang oil – 5 drops

Saturn Powder

Asafoetida – 1/2 tsp, Black storax – 1 tsp, Comfrey – 1 tsp, Cypress oil – 1 drop, Henbane – 1 tsp, Mandrake – 1/2 tsp, Mullein – 3 tsp, Myrrh – 2 tsp, Patchouli oil – 1 drop, Sloe berries – 1 tsp, Yew needles – 1/2 tsp

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Fire of Saturn Incense

Asafoetida – ½ tsp, Black storax – 1 tsp, Comfrey – 1 tsp, Cypress oil – 12 drops, Henbane – ½ tsp, Mandrake – ½ tsp, Ivy berries – ½ tsp, Mullein – 2 tsp, Myrrh – 2 tsp, Patchouli oil – 15 drops, Poplar buds – x3, Thyme oil – 6 drops, Yew needles – ½ tsp, Alum – 1 ½ tsp

Saturn Oil

In oil gently heat Comfrey – 3tsp, Mandrake – ½ tsp, Mullein – 1 tsp. Allow to cool and add Patchouli oil – 20 drops, Cypress oil – 7 drops

Other Working Powders

Witch Powder

This is a most useful and general working powder of Cornish magical tradition. It is used to lift curses and drive away negative influences by casting it about a place or over a person, animal or object that has been ill-influenced. It may also be employed to cast powers and influences according to intent in general, and in generative magic it may be cast into a charmed fire to conjure that which is desired. Make it by grinding together the following:

Camphor oil – 1 drop, Dragon's blood – 3 tsp, Earth from places of power – 1 tsp, Madder root – 2 tsp, Mugwort – 1 tsp, Patchouli oil – 1 drop, Salt – ½ tsp

Go Away Powder

A famous powder traditional to witches in the South of Britain; it is highly potent and is employed to

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banish anything undesired either by scattering it over a representation of that which is to be banished or else throwing it into a fire, into the ebbing sea tide or into the wind whilst naming the undesired thing. This finely ground powder is made of the following:

Benzoin – 3 tsp, *Blackthorn thorns* – x2, *Mullein* – 1 tsp
Salt – 2 tsp, *St John's wort* – 1 tsp, *Wormwood* – 2 tsp

Love Powder

Camphor oil – 1 drop, *Clove oil* – 1 drop, *Copal* – 1 tsp, *Jasmine flowers* – 1 tsp, *Orris root* – 2 tsp, *Red rose petals* – 3 tsp, *Sugar (brown)* – 1 tsp, *Vervain* – 1 tsp

Addiction Breaking Powder

Bound in a small white bag, this powder is carried by those suffering from addiction:

Celandine – 2 tsp, *Dragon's blood* – 1 tsp, *Marjoram oil* – 1 drop
Mullein – 1 tsp, *Nettle leaves* – 1 tsp, *Rue* – 1 tsp, *Heather flowers* – 3 tsp

Spirit Powder

For all rites and workings of spirit conjuration and communion:

Copal – 1 tsp, *Juniper berries* – 3 tsp, *Myrrh* – 3 tsp, *Patchouli oil* – 2 drops
Poplar buds – x 3, *Sloeberries* – 1 tsp, *Ash of crow feathers* – 1/2 tsp, *Vervain* – 1 tsp, *Yew* – 2 tsp

Other Working Incenses

Serpent Smoke

A general working incense for the gathering, raising and direction of sprowl. It is employed in acts of empowerment and all rites and workings aided by the virtues of the Eastward road:

*Bryony root – ½ tsp, Cinnamon oil – 15 drops, Clove oil – 30 drops, Colophony – 1 ½ tsp, Dragons blood – 2 tsp, Geranium oil – 5 drops, Ginger powdered – ½ tsp, Madder root – 3 tsp, Patchouli oil – 12 drops
Pine needles – 1 tsp, Rue – 1 tsp, Sloe berries – 1 tsp, Wormwood – 1 tsp, Alum – 1 ½ tsp*

Hare Smoke

An incense of Southward road virtue, especially helpful for bodily healing, acts of cleansing, purification, the removal of negative influence and the encouragement of positive influences and strength:

Angelica root – ½ tsp, Bay leaves – 1 tsp, Cinnamon oil – 7 drops, Copal – 1 tsp, Frankincense – 3 tsp, Juniper – 2 tsp, Lavender oil – 15 drops, Lemon balm – 1 tsp, Oak bark – 1 tsp, Rosemary – 2 tsp, Rose petals – 1 tsp, Sage – 2 tsp, Vervain – 1 tsp, Alum

Toad Smoke

Toad Magic is to deeply influence and bring change via connection and oneness with the target of the working. It is also to explore, gain wisdom of, or bring healing to the deeper self, deeply held emotions, ideas and patterns of behaviour. It is useful in all other acts aided by the Westward road virtues:

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Bramble leaves – 1 tsp, *Camphor* – 12 drops, *Comfrey* – 1 tsp, *Cypress oil* – 5 drops, *Elder flowers* – 1 tsp, *Mugwort* – 2 tsp, *Myrrh* – 2 tsp, *Patchouli* – 5 drops, *Ylang ylang* – 3 drops, *Alum* – 1 ½ tsp

Crow Smoke

Crow Smoke aids all workings of spirit communication, seeing and all other workings aided by the virtues of the Northern portal:

Camphor oil – 12 drops, *Henbane* – ½ tsp, *Juniper* – 1 tsp, *Mugwort* – 3 tsp, *Myrrh* – 2 ½ tsp, *Star anise* – 1 tsp, *Thyme oil* – 7 drops, *Vervain* – 2 tsp, *Wormwood* 1 ½ tsp, *Alum* – 1 ½ tsp

Sea Cunning

This incense is used in rites and workings where the powers of the sea are employed to conjure or banish according to tide:

Bladder-wrack – 1 tsp, *Camphor* – 3 drops, *Coffee beans* – x 2, *Dulse* – 1 tsp, *Mint oil* – 2 drops, *Myrrh* – 3 tsp, *Sea salt* – ½ tsp, *Alum* – 1 ½ tsp

Exorcism

An incense employed in strong workings to banish negative or harmful energies, influences and spirits:

Benzoin – 4 tsp, *Clove oil* – 2 drops, *Dragon's blood* – 2 tsp, *Horehound* – 2 tsp, *Juniper berries* – 1 ½ tsp, *Mint oil* – 3 drops, *Mullein* – 1 tsp, *Pine needles* 1 tsp, *Salt* – 1 tsp, *St John's wort* – 2 tsp, *Wormwood* – 3 tsp, *Alum* – 1 ½ tsp

Protection

To raise a protective boundary in preparation for potentially dangerous, harmful, or unfamiliar situations and in cases of suspected ill-wishing:

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Clove oil – 5 drops, Dragon's blood – 2 tsp, Fern – 3 tsp, Frankincense 1 tsp, Holly – 1 tsp, Horehound – 1 tsp, Juniper – 1 tsp, Mint oil – 3 drops, Mullein – 1 ½ tsp, Pine needles – 1 tsp, Alum – 1 ½ tsp

Liquids

Witch Oil

This oil is for use within rites and workings as an anointing oil for the body and tools of the Craft. Make it thus:

Dissolve finely ground Dragon's Blood into natural cold Turpentine. Into this liquid stir lightly pounded Madder root and keep it somewhere both dark and cool until it becomes pleasingly red, stirring it upon occasion.

Set an iron vessel containing some linseed oil to hang high over glowing embers, add to this Mandrake root, Mugwort and Vervain; there to warm until the fire's death. When it has cooled, the two mixtures must be combined and left for six months in a cool and dark place before straining and bottling.

This is best undertaken during the full moon and the Serpent and inner fire must be raised and worked into the preparation during its making.

Spirit of Myrrh

This is used within rites to anoint and coat such things as skulls, bones and other ritual or magical items associated with spirit magic and the ancestors. It may be made simply thus:

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Add ground myrrh gum to natural cold turpentine. Stir this until the myrrh has dissolved. Oils of cypress or thyme may be added for scent.

Charm Bags

The traditional charm bags of the Cornish practitioner, containing folded written charms, powders, and other materials pertinent to the intent, may be made using two squares of red felt one and one half inch square. The paper charm, being three inches square, once marked as appropriate should have the four corners folded into the centre, fold this in half then in half again resulting in the folded paper being just over one inch square.

The bags are sewn, using a thread of colour appropriate to the intent of the charm, along three sides leaving an opening for the paper charm and other inclusions to be placed inside before being sewn shut. A small loop is added so that the charm may be worn if the client so desires.

These charm bags will of course be made with mind and will attuned to the magical goal, with the aid of the practitioner's familiar spirits, and the appropriate virtues raised at an appropriate time. Their making is accompanied throughout with the intent and purpose being rhythmically muttered and worked into their physicality, before being sealed by passing them through the smoke of a pertinent preparation, and then through a flame three times. A completed charm may then be left in the hearth bowl to 'cook' over night, or else given to the client there and then if they are present and waiting.

Charm Bags to Attract the Aid of the Planetary Virtues

A planetary charm bag is made and empowered to bring the traditional virtues of the appropriate planet into the life of its bearer. Thus they are quite versatile; each offering aid for a variety of needs.

The bags are each sewn with a colour pertinent to the planetary virtues being dealt with. One side of the folded charm bears the planetary square. The pertinent planetary powder is of course the substance chosen for enclosure with the folded charm.

Upon one side of the paper charm write the following beneath the appropriate planetary signs:

“Whosoever does bear this charm be ever under the blessing, guidance and empowerment of the virtues and potency of (name of planet).”

Mark the reverse with the appropriate planetary square:

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

SATURN

4	14	15	1
9	7	6	12
5	11	10	8
16	2	3	13

JUPITER

11	24	7	20	3
4	12	25	8	16
17	5	13	21	9
10	18	1	14	22
23	6	19	2	15

MARS

6	32	3	34	35	1
7	11	27	28	8	30
19	14	16	15	23	24
18	20	22	21	17	13
25	29	10	9	26	12
36	5	33	4	2	31

SUN

22	47	16	41	10	35	4
5	23	48	17	42	11	29
30	6	24	49	18	36	12
13	31	7	25	43	19	37
38	14	32	1	26	44	20
21	39	8	33	2	27	45
46	15	40	9	34	3	28

VENUS

8	58	59	5	4	62	63	1
49	15	14	52	53	11	10	56
41	23	22	44	48	19	18	45
32	34	38	29	25	35	39	28
40	26	27	37	36	30	31	33
17	47	46	20	21	43	42	24
9	55	51	12	13	54	50	16
64	2	3	61	60	6	7	57

MERCURY

37	78	29	70	21	62	13	54	5
6	38	79	30	71	22	63	14	46
47	7	39	80	31	72	23	55	15
16	48	8	40	81	32	64	24	56
57	17	49	9	41	73	33	65	25
26	58	18	50	1	42	74	34	66
67	27	59	10	51	2	43	75	35
36	68	19	60	11	52	3	44	76
77	28	69	20	61	12	53	4	45

MOON

Workings of Protection

A Charm Bag for Protection from Curses, Evil Spirits and Ill Luck

Upon the paper charm, mark one side as follows:



Mark the reverse as follows:



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Fold this and place it inside the opening of the bag. Add one pinch of Witch Powder and two very small lodestones, one to attract good fortune and one to repel bad luck and evil spirits. Sew the bag closed using red thread.

The Rowan Berry Charm

String forty five dried rowan berries upon red thread, making sure to tie a knot between each berry to seal raised protective sprowl into the charm, and stop the berries from rotting.

Mutter as you tie each knot:

"Rowan berries and red thread; put all evil to its speed!"

Once all the berries have been strung, tie the ends to form a loop and pass the charm thrice through Serpent Smoke. The charm may be hung at any of the home's portal points.

Hag Stone Charms for Protection

The magical use of hag stones often involves the traditional magic of cords, these being passed through the holes of the stones and often being tied with knots. Along these cord-paths of power, otherworldly forces are drawn upon, along with other potent influences and virtues, tied within the knots of intent to be made manifest in the material world according to the will of the practitioner. Always the number of knots is symbolic.

For protection, a red cord may be passed through, and have tied onto it nine hag stones. Tie also five knots into the top of the cord, thus producing a charm that calls

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upon the protection of otherworldly, Lunar and Martial influences.

An old iron key, tied to a red cord that passes through a hag stone, is another charm that employs the holed stone to bestow otherworldly protection upon the home and all who dwell within it, whilst also making use of the potent protective qualities of iron.

Two Protective Blackthorn Charms

The blackthorn hedge is symbolic of highly effective protective and defensive boundaries.

A potent charm to protect the habitants of a home from all outside interference, intrusions, attacks, curses, and all general malicious intent, is to set up a magical boundary in the form of eight large, and viciously sharp, Blackthorn spikes tied into a cord of red thread, passed through the smoke of Mars and hung up in some window of the home.

The Mercurial number eight is employed here to allow, and even encourage, all welcome and beneficent visits, contact and communication from the outside to pass into the home. Those who try to force their way through or over a blackthorn boundary hedge, will succeed only in harming themselves through such a foolish attempt. The same fate will befall all those who try to force themselves, their malice or influence upon the inhabitants of the home that bears such a charm.

To ward off the unwanted advances of another, sew three sides of a bag of red felt 5 cm square (with a flap at the opening) with black thread, five being a martial number of defence, and black the colour of boundaries.

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Prepare a powder of the following:

Black pepper – 1tsp, *Celandine* – 2tsp, *Comfrey* – 1 tsp,
Coriander – 3 tsp, *Cypress oil* – 3 drops, *Dragon's blood* – 1 tsp,
Mistletoe – 1 tsp, *Mullein* – 1 tsp, *Poplar buds* – 1 tsp, *Rue* – ½
tsp

These ingredients offer different virtues for both the victim of the unwanted advances, and the ex-lover or unwanted admirer. Some offer protection, some offer release, some sooth the pains of un-requited love, some encourage the pursuer to deal with endings, some to see the error of their ways, and some to break bad patterns of behaviour, or habit.

Place the powder in the bag and seal the flap shut with three spikes of the Blackthorn. These three spikes are the client's boundary, a boundary that they have set so that the ex lover/unwanted admirer may not cross the boundary of acceptable behaviour.

The client may place within the charm, something representative of the one who has been making the unwanted advances, a small item of theirs, hair etc. Or they may write their name and the unacceptable behaviour their unwanted advances have involved, for these are the very things the charm is to protect against.

The Witch's Stick and Witch's Ball

Witch's sticks are the delicate, and often rather pretty little glass walking sticks of the type made by glass workers in Nailsea, Somerset, from glass scraps in their own time. They were commonly put to dual use as decorative items and protective charms, being hung above fireplaces,

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windows, or beams, often in the bedroom, to offer some protection against evil spirits that caused illness. The spirits were thought to be attracted, and en-tranced, by the twists and coloured strands that are sometimes included within the glass. The spirits are banished as the glass stick is wiped clean out of the window each morning.

The witch's ball is employed in a similar fashion. These huge reflective mirrored glass 'baubles' are often filled with protective herbs, and hung in a window. There are two modes of thought as to how these work. Some say they work to deflect or repel a curse or evil spirit that tries to enter the home, whilst others say that evil spirits are attracted by the bright reflective surface, and remain there until they are destroyed by the light of the morning sun, or are wiped out of the window with any dust that has settled on the globe.

To Counter a Curse

Take a small narrow necked vessel, be it of glass or pottery, and place within it the hair and nail parings of the one to be protected to provide a decoy for the curse, the red 'Witch Powder' to destroy the evil influence, a tangle of sewing threads to trap and confuse evil spirits, nine bent pins and three large blackthorn spikes to ever prick and stab at the originator of the curse. Close the vessel with a cork and seal with wax. The vessel may be secured within the chimney, buried beneath the hearth or else buried in a churchyard path.

To Return a Curse or Trouble Making

If the identity of the ill-wisher or trouble maker can be discovered, an image made in their likeness should be

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formed from dough and named. A large pin or needle should be driven right through this, and the whole thing burnt to ashes upon a fire made of ash and hazel. When the fire has died and the ashes have grown cold, they should be gathered up, along with what remains of the long needle, and sealed within a vessel just large enough to contain them. Take this at midnight to a remote crossroads and there bury it, so that the ill-doer shall ever be tormented by the evil of their own making.

The Horseshoe Charm

Take an old horse shoe that has been cast from its wearer, and nail this with new iron nails upon the door of the building to be protected from ill influence.

Chant the following thrice whilst nailing the charm:

*“So as the fire does melt the wax
and the wind blows the smoke away,
so in the presence of this iron
all wicked shall decay, all wicked shall decay!”*

To Protect Farm Buildings and their Contents

Secure a section of animal bone upon an iron chain. Drive an iron nail into a roof timber inside the building to be protected, and hang the chain and bone from this nail. As this is done chant the following:

*“The nail to fix the chain to hold the bone to stay,
by this charm be all evil driven away, away, away!”*

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The Hedge or 'Witch's Lump' Figure

To protect farm land, and all that lies within its boundaries, take small amounts of earth from the north, south, east and west of each piece of land that is to fall under the protection of the charm, remembering to collect also dirt or dust in the same way from each of the farm's buildings. Mix these small samples together, and work them well into a lump of rough clay (even better if the clay used can be dug from the land to be protected), crafting this into a human but sexless form. As the body is worked, so the Pellar breathes life into it. The figure's garments must then be set with small panels of broken glass. Once fired, set the figure somewhere within one of the farm's hedges, so that it may keep a protective watch over the land and all that lies within.

The Lady's Tree Charm – Protection from Fire

Collect a good bundle of Bladderwrack seaweed, and bind the ends with red thread. Hang this charm within the chimney, to protect the home from fire.

Protection by Garlic

For protection against the influence of people and spirits with vampiric and envious tendencies, bulbs of garlic tied with red ribbons should be hung above or in the portals of the home.

To Keep an Unwanted Visitor from your Door

The potent 'Go-Away' powder should be sprinkled thrice across the threshold of your home, whilst thinking of the unwanted visitor. In the absence of this powder, salt may be employed in the same way.

Workings of Healing

Stroking Magic

Stroking magic is a technique of magical healing very popular with traditional Cornish practitioners.

Stroking stones are employed here either to soothe away pain and illness, by smoothing it over the afflicted part of the patient's body, or, in cases of absent healing when the patient is not actually present, the witch, forming a link with the patient, will hold the stone in the left hand and stroke it rhythmically as if it were the afflicted body part, whilst muttering a healing chant such as the following popular charm:

*"This is the spell that I intone,
flesh to flesh and bone to bone,
sinew to sinew and vein to vein,
and let them all be whole again."*

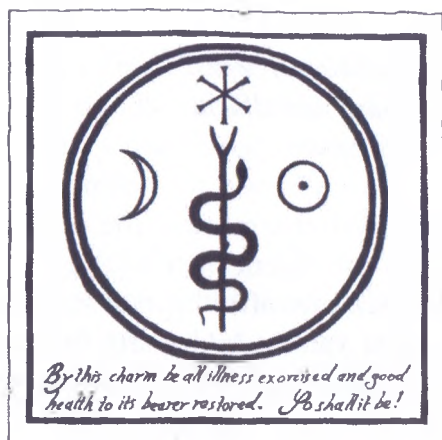
The left hand will charm away the illness, whilst the right administers the regenerative healing force. Magical workings of this kind are often kept up for hours at a time. Representations of various body parts, formed from lead or clay, were also kept by some practitioners specifically for stroking during acts of absent healing.

A Charm Bag to Banish Illness and Attract Good Health

Upon one side of the paper charm mark as follows:



Mark the reverse thus:



Fold and place this within the bag, add one pinch of mixed earth, one pinch of Sun powder and one small crystal of quartz, given by the land and bathed in the water of a holy well under a full Moon. Sew with white

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thread. The famous and traditional 'Abracadabra' charm will diminish the ailment. It is also a traditional charm against ill wishing and evil spirits in the same manner.

Wart Charming

The removal of warts is a practice that still provides a small income for a good number of practitioners in Cornwall and the West Country today. Here follow three methods of wart charming:

1) Take a length of parcel string (being of organic material) and tie a knot over each of the client's warts. As you tie each knot, touch it to the wart moving left to right. Take the 'string of warts' and bury it to rot beneath a blackthorn. As the string does rot so the warts shall fade.

2) Take the client outside on a clear night under a full moon. Hold aloft a shiny copper basin toward the moon and draw its powers down therein. Place the basin upon the ground and set the client to kneel before it on one knee, with the reflection of the moon within the polished copper visible to him. Instruct him to wash his hands in the basin of moonlight with the thrice repeated charm:

*"I wash my hands in this thy dish,
O man in the moon, do grant my wish,
And come and take away this"*

As the moon thereafter wanes from full, so will the warts fade.

3) This last example employs good old unethical 'passing-on-magic' still used in varying forms in Penwith today. Have ready some small quartz stones that have been carefully gathered with the flow from a stream,

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and select as many stones as there are warts. Touch each stone three times, from left to right, to each of the client's warts. Place each of these 'wart-stones' into a small sack of white cloth bound with red thread. Take this bag and cast it unobserved into a street. The poor old soul who picks up the bag will get the warts. By this rather naughty method it may well be possible for a practitioner to make a regular income removing the same warts as they get passed on to different people!

A Witch-Bottle for Healing

Place within a bottle good amounts of bay leaves, benzoin, juniper berries, lavender and rosemary. Then add some hair and nail clippings of the patient, and nine bent pins to drive away the illness.

To Stop Blood

Have a dead toad. Bake three bricks within a fire until they glow quite red with heat. Remove one brick from the fire and place the dead toad upon it for a while, until the intensity of the brick's heat has waned. Do the same with the remaining two bricks and by the last the toad, baked quite black and hard, may be ground into a powder. Place this powder within a small black bag and there keep it as a charm to place upon the heart of man or beast to stop the flow of blood from any wound.

Also for the same the charmer may tie nine knots into a red cord saying with each knot as it is tightly tied:

*"I tie this knot to set the clot,
stop ye, clot ye, stop!"*

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Such blood stopping charms can be employed by the charmer absently if need be.

For Teething Babes

A necklace made from sections of henbane root, strung as beads, may be rented out by the Pellar to mothers who will place the charm around their child's neck to ease the teething period.

Against Bites of the Adder

A charmed stick of ash is kept to pass and turn over a patient's adder bite against the sun with the words:

*“Underneath this hazelen mot
There’s a braggaty worm, with a speckled throat,
Now! Nine double hath be.
Now from nine double, to eight double,
From eight double, to seven double,
From seven double, to six double,
From six double, to five double,
From five double, to four double,
From four double, to three double,
From three double, to two double,
From two double, to one double,
Now! No double hath be!”*

This charm may be inscribed, coiling up the ashen staff, and kept above the door to prevent snakes entering the home. Greatest care must be taken in March and April when adder venom is at its strongest.

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The Cloutie Charm

Instruct the patient to wear a cotton thread tied around the afflicted part of the body for three days and nights, then on the fourth day they should visit Madron Well, and there lay the thread over a branch that hangs over the holy well. An offering of some food or coins should be made to the spirits of the place. As the cord falls from the branch and rots away, so will the ailment heal.

To Charm an Ailment with Snake Skin

The naturally shed skin of a snake is highly prized by West Country healers. It is carefully kept, wrapped up in a box, to be brought out when a patient is in need of healing. The skin is wrapped gently around the ailing part of the body, as the practitioner mutters chants for the serpent's regenerative forces to enact healing upon the client. After a while the skin is slowly unwrapped from the patient and placed again within its box. Thus the ailment is shed from the body as was the skin from the snake.

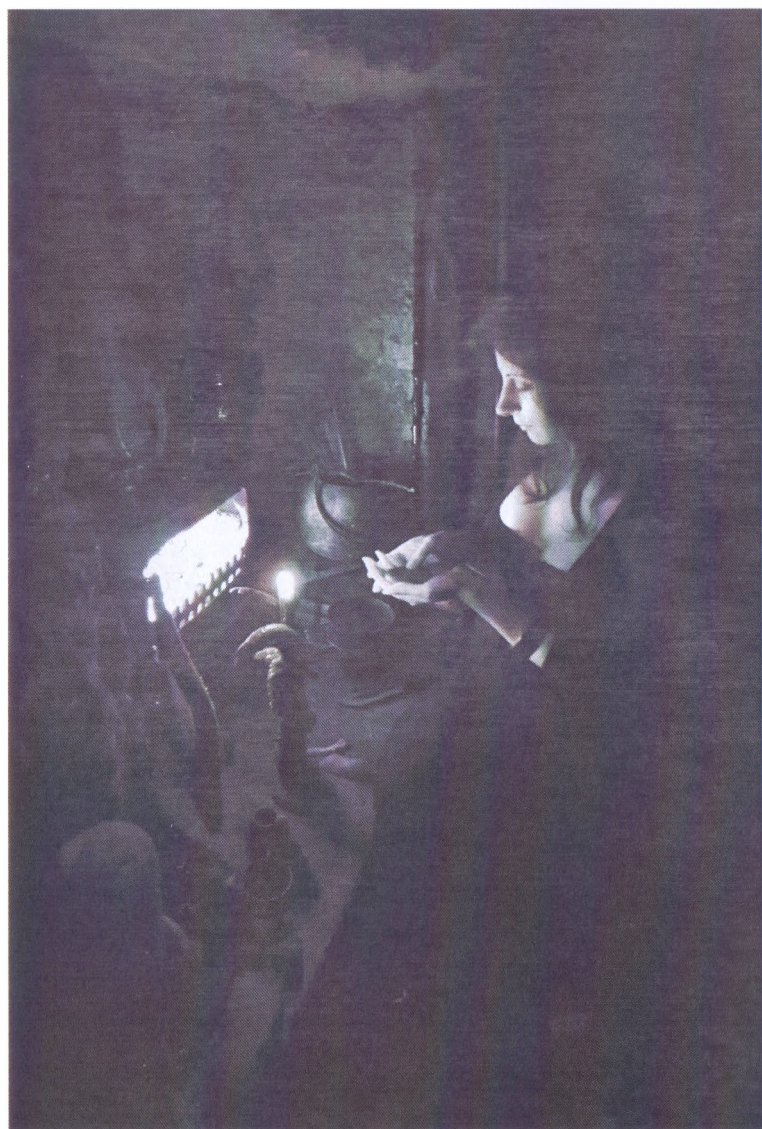
Workings of Love

Charm Bags for Love

Mark the paper charm with the following:

“whosoever does bare this charm shall be blessed with good fortune in all matters of love.”

And mark the reverse thus:

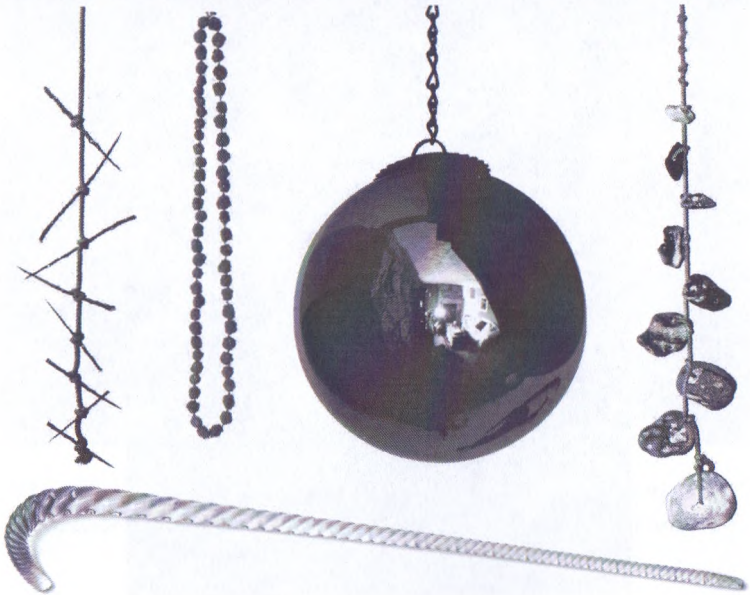


the author working at her cottage hearth



The author conjures and marks out the 'Compass Round' in preparation for an outdoor witch-rite, and (facing) working in the circle with the Hood-Fire







Top; the contents of a traditional salt-glaze protective 'witch-bottle' - author's collection.

Above; sections of charmed animal bone on iron chain - protections for farm buildings and stables.

Left; a charm bag made for a client by the author, and a collection of the author's household charms (facing page)





Top; the author's house doll sits on the hearth beside another, newly made for a client (left).

Above, the author's mandrake in it's coffin



Enclose this charm folded within the bag, add love powder and sew with pink thread.

Another charm bag that offers good fortune in matters of love, as well as protection in general, is to sew the powder of dried St John's Wort in a charm bag of white silk one inch square.

Juniper Love Charm

This is a charm that may attract new love when it is needed, or strengthen and guard it where it already exists. Thread together forty nine juniper berries upon green string, being sure to make a knot between each one. To attract new love hang it at the door, to protect and strengthen existing love it should be hung above the hearth at the heart of the home.

The Dragon's Blood Love Spell

Dragon's blood, a tree resin which is blood-red in colour, is one of the stock items to be found in the traditional

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Cornish witch's collection of magical substances, for it adds much potency to all magical workings and can thus be used alone to bring about any desire and is traditionally used in such a way for finding love.

At midnight on the first Friday to occur following the new moon, have coals burning within a dish of copper; being the metal sacred to Venus. Upon these coals, the client must cast pinches of dragon's blood resin whilst speaking of the qualities of the type of person they wish to attract.

To strengthen the love of two people, the Cornish witch may also make use of Dragon's Blood. Two sticks, inscribed with the names of the couple, are bound at each end with red thread, sealed with red sealing wax, and passed seven times through the smoke of the burning resin.

The Willow Love Knot

For the client who seeks love, send them to find a fine willow tree that grows beside flowing water. There they must carefully tie knots within the delicate branch ends, whilst thinking deeply upon the love they wish to attract and speaking of this to the willow.

Love Pomanders

To make a delightful and sweet smelling love charm, for a long, strong, and happy marriage, have cloves, two oranges, powdered orris root, and a small stick sharpened to a point at both ends. Impale the oranges together upon the stick, and cover both entirely with cloves pushed into their skins. Place the charm within a paper bag, and therein sprinkle plenty of powdered orris root. Keep this bagged

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charm in a warm, dark and dry place until the oranges have dried hard, at which time they may be removed from the bag, shaken free of powder and hung from the bed frame by a pretty red ribbon. The remainder of the orris root powder may be sprinkled about the bed chamber for good measure.

Workings of Good Fortune

Snail Beads

Snails have long been revered by Cornish witches, and were once held in high regard by the Cornish in general. If tin miners came by a snail on their way to work, they would not proceed without first offering food in the form of some tallow, or a small portion of their croust. Their spiral and breast like shells made them symbolic of the sacred feminine aspect of the generative force.

To form a charm that attracts good fortune, fertility, abundance, and love into the home, string as many empty snail shells as can be gathered from the land upon red ribbon and hang this somewhere proudly in the home with these words:

"This house be blessed where snails do rest"

Three Bees Charm

A popular traditional West Country charm of three fine bumble bees that have passed from their busy working life into the realm of spirit, where they shall instead busy themselves bringing health, happiness, and good fortune

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into the home in which they are proudly housed within a fine blue pouch.

The Devil's Hand

Upon the magically potent night of Midsummer's Eve, five connected unfurled fronds of the male fern must be smoked over a charmed fire, until dry and hardened. This curled up old hand when hung by the door, will draw to its owner luck, good fortune, and protection.

Blessing by Grave Dust

For a simple Cornish rite to bring blessings, fecundity, good fortune, strength, and growth, keep a covered bowl, or lidded box holding grave dust which has been baked and finely ground. Under a moon of increase, walk in a dextral circle about the item, creature, person, or place to receive the blessing, casting pinches of the dust as you go.

Lucky Coins

Coins of unusual appearance, such as those that have been pierced with a hole, best of all in the shape of a star, are considered to be lucky and are kept together near the hearth of the home in a draw-strung bag. Coins that have been found are also lucky and should be kept rather than spent to attract more money to follow into the home.

Workings of Spirit Magic

The Familiar Spirit

In addition to taking living animal forms, the familiar spirits of the Pellar may be encouraged to inhabit certain

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'haunted' items, such as sticks and other working tools, specially prepared images, preserved animal remains, and 'spirit houses'. Often the nature of the item, and the ways in which it is prepared, will reflect and be intentionally attractive to the nature of the spirit desired to inhabit it.

The Cornish witch will often keep numerous spirit helpers and 'friends' in addition to their primary indwelling familiar, for the body of the witch may also become a spirit house. As with carefully prepared items, the body must be made a welcoming and happy environment for one's familiar, thus the Cornish witch must take good care of their body and being if they are to attract an indwelling familiar spirit helper of their own.

A practitioner's spirit items are lovingly cared for, kept clean, spoken to regularly and in many cases ritually fed. The indwelling familiar is always consulted for help with all workings and magical operations, and thanks for their efforts must always sincerely be given.

The House Doll

The body of this doll may be fashioned according to the tastes and hand-skills of the witch, from such things as wood or cloth as long as detail and care is lavished upon her creation. Give her good clothes, her own stick of blackthorn, and any other things that may provide her comfort or that may aid her work, for she is a doll with a job to do.

When her body is complete, the witch may breathe life into her with whatever methods or rites are of preference. One way is to take her to the Men-an-Tol stones and birth her through the holed stone. Here should be born into being the spirit of a formidable old woman, who will sit

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in pride of place at the hearth of the home she is to serve. She will provide a terrifying defence against all curses, evil spirits, and all intrusions and ill intent targeted toward the home and its occupants. She will also serve her owners by working to provide for all household needs: require a new set of cooking pots? Have a word with her about it and she'll see what she can do.

Those whose house she serves must however take care to say good night to her before retiring to bed and greet her in the morning. Provide a little food and drink, and perhaps a little 'baccy' every now and then, by leaving it over night on the hearth before her. Keep your household spirits content and comfortable and they will do their best to ensure all your needs are met.

The Spirit Box or Wish Box

Form a lidded box, which will be best crafted from Ash. Carve, inscribe or paint this box with any images that inspire thoughts of interconnection between the worlds.

Take this box to one of the quoits, houses of the dead, light there a black candle and make the rites that conjure the circle and the spirits. One must operate on the first Saturday to follow the new moon.

Put into the box a fine layer of earth from this place of the dead, and scatter upon this a fine layer of spirit powder. Hag stones, crow's feet and other things symbolic of spirit contact may be included with care that plenty of room within the box should remain.

Make there the Troyl rite pouring some of the mead out upon the earth in the quoit, and sprinkle some within the box before drinking some yourself. Likewise with the

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bread leave some within the quoit, scatter some crumbs within the box and eat some yourself.

The box must then carefully be taken home where it shall be kept upon the hearth, and when need arises write of this upon a small square of paper, fold and place it within the box. Light a black candle before the box to signal to the spirits that their aid is sought, and place food offerings before it in thanks and to maintain the bond with the world of spirit.

The Mandrake Spirit

This spirit is known by various names such as Mandrake, Mandragora, Alraun, Alruin, Devil's Turnip, Devil's Candle, Witches' Root and Hag's Root.

The true mandragora is not native to these lands, and often the root of bryony is used by British witches instead, for the deep and tangled roots of this plant may also produce anthropomorphic forms. However the true mandrake may be found growing but it is extremely rare. A practitioner may obtain the whole root from traders from the East. Sometimes the seeds may be obtained from them. If a witch is successful in growing this plant, offerings and sacrifices must be made to it on full moons and Fridays. Blood, tobacco, wine etc. are good offerings. The grower must also talk to the growing plant, and speak and chant of such things as love and foresight.

When the root is to be harvested, or dug to check its development, two persons are required. They must avoid facing the wind and the ceremonial knife is used to trace three rings around the plant whilst another dances around it chanting of love. The plant may then be dug out in a circular way. The person doing this must face the

west. The root, if suitable for harvest must be wrapped immediately and placed in its coffin which has been made for it, and left alone for three days. If it is not ready for harvest it must be re-planted with more offerings. These operations must be performed on a Friday.

The correct care and keeping of the Mandrake spirit is simple but vital if it is to serve its master. On Fridays and full moons the spirit must be removed from its coffin, bathed gently in lightly warmed red wine and dried thoroughly, wrapped in red or white silk or velvet and replaced in its coffin. It must be greeted in the morning and bid good night. The spirit and its coffin must be kept on the hearth or mantle piece at the magical centre of the home. Kept here, the Mandrake will work as a house spirit and will protect the home from unwanted influences and will attract wealth to its master, especially if money is kept under its coffin.

The Mandrake will aid, strengthen and protect all magical works and rites of divination if it is present at their performing. It is most useful in love and sexual workings, and in workings for wealth.

The witch, when in a light trance, may consult the Mandrake spirit as a whispering oracle for advice, counsel, information on future events, and the location of lost or hidden things.

The Mandrake spirit must be present in the circle when rites of spirit travel are being performed. The Mandrake will protect the witch, in this vulnerable state, from demonic possession and interference from unwanted or negative spirits.

It aids greatly the raising of spirits and may provide a temporary body for such spirits, allowing them to be

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consulted. This is best done on a Saturday whilst burning 'Crow Smoke' and placing the mandrake spirit, and the incense, in a north pointing black triangle within a circle of white.

Spirit Houses

When such annoyances as strange knockings, or the regular disappearance of random objects become a common household occurrence, mischievous spirit activity is often found to be the likely cause. In such situations exorcism may be quite an over dramatic and unnecessary solution.

To stop the mischievous activity of spirits within the home, it is far more sensible to provide them with their own space to occupy and keep them content, by constructing a spirit house.

The ways in which spirit houses are constructed vary greatly and will depend much on the witch employed to supply it, and perhaps the perceived nature of the spirits involved. Large glass bottles, ceramic jars, animal or human skulls, and intricate structures of threads stretched over a frame, or woven cages of flexible woody strands of such things as honeysuckle or willow etc. have all been used for the 'outer shell' of spirit houses.

The inclusions for the interior of the spirit house can vary as much as the outer shell, with such things as mixed earth, powders, mosses, seeds, snail shells, bones, feathers, tangled threads, hag stones, glass beads, and 'spangles' etc. being not uncommon.

The principle idea behind such inclusions is to provide a private space containing things that will comfort the spirit, and things that either through their intricacy, beauty or shiny reflective qualities will provide the spirit with interest, fascination and fun to keep them occupied.

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After providing a mischievous or noisy spirit with their own space and inviting them into it, the annoyances may well cease and the now content spirit may even become a helpful one.

A Rite of Exorcism

To remove persistently troublesome, abusive or dangerous spirits from a place, the Pellar may perform a rite of exorcism. A box containing the items of the rite: soft wax, black cotton cord, Witch Powder, benzoin resin, an exorcising suffumigation, a crucible and charcoal, is brought to the place, along with the working blade.

After asking all that the client knows about the spirit in question, the witch will enter into trance and may either choose to sit in one place, or move about the house, all the time working to discover all that they can of the spirit's nature whilst gradually working this into the soft wax, forming the spirit's likeness.

When the witch is most confident that the spirit has been worked into the very wax that now forms its physicality, the black cord will then be taken up and the image slowly bound, trapping the spirit within and binding it from the ability to have influence over the place and the living that dwell or work within.

A good fire must be built at the hearth as the suffumigation of exorcism is burnt within the crucible. The witch will charm the fire with their blade in the six-fold sign, opening the way between the worlds. The image is then, with force, thrown upon the fire with handfuls of benzoin being also cast into the flames. With blade in hand the witch mutters over the burning image:

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*"I exorcise thee, I exorcise thee, I exorcise thee!
Troublesome one in waxen likeness bound,
Depart now from this place,
Pass now into the realm of spirit,
For your influence here must now end.
In the name of the Old One I command thee,
Depart, depart, depart!
So shall it be!"*

Witch Powder is then scattered at the hearth in the sign of an X. The smoking crucible is carried from room to room, as each corner, window and entrance to the place is censured and scattered also with Witch Powder in the same manner.

Divination by the Aid of Spirits

To gain visions and answers from the spirit world, via such devices as mirrors, globes, and 'shew stones', offerings of food and drink must be provided and the burning of some pertinent substance as 'Crow Smoke' whilst the conjuration of the spirits is given:

*"I conjure thee old ones, spirits kindly and wise,
by my will I conjure thee,
by my breath I conjure thee,
by fire and dancing smoke I conjure thee!
See the sustenance I offer unto thee,
Come spirits feed!
Grant visions to show in truth all that I may ask of thee,
I conjure thee, I conjure thee, I conjure thee,
Come, arise, and let me see!"*



Always at the ending of the work thanks and farewell must be given to the spirits called. For important matters, draw upon the ground a circle about one and a half foot in diameter with the staff or, if necessary, mark this circle out with a cord or with flour for its boundary must be visible. Within the centre of this, set a suitable vessel containing burning coals. Around this place such tools of sight and spirit communication as a seeing stone or globe, a black mirror, a skull etc. Also place there a horn of mead and bowl of bread in offering. Cast upon the burning coals a good handful of 'Crow Smoke' as the

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conjunction of the spirits is given.

Continue to replenish the Crow Smoke upon the coals, and ask clearly your questions. Seek the answers by spirit vision, which may be given in the smoke or within the tools of seeing, or by spirit voices via any skull placed within the circle.

When you have received your answers you must thank the spirits and dig a hole within the circle and into it place the bread and pour out the mead before leaving the place with no visible sign of the work performed there.

Workings of the Weather

For Rain

When rain is needed, an iron vessel and the knife are taken to a high place, be it a rocky carn, hill, or towering cliff top. Within the vessel, a small fire is made and upon this is set a good bundle of ferns and some henbane to burn with much smoke. After Becoming, the aid of the spirits is invoked with dances made against the sun around the iron vessel of rising smoke. The blade is held aloft as conjurations for rain are muttered into the smoke as it rises to the sky. Further circumambulations may be made around the smoking vessel whilst sprinkling water upon the earth from a dipped branch of heather.

To Raise or Lower the Wind

To make a 'Wind Stone', thread a good length of cord through a hag stone and tie eight knots along its length.

Take this out to some exposed place and begin to whirl the stone in the air above your head, whilst invoking the

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spirits of the air. The speed at which the stone is whirled must be adjusted in accordance with the speed of the wind to be conjured. To slow the wind and conjure calm weather, one must begin by whirling the stone at great speed and gradually slow it down. To conjure great winds and gales, start to whirl the stone slow and gradually increase the speed to conjure the level of wind desired.

West Country witches also highly prize the ‘pricking tool’, which is made from a single tine antler. These were commonly used by the fishermen to pierce sail cloth and for working on nets. The Pellar make use of these as hand tools when working with spirits of the air, and of the sea, to raise or settle the winds, to conjure things or send things via the force and movement of the wind, or to make conjurations or banishments via the rising or ebbing forces of the sea tides.

Versatile Ways

Cord and Knot Magic

There are a number of traditional working methods that are highly versatile, in that they can be employed to achieve a wide range of magical goals according to the intent applied to their working, as well as the observation of the correct times and moon phases pertinent to the deed in hand.

One of the working methods most widely found in traditional witch magic across regions, and indeed across the world, is the use of cords and threads. Employed as ‘tracks’ along which to draw spirit force and sprowl, we have seen them used in protective charms in conjunction

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with such things as hag stones and rowan berries, or to entice, trap or occupy spirits by the inclusion of many tangled threads within witch-bottles and spirit houses.

Cords may offer yet greater working versatility when perceived and brought into action as the strands of fate; of people, places or objects etc. Here, influence, for either good or bad, can be exerted over the target, once identified with the cord, and the working intent of the practitioner tied into knots along its length to cause changes and influences upon the target.

The nine knot spell is traditionally used to bring change and exert influence. It is performed by the contemporary witch with a popular form of spoken charm, of which there exist a number of versions, below is my own:

*“By knot of one oh serpent come,
By knot of two the spell to do,
By knot of three I conjure thee,
By knot of four 'tis through the door,
By knot of five the spell to thrive,
By knot of six the spell to fix,
By knot of seven now I have 'em!
By knot of eight 'tis sealed by fate,
By knot of nine the spell I bind.”*

A method of cord magic is to pass the cord, slowly to and fro, through the smoke of pertinent incense, in the north of the Compass, to cleanse it and to identify it with the target of the spell. In the working of a group of fellows, this is done by each practitioner present. Each then, using the ‘Witch’s Breath’, breathes ‘life’ into the cord, if it represents a living person, or, if it is

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representative of an item or situation, this is held firmly in mind and breathed into the cord.

The cord is then placed within the cauldron, which is slightly to the west of the centre of the Compass, as a sinistral Round is walked to intensify the link with the target of the operation, and to gather in the virtues that will aid the desired results. Once this is potently established, the cord is taken up again and the nine knots made along its length, reciting each line of the charm with each knot. In a working of fellows, the cord is passed round in turn for a knot to be made, each time, the witch reciting a line from the charm. As each knot is tied, the desired change is potently envisaged as taking place upon the target, and it is breathed upon to give life to the magical action.

When all the knots are tied, it is placed again within the cauldron, which has been moved to stand upon the pentacle, positioned slightly south of the centre, and a dextral Round is walked to raise and intensify the gathered virtues and to bring the desired effect of the working into manifest reality. Once complete, a knotted cord may, if circumstances permit, be left close to the target to work its influence over them, or, when representative of something to be rid of, thrown into the fire or buried to rot.

The colour of the cords used will be pertinent to the intent of the spell. In Cornish magic the three colours of choice are, as we have seen, red, green and black. However, a red cord is kept for most operations, and a black one kept for acts of 'get rid of' magic and blasting.

In addition to the above, knotted cords are also employed to draw upon and store certain virtues, whereby the knots will be untied later to release the virtues to lend power

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to certain spells. A notable example is the moon cord or 'moon ladder', in which the lunar virtue is stored for later use. There is also what many call 'the witch's ladder', used by the witch to access certain powers and virtues which are tied into the knots along its length, and is made and empowered during the rite of witch initiation.

Candle and Pin Magic

Working in much the same way as cord and knot magic, the candle takes the place of the cord, and the pins operate much as the knots do. Here the candle is representative of the target, topped by their/its light of being. The pins are heated briefly within the flame and are inserted into the body of the candle, each one conveying the will and intent of the spell into the candle, thus directing the desired influence to the target. As the flame of being reaches each pin to let it fall from the candle, that part of the spell is seen to have fully taken hold, or, according to the nature of the spell, to have actually brought about the desired change the pin conveyed.

As with cord magic, colour plays an important role. Usually only either a white or black candle will be used depending on the nature of the work at hand, white for such things as generative magic, healing etc. black for consumptive magic, cursing, mind control (for good or for bad) etc. The pins however may vary in colour, as Cornish witches keep a good array of different coloured glass headed pins, catering for a wide range of magical intentions, and planetary influences.

Candle and pin work may also be undertaken as an act of divination, where the timing of the pin's falling, it's distance from the candle, direction of pointing, and its

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relationship to other fallen pins may all be read by the divining witch.

Three Vessel Magic

This spell requires three identical vessels. It is highly versatile, being adaptable for most needs and involves the witch working with one vessel, placing within it powders, objects, written charms etc. pertinent to the intent, and the client will place within another of the three vessels things symbolic of, or connected to, their need. The third vessel is for the helpful influences of the witch's familiar spirit. The three vessels are sealed, taken and buried at a place where the powers and virtues will be helpful, thus both the place and the timing of this will be chosen carefully, depending on the spell's intent.

Get Lost Boxes

A method of banishing magic, popular with Cornish witches, is the making of a 'get-lost-box'. Whilst its operation is limited to workings of banishment, it is versatile in that it may be employed to banish anything from the life of the client that they wish to be rid of.

Within such boxes are placed items, supplied by the client, that are symbolic of whatever it is they wish to be rid of. The witch will then seal the box with red sealing wax, and wind tightly red thread, wool, or thin cord, around the box over and over, trapping and diminishing the undesired thing.

Sometimes these boxes, if they contain a minor ailment, such as warts or a runny nose, might often be left in some place, such as a road or the steps to a church, to be found by another in an act of passing on magic. For other more

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seriously undesirable things and conditions, the box might be buried at a remote crossroads. Whatever is done the important thing is it must be forgotten about.

The Knitting Spell

Magic involving the usefully repetitive action of knitting, is obviously related to cord and thread magic. In the West Country it was traditional for thick glass knitting needles to be employed within this type of magic, and the colour of the wool would be determined by the nature of the spell. The witch, in trance, working away with her glass needles beside the fire, would work her intent strongly into the piece of knitting for some time before pulling it from the needles and casting it upon the fire, so that the intent may be released up the chimney and out on its way to do its work.



Rites of the Moon

THE time of the full moon brings increased potency to the generative and vision inducing virtues of the serpentine flow, and so, it is for the witch a time that lends itself to a variety of useful work. After the rites of the Compass have been done, in either simple or grand form, there is no one rite of the full moon to be observed within Cornish witchcraft. What takes place during a full moon rite depends entirely on the work to be done at the time.

If much work has been done since the last full moon, practitioners may feel themselves to be at low ebb and lacking in sprowl, and so the witch may seek to imbibe this vital force through dancing the Round to conjure and draw deeply upon the serpentine flow, and via the rite of the Troyl; taking full advantage of the time of increased potency that the full moon brings. Useful lunar force and sprowl will also be stored at this time for later use by means of the moon cord, which is made from three nine foot white cords plaited together and bound at the ends with red thread. The witch, after having danced the round

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to gather and raise sprowl within the circle, will raise their cord to the face of the moon and conjure its force, and the raised sprowl, into nine knots tied along the cord's length. Each is tied with only the left eye open so that the face of the moon may be visible within each knot before it is pulled tight. Each of the nine knots may be untied at later times to lend extra strength to magical workings.

This potent time is also highly useful, not only for gathering herbs, but for mixing and charging magical powders and other substances, as well as the ritual charging of magical items and charms. It is also a time for generative magic and conjurations around the hood-fire.

It is known by the Cornish Wise folk that heightened generative potency and 'life force' is not the only thing to be drawn upon from the serpentine flow during the full moon, from the serpent there is another force that may, at places, issue forth in abundance and that is the force known as the serpent's breath. To draw upon this force, the Pellar will take their full moon rites down into the damp sea caves, haunted fogous or potent holy wells; places where this hypnotic, chthonic force may more easily be encountered and in a more concentrated form. There they commune with this force, drowsing deeply within it, receiving visions, answers and life. Drawing upon the serpent's breath will aid greatly the visionary abilities of the witch.

One full moon rite for visionary and divinatory purposes is that known down here as 'Calling Down the Moon'. This name is obviously related to the elaborate Wiccan rite of 'Drawing Down the Moon' but the Cornish version is, in essence, a quite different and seemingly simple rite. For this the good old copper basin is filled partly with water,

Rites of the Moon

and it is better for this rite if it can be drawn from a holy well.

The witch will stand looking intensely at the moon, working to achieve a trance state, with the basin before them on the ground. They will then take this up gently and raise it to the moon; drawing its virtue into the water before lowering it gently back to the ground. The witch will then kneel before this basin on one knee and gaze at the moon again for a while, and then down to the dancing reflection of the moon in the water. The witch will look to the moon for one last time, then, after a while draw their gaze slowly downward to the reflection of the moon within the copper vessel, and there seek visions in answer to their questions. This water will also prove useful within the rite for anointing the self and magical objects that might benefit from a little extra lunar virtue.

Within all full moon rites, the witch will make sure that they have quartz stone with them; for this will serve to enhance the flow of the serpentine force during the proceedings, and thus aid greatly any work done. Rites of the full moon are of course always concluded with a joyous Troyl rite.

The New Moon

When the moon is dark, a quite different, yet still highly useful situation arises, with other opportunities to get work done.

Whilst it is true that traditional witch rites in general can be fairly quiet affairs, with declamations and spoken charms often being muttered rather than spoken aloud,

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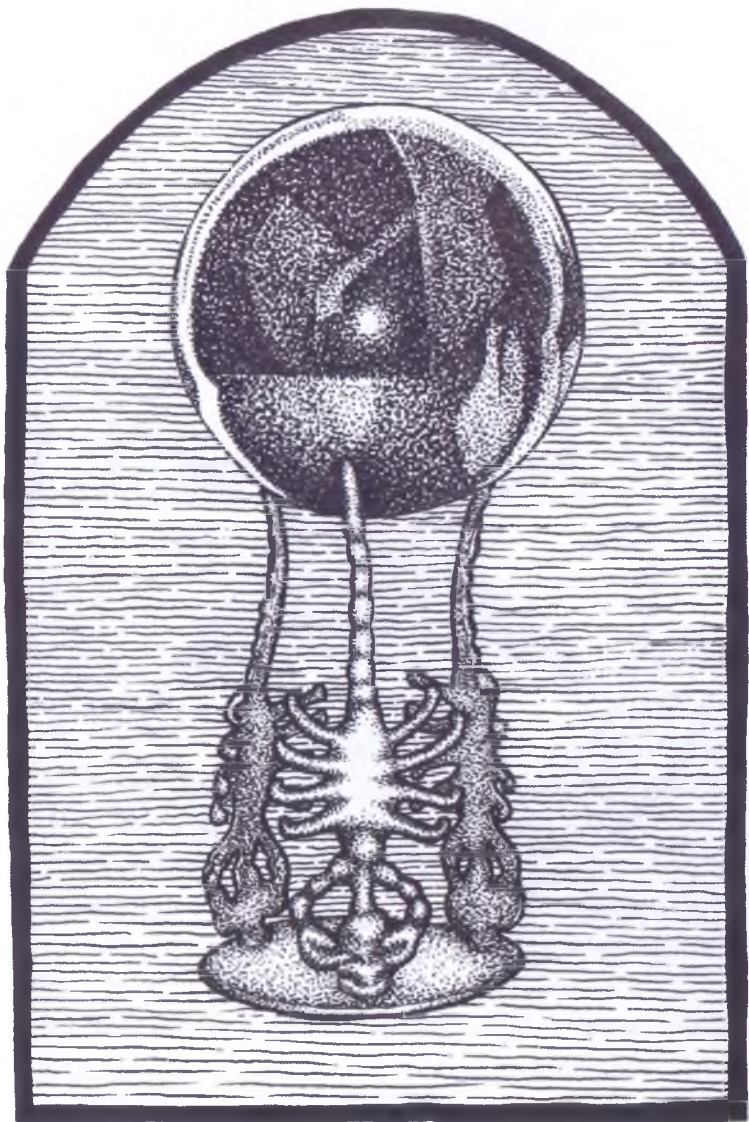
rites of the new moon are mostly silent, with any ritual declamations being muttered, or whispered, very quietly indeed. The new moon is a time for rites of inward journeying, looking deeply into the self for answers, and delving for anything buried that may otherwise throw up inconvenient surprises at later times, for the Traditional Cornish witch, that universal occult maxim 'Know Thyself' tells of an important magical prerequisite that is always striven for.

Journeys will not only be made into our own inner-underworlds, but to the underworld of the beloved dead, for the new moon is also a time for ancestor communion, and acts of atavistic 'seeing' and divination will be made to seek ancestral wisdom and guidance. In such rites the black mirror is an ideal tool.

Making use of the inward and consumptive virtues of the serpentine flow, magical workings at the time of the new moon will largely consist of 'get-rid-of' magic as well as magic of the toad, to influence the mind and emotions of others for either good or for bad if need be. It is also a time for acts of 'Owl Blasting' when such is necessary.

The stone of choice for rites of the new moon is the black obsidian, for it is a stone that aids inward focus, and the revealing of things held deep. It is also of protective quality, which will be found by many to be a useful virtue during such work.

A sphere of obsidian called a 'moon crystal' or 'moon stone' is sometimes kept, useful both in the rites of inner visioning during the dark of the moon but also in 'seeing' work under a full moon, where her hypnotic image may be shown on the sphere's black surface.





The Furry Nights

Rites of the Year's Round

IN Cornwall we have a bewildering calendar of traditional festivals and feast nights, ranging from the world famous to the obscure and sometimes bizarre! For an exploration of this extensive calendar, from someone actively involved in its revival, I can recommend Simon Reed's 'The Cornish Traditional Year'. Here however we will concern ourselves with the main seasonal rites of use to the traditional magical practitioner, that present a journey of birth, growth, climax, preparation, withdrawal, death and rebirth, that is wisely mirrored in the life and work of the Pellar.

The practitioner marks the main ritual observances of the year's tides by the four Celtic quarter nights, which in Cornwall are the "Furry Nights" (ecstatic holy nights) or "Troyl Nights" (feast nights).

These are Allantide, Candlemas, May's Eve and Guldize Night. The Solstices are also observed, as they are the zeniths of light and dark and as such provide highly useful virtues that must be worked with: the light must be harnessed to guide us through darker days, and the

dark takes us deep within ourselves and provides wisdom yet must be protected against to prevent it consuming us totally, and, to encourage it to move on so that the light can return!

The equinoxes are not normally observed ritually by many witches of traditional persuasion as they are times of balance and not times of 'vital change' that require magical action. Some traditional witches acknowledge the equinoxes with a simple rite to commune with this balance.

Whilst the Furry Nights have their traditional guiding dates, their observance is not determined by strict adherence to the calendar. Nature provides the signs of change that will signal to the witch that the Furry Night has arrived. The behaviour of certain plants will be watched for: the appearance of the May blossom signalling the arrival of May's Eve, the Snowdrops heralding Candlemas etc. The Moon is also used as a natural marker for the Furry Nights, the night of the nearest full moon to the calendar date often being chosen as the time for the observance since the forces of the land are responsive to both seasonal change and the cycle of the moon.

Candlemas

This 'feast of lights' is the ritual marker of winter's end, and the point at which the days will begin to noticeably lengthen gradually as the sun returns, signalling the approach of spring. It is also the rite of 'waking the serpent' at the time after the slumber of deep winter,

The Furry Nights

when the serpent, being responsive to the seasonal cycle as well as the phase of the moon, will be seen to return from the depths of the cold earth and begin to return the life force to the land, and the badly needed and highly useful sprowl, so vital to the witch's work, would slowly become more accessible. It is for this reason that the witch's powers in Cornwall were seen to be 'renewed' at springtime, for by the time spring had properly arrived, the witch would again have good access to serpentine sprowl and thus work their Craft more effectively. The people would be known to queue up in the spring to have their charms re-empowered, after having kept them throughout the winter. It is also due to the fact that, for this rite, the Wise seek to conjure the re-emerging serpent, that they traditionally make these rites of 'gentle fires and encouragement' at holy wells, being both a place where such virtues are usually more easily accessible anyway, and, from a symbolic point of view, they are watery and vagina-like portals into the depths of the earth through which the serpent may be birthed with conjurations and offerings.

A Candlemas Rite

Things needed: A white candle within a lantern or glass jar for each participant, one large red candle, a cauldron, quartz stones, a serpent-form wand or one crafted from the quickening rowan, a pitcher, the crucible & coals, dragon's blood resin, the forked staff, Troyl items and extra food, drink and some musical instruments to warm

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the blood and the spirit on what is likely to be a very cold night.

For their Candlemas observances, the Cornish Wise Folk like to make their way, at the dead of night, in silent procession to one of Cornwall's holy wells, lead by one candle lantern, and the rest carrying theirs unlit.

Upon reaching the well, the staff is placed in some prominent place close at hand, with the Troyl things and pitcher at its base. The white candles will be placed about the well, with only the one candle that lead the procession remaining lit. The cauldron is placed by the opening to the well, with the quartz stones placed around it and the red candle within it. Before the cauldron is placed the crucible of burning coals and beside it lies the serpent wand. The Circle will be conjured quietly and the light of the single burning candle lantern will, for this rite, become the hood fire and will be charmed as such with the blade.

Those gathered find a place to sit about the well, breathing of the season in silent contemplation of the cold hard earth, the inward winter withdrawal of life that has been made, and the stillness of the frozen land in need of reanimation. After some time, one will take up the pitcher and with it draw water from the well to be held aloft the hood fire candle. This will then be passed around for each celebrant to bless themselves with the icy cold water before it reaches again the one who drew it who will then pour it with reverence back into the well.

All then prepare for the rebirth of the serpent, as dragon's blood is placed to smoke on the coals within the crucible and the red cauldron candle is lit from the hood fire candle, which is charmed with the serpent wand as these words are said:

The Furry Nights

*“Return, return, return,
As candle wax does burn,
We conjure thee oh serpent red,
Awake, arise ye from thy bed,
By Bucca dark by Bucca fair,
By toad, by crow, by snake, by hare,
We conjure thee, we conjure thee, we conjure thee!
Awake, arise, so shall it be!”*

All repeat “so shall it be!” and gradually the other candles about the well are relit from the red serpent candle. When all the candles are burning, and more dragon’s blood smokes, the celebrants will breathe deeply; drawing upon the renewed serpentine flow as it begins to emerge, with light and rhythmic thumping on the ground, humming and drumming. In celebration of this the Troyl rite is made, and all commune with the serpentine flow. The rite is best concluded with some celebration and merry making with feasting and music, to provide warmth in this cold time and to act as further life affirming conjurations of the serpent. For this, the celebrants might move their rite from the well to a ‘dancing ring’ with a fire at its midst, which should of course be lit from the red serpent candle.

May’s Eve

Here arrives the eve of the opening of summer’s gates and the final death of winter; the end of Bucca Dhu’s reign and the beginning of that of Bucca Gwidder. Here the sprowl of the serpent is in full flow, revealed by the

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greening of the land and symbolised by the erecting of the may pole, to both tap this energy, dancing it alive and to mark the marriage of earth and sky at this time of increase and potency.

The rather grand maypole set in Padstow Broad Street has become a traditional meeting place for Pagans gathering with the masses of other visitors, to watch the mysterious and famous rite of the Obby Oss. So popular has this May Day tradition become, that many streets in the village are packed so tightly with people that walking becomes a painfully slow process indeed. Yet somehow the progress of the Osses (for there are two main Osses in addition to the Children's Osses) does not seem to be all that impeded by the densely packed crowds. The old Oss is the 'Red Oss' whilst the younger is known as the 'Blue Oss' and by some as the 'Temperance Oss', because traditionally the 'Blue Oss' team differed from their red counterparts in refraining from getting themselves very drunk, which others see as an essential part of the ritual!

The old original Oss was traditionally covered with sail-cloth blackened with tar, and to get your fingers black from touching the Oss was a sign that you had received the blessings of this mysterious character. Today the Osses are made from lighter yet sturdy fabric painted black, so the fun of tarred fingers is no longer possible, yet the tradition of touching the Oss for good fortune continues as does the tradition that if a woman is captured beneath the skirt of the Oss they will be with child before the end of the year.

There are many theories as to the meanings behind this mysterious ritual with its hypnotic, primitive music

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and dancing, my own favourite is that put forward by the Cunning Man JackDaw, who encourages us to look closely at the Oss to discover that there are actually two characters here for there are two heads; that of the horse and that of the rider. The head of the rider is clearly intended to be the focus of attention, for not only is it much larger than the tiny and easy to overlook head of the horse, it is also painted in such a way that you cannot help but be drawn into its gaze. If we begin to see the Oss as the rider rather than the horse, we are reminded that in Old English the word 'Oss' means 'Old God' and in Cornish & Devonian witch-lore we find the old 'Black God' Bucca Dhu riding a black horse with burning red eyes and smoky breath. We are reminded also of the traditions of the horse as the vehicle of the seasonal tides. Could it be that Padstonians have kept alive an ancient rite which observes the final riding forth of the dying black god and winter tide at the beginning of summer? It is after all a dance in which the Oss repeatedly falters and 'dies'...

A week later, another ancient and famous Cornish May festival takes place in Helston. Crowds again gather for the celebration of Flora Day, with its 'Furry Dance' and mummer's play the Hal-an-Tow. The Furry Dance is now a very genteel, polite and smartly dressed affair, but in the past would have been a more ecstatic and drunken celebration, indeed it was once banned for being so. It is still a joyful occasion, with the streets adorned with greenery and flowers, notably bluebells, and after the official celebrations during the day, a celebratory atmosphere continues well into the night.

A May's Eve Rite

Things Needed: The forked staff decorated with Hawthorn, and red ribbons to represent the serpentine flow, the broom, a cauldron, a drum, serpent wand, crucible, coals, 'Hare Smoke' incense, a white candle or torch, the Troyl things, a vessel of horn, antler or earthenware, and Witch Oil.

Within high wooded land, the forked staff and cauldron are set to stand a little way apart at the centre of the working area. The Troyl items, crucible of coals, incense, serpent wand and the vessel of Witch Oil are arranged around its base.

Before the rite, all go into the woods; some to gather greenery and flowers and some to gather firewood, dry leaves or furze for kindling. When all return to the circle, a ring of greenery and flowers is made around the staff and cauldron. The kindling and fire wood are built within the cauldron with the spare wood laid beside it. A white candle or torch is set to stand and burn at the south-east of the working area.

The incense is lit within the crucible and the circle is conjured without the charming of the fire. All stand in circle, around the staff and cauldron, in silent contemplation of all that is outworn and needs to be banished in purification and preparation for the birth of summer.

One will step forward holding the broom, and holds the brush within the rising incense smoke before sweeping the

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circle three times round against the sun, finally sweeping the dross out of the northwest of the circle. The broom is then taken, with the sun, to the southeast of the circle and is held aloft the candle or torch that burns there. All gathered make the horned salute whilst the broom barer declaims:

*“Now upon May’s Eve
let swing open the gates of summer!
By leaping hare and serpent fire,
By broom, by staff and cauldron pyre,
We conjure thee, we conjure thee, we conjure thee
Oh white one, come!
So shall it be”*

All repeat “so shall it be” and the broom is laid upon the ground, with the brush end pointing to the southeast edge and the shaft pointing towards the circle’s centre. The candle or torch is carried to the centre of the circle and from it the cauldron fire is solemnly lit and charmed in the usual way. The candle or torch is replaced at the southeast edge. Another steps forward and takes up the vessel of Witch Oil to hold it above the fire and calls “Bucca Gwidder!” three times, those gathered repeating each time. All are then anointed upon the brow with the oil in the sign of the six ways, the oil bearer anointing themselves before replacing the oil at the foot of the staff.

Now begins the drumming and dancing about the staff and cauldron fire in conjuration of the serpent, and in celebration of the commencement of Bucca Gwidder’s reign. High and wild leaps are made over the broom

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laid upon the ground to mark the passage through the gates of summer, the increase of the serpent, and in acknowledgement that as the gates swing open exchange between the worlds is all the more possible.

Cornish Wise folk empowered, and mazed by the serpent, now take full advantage of the conjured land sprowl and the opening of the way between the worlds with 'seeing work'. A period of time follows with some seeking visions and communications by gazing into the fire, or into the rising smoke of the incense. Some will make use of forked talking sticks in the old way to gain wisdom from earth spirits, or visions with the aid of the serpentine flow, whilst others may make use of Troy Stones and will make inner communications with the spirit world. When this work is done, the Troyl rite will be made and yet more celebration had before the rite is closed.

Golowan

Summer's zenith in Cornwall is a time of much ritual activity, celebration and old magic. In the west of Cornwall the ancient midsummer observances survive, and were under revival in Penzance with the 'Golowan Festival' & Mazey Day celebrations. Golowan in the Cornish language means the feast of St John (the Baptist) and Mazey is derived from the Cornish term for being of a dizzy, crazed, maddened or intoxicated state.

The festivities of the past centred around fire, with folk running about swinging great squares of burning canvas

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that had been saturated in tar and attached to the end of long poles, or strong chains. Burning tar barrels were also placed in line up the middle of Market Jew Street for people to run and dance about.

These traditions slowly declined under the pressure of the disapproving authorities, but through the hard work and passion of a group of community minded folk, 1990 saw 'Golowan' and Mazey in Penzance reborn. Today, each year, thousands flock to Penzance to enjoy carnival processions, music, art, and drama and 'serpent dancing'.

The serpent dance, which has become quite a wild creature, seems to be a spontaneous conjuration and communion with the serpentine flow which, at this time of year, zeniths in potency. Fire is still very much an integral part of a spectacular fireworks display rising from the seafront by Jubilee Pool. In very recent years however, over officious attitudes and financial interests would appear to be dominating and leaving less and less room for local midsummer traditions, which are sadly rapidly deteriorating within the festival.

Cornish witch-lore tells of how Midsummer would see all the witches of the west gathering on the steep granite boulder strewn hill known as Burn Downs, which rises above Tregerthen which could be translated as 'Rowan Tree Farm'. It lies on the path from the hamlet of Wicca to Zennor, a remote and wild area steeped in old witchcraft. Here the witches of the west would light many fires, work magic and renew their vows to the Old One. Here also was a substantial, sacred cubical boulder known as 'The Witch's Rock' and was attributed with magical powers. Tradition states that to touch it nine times at midnight

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would protect one from all evil. Unfortunately this rock was broken up, probably to be used for farm buildings, but there remains another sacred rock attributed also with magical powers. The Giant's Rock lies in a field not far from Zennor Church. Tradition holds that to walk nine times around it at midnight would give one the powers of a witch, perhaps revealing that this was a place of initiation. To this very day the Giant's Rock may see the midsummer gathering of Cornish witches.

Midsummer Eve bonfires remain a strong Cornish tradition, with fire beacons being ceremonially lit on the sacred hill tops, from Chapel Carn Brea in West Penwith to Kit Hill, a line of ritual fires snaking from one end of Cornwall to the other.

For the survival of this we have the Old Cornwall Society to thank. These official hilltop rites have however become much Christianised, although it is extremely difficult for any to deny the ancient pagan spirit behind such practices. In addition to these official gatherings, the Wise folk of Cornwall climb the high places of the land to light magical fires of their own.

A Golowan Rite

Things needed: The forked staff, the Troyl things, drums and other instruments, last year's St John's Wort bound with other good and baneful herbs in coloured ribbons – yellow for the sun, red for sacrifice, white for strength, green for wisdom and blue for love. Have also a fresh bunch of St John's Wort.

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Atop a hill or Carn, the forked staff is set to stand at the south of the working area, with the Troyl things at its base, the sacrificial flowers to the left and the fresh St John's Wort to the right. A large fire is built, within a cauldron or brazier, to hold it safe in the winds that are likely if the rite is held in a high place unshielded by trees. The circle is conjured, omitting the charming of the fire which remains unlit. When the 'Walking of the Round' is done, these words are said by the master of the rite:

"According to the custom of our beloved ancestors, behold us making our Midsummer Bonfire, this night in the middle of summer."

The Fire is then lit as the master says these words:

*"Now set the pyre at once on fire,
Let flame aspire over the land
In Bucca's high name!"*

The flowers for burning are held over the fire by the mistress of the rite as she says these words:

*"In one bunch together bound
Flowers for burning here are found,
Both good and ill.
Thousand fold let good seed spring,
Wicked weeds, fast withering,
Let this fire kill!"*

The master of the rite orders:

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“Now Cast the Flowers!”

The mistress does this and brings the new St John’s Wort to hold above the fire with these words:

*“By the potent midsummer sun be these flowers hood!
A charm against all intrusions of evil spirits and wicked
bewitchments!
Against all ills and harm guard us!
So shall it be!”*

The St John’s Wort is passed through the smoke of the fire three times in the direction of the sun, and divided up equally amongst those gathered to take their flowers home, to fashion them as protective charms until next midsummer.

To drumming, and other music, those gathered now dance around the fire in celebration, each breaking away from the circle occasionally to jump through the flames and smoke of the midsummer fire for extra protections, and as a personal spell for potency in any area of life according to intent. The rite is concluded with the celebration of the Troyl.

Ashes gathered from the midsummer fire and kept in a black bag form another potent traditional protective charm.

Guldize

Guldize - 'the feast of ricks' is the Cornish celebratory feast associated with the completion of the wheat harvest and thus the sacrificial harvesting, threshing & grinding of the spirit of the field (being John Barleycorn to some and the Corn Goddess to others) who resurrects in the form of Ale and bread.

In Cornwall there were also observed a number of old feasts around the beginning of the harvest, notably in Morvah on the first Sunday of August commemorating (with much drinking and feasting) a contest of "quoit throwing" between giants, who are acknowledged to be folk memories of powerful land deities or spirits. Here the local giant conquers his opponent (ensuring the protection of his land) and marries his daughter, giving the feast ancient themes of battle, death, sanctity of the land and fertility.

Later in the month of August, Cornwall sees the once widespread "Crying the Neck" ceremony which, like the Midsummer bonfires, has been revived on a number of Cornish farms by the Old Cornwall Society.

The culmination of the harvest is marked by the ceremonial cutting of the last standing Corn, which becomes the "Neck" and is carried back to the farmhouse where the bearer of the Neck is often dowsed with a jug of water by the lady of the house, symbolising the rains needed to nourish the next crop.

The Neck is decorated, and sometimes fashioned into a figure or dolly, to contain the spirit of the field and ensure

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a good harvest for the next year. The Neck would be given a place of honour at the table and drunk to during the feast. It would then be hung up in the farmhouse until the next year's harvest was gathered in, with the creation of a new Neck, whereby the old Neck would be burnt, buried, or fed to the farm's finest beast. In some cases the Neck would be ploughed back into the field on the first Monday to follow Twelfth Night thus ensuring the continued fertility and productivity of the land.

A Guldize Ritual

Things needed: Last year's Neck, a handful of this year's wheat-crop wrapped in cloth, the forked staff, a sickle or billhook, red cords, crucible, coals and pertinent incense, the Troyl things – the drink consisting of ale instead of mead, and extra food and drink for feasting.

The Wise, for this rite, will gather around the time of the September full moon in the corner of a field. The forked staff is set to stand at the southwest of the working area with last year's Neck stood at its base and the Troyl things, crucible of coals and incense and the sickle arranged around this. Build a small fire in the centre of the working area.

When the business of the circle rite is done, one witch will take up the old Neck and solemnly embrace it, or make some gesture of thanks for received gifts and blessings, and in hope for those desired yet to come. The Neck is passed around the circle of those gathered who receive the Neck in the same fashion, until reaching again

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the first. The old Neck is then carried to the west of the circle where the bearer kneels, lays the Neck gently upon the ground and draws their knife to dig in silent reverence a hole in the earth at the circle's edge. The Neck, and the hopes and wishes it holds, is then buried or 'planted' within this hole and covered over. The ritual thus far must be performed in silence and with the utmost solemnity.

Another then unwraps the cloth bundle and takes up the wheat-crop in one hand and the sickle in the other. These are held aloft proudly, above the fire, in the centre of the circle with the declamation:

"I have'n, I have'n, I have'n!"

To which those gathered in the circle respond to the wheat-crop bearer with the question:

"What 'ave ee? What 'ave ee? What 'ave ee?"

The bearer answers:

"A Neck! A Neck! A Neck!"

The sickle is replaced at the foot of the staff and the Neck is then touched, with great reverence, to the ground, held aloft to the sky, and then shown to the East, then to the South and then to the West but not to the North, for no sun comes from there. The neck is then bound into pleasing form with red cords and set to stand in pride of place at the foot of the forked staff to preside over the feast. The Troyl rite will be made with ale instead of the

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usual mead. The Neck is first sprinkled with the blessed ale before any of the gathered company partake of it. The Troyl continues into a feast enjoyed in honour of the new Neck. It will be decided who shall keep the Neck on behalf of those gathered until next year's rite.

Allantide

November's Eve brings us to the end of summer and the opening of winter's gates, again providing a point of ingress between the worlds of the living and the dead. As the reign of Bucca Gwidder comes to an end, so Bucca Dhu rides now across the reddening land, upon the dark steed of wood-smoke breath as spirits walk aboard. It is a time for gradual withdrawal, turning inward and gathering wisdom.

Given the nature of the season, it is hardly surprising that there were a good number of divinatory practices traditionally enjoyed by the populace in Cornwall at Allantide. These were recorded as having been enjoyed mostly by young women, and in the days when a woman having a career of her own was not the done thing, the identity and occupation of her future husband was of vital concern, and so it is also of no surprise that the old divinatory 'games' were recorded as being employed to shed light on this matter more than any other. They were and are of course quite useable to divine the answers to all manner of queries.

The most popular of these old divinations included the use of water filled basins, being best made of the

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Venusian copper if the divination was for matters of love, into which molten lead would be poured; often through the handle of a door key, and the resulting strange forms taken by the water-cooled lead being read for divinatory meaning. Others would write all the known possible answers to a question onto pieces of paper, and roll these individually into balls of earth before dropping them into the basin. The first piece of paper to break free of its earth encasement and rise to the surface would reveal the true answer. Divining pendulums would also be formed, usually from the front door key, or a wedding ring, to which questions would be put and the swinging motions being read for meanings and answers.

The origin of this festival's name is given various possibilities. It is attributed by some to St. Allen, whilst others prefer the likely relation to the Welsh & Manx *Hollantide*, relating it in turn to *Hallowe'en*. Yet others point out 'allan' as an old English word for apple and the traditional association with apples that this festival undoubtedly has. As with many things so contested, the true origins are likely to be a mixture of the various theories and possibilities.

In Cornwall, it was an important *Allantide* custom for specially large and polished apples to be given to friends and family members as charms to bring good luck, foresight, and good fortune in love. These special apples were given the name 'Allan apples' and many were sold in Penzance, where the shopkeepers would proudly display their largest Allan apples in their windows on the Saturday prior to *Allantide*. On the night of *Allantide*, the Allan apple had to be placed beneath the pillow to provide

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prophetic dreams, again usually in matters of marriage, and eaten in the morning to ensure good fortune and the fulfilment of any favourable portents contained in the night's prophecy.

An Allantide Ritual

Things needed: The forked staff, the Troyl things, a cauldron, one large and new orange candle, four black tapers, a human skull or some other fitting representation of the ancestors, the crucible, coals and 'Crow Smoke', a small vessel of bone, horn or earthenware, 'Witch Oil', Troy Stones and divinatory tools, and extra food and drink.

Upon this night, the wise would descend into a fogou, or journey out to one of the remote Penwith quoits; houses of the ancestors; for this is a rite of underworld passage and communion with the dead. The rite must be made adaptable for the chosen location and compromise prepared for. The ability to make ritual movements will be highly limited in most fogous where movement of the imagination and the spirit must take over from the physical. The round chamber of Carn Euny Fogou however provides plenty of room for physical ritual movement. Fogou shelves and recesses may provide the working shrine of the rite, that may be in difference to the preferred directions for these things and so again compromise must be made and the rite formed to fit the location. Quoits present fewer problems where there is ample room for movement outside and around these

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hallowed structures, with the antechamber of Zennor Quoit for example providing the place for a shrine, portal, and point of communion.

The forked staff is placed at the northwest of the working area, with the skull at its foot, with the orange candle to one side and the crucible of coals with Crow Smoke to the other. Before the skull, place the vessel of Witch Oil. Have there also the Troyl things and arrange the divinatory items and Troy Stones in a place where they will be safe. At the quarters have burning black tapers and in the centre have a cauldron containing a small unlit fire of dry furze.

The compass is conjured with the charming of the fire and the walking of the Round not yet undertaken. All stand in silence about the cold unlit cauldron, contemplating the inward withdrawal the spowl of the land is now making and prepare to make that same journey.

One witch goes about the circle to extinguish the black tapers against the sun, so only the single orange candle remains burning in the northwest where the witch takes up the candle and makes the call as others make the sign of the horns:

*“Now upon this Allan-night
let swing open the dark gates of winter!
By call of crow and toad ‘neath the stone,
By smoke, by spirit, by blood and bone,
We conjure thee, we conjure thee, we conjure thee
Oh black one, come!
So shall it be”*

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All repeat “So shall it be” and so now begins the walking of the Round, with one carrying the orange candle representing the sprowl descending deep within the land, as with it, those gathered descend in a round of whispered conjurations of the underworld, to meet with the ancestors and conjurations of Bucca Dhu himself.

When the journey has been made, all stand again in silence around the cauldron, as the candle bearer comes forward to light the cauldron fire of the underworld and the descended sprowl, relighting also the quarter tapers. The fire is charmed in the usual way and another takes up the vessel of Witch Oil and holds it aloft the fire and calls “Bucca Dhu!” three times, those gathered repeating each time. All are then anointed upon the brow with the oil in the sign of the six ways, the oil bearer anointing themselves before replacing the oil at the foot of the forked staff.

One witch now takes up the skull in silence and holds this above the fire for a moment, before stepping back to walk slowly, and in reverence, nine times round against the sun, carrying the skull behind those gathered as all make an inner call to the spirits of the ancestors and loved ones who have passed across the bridge. The skull is held once more above the fire and replaced with care at the foot of the forked staff.

Now begins a period for all to commune in their own way with the ancestors and their beloved dead. Some will work the Troy Stones, some will use mirrors, some will gaze into the fire and smoke to make their communications and seek visions and advice for the coming year. Some time will be devoted to this part of the rite.



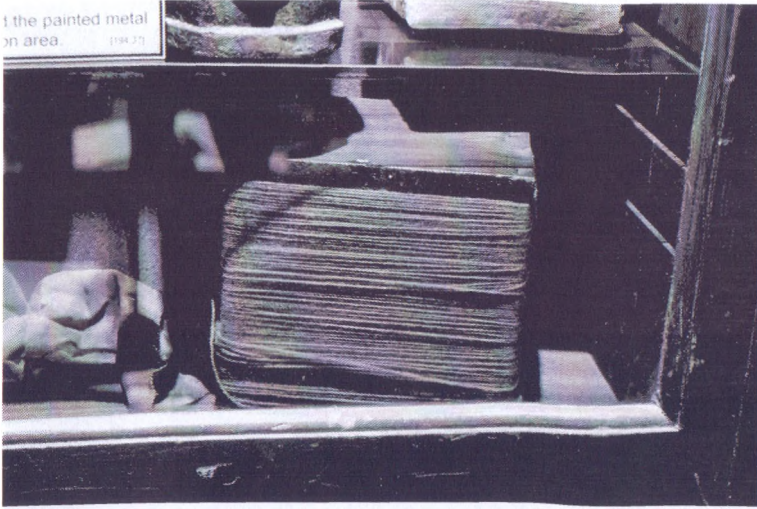
A particularly fine example of a spirit house. Note the use of intricate thread work and shiny materials. Part of the Museum of Witchcraft collection



*The author employs the 'Hood-Lamp' within a working of
candle and pin magic*

*Facing; single tine antler 'prickers' used in weather magic,
Museum of Witchcraft collection*

the painted metal
on area. [194.27]



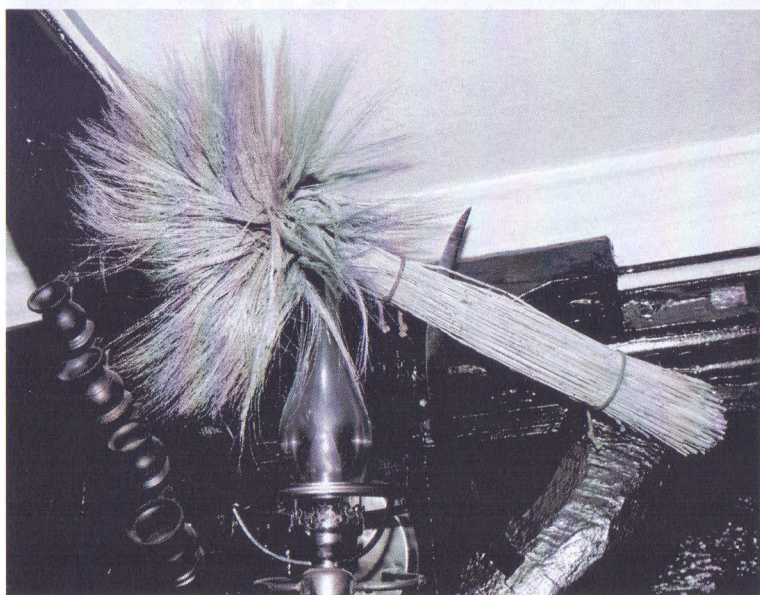
Top; a 'Get-Lost-Box' bound round and round with red wool.

Above; a West Country mirror-bottomed copper basin, to be employed in rites and visionary workings of the full moon when filled with water.

Both items in the Boscastle Museum of Witchcraft



*Padstow 'Obby 'Oss
the 'Old' or 'Red' 'Oss*



Top; Madron Old Cornwall Society Midsummer Fire

Above; the Penzance Guldize Neck installed in the 'Admiral Benbow'



*Madron Old Cornwall Society
Crying the Neck*



The nine knotted red black and green plaited cord

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When the time has come, the Troyl rite will be made with some of the mead first poured into the cauldron fire in offering to the gathered spirits. Allen apples will be exchanged as gifts between the fellows to be taken home for good fortune and prophetic dreams. The rite will be concluded with feasting and dancing to celebrate and strengthen the bonds between the living and the dead.

Montol

Here we reach the darkest point of the year, the Midwinter Solstice, a point of stillness and death, leading to rebirth, for the process of descent and withdrawal has reached completion and from here the only movement possible is the commencement of reawakening, regeneration and rebirth, so it is also a time of transformation, the gradual return of the sun and of the serpent, celebrated with sacred fires upon which the Montol 'Mock' is burned. This is the Cornish 'Yule Log' as it is called in other areas where Oak is used with its solar associations. In Cornwall the Ash is often used instead and is regarded as a highly magical tree, associated with the serpent and regeneration. The Mock is marked with a white chalk figure and burned with great ceremony, and in celebration of the re-birthing into the world the life energies that the Mock represents. Young folk would dance indoors, around many candles stood up within a vessel of sand, or around a bonfire outside, and the mysterious 'guise' or 'geese' dancers would jape about; transformed by their animal spirit masks. Some guise dancing troupes would be accompanied by a Penglaz pole 'Oss, covered with skins or tattered rags

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and topped with a mare's skull or carved wooden horse head. The Penwith midwinter tradition of Penglaz 'guise 'Osses, is first recorded in the 19th C, but may well be far older in origin. The holly, yew, ivy and mistletoe would be brought into the home, affirming life in this darkest time, and as a charm to encourage the return of abundant greenery to the land. As the mock was brought into the house and placed upon the fire, each member of the household would light a painted candle from it to partake of the re-birthing of the serpent and the sun. Children were allowed to stay up for this and to drink to the Mock.

In Penzance, the Montol street celebrations have been revived with fire, guise dancing, and for a brief period, until 2009, Penglaz 'Osses cut startling figures in the icy cold streets, with the masked guisers, as they were traditionally meant to do. They were crowned in yew and seemed to embody the spirit of the winter season, and the continuation of life within the cold, hard land.

A Montol Ritual

Things needed: The forked staff, a cauldron, torches, an ash Mock, the Troyl things, a black candle, goose feather sweeper, crucible, coals and a purifying incense.

To make simple yet highly effective torches for this ritual, you will need to gather some shafts of wood, about the thickness and length of a walking stick. Have one end cut smooth and flat with the other end sharpened to a point.

You will also need to collect some empty food cans. Make a small hole in the bottoms of these and use a

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screw to fix them tightly to the flat end of each stick. Holes will also need to be made with a hammer and nail, or sharp bradawl, around the outside of each can near the bottom. Cotton rags may then be placed into the cans and a little paraffin or lamp oil added. Having the sharpened end makes it possible for these torches to be stood in the ground when not being carried.

Wooded areas, or ancient circles of stone are often visited for this rite. The forked staff is stood in the North of the working area, decorated with the usual seasonal greenery, such as yew, ivy and holly and with black tatters, rags or ribbons. If it is possible, it is good to have on this night a human skull, sat upon a small three legged stool before the forked staff, to represent the Ankow presiding over this darkest night of the year, a night of death and rebirth. Around the base of the staff are also arranged the Troyl things, the crucible of coals, incense, the sweeper, the Ashen Mock and the black candle. The cauldron is placed in the centre and fallen wood is gathered to build a fire within it. The unlit torches are kept close or stood in the ground around the working area.

The circle rite is done without the fire and only the black candle burning. The walking of the Round is made against the sun, in conjuration of the Ankow, and in contemplation of those things that are outworn, stagnant and need to die before life can re-emerge from this time of stillness and dark. When her presence within the compass is felt, or some sign is given, the pace of the Round becomes slower and slower, until all are stood about the unlit cauldron in stillness and silence.

One witch takes up the crucible, with plenty of purifying wort burning within it, and the sweeper of goose feathers.

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This witch first purifies their self by sweeping the smoke over their body, starting at the feet then rising gradually to sweep the smoke above their head. The circle and each person in turn is then also purified with the smoke, banishing, with the aid of the Ankow, all that is outworn, inhibiting, impeding and unwanted.

The crucible and sweeper are replaced at the forked staff and a torch taken up instead, lit from the candle. Another takes up the Ashen Mock. The torch bearer then says:

*“Ankow, Ankow, Ankow!
Black bag of death, transformation and wisdom.
At this time of darkness all has become still,
The land lies cold, hard and dead,
Bring to us transformation!
Return to us the serpent! Return to us the Sun!
So shall it be!”*

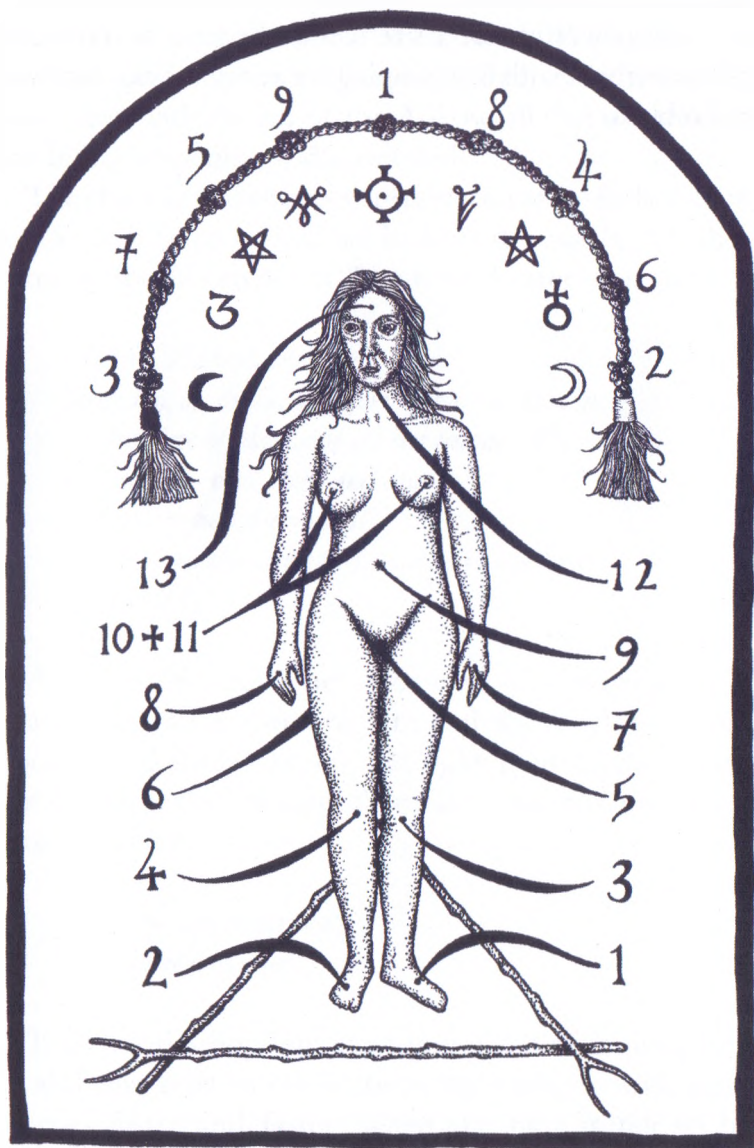
All repeat “so shall it be”, then with solemnity the torch bearer ignites the cauldron fire and the mock is placed upon it. All then take up and light their torches from the cauldron fire, holding them aloft the cauldron for a moment to say:

*“Hail the reborn serpent!
Hail the reborn sun!”*

This may develop into a random chant of conjuration, as all begin now to circle about the cauldron with their torches faster and faster. When the time is felt to be right, the circling will stop and the burning torches stuck into the ground to stand around the circle's edge so that

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the Troyl rite may be made. This might be followed by further circling, wild and mazed, in further celebration of the regenerative force's return to the land, and of self empowerment with fire jumping for reawakening, renewal and rebirth.



Initiations

On the Cunning Way

IT seems that in Cornwall, and in other areas, the traditional process of passing on the teachings of the Cunning Way, from one practitioner to another, occur via the family line, by 'apprenticeship' and, in rarer cases, via admittance to a small and secretive circle of associated, primarily solitary practitioners. Where 'Old Craft' 'Cunning Lodges', Hearths and Circles exist, there are three or four main rites that mark progress upon the path, but only one is acknowledged to be an actual rite of initiation. The first rite a novice will undergo (after having been closely observed for varying probationary periods) in order to be admitted as a *Fellow*, is the rite of dedication. Each Hearth will have their own rite for this, as we do, in which the novice will dedicate themselves to the path in the Old One's name, will swear an oath to keep the secrets of the Circle, and will be ceremonially linked, or bound, to the group in some way. The second is the actual rite of initiation as Pellar, Wise Woman or Cunning Man, in which a partial 'passing/sharing of the power' will occur. This confers upon the Crafter the status of a

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working practitioner that allows them to initiate others and to found a Hearth of their own within the family or 'kord' (clan). The third rite is only taken into practice when an initiated Crafter is to form a new Circle, or when the presiding witch is to retire and transmit their position to their successor in a full 'passing of the power'. This rite confers upon the Crafter the title of 'Devil' or 'Maid', or in my own Hearth '*Dyawl*' or '*Dyawles*'. Such gatherings are, and always have been, few and far between and so apprenticeship to a lone practitioner was a more usual circumstance in which the ways were and still are passed on. Here only two rites may be observed; the dedication and when the training is complete the actual initiation after which the new Cunning Man or Wise Woman is sent off on their way to get on with it.

Whilst each Hearth has their own ways of carrying out rites of admittance and initiation, patterns exist, such as the concept of the 'Cavern of Initiation' for the very few Hearths existing in Cornwall today make a habit of visiting the fogous and sea-caves for these occasions. Cross roads & churchyards are also the venues for certain rites. In addition to the formal admittance and initiatory rites of the Pellar Hearth, there are other informal initiation rites associated with certain 'places of power' within the Cornish landscape, such as the traditions surrounding the 'logan stones'. Such rites often have themes of chthonic power, ancestral gnosis, and rebirth, and are conducted by the Pellar whenever and as often as the need and desire arises.

Within the Old craft, there exist guarded initiatory lines, passed on via Circles, or teacher and 'prentice like relationships. In the first edition of this book, I made

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mention, somewhat to my regret, of one such line within Cornish witchcraft; that of the Cronnek Dhu, or 'Black Toad'. Whilst brief mentions of it existed in a couple of locations on the internet, prior to the release of the first edition, details of the line's rites had not, to my knowledge, been published, and here within this book at least that will remain the case. However, after the release of the first edition, I received many enquiries regarding the Cronnek Dhu, some people started using the name and imagery in various ways, even affixing it to various profane products such as coffee mugs and t-shirts! But saddest of all, one chap from America contacted me to say he'd killed a toad and asked what he should do with it next. I feel some clarity and tying up of loose ends is required here.

The secret rites of the Cronnek Dhu Cornish initory line are similar in some respects to the no longer secret toad bone rites of the East Anglian Craft, however they do not involve the act of killing a toad. The acquisition of the physical remains of the 'right toad' is by portent and an ominous occurrence. Knowledge of the rites are confirmed by an existing initiate. I say confirmed rather than 'passed on' for 'candidates', under guidance, are ready to undergo the rites only when they have realised their true nature and inner purpose for themselves, at which time the toad will appear. The rites of the Cronnek Dhu are a lengthy and personally costly process, during which the preserved black toad fetish is created, and marks the possessor of this charm as a 'Toad Witch' conferring upon them the ability to influence the mind and deeper self of humans and animals.

Historically many practitioners in Cornwall claimed to have been born into a family line of Crafters or Pellar.

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Whether truth, or just good business sense was behind these claims, we can only ponder. It could be argued that the potential client would have more faith in a practitioner they thought belonged to an ancient blood line of the Wise. It seems to be accepted by many Traditional Crafters today that being born to a practitioner does not automatically result in Cunning inclination. It is also however acknowledged that such inclination is born into certain folk, and that this arises in the 'right people', regardless of who their parents might be. Practitioners certainly do though very often tend to come from families where Cunning, or those practices related to it, have been present, sometimes a number of generations back. A blood line of sorts, if not strictly a continuous or unbroken one.

Many working Pellars of Cornwall would claim blood descent from the 'Old Man of Cury' (Tammy Blee of Helston being a notable example) who, according to various versions of an old legend, rescued a stranded mermaid he had found close to Lizard Point, whilst walking the sands in a day-dreaming state. For returning her to the sea he was granted the powers to exorcise evil spirits, lift curses, to provide cures, and to tell the whereabouts of things lost or stolen. These powers of the Pellar would be passed to all of his line.

Lizard Point, and its surrounding coves, has long been held as an area of visionary and initiatory power by Cornish practitioners, and the powers of the spirit of the sea are conjured as a highly useful aid to various magics.

The 'Old Man of Cury' may be seen as the 'First of Pellar Blood', who brought the powers of the sea and the potent serpent force of that place to man, and the true 'Blood Line' is the wisdom and power that enchants the

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blood, as it is passed forth from practitioner to practitioner via initiatory rites.

Within the modern Traditional Craft, it seems a contested issue whether or not the paths of the 'Old Craft' can be trod entirely alone, with no contact or association with other established practitioners from whom to receive guidance. I do feel that it is entirely preferable to strive to make such contacts and associations, essential if one seeks entry into an initiatory line, for the continuity of passing wisdom from one practitioner, directly to another, has much inherent power in itself.

It is entirely possible that, traditionally, some practitioners took up their ways entirely alone, drawing from established local knowledge regarding the charms and rites that heal, avert evil and make divinations, whilst making use of the old 'grimoires' to provide knowledge of further rites and charms.

Progress within the traditional Craft can truly only ever be by experiential immersion, all the better amongst established practitioners, but not at all an impossibility for those whose initial 'contact' can only be via books. In both cases, honest practice and dedication are required.

The 'blood calling' of the true Crafter will lead them to draw wisdom from the land, for both it and the self are the teacher, and within the Compass of Cunning, by communion with the spirits of the ways and those of the blood who have walked its very same round before, is the wisdom and the Way ever passed on anew.

For the solitary dedicant, I offer here a rite of dedication based upon a combining of parts of the rites of Admission and of Initiation employed within my Hearth; Ros an Bucca.

A Rite of Dedication to Bucca & the Cunning Way

Have with you at your place of working: the forked staff, a lantern, the knife, the horn-cup of mead and bowl of bread, a crucible of coals and dragon's blood resin to burn therein. A vessel of 'Witch Oil', a cord plaited, made with dedication, of three strands 9ft in length and coloured one red, one green and one black, with one end bound in white thread and the other with black. Some means of making fire.

Set the staff to stand in the north of the circle and arrange the things for the ritual at its base. Also in the north, mark upon the ground in some way a northward pointing triangle – just large enough to crouch in. Gather some wood to build a small fire in the centre of the circle.

Enter the working area from the East, without clothes, and complete the Compass rite. Begin the walking of the Round with inner conjurations of Bucca, the spirits, and Ankow, the Black One of Annown who brings death, transformation and rebirth. Make a journey down into the earth, into the self and into Annown, continuing the Round until the presence of Ankow is strongly felt. Crouch at the north, within the triangle of conjuration, manifestation and rebirth, with your brow upon the earth and allow Ankow to make her purifications of death and rebirth. Feel yourself going into the earth, with flesh falling from the bone as you become part of the dark earth in symbolic death. Spend some time contemplating this ending of the old life, then feel for the serpentine flow within the earth. When this force is strongly perceived,

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breathe it into your being and feel the spark of renewal as the inner flame ignites. Feel new flesh return to your bones from the earth, and the animation of life return to your body as you breathe of this sprowl, fanning the inner flame to greater brightness.

When the time is right, rise to kneel before your staff. Replenish the crucible with dragon's blood and cross your arms at your chest, with your hands in horned-salute, as you say these words:

*"Horned One; dark and fair,
I answer thy call to fulfil the desire in my blood,
To stand amongst the Wise,
And walk the crooked path and Cunning Way.
By the sign of the horns and the skull,
By snake and hare and toad and crow,
So shall it be and so I bind."*

With both hands take up the cord, keeping the black end to your left and the white to your right. Tie a first binding knot of self dedication in its centre, holding it in the smoke of the crucible, and then kiss the knot. In the tying of the following knots always be mindful of your centre knot and keeping the black end to your left side and the white end to your right.

Arise and hold the cord to the sky and tie a second knot at the far right end of the cord, bound in white, with these words:

*"By the spirits above, may I be wise upon the starward road
of Nevek."*

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Kiss the knot and kneel to the ground and tie a third knot at the far left end, bound in black, with these words:

“By the spirits below, may I be wise upon the hellward road of Annown.”

Kiss the knot and stand with your back to the North. Tie a fourth knot between the centre knot and the white end knot with these words:

“Bucca Gwidder, by thy ways may I be wise upon thy white and blessed Path.”

Kiss the knot and go to stand with your back to the southern edge of the Compass. Tie a fifth knot between the centre knot and black end knot with these words:

“Bucca Dhu, by thy ways may I be wise upon thy black and crooked path.”

Kiss the knot and turn to face the southern edge of the Compass. Tie a sixth knot between the white end knot and the fourth knot with these words:

“By the spirits white, may I be wise upon the Southward road.”

Kiss the knot and go to stand facing the northern edge of the Compass. Tie a seventh knot between the black end knot and fifth knot with these words:

“By the spirits black, may I be wise upon the Northward road.”

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Kiss the knot and go to stand facing the eastern edge of the Compass and tie an eighth knot to the right of the centre knot with these words:

"By the spirits red, may I be wise upon the Eastward road."

Kiss the knot and go to stand facing the western edge of the Compass and tie a ninth knot to the left of the centre knot with these words:

"By the spirits grey, may I be wise upon the Westward road."

Return to the north of the Compass, and lay the cord before the forked staff. Crouch there within the triangle, with your right hand upon your head, and the left beneath the feet and say:

*"Bucca, Bucca, Bucca! Horned One, dark and fair,
Shrine, Hearth and Vessel of all dualities conjoined.
I dedicate my whole self to thee.
For there is nought of me that is not thine,
And there is nought of thee that is not mine.
By the light betwixt the horns shall I walk upon the
Cunning Way,
That is by my blood my true path,
And ever ensure the secrets keep.
As Witch and Cunning woman/man
Bound, and anointed,
So shall it be."*

Take up now the cord, and tie it about your waist. With left finger anoint the thirteen witch's points with Witch

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Oil. Anoint first your feet, then the knees, genitals, base of the spine, the hands, the naval, the breasts, the underside of the Chin (in place of the lips) and lastly the forehead, marking it with the sign of the six ways.

Walk the Round in a dextral circle, in conjuration of the serpent so that the blood may be warmed and the inner fire further fanned by the serpent's breath. Let the Round become wild and ecstatic with leaps over the fire.

Seal and conclude the rite with the Cunning Troyl in communion with the forces raised. Give mead unto the fire and bury food offerings at the four quarters. Leave the place with no visual sign of the ritual having happened there.

Glossary

Allan Apple – Especially large and polished apples, displayed in Penzance shop windows during Allantide, and sold to be exchanged as gifts of good fortune, and often to be used within divinatory practices, particularly for matters of love.

Allantide - The Cornish festival of Allantide, a Hallowe'en festival, with similar traditions to those found at this time in other areas, including divination and the use of apples.

Ankow – The hag; the personification of death and the transformative and purifying processes that arise there from.

Annown – The underworld.

Becoming – An act performed by witches to become fully aware of their connection to 'All' between the worlds. This is of the central teaching of the Cunning traditions; "All is One" from where all magic is possible.

Bucca – A spirit/deity acknowledged by some traditional Cornish Crafters. Bucca is of twin/dual light and dark aspect. Bucca is associated with the weather in Cornish

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lore, particularly Bucca Dhu (the Black Bucca), who is associated with storms and shares many of the attributes of the Devil and Odin.

Compass, The – The name given within the traditional Craft to the properly conjured witches' circle in which the operations of the Craft take place.

Cronnek Dhu – A Cornish initiatory line whose rites are passed from initiate to initiate, only when the candidate has shown themselves ready by understanding the nature of the rites.

Dragon's Blood – A blood red palm resin, long employed within the works of witchcraft, and a stock substance in the traditional practitioner's collection of working substances. It is associated with fire and potency, the serpent and sprowl, and, as such, is generally employed to lend potency to magical workings. In Cornwall and the West Country, Dragon's Blood is traditionally used within love spells.

Fogou – Mysterious ancient subterranean man-made passages/chambers of probable ritual origin. The name is derived from the Cornish 'ogo' meaning 'cave'.

Furry Nights – A name given to the Cornish seasonal festivals, meaning 'ecstatic' or 'holy' nights.

Golowan – The Cornish name for the midsummer period derived from the Cornish for 'the feast of St John the Baptist'. A time of magical and protective fires, lit atop Cornwall's sacred hills or 'Carns'. This practice has been widely revived by the 'Old Cornwall Societies' though much Christianised. A festival of the same name takes place in Penzance each midsummer.

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Guldize – A post-harvest Cornish celebratory feast following the ‘Crying the Neck’ ceremony.

Hood – A Cornish term meaning ‘bewitched’. To Hood something is to make it bewitched.

Knockers – A Cornish spirit once encountered by miners deep within Cornwall’s mines. Named Knockers for their tapping sounds which were believed to lead favoured miners to rich lodes of ore. To win the favour of the Knockers, however, the miners would have to leave a portion of their croust (lunch) in offering, refrain from swearing or making the sign of the cross whilst in the mine.

Mazed – To be in an intoxicated, en-tranced or maddened state.

Mock, The – The ‘Mock’ or ‘Block’ is the Cornish version of the Yule log. Ash was a favoured choice of wood for the Mock which was burnt each Montol.

Montol – the Cornish name for the midwinter festive/celebratory period. A popular Festival of the same name was created in Penzance, featuring many of the old Montol traditions, thanks to the efforts of Simon Reed who has been a driving force behind the revival of other Cornish traditions in the Penzance area.

Neck, The – The last standing corn, after the harvest is ceremonially cut and bound into the ‘neck’ during the ceremony of ‘Crying the Neck’. The ‘neck’ presides over the Guldize feast.

‘Obby ‘Oss – A mysterious ‘hobby horse’ character featuring as the focus of the ancient May festivities of

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Padstow, North Cornwall. The word 'Oss has been linked to an Old English word for 'Old God'.

Pellar—A name given in Cornwall to a breed of professional magical practitioners. The name is thought by many to be linked to 'repeller' as in one who repels evil spirits, ill wishing, illness etc. However, in her article, *Smithcraft and the Cunning Art*, Shani Oates explores an interesting and probable theory that the name may have links with the arts of the Blacksmith, a figure long associated with folk-magical tradition and practice.

Penglaz — A West Cornish name for Mare/Horse skull topped pole 'Osses, at least 19th C in origin, who made an appearance with guise dancers during the Midwinter/Christmas period.

Piskies — The Cornish name for a variety of the 'Hidden Folk', believed in Cornish tradition to be the spirits of the dead.

Poppet — A small figure, made to represent the distant recipient of magical working. Often these would incorporate such things as hair or nail clippings to strengthen the connection.

Quoits — Ancient chambered tombs found in Cornwall. The chambers are constructed using large stone slabs and roofed with a single massive capstone. Evidence suggests they were once covered in stone and earth mounds, with only the capstone visible. They were places of ritual offerings to the ancient dead, and seen by many as 'spirit houses' of the ancient ancestors.

Round, The — The circumambulation of the Compass as an act of conjuration and a 'gathering in' of the spirits, virtues and forces of use to the rite or working at hand.

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Spriggans – a tribe of Cornish spirit, formidable guardians of sacred ancient places.

Sprowl – The vital spirit force of nature that animates life. It is 'power' and 'potency', drawn upon and employed in the work of the witch.

Threefold Track/ Sign of the Six Ways – A depiction, or ritual gesture, in the form of a six armed cross representing the ways above (Nevek), below (Annown) and the cross-quarter ways of the midguard.

Troyl – A celebratory feast involving music and dancing. Used by some Cornish witches to describe the celebratory communion feast within their rites.

Troy Stone – A stone slab, normally of slate, carved with a uni-cursal labyrinth and kept by Cornish witches. These revered stones have trance inducing, magical and transformative uses.

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