

Pagan World 32
Year 8 Issue 4

Dec 21, 2006



Hi all and welcome to the 32th issue of Pagan World!

Be careful what you wish for....

This issue is a bit later than planned because I managed to break my right elbow during an Asatru midwinter ritual. Take my advice: If the fire pit is a meter and a half wide, don't even try to spring over it wearing 5 centimeter boots ☺. And be careful what you wish for when you spring! My wish was that I would not fall into the fire. It came true, because I fell on the other side of the fire while landing. I tripped on the edge of the fire pit, landed face first in the ground, rolled over and started laughing. I don't think that anyone is so good humoured about breaking their elbow ☺ I've already requested a special "kiddy fire" be made for me next year (maybe just a tea light ?) and secondly my wish will be that "I don't fall at all". ☺

Thanks to Morgana for jumping in and attending the PFI Belgium PubMoot in Diest while I was busy at the hospital getting my cast put on. I did show up eventually insisting to everyone that usually I had two normal arms ☺

***See you next issue!
Bright blessings,
Joanne
January 7, 2007***



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PAGAN FEDERATION INTERNATIONAL

PAGAN WORLD

Following the Moon **by Ian Elliott**

While reverencing the Sun and the Earth, polytheistic witches identify the Moon as the special Goddess of witchcraft, a view borne out by that classic of the modern Craft, Aradia, Gospel of the Witches, recorded by Charles G. Leland and published in 1890. Additionally, the witch Goddess (called the Lady and regarded by Wiccans as the personification of all Goddesses combined) has three visible aspects, corresponding to the waxing, full and waning phases of the Moon, known also as the Maiden, the Mother and the Crone. She also has a hidden fourth phase, the Dark of the Moon, which corresponds to her monthly renewal from Chaos, the dark sea of awareness or spirit. The Moon's waning phase is often identified with Hekate, the classical witch-Goddess.¹ That the Moon herself in all her phases had witchcraft as her province can be seen in the second Idyll of Theocritus, often called "The Sorceress".

The current phase of the Moon should be noted in every entry of one's witchcraft journal, for the work one does will depend on the phase one is in.



The waxing phase, associated in antiquity with the Greek Goddess Artemis, begins with the New Moon. When the Moon is a mere sliver in the sky, curving to the right and therefore facing left, the Maiden appears, and Her energy blesses all new enterprises. It was traditional to kiss one's hand to the New Moon for luck, a practice condemned in the book of Job in the bible, which as we know also condemns witchcraft. It was also traditionally considered very unlucky to first catch sight of the New Moon through glass; in other words, witches and Pagans in general went outside around the time of the New Moon to honor Her first appearance and the beginning of a new monthly cycle.

The Carmina Gadelica, a compendium of old spells and prayers, some from Druidic times, refers to the New Moon as "the Moon of guidance." This is the time for a witch to practice divination, in an effort to gain insight into the character of the lunar month just ahead. Whether you deal the Tarot or cast rune-stones or (like me) coins for the I Ching, whatever your method of divination, this is the most important time to do it, preferably right after going out in the fields to catch your first glimpse of the New Moon and kiss your hand to Her.

When you have divined the shape and chances of this lunar month, it is time to plan your spellwork. Spells of increase are effectively cast during the waxing phase of the Moon, especially as She grows round in the sky. So begin any new enterprises at the New Moon, and from the 2nd quarter onward cast your spells of increase. As the Moon begins to grow round, it is a good time to pray to Her for the recovery of lost things. As Patricia Crowther writes:

Pray to the Moon when She is round,
Luck with you will then abound.

¹ Hekate was depicted as a Maiden, though she developed Underworld associations similar to the Crone's from the fifth century BCE onwards. The Crone figure probably derives from the Celtic Cailleach.

What you seek for shall be found,
In sea or sky or solid ground!

The witch's prayer, of course, is little different from a spell. Unlike a christian prayer, it is not a humble supplication with "thy will be done" tacked onto the end of it (a sure guarantee of failure). The witch prays to the Gods in a friendly, cajoling way, much as a child will charm a parent into giving it a treat or present. When you pray to the Lady or the Lad (the Oak or Holly King) or any other God or Goddess, do so in a friendly fashion, showing both respect and self-respect. That is what They like. Remember that there is no original sin in witchcraft, and unless we have broken our oaths or offended the Gods in some other way, we can approach Them with a clean slate.

In India, which follows lunar astrology, the eleventh day of every lunar cycle is traditionally a day for fasting, called 'Ekadashi'. This is the entrance into the week of the Full Moon, which includes the three days before and after the day of the Full Moon, and is sacred to the Mother, called Selene in classical times. Fasting is a method of purification, and witches seek to purify themselves at the start of any new cycle so as not to carry over old energies or 'miasma' which could block the new energies that fuel the 'magic of the beginning'. In the same way, it is wise to purify oneself before a natural process reaches its height, as at the Full Moon or at Midsummer.



The Full Moon itself is the time when witches gather for Esbat, a word which has been said to derive from an old French word meaning "frolic." The main convocations of the witches are the Esbats and the Sabbats, the latter meaning "rests" or "restful recreations." From this we can conclude that the purpose of witchcraft is to have fun. A Hindu sorceress once described life as a process of "playful growth." The play involved, however, is like the play of children, which is both frolicsome and serious at the same time. When children play, they are practicing to be grown up, and throw themselves completely into what they are doing. They laugh a lot but also get angry or weep at times. Witches regard themselves as children of the Gods, and Esbats are the times for us to come together and play as children do, practicing and honing our skills in preparation for that distant day when we become daimones (that is, demigods) and can at last really help the Gods themselves.

As the Full Moon assumes Her radiant nightly reign, the psychically sensitive witch will seek to soak up Her light and subtle influences as much as possible. So even if you celebrate Esbat indoors, you should go outdoors at some point and walk in the moonlight for a while. This light has the quality of changing our consciousness from beta to alpha rhythms, and in time inducing religious ecstasy. Anti-pagan teachings have added the word "lunacy" to our vocabulary, warning against the trance that moonlight can induce. We can learn a lot from these old churchy fables about Pagan religious practice. For instance, people were warned not to lie out at night under the Moon, as the crone in the Moon would rake their faces with her claws. From this we can infer that it was a practice to lie out under the Moon, soaking up Her light and subtle influences and perhaps having a visionary dream of flying to the true Sabbat. So if you have a patio or fenced backyard and the full Moon is out, you might give this a try some night.

Classically-minded Pagans might like to chant the Greek poetess Sappho's Paean to the Full Moon at this time:

Lo, the stars around the lovely Moon
Hide away their bright forms
Whenever she shines most fully
Over the whole Earth.

Or, in Sappho's own lovely Aeolic dialect:

Asteres men amphi kalan Selannan
Aps apokruptoisi phaenon eidos
Oppota pleithoisa malista lampei
Gan epi paisan.

On the day after the Full Moon, the Moon will appear in the daytime sky for a while opposite the Sun, often with Her face tilted to one side, as though reclining in bed after love-making. This is an excellent time for spells of balance.

The fourth day after the Full Moon begins Her waning phase, associated with Hekate, the Greek Goddess most closely associated with witchcraft. The waning phase is for curses and apotropaic spells, that is, spells to fend things off or get rid of things, called in traditional witchcraft 'wanions'. Following the Law of Threefold Return, which states that whatever energy we send out returns to us threefold, we modern witches do not engage in cursing people. But there is nothing wrong with protecting ourselves from the ill regard of others. That the thoughts of others can impact our minds and energy can be seen from the meditation practices of Buddhist monks, who traditionally meditate in the early hours of the morning, when most people are asleep. One reason witchcraft is called "the Hidden Path" is that a witch will seek to live in such a way as to be as free as possible from the restricting regard of others. For this reason the witch cultivates the fourth power of the magus, keeping silent. The less others know about the things you do, the freer you will be, psychically speaking, to do them.



Hekate had power at the trivia, the places where three roads meet, in antiquity where witches gathered at midnight for their conjurations. As the guardian of the trivia, Hekate was represented by a stake or column in the center of the intersection, upon which three wooden masks were hung, looking out along the three roads. In the mid-fifth century BCE, she began to be represented by triple female figures ranged around a column. These figures were in Roman times identified with the three visible phases of the Moon, associated with Artemis as the Maiden, Selene as the Mother, and Persephone as the Crone, ² but Hekate came to be identified with all three phases, and the dark phase as well. Her column is the world pillar or tree which links the

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² Earlier Juno Lucina was a triple Moon goddess. Hekate was later identified with this figure.

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three worlds of heaven, middle-earth and the underworld, and through which spirits and the ancestors travel as in a great cosmic elevator. Hekate is the spirit of the pillar who grants Her worshippers access to the three worlds and is thus the Goddess who empowers witchcraft.

Of the three figures ranged around the pillar or hekateion, the first bears a torch, standing for the torch Hekate bore when she searched for Kore or Persephone when the latter was abducted by Hades. As we saw above, the New Moon is a finder and a guide, which is why witches divine at the New Moon to seek Her guidance throughout the month. The second figure holds a libation bowl and ewer, and stands for Selene facilitating prayer at sacrifices, which are most effective at the time of the Full Moon. Finally, the third figure holds fruit, standing for the fruits of the Earth enjoyed at the harvests of the waning year, the fruits of wisdom gleaned in old age, and the fruits of the spells of increase cast during the waxing Moon and enjoyed during the waning time.

The waning phase, then, should be a time for enjoying the fruition of those short-range spells cast during the waxing phase, and the protective spells cast at this time serve to enhance the witch's enjoyment by securing his or her fences against ill-wishers. This is a time especially for cultivating inner silence, purifying the body and sweeping clean the mind from the miasma of past grievances and sorrows. For the time of the dark phase is coming, when the witch will descend, in deep meditation, into that sea of chaos from which the Gods have their birth and rebirth, and out of which They fashion the worlds. During the dark phase, the Lady Herself sinks into that dark sea of awareness and renews Her own energies. And just as children imitate their parents, so witches imitate Her example and descend into their own inner darkness.

The 25th day of the lunar month, three days before the dark Moon, corresponds to Ekadashi and is a good time to repeat the cleansing fast held earlier. From then till the first appearance in the sky of the sliver of the New Moon is a time for resting, going within and practicing meditation after one's ways. One way is to go backward in memory, tracing one's life back to the earliest times, and trying to recall the sense of oneself one had at different periods of one's life. Who were you when you were small? Then try to go back before that, and get a sense of yourself before you were this person. In Zen Buddhism this is called "one's original face." Deep within, you are still this unknown person. Try to face the world as it first appeared to you, as a fresh, unknown thing. Then face yourself as unknown. This is one way to descend into the sea of chaos, that fruitful place from which all things are born and to which they eventually return.

For complete Sun and Moon information for today, see http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/RS_OneDay.html

For a list of New and Full Moons for the years 2005 though 2009, see http://www.nickcampion.com/nc/planets/full_new_moons2005.htm



Bohemian Moravian Witches' Conference 8 (BMWC)
South Bohemia, Janov, 27th September – 1st October 2006
Written by: Jakub Achrer (Zahrada), NC for PFI CZ

The eighth Czech regular pagan oriented event we are used to call 'conference' took place in September 2006. Considering the number of people involved in Czech pagan community or occult studies we can say that this events with it's attendance about 25 people was again very important meeting of like-minded people and friends with common or similar interests, very often involved in or related to revival of paganism.

BMWC (www.bmwc.org) is organized by small group of four people that has a status of non-profit organization (o. s. REC). It is half-opened invitation only event has very strict rules of attendance, but these rules seem to support spontaneity, fun, creativity and the right kind naughtiness and mirth that seems to accompany many pagan based events. The character of BMWC is very much experimental, experiential and spiritual. It has developed in quite a spontaneous way from very small and simple meetings. Now it is not just a conference. People usually describe it as a several day long intensive work and experience that sometimes changes attitudes to life and development and brings lots of inspiration on their paths. The program contains various workshops, speeches, exercises or even simple rituals based on paganism or practices developed in the context of western magical systems (i. e. Golden Dawn). There are also trips to nature or some historical monuments and much place for fun and socializing is also essential.

**Walk in the woods (Photo:
Zahrada)**

BMWC is very open platform for all paths related to our pagan heritage. The spiritual paths of our attendees and parts of the program range from heathenry and witchcraft to qabbala, chaos magic or shamanism. This fact is reflected not only in the work that is done, but also in the atmosphere that is the necessary part of these conferences. People are open-minded, they know how to listen to each other, they build very strong relationships within the group of regular participants and most of all... they know how to enjoy each others company, have fun and celebrate!



Our eighth gathering was attended by 27 people among who were one British, Spanish and one American participant that have come to join us. BMWC 8 was the first one that was bilingual (Czech/English) including all information material for participants and all workshops. Almost every part of what was going was translated to English.



**Workshop on natural healing systems and Unani medicine given by Jeff (from Vienna)
(Photo: Zahrada)**

We have done introductory ritual that was based on GD system using pentagram ritual, qabbalistic cross and invocations. One of the workshops was aimed on practical work with runes and involved pathworking based on Yggdrasil, the tree of life of Nordic mythology and spiritual system. We have experienced a drama of

Sumerian mythology, but not as watchers or listeners, but as acting all the characters involved. Another deep experience for many of us was shamanistic trance work aimed on traveling to and visiting spirits of various species of plants, often herbs. First session of special group for men spirituality happen during BMWC 8 and more work is planed for the next conference. Women spirituality will be also happening separately and work with the concept of polarities within paganism is planned as a continuation of one very intensive experiential workshop on polarity symbolism that has taken place during BMWC 7.

BMWC is not an event aimed primarily on witchcraft any more. It starts to be a group of predominantly young people that are involved in various paths and that have very proactive approach. They organize meetings, local working groups and various other events. BMWC community is taking leading role as a Czech meeting point for those who are interested in paganism or any related topics and are willing to share with others and build bridges between groups of particular paths through tolerance, understanding and friendship.



Participants of BMWC 8 (Photo: Pooh)

The Devil in Film **by Joanne Agate**

I love horror movies, in particular any movie that has the good versus evil theme. Over the last years this theme has become very trendy in film. In these films the main characters turn their backs on evil and good conquers all. To me the problem is that in most of these films, the evil character is usually the most interesting. Most times I find myself hoping that evil wins, but they never ever do.

A few examples:



- In the "Devil's Advocate" starring Al Pacino and Keanu Reeves, the Devil is quite an interesting fellow. It makes one wonder why Keanu was dead set against accepting him.
- In the series of Prophecy films, Lucifer played by Viggo Mortensen and then later by John Light, makes evil look quite attractive. If they



wanted me to hate him, they should have chosen actors with less charm.

- In the 'End of Days' starring Arnold Schwarzenegger with Gabriel Byrne as Satan, Satan was by far a lot more likeable character than Arnold. Arnold, running around with guns and defeating Satan was positively annoying.



- In 'Bless the Child', the character played by Rufus Sewell, called John Stark, was the Devil's representative on Earth. With his large eyes and handsome face, I would have certainly given in to my dark side...
- In the Passion of the Christ, a sado-masochistic film going incognito as a religious



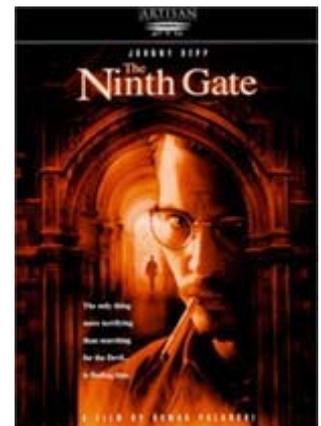
one, I just couldn't wait for them to kill Jesus and get it over with.

On the other hand, in 'Constantine' starring Keanu Reeves, the visions of Hell were positively scary. No argument there—I certainly wouldn't want to end up in that Hell—if I believed in Hell that is. In the Lord of the Rings series, the evil characters are so horrible and evil, and the good characters so filled with honour, that of course there is no doubt to us that good just has to win...



In most of these Satan/Lucifer/Devil films, evil incarnate offers the hero money, women, power, etc if only the person would accept their dark side and give in to evil. But in this modern time where money and power seem to mean more than goodness, is it realistic that all of these characters fight nearly to the death to remain good? To keep holding on to their moral values even when the good God is silent? Do many people in this world really have moral values anymore? Maybe I am a pessimist, but I don't think so.

This is why I find the film "The Ninth Gate" so interesting. Johnny Depp, while investigating a rare book supposedly co-authored by the Devil, finds himself obsessed with discovering the secret and keeping the answer for himself. Depp's character personifies modern man—he's only interested in making money. He is not at all interested in religion or spirituality. The Almighty Dollar is his God. In the end, he gives in and the last view of the film is Johnny walking through the Ninth Gate.



Isn't this more realistic in our modern times? While the Judeo-Christian God has been silent for millennia and horrible things always seem to happen to good people, is it any wonder that Johnny gives in to the dark side? The Christians explain this as that their God gives us free will to choose between good and evil, but isn't that just another way of passing the buck and being lazy? If we emulate the Judeo-Christian God who is presented as a Father to us all, then all parents should give birth to their children and then let them run wild saying "Well, I don't want to influence my child so he can figure it out for himself." It is crap, really.... And just one of the many flaws in the Christian religion, especially since for many hundreds of years when Christianity was new, the Christians murdered each other in the name of God over a differences of opinion. Where was the free will in that? Or how about the Crusades?

Hollywood is known for money, power, back-stabbing and sexual deviants, which is exactly how Evil Incarnate is portrayed in film. So while Hollywood is presenting us with good always conquers evil films, are they accidentally making us want to accept the dark side by portraying evil as being a heck of a lot more attractive than good? Are they doing this on purpose? I'm not sure, but this has given me something to think about.

Beltane 2006 (The first open handfasting in CZ)

Lipnice n. Sazavou, 1st May 2006

Written by: *Jakub Achrer (Zahrada)*, NC for PFI CZ

1 The Altar (Photo: Zahrada)

The first open ritual of pagan handfasting happened during the regular music festival called Beltine 2006. This regular music festival is organized by a Czech society for Celtic culture: The Brotherhood of Celts (www.beltine.cz)



During autumn 2005 few pagans belonging to regular participants of BMWC (www.bmwc.org) and organizers of it (the non-profit society o. s. REC) decided to get into contact with the Brotherhood of Celts and discuss making a real pagan ritual on that music festival that was scheduled for 30th of April – 1st of May. The outcome of that negotiation was very promising. The ritual that was planned was a real pagan handfasting of Sokol and Villona, two of our friends that decided to get married not only officially, but spiritually as well, on the basis of their path that they have chosen for themselves.

The ritual drew considerable attention of media, because of the advertisement of that festival by its organizers. The audiovisual record of it was taken by four mainstream TV channels. It appeared in newspapers also and it definitely contributed to positive public awareness on pagan paths and spirituality in our country.

2 Handfasted couple (Photo: Iva Tereza)



shamanistic techniques.

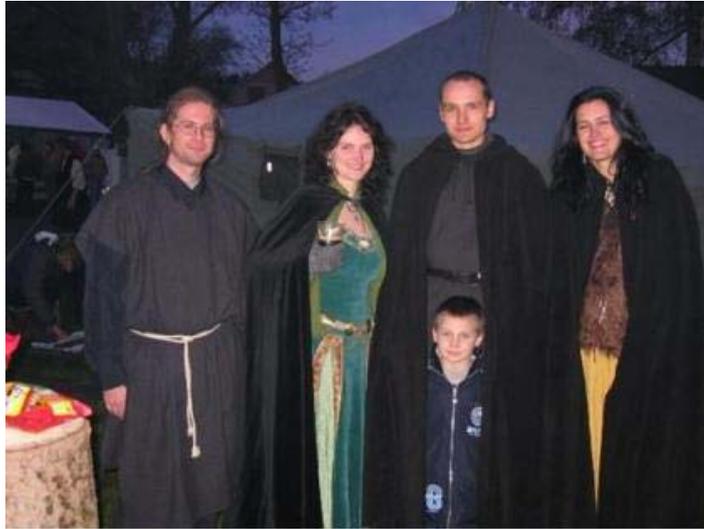
The ritual itself was conducted by a group of people of various paths. We have have called ourselves “Handfasting team”: Baraka, Elijah, Berkana, Zahrada and of course... the handfasted couple Sokol and Villona. These two are eclectic witches, Berkana is the only one following the shamanistic path within a Native American framework, Elijah is also witchcraft practitioner and he is much involved in qabala and hermetism. Zahrada and Baraka are both Wiccan initiates, also with slight tendency to work with

The ritual was witnessed by several hundreds of people directly, it happend right after midnight as a peaking point of the music festival. However... we haven't taken it as any kind of show in any way. We have done it as any other ritual without even paying attention to the crowd and cameras around. In the first line around the ritual circle were closest friends, familiar pagans and people form the BMWC community. When we have cast the circle we have forgotten about the outer world as we usually do when

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doing rituals and the work done was just as intensive as any other ritual worked with very careful preparation, hundred percent attention and presence.

Right after the ritual many people came to congratulate to newly handfasted couple and everybody seemed happy, excited and enjoying the celebration. All of us spent the rest of the night having fun and dancing in the rhythm of Celtic and rock music. We remember this time very often, because it was wonderful and beautiful experience of something great that could be also helpful to pagan revival in broader perspective.



3 Handfasting team before ritual (Photo: Iva Tereza)



The PFI branches out once again!

It is with great pleasure to announce the launching of

PFI The CZECH REPUBLIC

Please see the new website
www.cz.paganfederation.org

National Coordinator is Zahrada
For more information please contact:
zahrada@paganfederation.org

And to put the icing on the cake Zahrada has already produced a newsletter, which will be up and running soon at the usual address

<http://www.paganplaza.paganfederation.org/members/login/login2.php>
password is: dontforgetit

University of Leicester archaeologists unearth ancient curse 1,700-year-old curse tablet to god Maglus invokes destruction of cloak-pilferer

An ancient curse aimed at a thief is one of a number of treasures to be unveiled to the public for the first time, following the largest archaeological excavation the city of Leicester has ever seen.

Over the past three years, a team of up to 60 archaeologists from University of Leicester Archaeological Services has been working on a number of sites in the city. Almost 9% of Leicester's historic core has been subject to investigation in some form, giving new insights into the appearance and development of the Roman and medieval towns.



One of the most interesting finds from a site on Vine Street was a 'curse' tablet – a sheet of lead inscribed in the second or third century AD and intended to invoke the assistance of a chosen god. It has been translated by a specialist at Oxford University, and reads:

'To the god Maglus, I give the wrongdoer who stole the cloak of Servandus. Silvester, Riomandus (etc.) ... that he destroy him before the ninth day, the person who stole the cloak of Servandus...' Then follows a list of the names of 18 or 19 suspects. What happened to them is not recorded.

Before the discovery of this object, archaeologists only knew of the names of three or four of the inhabitants of Roman Leicester, so the find is of great significance.

Richard Buckley, co-Director of the University of Leicester Archaeological Services, said: "Curse tablets are known from a number of Roman temple sites in Britain, and are thin rectangular sheets of lead bearing the 'curse' inscribed with a point or stylus. They were usually rolled up and were probably nailed to the wall of a temple or shrine. Most curses seem to relate to thefts and typically the chosen god is asked to do harm to the perpetrator. It has been suggested, on the basis of name forms and the value of items stolen, that the curses relate to the lives of ordinary people, rather than the wealthy, and that they were perhaps commissioned by the dedicator from a professional curse writer.

"The Leicester curse is unusually well preserved and had not been rolled up. After initial cleaning by a conservator, it was clear that it was covered in handwritten script, including a column of text which looks rather like a list. The inscription is currently being translated by a specialist at the University of Oxford. He notes that the Latin of the script reflects the spoken language in several ways. There are 18 or 19 names, a mixture of commonplace Roman (like Silvester and Germanus), Celtic (like Riomandus and Cunovendus), and 'Roman' names found in Celtic-speaking provinces (like Regalis). The god's name might be a title - 'prince' in Celtic.

"The curse is a remarkable discovery, and at a stroke, dramatically increases the number of personal names known from Roman Leicester. So far, we have the soldier,



Marcus Ulpius Novantico, from a military discharge certificate of AD106, 'Verecunda' and Lucius' from a graffito on a piece of pottery and 'Primus' who inscribed his name on a tile he had made. The name forms will help us to understand the cultural make up of the population, whilst the subject matter tells us about the spread of spoken Latin and the religious practices of ordinary people".

The excavations have also produced many thousands of sherds of pottery, together with building materials, animal bone and a large variety of smaller objects,

including Roman weighing scales, coins, brooches, gaming pieces and hairpins. A find of note from the medieval period is a piece of high status chain mail.

Four large sites were excavated in 2005 and 2006 as part of the Highcross Quarter and Leicester Square Developments, funded by Hammerson plc and Thomas Fish and Co. respectively. Now that the fieldwork has finished, the archaeologists would like to share the discoveries with the public

Highlights of the project have included:

- The discovery of the lost medieval churches of St Peter and St Michael and their graveyards, with the excavation of over 1600 burials
- The excavation of a substantial Roman town house of the 2nd century AD and an adjacent public building
- The investigation of the northern Roman and medieval town defences and the discovery of part of the town wall, together with an interval tower
- The collapsed wall of the macellum or market hall, one of Leicester's Roman public buildings – rare evidence for the appearance of a Roman structure in the city.
- The investigation of a deep sequence of medieval and post-medieval properties on Highcross Street, with evidence for a brewery
- New evidence for Dark Age Leicester, from the discovery of Anglo-Saxon structures of the 5th-6th century AD

The site directors will be on hand to talk about the results of the excavations and there will be the opportunity to view some of the finds and meet specialists in Roman pottery, medieval and post medieval pottery, animal bone, human bone, building materials, small finds and environmental evidence.

Richard Buckley commented: 'The recent excavations have been on a scale rarely seen in British cities, and for the first time in Leicester it has been possible to look at large areas of the Roman and medieval town. This has made it possible to examine complete buildings and to see how an entire neighbourhood changed over almost 2000 years.

'Now begins the painstaking process of analysing the results of the project. The work will involve many specialists and is expected to take several years.'

9th Congress of PFI-Portugal, October 2006

On a clear October afternoon, a few dozen members, guests and many other people attracted by utter curiosity, joined together at the auditorium of “Casa de Goa” where the 9th Congress of PFI-Portugal was about to take place.

While waiting for the beginning of the event, members and guests exchanged their ideas or



or simply talked in a happy mood, and the general atmosphere was cheerful while the harmonic feeling of the atmosphere was increasingly taking form and colour.

When the event was about to begin, everybody reached the audience hall and soon the room was filled with smiles and voices colouring the moment, simple gestures but only one wish and will: to be present.

HPs Isobel Andrade opened the Congress activities, welcoming the audience in the name of PFI-Portugal, followed by the presentation by HP John Belham-Payne who based his presentation on a subject that is creating quite a polemic in the UK: the withdrawal of the terms “Lord” and “God” when referring to the “Creator entity”. He made a few considerations about the subject while reading some newspaper news from the UK where this situation was stated, and made a few very appropriate remarks regarding the denial of those two terms.

Immediately after this first communication, a second speaker and a second theme followed, now HP Thorg of Lusitânia who plainly and clearly presented a few explanations on how specific Paganism is when compared with other religious movements. In his speech we felt the dynamic and clear experience of someone who has been following a Path in continuous transformation.

It was then the moment of a brief intermission, when everybody took some time to give some new energy to one’s body at the bar, while listening to short comments on the two speeches one had heard. Happiness was evident in every face and smiles showed the joy that filled the entire environment, a blooming energy among the audience, justifying the hard “backstage” work the Congress had implied.

The beginning of the second part had once more the presence of HPs Isobel Andrade, with a brief explanation about the third moment of the Congress, while introducing the next speakers - José Antonio Campos and Blue Lady, who would present the results of a study about the Pagan Decan Report on the situation of Portuguese Paganism on the Web.

First of all, José António Campos presented a register of data referring to a computer research, which included the organisations and entities committed to Paganism in the Portuguese virtual world, followed by Blue Lady who presented the conclusions of the report, according to the answers to the enquiry.

At once, an idea came to our minds: the need to join forces to increase Paganism in Portugal, supported by a recognised organisation to represent it.

And then the fourth moment: HPs Isobel Andrade, Coordinator of PFI-Portugal, took us on a journey through the 10 years of PFI-Portugal’s life, for some time we were carried away from the beginning of PFI-Portugal to the present day, visualised in thought the moments, the events, the wishes and desires that made PFI-Portugal grow and flourish and become what we all intend it to be.

HPs Isobel Andrade's clear and emotional communication, illustrated by a brilliant slideshow, travelled over each year of the PFI-Portugal's existence, we could see some of the main events that took place, and could even feel in the voice of the speaker, much beyond words or images, we were actually living a revival of significant moments of a whole route, not always easy but - as this Congress proved - worth it, showing that the courage and strength to go on has not been lost.

Another pause, in every face was evident a noticeable satisfaction while awaiting the last part of the Congress.



We could then feel and listen to the personal experience of Gil-Herne, one of the first members of PFI-Portugal, we were presented with a personal reflection on the growing cycles of PFI-Portugal, marking the increasing importance it attaches in the Portuguese Pagan panorama, and the part that its members and followers must play to guarantee its existence and demonstrate it's not enough only to think but also to take action. To close the activities of this Congress, Will Kale, of the USA, illustrated his presentation

with a slideshow of images and took us a little bit closer to Paganism in the USA. He showed a few examples of the North American reality, opening with a grounding moment in which all the audience took part.

The Portuguese co-ordinators closed at last the 9th Congress of PFI-Portugal, thanked us all for our presence, and made evident that she trusted the next Congress to come up even stronger and more brilliant, with the effort and enthusiasm of all members and followers of the Portuguese Paganism reality.

In the wishes and desires
In the moments and the ways
In the gestures and the words
In the strength and belief
To go on is to achieve
To dream is to live
To live is to Be

And in the Sacred Fire the Power that Joins Us Together is Made Stronger.
José António Campos Translator-Teresa Santana (PFI-Portugal Member)



Mark your calendars! PFI Conference Germany!



**OSTARA-
RITUAL
RUNEN
PAGAN
PARENTING
GALDR
PERSÖNLICHE
MYTHEN
KERZENMAGIE
HEIDENSPASS
FÜR KINDER
u. v. m.**

3. KONFERENZ 2007

DER
**PAGAN FEDERATION
INTERNATIONAL DEUTSCHLAND**

mit
**PAGAN
SPRING
PARTY!**

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17. bis 18. März
(Samstag 10:00 bis Sonntag 17:00 Uhr)
Gästehaus Froschloch
Froschloch 14
44225 Dortmund

Tickets (nur Vorbestellung)
PFI-Mitglieder 22,00 €
Nicht-Mitglieder 26,00 €
Kinder von 5-13 J.: 50% ermäßigt
Buffet: 16,00 €
Übernachtung:
Im Mehrbettzimmer 10,00 €
(begrenzt verfügbar)
Matratzenwechselplatz: 4,00 €
Ticketvorbestellung und Infos
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10 % Frühbucherrabatt bei
Zahlungseingang bis Ende 2006

www.de.paganfederation.org

LEMUN: Leidse Model United Nations

November 2006 – Stedelijk Gymnasium Leiden, The Netherlands

This was the press statement from Fiona van Limburg Stirum, Secretary General LEMUN 2006

More than two weeks have passed since LEMUN 2006. We are proud to announce that the LEMUN 2006 conference has been a great educational experience for both delegates and staff members. Each year, our simulation draws over 500 students from dozens of countries around the world to tackle a diversity of issues in international relations. The LEMUN staff has worked tirelessly to make the conference an exciting and innovative experience to breed dynamic debate. This year, delegates and chairs from Ghana, Sri Lanka, South Africa, the United States of America and various European countries joined our conference. It is those people who made our conference a success!! We are looking forward to seeing you all back in the Netherlands at LEMUN 2007!

See for more information: <http://www.lemun.org/>

18 November 2006

One of the lectures for the “Special Conference on Religious Intolerance” (SCIR) was given by PFI. Attended by about 90 people Saddle LaMort gave a stimulating lecture on “**Religious Tolerance**”

Here is the text:

“Good afternoon. My name is Saddle La Mort.

Within this short talk, I will attempt to look into some controversial issues - but then again, there are seldom any other types, when personal freedom is involved.

During the lecture, I will talk about

- **The role of religion in post-conflict nation building**
- **The tension between freedom of expression and freedom of religion**
- **The impact of terrorism on intolerance towards religion**

The role of religion in post-conflict nation building

Whenever a nation is in trouble, people start to look for 'divine help' to help them through a difficult time. This is a normal reaction, although one that is usually fully exploited by certain religions. Wherever a religion is a power point, that is to say, a strong institution with a lot of followers, the usual reaction of the religious leaders is to try to strengthen their hold on political power as well. This is nothing new; the same pattern can be seen throughout even the earliest periods of religious history.

However, this poses no threat to a democracy, as long as there are several different religious paths are involved. Examples of this can be seen throughout most ex-communist countries. Because the hostile stance that was taken by communism against religious (and of course esoteric and occult) philosophies and practices, most of the former "eastern block" is now sprouting literally hundreds of congregations, churches, religious and alternative philosophy groups.

In Hungary, for example, more than 300 churches are recognised as legal entities. Of course, the downside of this is that a lot of them are what in English are called cults, but all over Europe, most people call them "sects". (I would like to add, that the former term is more correct, a sect - from Latin 'sectio' - is a smaller group that detaches itself from a larger religion or church; this surely cannot be said about a large number of these groups).

In some countries this is dealt with simply by not dealing with it - everyone can believe in whatever they will as long as they don't break the laws, but the state itself does not recognise any of the churches. In others, all churches are recognised, and get the same tax exemptions, benefits, etc. The former method is, in my view, the more democratic one, for there cannot be a real equality. How could there be between a, say, Wiccan church, with 200 active members, and the Christian Catholic church - a lot of the people say they are Catholic even though they are not even religious, simply because they were christened into that particular religion. This, of course affects financial aids given by the state as well.

Recognised by the state or not, different religions do appear in those countries, gathering donations, membership fees, etc. Some of them have a solely financial reason to exist, some are in it for the power, yet others do have a strong faith in what they do; it is all fine and well. Real controversy begins, when, in spite of the fact that the country supposedly supports religious freedom, there is nothing like equality in terms of religious rights. For example, in Germany Christian religious studies are compulsory for school children, to the annoyance of Pagan parents (followers of modern Pagan religions such as Druidry, Shamanism, Witchcraft, Asatru, Female and Male Spirituality, etc.).

Yet more problems arise, when there is only one strong religious group, and it is supported by the state. After, or even during a conflict, people will turn to the only god they know - or, more accurately to the priesthood of the religion. The religion will become an inseparable part of state, and its laws will start to find their way to the homes of all citizens - and this is where democracy ends. Most religions hold strong views on 'religious freedom', if they can get away with it, and usually, they are not built on democratic grounds.

How can, for example, a clash may be resolved, where religious laws oppose basic human rights? This problem is quite obvious in the light of the Muslim faith. While the religion itself is originally gentle and peaceful, some interpretations of the Quran state that women are not equal to men, and they are second-class citizens. This problem boggles the mind of even the most intelligent of lawmakers; therefore I will not even attempt to give a single elegant solution, although I do feel that some answers may lie in the right to travel.

The tension between freedom of expression and freedom of religion

Everyone knows quite a few religious jokes. In our society, it is usually not a problem, to make fun of anything - faiths, politics, certain jobs, certain colours of hair, etc. Some of these jokes, of course, are not very funny and can hurt the feelings of the followers of the group of people it is about, but usually it is not a big deal - Robert Frölich, ex-teacher and friend of mine - Rabbi of the Dohány street synagogue in Budapest, Hungary - he said it's okay to say Jew-jokes. The problem is with Jew-bashing jokes. Jokes are one of the ways people can deal with diversity. Typically, the

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best policemen jokes can be heard from policemen, the best blond jokes can be heard from blonds, and Rabbi Frölich was an infinite source of great Jewish jokes.

So how can this "Western mindset" deal with people, who can't take a joke? A most prominent example could be seen when only recently Danish cartoons were published in a newspaper, and a Danish embassy was blown up in retaliation.

As an aside, now, again, I must remind you, that it was not "the Muslims" who did the deed. It was terrorists. The problem is that these acts do not help religious tolerance at all. People tend to think in boxes - jokes are based on this exact fact. Therefore, if one person from a group of people does something, they will draw the conclusion that all the people in the group are like that. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Back to the topic. The Muslim faith is not the only one that forbids images of certain types. Most of these religions have dealt with this problem, though - they do not do it, but they do not seek to 'push' their views on others. However, again, we do have an absolutely different culture than that of the Middle East. Official statements condoning the cartoons were given, apparently oblivious to the fact that in Europe everyone can express their thoughts in whatever form they choose.

This is also a problem we will have to deal with sooner or later - again, I cannot attempt to give one single answer on the 'how'. It would be very easy to say 'they have to see and accept our views' - but how could we say such a thing without being hypocrites? They could say the same, and with the same right to do so. Therefore, this, again, remains a most controversial issue.

The impact of terrorism on intolerance towards religion

As we have previously understood, the acts of religious fundamentalist terrorists have an effect on how people will view the followers of the faith. Strong anti-Muslim feelings did rise out of the attacks that happened recently - but, again, the issue is not simply black and white. The question is always the 'why'. Why would someone blow himself up on a street in, say, London? People like to think in terms of "us" and "them". "We" are always righteous, gentle, peace loving, friendly; it's always "them" who are evil, warlike, and unethical. If we look at the world now, most of the wars have a real reason (usually money or resources), a cover-up reason (usually along the lines of "they are threatening us, therefore we must fight them"), and most importantly the underlying main reason: that "they" are not "us" and we never really liked "them" anyway.

When we have this view on both sides, we get war, terrorism, hate. But this is just the tip of the iceberg. Religious fundamentalists can be found everywhere, throughout space and time. Buddhism seems to be free of that mindset, but we shouldn't forget the massacre they committed in Tibet - the victims were Bon priests, followers of the original Tibetan religion. However, in Europe today the most pressing issue should be Christian fundamentalism. Although the topic is rarely discussed, they also commit violence quite often. Rev. Angela Buchanan of the Circle Sanctuary wrote an article for a symposium on religious violence, in which she mentions several events - the most shocking of which happened to a young pagan college boy, who was run down by a pick-up truck, tied, then beaten with a cane and hose, cut with knife from neck to hip, then eventually tied to a tree and left.

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Acts like this are, and I cannot stress this enough, acts of religious fundamentalists. 'The Christians', 'the Muslim', do not commit them - certain violent people, who are blinded and driven mad by their own religious ideals, do them. But again, it is easier to simply hate "them" whomever "they" might be.

Religious intolerance of course is encouraged when the followers of a particular faith that is discriminated against, are physically different from the discriminators. If this occurs, then racism comes into play as well, and we can see examples all over the world. People with darker skin are often strip-searched at airports, abused by their classmates at school, or shot by the police (as we all remember the London incident).

The possible solutions

Most problems do have a solution in theory. Our present topic is no exception to this rule, but, unfortunately, the solutions are not feasible in the present situation. Therefore what we **can** do is start working for a world in which true religious tolerance is a very real possibility. We have to do our own part first.

If we are to ease the problems, we all have to alter our individual mindset first. We have to learn to think in terms of individuals rather than groups. It's harder than it sounds, for our mind won't give up the concept of "Us vs. Them" without a fight. If you wish to do an exercise for that, write a page about the people you have seen on the street while going home. Consciously avoid terms that would categorise a person into a group - as an example: don't write, "I've seen a priest". Write, "I have seen a man wearing black suit and a white collar". This exercise helps the mind understand diversity without judgement. After all, the person wearing the same suit might as well be someone going to a costume party.

Another very important step would be education in comparative religious studies. It is easier to relate to a particular religion, if we understand it's basic concepts. We don't have to believe in them - we just have to accept that others believe in them.

A third concept that is already making it's mark all around the world is the "Living Library Project" **. It is basically a possibility to let people meet members of some discriminated groups (Muslims, Jews, Gypsies, Witches, etc.) - it's so much harder to hate a person you meet, than a faceless group of people you don't know.

I hope this talk will start thoughts within you. You don't have to agree with me, certainly not. But the fact that you think about the issue, makes you part of the possible future solution. Thank you."

** Living Library Project, For more information about this project see



http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2006/webArticles/121806_lib.htm

Revenge of the killer fairies
BY SARAH GETTY - Wednesday, November 29, 2006

The 500-year-old death records from Lamplugh which revealed some peculiar demises. Forget knife-carrying hoodies, people in the mid-17th century had far more dangerous opponents to worry about... such as spirits and fairies. Also, pitchforks, stools or even a trusty frying pan were the weapons of choice when it came to street fights, a newly unearthed burial register has shown.

The document reveals the deeply superstitious – and often brutal – side of life in Oliver Cromwell's England. Covering deaths from 1656 to 1663 – the manuscript reveals no less than four people were 'Frighted to Death by faries' while another died after being 'Led into a horse pond by a will of the whisp'. A further seven people died after becoming 'bewitched' – and three 'old women' were drowned after being tried for witchcraft.

While most of the deaths recorded in the Cumbrian parish of Lamplugh were due to old age, drunken duels claimed two lives in bizarre fashion. One man died in a battle 'fought with frying pan and pitchforks' while a second brawl involving a 'three-footed stool and a brown jug' accounted for another. Also dangerous was 'Mrs Lamplughs cordial water', which accounted for two deaths.

The manuscript is not dated or signed, but experts studied the writing and concluded it was written in the mid-1700s. It is based on the burial register from a century earlier, which has been lost, but would have been kept by the local rector. Archivists in Cumbria came across the document recently in their archives in Whitehaven, as part of a national campaign to highlight the treasures to be found in local history.

Archivist Anne Rowe said: 'These were insecure social times and many folk in the 17th century would have been scared of fairies and will o' the wisps. 'Many a natural death would have been put down to the evil witchcraft of a harmless old widow.'

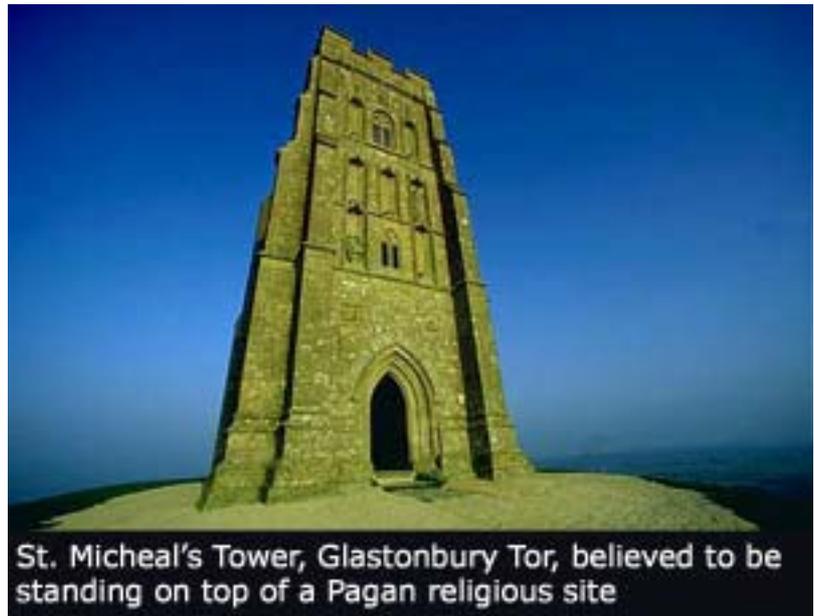
Other interesting ways that the folk of Lamplugh died:

- Knocked on the head at a Cockfight: 2
- Crossed in love: 1
- Broke his neck robbing a hen roost: 1
- Caught a cold sleeping at Church: 11
- hanged for clipping and coyning: 7
- of a sprain in his shoulder by saving his dog at bull bait: 1
- Drank Mrs Lamplughs cordial water: 2
- Knocked on ye head with a quart bottle: 1
- Climbing a crows nest: 1
- Led into a horse pond by a will of the whisp: 1
- Over eat himself at a house warming: 1
- By the Parsons bull: 2
- Vagrant beggars worried by Esqr Lamplughs housedog: 2
- Choked with eating barley: 4
- Old age: 57
- Vagrant beggars worried by Esqr Lamplughs housedog: 2

Persecution of the Indigenous British Religion

HHR Press Release, November 10, 2006

Glastonbury is famous throughout the world but the town has made the news for all the wrong reasons over the 2006 Halloween weekend. It is with great concern that Hindu Human Rights reports an increasingly common attack on a religious minority here in the UK. In Glastonbury, a sacred site for mystical Pagan traditions, the town was taken back to medieval times when Christian extremists in a procession organised by a Roman Catholic group Youth 2000 took it upon themselves to attack local Pagans and threatened to "cleanse" them from the town. Pagan Federation member Yemaya Pinder was abused in her own shop, the Magick Box, while others were pelted with salt and threaten with everlasting hellfire among other verbal abuse.



Thankfully, both the local Catholic priest, Fr. Kevin Knox-Lecky, and the managing director of Youth 2000, Colin Connor, have condemned the actions of extremists of their flock. But we must remember that Pagans in this country do not seem to be treated on a par with other recognised religions. This is partly due to bigotry but also indirectly due the diverse nature of practices and beliefs within this community which do not fit well into a predetermined mental construct, so these traditions are often derided as "primitive" and "superstitious". But once they formed the basis of great civilisations such as the Greek and Roman, the major basis of what is understood to be Western Civilisation.

However, unlike many other Pagan traditions, Indian Paganism has survived the millennia maintaining a continuity with its past, and is now commonly termed Hinduism. For this reason Hindu Human rights not only condemns that unsavoury actions which took place, but is also emphatic with our sister Pagan traditions with which we as Hindus have much affinity and which continue to be deliberately misunderstood, not least in how Hinduism is itself negatively portrayed.

Hindu Human Rights

<http://www.hinduhumanrights.org/pressreleases/hhrPressRelease10112006.html>



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