**British Isles Folk Magick Traditions**

Welcome, title, **intro**

**What is** the folkloric tradition of British Isles? Magick of **common people**: workers, farmers, craftspeople, homemakers. **Magick**: using will & intent w/ natural forces to create change.

**Where**: British Isles – Britain, Cornwall, Ireland, Isle of Man, Scotland, Wales / Cymru, Brittany, places where those people settled, USA & Australia

Don’t have to be of that ethnicity, origin, born there. Affinity. **ANYONE** can do. Not closed, no bloodlines, no initiations

Mine personally Cymric / Welsh tradition from SE Wales, border “Marches” w/ England

**What NOT** – Wicca, Druidry, Asatru, Ceremonial magic – shares some aspects. Do things differently, but can incorporate it into those praxes.

**What IS** – folklore handed down through generations by word of mouth; experience. *Magick* using natural forces to create change – w’in surroundings or oneself. *Witchcraft* – practice, using magick, usually without spirituality. In combination w/ *Nature Spirituality* / Earth Religion – includes spiritual aspect, ethical considerations, reverence for Nature, calling upon helper entities. *LOW magic* – earth more than literature. Common people – *Common Magick*.

**Things in Common** w/ all magickal systems, not just British Folk Magick

**Working**, rite, spell – **Active** magick. \*Change to outside world. Achieve goal

**Passive** magick – Change to self, consciousness. **Attunement** – align, be in harmony with beings, self, world. Journey, astral travel. Divination. Knowledge

**Celebration** – may include all.

\*\*\* Something we Folk Magick people do that is **Unique** that others may have borrowed:

**Folkplay**: Ritual drama, ritual theater, skit, folk dance. Mummer’s play. \* Done to bring a situation about through sympathetic Magick by acting out a drama \*May have lost meaning over time, done only with the intention of carrying on a tradition or as a tourist attraction. \* Most knew – “Pagan custom” in tourist brochures. \*Still creates a Magickal effect

**Entities:** Deities, spirits, heroes, ancestors, Fae, other magickal beings

**Avatar**: Like your social media profile picture, comes from Hindu. \*Aspect, Draw Down Moon, Wicca \*Take on characteristics of an entity, let them work through you. \*Afro-Carribean practice Loa / spirit “ride”, possession. \*You do it, or it happens. Memory or not. Trust! \*Done during rituals, especially ritual theater / folkplay. \*How-to in *Common Magick* or website.

**\***Entity known as a folk deity. \*May King / Queen, Avatar rep **Spring**. \*Avatar rep **Death** Yr Angau / L’Ankou, death deity / psychopomp, statues all over Brittany, in legends, not so much in literature. (Not gender based) \*Family Trad

Act out folkplay fun, can be done in Wicca circle, effective for fertility prosperity magick.

**Liminality**: Places or times betwixt / between, cusp, end and begin, both & neither, aspects of both, several. **Times** – astronomic events; new & full moons; Solstices, Equinoxes, cross-quarters; dawn, dusk, midday, midnight \* Rites of Passage **Places** – Bridge, cliff, tunnel, windowsill, fairy forts, graveyards, crossroads. End one state, begin another. \*Powerful combine – crossroads midnight, beach at dawn. Example: Doorway w/ coins

**Why**: *Working, spell* – Love, health, money. *Attunement* – intellectual, spiritual growth; harmony divination for knowledge.

Put it all together – Steps in *Common Magick*

Example working: **Beating the Bounds**. (Video on website) \*Show tool “wake up earth” \*Authentically older tradition, still practiced in Britain, also in Eastern states USA, Vermont. \*Done around spring equinox. \*Secularized, merged w/ Christianity. \*Remember boundary markers, but also Magickal protection, bring about spring. \*Hit things w/ staff, bury eggs at corners, speak words of power. \* Picture – older drawing of Beating the Bounds

**\*Similarities & Differences** / Wicca, Traditional British Witchcraft, Folk magick of British Isles. \*History of Wicca by Brian Cain. \*I wrote about similarities & differences in *Witches & Pagans* #38. \*Then more tools, artefacts, including as promised, really old athame

**Wicca**: Gerald B. **Gardner** used some actual British witchcraft trads for Wicca. \*He and pals including Cecil Williamson fascinated by witchcraft. Dorothy Clutterbuck. \*Southeastern / Central England – Bricket Woods, New Forest. \*Spells: Tying knots make witches’ ladder, potions, ritual dramas / folkplays like “descent of Goddess”. \*Added Eastern mysticism, Western esoteric tradition like Golden Dawn, Masonic rituals, etc. to create Wicca.

Doreen **Valiente** wrote liturgy. Fed up w/ Gardner, joined Robert Cochrane

**Cochrane** – borrowed from Cornish traditions to create **British Traditional Witchcraft**. Michael Howard, Shani Oates. Folkways – Gemma Gary. \*Cochrane took certain aspects of Cornish trads like tools stang, doth & rig, the folk God figure of the Bucca / Man in Black as priest, mixed with Robert Graves’ *White Goddess*.

**Difference**s: British Isles Folkloric Traditions:

***NO:***  **Initiations,** hierarchy, degree system, lineage

Ritual **circles** – safe space – not always used. Liminal space. \* or **none** – folkplay / ritual drama /dance / procession.

**Goddess** – No “great goddess” or father god like in Wicca.

**4 Elements** – four directions / watchtowers / archangels / not invoked.

Few **altars** – shrines, natural settings, liminal space like a doorway.

***Instead:***

1. Elders train younger; experienced train inexperienced.
2. Rites of Passage – adulthood, marriage, new job, elderhood
3. **Entities** – folk deities, some deities from pantheons in British Isles; beings like Fae, beings of Nature, spirits; heroes, ancestor veneration. Spoken with, asked to help, **avatar**.

***Folk spirits***, folk saints, folk deities – not in literature, but in folklore. \*Bucca / woodland spirit / Cernunnos / Herne \* Death spirits like Angau; \*Madron – briefly mentioned in Mabinogion, mother; well in Cornwall called St. Madron’s well, not canon Catholic, never canonized as saint. Also Mab, Maub, Mawb, Mab queen of the fairies, Mawb = All.

***Animism***: Belief that all things have a spirit, can communicate – rocks, trees, bodies of water, land formations like mountains, plants, animals, the wind…

Witchcraft, the practice, might not have entities.

**Ethics** – follow natural or human-based laws. Law like gravity. \* Honor enech / wyneb \*Swingaround, blowback, comeback – curse. \*Try to cause as little harm as possible. Tread lightly

**FUN**! Often portrayed as dark and spooky, but also fun, celebrations, dancing, singing, feasting. Create positive change for betterment. Attunement with Nature, ethereal beings for bettering life. Folkplays avatar being, “god for a day”, act out legend in skit, storytelling. Frolic.

**Protection**: Because ritual circles not always used, how do we protect ourselves? **What from** – malevolent beings want to steal magickal energy / life force, entities that might not have our best interest in mind \*Curses / hexes / maledythion \*people’s baneful emotions – jealousy illness / human problems.

**How** - Request **aid** magickal beings, ancestors, also use **objects** for sympathetic magick. \* On slide, some protection objects, like talismans and sigils. \*Show you some:

Some British Traditional **Witchcraft TOOLS**:

Peg / **Doth** & Cord / **Rig**: (Video) \*Way to create sanctified &/or protected space, liminal space. Drawing the Compass: **Peg** – wood. Drive peg into ground 3 strokes. **Cord** – rig – rope natural; 9’. \*Attach to doth / peg, hold in hand, walk clockwise / deosil / jeshil / sunwise to manifest, or anti-clockwise, northwise, wraingaits, widdershins to banish. \*Old days outline w/ candles, elaborate ditch w/ water or oil. \*Setup stang in North. **Prop 6.5**: Besom, sickle to get in. \*Also tarp with circle inscribed permanent paint. \*Don’t always use protective circles, mostly for smaller rites & solitary. Not all trads do. Folkplay or ritual procession – can’t.

British Traditional **Folk Magick** **TOOLS:**

Tools **store** energy that is raised, or have natural *intrinsic* quality. \* Can use **Contagion** magick – actually touch something, transfers power. \* Form of apotropaic magick. \* Sympathetic magick, Symbolize state of being, Represent quality.

**Talismans / Amulets**: \*Amulet worn. \*Sigils. **Necklace** amber / British Jett – slight neg electrical charge. Wiccan priestess, found in grave goods Neolithic tombs, including Neanderthals, quality of being organic / not, stones/ not. British Folk Magick – mostly protective, draw power.

**Hawk claw** w/ jett stone – Ethically obtained. Symbol in Italian culture, jewelry, silver. Genuinely older, magick books, British Museum of Witchcraft in Cornwall. Protection, wisdom, communication, go-getter quality of hawk, scrutiny, tenacious; Stone – British Jett, fossilized charcoal. Black, absorbs / repels harmful beings and energies.

**Snakeskin** – protection magic, also intellect, sexual energy. Carry, grind in mortar & pestle,

**Holey stone**: Hagstone, peep stone, seer stone, keek stone. Peer through see fairies, truth. Hang in window to repel baneful forces. Not embellish. Wear / carry.

**Hexfoils**: (PP) Witches’ marks, sigils, runes. Symbols used for generations to attract beneficent entities, energy, state of being. One on cover of *Common Magick* – **Daisy Wheel** or Flower of Life. **Pentagram** – authentically older symbols, used to trap harmful beings, loop around, repel. \*Hundreds of hexfoils found throughout British Isles, including Tower of London, Cresswell Craigs caves, workplaces, homes, even churches. \*Documented by National Trust. \*Spectacles, maiden goddess, corn god, deer, ship, VM, circles. \*Used from ancient times right up to 1950s. \*Book *Medieval Graffiti*. \*Used to invoke, protect against “witchcraft”, repel certain entities.

**Other TOOLS** used for spells and workings, attunement, honor entities.

***ATHAME***! Wiccans aware of the **athame**, (pronunciations) or ritual knife, used to direct magickal energy, invoke a sacred circle, etc. \*In Brit Trad Witchcraft / Cornish folkways, sometimes called a *Shelg*, red handle, used for bloodletting. \*Scots called *Dirk*. \* Gardner wrote about the Sikh people of India & sacred *keris*. \* British practitioners – black handle, magick, cast circle; white handle chop herbs, red handle bloodletting. \* Druids – *bauline*, crescent shaped, bronze, cut mistletoe. \*Ours – Aldag family, authentically older, used for all of the above. Bronze knife, wooden handle, wooden case. Just recently got from Dave’s older brother, no kids, pass along to ours. Might have originated in another culture – Brits traded all over the world.

My book *Common Magick*, also in *Witches and Pagans* #39, *Llewellyn Magickal Almanac*. My website British Isles Folkloric Trad on FB. \*Appearances festivals / Pagan Pride Days / Conventions in the Midwest – learn how to do folkplays / ritual dramas, rituals, arts & crafts make talismans, fun stuff.

**End**: Thank you for joining me. **BENDYTHION**