

The Beltane Bash – Conway Hall, London

The festival of Beltane, and its counterpart, Samhain, divides the pagan year into its two primary seasons, summer and winter. Beltane is about honouring life and fertility. It is the time when the sun is fully released from his bondage of winter and able to rule over summer and life once again and is represented by Fire, growth and the God Beltanus. Beltane itself is celebrated on Mayday, but the festival effectively lasts throughout May.



The Beltane Bash is a two day festival held in the heart of London which just about squeezes itself into the very end of the Beltane period (much to the chagrin of the more pedantic pagans) and sees a coming together of hundreds of pagans of all persuasions from across the country featuring stalls, workshops, talks, music and all manner of odd goings on! Profits from the weekend go to conserving a piece of ancient woodland in Buckinghamshire called Ravens Wood.

The Sunday starts at midday with a huge Pagan Pride parade through central London complete with a Jack in the Green, giant effigies of ancient gods Herne, the Morrigan, Holder, Freiya and many more. The procession certainly makes a bizarre sight as it snakes through the streets surrounding the British Museum accompanied by drumming and cavorting green men, horned men, tattooed Goths and small children running around, stopping traffic and bemusing tourists along the way before finishing by dancing in the fountain in Russell Square.

The festival itself opens with more drumming, then launches into a series of talks and demonstrations including the scariest looking Morris men you've ever seen in the form of Wild Hunt Morris, Red Indian flute playing, lectures on magic and paganism, a pagan choir, naked pot bellied Hells Angels dancing in tutus (I kid you not!), and a live rock band.

Other rooms hold workshops on belly dancing, Egyptian magic, drumming (run by TEMS's Rick Gibson and myself) and Morris dancing. Other rooms hold a huge range of stalls and a craft market selling books, clothes, offering readings, and selling magical tools and paraphernalia. Food and drink were also available in a pagan café.

Bank Holiday Monday continues in the same vein, with more talks on paganism, a very popular Sex Magic workshop

(strangely full primarily of men), didgeridoo lessons on the green in Red Lion Square and talks on tarot, the Morrigan, runes and more drumming and live music.

The weekend culminated with a huge Beltane ritual ending, with the Jack in the Green being brought ceremoniously back to life and a cross dressing May Queen being crowned!

There was certainly not a dull moment over the whole weekend and as the pagan masses retired to the nearby pub to continue the merriment, I was already looking forward to the forthcoming Halloween Festival in Hackney after having thoroughly enjoyed a stimulating, good humoured and enjoyably bizarre weekend.

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(Continued from page 7)

Ruqaiyyah (prayer for therapeutic purposes as well as exorcism of Jinn possession).

So, a different tradition for most of us and while the article is fairly short and cursory it does I think provide an interesting example of how science and religion are, in some cases, finding common ground for research and revised thinking. The full article is at <http://www.quranichealing.com/bpi.asp?caid=61&cid=138>.

The place of the jinn has interested me for some time and some believe that their exploits could account for some UFO encounters, old hag interludes (incubus / succubus) and a few other things. Some TEMSers will know or know of the late Gordon Creighton, he wrote an article with the title 'The True Nature of UFO Entities' originally published in Flying Saucer Review that explores some of these ideas. For those with a further interest it can currently be found at <http://www.sacred-texts.com/ufo/jinns.htm>. The sacred-text site is a repository of articles from many sources which without their efforts would no longer be available.

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Did Jesus Die?, Article revisited.

The above documentary as reviewed in eTEMSNews issue 1 presents the idea that Jesus Christ did not die by execution on the cross but spent the latter part of his life in Kashmir. It also claims that the teachings of Jesus Christ perhaps owed their origins more to Buddhist philosophy than Judaism and the programme presented several examples to back up this claim. I recently came across a website that I mentioned at the time on

(Continued on page 12)