

# Litha - Summer Solstice

*Ritual written\* and led by Charlene  
(Friday 14/12/07)*

## BACKGROUND

Litha (pronounced Leetha) or also known as the Summer Solstice or Midsummer is the longest day of the year, it is the festival of the Sun's rebirth and a time to honour the god where he is at his strongest, highest and brightest. It is a time of celebrating the fertility of the land and the abundance of the earth.

Some celebrate the horned God, some celebrate the God as the Oak King and Holy King where the Oak King (God of light) rules the Waxing year and then falls to his twin brother the Holy King (Dark God) who rules the waning of the year.

The Goddess during this time is full and pregnant and they say it is a good time for any women wanting to conceive to walk bare foot or sky clad through their own vegetable/herb garden at night and pluck some St John's wort. (Herb)

It is also believed that it is the time of the Faery (fairies) elves, leprechauns etc where they come out in great numbers to visit our world. You can welcome them on this day by leaving an offering for them out in your garden.

At this time the God represents the element of Fire and the Goddess represents the element of water.

## Aine

(pronounced 'aw-ne')  
Moon/Sun/Air/Fire/southwest/Summer  
(Celtic: Irish) Moon goddess; fairy queen.

Aine is one of the Great Goddesses of Ireland. She is a Moon goddess, a love goddess who encourages human love, and the fairy queen of Munster. Aine rules agriculture, fertility, crops, and cattle. She was originally a sun goddess who could take the form of *Lair Derg*, a red mare that no one could outrun. It is possible that Aine and Grainne alternated as goddesses of the waning and waxing solar year, changing places at the solstices.

Aine's father, King Egobagal, is one of the Tuatha de Danann. Also called Aine Marina and Aine of Knockaine, she is associated with Cnoc Aine/Knockainy (Aineís Hill) in County Kerry, and with Dun Aine (Dunany Point) in County Louth. People with the surname O'Corra are said to be her descendants.

There are several myths about Aine, who some say was a mortal woman who was taken and enchanted by the fae. She possesses a magical ring that can reveal fairies. Aine liked humans and often mated with men, producing fairy children. She once made a magical vow to never sleep with a gray-haired man. Aine kept this vow even after her jealous sister Miluchrach used enchantment to turn her beloved Fionnís hair that colour. She used magic to kill Aillil Olom, the King of Munster, when he tried to rape her.

There are several stories about how Aine came to marry Gerald, the Earl of Desmond. Gerald came across her bathing in a river and fell in love with her at first sight. He stole her cloak and refused to return it until she agreed to marry him. In another version he found Aine combing her hair beside the river, and used her own cloak to capture her. There is even a version where it was Aine who enchanted the Earl, who then married her.

In any case they had a son, Geroid Iarla, Earl Fitzgerald, who was called The Magician. Gerald was under a taboo to never show that he was surprised by anything their son did, but he broke this taboo by exclaiming aloud when Geroid jumped in and out of a bottle. The Magician then turned into a wild goose, and flew away. Disgusted with her human husband, Aine disappeared into Knock Aine. She is said to dwell there still, in a fairy castle. Geroid is said to live beneath a lake, but will return one day to expel all foreigners from Ireland. Others say that Geroid rides forth every seven years, as a phantom upon a spectral white horse that is shod with silver shoes.

Invoke Aine for love spells, fertility, fairy magic, abundance, prosperity, punishing sex crimes, keeping magical vows, revealing fairies, bearing magical children, and leaving unsuitable mates. The red mare, rabbit, and swan are her sacred animals. Midsummer Eve (Summer Solstice) is Aine's main feast day, when she is traditionally worshiped with torchlit processions through the fields at night. The first Friday, Saturday, and Sunday after Lughnasadh (August 1) are also her sacred days. Some say that Aine claims a life at that time.

## **Cernunnos**

Cernunnos is a Celtic god whose representations were widespread in the ancient Celtic world. As a horned god, Cernunnos is associated with horned male animals, especially stags and the ram-headed snake; Cernunnos' portrayals are unusually consistent. His most distinctive attribute are his stag's horns. He wears a torc, an ornate neck-ring used by the Celts to denote nobility. He often carries other torcs in his hands or hanging from his horns, as well as a purse filled with coins. He is usually portrayed seated and cross-legged, in the meditative or shamanic position. Some have even associated Cernunnos with Herne, The Horned God and the Green Man.

"The Horned One" is a Celtic god of fertility, life, animals, wealth, and the underworld. He was worshipped all over Gaul, and his cult spread into Britain as well. Cernunnos was born at the winter solstice, marries the goddess at Beltane, and dies at the summer solstice. He alternates with the goddess of the moon in ruling over life and death, continuing the cycle of death, rebirth and reincarnation. He is a life-death-rebirth deity.

Paleolithic cave paintings found in France that depict a stag standing upright or a man dressed in stag costume seem to indicate that Cernunnos' origins date to those times. Romans sometimes portrayed him with three cranes flying above his head. Known to the Druids as Hu Gadarn. God of the underworld and astral planes. The consort of the great goddess. He was often depicted holding a bag of money, or accompanied by a ram-headed serpent and a stag. Most notably is the famous Gundestrup cauldron discovered in Denmark.

## **References**

[http://users.bigpond.net.au/sonayasweb/wiccapage/summer\\_soltice2.htm](http://users.bigpond.net.au/sonayasweb/wiccapage/summer_soltice2.htm)  
<http://www.sacredgrove.com/1midsummer.htm>  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cernunnos>  
<http://encyclopedia.kids.net.au/page/ce/Cernunnos>  
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# **Litha Ritual**

*Ritual conducted by Charlene & Samantha  
Friday 14th December 2007*

Everyone is belled into the circle one by one and anointed.

## **CIRCLE CASTING**

By the power of the fae may this circle be blessed, cleansed and sanctified. ( say this while going around the circle 3 times )

### **East**

Guardian of the watchtower, of the East.  
Element of Air, Ruler of the fae.  
We call you to come forward this night to protect & charge this circle  
So Mote it be.

### **North**

Guardian of the watchtower, of the North  
Element of Fire, Ruler of the fae.  
We call you to come forward this night to protect & charge this circle  
So Mote it be.

### **West**

Guardian of the watchtower, of the West  
Element of Water, Ruler of the fae.  
We call you to come forward this night to protect & charge this circle  
So Mote it be.

### **South**

Guardian of the watchtower, of the South.  
Element of Earth, Ruler of the fae.  
We call you to come forward this night to protect & charge this circle  
So Mote it be.

### **Goddess**

Great Goddess Aine, Fairy Queen.  
We call you to join us  
Honour us with the gift of love and Strength.  
Let us feel your presence and guidance here tonight.  
So Mote it Be.

## **God**

Great God Cernunnos, The Horned one  
We call you to join us  
Honour us with the gift of Life and Rebirth.  
Let us feel your presence and guidance here tonight.  
So Mote it Be.

## **WORKING**

Take out 2 pieces of paper and a pen and write down some aspect of your life that hasn't gone so well for you during this year. Then one by one throw that piece of paper into the fire and meditate on it for a few seconds.

Then take the 2nd piece of paper and write on it what you want to bring to your life. Then take a cup, add some soil to the bottom of the cup and add into it your 2nd piece of paper then fill it with more soil. Then take a seed and plant it in the soil as you plant the seed meditate on it and ask the God and Goddess to bring it to your life for the coming year, as your seed grows so your wish will come to light.

## **CLOSING**

### **Goddess**

Great Goddess Aine, Fairy Queen  
Thank you for Honouring us with your guidance & presence here tonight  
Hail & Farwell

### **God**

Great God Cernunnos, The Horned one  
Thank you for Honouring us with your guidance & presence here tonight  
Hail & Farwell

### **South**

Guardian of the watchtower, of the South  
Element of Earth, Ruler of the fae.  
Thank you for being here this night to protect & charge this circle  
Hail & Farewell.

### **West**

Guardian of the watchtower, of the West  
Element of Water, Ruler of the fae.  
Thank you for being here this night to protect & charge this circle  
Hail & Farewell.

## North

Guardian of the watchtower, of the North.

Element of Fire, Ruler of the fae.

Thank you for being here this night to protect & charge this circle

Hail & Farewell.

## East

Guardian of the watchtower, of the East

Element of Air, Ruler of the fae.

Thank you for being here this night to protect & charge this circle

Hail & Farewell.

May the Circle be open, but unbroken,  
May the peace of the Goddess be ever in our hearts,  
Merry meet and merry part  
And merry meet again.

*\* This ritual is a combination of the author's original ideas and information obtained from various books and/or internet sources.*

(4) Photographs by Janine







