



SPELLBOUND

WITCHES, PAGANS, FAIRIES & FOLKLORE

Case File No:

17



PARENTAL INFORMATION:

There are no spells or curses included in this Case File. No mention of the occult either. Nor do any frogs lose their toes or newts lose eyes. We do cover the history of the Lancashire Witches and speak of their being hanged. We believe that this Case File is suitable for younger History Detectives.

INTRODUCTION

Autumn is upon us. It is a time when the magic of nature begins to happen:

Leaves turn all kinds of colours and fall to the ground. Plants begin to get ready to sleep through winter and animals like squirrels start hoarding their winter store of food. We feel a chill in the air and the rush is on to bring in the harvest. We get used to longer nights and some of you might be looking forward to Halloween or different religious festivals.

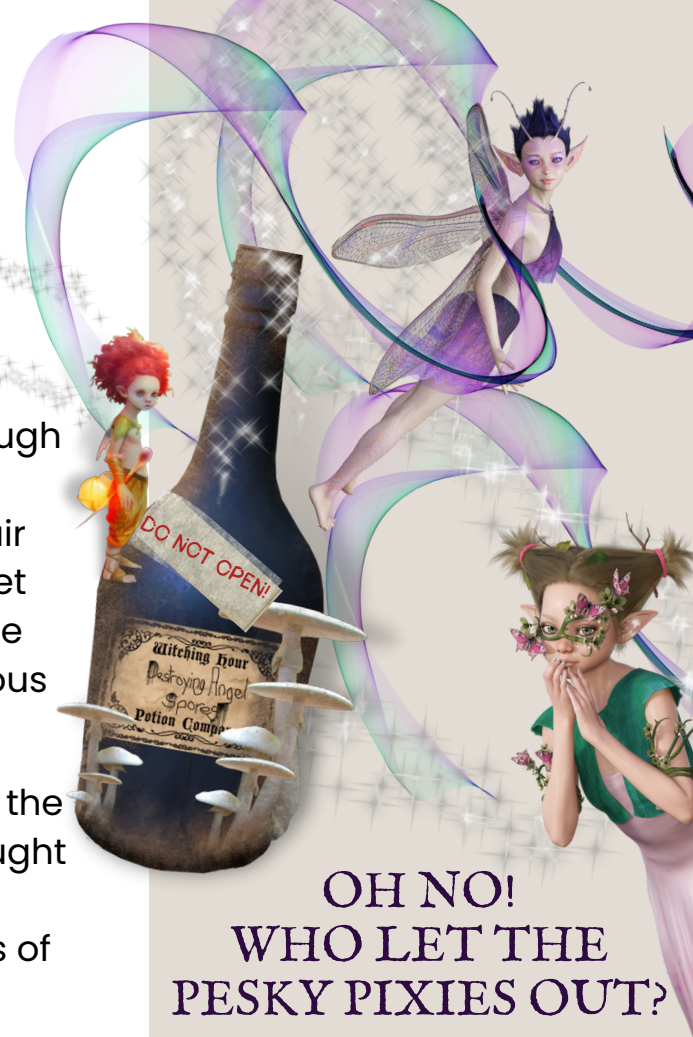
We are all used to this and sometimes we take the changing seasons for granted. Science has taught us what is happening and why things are changing. Before science gave us answers lots of these things were like magic.

Before Christianity was brought to Britain the people living here were Pagans. They believed in the power of nature and many different gods and goddesses. They thought that good things happened because the gods were happy with them. Bad things happened because they weren't...or because someone had put a curse on them.

People turned to their own rituals and practices to ask for good things to happen (and sometimes for bad things to happen to other people). People also used charms and other ways of protecting themselves from bad things. We call these superstitions.

There are still lots of people who are pagans living around the world and we all practise superstitious things sometimes without even realising it!

LET'S INVESTIGATE WITCHES, PAGANS, FAIRIES AND FOLKLORE THROUGH HISTORY.

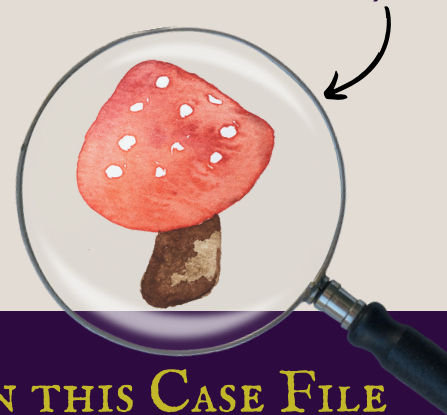


OH NO! WHO LET THE PESKY PIXIES OUT?

Those cheeky little creatures have hidden 7 toadstools in this Case File.

Can you find them all?

(This one doesn't count!)



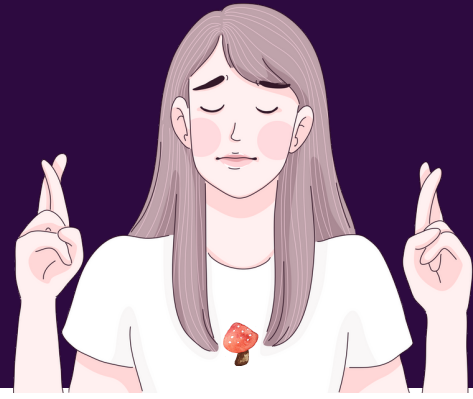
IN THIS CASE FILE

Pagan Beliefs: Nature
Which Witch is Which?
The Lancashire Witches
Superstition

Pagan Beliefs: Halloween
Pagan Beliefs: Christmas??
Do You believe in Fairies?

SUPERSTITION

The chances are that even today you have seen people practising superstitious things and not realised what they were doing. A superstition is any belief or practice that is thought by people who don't believe it to be odd or supernatural. They might think that it is silly but to the person who believes it, it is important. It is usually connected to beliefs and practices surrounding luck, amulets, astrology, fortune telling, spirits, and predicting the future. There are some very odd things that people still do, which are based upon superstition.



MAGPIES

One for sorrow. Two for joy.
Three for a girl. Four for a boy.
Five for silver. Six for gold.
Seven for a secret never to be told.
Eight for a wish. Nine for a kiss.
Ten for a bird you must not miss.

There is a notion that magpies can bring bad luck. It is thought that if you see magpies, then they will tell you what your fortune is. The poem above suggests that seeing only one will bring you sorrow. You then have to fool bad luck and dodge the sorrow. That's why you might see or hear people doing any or all of these weird things:

- Saluting the magpie and saying, 'Good morning general', 'Good morning captain', or 'Good morning Mr Magpie, how is your lady wife today?'
- Saying 'Hello Jack, how's your brother?' and tipping their hat.
- Spitting three times over their shoulder.

TRISKAIDEKAPHOBIA

Did you know that fear of the number 13 is called "triskaidekaphobia"? Friday the 13th is the most widespread superstition. On Friday the 13th people prefer staying at home and keep away from doing anything important, as they are wary of accidents and mishaps on this unlucky day. It has also bad luck for 13 people to sit for dinner together, just like Jesus and his 12 disciples. Jesus was crucified on a Friday - so Friday 13th is a particularly bad day for some.

SPILLING SALT

If you spill salt, then you should throw a pinch over your left shoulder, because that's where the devil sits whispering in your ear to do naughty things!

Take a close look at this close-up of Leonardo da Vinci's painting *The Last Supper*. You can see that Judas Iscariot has knocked over the salt with his elbow. Because Judas betrayed Jesus in the Bible, people began associating salt with lies and disloyalty.



WALKING UNDER LADDERS

Walking under a ladder is considered to be bad luck in almost every country where there are...well, ladders. The superstition is thought to come from the belief that the triangular space between the ladder, the floor and the wall was filled with good and evil spirits, and that they should not be disturbed.

CROSSING FINGERS

To keep your fingers crossed is usually used to wish for luck. It is thought to come from people making a cross to get help or protection from God. Some people keep their fingers crossed until they see a dog to stop any bad luck attracted by walking under a ladder.

LANCASHIRE SUPERSTITIONS



Lancashire has some very peculiar superstitions!

Here are some that were listed in 1851 by Mr Tattersall Wilkinson of Burnley, **but which are real, and which have we just made up for fun?** See if you can work them out.

A hot iron put into the cream during the process of churning, expels the witch from the churn; and dough in preparation for the baker is protected by being marked with the figure of a cross.

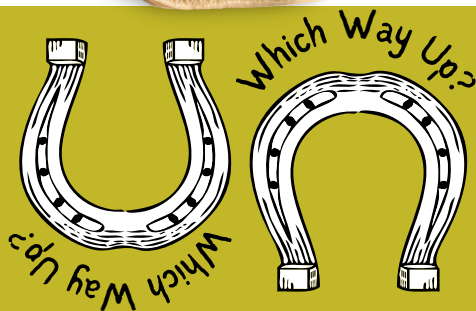
A crooked sixpence, or a copper coin with a hole through, are accounted lucky coins.

If a person's left ear burns, or feels hot, somebody is saying nice things about them. If the right ear burns, then it is a sure sign that someone is speaking evil of the person.

If a person's hair, when thrown into the fire, burns brightly, it is a sure sign that they will live long.
The brighter the flame the longer life, and vice versa.

Warts are cured by being rubbed over with a black snail, but the snail must afterwards be impaled upon a hawthorn. If a bag containing as many small pebbles as a person has warts, be tossed over the left shoulder, it will transfer the warts to whoever is unfortunate enough to pick up the bag.

Answer: Sorry, we played a trick on you. They are all real!



Ask an adult which way up they would hang their horseshoe for good luck.

Hanging a horseshoe open side up or open side down is simply a matter of preference. Opening up is said to collect luck for those in the house, while opening down showers luck on all who pass through the doorway underneath.

Corn Dolly

" 'Tis but a thing of straw" They say,

Yet even straw can sturdy be
Plaited into doll like me.

And in the days of long ago
To help the seeds once more to grow
I was an offering to the gods.

A very simple way indeed
Of asking them to intercede
That barn and granary o'erflow
At harvest time, with fruit and corn
To fill again Amalthea's horn.

(Traditional poem, unknown writer.)

CORN DOLLIES

Pre-Christian societies realised how vital cereal crops were for their existence. Corn Dollies were made by people in the countryside to ask for fine weather, prosperity, fertility and the supply of seed for next year's harvest.

Corn Dollies came in all shapes and sizes. Some communities burned them for good luck, others kept them for the year.



PAGAN BELIEFS: CELEBRATING NATURE



DID YOU KNOW?

The word Pagan comes from the Latin for people living in the countryside - **Paganses**

Hi, I'm Buster Myth.

There must be lots of things that we do today and don't think about why we do them. Shall we bust some myths about some of our weird and wonderful traditions and superstitions?



Myth: Pagans worship the devil don't they?

NOPE!

People who lived in towns and cities thought that the peasants who lived in the countryside were simple and superstitious. They didn't understand their traditions and were often a bit afraid of them.

When Christianity became the dominant religion, then many thought that the rituals that country folk did went against their beliefs- the devil must be involved.

So, there have been people throughout history who thought that pagan traditions and rituals included worshiping the devil, but this isn't the case.

The devil does not feature in these beliefs at all.

MYTH BUSTED!

Paganism is an umbrella term for any spiritual or religious belief that is not a mainstream religion such as Islam, Hinduism or Christianity. Pagan people may believe in many gods and goddesses and usually focus on nature worship. There were many different pagan beliefs in Britain before Christianity became the dominant religion.

In Ancient Britain and Ireland, there lived a pagan class of teachers, religious leaders, intellectuals and healers called the Druids. The word Druid can be translated from ancient Celtic to mean 'one who knows the oak'. The oak tree was a symbol of strength and wisdom as they grow to enormous sizes and can live to be many hundreds of years old.

The Druids were often associated with supernatural abilities, they are thought to have communicated with a variety of nature deities and held huge amounts of knowledge. Druids still exist today as a branch of what we call neo-paganism. They have a nature-based spirituality which follows the changes of the seasons.



PAGAN BELIEFS: HALLOWEEN



You might have wondered why people celebrate Halloween and why this festival involves all things spooky.

Halloween (or Hallowe'en, is a shortened version of All Hallows' Evening) has its origins in the pagan harvest festivals, at this time of year as summer fades and the nights draw in that people would harvest crops and prepare for the winter to come. While this in itself isn't particularly spooky, it does explain why people still have toffee apples and play games such as apple bobbing. Apples are ripe at this time and are in abundance so can be incorporated into the season's festivities.

Likewise, large fruit like pumpkins and root vegetables such as turnips are ripe after having all summer to grow and would be gathered now to be saved for when little else is available. This tradition can still be seen in the common act of carving a pumpkin (some places still use turnips to make Jack O' Lanterns), people believed in doing this, the Jack O' Lantern's menacing grin will scare off any nasty spirits out to cause trouble.

Halloween's association with ghosts is thought to draw from the Gaelic festival of Samhain (pronounced SOW-wen). This time was believed to be the time when the boundary between the world of the living and the world of the dead was at its thinnest and so spirits and ghosts were thought to walk amongst living people. This could be because Samhain can be seen as the point where summer meets winter, and this period of change allows the dead to directly communicate with living people.

Traditions at this time include setting a dummy feast. This involves laying an extra space at a meal or even preparing and serving an entire feast seen as an offering to appease spirits. It can be seen as a way of thanking and honouring ancestors no longer living.

Another interesting custom still practiced in some parts of Ireland is to leave a dish of milk at the front of your house as an offering to fairy spirits known as Cat-Sidhe (pronounced Cat-She), (Irish for Fairy Cat), houses that left a bowl of milk for these spirits are thought to be blessed with good fortune whereas those that neglected to do this will be cursed by the Cat spirits. This may also be where the link between black cats and bad luck comes from.

PAGAN BELIEFS: WINTER FESTIVALS

KISSING UNDER THE MISTLETOE



Mistletoe was sacred to the Druids of Britain, who believed that mistletoe could heal ailments. Most commonly found on apple trees, it was thought especially divine when found upon oak trees.

Romans and Scandinavians would resolve issues with their enemies under mistletoe as a sign of peace. Eventually, the tradition of kissing under the mistletoe came about in England. Mistletoe was incorporated into a decoration called the Kissing Bough during Tudor times. It was made of woven wooden hoops hung with greenery, and a small effigy of the infant Jesus was placed in the middle. They were placed by the doorway to a house and people who visited were hugged and sometimes kissed as they came in, to show peace and friendship.

EATING CHOCOLATE LOGS



Yule is the midwinter solstice celebration of the rebirth of the Sun God. On the night of Yule, a carefully selected log would be brought into the home and using a bit of last year's log to set it alight would be burned over twelve days. It was considered bad luck to allow your yule log to totally burn up. We eat chocolate logs, which are meant to look like Yule Logs.

**BRITISH MID-WINTER THIS YEAR IS AT
9:48PM ON WEDNESDAY 21 DECEMBER
- THEN THE DAYS GET LONGER!**

Many Christmas traditions seem puzzling when compared to the Christian message of Christmas. The reason for this is that many Christmas practices are much older than Christ's Mass itself, dating back to much older religious traditions and gods.

Let's look at some Christmassy things that we thought were just a plain old part of Christmas but are actually really interesting!



CAROL SINGING

The origins of carols lie in farming superstition. Performed during the summer and at harvest time as well as midwinter (mumming), country people sang them as they went about, offering good wishes and blessings on households in return for food and drink. In midwinter (around the 21 December), the carollers provided a wassail bowl full of ale in addition to their songs and blessings.

BRINGING PLANTS INSIDE!



In ancient Rome, December was the time when people decked temples with new flowers and plants, especially during festivals like Saturnalia and Brumalia, when they celebrated the end of harvest and wreathed their homes and public buildings. Holly was the symbol of the Holly King, who at midwinter battled with the Oak King of the fading summer season- and won.

CHRISTMAS TREES & GARLANDS



The ancient Celtic tribes of Europe, as well as the Vikings and Saxons all celebrated trees as symbols of life. They would tie small offerings to the gods to the tree's boughs (sound familiar?). Garlands also formed part of the Saturnalia decorations with the circular shape of the wreath as an ancient symbol of the circle of life and of protection.

GIVING GIFTS



On December 23, the Romans held the festival of the Sigillaria, a day when markets were set up to sell 'sigilla'. These were pottery figures that along with wax candles were made as offerings to Saturn. As time went on, the Sigillaria markets became a place to buy Saturnalia gifts for loved ones.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN FAIRIES?

When the first baby laughed for the first time, its laugh broke into a thousand pieces, and they all went skipping about, and that was the beginning of fairies. And now when every new baby is born its first laugh becomes a fairy. So, there ought to be one fairy for every boy or girl.

J. M. Barrie, Peter Pan

Thanks to J.M. Barrie (who wrote Peter Pan and introduced us to Tinkerbell) and Disney most of us think of fairies as pretty, tiny creatures that flit around with delicate wings and tinkling bells. They sprinkle fairy dust, grant wishes and even take away our teeth! But history and folklore tell a different tale.

Once upon a time (sorry, we had to say that) most people didn't like to mention fairies by name and so called them by other names, like the Little People or the Hidden People. There are hundreds of different kinds of fairies – some are minute and kind creatures, others hideous and mean. Some can fly, and they can appear and disappear at will.

The oldest fairies on record in England (this doesn't mean that they didn't exist before then, it just means that this is the first time we think that they were written about) were first described by the historian Gervase of Tilbury in the 13th century in his 'Book of Marvels'.

FAIRY-SPOTTING GUIDE



The Tooth Fairy

The Tooth Fairy was first written about in around 1200. In medieval Europe, it was thought that if a witch were to get hold of your teeth, it could lead them to have power over you. So, if the fairies took away your teeth you were protected from the wicked witches.



Hobgoblins & Brownies

These are guardian fairies. They are useful ones and do housework and odd jobs around the house. The term "hobgoblin" comes from "hob" ("elf") a word that can be traced to about 1530.



Lancashire Boggarts

Lancashire boggarts could be a real nuisance. To calm them down you laid a saucer of milk or planted holly, which was well-known for scaring away evil and mischievous spirits. You could also hang a horseshoe on the door of your house or leaving a pile of salt to keep them away. Some boggarts were so horrid that their tales are too nasty to tell here.



Will-o-the-Wisp

Marsh gas makes flickering flames that hover over marshy ground. This gave us the belief in Jack-o-Lantern. Jack-o-Lantern, or Will-o-the-Wisp, is a highly dangerous fairy that haunts marshy ground, luring unwary travellers into the bog!

BUT WHICH WITCH IS WHICH?

In the 1500s to the early 1800s Lancashire was a poor county. There weren't many people living here and it was a place divided by money and religion. Some people were Catholic and others were Protestant, few were rich and most were poor. Generally, people on the different sides didn't get on.

During this period the devil played on people's thoughts a lot. Those who were heavily religious saw people who were different as being dangerous, maybe even working for the devil!

People at this time really believed in witches. They were thought to be people who had made a pact with the devil in exchange for powers. If your cow was ill, it had been cursed. If there was plague, it was because of a curse. If the turnips didn't grow, it was because of a curse...

Most people who were accused of being witches were old, poor, single women, they were often innocent medicine-makers and midwives. Men and children were accused of being witches too. If you didn't like your neighbour, it was easy to get rid of them by telling people that they were a witch. It didn't just happen here, but all over the place, even America.

It didn't help that King James published a book, *Daemonologie*, in 1597 saying it was his right to torture and kill witches (male and female) who were threatening his position with their wicked ways. No-one trusted anyone anymore and if you liked to enjoy your privacy, or told your neighbour's children to stop being naughty, then chances are they would go home and tell their Mum that they saw you practising witchcraft...your days would be numbered!



1. if she be too ugly or too pretty.
2. if she be too poor or richer than they should be.
3. if she liveth by herself or hath a cat.
4. if she hath a birthmark.
5. if her hair be black, ginger, blonde, or brown.
6. if she doth not worship God.
7. if she hath knowledge of herbs and medicine.
8. if she floateth or if she sinketh in water.
9. if she doth not weigh much, thus she can ride a broom.
10. if you hath had a dream about her.

THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES

England's most famous witch trial happened right here in Lancaster. In the autumn of 1612, twenty people, including sixteen women and girls, were committed for trial, and most of them tried for witchcraft.

These people all came from remote and wild places in Lancashire, around Pendle Hill and Samlesbury near Preston. They were very poor and some of them made a living begging. Others were traditional healers, using a mixture of herbal medicine and talismans or charms which they would sell for pennies. This made them obvious targets for people to accuse them of witchcraft. We have already learned how easy that could be. Neighbours turned on neighbours and even children turned on their own families.

Six of the Lancashire witches came from two families, each headed by a woman in her eighties. The first, Chattox, was described as "a very old withered spent and decrepit creature, her sight almost gone...Her lips ever chattering and talking: but no man knew what." The second, Demdike, was described as "a very old woman, about the age of four-score years*, and had been a witch for fifty years." The two old women hated each other and some of the charges were made against each other. Some think that it was because their families were in competition with each other, trying to make a living from healing and begging in a place where few people lived.

Despite this, it was suggested that all of the witches and warlocks were working with each other and that regular meetings would take place at the home of Demdike.

When Elizabeth Device stood trial, one of the key witnesses was her 9-year-old daughter, Jennet. She said that her mother had held meetings with witches at their house, and that her brother was a witch too. During the two days of Jennet's testimony, the jury believed *everything* she had said. As a result, most of her family and neighbours, 10 in total, were hanged at Gallows Hill, Lancaster, near where Williamson Park is today.

Jennet's testimony impressed lawmakers so much that they changed the laws to allow children to testify against witches everywhere. 20 years later, Jennet faced accusations of witchcraft herself. However, times had changed in England. Although the jury found her guilty, the courts set her free.

*A score means twenty. So, four score years means that she was 4 x 20 = 80 years old.



IMAGE: SIR JOHN GILBERT, "THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES"

THE WONDERFULL DISCOVERIE OF WITCHES IN THE COVNTIE OF LANCASTER.

With the Arraignement and Triall of Nineteene notorious WITCHES, at the Assizes and generall Gaole deliuerie, holden at the Castle of LANCASTER, upon Monday, the seventeenth of August last, 1612.

Before Sir IAMES ALTHAM, and Sir EDWARD BROMLEY, Knights; BARONS of his Maiesties Court of EXCHEQUER: And Iustices of Assize, Oyer and Terminor, and generall Gaole deliuerie in the circuit of the North Parts.

Together with the Arraignement and Triall of JENNET PRESTON, at the Assizes holden at the Castle of York, the seven and twentieth day of Iulie last past, with her Execution for the murder of Master LISTER by Witchcraft.

Published and set forth by commandement of his Maiesties Iustices of Assize in the North Parts. By THOMAS POTTS Esquier.

LONDON,
Printed by W. Stansby for Iohn Barnes, dwelling neare Holborne Conduit. 1613.

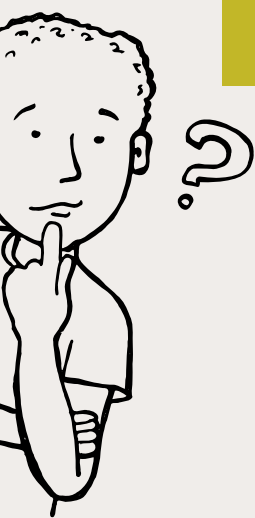
THE WHOLE TRIAL WAS RECORDED AT THE TIME BY A MAN CALLED THOMAS POTTS AND WAS PRINTED IN A BOOK CALLED 'THE WONDERFUL DISCOVERY OF WITCHES IN THE COUNTY OF LANCASTER'

SO, WHO WERE THE PEOPLE ACCUSED OF WITCHCRAFT AND EXECUTED IN LANCASTER?

10 people were executed at Lancaster on the 20th of August, 1612, for having 'bewitched to death by devilish practices and hellish means no fewer than sixteen inhabitants of the Forest of Pendle'. Today, we see the Lancashire witch trials as a power struggle between different religious groups, who put fear into people's minds and led to the death of these and other innocent people throughout Lancashire, Britain, and the World.

Anne Whittle alias Chattox
Anne Redferne, daughter of Chattox
Elizabeth Device, daughter of Demdike
James Device, son of Elizabeth Device
Alison Device, daughter of Elizabeth Device
Alice Nutter
Jane Bulcock
John Bulcock, son of Jane Bulcock
Katherine Hewitt, alias Mould-heels
Isabel Robey

Myth: People accused of being witches were dunked in water. If they floated, they were guilty and if they sank and drowned, they were innocent - dead but innocent.

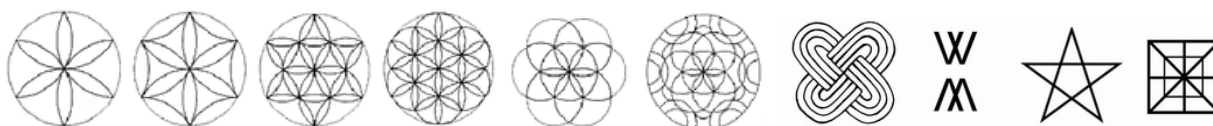


Nope!

We've all heard this story haven't we, and we wondered if someone accused of being a witch would ever get a fair trial. If they float, then they're a witch and we execute them. If they sink, they're not a witch but... they drown. BUT apparently the witchfinders had a bit more sense than we give them credit for, and anyone who sank was actually pulled out of the water and sent on their merry way.

MYTH BUSTED!

YOUR MISSION - APOTROPAIC MARKS



These shapes can sometimes be found on old buildings. They are called Apotropaic Marks (pronounced app-o-trow-payic). They were carved into stone or wood to add a layer of spiritual protection, as they are designed to 'ward off' evil. Think of them as the opposite of a curse - a curse is designed to bring down bad luck, an Apotropaic Mark was designed to do just the opposite - and keep an object, space or people safe from harm.

Go out and about and see if you can find any Apotropaic Marks anywhere.

EVIDENCE FROM THE MUSEUM COLLECTION

OBJECT TO LOOK OUT FOR:
THE MYSTERIOUS WOMAN ON A RING

LOCATION:
LANCASTER CITY MUSEUM

AGE:
AROUND 400 YEARS OLD

MATERIAL:
BONE (ANIMAL)



Actual Size

Made from bone, the ring is bezel-cut, meaning that it is all formed from one piece with the lady lying flat against the finger. It dates, we think, from between 1600 and 1700. Very little is known about the ring. What we do know is that it is incredibly rare. It came to the museum in the 1970s accompanied by a small note stating that it was found in ground behind properties on Market Street, Lancaster, with its head snapped off.

The ring could be a protective charm worn to deflect evil spirits or plague. It was made around the time that the Lancashire Witches were tried at Lancaster Castle and was found along what might have been the route that they were taken to be executed.

It could be in remembrance of a loved one who has died, or more likely created by a young man, perhaps a soldier or sailor as a gift for his girlfriend or wife when he returned home after years away. Tokens like this were a declaration of love: though with her head snapped off, perhaps she didn't feel the same way!

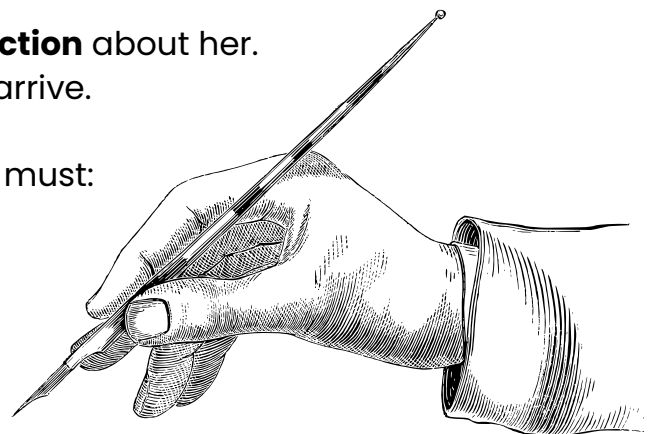
YOUR MISSION: 55 FICTION- THE BONE RING

Head to the City Museum and find the bone ring in the first-floor gallery.

Look at her for a while and **write a piece of 55 Fiction** about her. Please ask for a postcard to write on when you arrive.

Rules about writing 55 Fiction stories. Your story must:

- be 55 words or fewer
- include a setting.
- include one or more characters.
- have some kind of conflict.
- have a good ending.



Once you have completed it, leave it with the team at the museum and get your Time Traveller's Passport stamped.

SPELLBOUND PUZZLES

It can all be very puzzling!
Have a go at these
Spellbound-themed
puzzles.

WORD SEARCH

Can you find all of these words in the
puzzle below?

charm corn dolly fairies
Lancashire luck magic
medicine mumming pagan
Pendle spellbound wishing well
witches

C	E	M	W	W	L	P	Z	S	L	R	S	T	K
G	A	M	M	I	A	M	L	G	A	Y	N	G	Q
I	R	N	G	T	N	E	H	G	K	S	R	U	X
O	C	O	G	C	C	D	W	V	P	G	Z	N	U
G	H	L	G	H	A	I	C	P	Z	S	C	N	R
I	A	M	U	E	S	C	R	A	H	P	N	Y	L
R	R	W	I	S	H	I	N	G	W	E	L	L	C
R	M	U	M	M	I	N	G	A	S	L	U	C	K
G	I	G	Y	P	R	E	G	N	O	L	G	E	G
F	A	I	R	I	E	S	I	D	U	B	H	L	O
R	K	H	J	I	R	N	N	G	R	O	D	S	A
V	I	X	U	G	L	R	D	Q	S	U	S	N	S
M	Z	I	N	L	O	U	A	L	U	N	Y	C	G
M	A	G	I	C	M	G	N	S	E	D	W	V	I
B	G	O	I	D	I	U	B	I	O	B	R	I	M

MISSING LETTERS

My first is in **Mouse**, but not in **House**
My second is in **Leaf**, yet not in **Feel**
My third is in **Sage**, but not in **Safe**
My fourth is in **Wish**, and not in **Wash**
My last is in **Calm**, yet not found in **Balm**.

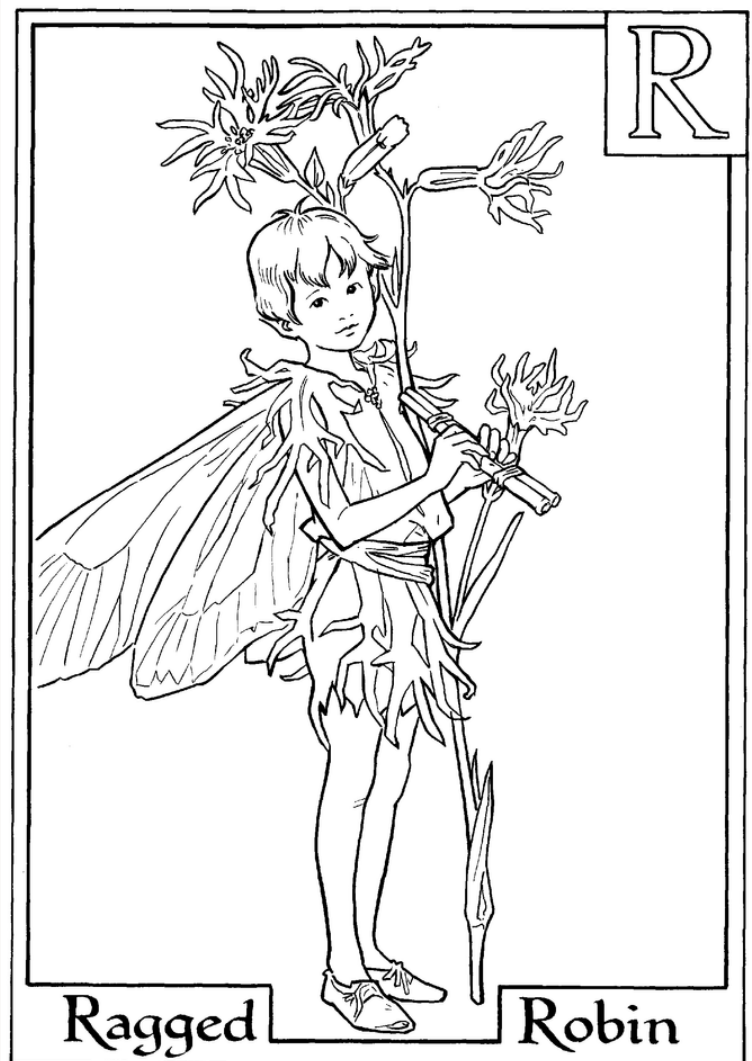
What am I?

ESCAPE THE SPELL!

Can you hop your way out of the maze before you stay a frog forever?



COLOUR-IN





**VISIT THE MARITIME
MUSEUM AND HAVE A
GO AT OUR FAMILIARS
MUSEUM TRAIL**



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