



**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

- Lammas Lore
- Lugh
- Lammas Ritual
- Lammas Recipes

L A M M A S 2 0 0 8

Lammas/Lughnasadh Lore

by Maria Kay Simms

This ancient Pagan festival of early August celebrates the first harvest. The name "Lammas" comes from Anglo-Saxon origin and means "loaf mass," a celebration of the bread made from the first harvest of grain. Lughnasadh honors the Celtic god Lugh. His name means, "light," so he has been called the "shining one." In Wiccan rituals of the season, Lugh is often equated with the Sun god. His light in this season may be waning, with each day just a few minutes shorter, but here in the northern hemisphere we are still very much in the full heat of summer. Any Pagan or Wiccan reference one can check for the Wheel of the Year festivals contains reference to Lugh, though there is very little agreement on either the spelling (Lughnassadh, Lughnasadh, Lunasa, etc.) or the pronunciations of the name. Some sources place the accent on the first syllable (LOO-na-sa), while others say (Loo-NAH-sa), but most all that include any kind of pronunciation key suggest the "g" and "d" are silent. The spelling used in the title here is from The Witch's Circle.

Perhaps the most popular ritual depictions of Lugh focus on his skills as a maker of tools. In Irish Gaelic lore he was a chief of the Tuatha de Danaan, fabled as both a warrior and a very multi-talented towering figure who became, over time, an immortal god equated with the Roman god Mercury. Lugh was considered the patron and inventor of the arts, including the practical tools needed for livelihood. As a protector of his people and teacher/demonstrator of the skills they needed to survive, he fits well the sequential theme of this turn of the wheel as is explained in The Witch's Circle, and also is summary in the Wheel of the Year section of this site. Midsummer was the culmination of the solar year cycle, the longest day and the height of the Sun's power. In the eight-fold cycle symbolism as first clearly defined by astrological philosopher Dane Rudhyar, Midsummer would be number 5, the Full or culminating point. Lughnasadh, the sixth spoke of the Wheel, would then be Disseminating. The term "disseminating" means, "to spread" and it is very much a function of Mercury, messenger of the Sun, whose function is to communicate, to disseminate knowledge. This understanding of the theme of the Sabbat, whether it be called Lammas or Lughnasadh, fits well and pulls all the varied myths together into one central theme of sharing.

At the Disseminating phase of any eight-fold cycle, we have attained culmination-Fulfillment-and now we must give from what we have received. In the Lammas celebration of the first bread of the early harvest, the community shares the bounty of their labors. Lugh represents the maturity of the traveler on the Wheel of Life, the great Sun King who is each year born of the Mother at Yule, and grows to his Full power at Midsummer when he consummates his union with the Goddess. As his energy flows into the Earth, warming her to the growth that will become the harvest, he recognizes his responsibility to her and to her children. He will become Father and

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protector, and when the times comes at Fall Equinox, the willing sacrifice as the full harvest is reaped and the stag falls. But now, as Lugh, he is with us to demonstrate and to share his knowledge and his skills by disseminating-spreading the word. He is a teacher and exemplar of sharing.

Alternatively, rituals of this Sabbat, which is directly opposite on the Wheel from Brighid (Candlemas, Imbolc), often feature the Corn Mother, autumn counterpart of Brighid as the Corn Maiden. In February, you saw here a photograph of Circle of the Cosmic Muse's Brighid, a doll fashioned of cornhusks, dressed in bridal white and placed in a decorated basket-bed with a phallic wand. In Lammas rite, the cornhusk doll is dressed in red and may be mounted on a staff and carried in celebratory procession. She is now the Corn Mother from whose body is brought forth the abundant harvest. The photograph shows the altar for a Lammas ritual in which the Corn Mother theme was used.

Corn bread and apple cider in the chalice made fine treats for the sharing part of this rite. Fresh sweet corn was husked in circle, then cooked and eaten during the potluck feast following ritual. During the ritual the corn husks and yarn were used to fashion simple solar crosses. These were then charged as amulets of house blessing to be taken home and hung over entry doorways.

Other traditions of Lammas focus on the fact that this first rite of First Harvest begins the season of sacrifice, when the grain of the harvest must die in order to provide food. Two mythologies that lend themselves well to this theme are that of John Barleycorn and the Wicker Man. One year Circle of the Cosmic Muse enacted the entire John Barleycorn song as we sang it, and another year we constructed and burned a Wicker Man.

Lugh

Lugh is a God who exists in all Celtic pantheons with only slight variations in his name. In Ireland, he is known as Lugh Lamfadh (Lugh of the Long Arm). In Wales, he is known as Llew Llaw Gyffes, "The little one is many skilled". In ancient Gaul, he was called Lugos, and throughout the rest of the isle, he is known as Lug. His stories differ in each region as well.

Primarily known as the God of the Sun, Lugh is a "Jack of all trades". He is a Warrior, Physician, Druid, Bard, Smith, Brewer, etc. His trademark weapons in all traditions are his slingshot and spear. In Irish lore, he is the father of the great hero, Cu Chulainn. He can be called upon for help with anything requiring the use or demonstration of one's skills (i.e.: job interviews, starting new projects, etc.). He can also be called upon for almost any other reason (healing, courage, creativity, etc.).

Lugh in Irish Lore

Lugh's story starts with a secret love affair between Cian (A De Dannan) and Eithne (The daughter of Balor, the Formorian). Balor locks his daughter in a high tower, unreachable by any means except for flying. Cian, not to be disheartened by this, enlists in the aid of a Druidess, who makes him able to fly on a cloud over to the tower.

Months later, Eithne gives birth to two beautiful babies (which proves that they are not of Formorian fatherhood because Formorians are to be quite ugly). Balor, worried and angered by this, throws the babies into the sea. A prophesy had been made that a child of Formorian and De Dannan blood together would bring about his death and he wanted to prevent that fate. One drowns and the other swims away. The baby boy is discovered by the Sea God, Mannanann MacLir who in turn sends him to a warrior woman, Tailtu, to be fostered until such time that the boy is old enough to return for the 4 treasures of the otherworld to defeat Formorian rule).

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The young Lugh was raised by a frazzled Tailtu. He learned so quickly that he became bored very quickly and would drive her nuts. She taught him everything that she could, and sent him to others to learn what she could not teach. By the time he was a young man, Lugh had pretty much gained almost every skill there was to be had. Soon, it was time for him to return to Mannanann and fulfill his destiny.

Llew Llaw Gyffes in Welsh Mythology

Llew Llaw Gyffes' story is quite different from his Irish counterpart although there are a few similarities.

Arianrhod, the Goddess of the Wheel of Fate and Time as well as the moon and magic, wanted to prove her virtue. Her brother, Gwydion put his staff down on the floor and bade her step over it. If nothing happened, then her virtue would be proven. She did so and as she stepped over the staff, two baby boys fell from her loins. Enraged and humiliated, she swore to kill the two babies. She drowned one, while Gwydion ran off with the other one. Arianrhod yelled after her fleeing brother that the boy would die unless she gave him a name, arms, and a wife (Which she was not about to do).

Gwydion raised the boy as his own until the time came for the boy to be given a name. He took the boy to Arianrhod in disguise. They were disguised as travelling Cobblers. While fixing Arianrhod's shoe, the boy noticed a bird flying overhead. He pulled out his slingshot and shot the bird directly.

"The little boy has many skills!" Exclaimed Arianrhod, impressed with his skill.

"You have given him a name, Arianrhod...Llew Llaw Gyffes - the little one is many skilled!" Crowed Gwydion with glee as he shed his disguise.

Arianrhod did not have time to be angry as her castle was attacked in surprise. Panicking, she forgot about her curse and gave Llew weapons to help fight the attackers.

"Now you have given him arms!" Stated Gwydion.

"You may have me there, Gwydion, but there is no way you can trick me into giving him a wife!"

She was right. Gwydion could not think of a way to get around that obstacle, so instead he opted to make Llew a wife. He went to his uncle Math and together they created a fair woman from flowers. They named her Bloddeuwedd. She was more beautiful than any woman seen and she became Llew's wife.

Unfortunately, Bloddeuwedd, although created from flowers, had a mind of her own and fell in love with another man. In her unhappiness, she and her lover plotted to kill Llew. Normally, this might not have been too hard a task, but Gwydion had put a gaes on Llew that he could not die unless he was standing with one foot on land, one foot in water and killed with his own spear. Through trickery, they accomplished this task by getting him to stand with one foot in the bath, one foot on the floor while her lover speared him in the heart with his own spear. This wounded Llew badly but did not kill him. He turned himself into an eagle and flew away.

Gwydion found this eagle many months later in a tree. After conversing, Gwydion changed Llew back into his human form and healed him. Enraged at Bloddeuwedd, he changed her into an owl (the flower faced bird) so that she would only show her face at night.

Lughnasadh ritual

Place upon the altar sheaves of wheat, barley or oats, fruit and breads, perhaps a loaf fashioned in the figure of the Sun or a man to represent the God. Corn dollies, symbolic of the goddess, can be present there as well.

Arrange the altar, light the candles and censer, and cast the Circle of Stones.
Recite the Blessing Chant.
Invoke the Goddess and God.

Stand before the altar, holding aloft the sheaves of grain, saying these or similar words:

Now is the time of the First Harvest,
when bounties of nature give of themselves
so that we may survive.
O God of the ripening fields, Lord of the Grain,
grant me the understanding of sacrifice as you
prepare to deliver yourself under the sickle of the
goddess and journey to the lands of eternal summer.
O Goddess of the Dark Moon,
teach me the secrets of rebirth
as the Sun loses its strength and the nights grow
cold.

Rub the heads of the wheat with your fingers so that

the grains fall onto the altar. Lift a piece of fruit and bit, savouring its flavour, and say:

I partake of the first harvest, mixing its energies
with mine that I may continue my quest for the starry
wisdom of perfection.
O Lady of the Moon and Lord of the Sun,
gracious ones before Whom the stars halt their courses,
I offer my thanks for the continuing fertility of the Earth.
May the nodding grain loose its seeds to be buried in
the Mother's breast, ensuring rebirth in the warmth
of the coming Spring.

Consume the rest of the fruit.
Works of magic, if necessary, may follow.
Celebrate the Simple Feast.
The circle is released.



Lammas Recipes

Perfect Corn Bread

1 cup sifted all-purpose flour
 1/4 cup sugar
 4 teaspoons baking powder
 3/4 teaspoon salt
 1 cup yellow corn meal
 2 eggs
 1 cup milk
 1/4 cup shortening
 Sift flour with sugar, baking powder, and salt; stir in cornmeal. Add eggs, milk, and shortening. Beat with rotary or electric beater till just smooth. (Do not overbeat.) Pour into greased 9x9x2 inch pan. Bake at 425 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes.

Corn Sticks: Spoon batter into greased corn-stick pans, filling 2/3 full. Bake in hot oven (425) 12 to 15 minutes. Makes 18.

Stuffed Mushrooms

From Wisteria's Faery Recipes

2 tablespoons butter, divided
 1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
 2 tablespoons diced green pepper
 Salt
 Pepper
 1/4 cup chopped mushroom stems
 2 tablespoons chopped onion
 1/2 lb. large mushrooms, stems removed
 3/4 cup bread crumbs
 2 tablespoons cooked, crumbled bacon
 12 small slices cheese (optional)
 Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Melt 1 tablespoon of the butter over low heat and saute' the mushroom stems, green pepper, and onions until tender. Mix in the bread crumbs, bacon, thyme, salt & pepper. Spoon the mixture into the mushroom caps. Place the caps on a cookie sheet. Melt one tablespoon of the butter & drizzle over the caps. Top each with a cheese slice. Bake for 15 minutes. Serve hot.

Yield: About 1 dozen.

Noodles in Faery Butter

From Wisteria's Faery Recipes

4 hard-boiled egg yolks
 2 tablespoons orange flower water (optional)
 1/2 cup sugar
 1/2 cup sweet butter, softened
 1 lb. noodles (any kind), cooked
 1 teaspoon dried thyme
 1 teaspoon dried sweet basil
 1 orange, sliced (garnish)
 Beat the egg yolks, sugar, butter, thyme, basil, and orange water in a small bowl until smooth. Mix enough of the butter with the hot noodles to coat the noodles with a golden-yellow color. Garnish with orange slices.

Yield: 8 Servings

Pitcaithly Bannock

8 oz flour
 4 oz butter
 2 oz caster sugar
 1oz chopped almonds
 1oz mixed candied peel

Set oven to 325F/Gas 3. Grease a baking sheet. Sift the flour into a bowl. Add the sugar and butter and rub in to form a dough. Add the almonds and mix in the peel, making sure they are evenly distributed. Form into a thick round on a lightly floured surface and prick all over with a fork. Place on the sheet and bake for about 45-60 minutes. Allow to cool and serve sliced thinly and buttered.



More Lammas Lore

Once known as 'Sextilis', as it was the sixth month of the Roman year (from March). The month was then given the name of 'Augustus' in 8 BC, later changed to 'August' and is said to derive from honouring the Roman Emperor 'Augustus Caesar'. As part of the seasonal calendar August is the time of the 'Corn Moon' according to Pagan beliefs and the period described as the 'Moon of the Black Cherries' or 'Moon when the Cherries Turn Black' by Black Elk (Black Elk Speaks, Neihardt). August has also been known as:

'Oostmaand' (Harvest month) - Old Dutch

'Weod-monath' (Weed month, vegetation month) - Old Saxon

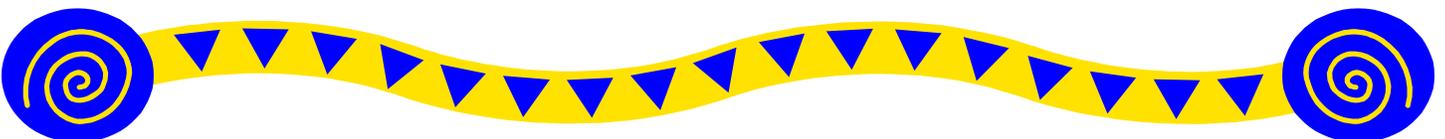
August has historically been considered to be a lucky month. This is the first month of 'Lammas' (August - October), commencing on August 1, a time of harvest before the winter onset of 'Samhain' (beginning in November). The first day of August was a date for the Druid festival of 'Lughnasadh', dedicated to the 'God Lug' with celebratory dances which evidence suggests reflected the everyday activities such as cutting the corn, ploughing and weaving. The baking of bread, on August 1, made from the first flour after the first harvest, was used in the 'Hlaef-mas', made into the 'Mass loaf' as a central part of the Druid ceremonies.

From the fields, the hedges to the orchards everyone would be involved and busy. A vast array of foods would be brought in, and as Lammas progressed to a close both the Celtic and pagan year would end with thanksgiving ceremonies to the God Bel, the earth goddess for the fruitfulness of the land. Luke of the four gospels, his symbol being the haloed calf, is associated with the period of Lammas.

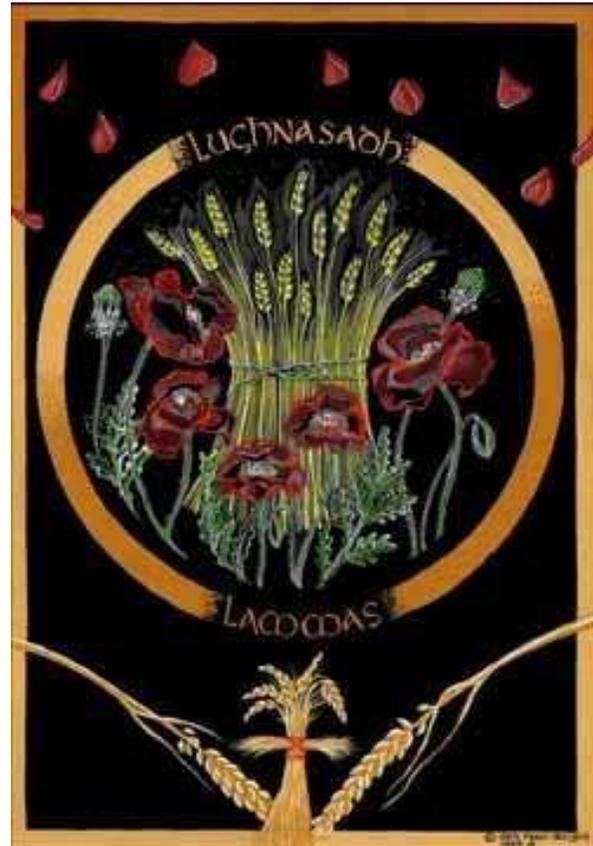
'Grant, harvest-lord, more by a penny or two,
To call on his fellowes, the better to do;
Give gloves to thy reapers a largess to crie,
And daily to loiterers have a good eie.'

Thomas Tusser

The in-gathering and storage of grain actually began in early June 'By Barnabas put scythe to the grass' but it was not until this time that the major ceremonies and offerings were made of corn to the gods. A residual of this can still be seen today in the common rural practice of making the intricately designed 'Corn Dolly' or 'Kern Dolly' at this time. These were traditionally made from the new grain and decorated with prayer rags or red thread and ribbon which was believed to ward off negative forces, and in some cases witches. Working in ever decreasing circles the workers would clear the fields, leaving the 'Corn-spirit' safely in the middle for capture in the few remaining ears. The daring would throw their scythes into the centre together to cut down the last few stalks. This ritual action known as 'Crying the Neck' of the corn-spirit, also 'Crying the Knack', or 'Crying the Mare'. The kern-dollies, as already mentioned, were made from these last few stalks, woven and plaited into ritualistic representations of the 'Maiden', the 'Ivy-girl' or the 'Baby'. Placed in the home these were seen to provide protection against negative forces and believed by some to keep the corn-spirit ever present, although this meaning has been disputed. The last sheath of corn was preserved and carried home by the 'Harvest Lord', wrapped in a ribbon and handkerchiefs and presented to the women, this ritual being a reminder of the precious need of man for corn, and a lasting trophy of his achievement.



Lammas images and pictures



What books have you read, that you would suggest for the rest of us to read?

Cooking To The Wheel of the Year by Lynn Riggs Palfi

Lammas: Celebrating the Fruits of the First Harvest by Anna Franklin and Paul Mason

Pagan Chants

Selection from <http://www.seeliecourt.net/panpipe/oldchan.html>

Sacred Grove

We Approach The Sacred Grove
with hearts and minds and flesh and
bone.

Join us now in ways of old,
we have come home.

Circle Gate

Naught Shall Pass Our Circle Gate
Caught By Fire - Blue Fire Bright
Five Points Blaze - Safe And Secure
Star Of Light, Guard Well Our Fate

Newsletter Submission Due Dates

Imbolc Issue—January 2nd
Ostara Issue—February 22nd
Beltane Issue—April 2nd
Midsummer Issue—May 20th
Lammas Issue—July 2nd
Mabon Issue—August 21st
Samhain Issue—October 2nd
Yule Issue—November 21st

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