

THE GREENWOOD TAROT



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A Guide to the Greenwood Tarot

This book compliments the information written by Mark Ryan in the book that accompanies the Greenwood Tarot cards. I have expanded upon the explanations of the minor arcana, court cards and the Wheel of the Year lay out. The superimposition we have made between the Greenwood Tarot and the Wheel of the Year is not incidental or artificial; it is an important rediscovery: we believe the Wheel of the Year was the underlying system for the original tarot decks. Tarot designs emerged in various forms in Italian courts in the late Middle Ages. Originally they were commissioned for the rich, being hand painted and gilded. With the invention of printing they could be produced for the general public. Tarot cards are the product of a medieval need to explain and unify the workings of the world, religion and the state. Thus a Knight and Queen, Judgement and the Hierophant are in a pack as well as Strength and Justice. Some of the original decks included the four elements and signs of the zodiac. It is only the wheel that unifies these disparate archetypes.

The seasonal cycle of the Wheel of the Year was the basis of the Christian year and feast days, which in turn was overlaid on the pre-Christian sacred year. A complicated system of symbolism and calendrical observation based on the eight-fold division of the year is evident in the Boyne Valley monuments (Newgrange, Knowth) Eire c3,800 BCE. There mounds and stones are aligned to the solar and lunar rising and setting times of all eight festivals.

It is obvious that to an earlier hunting and gathering culture, subtle observation of seasonal change was essential for survival. The tarot is subtitled the 'pre-Celtic Shamanism of the Mythic Forest'. This means that we have traced the origins of the archetypal figures in the tarot back to their pre-historic roots; taking what is most ancient and updating it, so that it is relevant to the contemporary world. It took me four years to research and recreate the Greenwood Tarot; I lived it day and night. I was continually struck by the importance of the tarot as a unified system, a wonderful map, combining and explaining psychological states, deities, archetypes, and the natural world. The Greenwood Tarot is a form of eco-psychology, a modern shamanism. I believe in magic, in wonder, in the extraordinary that can occur when one's heart is open to possibilities.

The tarot cannot predict the future 'set in stone', but it can clarify future possible outcomes should one approach life in certain states of mind; one is not a victim of fate, the outcome of most readings can be changed by a change of attitude. An in depth study of the tarot will give you profound insights, and help you live in harmony with yourself and the world around you, enabling you to bridge the distant past and the near future.

All the cards are based on European images; apparent similarities between our deck and other 'native' mythologies are because of similarities in early climate and lifestyles. For instance the continent that is now the USA had Ice Ages like Europe with the same prehistoric animals, i.e., mammoth; Prezewalski horses and cave bears. A human in bison skin and horns was painted in a French cave (Chauvet) c. 28,000 BCE, echoing the contemporary Native American sacred bison dancers. The Greenwood Tarot aims to give a coherent European shamanic system so that there is no need to steal imagery from other cultures.

Looking at the separate sheet of the Wheel of the Year, you can see the 78 tarot cards placed around the wheel. There are 22 major arcana; these have been placed very specifically so as to provide an initiatory journey. The time of year influences and explains the major arcana that are aligned with it.

My revolutionary discovery that the minor arcana are fragmented parts of the major arcana they accompany makes sense of their inclusion in a deck. I have carefully redesigned a full pictorial minor arcana, taking Pamela Coleman-Smith's cards from the Rider-Waite deck as a basis. For those with previous knowledge of the tarot, placing the Rider-Waite cards, or similar pack, in the Wheel lay out will illustrate its importance.

The Greenwood Tarot differs from a traditional deck only in its re-empowerment of some of the figures, divorcing them from their medieval origins. We have also replaced the traditional court cards, king, queen, knight, page, with the totem or sacred birds and animals of the land. I have placed the Greenwood Tarot in a Shamanic Universe, a coherent primal system where the cosmic, the human and the natural are given equal weight and meaning. The internal or psychological world is profoundly influenced by your interaction with external everyday reality.

The figures in the major arcana and the animals of the court cards are guides that bridge the two realities. The minor arcana holds keys to emotional moods or blocks that help or hinder these harmonies.

The Wheel Explained.

Looking at the separate sheet of the Wheel of the Year, you can see that the colours form a colour wheel, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet, with white and black added. The colours at the cardinal points are for the four elements. Red for Fire (wands); the red of the spring dawn sun; White/yellow for Air (arrows); the white disc of the summer noon sun; Green/ blue for water (cups); the colour of greenery reflected in water. Indigo/black for Earth (stones); the dark soil, the night sky, the deep cave. Thus red, white, green and black form the four sacred prehistoric colours.

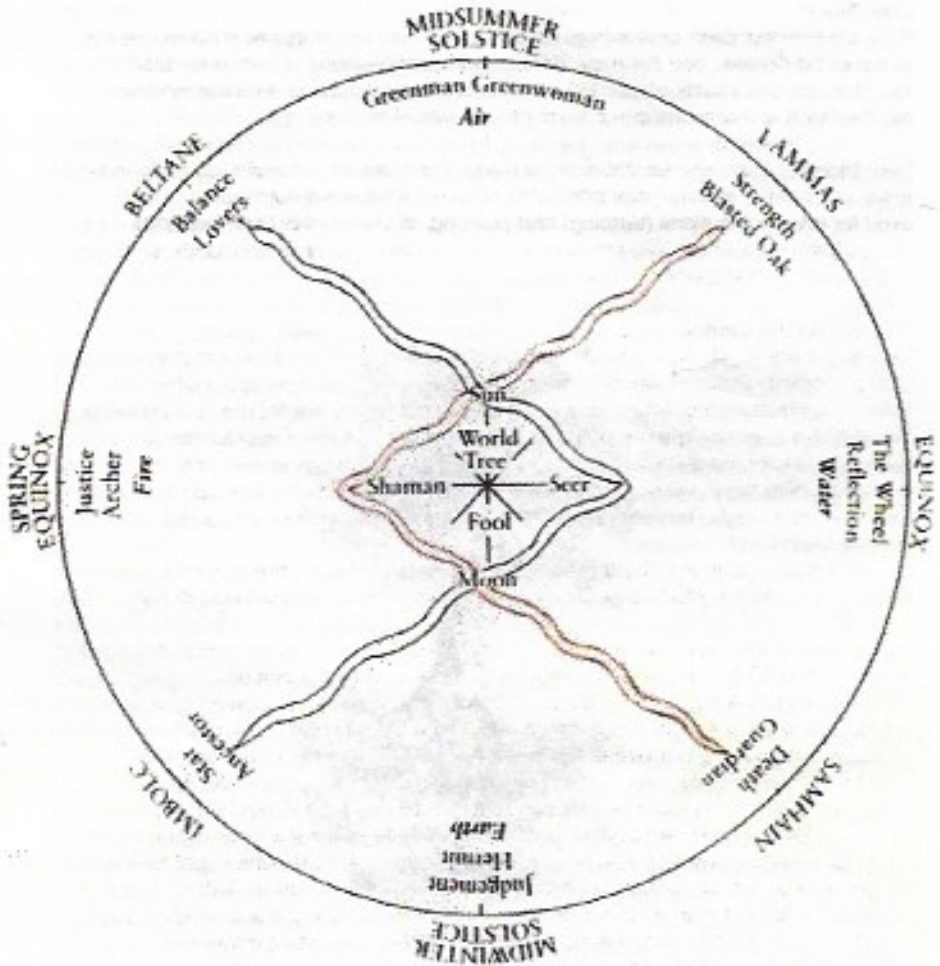
The wheel is divided into the quarter days—the Equinoxes and the Solstices (the solar cross) and the cross-quarter days, Imbolc, Beltane, Lammmas and Samhain; the lunar cross.

The Wheel of the Year is a useful and ancient map. It is simple yet profound. Fig.2 shows how it relates to the Three Worlds of most shamanic traditions.

The Upperworld is the sky, the Spiritual descending to earth, illumination, vision, vitality. If one sees the wheel as a tree (Fig.3) the Upperworld is the outspread branches, supporting numerous life-forms, reaching out to the future and new growth. One of the reasons the Oak is considered the European World Tree is that its roots are as extensive as its branches so that the sky and the earth (the head and feet) (Fig.4) are equally balanced. In this system the Lowerworld is not the shadowside of the sky, part of a dualistic reality where the 'white light' of the sky and spirit is aimed for, without a grounded reverence for the deep dark richness of our roots, a love of matter, of our bodies. The Lowerworld is a place of Ancestral Wisdom, of caves and deep lakes, of stillness and rest, of being content in ourselves and our environment. The roots feed on what is decomposed, recycled; death is not an inert static state; what was once formed is unformed and reused. The dead have many voices. Our Hermit, standing in the Lowerworld at Midwinter, does not climb away from the earth up a mountain to seek wisdom, she leads you

into the roots of the tree itself, for the teachings of the land come to those who are close to the earth. Fig.4 shows the human form placed on the Wheel, the head in the Upperworld, the feet in the Lowerworld. The central point is the navel, from where the umbilical cord grew which linked you to your mother, and is therefore actually and symbolically the thread of life.

Fig 2



The approximate shape of the belly button the centre of the navel, the cup and ring mark, has been used since Neanderthal times as a primary symbol of life and death. See *Ace of Stones; Foundation*.

The major arcana cards of the Upperworld are the *Greenman* and *Greenwoman* (traditionally the *Emperor* and *Empress*). They are shown as foliage heads embodying the qualities of the Upperworld and midsummer, intelligence and vision, spiritual mediators, healers, people that generate warmth, abundance and speak eloquent truths. If they live too much in their heads they are brought down to earth as the wheel turns at Lammas, and the world is turned on its head, i.e., the *Blasted Oak* (Fig.4)

Figure 2 shows the intertwined red and white serpents or dragons, more anciently depicted as horses. See *Balance*. These represent the two polaric currents which flow through all aspects of life. Their influences are subtle and mutable, and are clarified by this incorporation of them into the wheel system.

Red: Blood of birth, of menstruation, of hunting and attack, of death, of the flames of a fire, of the sun; its heat, and of warmth of heart. Of the red earth, of red ochre used for preserving skins (tanning) and painting, of chalybeate (iron-bearing)

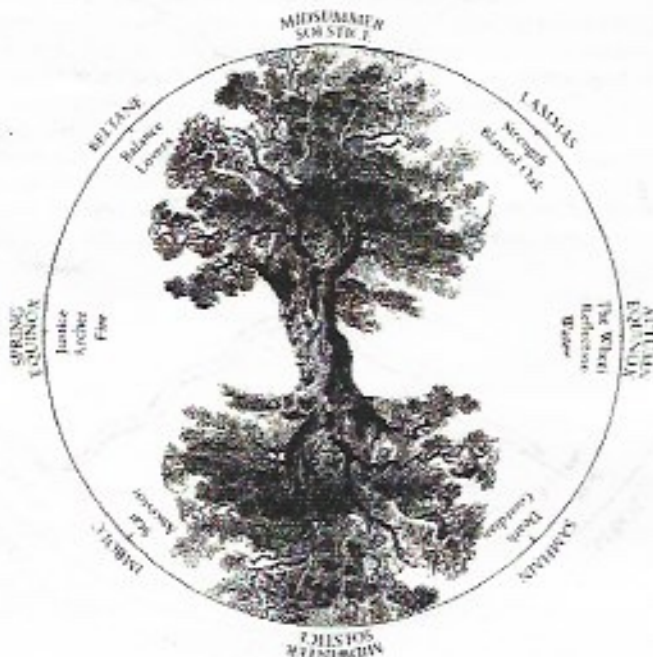


Fig 3

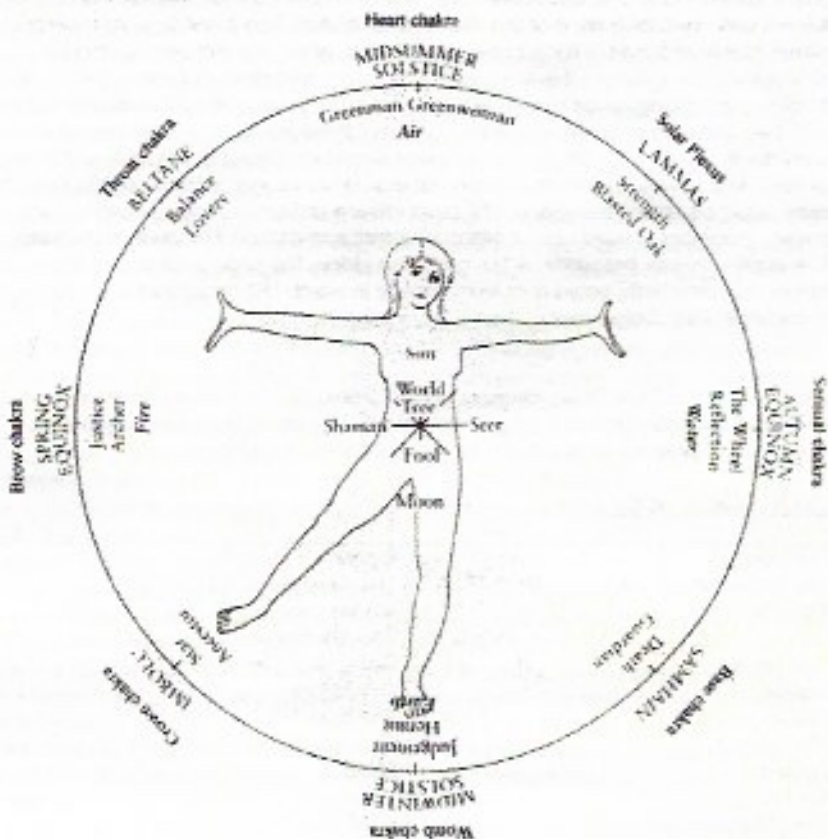
springs, such as Chalice Well in Glastonbury; of anger, determination, will, passion, activity.

White: Breast milk, semen, ash of fire, bones of the dead, ghosts and spirits, snow and ice, noon or summer sun, moon, chalk/lime bearing springs and wells, compassion, quiet, sensitivity, inactivity, withdrawal, passivity.

The qualities of red and white have recently been gendered—red more active and forceful, thus male; white more passive and gentle, thus female. This is prejudice and there is no ancient basis for this. Previously the currents were non-gendered so that symbolically one could become a whole person in oneself.

This sexism was also present in the medieval gendering of the middle world where traditionally crucified Christ replaced the shamanic or universal figure, with a moon and Mary Magdalene beside his left hand, and John the Baptist at his right hand or solar side.

Fig 4



The left/sinister was placed in the element of water, of intuition and was considered a female place of fear, darkness and uncertainty that one 'fell into' after the wheel turned at midsummer. Yet Christianity placed Christ's sacrificial death at the life giving Spring time of the Vernal Equinox (March 21st.) Removing all this Christian overlay, one can think of the left hand being receptive, psychic, empathetic; receiving healing at the Autumn Equinox, and the right hand being active, dynamic, actually making fire, tools, firing the long bow, making decisions.

I have placed the chakras around the wheel; this is not a 'new-age' gimmick. (Fig.4) You can see that although the chakras are placed round the wheel in their traditional sequence, they have no superficial correlation to the 'universal' figure, i.e. the crown chakra is not at the head, because this would be an overemphasis on the head; an inpouring of energy that one could not ground.

The actual placement of the crown chakra at Imbolc, i.e. by the feet, means that the spiritual connection, the possible continual renewal of energy, is grounded and that one is stable if one is already balanced. The brow chakra is activated in Spring with the will and conscious mind of the Archer and Justice. The brow also represents the pineal gland responsible for a sense of direction which the Archer requires for aiming true, being focused in the world. The throat chakra at Beltane is the joy of laughter, of singing, of kissing. The heart of the Greenman and Greenwoman opens with their generation of life, and their nurturing of the young; the solar plexus at Lammas is concerned with issues of personal and emotional power, its centring or its loss. The sexual chakra at Autumn Equinox is concerned with the subtle tides of sensuality, ovulation, psychism. The base chakra at Samhain holds deep sexual power, grounding if used wisely, but can uproot and disturb if abused or unused. The eighth chakra, the womb is the gestation place, the anchor for one at Midwinter, harbouring new birth, actually or symbolically in womb-like structures such as caves or mounds. See *Judgement*.

The Greenwood Tarot is an initiatory cycle. I would advise that you at least once follow the cards and the text around the wheel. This could then be repeated as a seasonal meditation, or as a basis for inspiration and ceremony.

The Sequence of the Cards

The Fool	Eights
The Ancestor	The Seer
The Star	Nines
Aces	The Shaman
The Archer	Tens
Justice	The Moon
TWOs	The Sun
The Lovers	The World Tree
Balance	Stoat
Threes	Fox
The Greenwoman	Hare
The Greenman	Adder
The Fours	Woodpecker

The Blasted Oak	Hawk
Strength	Deer
Fives	Lynx
Reflection	Kingfisher
Wheel of Fortune	Salmon
Sixes	Heron
Death	Reindeer
The Guardian	Wren
Sevens	Wolf
The Hermit	Bear
Judgement	Horse

The Major Arcana

The Fool

Position on wheel; centre.

World; all three, lower, middle, upper.

A young and beautiful figure opens their heart to the universe. Clothed in feathers and greenery, they are illuminated by the heart of the Greenwood. There is a playful and naive aspect to their character, and they hold the sun and moon in their hands like balls. Although they are suddenly inspired by insights into another world and life, and are open to exploring it, they do not have the understanding or responsibility necessary for grounding it. However, it is often The Fool that sees more of the patterns of life, however momentarily, than those whose feet are firmly on the earth. So in this card The Fool has a 'vision' of their future journey, a labyrinth, shimmering with stars behind them. The Fools' soul is re-animated, but just as a butterfly may live for only a few days, this state of divine illumination is not be maintained for long periods as it leads to 'burn-out'. Many poets, writers, and musicians die young, unable to move from this state of being. The path forward is explained in the card. The knotted korchief (of red and white-one's essential energy) contains one's previous experience. The Fool must pick that up and take it with them, rather than leaping blindly, unwilling to face responsibility for the potential re-creation of a pattern of behaviour that needs breaking. Note that the 'Fool' stands unaware of the precarious slant of the cliff, and is out of their tree; i.e. standing above the tree that is their grounded body. The Fool must fly off the cliff and follow the inner voice of their heart (as yet undeveloped) the small white deer, so that they can walk on the land and meet the first guide on their journey-The Ancestor.

The Ancestor (traditional card Hierophant)

Minor arcana: Aces Position on wheel; Imbalc. Element: earth/fire Chakra: crown.

Colour: Violet. Polarity: white.

This is an image of my very first vision that appeared to me many years ago. Even though I did not understand it at the time, I remained true to it, and knew that by having it my life had irrevocably changed.

The image shows a reindeer figure (female reindeer are antlered) holding a frame drum and a leaping horse drum stick with which she is beating the heart of the frozen land alive.

Beside her, there are reindeer prints in the snow, demarcating your way into the Greenwood to begin your initiatory cycle. The first trackways were made by the repeated travelling of tribes along the migratory routes of the reindeer, who followed the same paths for thousands of years. The reindeer were therefore seen as spiritual/shamanistic guides, along all actual as well as visionary paths. (This is brilliantly documented in the Saami film 'Pathfinder'). The Ancestor is therefore the guardian of all those who have walked these ways before you, holding the gentle wisdom of all ancestral memory.

She is the creatrix, calling forth the four elements, (the Aces), and therefore the world itself, into being.

Venus rises beside the new moon as first light breaks. This star is also your star of destiny, the guiding star of your life, your soul or guardian angel. Healing energy renews, and cleanses the crown chakra and aura, pouring down from a higher source- *The Star*.

Drawing *The Ancestor* means a new start; profound insights, spiritual guidance, a feeling of being on the right path, being guided by means of dreams and visions. A spiritual blessing on one's life.

The Pole Star

Minor arcana; Aces Position on wheel: Imbolc. element: earth/fire

Chakra: crown. Colour: Violet. Polarity: white.

Time of day: first light Chakra: crown Colour: Violet Polarity: White

If *The Ancestor* is associated with the beginnings of human consciousness, and the formulation of a mythology based on the interaction between people and the land; then the *Star* is concerned with creation myths of the earth itself. Where do we come from? Is there a spiritual consciousness behind our existence? Is there a deeper purpose underlying our lives? Ancient beliefs thought that the souls of the dead returned to the stars, and new born souls came into physical incarnation from the stars. Nowadays great importance is placed on recording our exact time of birth so that our astrological chart can be generated, giving us a life pattern based on the interaction between earth, planets and constellations. We consist of atoms and particles like stars. The most ancient symbol of life and death in European culture is the cup and ring mark, and this is the shape made by stars forming themselves in the cosmos. This shape itself clarifies why *The Star* card is linked to the Aces-from nothing, something is formed, i.e. 0 becomes one. *The Star* and *The Ancestor* form a creation myth, because this has been forgotten it is important to restate it.

'From the essence of stars in the universe, the earth was created, and was blessed. The first tree on earth was the silver birch; the World Tree. From the tree emerged its guardian, the first reindeer, The Primal Shaman, who waits until the first light, the dawn of human consciousness, aware of the guidance and blessing of her origins *The Star*. With an archaic singing, She drums the manifest world into being. First the four elements, *the Breath of life, the Spark of life, the Waters of life*, and the first land-*the Foundation*. Then She calls the primal forest, the birds and animals, the first people. She then marks out the first pathway with her own totem, the reindeer. And she will walk forever with all generations, so that they may remember their origins in the stars, and learn wisdom from those who have preceded them.' In the picture of *The Star* card, healing, radiance and a renewal of blessing pours down upon the pole (crown) of the earth.

By visualising this card and the purity of the four elements, you can work towards healing the terrible damage we have inflicted upon the ozone layer, water system and the earth itself.

Positive, focused and energised visualisation is a very powerful means of effecting change.

Drawing *The Star* card signifies a renewal of spiritual energy, cleansing and healing, a revitalised sense of direction, guidance from your 'lucky star', an intuitive knowledge of your destiny.

The Aces

major arcana: *Ancestor Position on wheel: Imbalc. Chakra: crown.*

Ace of Wands: Spark of Life

Against the dark sky of the primal beginnings, sparks fly, generated by a bow drill.

This is a prehistoric method of starting a fire by rotating a central pole/stick with a small bow. The ability to make fire was one of the first significant acts of human conscious will. Fire also represents sap, vitality, the spark of life that animates creation. Energy rises, spiralling upwards, so that nature can flourish. The heart shaped greenery are symbolically the dual polaric energies that flow around the central axis of the Tree of Life, and one's spine. Renewed will and life energy.

Sudden determination and action. Return of health. Positive energy. A new force in one's life, as yet unformed and unchanneled.

Ace of Arrows: Breath of Life

This image shows the head of the chalk hill figure cut in turf at Uffington, S.England. (See also *The Sun* and *The Horse*). There was once a long barrow for burials built within her mouth so that symbolically she gives the breath of life to the dead. Her eye is open and radiant, as new life is envisioned.

The morning star illuminates the night sky, and the mare breathes light into the frosty February air. Tender and gentle love that revives one with the 'kiss' of life. Renewal of inspiration, a reconnection to life, truth and wisdom, spoken from the horse's mouth.

Ace of Cups: Waters of Life

On a frosty morning pure blessed water overflows from a silver chalice in the shape of a white hart's head, revitalising the waters of life. Springs rise up from their source deep within the earth, giving pure water which is recycled from rain which fell thousands of years ago; i.e. one receives new inspiration from ancestral wisdom. Obviously a clean source of water is literally the water of life, and the basic need of all settlements. The ice of winter melts with a renewal of inspiration, and one is emotionally awakened. Sensuality returns. The swan is a symbol of the radiant soul, here 'crowned' by the morning star, Venus. A candle for the flame of the heart is held within the arc of the crescent moon.

Ace of Stones: Foundation

This card shows an ancient mossy standing stone inscribed with a labyrinth and cup and ring marks. Mythically the foundation stone means the first dry land on which life could begin. Also the first created form, matter, the mother stone, the firm ground from which one can begin one's journey and measure the eight directions, the birthing ground, the navel stone. The Labyrinth is the place where your journey begins; the first steps; the cup and ring marks represent the source, your emergence into this world. The horse's hoof mark, considered vulvic in shape (see

The Horse) means the source of life—the first steps on dry land; following the original horse herds led to your food source. A new stability enters your life.

The Archer (traditional card, Chariot)

*Minor arcana: Twos Position on wheel: Spring Equinox. Element: Fire
Chakra: brow. Colour: red. Polarity: red. Time of day: Dawn*

A woman aims with focused intent preparing to release her arrow. This longbow is based on the yew longbow dated 2,300 BCE found by a wooden trackway near Glastonbury. A stone bracer is wrapped by leather thongs round her wrist. This prevents the arrows chafing her arms when released. To shoot a bow efficiently, one needs to be both physically and mentally steady, with a clear intention. This is positive, directed energy. To be a successful archer in prehistoric times, one would need a detailed knowledge of the land around you, the lie of the land, the habitat. Your senses have to be alert, your life energy foremost: careless lack of concentration could put your own life in danger.

This card is to do with having a clear sense of direction. If *The Ancestor* leads you on to your path, *The Archer* teaches you how to walk that path with independence, determination and focused skill.

This card links to the Spring Equinox; a time to put the past behind you, to look to the future. It is the skill of *The Archer* that unifies the duality of intended and actual aim.

It is a tragedy that women and children are now afraid to explore woodland and other sacred places alone, and that these sanctuaries have become defiled and unprotected. Imagine *The Archer* as Artemis, the Goddess of the wild wood, in her primal aspect as a towering figure walking across the landscape, using the golden arrows of the dawn sun to inscribe a golden circle around an area of land to protect it. Imagine her and her hounds standing with her bow waiting to defend the vulnerable.

Justice

*Minor arcana: Twos Position on wheel: Spring Equinox. Element: Fire
Chakra: brow. Colour: red. Polarity: red*

This unusual representation of *Justice* was influenced by the moving appearance of Herne the Hunter as guardian of the justice of the land in the TV series *Rubin of Sherwood*, in which Mark Ryan played Nazir. Herne would appear when the forest and its human guardians were threatened, warning them to act in its defence.

There is strength in this card, that will not tolerate injustice. The deer speaks with the voice of nature itself. This card is particularly applicable at the moment when so many forests are being destroyed. Herne stands firmly, watching you with ancient eyes; tangled moss-covered branches of the Wildwood are animated by the spring sap. The red dawn sky emphasises the reawakened will to act. In one hand he holds the cutting edge of the axe, in the other a shield, upon which is the major oak of Sherwood Forest: a symbol of injustice thwarted; of the dispossessed in the Greenwood mythos defending themselves, and their natural right to live off the bounty of the land. The energies in both *Justice* and *The Archer* cards require steadiness of intention; careful consideration and wise action. If unharnessed, headstrong; impetuous impatience leads to ineffective action.

Justice is a strong and powerful ally; a guide to a wise balance between action and defence.

The Twos

Major arcana: Archer, Justice Position on wheel: Spring Equinox. Chakra: brow

Two of Wands: Decision

A figure illuminated and radiant with the dawn sun, stands at a gateway, spring energies rising at their feet, with their old life behind them and a new life in front. They are deciding on how best to move forward. They are poised between two worlds. A reawakening. Time to move from introspection into practical reality. Striking out on one's own. The figure is based on the chalk figure of the 'Long One of Wilmington', UK.

Two of Arrows: Injustice

The traditional figure of Justice is ironically blindfolded, and therefore without clarity of vision. She sits stiffly, hands crossed over her heart, upon a formal seat, isolated from others by steps, enabling her to look down on others. The Archer's bow of focused decision-making lies broken at her feet. The scales of justice are already unbalanced in favour of the light, and the 'white'. Someone who judges others from a position of arrogant superiority, often stemming from a fearful withdrawn heart.

Two of Cups: Attraction

Two figures stand in polaric attraction to each other, the dawn sun rising above them. The heart opens between them. The picture shimmers with the 'electricity' of their meeting. At this moment the energy is held in tension; should their union be fulfilled, they move into *The Lovers* and *Balance* cards.

Two of Stones: Challenge

Two mad march hares box each other on a bridge where the stone supports are buffeted by swirling currents. The confrontation on a bridge, before reaching the heart of the Greenwood occurs in the Robin Hood mythos, where Little John challenges Robin Hood with a quarter staff. Confrontation, manifested tensions, rivalry, arguments, that are often not well founded, but they need to be bridged before you can move forward.

The Lovers

Minor arcana: threes Position on wheel: Beltane. Element: Fire/Air

Chakra: throat. Colour: orange/rose-gold. Polarity: white

The woman has a green woodpecker head-dress, hawthorn leaves and May blossom, all symbolic of the heart of the Greenwood. She is a lady of May, of sensuous sensitivity, young, loving and trusting. She glows with warmth and heart; beside her grows an arum lily, called 'Lords and Ladies'. Her lover is also crowned with hawthorn, with the goat horns and legs of the young Pan, the wild male aspect of nature.

Between them is the maypole, or living birch tree, once erected every Beltane. This represents the Tree of Life, spanning the three worlds. These would be the Lowerworld, where the tree is stabilised by being placed in a shaft in the ground, the middle world- the actual land upon which people would dance, and the Upperworld or the top of the maypole, which usually had three foliate rings hanging upon it. It is love that enables one to transcend the boundaries of these worlds, uniting the physical, emotional and the spiritual. Beltane is still a common time to be handfasted. In some ways this is a card of young or new love, yet to be tested by time.

Lovers 2

This is a non-gendered Lovers card, which was turned down by the publisher, but is available if preferred. (See back page.)

Two people, deer headed, to signify their tender hearts, are charged with the energy of love. Their golden antlers, bedecked with hawthorn, draw down the spiritual love, as their union is blessed, giving their hearts wings. Their individual stars shine, confirming that this is their destiny.

Their bodies are charged with polaric energy, one hand raised to keep the current flowing, the other handfasted, blessing the land below, pouring out the life giving energy of love. The design is based around a central axis around which the couple cross-polarise. Between their hands a rose is illuminated. The background shows Chalice Hill and Glastonbury Tor, the Merry Maidens stone circle, and a maypole with traditional may day celebrants—a hobby horse, Maid Marion and a Jack in the Green. The red and white dragons, the polaric energies are unified by the lovers (see Fig.2) encompassing all genders.

Balance (traditional card *Temperance*.)

Minor arcana: Threes Position on wheel: Beltane. Element: Fire/Air

Chakra: throat. Colour: orange/rose-gold. Polarity: white.

Two beautiful sea horses intertwine, their energies harmonised. All dualities of light and dark, fire (red) and air (white) land and water, active and passive, are blended together creating a new third force—the green and fertile land, the person in balance with themselves, who is both grounded and creative, (*Creativity*, three of stones) and who radiates that energised peace (*Fulfilment*, 3 of wands) generated by someone at one with themselves. Three has always been a very sacred number, representing creation, i.e., one + one = another, hence the egg in this picture.

Horses were seen as the primal creators (see *The Horse*) before snakes and dragons. Uffington White Horse stands at the gateway of these two traditions looking like a serpentine horse. The sea horse design comes from a Pictish Scottish stone carving from Aberlennno. Sea horses are extraordinary creatures, being the only species in which the male gives birth. They also dance and intertwine together, as well as frequently changing colour for camouflage. Sea horses are therefore the perfect creatures to express the quicksilver, mutable, androgynous nature of creativity. It is subtle, perhaps experimental exchanges that bring profound harmony and new life. Of course the basic pattern of all life is the double helix DNA, infinitely subtle and infinitely creative.

The fleur-de-lis, iris or flag, in flower this time of year is a symbol of the three-in-one, the three worlds unified. Drawing this card can indicate a new harmony in your relationship or in a friendship. A creative phase in which you will blossom. An inner balance.

The Threes

Major arcana: Lovers, Balance Position on wheel: Beltane. Chakra: throat.

Three of Wands: Fulfilment

A figure has stepped through the gateway of the two of Wands, arms open to receive the blessing of fulfilment. They stand in the healing radiance of the afterglow created after a loving polaric interchange. This is represented by the caduceus of intertwined serpents on their cloak (see *Adder*). This energised peace does not require another person, it can be achieved after an act of *Creativity* or *Joy*.

Three of Arrows: Jealousy

Three arrows pierce a tender, bleeding heart. A triangular interaction that causes pain to all. A heart that is pinioned by the weight of other's wishes.

Three of Cups: Joy

Cranes were considered very sacred (their plumage being red, white and grey/black). Their return from migration heralded the beginning of warmer weather; they leap in the air, seemingly to dance. The 'crane dance', performed once by people in many European countries was a celebration of joy, creation and life energy. Happy and creative friendships, community, warmth, fun; a bonding on many levels.

Three of Stones: Creativity

The card depicts a trilithon (a three stone) gateway, similar to those at Stonehenge. Two stone pillars representing the primal gateway of dual energies, with a solar horse and lunar oxen, bridged by a third, creating an environment in which an artist stands inspired but grounded, a mediator, alive and radiant.

Greenwoman (traditional card *The Empress*)

*Minor arcana: Fours Position on wheel: Midsummer Solstice. Element: Air
Chakra: heart. Colour: white*

The Greenwoman is she who blesses those that come through the gateway of life, with love, healing and protection. She is the spiritual and actual warmth of the midsummer sun, and gives the breath of life to nature, and the newly born. Wild roses, symbol of an open heart, flow from her. Round her neck is a gold torc, a symbol of her sovereignty as Empress. Her golden cup is of amber, a translucent resin often called the teardrops of the sun. The Greenwoman is also a tree in full leaf supporting many other species in its branches. She is abundance made manifest. The winged dragon, or wyvern is green, as the energies are rich and fertile. There are very few carved representations of foliate green women. I only know of four in the UK of which three are in Oxford. This is because the Sheila-nagig, or woman opening her vulva (gateway of life and death) was the female medieval equivalent of the Green man foliate face. Whilst these green male faces breath forth the greenery of the divine logos, or fertile power of male wisdom, the Oxford green women hide behind rather than issue forth the creative life force. So my Greenwoman breaks with tradition. The flame on her third eye burns with divine intelligence and inner wisdom. She is the empowered heart, at one with herself, independent, creative, loving, stable, wealthy; nurturing herself and others.

The Greenman (traditional card *The Emperor*)

*Minor arcana: Fours Position on wheel: Midsummer Solstice. Element: Air
Chakra: heart. Colour: white/gold.*

The Greenman or carved foliate face disgorges vegetation, the male fertile power of nature. It is a medieval image, and also represented the divine logos or intelligence of God being made manifest on earth. Previously it was the force behind the ancient gods of nature and vegetation deities, enriching and revivifying the land. The Greenman like the Greenwoman balances power with love, and radiates this outwards for the benefit of others. They are the guardians of others, mediators between the spiritual, the natural and the human, hence the original titles, *The Emperor* and *The Empress*. Ideally their stable abundance is shared with their

community for the good of the land, with an empowered heart. A sharing without arrogance. A kind and forceful personality.

Sometimes the *Greenman* and *Greenwoman* live 'in their heads' alienated from the realities of life outside their own world, not wanting to face the shaky foundations of their lives; when these cracks can be suppressed no longer, the fall comes in *The Blasted Oak*.

The Fours

Major arcana: Greenman and Greenwoman Position on wheel: Midsummer Solstice.

Chakra: heart.

Four of Wands: Celebration

The four wands of ash, oak, birch and hawthorn form a diamond, an ancient symbol of the sun and womb as a gateway to life. On a warm June evening, the sun sets as people celebrate the midsummer festival with a traditional bonfire. Inside the hill the four-spoked sun wheel radiates life energy. Enjoyment of nature, celebration, of the summer with friends, party atmosphere, being outdoors, feeling of freedom and fun.

Four of Arrows: Rest

A person lies down in nature, resting so that their imagination and spirit can take flight and rejuvenate. A rest, a holiday, a cessation of activity, healing. Feeling more positive, seeing the beauty in yourself and everything around you.

Four of Cups: Boredom

A white hart and a peacock, creatures of visionary beauty, drink from the waters of life from which the vines of love grow. Trapped inside four walls of their own making, a figure sits apathetic and lethargic, unaware of the bounty of life around them. Being shut indoors, bored and unstimulated. Pent up frustration. Need to get out into the world.

Four of Stones: Protection

On a hilltop the midsummer sun rises over a dolmen beneath which a newly born fawn shelters. Many burial places are orientated to the midsummer sunrise, when the dead are given spiritual rebirth. Also many new-born birds and animals are especially vulnerable at this time of year, and need protection from predators. Nurturing parental care. A roof over one's head. A period of stability. Time to foster your tender heart.

The Blasted Oak (traditionally *The Hanged One*, *The Tower*)

Minor arcana; Fives Position on wheel: Lemmas. Element: Air/Water

Chakra: solar plexus. Colour: yellow/green. Polarity: red

A green figure is liberated from their bonds by the force of the lightning striking the oak tree.

You have been out on a limb, clinging on to an untenable situation. The air is charged with emotion. Pent up tears or anger are released. Although these times are often traumatic, this is the first stage of healing; yet there may be a loss of stability as the familiar is replaced by the unknown.

Be gentle on yourself and give yourself time to heal. The thunderbolt could also be thrown at you by a figure in authority, using their power over you, as anger, or intimidation, for instance. Use the balance of *Strength* to stand up to them or seek help.

Strength

*Minor arcana; Fives Position on wheel: Lammis. Element: Air/Water
Chakra: solar plexus. Colour: yellow/green. Polarity: red*

The Strength card concerns following what you feel is right for you, doing your true will. Society is not supportive of individual dedication to an unusual path, and incredible strength of heart is needed to stay on it. If one's initial impulse to follow your heart (Ancestor and Archer) has been lost by the pressures and attractions of everyday living, i.e. Lovers, Greenman/Woman, then Strength calls to your heart to rededicate your life. At this stage this might require sacrificing some aspect of it, which leads to the tensions in *The Blasted Oak*.

The image shows a woman with a mask of the mountain lion with eagle feathers, against the burning sun, dressed in the August colours of the land. A Scythian gold lion jewel empowers and encircles her heart. Tied upon her spear is the oldest animal headed statue ever found in Europe (30,000 BCE) a leonine human with pubic triangle. with lion claw scarification marks on its arm. It is very similar to the Egyptian statues of the Goddess Sekmet but 28,000 years earlier.

Prehistoric European cave lions, now extinct, were unmaned, like a large mountain lion. The spear of will and defensive action (air) is balanced by the cups of compassion. This balance cannot be held for long. It is a card of fullness seeking release, a build up of energy that needs grounding, a thundery sky needing rain, passion, anger, pre-menstrual tension, pregnancy about to birth, ecstatic dance or trance that could become oracular, a harvest ready for picking. It is not an easy energy to utilise yet when surrendered to produces ecstatic liberation that is both tenderness and wildness, a powerful creativity that can be used to transform your life into a dance of the heart.

The Fives

Minor arcana: Blasted Oak, Strength. Position on wheel: Lammis. Chakra solar plexus

Five of Wands: Power

The Cerne Abbas chalk hill figure grasps his oakleaf shaped club whilst the fiery energies of the August heat rises to be grounded by the lightening flash. An active power that is hard to hold in balance, tendency to anger; when misused by any gender, this becomes power over others.

Five of Arrows: Frustration

A hunter shoots a longbow at a fleeing ibex. A double edged card depending on whether you are the hunter or the hunted. The card can be a warning-either take flight or stand firm and face the situation. Ungrounded aims and fears.

Five of Cups: Ecstasy

A woman dances, dressed in a solar costume as she celebrates the end of the summer and the first fruits of the harvest, the wheat which pours from the two horns of abundance (Cornucopia). She holds a rattle and a bull roarer. She is full of dynamic energy, dancing into the night. Shamanic dance. Sexuality. Release of pent-up energy. Whole hearted surrender to life.

Five of Stones: Endurance

A figure sits in the darkness of a cave watching lightening strike their home, their emotional centre. They have temporarily withdrawn, looking on, unsure of how best to handle the situation. This inactivity initially taken as self-protection, can become over passivity.

Reflection(new card)

*Minor arcana Sixes Position on wheel: Autumn Equinox. Element: Water.
Colour: green/blue. Polarity: white.*

When the foundation of one's life seems to have collapsed beneath you, you can seek sanctuary in *Reflection* from the emotional intensity of *The Blessed Oak*. *Reflection* is a new card that I have added to the traditional tarot deck. It is similar in meaning to the usual *High Priestess* card which I have replaced with the more grounded *Seer*.

Having studied medieval symbolism, I knew that there was a conservatism and consistency in its use; I therefore found it strange that only three of the four virtues, Strength, Temperance and Justice are usually included in a tarot deck. Prudence is missing. She is traditionally depicted as a serpent-tailed woman, holding a mirror, sometimes enthroned. I considered this the perfect and necessary image for the Autumn Equinox phase of the wheel—the journey to the watery west.

Reflection is concerned with the mysteries of 'The Lady of the Lake', which are now usually associated with Avalonian Arthurian mysteries of the Glastonbury area. However originally it would have been the function of a priestess to mediate these energies on many islands or artificial islands (crannogs) throughout Europe. In the Glastonbury area sacred islands such as the Tor were scattered amidst miles of marsh land. People lived in wooden houses on stilts, lake villages. Flat bottomed boats were made from oak logs, these became the famous barge of Avalon, which is summoned through the mists to take you to the island (see *Transition* six of arrows). In the card *Reflection*, a person lays sleeping in the boat. They are resting, in need of healing, perhaps dreaming.

A serpent-tailed woman holds a Celtic mirror and crystal ball/moon. She is Morgan (Morvran—sea raven), the Lady of the Lake. Her serpent tail and mirror associate her with mermaids. These have been much misunderstood. Originally they represented powerful female sensuality, the magnetic currents of sexuality, the ebb and flow of watery currents.

During the iron age, (Celtic period) rainfall increased substantially and much land was consumed by water, so in legends, mermaids lure men to their deaths in the water, tidal seas being especially dangerous.

The Lady of the Lake is in fact an initiator into the deeper mysteries of sensual healing, spiritual healing and psychism. She is the powerful dark woman of knowledge. Just as water is a natural mirror, she holds a mirror up to you so that you are forced to look at your reflection and taught how to love or change what you see there.

Her cauldron of wisdom (a famous Celtic bowl found at Glastonbury) contains a herbal brew to enhance vision. The heron, the silent wise guardian of the mysteries, has the heron/crane bag, the medicine bag of all knowledge hanging round its neck. Originally the oracular priestess/Lady of the Lake would have worn a heron feather cloak and been heavily tattooed with woad-dyed enspiralled patterns representing the ebb and flow of the water. The moon of course influences these.

In a reading this card indicates profound healing, a period of introspection, sexual healing, immersion in myths and visions, the lure of fantasy, learning about yourself.

Wheel of Fortune

*Minor arcana Sixes Position on wheel: Autumn Equinox. Element: Water.
Colour: green/blue. Polarity: white*

Amidst the misty waters a vertical iron-age loom has been made from living hazel trees. Hazel, when coppiced, grows into straight poles. It is also a sacred tree that grows beside the pool of knowledge (see *The Salmon*). Across the loom are spread the warp and weft of living green, stretching in all four directions out to infinity.

These connect you with to the cosmic web, or the web of wyrd (fate) for your life is intimately connected to that of the living universe. At the base of the loom hang the loom weights. You are weaving the cloak that is the pattern of your life.

There is a process of interaction at work in this card and the mediators are the three cloaked figures standing at the lower right of the cloak.

These are the three fates, the norms, the hooded ones who watch over your destiny. Originally a triplicity of oracular priestesses cloaked in heron or raven feathers would be consulted on one of these sacred islands, hidden by mists and accessible only by a boat. By a combination of dreamwork, teaching, divination and healing, the person whose soul is wounded would be taught to see the patterns, the strands running through their lives.

In the centre of the cloak is the layout of the wheel for the Greenwood Tarot cards. Our tarot is a unified, self-contained system. By studying it one will gain profound insights into the connection between one's own psychology and the natural world, and European mythology.

It is important to know that your weaving is flexible, your destiny is not woven for you, it is an interaction; every one of your actions can affect a change in the design of your cloak at any point. It is never finished but is continually unravelling and being re woven. You may have severed the threads binding you to others for reasons of self-protection - these can be re woven, carefully linking you to the abundance of the world (six of wands, *Harvest*) thereby avoiding unwanted situations (six of stones, *Exploitation*).

The primal guardians of the Greenwood Tarot, the owl, horse, deer, bear, heron, raven and Green person stand as guardians of its teachings.

The Sixes

Major arcana: Reflector/ Wheel of Fortune Position on wheel: Autumn Equinox

Six of Wands: Harvest

The Autumn harvest of acorns, apples, blackberries, elderberries, rowan berries, and hazelnuts is abundant in this card. It is time to reap your harvest and give thanks for its bounty.

Six of Arrows: Transition

A cloaked figure looks towards their destination, as the swan-prowed boat sails towards the sacred tree topped island. As the sun sets, the moon rises.

You have turned your back on one phase of your life, and head towards a homecoming of the soul. Travel. Moving home. An emotional retreat.

Six of Cups: Reunion

This is the island depicted in the previous card (and *The Salmon*). In the golden light of an autumnal sunset, two souls are reunited on an ancient mound, the source of the waters of memory and deep love. Six green cups full of golden liquid float in the pool of knowledge. Two otters, animals of loving and playful affection, hunt nearby. Reunion with an old friend, soulmate or a wise part of oneself. A feeling of inner peace.

Six of Stones: Exploitation

This card is the opposite of Harvest. An exploitation of the earth's resources by mining and quarrying of coal, gold, star sapphires, stone and crystals; where the poor are exploited for the benefit of the rich; just as worker bees (in the outer hexagons) die after a lifetime of providing for the Queen Bee. A feeling of being trapped in a system of greed. A need to question the purpose of your work, and your part in the whole.

Death

*Minor arcana: Sevens Position on wheel: Samhain. Element: water/earth
Chakra: base. Colour: blue. Polarity: red.*

This image is stark and unavoidable, like death itself. This card signifies a continuous process, an active state.

Therefore the skull (of a reindeer) is still in the process of being defleshed by carrion. You are being stripped to the bone and there is no longer any escape from having to face up to the truth of your life. The all-seeing eye of the raven watches and reveals all you would prefer to keep hidden. This raven side of you is oracular, but it must name the truth it sees. Once named, the truth must be faced and acted upon; clearing away what has been making you ill in many different ways. You are confronting your essential self, without the secondary defences and protection of the mirror, mists and metaphors of reflection. (*Mourning, seven of cups*) will bring some relief. Seek comfort. When you have managed to clear, process and thus lay to rest the issues raised by *Death*, you will feel a great burden has been lifted, and that you can turn towards life.

The Guardian

*Position on wheel: Samhain. Element: water/earth Chakra: base Colour: blue.
Polarity: red*

This extraordinary image shows a cave bear, skeletal, yet it has a life of its own, just as fearful memories can rise up without warning. Some flesh still clings to the bones, and fiery flashes of energy are unable to earth from the spine. Fears are literally ungrounded.

Cave bears became extinct c.40,000 BCE, yet evidence of their existence can still be seen in prehistoric caves. At Rouffignac, France, for instance, their deep circular dens and the wavy patterns made by claw sharpening, and their bones, still visible, would have been a powerful presence, when later people painted their ritualised animals on the walls. (c. 13,000 BCE) Cave bears would have left a potent yet undefined psychic memory. Already honoured by the Neanderthals (see *The Bear*) the cave bear is the primal ancestor. There is a human quality to their skeletal shape, especially when raised up on their hind legs; the bear bridges the gap between the beasts and the humans. The cave bear is both a guardian of the ancestral past, and an initiator into its memories, often shadowy, unclear, therefore fearful.

This card is concerned with facing skeletons in the closet, fears long suppressed and often irrational, traumas in your family background that you have forgotten but that may resurface as panic attacks; ghosts that you cannot lay to rest and haunt your sleep. Seek support to help you calm yourself. Suppression of one's sexuality or creativity can lead to a thwarting of one's power, which becomes turned against

oneself. For those whose boundaries have been confused and previously invaded, befriending and healing your guardian will change your life.

The Sevens

Major arcana: Death/ Guardian Position on wheel: Samhain. Chakra: base

Seven of Wands: Clearance

This is the time of year for cutting down dead wood, and pruning to enable better future growth. An axe rests beside some cut silver birch, whilst the dead wood is burnt in a November bonfire. It is time to take action in order to clear outworn modes of behaviour from areas of your life. A clarification, a paring down of intention. The fire purifies negativity, transforming the energy.

Seven of arrows: Insecurity

A fearful person, unprotected, is attacked by anxieties and nightmares, unable to see a clear way out as they are so ungrounded. The solution is to protect one's boundaries, call in warmth of support; the need for intense physical activity to help one to ground some of the panic.

Seven of Cups: Mourning

A lamp is lit for the dead, and food and drink if offered as ancestors are remembered. Yew, an evergreen, is a reminder of rebirth. Grief and mourning for a loss in one's life. Necessary emotional release. An honouring and a respect for that death.

Seven of Stones: Healing

Between a stone gateway, against a clear starry sky a shamanic antlered guardian holds the cord that binds one's soul to one's body. A figure lies on the ground, protected by stones at the four quarters, and one on their heart. You are receiving healing, and need to reunite your re-energised 'astral' or spirit body with your physical body. Time to reawaken and ground oneself, using your visionary experience in a creative way in normal life.

The Hermit

Minor arcana: Eighth Position on wheel: Midwinter Solstice. Element: earth.

Chakra: womb. Colour Indigo/black

After being stripped to the bone in Death, you are now wrapped in the protection of the Greenwood in The Hermit. The green cloak is of holly and ivy, evergreens, that still grow in the otherwise bare and stark woodland in winter. You are finally arriving at your grounded centre. Warmth radiates from the heart of the tree, and the holly wreath shows the eight-spoked wheel. The original 'Father Christmas' wore a green cloak. Our Hermit is seen non-gendered.

The Hermit holds a holly staff for you have travelled far to come to this place. The green flame from the horn lantern will guide you through the darkness of winter, just as the spark of life lies dormant within nature at this time. When you sit in the winter stillness, nurturing this deep green flame of the inner heart, you will feel an inner warmth and peace. Our hermit walks firmly on the earth, and enters the Greenwood Tree to sit within its roots, this is unlike the traditional image of the hermit climbing a mountain, which denies that wisdom is held in the land itself.

The Hermit requires this contented solitude to re-establish their every day life after the disruption of Samhain. This is not lonely isolation but a stable base from which she can visit others. This time away from hectic activity enables you to explore

interests in depth, use your talents (*Skill*, eight of stones) and draw together all you have achieved and desired throughout the year. (*Hearthfire*, eight of wands).

Judgement

Minor arcana: Eights Position on wheel: Midwinter Solstice. Element: earth.

Chakra: womb. Colour: indigo/black

Judgement is a concept much misunderstood by contemporary society. The image shows two of the yew trees from Chalice Well, Glastonbury. Yew is an extraordinary tree. It is our longest living tree, and can grow for 3,000 years. It appears to regenerate itself, sprouting new growth from a seemingly dead hollowed trunk. The evergreen yew is said to hold the memory of all previous generations and is usually planted near the dead.

The *Judgement* card has to do with the cycles of time, a year, periods of one's life, one's whole lifetime, one's many lifetimes; from the seasonal year to the lifetime of the planet earth itself.

Your approach to the issues in this card affects your future, decides the nature or even the possibility of your rebirth. The entrance to a passage grave beckons you (Bryn Celli Du, Wales). This is a place to lay your past to rest, a still safe sanctified space in which the parts of your life can be reconstituted after the trauma of *Death*. (see *Rebirth*, eight of cups).

You are sensitive, and require someone to stand watch for you; either the highest part of oneself, an ancestral guardian, a shamanic figure or angelic power depending on your belief system.

In this *Judgement* card a huge white bear watches over your soul. On one level, this bear is the re-empowered *Guardian* of the previous card; the exposed bones now protected, all soulparts restored, a rebirth occurring.

In many mythologies the bear is the shamanic part of oneself, and its ceremonialised death and resurrection is an initiation into a shamanic system. This white bear traverses all three shamanic worlds, upper, middle and lower, and stands at the axis due north, just as the constellation of the Great Bear points to the Pole Star. The Winter Solstice is a gateway to these worlds. The dawn Midwinter sun brought rebirth to the dead and the darkened world, yet the darkness itself brings stillness and peace; it is not fallow. Behind the mound shines the aurora borealis and the rainbow bridge across which souls are said to traverse after death. A figure dressed in red, rides their reindeer on a shamanic journey (cf. Santa Claus).

After the *Death* of one highly significant part of your life, people are often very judgmental, i.e., 'if s/he had not done this or that...' often there is profound shame, sorrow, guilt at the mess they have made of their life, their time, their relationships etc.

What every person requires for their rebirth, to break a continuous cycle of repeated patterns, is forgiveness, absolution, the power and blessing of love, whether from an external source or oneself.

Perhaps for the first time in your life you feel a whole person, reborn.

The Eights

Major arcana: Hermit/Judgement Position on wheel: Midwinter Solstice. Chakra: womb.

The Eight of Wands: Hearthfire

A hearthfire burns brightly, fed by logs from the eight directions. A coming together of the wishes, and intentions laid down earlier in the year. An energised harvest that creates the warmth of regeneration. Happiness of the home, and visits of friends to your hearth in the winter. Generating a warmth at the heart of ones life.

Eight of Arrows: Struggle

A person wrapped up against the bitter cold, struggling through a snow blizzard, has difficulty finding their way home. A feeling of being alone, struggling in many aspects of one's life. A need for support, to open one's heart to the potential 'hearthfire' and for others to reach out and help.

Eight of Cups: Rebirth

The wheel has come full cycle. On one level this represents a solstice feast, a broth made for sharing, originally made from cattle- 'the Christmas bull'. On a deeper level this card represents a profound rebirth. In the centre stands the cauldron of transformation in which all the elements of oneself are being poured in order to be recombined. A Sheila-na-gig faces you, guardian of death and rebirth, focusing you in the present. On either side of her, one head looks towards your past, another to your future. The red, green, white and black of the whole wheel are present.

Eight of Stones: Skill

Deep within a cave a person chisels an eight spoked design by lamplight. Around them are prehistoric carved and painted stones. This card represents someone who is able to work alone, in deep concentration, skilled and mature, in tune with something greater than themselves. The completion of a large project.

The Seer

Minor arcana: Nines. Position on wheel: guardian and centre.

Outside of time. Colour: all.

The Seer stands beside the roots of the Greenwood Tree. Behind are the trees that mark the boundary of the inner sanctuary of the Greenwood (*Respect*, nine of wands). Ancient moss covered stones form another barrier. It is essential that the Seer stands still at the centre of the wheel, having knowledge of all aspects of the previous 85 cards, and of the four elements. She holds the staff (fire), stands by the spring (water) where an arrowhead lies (air). She is firmly on the earth.

Her staff is encircled by the double headed serpent of the land in balance; her medicine pouch of sacred objects and her antler whistle for calling the spirits are tied upon it. Glowing on top of the staff is a sphere of energy, necessary for second sight. She stands still at twilight-that magical time of the gloaming, when the veils between the worlds is thin. She is wrapped around by a barn owl, that flies silently at dawn and dusk, its soft plumage red brown and white, black and gold, with its beautiful heart-shaped face and piercing eyes, making it a fitting totem of the vision of the heart of the land.

Upon her green cloak are prehistoric painted animals, aurochs, horse, reindeer, mammoth, lion, owl and plants. The Seer is keeper of ancestral memory (nine of stones, *Tradition*), and its myths, able to see into the past, and understand its connection and interaction with the present. She is sensitive to her environment, to the nature around her. She is knowledgeable, not only intuitively, but she also has a keen intelligence and alert awareness, and can protect her land, and her clan from desecration of its natural inheritance.

She stays still but misses nothing—she is completely at one with the heartbeat of the land, which allows her to traverse all worlds. The Seer acts upon her visions, she is not a passive day dreamer. She can be prophetic, aware of much that others miss. The mediator between *The Seer* and the community is *The Shaman*.
Incidentally, I do not see this as a gendered quality; I know of skilled male seers (William Blake) and powerful female shamans.

The Nines

Major arcana: The Seer. Position on wheel: centre left.

Nine of Wands: Respect

A wildman stands protecting the way to the heart of the Greenwood, challenging the integrity of your intentions. Approach a sacred place or a sensitive person with consideration and honour. Respect the need for privacy. Ensure your own boundaries are protected, respect the value of your own space.

Nine of Arrows: Dedication

A woman stands, eyes closed, playing a bow (it can be used as a shamanic instrument); she wears a swan feather headdress and a robe of soft blue. With her spiritual dedication and musical skill she generates healing energy around her. Being at one with your inner heart.

Nine of Cups: Generosity

A wise figure sits, their heart open to the generous abundance of all around them. One foot is on the land; they are at one with their environment, genuine in their heartfelt gratitude to the gifts of life; they radiate generosity. They are flanked by the regenerative powers of the bear and bull.

Be open to giving and receiving. Life is flowing, and you are still and strong within yourself.

Nine of Stones: Tradition

A cross legged antlered figure sits upon a spiralled central stone. They listen to the wisdom of the stones beneath the full moon. Be aware of the patterns of connection linking you and nature around you to the past, present and future. Deep learning. The memory of much that has been revered in the landscape can be retrieved in periods of respectful stillness. Learning from elders.

The Shaman

Minor arcana: Tens. Position on wheel: guardian and centre.

Outside of time. Colour: all.

The Shaman wears a bearskin, the traditional shamanic animal. His face is mature, his expression both benign and stern, his power is evident. You do not cross a shaman. The Shaman is someone who is in control of their life; and wise and responsible enough to use their skill to help others. The Shaman can use the elements of earth, air, fire and water in a practical as well as a magical sense; they can light fires, swim, navigate by the stars, shoot bows, build a home life, as well as having consummate ceremonial skill. He carries a deerskin rattle (air) smouldering sticks (fire) a flint knife (earth) and an antler tine cup (water). He is a teacher, passing on the ancestral stories and skills to the next generation (Instruction, ten of arrows). Upon his bearskin are Palaeolithic painted shamanic figures from French caves, c.13,000 BCE. One is cloaked in a bison skin, dancing playing a bow; the other is antlered in a stylised animal skin.

Being a shaman, able to see the complexities of life and death, and acting on this knowledge for the benefit of all, can be a heavy burden to carry. (*Responsibility*, ten of wands). The Shaman has a deep rooted balance within themselves, and can assume a place of status within society without compromising their integrity and losing sight of the higher purpose they are working for.

The Tens

Major arcana: The Shaman. Position on wheel: centre right.

Ten of Wands; Responsibility

A person struggles across the ice, carrying logs home. A feeling of being burdened, weighed down by the responsibility of work or caring for others. Try to delegate and lay down some of the load.

Ten of Arrows; Instruction

A woman teaches a child to fire a bow. The passing of skills from one generation to another. The figures are African, as that is where the human race originated.

Ten of Cups; Happiness

In a verdant landscape, water pours down a waterfall, filling the cups to overflowing. A couple open their hearts to the power of love. Be careful not to get swept away by it.

Ten of Stones; Home

A stone archway is protected by two ancestral guardians. Beyond a thatched stone round house the tree of life grows radiant and abundant. All generations are represented in the garden, from a baby to the elderly; and the community is in harmony.

Coming home to oneself, an abundant home life, feeling spiritually and financially happy, loving one's immediate environment.

The Moon

Position on wheel: Winter/Lowerworld. Chakra: womb.

The Moon in a tarot pack is really concerned with the dark moon, not the waning moon, but the true last phase of the moon, when it cannot be seen at all. Obviously I have had to draw a moon in the card, but made it deliberately eerie and unnatural.

The Moon card is concerned with a fertile yet fallow state, latent life that grows within the amniotic fluid of the womb; molecules of carbon that lay within the swamps of our distant past and from which the first life form emerged.

The Moon card shows the watery winter flood plain of Avalon and one of the narrow wooden trackways that criss-crossed the marshes from island to island. On one of these sacred islands stand stark winter trees, inhabited only by crows and a heron. An aurochs or horned cow or bull is the totemic animal of this card. The connection between horned cattle, islands and the moon is very ancient. (cf. the Welsh name for Anglesey is Ynys Mon-Isle of Cattle). The association between cattle horns and the horns of the waxing and waning moon is obvious. Also the similarity in shape between the horned head of a cow and the uterus, made cattle extremely sacred.

This card is partially to do with the mysteries of conception and fertility, psychologically and physically. The egg depicted is a heron's egg; a heron is the primal bird of creation, at home on this marshland. The heron replaces the now rare stork as the bird that brings babies, i.e., new life into the world.

A shifting time of seething darkness in which new life and ideas can be conceived.

The Sun

Position on wheel: Summer/ Upperworld Chakra: heart.

A figure stands arms wide, heart open, to receive the abundance of the universe.

The Sun card traditionally refers to the sun at midsummer, the life-giving sun, radiant, potent, energised. The Sun differs from *The Greenman* or *Greenwoman* (the cards for midsummer) in that the solar figure has traversed the wheel and completed a life cycle. The Sun is the wise and grounded Fool, able to surrender to a higher spiritual power of love, without burn out or the interference of the ego. Summer leaves, a fern, sweet honeysuckle and the briar rose are blessed by the white hot summer sun. The person is joyful, radiant with life energy.

The Sun card is placed in the shamanic Upperworld, or sky, where spiritual teachers can be encountered, but access is only possible through a generous open heart. The Sun card follows that of the Shaman and is a spiritual aspect of shamanism. Solarisation or total shamanic identification with the heart of the sun is a world-wide practice. This is often achieved by sacred drumming, which sends one into trance, then journeying on a white horse into the sun. Many shamans consider the drum itself to be the sacred horse-the vehicle for their spiritual transformation. In the Sun card the figure has entered the sun through the sacred site of Uffington white horse, or mare, whose eye represents the sun. (see *Ace of Arrows*). Uffington still has a tradition that says if you stand in the eye of the white horse and wish, whilst turning clockwise three times with your arms open wide, your wish will come true. This damages the chalk eye, and would once have been a rare act of sacredness, where the shaman would have 'flown' into the spiritual heart of the sun in trance, and returned bringing its healing power both to the land and tribe.

A union with the wonder of life. Bliss. Health and happiness. Spiritual teaching. A rare heart. Transcendent joy. Access to the divine.

Re-energised from the flight of the heart, you return to earth to illumine *The World Tree*.

The World Tree

Position on wheel: centre, encompasses all worlds.

A strong and healthy tree, with the foliage of all four seasons, winter, spring, summer and autumn, stands on the earth, branches reaching the sky, roots deep in the earth. The labyrinth, a stellar vision in *The Fool*, is here grounded on the land; you stand at the centre as the Tree, your journey complete. You are able to draw on all the qualities from the other cards in the wheel, you are in balance, a whole person. You are at one with yourself, your immediate universe, your own path and a greater destiny.

The Storyteller (back of the cards)

This androgynous figure is at one with the Greenwood. They wear a hat of reindeer skin with ochred reindeer antlers. Heron, owl and raven feathers hang from it. They are clothed in moss and woodpecker feathers, a foliate face at their heart as they speak with the voice of the Greenwood. Their skin is weathered and tattooed. The frame drum is painted with the horse with which they traverse the shamanic worlds, and the emblems of the four elements, and intertwined serpent energies of the land. Horse hair and a kingfisher feather hang from the drum stick.

As you walk into the Greenwood may your journey be blessed and your heart full.

The 'Court' Cards

It felt intuitively right to make the traditional Page, Knight, Queen and King 'court' cards into European birds and animals, rather than human characters.

People were rarely depicted in pre-historic art, yet numerous animals feature from c.30,000 BCE. The very sophisticated symbolic naturalism of the painted Palaeolithic caves in France i.e. Lascaux (c.17,000 BCE) shows a complex animal mythology. This is based on direct observation of their natural environment. I have spent many enjoyable hours studying the behaviour of birds and small mammals in the British countryside. I wish the cards to have a practical power; for them not to be dissociated from the land itself. I have included some animals now extinct in Britain such as the wolf and lynx but surviving in other parts of Europe, i.e. Spain. Their mythic resonance is too deep for them to be forgotten.

The birds and beasts are grouped in suits around the Wheel of the Year- (see fig.1)

<u>Suits</u>	<u>Season</u>	<u>Element</u>	<u>Colour</u>
Wands	Spring	Fire	red/orange
Arrows	Summer	Air	white/yellow/gold
Cups	Autumn	Water	green/blue
Stones	Winter	Earth	black/indigo

Each bird and animal in the 'Greenwood Tarot' is non-gendered, although occasionally a male and female pair appear together, i.e. Reindeer and Woodpecker.

The titles, i.e. knight, page, queen and king refer to qualities rather than gender.

The **Pages** are all small, secretive, heralding new energy. Their 'cost' or plumage containing the sacred colours of the wheel, i.e. the rainbow plumage of the Kingfisher and the green, red, white and black of the woodpecker. They are therefore thought of as guardians of the mysteries of their element.

The **Knights** are independent and far-ranging; perceptive travellers such as the hawk or wolf.

The **Queens**, placed at the times of stasis, the solstices and equinoxes represent empowered stillness.

The **Kings** embody the fulfilment of the qualities of their element, enhanced by the power of the cross-quarter festival day they are aligned to, and containing the beginnings of the next element/season. Thus the rising and falling of entwined **Adders** combine the dynamic passions of fire with the life and love enhancing qualities of Air, fitting in well with their place on the wheel at Beltane, with the cards of the 'Lovers' and the combined 'serpent' energies of 'Balance'. The four Kings are also the primary totems of this land; the Horse, the Snake (dragon) the Lynx (lion) and the Reindeer (deer).

The colours of reddish-brown, white and black are the natural camouflage colours of many birds and animals, as well as being the sacred colours of the Upper, Middle and Lower worlds respectively. occasionally a bird such as the green woodpecker or goldcrest will have the green as well as red, white and black; these birds are then the living heart that unifies and awakens all three worlds.

Divination When you chose a court card in a reading it can refer to someone who bears the qualities of the animal depicted. Each card has many textures of meaning

and will obviously influence the context in which the card is read. In meditation the animals and birds are your helpers, guardians and guides.

Page of Wands; Stoat (Ferret US)

Time of year; Imbolc Element; Fire

Stoats are secretive but highly alert and energetic, sometimes seen playfully 'dancing'. They are determined hunters, taking prey such as rabbits which are twice their size. They emerge from burrows like the serpentine energies of spring rising from the winter earth. A wand of elder grows beside the stoat; this is one of the first trees to come into bud (leaf). Stoats are considered highly sacred in many societies, because in cold climates they transform their coats into white winter fur and are then called Ermine.

I was struck by the extensive use of ermine on shamanic clothing and ceremonial objects in Native American tribes. In European witchcraft weasels and stoats were allies, shapeshifters, mediators between the worlds.

In Britain ermine is considered symbolic of the Sovereignty of the land and is worn at the coronation of the monarch; but the roots of its sacredness must be far more ancient. One is painted on a French Palaeolithic cave. (Reseau Clastree-Ariege)

White is especially sacred at Imbolc (fig 2). Once savagely hunted for their fur pelts, they are now suffering from loss of habitat.

Divination; renewal of an alert determination. Realignment with the sacred will of the land. Secrecy and magical sensitivity. Playfulness. An ability to slip out of situations.

Knight of Wands; Fox

Time of year; Towards Spring Equinox Element; Fire

A fox is a survivor, adapting quickly to new environments, predatory and cunning. Foxes can scavenge, roam far and wild, are untameable, yet will live in close proximity to humans. The wand shown is a hazel divining rod used for detecting water and subtle energies. These were used by the 'Cunning men and women', the village shamans, the cunning referring to their knowledge as well as to their williness needed for survival. The fox (and raven) are the trickster archetypes of our mythology.

Divination: A quick-witted person able to weave in and out of situations, usually turning them to their own advantage. Difficult to 'pin down' or to be sure of their motives. Someone often on the edge of society. A wanderer.

Queen of Wands; Hare

Time of year; Spring Equinox Element; Fire

The hare still has connections to the Spring Equinox through Easter eggs and Easter rabbits. The name of the Anglo-Saxon Hare Goddess Eostre is preserved in the name Easter.

In the tarot card a hare stands facing the dawn, looking towards a new future. A blackthorn wand stands behind. These trees are unusual in that they flower in spring before they come into leaf, and they reflect the dual nature of this time of year; the sharpness of the March weather, the beauty of the spring flowers. The hare's paw leans on an Eastern European decorated Easter egg painted with a wheel of the year design. The Egg is the promise of potential abundance. At her feet the grass seems to dance with the rising sap of spring. In folklore hares were the spirit form of witches.

Divination: An empowered and energised person, with the ability to utilise their full potential, as long as they are not tempted to use that power against themselves or others.

King of Wands; Adder

Time of Year; Beltane Element; Fire-Air

At this time of year adders intertwine in what seems to be a courtship dance. It has only recently been discovered to be a display of male rivalry. Previously this was seen as a representation of lovers. The fiery energies of the earth, the sap rising to meet the softer energies of air. The rising and combining of the sexual 'kundalini' serpent powers. The wand is of naturally spiralled ash, mediating fire from below and air from above. The glyph of the caduceus seen between the adders' heads is the ancient symbol of healing, which comes from dynamic, balanced energies.

Divination: Raw and potent sexual. Earth or healing. Energies expressed and recharged. A charismatic healer. A rebalancing and re-empowering of one's physical and subtle energy and creativity.

Page of Arrows: Green Woodpecker

Time of year; Beltane Element; Air

Green woodpeckers have always been considered particularly sacred, their plumage being of the four magical colours; red, white, black and green. They also spiral up trees (i.e. the tree of life) and disappear into trees to nest. Therefore they were thought to hold the secrets of the Greenwood Tree of knowledge.

In Britain these gentle and beautiful birds are called yaffles because of their extraordinary call like a laugh.

Divination: Their drumming (pecking) on trees which echoes through the woodland heralds your entry to a place of the heart. In the tarot the pair of woodpeckers look at each other, a third flying down the arrow shaped path, guiding you to love.

Knight of Arrows: Hawk

Time of year; Towards midsummer solstice Element; Air

A large hawk with powerful flight flies on the summer wind currents, able to watch all below with clarity of perspective, and act on its own perception. These birds of prey, now a protected species are making a welcome comeback.

In myth they are wisdom and 'medicine' bringers. The arrow in the card is in steady mid-flight, its aim will be true.

Divination: A person with a sharp mind, able to fly high, be competitive, impatient, ambitious, focused, potentially intolerant and arrogant. A skilful mediator of new ideas. A watcher.

Queen of Arrows: Deer

Time of year; midsummer solstice Element; Air

I am very fortunate to live in Oxford near Magdalen College deer park where there is an actual white hart (albino fallow deer) and several white hinds. Each time I visit them is a sacred occasion. The white deer, rare in reality, has a strong mythology; it is the inner heart guiding one into an inner place of stillness and mystery. (see also The ancestor).

In this tarot card the deer sits still on a grassy mound, whilst the vibrant, healing, vitalised air of summer swirls in currents behind it. The arrows stand still in the ground.

Divination: A person with a gentle, tender and loving heart, whose quiet wisdom brings healing. They could have qualities of shyness and oversensitivity, difficult to get close to initially, they are loyal and deep. A person happy and healthy.

King of Arrows: Lynx

Time of year: Lammas Element Air-Water

A lynx and its cub stand watchfully beneath a Lammas (blood) full moon. A lynx is a predator, attacking prey stealthily and with the grace and strength of all big cats. Able to climb trees, leap, run at speed or to stand and silently, alertly, watching its prey. The lynx balances powerful action with needful passivity. It will fight to defend its territory and cubs, yet will play gently and tenderly with its young, remaining ever vigilant for danger.

Divination: A person of power, able to defend, protect and nourish their children or inner child, proud and independent. A tendency to anger curbed by a fierce heart.

Page of Cups: Kingfisher

Time of year: Lammas Element Water

The first time I saw a kingfisher (they are rare in Britain) I knew it was deeply significant. Each time I see them, as a sudden flash of azure, I know it is a blessing. Kingfishers are very small, with fast agile flight, able to dive into water and fish with skill, (hence combining air and water).

They are the rainbow bird announcing the beginning of healing, perhaps tears bringing emotional release. The cup is a precious gift. They are the northern mythological equivalent of the hummingbird.

Divination: A person who will guide you to a place of healing, perhaps by a message or gift. Be aware of small signs, that may have later significance. A special person who moves in and out of your life. A free spirit, elusive, but dynamic whose positive energy is illuminating.

Knight of Cups: Salmon

Time of year: Autumn Equinox Element Water

The card shows a magnificent salmon leaping in the well of wisdom, catching a hazelnut containing all the wisdom of the woodland. The Autumn sun sets over the mound of wonder from which ancestral wisdom and deep love pour forth. A golden bowl glowing with sunlight floats by the waterfall. At this time of year many salmon travel thousands of miles upstream to return to the place of their birth, lay eggs which are fertilised by the males, and die. The rare salmon that survives a second year is called a celt.

Divination: This card denotes someone whose life serves a greater purpose, someone with perseverance, determination, self-sacrificing and wise. Could have a tendency to martyrdom-to give away too much of one self.

Queen of Cups: Heron

Time of year: Autumn Equinox Element Water

A heron acts swiftly to catch an eel. Herons were considered the most sacred of all European birds. They lay the primal egg in the primordial swamps from which all creation emerges (see *The Moon*).

As guardians of life and incarnation they are now represented as storks carrying babies. Because they stand still for hours looking into water, herons are considered both wise and 'psychic' (see reflection). The glass cup holds the setting sun.

Divination: Drawing this card denotes someone who is deep, wise, knows when to be silent; is psychic, emotional, able to be solitary, but also able to impart wisdom

with maturity and responsibility. Someone able to be still enough to receive gifts of wisdom. Tendency to day dreaming and over-passivity.

King of Cups: Reindeer

Time of year; Samhain Element; Water-Earth

The reindeer stand at the cusp where the elements and earth meet, thus water becomes ice. Reindeer are wonderfully suited to living in icy environments, with their thick fur and specially adapted hooves. They inhabited Europe in the Ice Ages, and were considered guides, pathfinders- as the tribes followed the migratory herds, creating tracks through the landscape. These gentle reindeer stand before a prehistoric tent made of woolly mammoth bones, tusks and fur.

At this time of year reindeer eat the fly agaric mushrooms, whole herds keeling over 'drunk'. These mushrooms are toxic to humans.

Divination: Drawing this card denotes companionship, deep friendship. A sharing of profound understanding, a mutual love of knowledge from the past. Possible creation of a home together, a sense of home-coming and enduring friendship.

Page of Stones: Wren

Time of year; Samhain Element; Earth

The card shows a green mossy stone in which the wren may rest. A small golden egg and incised symbols may be found on the stone. A goldcrest nestles in its mossy depths and a wren stands above amidst the ivy.

Originally the goldcrest would have been the more sacred bird, with its plumage of red, white, black and green, but since it has become so rare, its mythos has been transferred to the wren.

The wren was an oracular bird to the druids, held to know the secrets of the otherworld as it appears to disappear into tree roots, walls and ivy; crevices between worlds. There was a cruel tradition of 'hunting the wren' on St Stephen's Day (Dec 26th) when wrens were caught, beaten to death with sticks, then displayed in a glass lantern, representing the death of the old year. What a barbaric way to see it out, especially as the wren signified the inner heart of the land.

Divination: Someone who speaks with a quiet but persistent voice of secrets and mysteries that elude others, who may be shy, and underestimated; but should not be overlooked. Someone who loves nature, and is gently aware of its subtleties, and has 'their ear close to the ground'. Being silent to hear the voice of your inner heart.

Knight of Stones: Wolf

Time of year; Towards Midsummer Element; Earth

A wolf prowls through a snowy winter landscape, above a Pictish (Scottish) stone carving of a wolf. The Midsummer sun rises over the hills, shining through a dolmen, light illuminating matter. Wolves have sadly been exterminated in Britain, though they are being protected and reintroduced in other parts of Europe. Much misunderstood, they are still ferocious and accomplished hunters, prowling across huge territories. They were domesticated prehistorically.

Divination: This card is one of guardianship. Someone who is essentially protective, a loyal companion on long journeys, who remains their own person. A defender of your boundaries, leaving you safe to withdraw from the world. A provider, but one who is not tied to a life at home, but is restless. Their power needs matching to hold them.

Queen of Stones: Bear

Time of year: Midwinter Element: Earth

A bear and cub hibernate. The skull is that of a cave bear with its thigh bone inserted in the jaw, placed in a ritualised setting by Neanderthals (Drachenloch cave c.45,000BCE) This is the earliest surviving European example of ceremonial burial and proves that the sacred mythology of bears is very ancient. (see *The Guardian*.)

Divination: This card is to do with being at one with the heartbeat, the rhythm of the earth, feeling content, secure, at home, protected by the Great Mother; able to sleep deeply and in peace. A person who is earthy, takes their time; is secure in the way that they live, strong and fierce in defence if necessary.

The King of Stones: Horse

Time of year: Imbolic Element: Earth

The horse shown is a Przewalski or Takh horse, the original wild horses of both Europe and the US. They were plentiful in the Ice Age and were painted in the Palaeolithic caves. Almost extinct now, a small herd of these beautiful horses have been reintroduced to land near the famous cave of Lascaux in France.* This is deeply significant as the horse or rather mare, was prehistorically seen as the source of all life, The Mother. This is because there is a similarity between the 'frog' underneath a horses' hoof and a vulva. It is this that is carved on the stone beside the horse on the tarot card. Stone reliefs similar to this date from c.30,000BCE.

This horse stands on a frosty winter's morning, about to drink from a pool from which the ice has recently melted. The ancient 'prehistoric' horsetail plants grow beside it. In the background is the chalk figure of Uffington White Horse (see *Ace of arrows*.)

Divination: Choosing this card signifies a positive change in one's life. A horse is a psychopomp-an animal that carries one between the worlds, bringing new life, the joy of the reborn sun. Perhaps there has been a fallowness, or an unhappiness in your life that will now begin to thaw.

A person who is reliable, wise, practical, able to help others with problems; both serious and playful, magical and grounded. They have their feet on the ground and their head in the stars.