



Yuletide Festival

Folkish Wodenist Festival for the Yuletide period also known as the Holy Night Festival. This covers the period of December until the New Year. We shall use the term 'Yule' for this period.

Ritual Equipment - The most important piece of equipment for this period (and for other festivals too) is the Yule-Wheel. This is a **6-spoked wheel** with a central axle, which can nowadays be bought ready or can be bought as an old wheel and refurbished. This would be about 50 - 80 cm in diameter with a central hub. The wheel must lie flat on any surface so the hub may need to be cut down on one side. This is how to make up the Yule-Wheel -

- ❑ A small, young forked tree branch is placed upright in the central hub; this is just the one upright branch with a forked piece at the end.
- ❑ You will now need to make up the *Yule Wreath* which can be a wooden circular hoop of wood around which small bundles of pine-twigs and holly-twigs are bound. Four red candles should be placed equally around the hoop. The Yule-Wreath is held by red cotton tied to the end of the forked twig.
- ❑ On the base of the Yule-Wheel you should place four night-lights, equally spaced around the wheel-base.

The Yule-Fest -

- ❑ This begins on **Woden's Day** (December 6th); this day should be celebrated by a *Rite to Woden*.
- ❑ On the first **Sunday** of December the first of the Red Candles on the Yule-Wreath is lit; on every Sunday after this another candle is lit, until on the fourth Sunday all four candles will be lit. This is symbolic of the light growing in power until the Yuletide itself when all four candles symbolise the Light-Reborn.
- ❑ On the first **Sunday** of December all four night-lights should be lit; every Sunday after this one **less** candle should be lit, ending at the fourth Sunday with one candle lit, which when blown out is symbolic of the waning Sun and Light.
- ❑ Each candle and night-light should if possible be kept alight for about an hour each time. These could be lit around 9.00pm in the evening.
- ❑ On the night of **December 21st** (or December 20th if you so wish [*]) if you have a Yule-Lighter (shown in the drawing at the top) you should place a candle/night-light in the base and then light it as you light the last night-light on the Yule-Wheel. This should be lit on this night and for the following two nights.
- ❑ This should be done indoors but if you so wish a Sacred Fire can be lit outside as well.

Please observe safety at all times as candles can be dangerous; at no time leave them burning without being there.

It would be possible to remove the Yule-Wheel to an area outdoors if you are doing a group-rite; Due to the weather at this time of year candles held in glass containers could be used (this could apply indoors as well since this way is perhaps safer). This could only be done if the Yule-Wreath was made of a hoop wide enough to get the candles on and held safely.

Cakes and Biscuits -

A Yule-Cake may be baked for the occasion.

Gingerbread and almond biscuits can be made, shaped into runes by rolling the dough into long pieces. The runes that you could use are -

The Swastika

The Sunwheel

The Wolf's Hook Rune

The Odal Rune

The Horse-Shoe.

These should be used to decorate the Yule-Wheel, and for eating you can make gingerbread cakes and biscuits in heart, star, or wheel shapes. (Use some other form if gingerbread is not liked). Make with honey and syrup for aroma.

Yuletide is a time of year for children, and those who are a bit older (like myself) will know how first impressions from childhood memories last longer and leave a deep sense of joy which lasts then into adulthood. The materialistic 'Christmas' of today leaves many people glad to get it over - if this is today passed on to the children they will have no deep and meaningful memories to hold into their adulthood. One way to help this process is to add Yule-Songs and Yule-Stories.

First Yule Sunday - *Little Red Riding Hood. The child with the red cap (The Sun) goes into the dark wood to visit the old mother (Earth Mother) and is swallowed up by a monster (wolf). The young hunter (Woden) brings her freedom and with it the rebirth of the year.*

Second Yule Sunday - *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves. The princely child goes into the deep wood, reaches the kingdom of the dwarves (Earth Mother) but gets put to sleep by the Evil Witch, sleeps on a mountain in a glass coffin (the Ice Winter) and is then freed and brought home by the young hero.*

Third Yule Sunday - *Maiden Marleen. The princess with the Golden Hair (The Sun) is held captive in a tower (death of the Sun). The world becomes barren and empty. The hero-prince tries to free her but is thwarted by bad bride (the Evil One), until the time is right and he recognises the right bride and brings her home.*

Fourth Yule Sunday - *Sleeping Beauty*. The princess reaches the tower of the old spinning-woman (the Evil One), she is pricked on the spinning-wheel and falls into a deep sleep, the world becomes barren and empty until the young prince comes and freely walks through the rose-hedges because the time was right (*Winter Sunstead*). He wakes the sleeping girl, the world awakes and radiates in new light.

Woden's Day - This is the day when the *Schimmelreiter* (rider on a White Horse) or *Hroth-beorht* ('the one shining with glory) rides - this is Woden, of course. This day is still celebrated as 'Christmas' in Holland. This is celebrated on December 6th and starts the Yuletide Festivals.

The Yule-Tree - If possible a small evergreen spruce tree should be used and should be placed into the central hub of the Yule-Wheel. For our heathen purposes this should be decorated with natural products and not with the modern plastic stuff. Small candles should be tied to the tree which should be held fast and safe enough to be lit. Red apples can be tied to the tree with wire, red being the colour of the Sun, and the apple symbol of forthcoming life and eternal life. Home-baked biscuits and almond biscuits can be hung on the tree, with their runic shapes. A boar-shaped symbol can be hung as symbolic of the Yule-Boar. Wooden swastikas and runes can also be hung on the tree. **Do not overdo the decoration as the actual tree should be the central point of focus.** The Yule-Tree should be made up on the Winter Sunwend (December 21st.)

The Winter Sunwend or *Mothers' Night* should be held on the night of December 21st (*) when the Yule-Wheel turns into the Yule-Tree. The tree-candles should be lit from the Yule-Lighter. On the tree should be 13 candles (12 months plus the 13th renewing), and three candles which are close together are left unlit. Everyone should be gathered around the Yule-Tree as the father does this (or Hearth Warder if a group-working). The following is said by the father or Hearth Warder after lighting the last three candles -

'This light burns for our ancestors who are with us tonight. This light should burn for the dead heroes of the constant struggle for freedom, and for the millions of Germanic Brothers all over the world who celebrate Yuletide with us tonight'.

After this a Yuletide song should be sung; heathen versions are available now.

I know that some Folkish Heathens reject the idea of using 'Christmas Day' (December 25th) altogether and prefer to concentrate the celebrations on December 21st (Winter Sunwend). For myself I have never done this, since the meaning of the *Winter Sunstead* is the period of the winter when the Sun appears to 'stand still' on the horizon, and this period is from December 22nd to December 25th. This clearly means that the actual time of the 'death' of the Sun is on December 22nd, and the time of the 'rebirth' of the Sun is on December 25th. The full lighting of the candles and the lighting of the candle on the top of the Yule-Lighter symbolises that we are magically renewing the Light at this time, and this has to be done until December 25th when the Light is renewed.

Our children are always open to 'peer-pressure' wherever they are, and to stop them from celebrating the 'Christmas Day' may well be a mistake; I would prefer that we (like the Christians did to the original heathen festivals) subtly altered the festivals back to heathen ones. The core

is already there, and since this work has been taken from *The SS Family* which is a source from which the most knowledge was acquired since they had the means, the facilities and the funding to fully research the subject, then I see this as the best means to get Yuletide back from the Christians and the economists.

Yuletide Eve (evening of December 24th) -

On this night the night-light/candle in the base of the Yule-Lighter should be lit and from it another candle should be lit; the base candle should be put out then, and the newly lit candle placed upon the top of the Yule-Lighter.

Yule-Day (December 25th) -

The Yule dinner should if possible be wild boar, hare or goose; these are the traditional meats to use.

Twelve Nights of Yule -

The twelve days following the Yuletide Eve are when Woden leads his *Army of the Dead* which are the mythical *Einheriar*; this is also the period when Frigga or Frau Holle leads the *Army of the Unborn* above the heads of the people. The candles on the tree should be lit as often as possible during this period. The pinnacle is reached on *New Year's Eve*.

New Year's Eve -

At midnight on New Year's Eve, when the candles on the Yule-Tree have burnt down the father will put the Yule-Lighter on the family table. The candle on this should be one used throughout the celebrations of the year and thus burnt well down. At this time a new candle is lighted and put in its place, ready for the rites of the coming year. This should be meditated upon by the whole family/group as it is done. Again, a small light can be placed under the Yule-Lighter (the old candle/night-light) and a new and larger candle lit on the top after the bottom one is put out.

The Yule-Wheel can be used throughout the whole year celebrating all of the rites; it is decorated differently for each rite. This will not be the subject of this short piece, which has been put together quickly to allow people time to set this up for the Yuletide of 2015. This year December 6th is actually on the first Sunday of Yule, which makes things quite easy this time. I will try to produce a work on how to use the Yule-Wheel for the whole of the *Wheel of the Year Rites* next year.

Note: This has been produced rather quickly and some refinements will need to be made later, and I hope that we can produce a Wheel of the Year rites based upon the Yule-Wheel and how to use the symbolism for each rite. What you need to do is to mimic the death of the old and the rebirth of the new through the candles - the difficulty comes in the actual dates used, which can change by the year. As a guide the time when the Sun appears to 'stand still' on the horizon would be December 22nd which means we should use the night of the 22nd, 23rd and 24th December, leading to the full rebirth of the Sun on 25th December.