

The Bear Tribe Manual (version 1) by C.Broch and K Fletcher

This Document...

...is intended as a practical guide to holding a Bear Feast of the type held by the Bear Tribe in the UK. It is not intended as a scholarly guide to bear ritual practices. If anthropology is what you are looking for, please check out the books in the appendix, particularly Irving Hallowell's Bear Ceremonialism which is available in many places online.

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Accompanying Materials

The songs for the ritual, recorded in mp3 format are available to download for free from the Bear Tribe website, at www.beartribe.co.uk
They are also available as a separate document in sheet music form.

Arctolatry, an Introduction

One of Mankind's oldest spiritual impulses is Arctolatry, The Worship of the Bear. When we first came to the Northern forests Bear taught us to find food. When we starved in the depths of winter the flesh of the bear sustained us. Teacher and Saviour, his corpse alarmingly man-like when stripped of its warm fur, mystery and taboo surrounded the animal whose name must not be spoken. A child of the Sky God, lowered from on high on a golden chain, he is guest of honour at his own funeral feast. With thanks and messages for his Father his spirit is sent back to Heaven that he may return and feed us again in our need time.

This ancient pattern of myth and worship is found all across the North, from the Finns and Sami of Northern Europe, the Khanty Mansi and other Siberian tribes, to the Ainu of Japan and the Inuit of Hudson's Bay. It has even left traces deep in our own mythology. Let us not forget that King Arthur (whose name means Bear) sleeps in a hollow hill to return when he is needed. That he stole from the Mound Fortress a sustaining cauldron, and that his wonder-working grail descended from Heaven upon a golden chain...

This was the mythos we drew upon for our Bear Feast, inspired also by Graham Harvey's recent work on Animism. This yearly ritual gives us an opportunity to connect with the other-than-human-persons (plants and animals) we have eaten through the year and express compassionate gratitude towards them.

History of the Bear Feast in Britain

Bear Feast can trace its origins to a talk given by Graham Harvey (blessed be his name) at an OBOD Druid camp some time in the mid 1990s. In this talk Graham gave a variety of examples

of ways that people used ritual and religion to deal with the tricky idea that we have to kill things to eat, for fuel and building materials etc. Its obviously bad to kill other animals, to reduce something complicated and beautiful and obviously like us into mere meat, and maybe these animals belong to other people (forest spirits perhaps) or just to themselves. So how do we reconcile committing what amounts to murder and possibly theft with the great imperative to be polite to other people, some of whom may be other-than-human-people?

Well some form of apology may be in order, and perhaps some gift to make amends. Or perhaps even a bit of sleight of hand, to persuade the dead animal it wasn't really our tribe to blame for his death, but someone else. Maybe if the animal is brought into our kin group it might be persuaded that its gift of itself was voluntary, or at least that it has been compensated for the inconvenience of dying and having to be reborn.

In 2005 Kate and I walked a long pilgrimage from home in Dorset to Santiago de Compostalla in Galicia, Spain. It took nearly 4 months to do this walk and during that time with nothing else to do we basically talked and downloaded the entire contents of each other's brains! Eventually two conversations became entwined, a conversation about what the oldest human religion must have been like, and a conversation about that talk of Graham's I'd been to. We decided that we would like to try to revive the old Bear Cult and at the same time use the ritual for its original purpose, to make us think about our relationship with our food and give us the opportunity to express gratitude.

Bear Feast is the ritual of a mystery religion, a sacred meal and communion which attempts to explore artistically and spiritually one of the questions of life, that life is precious, yet depends on death to continue, the death of those who are in reality our kin. If this appeals to you, then welcome to the Bear Tribe.

If you want to learn more, go to the back of this document for an Afterword and the Bibliography.

The Bear Feast Ritual

Introduction

What follows is the full ritual, as carried out the last few years at BF. There are many ways to shorten this ritual, to carry it out in a different order if necessary and to manage with fewer people, we discuss this later in this section. However the running order here assumes you will be carrying out BF as it was carried out for the first 7 years of its UK revival. For notes on ritual in general see Appendix II.

People

The following roles are required for the effective performing of this ritual (with people doubling up as required):

- Bear. We found that a large person in dark coloured clothes with even a single sheepskin on their back and a balaclava or dark face paint was enough to represent the Bear effectively provided the hunt begins in very low light!
- Three Hunters, armed with safe spears.
- A fourth Hunter to recite the waking and poem of thanks to the Bear
- A priestly person or elder to bless the hunters.
- A man able to facilitate the men's part of the ritual (symbol)
- A woman to facilitate the women's part of the ritual (preparation of the space).
- A strong singer of each sex to lead the songs.
- Sundry other members of the tribe to recite other poems and prayers (including importantly a man and a woman to recite the dialogue at the doors to the building).
- Drummers, preferably with shaman/frame drums and rattles.
- Someone reasonably able physically and not afraid of heights to raise the Bear from the smokehole at the end (if appropriate) or to place the Bear skull in a pine tree.

Resources

If the event is to be residential (which facilitates the pre-dawn start as well as the learning of the songs the night before) then there will obviously need to be sleeping space. Aside from this you will need a space big enough for everyone to gather, that can be heated and decorated appropriately. In the text below this is referred to as the Temple. A smaller space for the men

to gather in is also helpful, but not essential as they could gather around an outside fire.

In terms of kit, the following is essential (please contact us if you would like to borrow any kit, we are very unlikely to refuse!):

Bear Skin or something to represent it such as two black sheepskins sewn together.

Bear Skull or something to represent it if the ritual is to be ended at the pine tree. A large dog skull, model bear skull or papier mache bear skull could be made to work.

Spears.

A drink for the men and another for the women – it is important to provide a non-alcoholic alternative for those who do not drink (eg recovering alcoholics, pregnant women etc)

Drums, rattles and other instruments.

Games equipment (see Appendix III).

Decorations for the spaces, preferably fresh greenery.

Lighting (preferably candles - we have always avoided using petro-chemicals, favouring soya and beeswax tea lights for lighting).

Heating (preferably fires, and thus firewood is required)

Catering equipment and food for everyone including a feast to represent the Bear, which will most likely include optional meat. Wild meat works well, we have always used venison.

Smudge, incense, aspergulum etc.

Cleaning equipment for the ritual Temple cleaning, such as besoms.

Prayer stick making kit- paper and scissors or carveable sticks and knives if you are feeling brave! Baskets to put them in when they are finished.

Blowing Horns or other loud noise makers. Helpful for summoning people and also so the men can let the women know they are coming after the hunt.

Songs and stories to entertain our guest.

Copies of speeches, songs and poems, preferably laminated in case of bad weather.

About the Text

It is recommended that people are given laminated print-outs of their words in a large font (so they can be read in poor light and will survive winter conditions) well before the ritual begins. Preferably long enough before that they practise and maybe even learn them!

Most of the words in this ritual are recorded oral utterances of people from around the sub arctic world. For a list of their sources please consult Appendix I. As oral poetry, fixed in time when it was recorded, it was never meant to be a final or permanent version, but a performance alive in its moment. With this in mind feel free to paraphrase, rewrite, misremember and change to suit anything here!

From the moment the ritual begins (and if possible, from the beginning of the whole event) the word 'Bear' is considered Tabu. It should not be uttered by anyone until after the ritual is completed. The reason for this is explained in detail elsewhere, but it is a powerful and important part of the whole process, not to name those who you hunt, to avoid offending them in some way. We provide a list of alternative names you can use in the form of one of the songs and we have also provided a list for your reference in a separate appendix.

Running Order and Timings

Feel free to vary the running order, but for your information generally our days have been laid out as follows:

Evening of the day before the Ritual

Meet and greet, introductions, eating together, learning songs.

Ritual Day

Hunt and Preparation (Ritual part I and II) 6-8.30am

Breakfast, 8.30-10am

Talk, 10.30 -12am

Break,

Lunch (pre-prepared soup with rolls), 12.00-1.00pm

Games, 1-2.30pm

Break,

Prayer Stick making, 3- 4.30pm

Break,

The Feast (ritual part III), 6pm

music and performance to honour the guest,

Sending Back (ritual part IV). 9.30-10pm

The ritual day in effect ends after the Sending Back, which usually finishes around 10pm, it is followed by free time and less 'beary' music, poetry and song as people drift off to bed.

Day after Ritual

Breakfast 8.30am

Market 10am

Secret Vainamoinen Gifts (everyone brings a gift, value under £10 preferably hand made), everyone gathers in a circle and these are shared randomly.

Closing Prayer and Closing ceremony 12 noon

As the closing everyone gathers, hears the last prayer and extinguishes the fire.

Alternative Running Orders

BF has had several different running orders over the years.

BF in One Day

The first BF in England in 2008 was a one day event, and this is an easy way to run one without having to worry about accommodation. The main problem is that it will probably be impossible to have the hunt at first light. The first BF got around this by having the hunt at nightfall instead of dawn, but this meant the games couldn't be in honour of our guest as he wasn't yet present. Instead the games can become a way of selecting the hunters.

A hunt could take place in daylight if it perhaps took place in a dark woodland with significant underbrush, and the spectators were kept well back from the Bear and the hunters to preserve some sense of drama and realism. Even though everyone knows it is a pretend hunt (except perhaps for small children) for it to work as ritual it seems important for it not to descend into pantomime which could easily happen if the hunt happened in plain sight, depending of course on how good your Bear costume is! You will have to find a solution that works for your circumstances.

BF in an Evening

If you were attending a traditional Bear Feast taking place somewhere in Siberia, the hunt would have most likely taken place a day or two before you arrived, so we can also take the hunt 'as writ' for our purposes and start with either the cleaning of the space and the bear's arrival (which could just be carried in from another room or from outdoors as if arriving from the hunt). Your guests could arrive and the evening could even start with the games or even with the actual feast itself (Part III). It might be good to carry out an arrival and cleansing ritual yourself before everyone arrives so the space feels properly prepared.

Such an abbreviated BF could begin with the poem Where was Bruin Born and/or the song the Origin of Honeypaw (taken from the Karhunpäivä ritual) as a sort of evocation to the spirit of Bear.

PART I – The Hunt

The first part of the ritual ideally takes place just before dawn while it is still dark. The person playing the role of the Bear should leave discretely at this point to get ready and in position, they will most likely need a minder to help them. No-one should be told who is playing the Bear, and the Bearskin (if you are lucky enough to have one) should remain out of sight prior to the ritual. (It is recommended that whoever plays the bear should know in advance to give them time to watch footage of bears in order to get an idea of movement and sounds.) Light should be kept to a minimum and people should be woken quietly, perhaps with gentle drumming to build the mood. Once all are assembled, the drumming stops and the following poem is recited. It is very effective if recited by two people, one asking the questions and the other giving the answers.

*Where was Bruin born
the honey-paw turned over?
There Bruin was born
the honey-paw turned over
In the upper air
upon the Great Bear's shoulders*

*Where was Bruin given birth
the bear's cub brought up?
in a little woolen box
in a little iron box.
On the peg of a small cloud.*

*How was he let down to earth?
in a sling he was let down
in a silver sling
a golden cradle
On a nameless, quite untouchable string*

Once the poem has been recited, the hunting party are called forward (if not already there) to the front of the group. In our ritual, the winners of the previous year's games are usually given the honour of hunting the Bear. While the hunters are ritually cleansed with smudge smoke or water and prepared in any other way you can think of, the following song is sung as many times around as necessary, hopefully building to a climax which ends with the recitation of the poem that follows it. This song works well with drums and rattles.

Hunter's Song

Forge a spear of magic metal,
Forge a lancet triple-pointed,
That I may awake great Otso,

Forge a lancet triple-pointed,
Forge the handle out of copper,
That I may awake great Otso,

Hide thy claws within thy mittens,
"Otso, O thou Forest-apple,
That they may not harm the hunter

"Otso, O thou Forest-apple,
Let thy teeth remain in darkness,
That they may not harm the hunter

Once the song and drumming has finished, the following prayer should be said as the hunters continue to be smudged (cleansed with smoke).

Prayer for the Hunters
Guide the skier by the sleeve
direct him by the coat-skirt
lead him towards that headland
move him towards that hillock
where the quarry may be caught
and the game brought home!

Procession

Drumming and rattling starts again before leaving. It's important to make a journey to the Den, rather than go straight there. Only the leaders of the ritual should know the location of the Bear. In our ritual, he has been in a different place on the site every year.

Once the procession arrives at the den, the hunting party steps forward. The following words may be said by one of the spear holders, or better still by someone else selected before the ritual. The words should be directed at the den and everyone can join in on the 'CHOI' at the end of each line.

Waking the Bear

Wake up now, brother
na-na-nanana
the sun is shining on the hills
na-na-nanana
Wake up now, brother
na-na-nanana
the ants are running on the snag
na-na-nanana
Wake up now, brother
na-na-nanana
birdsong is ringing in the ears
na-na-nanana

At this point the Bear emerges and prowls around for a few moments, allowing everyone to see him (albeit indistinctly) and hear him. The hunters keep him from running away by threatening with the spears, until he runs onto one of the spears (usually the middle one). Once he is still, the prayer of thanks can be said by one of the party.

once the bear is killed

*Be thou praised, O mighty Ukko,
As thou givest me great Otso,
Givest me the Forest-apple,
Thanks be paid to thee unending.*

At this point, the women are invited to leave and go to the ritual space / shrine while the men stay with the Bear. This division by gender is traditional, but we have always allowed for people to choose to identify with the roles of either staying back after the hunt and those going ahead to prepare the Temple, regardless of gender. Having said that, most people are happy to go with the men / women tradition. Sensitivity is always paramount.

PART II – Preparation

Men / Hunters

Men remove the skin from the person playing the Bear, and drape it over a pole or one of the spears so it can be carried easily. If there is a convenient covered space then the men retire there, carrying the bear skin. A Symbel is conducted: the men gather in a circle, each man makes a boast and then a promise in front of the others, and takes a sip of a ritual drink (a horn of mead or a bottle of something – we use Jaegermeister). Make sure to provide a non alcoholic alternative. Then the next man does the same until everyone has had a turn. At our feasts we continue until the Jaegermeister is used up- so this part of the ritual has become known as 'The Early Morning Jaegermeister Challenge'! Alternatively any left over drink can be used as a libation. Once everyone is done, the men learn the Men's Song (which is easy enough to be learnt on the spot and need not be taught the evening before). Then they blow horns and process singing the Men's Song below to the door of the indoor space, where they wait for the women to be finished. Once they hear the women stop singing their song, the dialogue is begun by one of the men.

*Here comes the one who
lives in the forest
He jumps and he dances so be aware!*

Women / Hearth-makers

The women make their way to the indoor temple space where they complete the following tasks while singing the women's song: ritually 'cleanse' the room with incense, besoms, smudge etc. They light lanterns and candles. Light the fire (usually with flint and steel). Decorate the

shrine with greenery etc. We usually end with all those present gathering in a circle and sharing some kind of ritual tippie (traditionally something made with berries) and speaking words of welcome to new women, new lives, and anything else that needs to be said. Once this is done, each woman should bring a small cup water and gather by the doorway awaiting the arrival of the menfolk, still singing:

Men to the woods go stepping slowly
men go forth to take the bear x2
Sound the horns to give a sign
The bear is got, the feast is on x2

Arrival of the Bear

Man: *have the planks been scrubbed*
have the floors been swept
and the benches wiped?

Woman: *the floors have been sewpt*
the planks have been scrubbed
and the benches wiped!

Man: *have the lintels been raised*
and the tables laid with gold
for the good one to come in
for the great man to step in?

Woman: *the lintels have been raised*
and the tables laid with gold
for the good one to come in
for the great man to step in!

Man: *put him upon clean wood*
lay him down on a good board

Woman: *the boards all begin to sing*
and the windows to rejoice
that the good one has come in
that the great man has stepped in

After the dialogue is complete the men are admitted, as they pass, the women sprinkle them with water from their cups and perhaps smudge them as they enter the space. The men carry the Bear to the shrine, where he is placed in his position of honour. 2 coins are placed on his eyes (we use pound coins) with the following prayer:

Opening of the eyes
"We salute thee, mighty Otso,
Honey-paw, we bid thee welcome,
Welcome to our courts and cabins,
Welcome, Light-foot, to our tables
Decorated for thy coming!

The Honeypaw Song

Chorus: Big foot, Broadfoot

Lightfoot, Sticky-mouth

Short-tail ,Bobtail

Snubnose ,Honeypaw

Verse 1: Wild Dweller, Footstep Widener, Night Time Prowler, Golden Feet x2

Verse 2: Bee Wolf ,Forest Apple, Winter Sleeper, Golden Friend x2

Verse 3: Earth Owner, Forest master, Mountain Ruler, Golden king x2

After the song, participants are invited to place their offerings on the shrine one by one. Plenty of time should be allowed for this to take place. The shrine remains a quiet place of contemplation as people leave for breakfast.

During the day, all activities take place in the presence of the Bear.
These may include:

- ◆ A talk about some aspect of the ritual, bear mythology etc
- ◆ Hunters Games (see Appendix III)
- ◆ The making of Prayer Sticks (see Appendix IV)
- ◆ Personal Devotion
- ◆ Meditation

PART III – The Feast

After the day's activities are finished and the prayer sticks made or other flammable offerings prepared, everyone assembles in the shrine/temple space.

A meditation is carried out (this is important), for an example text see Appendix VI.

The following prayer is made and song sung.

Before eating

*O God the one you gave
shall not be eaten without song*

Honeypaw Song

Big foot, Broadfoot

Lightfoot, Sticky-mouth

Short-tail ,Bobtail
Snubnose ,Honeypaw

Wild Dweller, Footstep Widener, Night Time Prowler, Golden Feet x2

Bee Wolf ,Forest Apple, Winter Sleeper, Golden Friend x2

Earth Owner, Forest master, Mountain Ruler, Golden king x2

Then this blessing is made, preferably over the meal.

*Ready is the feast of Otso;
From the fire are swung the kettles
On the crane of polished iron;
In the centers of the tables
Is the bear displayed in dishes,
Golden dishes, decorated;
Of the fir-tree and the linden
Were the tables newly fashioned;
Drinking cups were forged from copper,
Knives of gold and spoons of silver;
Filled the vessels to their borders
With the choicest bits of Light-foot,
Fragments of the Forest-apple.*

Dring the meal the following poem is recited, written for the first UK Midwinter BearFeast Ritual by Nick Ford. Nick has kindly given permission to share it here. Or it can be recited later when people are playing music.

Honeypaw

*Too many to the southlands came – and we were driven forth:
Upon the glaciers' feet we trod, when we fled to the north.
A hard, bleak, land, and cold to us, we came as strangers to:
When first we found this land to hunt, we were a hungry few.
This is our clan's Remembering: this is The Ancient Lore;
In praise of Him We Do Not Name: Of Two Legs, And of Four.*

*We would have died that late Fall, when the game was scarce and small,
Had He not found us, starving – He who came to change it all!
He wore the warm fur clothing. He knew the shelter-caves.
He knew where meat lay under snow: by Him, we all were saved.
This is our clan's Remembering: this is The Ancient Lore;
I speak of Him We Do Not Name: of Him Who Eats Meat Raw.*

By mid-winter he lay as dead – for so we all believed;

*He eats His kin, as we do, so we ate Him, as we grieved -
His skull, in place of honour, overlooked us, every one:
We called his spirit to return, and bring with Him the sun.
This is our clan's Remembering: this is The Ancient Lore;
I speak of Him We Do Not Name: Who Rises With The Thaw.*

*Our call was answered. When Spring came, once more He walked the woods:
He dug up roots, and sleeping grubs, found other, hidden, foods;
When Summer came, as southland warm, and Sun rose high above,
He climbed the trees, he found the bees, the honey-hives we love!
This is our clan's Remembering: this is The Ancient Lore;
I speak of Him We Do Not Name: of Uncle Sticky Paw.*

*He showed us ground-meat under leaf, sweet berries good to eat;
When leaf-turn brought the shortening days, he gave us better meat:
At salmon-spawning time, he knew just where the shallows lie
To catch the slippery silver ones, as they came leaping by.
This is our clan's Remembering: this is The Ancient Lore;
I speak of Him We Do Not Name: of Mighty Big-Foot Spoor.*

*So, next when Winter bound the caves, we had much food within:
So all lived through the Darkening-Time, Night took none of our kin.
We had no need to eat kin-flesh, not ours, and not His own,
Then, when He ate an Elder, He became kin, bone for bone.
This is our clan's Remembering : this is The Ancient Lore;
I speak of Him We Do Not Name: of Him Who Goes Before.*

*He lives in us, and we in Him, and each is kin to other:
He is Most Honoured Elder, close to us as Mother's brother;
So sits His skull in pride of place, and so our Shape-Man wears
His shaggy pelt, His new-moon claws. No other mortal dares.
This is our clan's Remembering : this is The Ancient Lore;
I speak of Him We Do Not Name: of Terrible-In-War.*

*Old Uncle Sticky Paw is kin – though, be it understood,
He loves the honey, but His paws are sticky, too, with blood.
He gave us life. He gives us strength, in everything we do,
As long as we will give Him honour, pay to Him His due.
This is our clan's Remembering : this is The Ancient Lore;
I speak of Him We Do Not Name: of Red In Tooth And Claw.*

*His stars are in the northern sky – He roams High Heaven round,
So it is meet to follow Him, to each next hunting-ground.
He is the bridge between the spirits of both sky and land,
Who walks on four legs like a beast – and stands on two, like Man.
This is our clan's Remembering : this is The Ancient Lore;*

All praise, to Him We Never Name: Great Uncle Honey Paw!

After the meal it is time for the sharing of poems, songs and stories in the honour of our guest Honey Paw. For some examples see Appendix V.

PART IV - Sending Bear back to the Heavens

We suggest two ways to do this part of the ritual, depending on the space you are carrying it out in. If the building/tent you are in has a hole in the roof then whilst In the Height of a Cloud Running is being sung then a basket with the bear in can be hoisted slowly to the roof and lifted out, representing in a very literal way the bear's ascent to Heaven. Secondly everyone could process solemnly to a nearby tree, hopefully a pine tree, where the Bear skull or suitable representation thereof can be placed in the branches. It will be helpful if a fire has already been lit near the tree. If you don't have a hole in the roof or a tree you will have to improvise!

The Bear should be held aloft and addressed:

*Golden one, be on your way
Golden precious make your way
along the golden lane
along the silver road!
You'll not be taken far from here
just to a pine tree on a hill
a juniper at the field's far edge.
There the wind will meet your needs
the wave will drive you perch
on one side a whitefish strait
nearby the sweep of a salmon run.*

all throw sticks and prayers into fire singing:

Height of a Cloud Running

in the height of a CLOUD running,
in the height of a CLOUD striding,
my sacred house in moon colours,
my sacred house in sun colours
ON A GOLDEN CHAIN'S END HANGING
ON A SILVER CHAIN'S END HANGING

Bear is hoisted through hole in the roof or placed in the tree whilst singing continues.

After this has happened someone a short distance away can set off a firework if appropriate (a rocket is best or multiple rocket launcher). This is best if it is a surprise for everyone. The firework is a good way of drawing a definite line under the ritual activity of the day. It doesn't necessarily need to be noisy, but we have found it helps to mark an end to the proceedings and to ritual time. Another possibility is that if the closing ceremony is to take place immediately afterwards (and not the following day), then the extinguishing of the fire with cups of water is also very dramatic and symbolic and does a good job of marking the end of things. Once the Bear is gone then pause for a moment of contemplation! If the Bear Feast is taking place in a single day then go straight to the closing, below. Alternatively break for general fireside entertainment at this point and do the closing in the morning.

The Closing

Everyone gathers around the fire, bringing with them a mug of water.

We generally exchange 'Secret Vainamoinen' gifts at this point- everyone has brought a small wrapped gift to the event which are all placed in a basket when people arrive and at this point are randomly distributed to everyone present. Once the gifts have all been opened the closing continues.

The prayer below is recited and then everyone holds their cup of water over the fire. We all pour together and extinguish it in a great blast of steam and smoke! Bear Feast is over!

*"Grant, Sky Father, my Creator,
That the signs may guide our footsteps,
That the notches in the pine-tree
May direct my faithful people
To the bear-dens of the woodlands;
That great Herne's sacred bugle
May resound through glen and forest;
That the wood-nymph's call may echo,
May be heard in field and hamlet,
To the joy of all that listen!
Let great Herne's horn for ages
Ring throughout the fen and forest,
Through the hills and dales of this land
O'er the meadows and the mountains,
To awaken song and gladness
In the forests of Hampshire,
On the snowy plains of Dorset,
On the meads of Wiltshire,
For the coming generations."*

Karhunpäivä

Karhunpäivä (Finnish) or Karuse Peäv (Estonian), literally Bear's Day, is the 13th of July. It is held to be the navel of summer, and is the opposite day to Talvennapa, the navel of winter. Despite both days being sometime later than their respective solstices, they are often the warmest and coldest times of the year and so are regarded as the heart of their season. Sadly most of the rituals associated with this day have been forgotten or confused by the admixture of Christianity (St Margaret of Antioch's day is celebrated as 13th July around the Baltic), but there are a few customs which remain and hint of the day's former importance and there are rituals which have been revived or possibly created by Pagan Finns and Estonians which we can adopt.

Firstly people keep away from the woods where they would normally have cut hay at this time of year, as a mark of respect for the Bear which was believed to give birth on this day. Instead they would make offerings of incense, coins and flowers to the Bear. Wine would be poured into the sea for sea-luck. These days festival clothing is usually white to symbolise purity and people try to go to where there is a pine tree as the pine is associated with the Bear as his birth place and the place he returns to Heaven. The song of the Origin of the Bear is sung. Promises are made not to harm to nature and in return it is hoped nature will not harm us.

The first time we held Karhunpäivä it was as part of a wedding celebration. Around a dozen of us participated and we started by introducing ourselves each to each, drumming and singing the Origin. Then we each made a promise to the bear, holding the bear skull as we did so. Lastly I recited a poem of farewell.

The Origin of the Bear

"Tell us of the birth of Otso!
Tiri liirin liiri,
Was he born within a manger,
Tiri etc
Was he nurtured in the sauna
Was his origin ignoble?"
This is Wainamoinen's answer:
"Otso was not born a beggar,
Was not born among the rushes,
Was not cradled in a manger;
Honey-paw was born in ether,
In the regions of the Moon-land,
On the shoulders of Orion,
With the daughters of creation.

"Through the ether walked a maiden,
On the red rims of the cloudlets,
On the border of the heavens,
In her stockings purple-tinted,

In her golden-colored sandals.
In her hand she held a wool-box,
With a hair-box on her shoulder;
Threw the wool upon the ocean,
And the hair upon the rivers;
These are rocked by winds and waters,
Water-currents bear them onward,
Bear them to the sandy sea-shore,
Land them near the Woods of honey,
On an island forest-covered.

"Fair Mielikki, woodland hostess,
Tapio's most cunning daughter,
Took the fragments from the sea-side,
Took the white wool from the waters,
Sewed the hair and wool together,
Laid the bundle in her basket,
Basket made from bark of birch-wood,
Bound with cords the magic bundle;
With the chains of gold she bound it
To the pine-tree's topmost branches.
There she rocked the thing of magic,
Rocked to life the tender baby,
Mid the blossoms of the pine-tree,
On the fir-top set with needles;
Thus the young bear well was nurtured,
Thus was sacred Otso cradled
On the honey-tree of Northland,
In the middle of the forest.

Farewell Poem

*Golden one, be on your way
Golden precious make your way
along the golden lane
along the silver road!
You'll not be taken far from here
just to a pine tree on a hill
a juniper at the field's far edge.
There the wind will meet your needs
the wave will drive you perch
on one side a whitefish strait
nearby the sweep of a salmon run.*

I expect this section to be radically expanded as our research continues and after we hold our second Karhunäivä.

Appendix I, The Sources

Opening Poem

Where was Bruin born...

Words: Finnish Bear Origin poem (#44, The Great Bear pg 184 ISBN0195210921)

Hunter's Blessing

Guide the skier by the sleeve...

Words: Finnish Hunting Poem (#43, The Great Bear pg 183 ISBN0195210921)

Hunter's Prayer

Forge a spear of magic metal,...

Words: Kalevala by John Martin Crawford, [1888] RUNE XLVI.

Adapted from Lines 24-27, 60, & 64-66

Music: Finnish traditional Runolaulu tune (learnt originally from Hedningarna)

Waking the Bear

Wake up now, brother...

Words: Sami song for waking the Bear (#41, The Great Bear pg 182 ISBN0195210921)

Music: Composed by Fred Cairns

once the bear is killed

Be thou praised, O mighty Ukko...

Words: Kalevala by John Martin Crawford, [1888] RUNE XLVI.

Lines 97-100

women's song

men to the woods went stepping slowly...

Words: Trad Finnish – sent to us by Minna Raskinen, a Finnish kantele player and friend to go with the tune

Music: Finnish Trad Runolaulu melody from Viisikielisen Kanteleen Ohjelmistoa 1

KARHUNPEIJAIPOLSKA

Miehissä metsään mennään (men go to the woods)

töppöset polkee polkua verkalleen. (feet step on the path slowly)

Koirien häntä heiluu (dogs wag the tails)

sohjo ja räntä pyrkii saappaaseen. (wet snow tries to get in the boots)

Kankaalla karhut paini (the bears were wrestling)

tappeli tanner tummaksi tallattiin.

Koirien haukku kuului (you could hear the dogs bark)

kankaalta paukku karhut kaadettiin. (and a sound of a gun as they killed the bear)

Metsässä raikui torvi (the horns were played...)

mieheltä miehelle tiedoksi soitettiin. (...as a sign...)

Kontio saatu täällä (we got a bear here...
kankaalla kaatu mennään peijaisiin. (let's go and have a feast)

men's song

Here comes the one who lives in the forest...

Words & Music: Björndansen, a traditional song from Skane in Sweden/
Suggested by Josef Berger, a Swedish/Czech musician and musicologist

Björndansen trad. skåne

Här kommer björnen som bor uti skogen, han hoppar och dansar, såakta dig!

♩ →

gammal fruktbardens med rötter i hedatiden.

dansades bara av män: Två karlar imiterar björnens klumpiga rörelser.

translation: "here comes the bear, who lives in the forest,
he jumps and he dances, so be aware."

old fertility dance with roots in pagan times.
was danced only by men: Two guys imitate the clumsy movements of the bear.

Arrival of the Bear

have the planks been scrubbed...

Words: Adapted from lines 35-48 Finn Bear Feast poem (#48, The Great Bear pg 187
ISBN0195210921)

Opening of the eyes

"We salute thee, mighty Otso ...

Words: Kalevala by John Martin Crawford, [1888] RUNE XLVI.

Lines 184-188

Music:

Names of the Bear Chant

Words: euphemisms for the Bear (list of sources below)

Music: Chorus - Ob-Ugrian narrative melody (chorus)

Verse - Composed by Kate Fletcher using the Nature tone scale

Big Feet (Native American)

Broadfoot (Estonian)

Famous Lightfoot (Finn)

Sticky-Mouth (Native American)

Short tail (origin unknown)

Bobtail (Native American)

Snub-nose (Finn)
Honey Paw (Tungus)
Dweller in the Wilds (Ostyak)
Step-widener (Sami)
One Who Prowls at Night (Native American)
Golden Feet (Native American)
Owner of the Earth (Siberian)
Master of the Forest (Sami)
Divine One Who Rules the Mountains (Ainu)
Golden King (Native American)
Bee Wolf (Old English)
Apple of the Forest (Finn)
Winter-sleeper (Sami)
Golden Friend (Finn)

Before eating

O God the one you gave...

Words: Lines 1-2 Finn Bear Feast poem (#48, The Great Bear pg 186 ISBN0195210921)

Ready is the feast of Otso....

Words: Kalevala by John Martin Crawford, [1888] RUNE XLVI.

Lines 265-277

Poem

Too many to the southlands came... Composed for BF 2008 by Nick Ford and recited at every BF since

sending bear soul back

Golden one, be on your way....

Words: Kalevala

In the height of a cloud running...

Words: Extracts from Khanty Bear Feast Songs collected by Wolfgang Steinitz. Full text below.

Music: Finnish Runo-Laulu melody (Anna ainaki, Jumala)

Songs for calling spirits and deities are performed in the latter part of the festival day and usually alone, with the singer's face partly covered. The first song is number 29, *The song of the Lord-with-tributes-of-spring-squirrel-skin*, where the World Surveyor Man is introduced. His abode is described with the following words:

Grown in the morning
on the headland grown by golden lawn,
grown in the evening
on the headland grown by golden lawn;

on hills covered with the feathers of spring grouse rooster,
on hills covered with the feathers of autumn grouse rooster;
in the height of a running cloud,
in the height of a striding cloud,
my sacred house in moon colours,
my sacred house in sun colours
on a golden chain's dear end
hangs there,
on a golden silver's dear end
it hangs there.

When from the southern throat a throatly wind
starts to blow,
with the clinking sound of a little silver,
towards the dear waters of the northern Ob
it moves there.

When from the northern throat a throatly wind
starts to blow,
with the banging sound of a big silver,
towards the dear waters of the southern Ob
it moves there.

In the inside
of the sacred house in moon colours,
of the sacred house in sun colours,
close by
the hoofly table with golden hooves,
upon
the hoofly table with golden hooves
into the sacred book of spring squirrel hide,
into the sacred book of autumn squirrel hide
seven golden letters
the master is writing,
six golden letters
he is writing there.

(Ibid.: 339-341, verses 1-37).

closing prayer

"Grant, Sky Father, my Creator...

Words: Kalevala by John Martin Crawford, [1888] RUNE XLVI.
Adapted from the last 19 lines of the Rune

Recommended Reading:

We highly recommend that anyone hosting a Bear Feast reads the whole of RUNE XLVI of Kalevala. The full text is online at Sacred Texts:

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/kveng/kvrune46.htm>

Appendix II, Ritual Design

The following article was originally published in a much shortened form in Pagan Dawn magazine, Samhain 2013. I thought I'd put the full version here for anyone interested. It also includes a good description of some of the design philosophy behind The Bear Feast.

Designing Ritual

Corwen Broch and Kate Fletcher

Paganism is a hard thing to define. Personally I know what I consider to be its core, but opinions vary. For this reason its often easier to delineate Pagans by what they do, rather than what they believe, Orthopraxy rather than Orthodoxy to use the technical words. One of the more important things that most Pagans do is ritual (I'm not talking about everyday ritual acts like cleaning teeth here, I'm talking about those special ritual actions we do as part of our 'practice'). We do ritual a lot, rain or shine, on our own, with covens, groves, at camps, at open meetings, from memory or from slowly disintegrating damp bits of paper. Why? Maybe if we think a little about why we are doing it we could consider whether we are getting the most out of it? For many of you none of this will be new, but it is sometimes a good exercise to strip things back to first principles so I hope you won't feel patronised.

The Purpose of Ritual

Here are a few reasons we could think of:

Getting in touch with something or contacting the transpersonal. Whether you define the transpersonal as Deity or as your unconscious mind, ritual can help us reach out to the 'other', within or without. This reaching out can achieve anything from communication to actually embodying some other transpersonal force. Examples: Drawing down the Moon, the Wiccan rite whereby the Priestess embodies the Goddess and speaks as her. Vision Quest, where the aspirant hopes to catch a glimpse of the forces that underlie reality and gain power or knowledge from this vision.

The social aspect, bonding groups and establishing boundaries. Ritual can be a solo activity but is more often done in a group. The simple act of being together in the heightened state of ritual time can strengthen groups, but ritual is also used, through the concept of Initiation, to mark the entrance of people into a group. Examples: Druid Initiation, at my initiation I became a full member of my Druid Order. Even though I had paid the money and done the course a physical initiation ceremony was a powerful marker which changed how I felt about myself and the group.

Achieving change, magick and psychology. Perhaps we want to change how we feel or think. Perhaps we want to change something in the world through non physical means (if one believes this is possible). Ritual is certainly a powerful way to change how we feel about something, or to change our view of ourselves. Example: Coming of Age ceremonies exist in many cultures to mark and smooth the change from child to adult. Many Pagans are seeking to facilitate their own children's growth in this way.

Comfort. Lets not underestimate the simple fact that ritualistic behaviour and the sense of altered perspective it brings can be comforting and offer solace, often through contact with something beyond the self, or through simple familiarity. I think there is a degree of comfort

implicit in the social bonding achieved by successful rituals too.

Delineation of time and space. Ritual may be used to mark out a time or a place as somehow special, dedicated to a certain purpose or worthy of increased respect or different behavioural norms. Example: The Consecration of an Altar in a room may add a sense of peace and sacrality to the space and enable further work such as meditation to take place there.

Art. Ritual can be a form of artistic expression in its own right. It seems that the overly theatrical rituals typical of Victorian occult groups like the Golden Dawn are close to theatre and are as much artistic experiences as magical ones.

I'm sure there are many other reasons too, and any ritual may include several of the above elements.

The Tools of Ritual

In order to achieve the above end results we can use many different techniques or tools. Of course most rituals probably include many of these and perhaps more that we haven't thought of. Here are a few ideas though. Obviously there is a great deal of overlap through between these two broad categories, as they both ultimately work on the minds of the participants.

Physiological Tools. These work on the mind primarily through the body. They exploit our own body's responses to fear, discomfort, sensual stimulæ, sexual arousal or adrenaline and thus heighten our sense of being in that moment. By giving us a heightened experience we may be able to enter intense emotional states more easily, we will also be more likely to form lasting memories of the ritual, which is important if the goal is to achieve some long lasting psychological shift. Examples: darkness, firelight and flickering light, disorientation, unusual sounds, smells, sights, locations, posture. These may be combined; in my initiation into the Bardic Grove for instance I was blindfolded (in darkness, disoriented and somewhat anxious), robed, led by the hand (sensual stimulæ), asked to curl up like a seed (posture) and exposed to incense, chanting and music (sounds, smells etc). As part of the ritual I stood up and was unblindfolded (posture again and light etc), and found myself in a wood (unusual environment), all of which served to put me in an extremely heightened sense of awareness which made the words spoken to me, and which I spoke, more powerful.

Psychological Tools. Many of them rely on changing the environment we find ourselves in to one that is significantly different from our everyday experience, one that may have symbolic or meaningful content. These include special words or music, symbolic costumes or objects, drama or narrative. These things are chosen to be beautiful or elicit some other emotional or rational response. Drama and narrative and symbolism are especially important as they allow us to bring deep content into our ritual without having to explain what everything means explicitly. We all know what a person wearing black with a skull mask and carrying a scythe represents, there is no need to talk about what death means or describe it in words. In this way symbolic items or characters can stand in for large and complex concepts, and are well understood as such by both conscious and unconscious minds. The deep meaning of actions carried out by or with these symbolic objects or characters are understood very well by the unconscious mind. Social relationships and status may also play a part, initiations are often carried out by the most 'important' people in the group and their status adds to the effect of the actions.

Altered States. All of these factors may contribute to us entering an altered state of consciousness. I don't want to go into this area in great depth as it could be the subject of a

whole series of articles, but basically any state other than our normal waking consciousness could be considered an altered state. In some altered states, such as light trance, we are open to suggestion or more likely to experience glimpses of the transpersonal. Even the state of heightened arousal we mentioned above is an altered state of consciousness, though one that we may not notice in the moment.

Repetition. Repetition deserves a paragraph all of its own. Repetition within ritual, repeating the sacred words for example, or repeating narrative elements in the manner of a children's story, is important because it can put us in an altered state of consciousness, or more prosaically simply drum words or images into our minds. A standard familiar opening or closing, if not too long or uninteresting, may be helpful in establishing mood. Repetition of entire rituals themselves is also extremely powerful. A major shortcoming (in my opinion) of many Pagan rituals is the feeling that we should re-invent the wheel and write a new ritual each time. This is unnecessary and may actually be seriously counterproductive. A well designed and enacted ritual gains tremendous power through expectation and repetition, we don't need to worry about boring our participants if there are enough dramatic, sensual, psychological and physiological elements for them to experience! If you feel you have hit upon a successful form, why change it? Why not let it run and refine it instead?

Putting it all together

So we want to do a ritual. Firstly think about what we are trying to achieve. Without a clear purpose we will achieve little. I've been to too many seasonal rituals that are carried out just because it's that time of year. They lack focus and are generally unsatisfying experiences. It is of course perfectly acceptable to have a ritual as pure theatre or as a get together, but if you do why not use your skills to make it artistically or socially fulfilling for all concerned?

Having delineated our purpose or purposes then it is time to think what elements from the toolbox of ritual would be appropriate. Finding a central image may be useful, or a central process. A symbolic action might be enacted, like the famous reaping of an ear of wheat in silence, or the baptismal immersion in water, and this central action can be surrounded by other elements which reinforce its symbolic meaning or psychological or physiological impact. Simplicity is often more powerful than complexity, there is only so much that the mind can grasp without becoming overloaded. It is especially important not to overload the mind with too many words! Images and actions are far more powerful, words are no substitute for them. Too many words may lead the participants to lose interest and switch off, there is no rule about how long a ritual has to be, make it short and punchy rather than long and dull!

Case Studies

Here are a couple of case studies which hopefully illustrate these elements of ritual design.

The Mercian Gathering is the single biggest outdoor Pagan gathering in the UK. Designing a meaningful ritual for a group of almost 1000, some of whom may know little about Paganism and the others will be from many different traditions must be a challenge to say the least, but I feel that the Mercian Gathering achieve their goals well. The ritual begins with symbolic cleansing by passing through a fire labyrinth to the sound of pipes and drums. This uses many of our physiological tools above, fire, darkness, sound etc. It marks the entrance into a liminal time, once we have passed through the labyrinth we are in a different (head)space. Everyone then processes to the Wicker Man where some have hung offerings and prayers in the hours

preceding . The procession, with its sights and sounds serves to add a sense of expectation. Everyone circles the Wicker Man and the fire is lit with flaming arrows- a far more marvellous spectacle than lighting it with a match would be! There is dancing and music and cheers as the Giant falls- the sacrifice is complete. Later bread will be cooked in the embers, in the morning the bread will be drawn forth, a suitable resurrection with rich symbolic meaning. There is another procession, bearing solar imagery, to the main circle where the bread is shared.

This ritual has many powerful visual images and coupled with the symbolic sacrifice and rebirth is satisfying emotionally and rationally. It could inspire a ritual on a small scale too, following a trail of lanterns through a wood to a place where among chanting celebrants a corn dolly is sacrificed, burnt, and a loaf pulled from its ashes would be equally powerful if somewhat less spectacular!

The Bear Feast takes place at Midwinter. We were inspired by two things to create this ritual. Firstly ancient bear ceremonies that were carried out all around the sub-arctic regions, and secondly by Graham Harvey's writings on Animism, and more specifically a talk he gave at an OBOD camp many years ago about one of the origins of religion being our need to apologise to our food. The emotional or spiritual purpose of the Bear Feast is to forge a compassionate connection to the food we eat and the lives that are inevitably taken in its production, directly or indirectly. If we are respectful to those other-than-human-persons who literally died that we might live, then we should try to live our lives to the full.

Bear Feast is a weekend event and thus is in effect made up of several connected mini rituals, though the whole thing hopefully functions as a kind of unity. Firstly on the Friday evening people gather in the recreated Viking Longhouse, we hold hands and all introduce ourselves and share food, then we all learn and practice the songs we'll use the next day. There is obviously a practical aim to this (eating and learning the songs) but more importantly this time serves to bond the group together, so people can relax and feel safe and thus more able to appreciate the other parts of the weekend. The setting, firelight etc also help to add a special mood, though we are not really deeply in 'ritual time' yet. We do start to observe the taboo against speaking the word 'bear' however, which is extremely difficult at an event called the Bear Feast! All sorts of amusing euphemisms must be concocted and forgetting the taboo will be met with mockery! Use of different language in this way also reinforces the specialness of the events taking place.

Early on Saturday morning, while it is still dark, we wake everyone who has been sleeping in the Longhouse with drumming, tea is made and folk get dressed and perform their ablutions but everyone is encouraged to speak in hushed voices to maintain if possible the liminal state between waking and sleeping. Eventually drumming becomes chanting and the (previously selected) hunters assemble by the doors with their spears. They are smudged and blessed with an ancient poetic hunter's blessing translated from a Finno-Ugric poem and while this whole process is going on we all sing some of the songs we've learnt. The atmosphere really builds (as you might expect in a Viking Longhouse at dawn full of incense, firelight, chanting, drumming and beautiful poetry) and there is a great sense of expectation. Everyone leaves and we process around the site until we come to where the (person impersonating the) bear is hiding. The bear is woken from its hibernatory sleep according to an ancient formula and is then 'killed' by the hunters, again in the way expected by tradition. In the dim dawn light the hunt looks quite convincing and even though everyone knows this is 'pretend' the build up and the imagery is so

powerful that you are moved in spite of yourself.

The men and women (or as we like to say 'those who identify with stereotypical male and female roles...') separate and the men remain with the bear to remove his skin (an antique real bear skin) and then hold a symbel where we make boasts and promises. This is bonding for the men but also gives the women time to prepare the Earthhouse, the large roundhouse where the later parts of the ritual will take place. The women symbolically clean the space, smudge it and sing a special song. They light the fire, all these actions are explicitly carried out to honour our 'guest', the bear. The men process to the door singing, and there is a ritual exchange of words through the closed door. Eventually the door is open and the men carrying the bear enter, they are sprinkled with water and welcomed with song, the bear is taken to his place of honour where his throne and its surroundings are decorated with offerings representing the food we have eaten that year.

In this part of the ritual we see the central image or narrative starting to emerge. The Bear represents our food, by killing him we acknowledge the role of death in bringing us food and by honouring him we honour the things which we have eaten.

Later in the day we have a talk and then silly games, ostensibly to choose next years hunters but also to honour our furry guest. We have a meditation which brings the last year of our lives and the coming year into focus and attempts to call up a sense of all those persons we have eaten, with the intent of honouring them. This is the most transparent part of the ritual with regards to its meaning as it is explicitly stated, but it is woven into the ritual as a whole and serves as part of the preparations for our sacred meal. This meal represents the bear's meat but is usually of local venison (with a vegan option!). There is music and song followed by the last part of the ritual, where the bear skin is levitated with the power of our song up (at least that's how we describe it) out of the Earthhouse roof, while objects representing the prayers we send with him burn on the fire. Sometimes we have let off a firework as a sign of his ascendance. There is a strong element of play acting and some humour in all this but it in no way diminishes the seriousness or the magical or spiritual power of the experience. Mirth and reverence can happily co-exist. The bear will of course return from the Sky Father next year, as all the matter in the world moves through cycles of animate and inanimate existence, those atoms which make up our bodies being no exception.

The Sunday morning ends with an exchange of gifts and the extinguishing of the fire, each participant pours a cup of water onto the fire resulting in a great cloud of steam and smoke, a good action to mark the ending of that years Bear Feast.

This ritual then combines the strong central image of the death, consumption, ascension and assumed return of the Bear with many of the tools of ritual we spoke about earlier. Location is important but the timing of the more symbolic parts of the ritual to take place at night or early in the morning, by firelight, to the accompaniment of 'bells and smells', chanting and drumming, is deliberate. There are many small touches to involve each person present, from exchanging gifts to dressing the altar and playing communal games. Perhaps most crucial is the fact that we have as much as possible tried to keep the event as similar year on year as possible. We have obviously refined it, and in fact a few years ago changed the order of its parts quite radically, but now it seems optimal we will keep the words, songs etc the same. We can draw on the power of repetition which both deepens everyone's experience and also makes things run more smoothly, eventually Bear Feast should run itself, people will know their parts and

the songs and what happens next. There are already signs of this happening.

Last Words

So to summarise when planning ritual boil down your purpose into a few images or actions, and then find some way to make them have visual or psychological impact. Surround them with elements calculated to add intensity to the experience. Carry it out with pace and feeling. Job done!

What do you want to be different after the ritual?

What do you want to change?

Appendix III The Games

Here are some of the games that we have played at Bfs over the years. If you need to borrow the kit for them feel free to ask.

We generally have a chalkboard to keep running scores, a scorer and an umpire/announcer who explains the rules and manages the game. You may wish to give him or her a "baton de festivité" as a sign of their authority. We have had four teams traditionally (Stags, Foxes, Salmon and Hares) with an elemental association but you could have more or less.

A variety of scoring systems have been used over the years, not all of them compatible with each other! So please read over the games and make sure they will work together!

The most important thing to remember about the games is that they aren't meant to be taken seriously. Generally we let the winning team be the hunters for the next year, and the losers wash up, but really there is no need for any prize or penalty. Randomly assigning teams is good to mix people up who don't otherwise know each other.

Most of the games have a food theme, since BF is about food this makes sense. Vegetable related sport is a sort of running joke too in our lives... Please ensure at least one of your games involves Brussel Sprouts or the Great God Brassica may be offended.

As with all things please pay attention to health and safety and your liability as an organiser should someone get hurt! Event insurance exists for a reason...

Each team will have a "Strength of 12" placard. If they make it known to the judges that they are waving it at the start of a round, all points for that round will be doubled. The "Strength of 12" card may only be played once. The referee's decision WILL BE FINAL! (Strength of 12 is a name for our furry friend of the forest)

Axe throwing

Each team has 6 throws

1 point is scored for each axe that sticks in the target

Note: an axe will only stick in the target if thrown from a given distance away- so mark this distance to give people a chance. Don't try to run this game if none of the organisers can throw an axe! You will also need a large log or board as a target. Throwing axes are not necessary, cheap hatchets work just as well. There are obvious health and safety ramifications to this game! Axes bounce!

Spear throwing

Round 1 – accuracy

Each team has 6 throws

The spear must go through the hoop to score 1 point

Round 2 – distance

Each team has 3 throws

A marker will be placed where their furthest spear lands.

When each team has thrown points will be awarded as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>1st place</i> | <i>6 points</i> |
| <i>2nd place</i> | <i>4 points</i> |
| <i>3rd place</i> | <i>2 points</i> |
| <i>4th place</i> | <i>1 point</i> |

Throws taken with any part of the contestant's feet in front of the line will be void.

Round 3 – under 14's distance

As for round 2, but competitors must be under 14 years old

NOTE: safety spears are best. Hay bales make a good backstop. You may be surprised how far some people can throw a spear (so may they) so make sure you have lots of space, or a distance round may be impossible. Using a spear to knock over a target might be an alternative to getting one through a ring, though we like the sexual symbolism and Robin Hood reference to the ring target.

Tug of Rope

6 members of each team may participate.

Round 1: The 2 leading teams will compete first

Round 2: The 2 losing teams will compete second

Round 3: Winners of the first 2 rounds will compete

Round 4: Losers of the first 2 rounds will compete

Points will be awarded as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Winner of round 3</i> | <i>6 points</i> |
| <i>Loser of round 3</i> | <i>4 points</i> |
| <i>Winner of round 4</i> | <i>2 points</i> |
| <i>Loser of round 4</i> | <i>1 point</i> |

NOTE: You will need a very strong rope. If the area is at all sloping this will favour the downhill team markedly. You can always let the whole team take part.

Sprout Flinging with sling shot

Each team has 6 throws

A team member will be placed where their furthest sprout lands or rolls to.

When each team has thrown points will be awarded as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>1st place</i> | <i>6 points</i> |
| <i>2nd place</i> | <i>4 points</i> |
| <i>3rd place</i> | <i>2 points</i> |
| <i>4th place</i> | <i>1 point</i> |

Throws taken with any part of the contestant's feet in front of the line will be void.

NOTE: We use traditional slings made from string and leather for this.

Archery – poor little Rudolf gets it again...

2 teams will compete at a time, alternating shots.

The team in the lead will compete against the team in last place.

The team in second place will compete with the team in 3rd place.

A coin will be tossed to determine who gets each bow.

Each team will be given 5 arrows.

Rudolf will have 6 balloons (3 of each team's colour)

The first team to pop all 3 of their balloons is the winner and wins 6 points.
The losing team wins 1 point for each of their balloons popped.
If at the end of all 10 arrows no balloons have been popped, the arrows will be collected and fired again.
Balloons popped by members of the opposite team will be counted.
Shots taken with any part of the contestant's feet in front of the line will be void.

Children's reindeer hunting

Each team will be given 6 darts which must be thrown by under 14's only. 1 point will be awarded for each balloon popped.
Throws taken with any part of the contestant's feet in front of the line will be void.

NOTE: played with a large model reindeer (can easily be improvised), balloons and either a bow and arrows or darts. There are, again, health and safety ramifications to this! Ensure a good backstop and use low power bows if using the archery option... Arrows can bounce off balloons so make sure everyone is well back.

Plum Pudding Sally

Each team will have 6 sticks.
The plum pudding must be knocked off its stand cleanly without hitting the metal stand or post.
Throws taken with any part of the contestant's feet in front of the line will be void.
Points will be awarded as follows:

If the pudding is knocked off with stick 1 6 points

If the pudding is knocked off with stick 2 5 points

If the pudding is knocked off with stick 3 4 points

If the pudding is knocked off with stick 4 3 points

If the pudding is knocked off with stick 5 2 points

If the pudding is knocked off with stick 6 1 points

NOTE: Aunt Sally is an Oxfordshire game, a white wooden target is balanced on a wooden stand and must be knocked off using a thrown stick without hitting the stand. For our version we wrap the Sally up as a plum pudding complete with tinsel for the traditional target. Any sort of stand would work, like a tall CD rack or other thin tall piece of furniture, or a stick stuck in the ground with a flat piece of wood nailed to the top.

Wife Carrying

One member of each team will be carried around the course by another member of the team. Both contestants must be over 16 but gender is not specified by the rules. The 'wife' must not touch the ground at any point.
Points will be awarded as follows:

1st place 6 points

2nd place 4 points

3rd place 2 points

4th place 1 point

Children's Race

All team members under 14 are to race around the course.

Points will be awarded as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>1st place</i> | <i>6 points</i> |
| <i>2nd place</i> | <i>4 points</i> |
| <i>3rd place</i> | <i>2 points</i> |
| <i>4th place</i> | <i>1 point</i> |

NB it is possible for a team to hold several places and therefore score very highly. The "Strength of 12" cannot be played on this round.

Relay Race

Each team will carry the "baton de festivité" (a sprout stalk) around the course in 4 stages. The last person will hit and burst a balloon of the team colour using only the baton de festivite, or possibly their teeth.

Points will be awarded as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>1st place</i> | <i>6 points</i> |
| <i>2nd place</i> | <i>4 points</i> |
| <i>3rd place</i> | <i>2 points</i> |
| <i>4th place</i> | <i>1 point</i> |

NOTE the sprouts on the sprout stalk can be later used for sprout slingshot.

Mallett throwing

Each team has 7 mallets (rubber tent peg hammers described as mighty Thor's hammers).

The targets consist of a model Yule goat and a bucket.

1 point for each mallet in the bucket, but only if the yule goat has been knocked over do these points count.

Vegan Hunter Gathering Seasonal Vegetable Round

Each team will be given 4 seasonal vegetables. The team will stand in a line and pass the vegetables, one at a time and place them in the cooking pot (ie you cannot start the next one til the first one is in the pot). Use of hands and mouths is not permitted (because that would be unhygienic...

NOTE: gives bigger teams, who may have an advantage in other games, a disadvantage. This is a deliberate design feature of this game!

Log Race

A strong person, a woman and a child from each team takes part. The Log starts standing up at the bottom of the course. An under 14 from each team runs to the log and back, once they are back a woman runs, once she is back then a man or woman can run down and bring the log back to the finish line.

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>1st place</i> | <i>15 points</i> |
| <i>2nd place</i> | <i>10 points</i> |
| <i>3rd place</i> | <i>3 points if course completed</i> |

NOTE: four logs, one for each team are needed. They don't have to be the same size, though if

they are, and are colour coded, it may prevent squabbling breaking out! Could be played with a rock, plank, sack of potatoes or anything else heavy and awkward.

Gatherer-Hunting

A horn will be blown, then everyone has two minutes to search the site for cuddly vegetables and cuddly 'pests' which have been previously concealed, or even placed around openly. A second horn is blown after two minutes, people have one minute to return and put their finds in a basket. Points are awarded 5, 4, 3, 2, to the teams with most finds. Over the years we have amassed a large collection of cuddly vegetables and fruit....

Reindeer Hooplah

Each team has 12 hoops to toss at the antlers of a model reindeer which is pulled either on a sled or on a skateboard by a member of another team (this person must stand in one place and pull the reindeer in via a rope, ie 'reeling it in'). Half a point is scored for each on target hoop that is in place at the end of the round.

Sprout Golf

Two teams at once must nominate a golfer to knock a sprout around the course with a golf club and into the bucket (which had better be lying down). The winner from the first round plays the winner from the second. Overall winner, 5 points, second place, 3 points.

Appendix IV Prayer Sticks

Prayer sticks or Feather Sticks are made by the Ainu and various Siberian peoples as offerings to a variety of deities and ancestor spirits. They are finely carved from wood, usually willow, and there are different styles for different sorts of offering. They make a nice offering to the Bear and can be added to the fire at the end of the ritual while the Bear is being 'sent home'. They flare up nicely. You will find pictures and instructions online. Ainu feather sticks are called Inau.

We have made wooden feather sticks, which obviously requires the use of knives and could be dangerous. We encourage people to use their own knives and obviously you will want to make sure that everyone understands this is at their own risk, and have a first aider standing by.

Paper feather sticks can also be made using safety scissors and are a more accessible activity that anyone can do. Searching online for Newspaper Palm Tree should find you some detailed instructions, but basically take a sheet of paper, cut many parallel slits into the long side that reach around halfway across the paper. Roll up the paper, and then curl the slits as you would a ribbon.

Appendix V Songs and Poems

Hearth song

music: trad
lyrics: trad Finnish
translation: M.Raskinen

Men to the woods went step - ping slow - ly___ Men went forth to take the bear.

5

Sound the horns to give a sign the___ bear is got the feast is here!

The image shows two staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The first staff contains the first line of the song, and the second staff, starting with a measure rest of 5, contains the second line. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Height of a Cloud Running

trad arr K.Fletcher & C.Broch

VERSE:

In the height of a cloud run - ning, In the height of___ a cloud stri - ding,
On a sil - ver chain's end hang - ing, On a gol - den___ chain's end hang - ing,
On a head - land grown by mor - ning, On a head - land___ grown by eve - ning,
Three long steps of for - est spi - rit, Four long steps of___ for - est spi - rit,

OPTIONAL VERSES:

3

REFRAIN:

My sac - red house in___ moon co - lours, My sac - red house in___ sun co - lours.

The image shows two staves of music in B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. The first staff is labeled 'VERSE:' and contains four lines of music with lyrics. Below it, 'OPTIONAL VERSES:' are listed. The second staff, starting with a measure rest of 3, is labeled 'REFRAIN:' and contains two lines of music with lyrics.

Homecoming Song (Bjorndansen)

Trad: Skåne (Sweden)
translation: Josef Berger

Here comes the one who lives in the for - est, he jumps and he dan - ces so be a - ware!

The image shows a single staff of music in D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The melody is marked with Roman numerals I, II, III, and IV above the first four measures. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Honeypaw

words : K.Fletcher & C.Broch
music: trad & K.Fletcher

CHORUS:



Big - foot, Broad - foot, Light - foot, Sti - cky Mouth, Short - tail, Bob - tail, Snub - nose, Hon - ey - paw

5 VERSE:



Wi - ld Dwel - ler___ Foot - step___ Wi - de - ner, Night - time Prow_ ler___ Gol - den Feet,
Bee___ Wolf___ Fo - rest___ Ap___ ple, Win - ter Slee_ per___ Gol - den Friend,
Earth___ Own - er___ Fo - rest___ Mas_ ter, Moun - tain Rul_ ler___ Gol - den King,

9



Wi - ld Dwel - ler___ Foot - step___ Wi - den - ner, Night - time Prow_ ler___ Gol - den Feet!
Bee___ Wolf___ Fo - rest___ Ap___ ple, Win - ter Slee_ per___ Gol - den Friend!
Earth___ Own - er___ Fo - rest___ Mas_ ter, Moun - tain Ru_ ler___ Gol - den King!

Origin of Otso


trad: arr K Fletcher & C Broch
translation: John Martin Crawford



Ot - so was not born a beg - gar, tii - ri lii - rin lii - ri
Was no born a - mong the rush - es,
Was not crad - led in a man - ger,
Ho - ney - paw was born in e - ther,
On the shoul - ders of O - ri - on,.....

Hunters Song

words & music : trad



Forge a spear of ma - gic me - tal, Forge a lan - cet tri - ple point - ed That I may a - wake great Ot - so
Forge a lan - cet tri - ple point - ed, Forge the han - dle out of cop - per That I may a - wake great Ot - so
Hide thy claws with - in thy mit - tens, Ot - so O thou Forest Ap - ple That they may not harm the hun - ter
Ot - so O thou Forest Ap - ple, Let thy teeth re - main in dark - ness That they may not harm the hun - ter

Appendix VI The Meditation

The meditation has taken a few different forms over the years. It started out as a guided visualisation to meet the souls of the animals we had eaten (or caused to die through eating plant food for vegans) on the other side of the river of death. It struck me that this was unnecessarily prescriptive and also didn't really get the point across. So it was rephrased in the form I have presented it below. Please note though, that it has never been a written script, it has always been delivered ex-tempore, following the mood of the moment. To avoid it becoming formulaic in future I have not written such a script here.

Fundamentally the purpose of the meditation is to bring about an awareness of how precious life is, and how our lives depend on us taking the lives of other beings. Therefore our life is doubly precious, and we should honour those upon whom we rely for our life.

So I usually begin with general relaxation, bringing their attention to their posture, their balance on the seat, closing their eyes, listening to my voice. Then I try to bring about an awareness of the time that has passed since the last BF, or the last year, describing the seasons, the days and nights, the moons passing, and asking people to remember the significant events of the last year. Then I ask them to remember the emotions they have felt, the people they have met, and any other details that come to mind. I then ask them to hold the sense of this entire year in their mind, as a part of their life, and feel gratitude for that time that they have had to live their life and experience all these things. We might hold this feeling for a minute or so.

Then I bring their minds to all the food they have eaten over this time, the animals and plants, and those animals that died indirectly for the harvest or production of those plants. I ask them to hold the lives of these fellow beings, every bit as important and precious as our own lives, in their minds, and to allow themselves to feel sorrow at their death and gratitude for the life they have given us. If the preceding descriptions have worked we might rest in this feeling for a few minutes.

Lastly we return to normal consciousness, focussing on our weight on the seat, the sounds around us, the sensations in our body, the light through our eyelids, then I ask them to open their eyes and stretch and be present in the room. It is good if the food follows soon after the meditation as this is both grounding and adds to the sacramental nature of the meal.

Appendix VII Organisation and Example Info Sheet

In this section we talk about how to organise the practicalities of BF and also provide a copy of the information we sent out to participants. Much of this will most likely not apply to your event, but some of it you will be able to copy. In any case. Since it might be useful, we have included it!

Delegation is everything with this sort of event. Although there have been years when Kate and I managed almost single handed (couple handed?) at the beginning, it is really too much and even then you are relying on other people to help at the actual event as no-one can be everywhere at once.

Some things we have learnt:

Offering free crew places doesn't really incentivise people to help. In fact we noticed that people coming on free crew tickets were just as likely if not more likely to cancel at short notice than people who had paid. Better to rely on the people who have paid for tickets to help as part of the experience, or to pay for people to help, unless you have a core of very committed people who can be trusted to take on tasks (luckily that is the case these days for us!). Initially we paid for entertainers and caterers, but now we rely on those attending for entertainment and to organise the food. You will have to see what works best for you. We don't regret paying people at the beginning though before the community became established.

People will happily bring some food with them, Some people will voluntarily cook soup for a dozen people for instance. Meals where part of the food has been provided by us (like we cook potatoes, people bring things to go on them) have worked really well. In general we have organised the hot food and asked people to bring things to accompany it and vegetable ingredients.

Our rule of thumb for meat (venison) for stew is about 250 grams per person with some generous rounding up. A few of the vegetarians are likely to eat the meat if it is local and ethical so allow a little extra for them.

People will drop out, so you can probably get away with inviting slightly more people than you have room for. Only slightly though!

Clear and succinct communication is key. Some people won't read the literature you send them, you just have to impress upon them that its important!

Seperate accommodation for snorers is a good idea...

Accurate spreadheets/lists to keep track of who is coming and their details are essential. Paypal makes selling tickets online easy, but it can be very easy for people to get refunds this way so if you are making a big outlay a ticketing service may work better.

To allow time and breathing space inbetween activities. Mixer activities at the beginning of the

event are important and valuable, even if this is just getting everyone to say their names in a circle.

You will need public liability insurance if it isn't provided by the venue. Definitely if you are selling tickets.

Setting things up in the dark is tricky! Published times of dawn and dusk can be wildly different from amount of daylight in reality (depending on cloud cover etc) and it's better to judge on the day than plan too exactly.

If you sell tickets then our refund policy has always been 'if we can sell your ticket to someone else after you cancel then we'll refund you'. This works well and saves us from being out of pocket due to last minute cancellations when we have already bought food etc.

People need comprehensive and clear information. Make sure you provide them with the following before the event: directions, anticipated timings, a checklist of everything they need to bring, a health and safety disclaimer, a list of things NOT to bring or do, description of accommodation if provided.

Below is example info we sent out in 2014.

Midwinter Bear Feast

at the Cranborne Ancient Technology Centre

Friday 19th – Sunday 21st December 2014

Info

Please read all information carefully to avoid discomfort or embarrassment.

You will find a handy CHECKLIST at the end of this document for your convenience.

Times and Places:

- Unless you have arranged to come early to help set up, please aim to arrive at the between 6pm and 7pm on Friday. We will be eating at around 8pm so this will allow time for you to find your bed and set up your sleeping things before we eat. Let us know when you arrive.
- On Sunday, there is a market, a meeting, and closing event in the morning. We usually finish at around 1pm. The afternoon will be spent clearing the site for those who can stay.

What to Bring (there is a checklist on the back of the directions):

- **Cup, plate, bowl and spoon each.**
- **Food – see checklist**
- **Warm bedding**, including something like a thermarest to sleep on if you are staying in the Longhouse (on wooden platforms) or Roundhouse (we have some camp beds but let us know if you can bring your own bed). You will need something warm both **under** AND **over** you at this time of year. Please note that a normal airbed on its own will be too cold.
- **Warm clothes.** Bring more than you think you will need, you will be sitting still for some of the time.
- **Blanket or cloak.**
- **Something to decorate the Bear Altar**- we suggest something totemic of the food you have eaten this year- bones (clean!), feathers, beautiful fruits and vegetables, and beautiful things in general. The idea is to raise an altar in gratitude for the life-force we have consumed this year.
- **Waterproofs** or an **umbrella.**
- **Cushion, sheepskin or something warm to sit on.** The EarthHouse has hard wooden benches which will not keep your bottom warm!
- **Torch.** The site is mostly unlit at night, the surfaces are uneven and possibly slippery.
- **Sensible outdoor footwear** and lots of **socks.**
- **Small gift** each for the Sunday morning 'Secret Vainamoinen' gift sharing. If possible something made not bought, or if bought, low cost. Please wrap it so people can't tell exactly what it is! Children should bring something suitable for another child.
- **Cash** for the raffle (all proceeds to Survival International / ATC) and the market.

- **Songs, stories, poems, drums and other musical instruments.** If you have something of a seasonal nature or Bear related to perform, all the better.
- **Your crafts or handmade goods,** and a blanket to sell them from for the Sunday Market.

What NOT to Bring:

- Please do not bring excessive amounts of **alcohol**, or if you do, please share it around! This is a spiritual occasion and so we would like to avoid excessive intoxication.
- Please do not bring any **dogs** as there are free-range livestock on site.

Important Health and Safety Stuff

- Please keep your children under close supervision at all times. **We and the ATC cannot accept any responsibility for them.**
- Be aware the site has uncovered ponds with boggy edges, sharp tools may be left around, there are slippery surfaces and open fires. **Do not climb on the EarthHouse roof** or climb any of the other structures. Please don't disturb the livestock. Sheep & pigs aren't aggressive but can knock a child down if startled. **Don't put your hands near the pigs,** they can bite!

Accommodation:

- Accommodation is in the Longhouse or the Roundhouse, unless you have a camper, tent or have made other arrangements. The Longhouse is an authentic reconstruction and accommodation is communal with shared bunks or sleeping platforms. The Roundhouse is a large space with a central fire and sheepskin-covered camp beds. Please be mindful of the fact that sleeping areas are communal, a fantastic opportunity to connect with our ancestors' lifeways, but also to annoy one another unintentionally! Please set up your sleeping space on arrival to avoid disturbing people later.
- Both the Longhouse and Roundhouse will have a fire and a fire-keeper, but we have to warn you that wherever you are sleeping it may (and if past years are anything to go by, will...) be COLD!
- There are washing facilities, toilets and electric lighting in the Longhouse. There is also a toilet block with a shower by the main entrance near the carpark.
- If you find yourself getting too cold please get up and warm yourself by the fire and have a hot drink (provided). There will be a kettle and tea-making facilities for your use at all times.

Other Stuff:

- There is almost no phone signal on most networks in Cranborne. There is a telephone in the Longhouse for emergency outgoing calls only.
- Cranborne has a very good (but very pricy) village shop.
- Whatever the weather, the BF will go ahead regardless but as in previous years we will adapt to the circumstances. Once we are on site, it will not be possible to contact Kate & Corwen during the day on Friday but please leave a message, or better still, send a text to let us know if you are coming and when to expect you. We will check for messages whenever we can.

Overview of events

Friday - arriving from 6.00 to 7.00pm

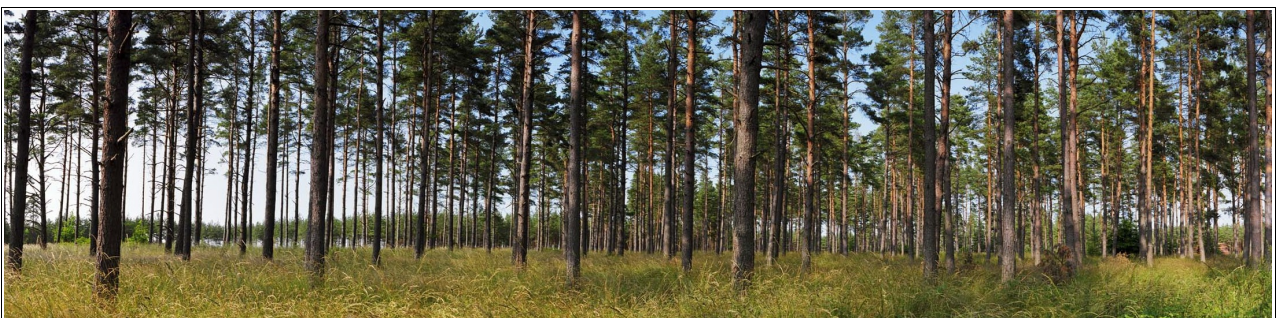
- Shared supper & singing in the Longhouse.

Saturday -

- Very early rising with tea
- The Hunt & return of the hunters at dawn
- Honouring of the shrine
- Breakfast from 8am-9am
- Talk
- Lunch
- Hunter's Games
- Craft Activity / Meditation
- Feast
- Music, stories and poems in honour of our guest
- Honeypaw's Ascent & End of Ritual

Sunday – Breakfast from 8.30-9.30am

- Market
- talking circle for the tribe to discuss the future of the Midwinter Bear Feast
- Final gathering & sharing of gifts



Directions:

ATC postcode for SatNav: BH21 5RP

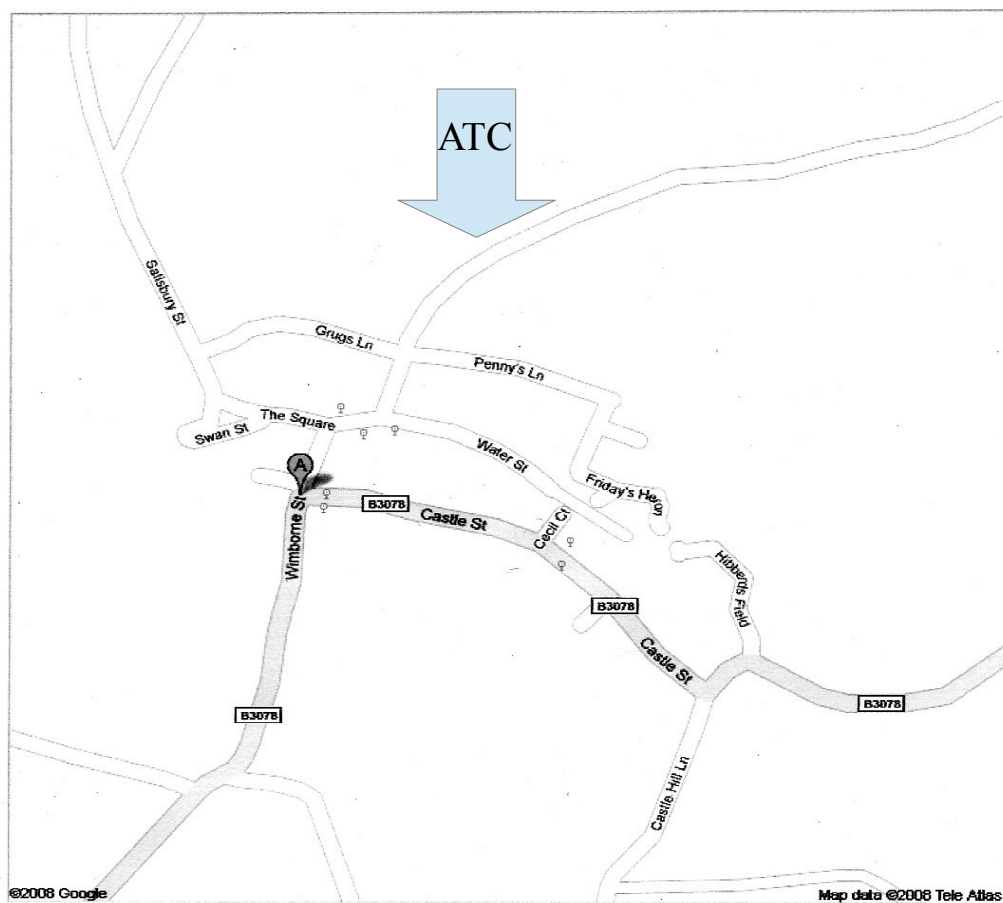
From the A31:

Take the Verwood exit from the A31 (near Ringwood) and follow the B3081 to Verwood. Go straight on through the town ie straight over/through all lights and roundabouts. After the Albion pub you leave Verwood over a narrow bridge on a bend. Carry straight on past the golfcourse on your left. Ignore the 1st left turn (signposted Woodlands) and take the 2nd left (signposted Shaftesbury B3081). Follow this wiggly road until you come to a T-junction with the B3078. Turn right.

*Follow this road straight on into the centre of Cranborne. you will see the pub on the right and then the shop on the corner on the left. Follow the road around the dog-leg to the right and left. The school is the last building in the village on the left. Turn into the entryway and take the track hard on the left to the ATC. Park at the top if there is space. Even if the gate into the school is unlocked please **do not park** in the school car park.

From Salisbury:

Leave Salisbury on the A354 to Blandford. Stay on this road until you come to a roundabout (about 15-20 minutes). Take the 1st exit onto the B3081 (signposted Verwood and Ringwood). Take the first left (signposted Cranborne). At the next junction turn left and follow the road into Cranborne. See directions above from *



CHECKLIST

- Food – see info below
- Bowl, spoon, plate, cup, cutlery etc
- Something warm to sleep on (rollmat, thermarest etc)
- WARM bedding
- Decoration / offerings for the Altar
- Cushion or sheepskin to sit on
- Spare warm clothing
- Torch
- Waterproofs
- Small surprise gift (made, found or inexpensive)
- Cash for the **raffle** and market
- **Songs, stories, poems etc to share with the tribe and our guest, Old Honeypaw.**
- Empty food containers to take home leftovers in

Food at the BearFeast

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY TO AVOID GOING HUNGRY!!!!

We have devised a simple menu for the weekend, and ask everyone coming to bring a few things we need. BF will provide some of the ingredients. Please don't bring lots of individual dishes that need heating as there are limited facilities – we will create the hot food communally. There will be around 50-60 people this year.

As always, hot refreshments will be laid on.

When choosing what to bring, please be mindful of the fact that there will be quite a few vegans and vegetarians among us, as well as a few folk with gluten or dairy intolerance. All food provided by us will be gluten free and vegan (except for the venison stew option on Saturday which will contain meat but no dairy or gluten)

| | WE will provide: | YOU will provide : |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| FRIDAY DINNER | hot jacket potatoes | nice things to go in/with them |
| SATURDAY BREAKFAST | Porridge | Stuff you like in porridge |
| SATURDAY LUNCH | Soup, made by volunteers from the Tribe | Bread, cheese and fruit |
| SATURDAY DINNER | Local Venison (for meat eaters) Pulses (for veggies) | Something from this list: carrots, leeks, onions, swede or any other vegetable suitable to go in a stew. |
| | Mince pies & custard | Additional cake (just in case) |
| SUNDAY BREAKFAST | Porridge | Stuff you like in porridge |
| SUNDAY LUNCH | Leftovers | Help clearing up |

BF will also provide hot drinks (with milk / soya milk & sugar) and biscuits all weekend although if you want something hot to drink other than tea, coffee, redbush or cocoa, please bring it with you!

On arrival, please bring your food contributions to the Longhouse Kitchen where we can 'rationalise' what we have and store it safely. Label containers clearly and if possible, label homemade food as vegan, veggie, gluten-free etc as appropriate. Thankyou.

On Sunday, no-one leaves the site without taking home a share of the remaining food. We don't throw anything away, in the spirit of the event. Clever folk will know to bring tupperware in case of excess venison stew...

Appendix VIII Alternative names for the Bear

| | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Angry One (Cree) | Illustrious Pride (Finn) |
| The Animal (Michikaman) | Little Mother of Honey (Finn) |
| Apple of the Forest (Finn) | Lord of the Taiga (Tungus) |
| Big Feet (nA) | Master of the Forest (Lapp) |
| Big Great Food (Cree) | Old Man of the Mountain (Lapp) |
| Big Hairy One (Blackfoot) | One Who Prowls at Night (nA) |
| Black Beast (nA) | Owner of the Earth (Siberian) |
| Black Food (Cree) | Pride of the Woodlands (Finn) |
| Black Place (Koyukon) | Reared in the Mountains (Navajo) |
| Bobtail (nA) | Sacred Man (Lapp) |
| Broadfoot (Estonian) | Sacred Virgin (Lapp) |
| Dark Thing (Koyukon) | Snub-nose (Finn) |
| Divine One Who Rules the Mountains (Ainu) | Step-widener (Lapp) |
| Dweller in the Wilds (Ostyak) | Sticky-Mouth (nA) |
| Famous Lightfoot (Finn) | The Strong One (Taglish) |
| Fine Young Chief (Navajo) | That Which Went Away (Koyukon) |
| Food of the Fire (Cree) | The Thing (Koyukon) |
| Forest Apple (Finn) | Unmentionable One (Blackfoot) |
| Four-legged Man (Ostyak) | Venerable One (Vogul) |
| Fur Man (Ostyak) | Wide-way (Lapp) |
| Golden Feet (nA) | Winter-sleeper (Lapp) |
| Golden Friend (Finn) | Wise Man (Lapp) |
| Golden King (nA) | Woodmaste (Samoyed) |
| Gold Friend of Fen and Forest (Ural Altaic) | Wooly One (Lapp) |
| Good-tempered Beast (Cree) | Worthy Old Man (Ural Altaic) |
| Great Man (Siberian) | Bruin (The Brown One- English) |
| He Who Lives in the Den (Navajo) | Bee Wolf (Beowulf- English) |
| Holy Animal (Lapp) | Short tail |
| Honey Paw (Tungus) | Strength of 12 |

Hunt

*Where was Bruin born
the honey-paw turned over?
There Bruin was born
the honey-paw turned over
In the upper air
upon the Great Bear's shoulders*

*Where was Bruin given birth
the bear's cub brought up?
in a little woolen box
in a little iron box.
On the peg of a small cloud.*

*How was he let down to earth?
in a sling he was let down
in a silver sling
a golden cradle
On a nameless, quite untouchable string*

Before setting out

*Guide the skier by the sleeve
direct him by the coat-skirt
lead him towards that headland
move him towards that hillock
where the quarry may be caught
and the game brought home!*

Hunter's Song

Forge a spear of magic metal,
Forge a lancet triple-pointed,
That I may awake great Otso,

Forge a lancet triple-pointed,
Forge the handle out of copper,
That I may awake great Otso,

Hide thy claws within thy mittens,
"Otso, O thou Forest-apple,
That they may not harm the hunter

"Otso, O thou Forest-apple,
Let thy teeth remain in darkness,
That they may not harm the hunter

Waking the bear

*Wake up now, brother
the sun is shining on the hills
Wake up now, brother
the ants are running on the snag
Wake up now, brother
birdsong is ringing in the ears*

once the bear is killed

*Be thou praised, O mighty Ukko,
As thou givest me great Otso,
Givest me the Forest-apple,
Thanks be paid to thee unending.*

Hearth Song

*men to the woods went stepping slowly
men went forth to take the bear X2)
Sound the horns to give a sign
The bear is got, the feast is here X2*

Homecoming Song

*Here comes the one who lives in the forest
He jumps and he dances so be aware!*

Arrival of the Bear

Man: *have the planks been scrubbed
have the floors been swept
and the benches wiped?*

Woman: *the floors have been swept
the planks have been scrubbed
and the benches wiped!*

Man: *have the lintels been raised
and the tables laid with gold
for the good one to come in
for the great man to step in?*

Woman: *the lintels have been raised
and the tables laid with gold
for the good one to come in
for the great man to step in!*

Man: *put him upon clean wood
lay him down on a good board*

Woman: *the boards all begin to sing
and the windows to rejoice
that the good one has come in
that the great man has stepped in*

Opening of the eyes

*"We salute thee, mighty Otso,
Honey-paw, we bid thee welcome,
Welcome to our courts and cabins,
Welcome, Light-foot, to our tables
Decorated for thy coming!
After the arrival and eyes are open:*

Honeypaw Song:

**CHORUS: BIG FOOT, BROADFOOT
LIGHTFOOT, STICKY-MOUTH
SHORT TAIL ,BOBTAIL
SNUB NOSE ,HONEY PAW**

**V1: WILD DWELLER, FOOTSTEP WIDENER
NIGHT TIME PROWLER, GOLDEN FEET**

**V 2: BEE WOLF ,FOREST APPLE
WINTER SLEEPER, GOLDEN FRIEND**

**V 3: EARTH OWNER, FOREST MASTER
MOUNTAIN RULER, GOLDEN KING**

Before eating

*O God the one you gave
shall not be eaten without song*

HoneyPaw Song:

CHORUS: BIG FOOT, BROADFOOT
LIGHTFOOT, STICKY-MOUTH
SHORT TAIL ,BOBTAIL
SNUB NOSE ,HONEY PAW

V1: WILD DWELLER, FOOTSTEP WIDENER
NIGHT TIME PROWLER, GOLDEN FEET

V 2: BEE WOLF ,FOREST APPLE
WINTER SLEEPER, GOLDEN FRIEND

V 3: EARTH OWNER, FOREST MASTER
MOUNTAIN RULER, GOLDEN KING

After the Bigfoot song

*Ready is the feast of Otso;
From the fire are swung the kettles
On the crane of polished iron;
In the centers of the tables
Is the bear displayed in dishes,
Golden dishes, decorated;
Of the fir-tree and the linden
Were the tables newly fashioned;
Drinking cups were forged from copper,
Knives of gold and spoons of silver;
Filled the vessels to their borders
With the choicest bits of Light-foot,
Fragments of the Forest-apple.*

Between main course & pudding:

Honeypaw by Nick Foot

Too many to the southlands came – and we were driven forth:
Upon the glaciers' feet we trod, when we fled to the north.
A hard, bleak, land, and cold to us, we came as strangers to:
When first we found this land to hunt, we were a hungry few.

This is our clan's Remembering: this is The Ancient Lore;
In praise of Him We Do Not Name: Of Two Legs, And of Four.

We would have died that late Fall, when the game was scarce and small,
Had He not found us, starving – He who came to change it all!
He wore the warm fur clothing. He knew the shelter-caves.
He knew where meat lay under snow: by Him, we all were saved.

This is our clan's Remembering: this is The Ancient Lore;
I speak of Him We Do Not Name: of Him Who Eats Meat Raw.

By mid-winter he lay as dead – for so we all believed;
He eats His kin, as we do, so we ate Him, as we grieved -
His skull, in place of honour, overlooked us, every one:
We called his spirit to return, and bring with Him the sun.

This is our clan's Remembering: this is The Ancient Lore;
I speak of Him We Do Not Name: Who Rises With The Thaw.

Our call was answered. When Spring came, once more He walked the woods:
He dug up roots, and sleeping grubs, found other, hidden, foods;
When Summer came, as southland warm, and Sun rose high above,
He climbed the trees, he found the bees, the honey-hives we love!

This is our clan's Remembering: this is The Ancient Lore;
I speak of Him We Do Not Name: of Uncle Sticky Paw.

He showed us ground-meat under leaf, sweet berries good to eat;
When leaf-turn brought the shortening days, he gave us better meat:
At salmon-spawning time, he knew just where the shallows lie
To catch the slippery silver ones, as they came leaping by.

This is our clan's Remembering: this is The Ancient Lore;
I speak of Him We Do Not Name: of Mighty Big-Foot Spoor.

So, next when Winter bound the caves, we had much food within:
So all lived through the Darkening-Time, Night took none of our kin.
We had no need to eat kin-flesh, not ours, and not His own,
Then, when He ate an Elder, He became kin, bone for bone.

This is our clan's Remembering : this is The Ancient Lore;
I speak of Him We Do Not Name: of Him Who Goes Before.

He lives in us, and we in Him, and each is kin to other:
He is Most Honoured Elder, close to us as Mother's brother;
So sits His skull in pride of place, and so our Shape-Man wears
His shaggy pelt, His new-moon claws. No other mortal dares.

This is our clan's Remembering : this is The Ancient Lore;
I speak of Him We Do Not Name: of Terrible-In-War.

Old Uncle Sticky Paw is kin – though, be it understood,
He loves the honey, but His paws are sticky, too, with blood.
He gave us life. He gives us strength, in everything we do,
As long as we will give Him honour, pay to Him His due.

This is our clan's Remembering : this is The Ancient Lore;
I speak of Him We Do Not Name: of Red In Tooth And Claw.

His stars are in the northern sky – He roams High Heaven round,
So it is meet to follow Him, to each next hunting-ground.
He is the bridge between the spirits of both sky and land,
Who walks on four legs like a beast – and stands on two, like Man.

This is our clan's Remembering : this is The Ancient Lore;
All praise, to Him We Never Name: Great Uncle Honey Paw!

sending bear soul back with prayers

*Golden one, be on your way
Golden precious make your way
along the golden lane
along the silver road!
You'll not be taken far from here
just to a pine tree on a hill
a juniper at the field's far edge.
There the wind will meet your needs
the wave will drive you perch
on one side a whitefish strait
nearby the sweep of a salmon run.*

all throw sticks and prayers into fire singing:

**Height of a Cloud running
in the height of a cloud running,
in the height of a cloud striding,
my sacred house in moon colours,
my sacred house in sun colours
on a golden chain's end hanging
on a silver chains end hanging
my sacred house in moon colours,
my sacred house in sun colours**

closing prayer

*"Grant, Sky Father, my Creator,
That the signs may guide our footsteps,
That the notches in the pine-tree
May direct my faithful people
To the bear-dens of the woodlands;
That our great Herne's sacred bugle
May resound through glen and forest;
That the wood-nymph's call may echo,
May be heard in field and hamlet,
To the joy of all that listen!
Let our great Herne's horn for ages
Ring throughout the fen and forest,
Through the hills and dales of this land
O'er the meadows and the mountains,
To awaken song and gladness
In the forests of green Hampshire,
On the snowy plains of Dorset,
On the chalky meads of Wiltshire,
For the coming generations."*

Appendix X Afterword

A Quick Disclaimer

The suggestions given here are not meant to be slavishly followed. They do not represent any attempt at describing the best way to do anything, it just describes how we have done things before. Please use your imagination and common sense. You will doubtless have better ways of doing things, so don't be a slave to tradition, rather use tradition as a tool (a great tool, and collective art-work, and worthy of respect) to do what you need and want to do in your own time and place.

Also please note we cannot be held responsible for any damage, injury or losses incurred whilst doing anything suggested in this document. Some of the things in this document are silly and dangerous! Use your own common sense, especially with regard to health and safety matters. What is appropriate for one group of people in one place and time may not be so for another.

Please also note this is not a definitive document, but reflects a work in progress. The Karhunpäivä ritual in particular has not yet taken a firm form, having only been carried out once by us. If we can get a clear description of what Karhun Kansa do in Finland it will give us some ideas and doubtless it will change form for the next few years until it settles into some sort of pattern.

Why Worship Nature? Or - Ethics, Eating and Religion

We are a part of nature, and are dependant upon it for everything and in every way. We are inexplicably linked to natural processes for our continuing life. The movements of the sun and moon for example, are more critical to your survival than some of your own internal organs. We are also a microcosm of the world, being mobile ecosystems in our own right with inhabitants, good and bad, eating each other, eating us and feeding us, harming us and helping us, or just being with us. These fellow travellers are unique and also carry with them a history of our lovers, our childhood, our diet and the places we have lived.

It is now becoming clear that a relationship with nature is essential for our mental health too. That we recover from illnesses faster when we can see trees, that woodland air itself contains scents that increase our wellbeing, that exposure to animals and earth protects us in childhood from allergies and illness later in life.

This is not a one way street. Nature is also dependant on us. We have the power to harm the world and its community of living things greatly, both through action and inaction. And sadly we have done such harm. The world, that we are part of, is suffering, and we suffer too, because as all Druids know, the Land and the People are One.

Our continued well being and indeed survival, as well as the wellbeing and survival of those other-than-human-persons we share this world with, depends on a change in our relationship with nature. It depends on a change in our idea of self, away from the perilous individualism of belief systems that have long told us we have a secret, invisible, unique, eternal soul. We need

an awakening to the realisation that we ourselves are multiple, our existence is braided in with that of other persons, some of who are not human. Our very being is entwined with the fates of inanimate and animate nature, and we exist as persons more through our physical, emotional and dare I say it even dietary relationships with others than through a dependant relationship with some invisible, unproveable deity.

Appendix XI Bibliography

Bear Ceremonialism in the Northern Hemisphere by Irving Hallowell
Golden King of the Forest by Juha Pentikainen
Karhun Kannoilla, in the footsteps of the bear, Ed Clive Tolley
King Arthur in Antiquity by Graham Anderson
L'Homme et L'Ours by Jean-Dominique Lajoux
L'Ours, Histoire d'un Roi Dechu by Michel Pastoureau (also available in English)
Magic Songs of the Finns trnnslated by John Abercrombie
Ritual Animal Disguise by E C Cawte
The Beast that Walks Like Man by Harold McCracken
The Great Bear, a thematic anthology of oral poetry in the Finno Ugrian languages by Honko, Timonen etc
The Hobby Horse and Other Animal Masks by Violet Alford
The Kalevala translated by John Martin Crawford
The Kanteletar translated by Keith Bosley
The Sacred art of Hunting by James A Swan
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Further Reading

Animism: Respecting the Living World by Graham Harvey
The Idea of Wilderness by Max Oelschlaeger
The Song the Owl God Sang: the collected legends of Chiri Yukie translated by Benjamin Petersen
Thinking Like a Mountain by John Seed et al