**The May Branch**

May branch, May bough older British Isles tradition. Example of a Folkplay

Also May wand or gam, used as magick wand, sometimes tipped with a garlic bulb or pinecone. Priappic wand.

May Branch: Decorated with ribbons, streamers, trinkets, cloth or paper flowers.

Related to the Clootie Trees near holy well, found all over British Isles and in other parts of world where Celts settled.

Wrote article about in issue #38 of *Witches and Pagans* Magazine, “The Charm of the Clootie Tree” issue about folk magick.

AKA clootie, raggy bush, wishing tree (cloughtie – Scots dialect – means “cloth”). Rip cloth from clothes, dip in water, hang from branch, make wish, OR rub on afflicted part of body. As cloth rots, wish is granted by entity of spring or tree, OR healing commences. Started as Pagan, Christians do also. Famous one – St. Brigit of Kildare.

May branch – wrote about in my book, *Common Magick* along with other Beltane & holiday trads

Decorated on night before Beltane, used day of. Also decorated tree outside home or shop. Often apple, hawthorn. Only time hawthorn brought inside – home to fairies.

How-to: Cut a tree branch w/ flowers &/or leaves. Tied with ribbons, cloth or paper flowers.

Represents Life, carried by May Queen. Procession. Raises energy. Folkplay.

From *Common Magick*: Another custom involves adorning the May branch with hollow colored eggs, which is also done at the modern celebration of Oestara and Easter. Three hoops crossed in a “flower of life” design can be decorated with foliage and blossoms, rather like the hoops used for hunting the wren during Yuletide. May hoops represent the female principle. The wands, branches, and hoops are used for sympathetic magick to bring about fertility, and for contagion rites of protection, banishing winter, and welcoming spring.

Old Branch – Represents Death, carried by Arawn / Grim Reaper / yr Angau.

Has poppet of Death. Each person casts negative energies into poppet.

Chant: “We carry death out of the village.”

Minute of this in the older version of “The Wicker Man”.

Branch is burned. Release /transmogrify negative energies.

New Branch, May Queen. Taken to each participant, they remove a few flowers – protection for home, car, workspace etc.

Chant: “We bring back life to the village”.

Can watch video of Clootie in our American thorn tree in our backyard – on You Tube