

GWYN'S FEAST 2023

Preparation

Altar set up: An image of Gwyn (1), a bowl and cup for offerings, a candle.

Suggested offerings: pork and apples, mead or cider, incense.

You will also need a prayer, poem or a song of your own or a suitable piece by another author to read to Gwyn.

Introduction to Gwyn's Feast

Gwyn ap Nudd is a Brythonic God of the dead and a ruler of Annwn. In *The Life of St Collen* He is depicted presiding over a magical feast on Glastonbury Tor. In 'The Spoils of Annwn' He is the keeper of a cauldron that will not boil meat for a coward and His fortress has many names including Caer Vedwit 'The Mead Feast Fort'.

The existence of a feast day for Gwyn is suggested by the tradition of a fair held around the 29th of September on Glastonbury Tor. It is now dedicated to St Michael, who on this date banished Satan from Hell. This is echoed by St Collen supposedly banishing Gwyn and His people who he calls 'devils'.

A number of Brythonic polytheists (2) have been celebrating Gwyn's Feast on the 29th of September for several years as a way of claiming His feast back from St Michael and for entering communion with Him, with the spirits of Annwn, and with the dead. The feast consists of pork (based on Gwyn's hunt for Twrch Trwyth 'King of Boars'), apples, and mead or cider.

Ritual

Thanksgiving to spirits of place and / or land acknowledgement.

Opening - First flame of the feast

Gwyn ap Nudd
Within this sacred space
I sit with your shadow form in honour of your light

A flame within lit with the breath of the hunter
A flame without lit with the breath of Annwn

Gwyn ap Nudd
To me You are both the inner light and the surrounding darkness

As I light this candle to honour the first flame of the feast
I see the white stag guide a procession of Gods upon the path

Your brother Edern brings the serpent of wisdom and I see your reflection
within its eyes

Afallach brings the apples grown at the gates of Annwn and I see the
abundance of your harvest

Your father Nudd brings the well of dreams and I see your shadow within its
waters

Arawn the hunter brings the mead horn and with this we honour your spirit

Your lover Creiddylad brings the last light of Autumn and I see your life return

Blodeuwedd brings the owl in flight and I see your wild transformation

Gwyn ap Nudd
Before this flame
I sit with your shadow form as I learn to align my breath with the Gods of
Annwn

Song - Ode to the Feast of Gwyn (3)

Intro:
What do you bring to the feast of Gwyn
To the feast of Gwyn
To the Faerie king
What do you bring to the feast of a king.....

Edern what do you bring
I bring with me a serpent fine
Of ancient wisdom most Divine
I bring with me a serpent fine
With wisdom most Divine

Intro...

Afallach what do you bring
I bring with me an apple red
an apple red for the feast of the dead
I bring with me an apple red
Grown at the gates of Annwn

Intro...

Nodens what do you bring
I bring with me a dreaming well
With water where his shadow fell
I bring with me a dreaming well
Where his shadow fell

Intro...

Arawn what do you bring
I bring with me a drinking horn
With honey mead and life reborn
I bring with me a drinking horn
Hail the spirit of Gwyn

Intro...

Blodeuwedd what do you bring
I bring with me an Owl in flight
an owl in flight a sacred sight
I bring with me an Owl in flight
To bless the feast of Gwyn

Intro..,

Creiddylad what do you bring
I bring the last of Autumn light
Autumn light that fades to night
I bring the last of Autumn light
To the blessed feast of Gwyn

Meditation - Journey to the Underworld Feast

I invite you now to follow that procession of the Gods through a woodland where the trees are just beginning to drop their first leaves, turning brown, orange, golden, as the sun begins to set. To smell the mud and leaf mulch under your feet. It's getting dark now and the stag wavers and disappears

ahead.

The snake takes the lead, disappears down a hole, the Gods one by one follow after. You follow too, following Their faintly glowing forms. It's dark here but the tunnels are lit by glowing orbs of otherlight (some say it is the light of dead stars) and in those dark walls you glimpse glittering jewels. The secret treasures of the land of Annwn, of the land of Faery, of the Faery King.

As you travel you hear the sound of a harp and the words of bard: 'Allan o dywyllwch caf fy ngeni'.

You feel a lightness in your chest and a sense of excitement. Louder the harp, louder the words: 'Allan o waed caf fy ngeni'.

You feel, you know it in your bones, you are approaching a sacred place, a sacred gathering. Louder the harp, louder the words - 'Allan o ysbryd caf fy ngeni / Yn canu o Annwn'.

As you follow the Gods into an immense cavern you realise you are in the feasting hall of Gwyn ap Nudd in deep Annwn. Therein are countless deities, spirits, faerie people, in all manner of guises - with horns, with antlers, in hats, with weird and wonderful hairstyles (picture them as you will) and gathered too are ancestors from the deep past and the not long ago past. You might see living devotees of Gwyn too perhaps the people you hold ritual with (picture them as you will).

In the centre of the hall is a cauldron, burning, bubbling, boiling delicious food. Before it is a harpist and the bard is speaking the words:

'Tri phelydryn golau
Tri phelydryn llais
Tri phelydryn wirionedd

I oleuo â rhyfeddod
Ac yn torri'r galon wytnaf

Yn canu o Annwn' (4)

And they are speaking them in honour of a great king, oh a magnificent king. There He is. Gwyn ap Nudd. Lord of Annwn. Picture Him on a throne of stone or bone or some material of your imagination. He might have horns or antlers or long white hair flowing, shining, like the whitest of rivers, or be entirely Other, too bright, too beautiful, too terrifying for the eye to behold.

The bard steps back and it is now time for the devotees of Gwyn to offer their prayers, poems and songs. You watch, you listen, you step forward in turn.

(Space for participant to read a prayer).

Once the prayers have been read Gwyn turns to each of the devotees in turn and with Him and the snake they go from the hall to a unknown mysterious location.

Gwyn turns to you, with a beckoning finger, his right forefinger. You may now choose whether to go with Gwyn or to stay at the feast within His hall.

If you choose to go you follow Gwyn from the hall and down a winding tunnel leading deeper underground and notice the snake also accompanies you.

Down, down, down, you go, down to a place so deep you hear the beating of the Heart of Annwn. To a tiny cave. A cave just big enough for one person.

“In here,” says Gwyn, “lies deep wisdom. Take this.” He hands you a torc. “Hold it in your right hand and in your left hand hold the snake. He will look after you. Sit there, cross legged, pray to me and trust. In the sacred darkness of this deepest place in deep Annwn you will receive a message.”

If it feels right to you, enter, follow Gwyn’s instructions, take a seat in the dark.

(10 - 15 minute space for meditation)

Your time in the cave is at a close. You stand, exit, Gwyn is waiting for you. You hand him back the torc and set the snake down on the ground. With Gwyn and the snake you spiral, up, up, up that winding tunnel and return to the feast.

You speak your farewells to Gwyn, to the faerie people, to your ancestors. You depart, following the snake, the procession of the Gods, back to Thisworld.

(Take a moment to ground yourself back into your body, back into your place, eat a little food, take a drink of water, touch something earthy if you need to).

Closing Prayer

I give thanks
to Gwyn ap Nudd,
Ruler of Annwn, Lord of the Feast,
for the wisdom of the Deep,
of the hidden cave
I can return to.

I give thanks
for the harvest.

I give thanks
for the feast.

I give thanks
for the fall of leaves.

Your wisdom I will carry
as time's procession
leads into winter.

(1) If you don't have one please feel free to print off and use this one - <https://themonasteryofannwn.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/the-bull-of-conflict.webp>

(2) Former members of Dun Brython and others.

(3) Can be played from here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZA2BB6tB9M>

(4) Video with pronunciation and English translation here - <https://themonasteryofannwn.wordpress.com/2023/09/16/our-practices-annuvian-awen/>