

November Lanterns. A group workshop for Whatton Lodge residential training on the theme of 'Change: from Loss to Healing'.

Materials:

Luminaire Star Candle Bag Lanterns, suitable for outdoor use.
Tea candles (real give the best light, but can blow out if it's windy)
or LED battery operated flickering tea lights (safer if indoors).

Art Materials: these are supplied, but people can bring some of their own choice, too.

Pencils
Medium felt tip pens
Crayons
Paints
Pentel brush pen
Two Posca pens to be shared by participants.

Workshop

Preparing the lanterns takes place on an afternoon. The group will go outside to light them after dark. First of all, participants go for a walk on the beach or in the garden and choose a pebble to bring back. This will become the weight inside their paper lantern which stops it toppling or blowing away. *This is your pebble, it may find you.*

Together, the group discusses some Scottish calendar customs for the month of November. *Which are still around and which have changed? What new ones would you add to the list?*

Calendar customs include:

The Hallowe'en blaze (Hallow Fires) on hilltops.
(In the 1860's when boys kindled bonfires on the hillsides above Loch Tay, after dark both sides of the loch were illuminated as far as the eye could see).
Leaping through flames.
Rushing through the ashes.
Fire carried round the village.
Bonfire with bannock-eating.
Turnip-lanterns, tumshies, light the house.

Traditional Rhymes

'November's child
Is born to bless;
She's like a song
Of thankfulness'

Traditional rhymes celebrate the threshold of change, a door closing, a door opening.

'Hallowe'en! Hallowe'en!
Three witches tae be seen
Ane black, ane green,
Ane playing the tambourine.
Hey-how for Hallowe'en!'

Any other rhymes or sayings you can think of?

The group discuss stories, rhymes and sayings about this time of year. They harvest the insights in groups of three. Then participants write a few jottings on their own, for 15 minutes, on an idea sparked by this discussion. This writing could focus on the change of season, or about their hopes for the coming months.

Look over your jottings. Is there a phrase that shines out for you? Three words, or maybe seven? These will become the inscription on the sides of your lantern.

Everyone is given a candle bag from the pack. Taking this to the art table and keeping it flat, the art materials are used to colour the paper lantern on its sides. Finally, the chosen words are inscribed on the decorated lantern, using a Posca pen. *Unfold each candle bag and place the pebble inside, then add a tea light candle in the centre of the base.*

After dark, everyone goes outside to light their lanterns. The lanterns form a line along a stone wall, with the waters of the Firth of Forth beyond, and the lights of Fife on the far shore. Their words illuminate our thoughts on the change of season, and the gathering of lights makes an unforgettable impression of our stay at Whatton Lodge.