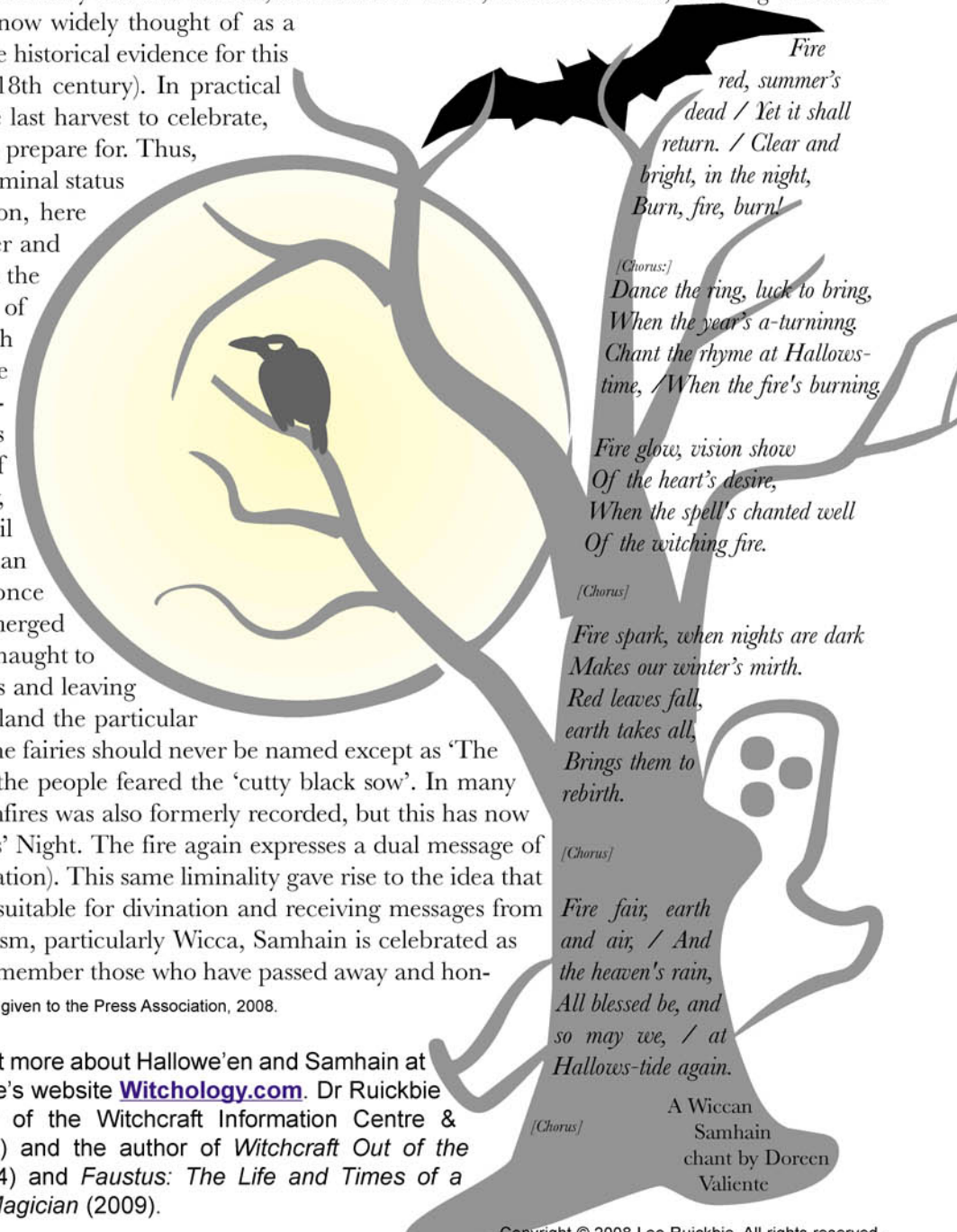


Hallowe'en / When a' the witchie may be seen; / Some o' them black,
 This is the night o' **HALL O' WEE' EN** some o' them green,
 SAOON HAII / Some o' them like a turkey bean /

US English: Halloween. UK English: Hallowe'en. The word comes from All Hallows' Eve(n), a Christian term meaning literally All Saints' Evening, being the night before All Saints' Day. The Christian festival was grafted onto an existing older pagan Celtic celebration. In the Gaelic speaking world this was known as Samhain, Samhainn, or Samhuinn, but the form Samhain is generally used by today's witches and other pagans. Modern pagans pronounce Samhain as *sow-in*, or sometimes *sow-ain*, but historically there were many regional variation. In Scotland they said *saw-en*, in Ireland *sow-in*, and in Wales *sow-een*. The Celts only had two seasons, summer and winter, and so Samhain, meaning 'summer's end' was a harvest festival and is now widely thought of as a New Year celebration (although the historical evidence for this seems not to extend beyond the 18th century). In practical terms there was the bounty of the last harvest to celebrate, as well as the long winter ahead to prepare for. Thus, in anthropological terms, it has a liminal status as a dangerous period of transition, here between the fruitfulness of summer and the fallow of winter. This is seen in the folkloric evidence that this time of year was thought to be one in which the natural and supernatural were particularly permeable. The traditional dressing up (guising) as ghosts and witches is an act of apotropaic magic, which is to say, an attempt to frighten away evil spirits by looking more scary than they are. In Ireland it was once believed that such evil spirits emerged from the cave of Cruachan in Connaught to work their mischief, stealing babies and leaving changelings in their stead. In Scotland the particular spirit is called a Samhanach, but the fairies should never be named except as 'The Good Neighbours', and in Wales the people feared the 'cutty black sow'. In many parts of the UK a tradition of bonfires was also formerly recorded, but this has now become transposed to Guy Fawkes' Night. The fire again expresses a dual message of celebration and protection (purification). This same liminality gave rise to the idea that this time of year was particularly suitable for divination and receiving messages from the otherworld. In modern paganism, particularly Wicca, Samhain is celebrated as a festival of the dead - a time to remember those who have passed away and honour the ancestors. Based on an interview given to the Press Association, 2008.



You can find out more about Hallowe'en and Samhain at Dr Leo Ruickbie's website Witchology.com. Dr Ruickbie is the director of the Witchcraft Information Centre & Archive (WICA) and the author of *Witchcraft Out of the Shadows* (2004) and *Faustus: The Life and Times of a Renaissance Magician* (2009).



*Fire
 red, summer's
 dead / Yet it shall
 return. / Clear and
 bright, in the night,
 Burn, fire, burn!*

*[Chorus:]
 Dance the ring, luck to bring,
 When the year's a-turnning
 Chant the rhyme at Hallowes-
 time, / When the fire's burning*

*Fire glow, vision show
 Of the heart's desire,
 When the spell's chanted well
 Of the witching fire.*

*[Chorus]
 Fire spark, when nights are dark
 Makes our winter's mirth.
 Red leaves fall,
 earth takes all,
 Brings them to
 rebirth.*

*[Chorus]
 Fire fair, earth
 and air, / And
 the heaven's rain,
 All blessed be, and
 so may we, / at
 Hallowes-tide again.*

*A Wiccan
 Samhain
 chant by Dorcen
 Valiente*