

## St Hans Cross

The symbol on our banners is often associated with the Kalevala. It is called **St. Hans's Cross**. The Scandinavian and north European name Hans (or Hannes) comes from the Swedish, Danish and Finnish names for John The Baptist in Scandinavia, Mid-summer's Eve or St. John's Eve has long been considered the greatest festival of the year.



The symbol is an ancient Scandinavian design – a square with loops at each edge, often called a *Shieldknot*—a form of knotted and intertwined design representing the notion that that everything in this world is intertwined, and that its course depends on fate—but the shape is actually not a knot, but an “unknot”: if you pulled at it you would discover that it is a twisted torus. The symbol is said to represent endlessly flowing water or infinity.

In Finland, the symbol was painted or carved on houses and barns, and domestic utensils such as tableware, to protect them and their owners from endless evil spirits and bad luck. Although especially common in Finland, the Saint John's arms can currently be found blazoned upon signs for cultural attractions through-out the Scandinavian/Baltic world marking sights of interest and Apple used the symbol on one of its command keys as well.

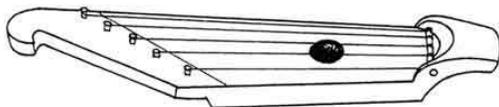


## Singing The Kalevala

The stories in *The Kalevala* were and still are sung and sometimes a zither called a Kantele accompanies. A pair of men would sit across from each other, fingers intertwined, or touching knees, swaying as they sang, singing sometimes in unison, sometimes call-and-response.

This enabled the main singer to spontaneously compose the next verses. A woman's song would be accompanied by a group.

Singing is also one of two methods of magic in *The Kalevala*, the other being a sort of built-in elemental, natural magic (generally used by female characters). Sorcerers *sing* their magic (“en-*chant*-ments”) and the Kalevala has many charms.



## A Kalevala Glossary:

### The three “champions” pursuing wives and the Sampo:

“Lusty Old, Steadfast” *Vainamoinen* – A wise shaman and singer of magical songs, who builds a magical red ship from a weavers shuttle, but is repeatedly unsuccessful in finding a wife.

“Mighty Smith, Craftsman” *Ilmarinen* – A metal worker who fashions many things including the wondrous Sampo who woos but loses his wives.

“Reckless Ahti, Lover boy” *Lemminkäinen* – A handsome, but bumbling ladies man, party crasher and adventurer who thinks he is a great warrior.

“Young” *Joukahainen* who lost his sister *Aino* for a wife to *Vainamoinen* in a contest, but she drowned herself in a lake rather than marry him.

“Gap-Toothed, Old” *Louhi*, “Crafty Mistress of North Farm” A shamanistic witch and the mother of beautiful daughters: the Maid of the North, “dazzling as the sun and cold as the snow” sitting on a rainbow spinning gold and silver fabric; and her sister, who is kidnapped, faithless then changed into a moaning sea-mew.

“Maiden, Flower of the Island” *Kylliki* was wooed by many; taken by force by *Lemminkäinen* as a wife, then abandoned as unsatisfactory because she loved dancing.

“Wicked ugly” *Kullervo* – a treacherous slave.

### Dieties:

*Ukko* – the Thunder God – Creator who is frequently evoked to help the heroes or change the weather.

*Tuoni* – Death, master of the Abode of the Dead

*Hiisi* – Demon Spirit with monstrous beasts.

### Places:

*Kalevala* – The Land of Heroes – home of the three “Heroes” a fictional place in the Karelia district of Finland.

*Pohjola* – the North Farm, “a cold and misty place” located three days journey North of Kalevala across a bay – probably Lapland, home of the Artic Sami people.

### Objects:

*Sampo* – a magical three sided “mill”, fashioned by *Ilmarinen*, but hidden away by *Louhi* – a “prosperity machine” constantly grinding out Salt, Grain and Money.

*Kantele* – A five stringed Finnish Zither – first made by *Vainamoinen* from the jaw of an enormous Pike, later fashioned from Birch.