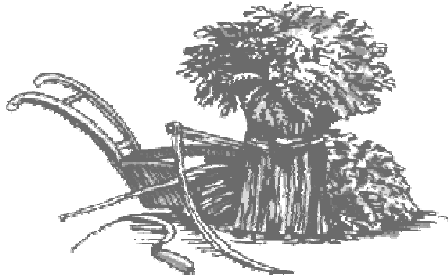


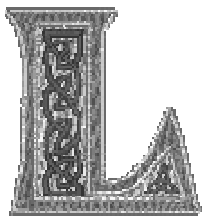
A Druid Missal-Any Lughnasadh Y.R. XL Vol. 18 Number 5 August 1st, 2002 c.e.



Lughnasadh Essay: Cycle of Lugh

Reprinted from A Druid Missal-Any, Lughnasadh 1990

By Emmon Bodfish



Lughnasadh, festival of the god Lugh. In one tradition these festivities marked the funeral games originally held by Lugh in honor of his murdered father Cian. In another tradition, in Ireland, they commemorate the death of Lugh's divine foster mother Tailtiu, who cleared the forest from the plains of Ireland to make

them fit for agriculture and died of the effort. She is a goddess of agriculture and one of the Irish female origin-figures. Irish clans often traced their ancestry to a female divinity, a goddess of the land. Lugh is the son of Ethniu and Cian, and the grandson of Balor, the elder Sun God, whom he later vanquishes in battle, reminiscent of Zeus overthrowing Chronos.

Lugh is the youthful Celtic Deity of Light, eulogized as "The Shining One." Some see in him an evolved form of the Neolithic "Young Year God," representing the Sun, born on Winter Solstice, married at Summer Solstice, and triumphant at Lughnasadh when he brings the harvest. He is fated to die on Samhain at the end of the harvest season and to sleep until the returning of the Sun on Winter Solstice.



Lugh is the multi-competent god, patron of all crafts and of commerce, protector of travelers, poet, harper, physician, smithy, magician, and defender of the people against their oppressive Fomorian king. Some scholars think he is cognate

with Grecian Apollo. He is master of the throwing spear and has the title "Lamhfada," long arm, far reaching; he owns the spear that cannot miss its mark but seeks out its enemy.

The Sun is now half way between Solstice and Fall Equinox, and already the days are perceptively shorter, though the strong heat is still to come. This festival marks the beginning of the harvest. The first fruits are of each farmstead were brought and offered in the sacrifice. Sheep had been sheared, and the surplus wool and lambs could be bartered.



In Reformed Druid tradition, any members who have a garden, a fruit tree, or a tree that gives mast or nuts, or wild land that gives any vegetable food, bring the first fruits picked this season to offer in the Lughnasadh bonfire. (No Animals! That was forbidden by the Reform in 1963 that gave us our origin, constitution, and laws.) Lugh's tree is the apple. I cannot find a scholarly reference on this, but so folklore and tradition have it. (If you know of one, send it in and get a free subscription if it checks out.**) Celebrate with apples, apple pie, cider, applejack, and the planting of apple trees. Lugh is the divine father of the Celtic champion, Cu Chulain. Reread some of these epics** aloud.

*This still holds.

**The Tain Translated from the Irish Epic Tain Bo Cuailnge, tr. Thomas Kinsella, Oxford University Press, 1983.

News of the Groves

Carleton

On June 22, 2002, several long-time members of the Reformed Druids of North America gathered on the Hill of Three Oaks, (www.winternet.com/~gmcDavid/html_dir/h3oak.html) at Carleton College, for a Solstice Liturgy and fellowship. This took place as part of the Carleton Alumni Reunion Weekend. Among those present were:

- Dick Shelton, Arch-Druid of Carleton, 1969-1971
- Ellen Shelton, Arch-Druid of Ann Arbor, 1973-75?
- David ("the Chronicler") Frangquist, Arch-Druid of Carleton, 1965-1966 (?), Author of much of the original Chronicles, Patriarch of Belenos
- Deborah Gavrin Frangquist, second woman to vigil for the 3rd Order (c. 1966).
- Michael Scharding, Arch-Druid of Carleton 1992-1994 (?), compiler of ARDA, historian of the RDNA
- Galia (Gerre) Goodman, 3rd Order, 1970

All of them contributed to A Reformed Druid Anthology, and figure significantly in the events and thoughts recorded therein.

Dick had organized the event and presided. David was Preceptor (who else but the Patriarch of Belenos on Midsummer?). The Liturgy was the old Carleton Midsummer

Service (see ARDA) with somewhat updated language. For the Waters-of-Life we used Glenmorangie, a single malt, and an impressive upward step from the ancient Black and White.

Afterwards, several of us walked through the Carleton Arb to visit other sites, sort of a Reformed Druid Pilgrimage. We visited Monument Hill; (www.winternet.com/~gmcdauid/html_dir/monhil.html), where the first Druid Services were held in 1963, and where Dick and I both did our 3rd Order vigils. We also visited the Druid's Den, east of Three Oaks, which has been used by the Carleton Druids in more recent years. Before returning to Campus we walked to Faculty Hill, Site of the first Samhain service. You may have read about it in the Later Chronicles.

For a while Michael, Dick, and David were walking a little bit ahead of the rest of us. This was a particularly impressive--the three most influential Arch-Druids in the history of Carleton together. With the aid of Faris Keeling (one of my Druid contemporaries) I was able to get a couple photographs of this historic chat.

This weekend was particularly meaningful for me. David's view of Druidism, and indeed of all religion, greatly influenced my own beliefs and I had been wanting to meet him for over 30 years. It was also my first meeting with Michael, to whom we all owe a debt for his revival of interest in the Reform at Carleton and beyond, and for the enormous effort he has put into ARDA and other Druidical projects. I also met Eric Hilleman, who administers the Druid Archives at the Carleton library, and thus ensures that this large collection (see <http://www.geocities.com/druidarchives/index.html>) will be preserved and enhanced for the future. It was also a chance to talk again with Dick, my predecessor as Arch-Druid of Carleton and my old mentor in matters Druidical, and with other friends old and new from the RDNA.

I hope to post some photos on the Web in the next few weeks. Meanwhile there is a picture of the Franquists at: <http://webapps.acs.carleton.edu/alumni/reunion/photos/?pageSet=31> (lower right).

--Glenn McDavid

Akita Grove: News from Japan

We possess a good time here in Japan. It is unbearably hot and rainy. We gave a big party in August for dead ancestors called "Obon." Many people visit their parents. I live with my father, but maybe mother will come back from Vietnam. Pat had big adventure across Japan, now is my turn! It will soon be hard for me to travel, so I go now. I am going to Oga half-island by bus, to Namahage land! Pat says it is "tacky," but I like the place. There will be many festivals in Japan in August, but we will have an easy Druid service, and then harvest rice in a near farm in later August!

Amazon Grove: News from Brazil

Ian apparently came down with a stomach ailment and was taken back to their base camp, but has already returned to whatever scientific studies he is up to down there (or is he on vacation?!). He just wanted people to know, "The trees are just grand down here, but not safely huggable, because of the little critters swarming around here." As always, we await our next installment of postcards.

Digitalis Grove: News from DC

My vacation to Carleton College went well and although I was unable to meet any of the Archdruids, I did get to meet Sancho (2nd) who is working in the Druid Archives there. He reminded me of how blissfully simple some of the Druids can be in a non-organized sense, even while those in charge are busy running things in a formal manner. He assisted me in sifting through the archives for more potential additions to the second edition of ARDA (mostly Liturgical materials and letters). As a side note, my Druidesque movie, Drake's 7, which was mostly filmed with Alumni Druids is visually edited and awaiting soundtrack and F/X, possibly by Christmas.

At the folk dance reunion, I met with David and Dee Frangquist (AD 64-66), Dick Shelton (AD 69-71), Glenn McDavid (AD71-72), Gerre Galia Goodman (ARDA, pt2), Faris Keeling ('74), and several Druids from the 70s and 90s. As usual, it was an honor to meet with them, listen to their wisdom and join them for a summer solstice ritual on the Hill of Three Oaks; followed by an arboretum tour of Druid holy sites and the Rocks of Irony. Earl the Dog participated in all the aforementioned activities enthusiastically.

Dravidia Grove: News from Maryland

Actually things here are kinda slow. Am working a lot of hours, and this area is in serious need of rain. We have had some interesting developments in the area with a new fish found in Maryland. It is the Frankenfish, somewhat of a rarity here. I am doing some research on the migration. Other than that the Grove is quiet.

Hemlock Splinters Grove: News from NY

Irony Sade of Volcano Grove has moved back to the States and says Hemlock Splinters Grove should be active again before too long. He would love to put it in touch with the (frighteningly) organized members of the RDNA. This additional news just in from him:

We had a couple of massive full moon bonfires, and visited a ritual performed by a Peruvian shaman for the solstice. Other than that, the tadpoles are frogging, the new snapping turtle has been eating wood ducks, and the oak tree planted from one of the acorns from the old Carleton grove has stretched another foot or so toward the sky. Impromptu music seems to be playing a central part in our gatherings. In other news, I was doing some research at the Eastman School of Music on the old wire strung harps--which I am learning to play--and found a book from the 1780's which attempted to trace the history and antiquity of the Irish harp by linking it back to the druidic traditions. I am working with the curator to spend more time in the archives. The books are climate controlled, and I live far away, but I'll see what can be learned...

Thanks again!

Irony

Eurisko Grove: News from Virginia

The Eurisko Grove is in Hampton, VA and we can be reached at gwydionream@aol.com. "Eurisko" in Greek means "I discover things" which is the general approach we have to our Druidry. We are all previously Wiccan trained and studying under ADF.

Five members in total; three humans (Mike "Gwydion" Ream, Jacquie Ream, Vonn Gants), one dog (Apollo), and one cat (Agnes).

Our length of office is generally one year from Yule to Yule.

Mike and Jacquie Ream = co-senior druids

Vonn Gants = student

Apollo = head of security

Agnes = keeper of mysteries

Our basic tenets are:

- 1) Nature is good
- 2) When in doubt consult your nearest tree
- 3) Question authority
- 4) Each member of Eurisko Grove is encouraged to study under different teachers
- 5) Suggested titles of recognition; protégé, contemporary, and mentor
- 6-10) To come as we think of them

We started the process of ploughing through the ARDA and interested in vigiling sometime. Jacquie and I are both members of Grove of the Other Gods (ADF).

—Gwydion, A sapling among the oaks

Swamp Grove: News from Florida

All is hectic at the Grove...We are re-locating the grove to another site here in the area, we are currently looking at land, the land that we currently use is being sold and we need a permanent grove area. The spirit of the Grove lives, no matter where it is located. Thanks to our members and friends who have pledged their help in the re-location and re-dedication of Swamp Grove, it should all be resolved within a couple of stress-filled months. A great summer wish to all our Brothers and Sisters in the reform.

Oaken Circle Grove: News from Kentucky

Greetings from the Oaken Circle Grove of KY, we are happy to announce that our grove is still growing and that we are making progress towards becoming incorporated and one day tax exempt.

Our solstice celebration was a success and you can find some pics of it on our webpage, we are currently planning our Lughnasadh gathering. We hope it will be a success as well. We recently had a paganing for four-month-old Laurelin, it was a beautiful ceremony and we would like to welcome her to a life of the old ways and hope that she gains all the knowledge of the ancestors as well. Much of the information on our grove is on our webpage, please feel free to check it out:

http://oaken_circle_grove_tripod.com/oakencirclegroveky

Many Blessings,

Sherry

Founder of the Oaken Circle Grove

Mojo Proto-Grove

Mojo grove spent Summer Solstice communing with nature, and a small group of like-minded folks from a local Tribe of First People/Native American/Aboriginal/Indians (we don't know which is PC anymore, and don't wanna be

disrespectful) mostly, Mojo grove members observed the ceremony as guests and absorbed the vibes, and added our own (vibes). Then it was food, drink, and merriment for all. For the upcoming Lughnasadh we will be observing the astronomical date (although if something comes up for the calendar Lughnasadh--well, we're flexible!) Near the astronomical date will be a powwow with the same tribe, and Juju is working on being a part of the ceremonies as a token Druid. Will report in the Mabon issue (do we have a Mabon issue?).

Fairy Spell Grove: News from California

Hey--Just an update here...

I have been buried in work over the last two months creating an email service ala hotmail. Well, it finally works and dare I say looks pretty damned cool!

Now that leads to my super-secret project--which is (shh!) www.fairiespell.net

Which is kinda empty and blank and boring at the moment. But...now that the email service itself works and the basic templates are designed to my exacting specifications I am going to start work soon on my grand design, that being: a pagan (well druidic, but the heathen-dog pagans can come along and find a happy home too!) portal. Webmail basically--again ala Hotmail/Yahoo, but with sections people can visit to chat with other pagans, post news, create mailing lists and most important of all--a complete and ever-expanding library of knowledge. This includes in-depth lessons from those who know (think "Pagan University") and spell help, ritual ideas for the creatively challenged (including fun and rather zany ritual ideas), humor and of course a place to share thoughts and ideas.

I have been working on this concept for nigh many a year and now it is almost ready to build.

My question is simply this: Have I forgotten anything? Are there any happy pagans out there who might like to contribute their computer skills, web design abilities, art or lessons/contacts/ideas to this project?

I am fairly certain that I have all of the bases covered and am not asking for anyone to do any work for me. But it seems the considerate thing to do to get some feedback and/or a wish list if people want before I have everything "set in stone" so to speak.

Oh well...I don't really think this qualifies as "news" yet, but if you have any ideas on how I can get the word out that we are open to assistance or even just general rants while we build this monster I would be deeply appreciative.

Okay thanks!

Dusty

Faerie Spell grove

Hazelnut Grove: News from California

The wheel turned to the time that Stephen Abbott, the ArchDruid, also called Tyroch Windtraveler, should celebrate his natal day. Stacey of the East Bay said, "This is important!" and gathered the faithful to sojourn up to the north where Stephen abode.

And he did abide in a flat with two women, another man, a dog and a cat. The other man, called by name Brian, cooked hamburgers for all. The faithful sat with Stephen, saw his toys and wondered. Stephen did open his gifts with many an ooh and ah. There was a cake that was so rich no one could bear to have more than a thin slice.

This chronicler wanted to do a reading for him, but the time was taken up by a motion picture on the talking box. Before dark, the faithful descended to the south to their own abodes.

Baccharis Grove: News from California

Due to the intervention of Life, the Universe and Everything that it entails, Baccharis Grove is in hiatus for now. The Arch Druid and the Server celebrated Summer Solstice with the rites of Weberos, duly offering charred sacrifices to the Gods. They seemed to be warmly accepted.

They also replanted their three little Oak trees, grown from acorns gathered from Grove property, and found that it was just in time. Says the Server "Although the Oaks are only one year old and quite small, their tap roots had grown extremely long and were in danger of growing out of their large 12" pots, getting trapped and being broken. That is the main danger in transplanting an Oak, if the taproot breaks the tree will very likely not survive. All three were transplanted successfully and seem to be thriving in their new 20" pots. As they were transplanted, they were dedicated to the Earth Mother (we know, that seems superfluous) and asked to grow and be healthy and happy in their new home on our property. We have also discover that our little apple tree has eight small apples that are growing nicely and the grape vines that we thought were decorative have many clusters of green grapes! They are probably Thompson's but I'm hoping for Muscat's. The roses are blooming profusely and our damask rose scented geraniums are huge, four to five feet across. Our neighbors have already picked several five-gallon buckets of green beans, cucumbers and huge cabbages. They happily share their bounty with us and we are all looking forward to tomatoes! The Earth Mother has certainly been generous with us!"

Poison Oak Grove: News from California

"Leaves of Three, Let It Be."

In a fit of severe anti-socialism the Preceptor of Baccharis Grove has decided to take a sabbatical. She has formed a "contingency" grove by the name of Poison Oak Grove (seemed fitting), though to be considered a "legal" grove in the RDNA tradition there needs to be three officers, she likes the sense of "groveness."

Though it was overcast the morning of the Summer Solstice she rose early to watch where the Sun would have risen had she been able to see it. As one person put it, Belenos was being quite demure. After all, He's done the same floorshow for so long he can be subtle from time to time.



Some Possible Lughnasadh Activities

By Alex Strongbow, a Druid Lost in the Woods

Basically, early August is a "hey, the farming is turning out alright!" agricultural festival and horse race time. Because it is a rather warm time of the year, and like other parts of the Northern Hemisphere, it is also a good time for big crowds of people to travel and have some constructive fun. Tairtiu, Lugh's mom, is commemorated in funeral games that last a week or so. I've put together a list of some events that might be done throughout August.

- Food was scarce before the harvest, so you might consider fasting before the festival begins, eating only seasonal foods that you can research as being available before world-grocery began. Perhaps combined with a camping trip, to test your rigor.
- Brehon Wedding/Handfasting: A young couple will put their hand through a hole in a stone and pledge to officiant and public their intention to try living together for a year before deciding on a permanent marriage.
- Settling of Legal Disputes: Advice or mediation in long-term disputes could be sought from other members of the grove (perhaps on slips of paper pulled from an anonymous box). Alliances with other organizations may be approved now.



- Horse racing: Well, few of us have horses, but a trip to a derby, dog track, or Nascar race would be appropriate, as would attending a summer track and field meet. Gambling is encouraged. If you do have a few horses (or can rent them), it is traditional to race along a river or ford a river mid-race.
- Bonfire: Not associated with hearth-fires, but just for fun and illumination of nocturnal partying. Sacrifice bad habits and unwanted things from your life by throwing symbols of them into the fire, this is good anytime. Perhaps, a competition between teams to build the biggest/oddest Lammastower?
- Prearrange to collect the last sheaf of wheat from a farmer and make it a Cailleach doll (old woman), much like the Bride-og at Oimelc in February. It should be placed on the mantle over the winter and

destroyed in the spring, perhaps ploughed into the ground.



- Celtic Olympics: Yes the games of Tailtean, were held until the time of the Norman invasions in the 12th century. Perhaps modeling them on a highland games, which are frequent this time of year, would be apt. Events could include:
 - Wrestling in either Greco-Roman fashion (pinning shoulders to the ground), Sumo (no touching ground except feet or leaving circle) or WWF Smackdown rules.
 - Hurley, Cricket, Soccer, or Rugby matches.
 - Foot races, wheelbarrow races, bicycle, piggy-back, sack-races, obstacle courses
 - Hammer Toss, Shot put, heavy rock lifting or caber toss
 - Sword dancing, country dancing, interpretive dance etc.
 - Long jump, high jump, pole-vaulting with walking sticks
 - Boffer-sword/Quarter-staff bouts, preferably on a log over a river.
 - Massive tug-a-wars, wacky relays, tag, human pyramids, or egg-toss contests.
 - Archery, fire-arms, catapulting, slinging or spear toss contest
 - Have a "Rhibo," a welsh game where people line up facing each other, making a bed of arms and then fling them up in the air. It is advisable to catch them on the way down.
 - Mental contests for the less physically-gifted: Chess, poetry, story-telling, lying contests, geometry jousts and math matches (bring out old SAT prep sheets), joke-telling, banjo-dueling, scavenging hunts.
- Large elaborate parades or activities to test the strength and endurance of young folk, usually through a forest, to a special spring or well or curving up and around a hill.
- Make plans for the winterization preparations.
- Feasting!: Foodstuffs include Beef, broccoli, cherries, spinach, any type of early berry, corn, potatoes, homemade bread (particularly wheat, oat, and especially corn bread), berry pies, barley cakes, nuts, apples, rice, roast lamb, acorns, crab apples, summer squash, turnips, oats, and all grains. Drinks: Elderberry Wine, Mead, Ale, Meadowsweet Tea, and Cider
- If you live near an abattoir, you could attempt a Tarbh Feis (cattle meditation) by wrapping yourself in a

freshly killed bull's hide after eating 10 pounds of beef at a crossroads and sleeping overnight while Druids sing around you. You could then prophesy the 2002 elections by this method, perhaps, or the fertility of the harvest might be gauged from your dreams.

- Offer first-fruits from your garden and plant all the seed of fruits eaten at festival. Bake a loaf of bread in the guise of a man and tear him apart by wildcats. Include bilberries or blueberries in your feast; these were a traditional fruit, whose abundance was seen as an indicator of the harvest to come. Make a cornwheel of ripe grains.
- Gather and make acorn bread:
<http://www.yvwiusdinvnohii.net/NAIFood/acorns.htm>

Other Lughnasadh Related Pages

Lughnasadh recipes:

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Parthenon/7039/AshlinCI.html>

All you need to know, and more:

http://www.summerlands.com/crossroads/newsletter_archives/su mmersun-august2000/ss_lughnasadh2000.html

Excellent lists of activities in detail:

<http://cyberpict.net/sgathan/essays/lghnsdh.htm>

<http://www.isleofavalon.co.uk/edu/g-bank/articles/sig-lugh.html>

<http://www.paganet.org/pnn/2000/Lughnasadh/sabbat.html>

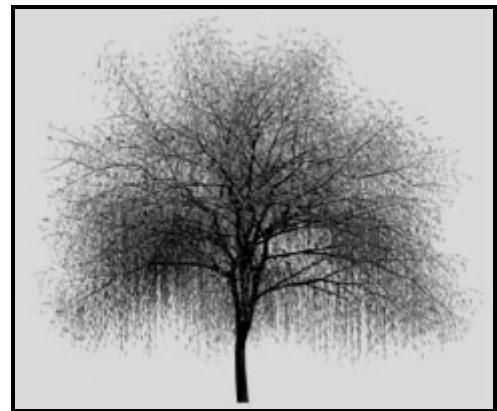
http://www.intercom.net/local/shore_journal/rifl0730.html

<http://www.wicca.com/celtic/akasha/lammas.htm>

<http://chantrea.home.attbi.com/lammas.html>

<http://www.geocities.com/CollegePark/4885/lugh.html>

<http://www.geocities.com/lavenderwater37/lammas.htm>



The Willow Tree

By Sam Peebles, Free-roaming Druid

Found throughout the British Isles in various species, the Willow is also common in Europe, North Africa and America. It is known as Saille in Irish Gaelic. The botanical name of the willow *Salix* purportedly comes from the Celtic word *sal* meaning near, and *lis* meaning water. Other Gaelic words for willow are *seilach* and feature in Scottish place names such as *Achnashellach* in Ross-shire and *Corrieshalloch* on Speyside. These names would have referred to both the presence of willow and related industries utilizing the willow's gifts. The verb and girl's name *Sally* may be derived from the Willow. In Cornish it is called *Helygenn*. Other names include: Willow, Witch's Tree, Pussy Willow, *Salicyn* Willow, *Saille*, *Sally*, *Withe*, *Withy*, *Witches' Aspin*, *Tree of Enchantment*, *Osier*, *Tarvos Tree*, and

Sough Tree. The Greeks called it Helice, and thus is associated with Helicon (abode of Muses). The Anglo-Saxon welig, from where the name willow is derived, means pliancy. It represents S in Ogham script.



Willows just love water and are often found in moist soils or near running water, along with alder, hazel and birch. It is occasionally found in the under-story of other trees or on the edges of meadows or in areas cleared by fire. Most of the 20 British willow species (330 in total and related to poplar, 100 in America) are bushy, but the White, Black (i.e. Pussy Willow) and Weeping Willow often become tree sized (50'to 80') and most well known for long, thin, variably droopy, flexible branches with few twigs. Its long thin leaves are easily recognizable as yellow in the fall. Yellow flowers arrive in April or May along with the Robin, and easily crossbreeds with other willows. The bark is most removable in the summer, containing 13% tannin and small amounts of salicin. Be careful not to ring the tree when removing bark or it will die, take vertical slices.



The dispersal of thousands of small windblown seeds is used by yellow willow to reproduce itself (2.3 million seeds per pound). Male and female flowers (in the form of catkins) occur on separate plants. Like other willows, it is reliant on insect pollination, especially from bees. After fertilization, a capsule develops which eventually splits open during spring or summer, dispersing the myriad of minuscule seeds. The production of large quantities of seeds ensures that some will fall on favorable sites. The seeds have a cottony down that allows them to float long distances in the wind, and on water. Seeds are non-dormant, remaining viable for only a few days. They germinate rapidly, usually within 12-24 hours if a moist seedbed is reached.



Practical Uses of Willow

First and foremost, trees are quite happy the way they are without being utilized by us, and serve their own niche in the ecosystem without being exploited. 'Nuff said.

Regardless of size, willows are easily pollarded and make straight poles in 4-5 years, which is good for fencing and baskets, and very munchable to horses, moose, beaver and elk and nested in by birds.

Willow's ability to absorb shock without splintering is still utilized in the making of cricket bats and stumps (note also the similarity between "wicket" and "wicker") and polo balls. (<http://www.rfs.org.uk/totm/cricket.htm>)

- The Dutch use it for making clogs.
- The Celts used it for chariot wheel spokes.
- The Romany use it for clothes pegs
- The bark's tannin was used for reddish dye and tanning leather.
- Before the advent of plastics, willow was widely used to make a variety of containers, from general basketry to specialized applications such as lobster pots and bee hives.
- A 6th century basket was discovered by archaeologists on Shetland, and apparently made of willow, used the same weaving techniques as those still practiced in Scotland
- Some people twist living willows into outdoor furniture and odds shapes.
- Many plant willows on riverbanks to prevent erosion and control flooding.
- Artificial limbs were once made from this light wood.
- Willow is used as core wood for laminated furniture (esp. Ikea)
- The wood was preferred for making charcoal for gunpowder.
- Used as bottoms of wheelbarrows, chariots, mills and washboards.
- Roots make a purple dye used in France/Sweden for Easter eggs.
- Willow wood is light but strong enough to make roofs and rafters, boats and carts.
- Do not plant close to septic tanks or sewer lines as the roots will invade!
- If you do have a low, wet area in your yard, this tree will actually "dry up" that area.

Mythological Connections

Even in the Adventures of Neera it is a withy ring of willow that must be placed around the ankle of a hanging corpse if Neera is to win the golden sword of Aillil. The placing of this withy plunges Neera into an Otherworld adventure. He is held captive in the Sidhe world and set to physical work but wins through with the support of a Sidhe woman. When he returns to Cruachan, no time has passed. It is still Samhain. He proves his story by showing the fresh blossoming twig he has carried out with him

British and Irish mythology is also rich with legends of the beguiling, Willowy Spring Maiden who is called Olwen, Niwalen, Gwenhyver, Cordelia, Blodeuwedd and many others, who initiate the young King into a deeply sexual experience.

The ancient Celts believed that the spirit of the dead would rise up into the sapling planted above a grave, which would grow and retain the essence of the departed one. Throughout Britain many cemeteries, particularly those situated near rivers, lakes or marshes, are often to be found lined with willow trees to protect the spirits in place.

In Sumer, 4000 BCE, Ishtar's predecessor, Belili, was known as the Willow Mother.



Often associated by the Greeks with water and the moon; it is linked to legends of Ceres, Apollo's harp, Minerva's bird "Wryneck" who only sleeps in willow, and Orpheus who gained bardic skills by touching willows in Proserpine's grove. In Athens, it was an ancient custom of the priests of Asclepius to place willow branches in the beds of infertile women. This was done in the belief that it would draw the mystical serpents from the Underworld and cure them. The ancient Spartan fertility rites of the goddess Artemis, also demonstrates the willows connection with fertility and fecundity. In that ceremony, male celebrants were tied to the tree's trunk with willow thongs, they were then flogged until the lashes produced an erotic reaction and they released, fertilizing the land with their seed and blood. How quaint. The Greek sorceress Circe is said to have had a riverside cemetery planted with willow trees dedicated to Hecate and her moon magic. Here male corpses were wrapped in untanned ox-hides and left exposed in the tops of the trees for the elements to claim and the birds to eat.

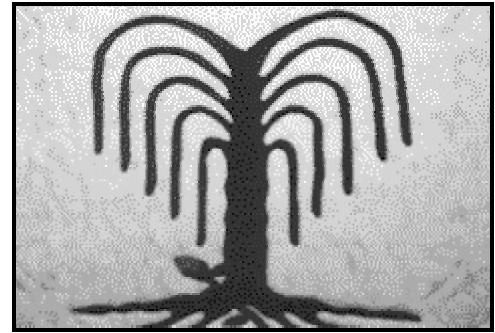
In Jerusalem, for the worship of Jehovah, the Feast of Tabernacles was also called the Day of the Willows. Willow branches were carried in processions, used to roof the small temporary shelters (sukkah) during the festivities; the branches were later burned in the Temples. (Lev. 23:40).

In Britain the more recent, "Christianized" use of willow to symbolize grief probably originated with Psalm 137:

By the rivers of Babylon
we sat down and wept
when we remembered Zion.
There on the willow-trees
we hung up our harps.

(Biblical scholars point out that these 'willow-trees' were probably Euphrates poplar (*Populus euphratica*) and not the weeping willows (*Salix babylonica*) which originated in China.) During the 16th and 17th centuries the association became particular to grief suffered by forsaken lovers, who also adopted the custom of wearing a cap or crown made of willow twigs and leaves. By the nineteenth century illustrations of weeping willows were commonly used as ornaments on gravestones and mourning cards. Willow boughs were also used to decorate churches in Britain on Palm Sunday instead of largely unavailable palm leaves.

The Seneca, a North American indigenous tribe, has a loving bond with all Trees, calling them The Standing People. They consider the Willow to be a source of gentle humility, charm and grace, adding elegance as She touches Her fronds to the Mother Earth, sweeping away fear to nurture peace.



One old tradition concerning the willow is still celebrated today by Rumanian Gypsies. This is the festival of Green George, which takes place on the 23rd of April. A man wearing a wicker frame made from the willow represents the character of Green George, which is then covered in greenery and vegetation from the land. This is symbolic of the willows association with water that fertilizes the land bringing fruitfulness to the fields. On the eve of the festival and in a gay and lively manner, everything is prepared in readiness. A young willow tree is cut down and re-erected at the place of the festivities, there it is dressed and adorned with garlands. That same night all the pregnant women assemble around the tree, and each places an article of clothing beneath it. The belief being that if a single leaf from the tree falls on a garment over night, its owner will be granted an easy child delivery by the willow goddess.

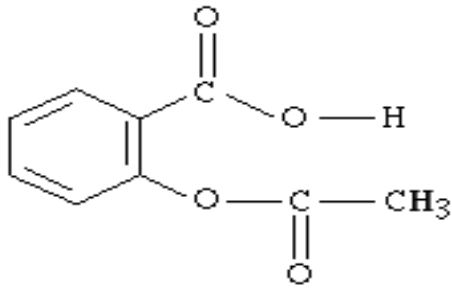
At dawn on the 23rd Green George appears in all his splendor and knocks three nails into the tree, removing them again he then proceeds to the nearest river, lake or stream from whence the tree was cut and throws them into the water, this to awaken the goodwill of the waters spirits to their proceeding. Returning he collects the willow tree and takes it back to the river, lake or stream, and dips its branches and leaves in it until they are heavy with water, thus awakening the tree's beneficial and fertile qualities. The water spirits and the willow tree's beneficial qualities evoked, all the communities animals, flocks and herds are led to Green George who raises the tree and shakes water onto them in blessing ensuring fertility for the coming year. This done the tree is taken back to the place of festivities and re-erected. Feasting, drinking and merriment then commences in thanks to the tree and water spirits.

Magical Uses of Willow

(User beware)

White Willow is a tonic, anti-periodic and astringent. It has been used in dyspepsia connected with debility of the digestive organs. In convalescence from acute diseases, in worms, in chronic diarrhea and dysentery, its tonic and astringent combination renders it very useful. One dram of the powdered root. One or two fluid ounces of the decoction.

Black Willow: The bark has been prescribed in gonorrhoea and to relieve ovarian pain; a liquid extract is prepared and used in mixture with other sedatives. Largely used in the treatment of nocturnal emissions. Fluid extract, 1/2 to one dram



Aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid)

Country folk have long been familiar with the healing properties of willow. They made an infusion from the bitter bark as a remedy for colds and fevers, and to treat inflammatory conditions such as rheumatism. The decoction is made by soaking 3 teaspoons (15ml) of the bark in a cup of cold water for two to five hours. Then bring to the boil. Strain and take a wineglassful each day, a mouthful at a time. The bark can be dried, powdered and stored in an airtight container. The sap gathered from the tree when it is flowering can be used to treat facial blemishes and dandruff. Young willow twigs were also chewed to relieve pain. In the early nineteenth century modern science isolated the active ingredient responsible, salicylic acid, which was also found in the meadowsweet plant. From this, the world's first synthetic drug, acetylsalicylic acid, was developed and marketed as Aspirin, named after the old botanical name for meadowsweet, *Spirea ulmaria*. Aspirin is now derived from coal and petroleum. The amount swallowed to date in the USA is approaching an annual 35 million lb. or five tablets a week for every man, woman, and child.

In times of hunger the softer inner bark, the "bast," was dried and ground into flour. Although very bitter it provided nourishment and a source of vitamins and minerals. In colonial times the bast was brewed into tea, which was considered a specific against malaria and a poor man's alternative to quinine.

Willow can additionally be useful in cases of hysteria and nervousness and as a Quinine substitute (although this is used only when Quinine is unavailable). Willow can be used to loosen tightness in the chest produced by pneumonia, whooping cough and other respiratory infections.

- For a wish to be granted, you must ask permission of the willow, explaining your desire. Select a pliable young shoot and tie a loose knot of it while expressing what you want. When the wish is hopefully fulfilled, return and untie the knot. Don't forget the last part.
- When willow wood is carried in your pocket, it will give bravery, dexterity, and help one overcome the fear of death.
- Willow is one of the nine woods of a Beltaine Fire (Birch, Oak, Rowan, Willow, Hawthorn, Hazel, Apple, Vine, Fir)
- The wind in the Willows is said to be the whisperings of a fairy in the ear of a poet. It is also rumored that Willow trees can uproot themselves and stalk travelers at night, muttering at them.
- Its leaves are used in love attraction sachets. Willow leaves or twigs can also be used in spells to create loyalty, make friendship pacts, treaties, or alliances.
- To find if you will be married soon, on New Year's Eve, throw your shoe into a willow; if it doesn't catch in the branches the first time, you have eight more tries; success means you will be wed. The rhyme goes:

"Throw your shoe high up
into the branches of a Willow tree;
If the branches catch and hold the shoe,

you soon will married be."

- Willow has the ability to banish depression and sadness; sitting beneath a willow tree calms and soothes the emotions. Try it out, this one works!
- Shavings of the wood, pieces of bark and whole leaves can be placed in a Dream Pillow or placed in a small bag, either under your pillow or under the bed itself.
- The willow has long been used for dowsing and for finding buried objects.
- If you need to share a secret, confess to a willow and the secret will be trapped.
- Because of its coppicing ability, it is a symbol of renewal, growth and fertility.
- Willow is used to bind the birch twigs to the ash handle of a broom.
- Willow caps were presented to all people who were disappointed in love. It is customary in the present day for villagers in Wales to ask a rejected suitor on the morning of his sweetheart's marriage to another man, "Where is your willow cap? We must make you a willow cap." The same applies to a spinster whose lover discards her for another girl.



Green Willow, or All Around My Hat.

Traditional British Song Chorus:

CHORUS:

All around my hat I will wear the green willow
And All around my hat for a twelve month and a day
And if any one should ask me the reason why I'm wearing it
It's all for my true love who's far, far away.

Fare thee well cold winter and fare thee well cold frost
Nothing have I gained but my own true love I've lost
I'll sing and I'll be merry when occasion I do see
He's a false deluding young man, let him go, farewell he and...

(Chorus)

Other night he brought me a fine diamond ring
But he thought to have deprived me of a far better thing
But I being careful like lovers ought to be
He's a false deluding young man let him go farewell he and...

(Chorus)

Quarter pound of reasons and a half a pound of sense
A small sprig of time and as much of prudence
You mix them all together and you will plainly see
He's a much deluding young man let him go farewell he and...

(Chorus)

As sung by Steel Eye Span on

All Round My Hat.

Here are some alternative lyrics but I'm afraid I lost the email and cannot remember who sent them to me. Sorry.

My love she was fair, and my love she was kind
And cruel the judge and jury that sentenced her away
For thieving was a thing that she never was inclined to
They sent my love across the sea ten thousand miles away.

All around my hat, I will wear the green willow,
All around my hat for a year and a day
And if anyone should question me the reason for my wearing it
I'll tell them that my own true love is ten thousand miles away.

I bought my love a golden ring to wear upon her finger
A token of our own true love and to remember me
And when she returns again, we never will be parted
We'll marry and be happy for ever and a day.

All around my hat...

Seven, seven long years my love and I are parted
Seven, seven long years my love is bound to stay
Seven long years I'll love my love and never be false-hearted
And never sigh or sorrow while she's far, far away.

All around my hat...

Some young men there are who are preciously deceitful,
A-coaxin' of the fair young maids they mean to lead astray
As soon as they deceive them, so cruelly they leave them
I'll love my love forever though she's far, far away,

All around my hat...

Sing All a Green Willow

Text by William Shakespeare (1564-1616), from The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice, Act IV scene 3. Based on an old traditional text.

The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,
Sing all a green willow.
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,
Sing willow, willow, willow.
The fresh streams ran by her and murmur'd her moans,
Sing willow, willow, willow.
Her salt tears fell from her, and softened the stones,
Sing willow, willow, willow,
Sing all a green willow must be my garland.
Sing all a green willow;
Let nobody blame him; his scorn I approve.
Sing willow, willow, willow,
I call'd my love false love; but what said he then?
Sing willow, willow, willow:
If I court more women, you'll couch with more men!
Sing willow, willow, willow.

More Links About the Willow

About cricket bat willows:

<http://www.rfs.org.uk/totm/cricket.htm>

Medicinal use of willow:

<http://botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/w/wilwhi22.html>

A good summary of Willow's occult nature:

<http://www.dutchie.org/Tracy/tree.html#willow>

<http://www.iol.ie/~sinann/grove/circle.html#1>

Full of practical knowledg:

<http://www.treesforlife.org.uk/tfl.mythwillow.html>

Chock-full of lore:

<http://druidry.org/obod/trees/willow.html>

Good for details on environmental connections and seeding ideas:

http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/tree/sallut/distribution_and_occurrence.html

Good eco-lore on willows through world:

<http://www.2020site.org/trees/willow.html>

Good for people interested in associations:

<http://members.aol.com/birchfire/Page7.html>

A more emotional sensitive understanding:

<http://www.whitedragon.org.uk/articles/willow.htm>

Another good hodge podge of lore:

<http://www.iol.ie/~sinann/grove/trees2.html>

Herbal lore:

<http://www.rexx.co.uk/herbal/uoherbal/htdocs/trees.htm>

For historical survey of weeping willows:

<http://www.2020site.org/trees/weepingwillow.html>



Heroes of the Willow

By Mike, Digitalis Grove

Perhaps you haven't seen the movie, "Willow" (1988) If not, now would be a good time; and of course the DVD version is preferred. The story plot is a mixture of standards and innovation. Evil queen Bavmora and evil daughter fear that a newborn child will dethrone her, kills the mother, and searches for the nursemaid who floats it down the river. Little hobbit-like people receive the baby. But, a normal life with wife and children is disrupted when Willow is asked to use every ounce of ingenuity and skill to escort a special Daikini baby past evil forces to the kingdom of Tir Asleen. Willow's life-long dream is to be a great sorcerer. After being passed over to become the High Aldwin's apprentice, Willow is told by his mentor that Willow's biggest downfall is that he lacks faith in himself.



With an assortment of magical tools from wizards and his wife, a few simple sleights of hand, and a lot of courage, Willow debating life and philosophy all the way with Madmartigan (Val Kilmer), the brownies (Rick Overton and Kevin Pollak) and others. Willow may not be big in size or have fought in any great battles but he proves that strength of the human heart and spirit is a lot stronger than the strength of a great army.

<http://www.vkn.com/willow/viewersguide.html> Has a good overview of the movie.

<http://www.lepconnie.com/index.html#warwickmenu> Warwick Davis (willow) fanpage, in which he also played the title role in the murderous "Leprechaun" 6 movie series and Harry Potter (Prof. Flitwick and Goblin Banker) and numerous films.

<http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Vault/6147/starwars.html> Compares Willow with Star Wars. (Played the Ewok, "Wicket," in earlier Lucas films)

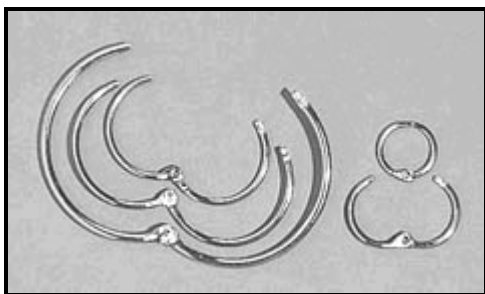


Sigil Construction 101

From Mike, Order of Lugh

For 40 years, the RDNA, ADF, and Keltria have been flashing those Druid Sigils with a circle and two parallel lines. We don't know where it came from, except possibly from Fisher's feverish mind (see <http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/sigil.html> for more on sigils), but people have been asking me to sell them one, and I get this wonderful idea. Why don't we just make them? We make up everything else in this group, so why not? Revolt against pre-fab, mass-made religious articles!

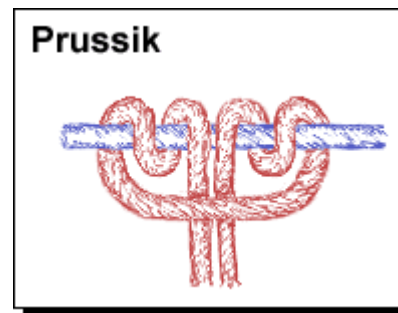
Being inspired by Lugh and being a cubicle-bound secretary, I open the drawer to actualize my words. All the materials I need are in there. First take a book ring (see illustration to right) which will form the ring base of the sigil, and they come in many sizes. A side benefit is that you can clip your final sigil on to a button hold, hand it from one of your pierced body-parts, use it to remove ticks and chiggers, or to pick-up and turn-over bacon (large model recommended).



Now to lay the bars onto the circle, balanced on either side of the joint-hinge and the snap-close. These bars can come from snapped coat hangers, paper clips, wire stocks at a bead and jewelry store, or hardware store by the foot. To avoid a sigil that is heavy on the front side, and looks funny when it inevitably flips over, you may wish to in-set the bars. If you have access to a metal shop with a fine-quality metal file (or a simple nail file and lots of patience) you can gouge the four grooves into the

book ring. I like to divide the circle into three sections of equal horizontal width, but perhaps you like each section to contain equal amounts of area (remember your geometry classes?), follow your muse here. The bars or rods can then be either welded, set with epoxy, or tied on with clear fishing line (if you're skillful). Don't have the bars extend past the circle too far, or they'll catch on things and poke you (rounding and polishing the edges is advisable) Goldish bars on a silvery ring make a nice contrast. A weight of about one ounce (four ounces is the same as a quarter-pounder patty) will make it hang well, any lighter and it will flop about. I caution against soldering, since the lead prevents you from dipping your sigil into the Waters (if you're into that custom).

The final step is getting the string. You can use yarn (if you're daring), leather, waxed cotton cord (found at bead and craft stores in various colors, I like black), ribbon, parachute cord, fishing line, or twine. Just remember if you catch your necklace on something, you'll get garroted! For the knot to close the string, I like to tie a double-fisherman's knot, which has the added advantage of allowing you to adjust the length while you're wearing it, by pulling the knots closer or farther apart.



Attaching the pendant. The following is one way, yea, one way among many. I detest running the cord simply through the book ring, as it never lies flat, the knot closing the string always works its way around to the pendant, and the book ring might open (unless you solder it shut) and you lose the pendant (life is about giving up possessions too, I suppose). I like to hide the joint of the book ring by binding a "prussic knot" over the hinge, between the two bars on the top of the sigil. That way the knot closing the loop of the necklace will lie at the nape of your neck, and can be lengthened and shortened easily.

Cost of the materials, with borrowed tools and free labor, about \$2 each. You're welcome to mass-produce them with this design and process. They're not copyrighted. Enjoy.

Prussic knots illustrated:

<http://www.hstech.org/howto/rigging/knots/sunday.htm>

<http://www.deltas.freemove.co.uk/images/prusik.gif>

<http://www.kfs.org/~abw/images/kites/active/prussik.gif>

Easy soldering:

http://www.allsands.com/HowTo/howtosolder_cc_gn.htm

Soldering basics:

<http://hop.concord.org/ieu/ieu.mess.act1.html>

Jewelry supplies:

<http://www.jewelrystore.com>

Book rings:

<http://www.animadesigns.com/suppliesephemera/metalbookrings.jpg>



Irish Spring and Irish Cleanliness

By Eric Powers, Digitalis Grove of DC

Okay, I wrote the "Lucky Charms" article for Beltaine, so I had to do the follow up. It is a fact of life for us mortals, as I am sure Nozomi will attest, that things get dirty, smelly and unpleasant to the touch; especially our friends. Until our not-so-distant ancestors, people didn't mind the smells to "risk" bathing, and the oils protected the skin and made wrestling easier. But to prepare wool and clean clothes, you need to remove the grime and so soap was invented. Soap was usually just boiled animal fat, wood ashes (or Pot ash), water and lye.

Then 30 years ago, people learned the advantages of adding perfume, artificial green color, a country's name, a season, and calling it "Irish Spring." But why not call it "Prussian Autumn" or "Ukrainian Winter"? Colgate-Palmolive yields millions of dollars in annual profits from the sale of Irish Spring soap, a product that was only created to improve their image with a bitter and angry Irish community. In fact, Colgate-Palmolive was one of the last large corporations to abandon an officially stated anti-Irish policy. It was well into the 1950s, just a few short decades ago, that Colgate-Palmolive in adherence with that policy, routinely refused Irish and Irish-Americans employment based on their nationality. When Colgate-Palmolive was asked in 1993 to support a National Irish-American Heritage Museum, the request was refused because Colgate-Palmolive was focusing on "the educational needs of youth and minorities." A look at their official web-sites, conspicuously avoids giving a product history (there are five varieties now) or any reasoning why they chose the name. They only describe it as:

"Irish Spring Original launched in 1972 with its classic green striated bar and quickly established Irish Spring as a leading brand for deodorant soap. Irish Spring Original's great, invigorating scent helps keep you feeling clean and fresh." Their selling points are:

- Helps keep you feeling clean and fresh,
- Great invigorating scent
- Rich striated emerald green bar
- Used by men and women everywhere
- Long-lasting deodorant protection

And of course, "keeps you clean as a whistle" (followed by dirty sexually inviting whistle). This phrase means "Neatly and effectively done; pure." As in the example: "He maneuvered himself out of that sticky situation as clean as a whistle." The reasoning is that a whistle needs to be clean and free of moisture and debris to produce a clear sound. The oldest literary example is Planche (1851) in *Extravaganza* where a character says, "Or

else his head cut off, clean as a whistle." Which is quite a Celtic feat.

The Celts are in a rather wet area of the world and many legends revolve around bathing and washing, more so than their Saxon neighbors (King Arthur stories aside). In both Irish and Scottish legend, there is the legendary washing woman at the ford (where water was shallow and lots of rock). The warrior, who would encounter her washing bloody linen, may rightly suppose that his death on the battlefield is not far off. Morgan as Modron appears in this connection in a sixteenth-century folk-tale. CuChulainn saw two maidens washing his bloody garments on his way to his last battle. The Washer is also one of the guises of the Morrigan. Legends are replete with her, as are bansidhe legends. They vary on whether by sneaking up on her you can change your fate, or whether her mere gaze would kill you. I suspect they originate from women robbing the corpses after battle, cleaning them up and taking back spoils. Somehow the legend is a foresight of this event.



Bathing incidents are such a great opportunity for storytellers to get their characters naked, see each other naked, be consumed by their passions, and make poor life-decision choices without any blame. Valuable items like Swan Princess/Selkie/Mermaid items can be stolen and wives gained, great warriors can be disarmed, and hearts can swoon during bathing scenes. Modern movies have not under-used this technique; but since *Psycho*, have added it as a good opportunity to kill off characters, after gratifying the young male audiences.

Examples are replete in legends. Angus Og had a palace at the river Boyne at whose estuary the Milesians landed. It was there that Eithne loses her veil of invisibility while bathing in the river. I would think that you would keep that on, while bathing outdoors? The church on the banks where Eithne died was named Cill Eithne by St Patrick. Midhir is a lord of the Otherworld. He lives in the mound of the sidhe at Bri Leith. He is one of the Tuatha De Danann and the foster father to Oenghus, who is the child of Eithne, the result of her seducing by Eochy. The seduction comes about when Elkmar, her husband, is put under a spell where he loses track of time. He believes himself to have been away overnight whereas he has slept for nine months, allowing the birth of the child. Midhir, himself, falls in love with a mortal, a girl called Etain, who he also sees bathing. She is the daughter of Aillil. They fall in love with each other at first sight and are soon in bed together. This creates something of a problem when he returns home and presents Etain to his wife, Fuamnach, who (like Juno) finds no ends of means to torment him and young lovers; starting a tragic cycle of stories. This was quite a mess out of trying to get clean.



Nessa, the wife of Cathbad the Druid was another bathing beauty. Her name was originally Assa or "Gentle," but after Cathbad had killed all her tutors, she took up arms as a woman warrior and was afterwards called "Ungentle" or Niassa (Nessa). Cathbad surprised her bathing without her weapons, but he spared her and granted her only to have her as his wife. She bore Conchobar on the day prophesied as the birthday of Christ. I'd have rewritten the ending a little differently.

There is a place called Abbeyfeale in County Limerick (Gaelic on map: Mainistir na Fiale meaning from the river Fiale), which is traditionally derived from the legendary Fial, wife of Lewy. She was spotted by him while she was bathing naked in the river and not realizing that the voyeur was her husband expired from shock and shame. The abbey was founded by Brian O'Brien in 1188, upon an earlier foundation.

Maurice was walking one day by the shore of Lough Gur when he saw the beautiful otherworld woman Aine bathing. He seized her cloak, which act magically put her into his power, and then lay with her. He probably did something else, for in this way Gearoid laria was conceived, and when he was born, Aine appeared at the castle of the Earl to present the child to him. There's a shocker for him!

One book I read mentioned:

Certain Irish social customs are also recounted in the *Hisperica Famina*. The early Irish frequently bathed frequently and considered bathing of guests as an act of hospitality. One text describes the custom of cleaning the feet of travelers: "Fill the steady hand basin with water and wash your dirty feet with flowing draughts; wipe clean your muddy soles with the clear liquid," and again: "pour a clear draught from the wooden tank and wash your dirty feet." The early Irish had a highly developed vocabulary for bathing, with separate words for washing the feet, the hands, hair, or immersing the entire body. For example; Osaic was the Old Irish word for washing the feet.

Now, we know the Celts used soap long before the Romans did, because those new-comer Romans built their empire long after the Celts arrived in the region, but they used it to wash their hands in the morning and during bathing. After bathing they would comb oil and scented herbs into their hair. The Romans rubbed their bodies with olive oil and herbs and then scraped it off with a device called a speculum. Another

little tidbit about this type of "bathing" is when the gladiators did it, the "residue" of combined sweat dirt and the oil concoction was sold to wealthy women as a virility drug that was taken internally. Of course the more famous the gladiator the more expensive it was. (And the Romans called us barbarians) Pretty disgusting isn't it?

While the Celts on the other hand used soap made from vegetable oil and herbs (kind of like what we have now) the only difference per se was the inclusion of lye. Another odd little tidbit about Celtic grooming is that they used stale urine to bleach their hair white, possible inspiring tales of blond Celts, when (touristy commercials aside) in fact most Celts are dark or brunettes. We also know from tales of Celtic grooming habits of all the body-paints, make-up and cosmetics that the Celts (or at least the upper-class) used, and this requires something to remove them before reapplication, i.e. soap.



There are also several Fulacht Fiadh (kidney or horse-shoe shaped mounds of burnt stone surrounding a wood or stone lined trough set into the ground), such as in Lochadoon Valley in Cloghane. Warriors of the Fianna, or anyone on extended summer hunts, wouldn't want to haul around a big iron pot and a deer, so they need to cook big hunks of deer or boar somehow. First a stone or timber-lined trough near a stream would be filled with water and then rock would be heated in an adjacent fire before being dropped into the water, a process that was continued until the water boiled. The joints of meat were then placed in the water to boil. It may sound pretty unlikely, but modern archaeological experiments have shown it to be a quite economical and effective method of cooking. It has also been suggested that Fulacht Fiadh were used for bathing or as saunas.



According to a link (listed below), the Gaels were also into building Sweathouses known as Teach an Allais, which may have been derived from all the Viking colonies in the Gaeltacht region, perhaps lasting as long as 1902 in distant rural areas without running water? 80 sweathouses existed in Co. Leitrim in the late 19th Century, but seem to be limited to Co. Leitrim, Fermanagh, Cavan, Sligo, and a few isles of western

Scotland; Jura, Colonsay, Argyll, and Kilmartin Valley. They are highly dismantable stone-igloos, and possibly were recycled in other regions. Sweating removes poisons in the body, improves appearance by unclogging pores, combats the persistent rheumatism of North Europe and (surprisingly) warms you up on cold nights. Peter Berresford Ellis in *The Druids* describes one as:

"The further development of the medicated bath was the hot-air bath, used in Ireland as a cure for rheumatism until recent years. The structure in which these baths were given was known as "tigh an alluis," or "sweating house." One such ancient structure survives on Inishmurray in Donegal Bay and several have been described in the last century particularly in the north of Ireland. They are small constructions of stone, five to seven feet long. A turf fire was kindled inside until the house was heated like an oven. The fire was removed. The patient, wrapped in a blanket, crept in and sat down on a bench. The door was closed up. The patient remained until in a profuse perspiration and then, on leaving, was plunged into cold water and then rubbed warm. The patient was encouraged to meditate (dercad) to achieve sitchain (state of peace). It is not beyond the realm of possibility that this act, found in many cultures in the world as a religious action, had similar religious connotations in the Celtic world." [6]



Most dwellings of the Sidhe (people of the hills) are old raths (now submerged lake forts), duns (old dirt embankments of ruined castles), disused par-terre root-cellars/homes, or still-buried cromlechs (those stones stacked on top of each other were once covered by mounds of dirt). This has brought up the idea to me, that perhaps those sidhe or fairies (in certain cases) were not so much a primordial displaced race, a distant race of gods, but memories of vision-crazed mystics who came out of their little sweathouses, still entranced, and performed healings or other magical activities? Those fairy-tales of people out in the night could be stumbling in upon a clandestine meeting of folk-shamans/what-have-yous in their sweathouses, high on who knows what kind of local weed. A nearby stream, which fairies can't cross, might be based on ancient cures for madness. Suddenly surprising the patient with a plunge into cold water was practiced from ancient times to the 19th Century. Boats were constructed which would break up and force patients to swim to the shore in the cold water and there were bridges that would collapse when patients were crossing them. The cold water shower or plunge was a "shock" treatment designed to bring a deranged person to his/her senses. It is an intriguing idea.



Several other culture/religions are obsessive about cleanliness, possibly because it's healthy, but perhaps to distance themselves from the grubby peasants who don't have the time to clean things up as well as a church with excess lazy layman's labor. Shinto revolves around purity, if Nozomi's articles are true; and certainly the Judeo-Christian bible is frantic about being clean (which was interpreted by the Christians to be a spiritual matter, thus bringing on several plagues, and moralistic catastrophes): [most of Leviticus, 1 John 1:9, 15:3; 2 Corinthians 7:1, James 4:8, Ephesians 5:26-27] No where in the bible does it say "Cleanliness is next to Godliness," which is derived from a sermon by John Wesley (1703-1791) or possibly Francis Bacon (1605) "Cleanness of body was ever deemed to proceed from a due reverence to God."

But the evidence does not show that this was the Celts made the spiritual connection, except as described above, they just wanted to look good, and who can blame them? Regardless, you should be able to buy Irish Spring now knowing that, advertising hype aside, soap is a Celtic innovation to Europe (as is the deep plough and iron). Even without your personal home sauna, you'll come out of your bath, invigorated, spiritually purified (Shower Shugyo, anyone?), and not so stinky.

Next time: Celtic Dietary Problems!

More Interesting Links

How to make soap:

<http://www.fragrant.demon.co.uk/makesoap.html>

The science of soap:

<http://cator.hsc.edu/~kmd/caveman/projects/soap/>

Soap

recipes:<http://cator.hsc.edu/~kmd/caveman/projects/soap/aviva.html>

What is pot-ash?

<http://is2.dal.ca/~jcrealoc/What%20is%20Potash.htm>

David Lynch's review of Irish Spring:

<http://www.goddijn.com/soap/sirish.htm>

Lucky vs. Trix rabbit WWF match:

<http://www.grudge-match.com/History/lucky-trix.shtml>

Palmolive exploits Irish:

http://www.irisheye.com/action_alerts/ac3_24_00.html

On being Irish in America:

http://www.inept.com/sporadic/featuresapr98/irish_eyes.htm

Gaelic Sweathouses:

<http://www.angelfire.com/mac/celticprayers/sweathouse.html>

Celtic Grooming:

<http://www.taliesin.clara.net/lifestyles.htm>

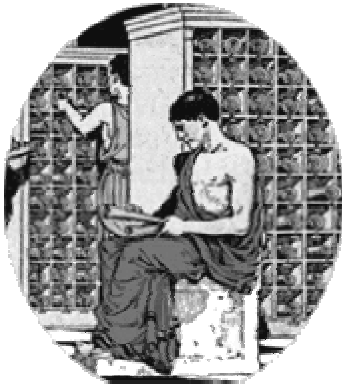
Eachna's Celtic Grooming page with also a lengthy chapter on hand-made woad:

<http://www.celticgarb.org/persona/grooming.html>

A Social History of Ancient Ireland by P.W. Joyce, Volume II Chapter XXII: Dress and Personal Adornment. This chapter can be found to be partially transcribed on this web site:

<http://www.alia.ie/tirnanog/sochis/sochis01.html>

“Celtic Body Decoration Pack” by Andy Sloss. This body art kit came out November 1999. It came with a small but surprisingly thick book, a few transfers, and two bottles of body paint. I don't think the majority of the ‘kit’ is worth it, BUT, the book is surprisingly useful for both basic body-art, and as a mini-guide to Celtic line art in general. It has hundreds of line art examples, as well as how to draw knotwork. There are zoomorphic examples, totem animals, mirror-backs, and more. The book alone is worth the cost to have all these types of images in one handy reference.



Press Release: Pagan Library

June 21, 2002

Envision it. A library filled with books about Paganism and Magick. Not just the few shelves at the local public library. Not just bubblegum Wicca.

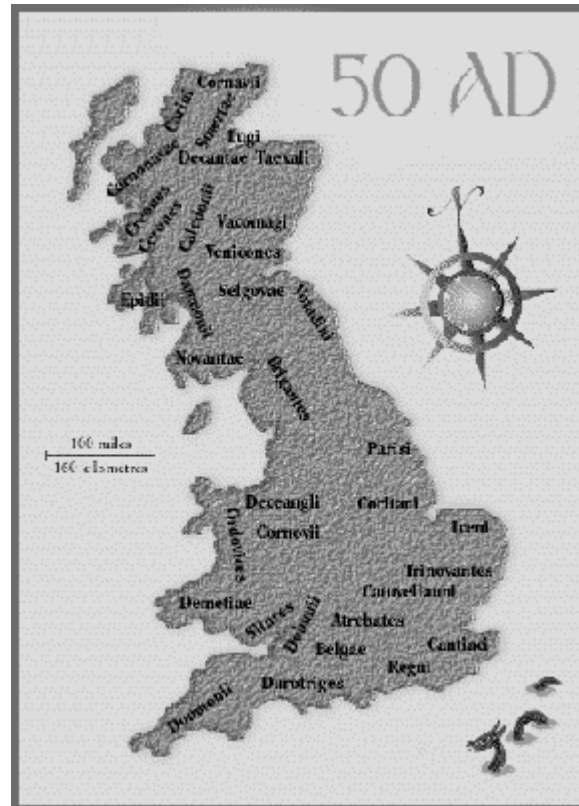
In Minneapolis, this is already a reality.

The New Alexandria Library and Resource Center opened its doors in September 2000. We have over 1500 books, several hundred periodicals, assorted video and audiotapes and a beautiful statue of Isis. Our intent is to be a resource not just for the local Pagan community but also for Neo-Pagans worldwide. Our collection is growing every day, ranging from first editions of Gardner and Murray to Pagan fiction (Terry Pratchett, anyone?) Our holdings include books on Paganism--paleo, meso and neo, Wicca, Goddess Studies, Mythology, Shamanism, Queer Spirituality, Divination, Thelema, and Magick. We are also the proud repository of two special collections: the Paul Tuitean Memorial Norse collection and the Steven W. Posch Semitica collection. We have what we hope will become the definitive collection of pagan periodicals, and, in addition, the ephemera of our community: festival brochures, ritual scripts, and flyers announcing pagan events.

We are staffed by volunteers, and depend entirely on contributions from the community to survive. To further this work of the Goddess, we urgently request your assistance. We welcome donations of books and other materials. (Please contact us first to avoid duplication.) Most of all, we need your generous financial support.

For more information contact us at New Alexandria Library and Resource Center, 3005 Oakland Ave South, Minneapolis, MN 55407, phone 612-823-3673 (long distance calls returned collect), email us: paganlibrary@magusbooks.com or check our web page: <http://www.magusbooks.com/newalexandria/>

Magenta Griffith, Librarian
Steve Posch, Board Member
for the New Alexandria Library.



Welsh are the True Britons, Study Finds

From The Independent, <http://news.independent.co.uk>

By Barrie Clement

1st July, 2002

The Welsh were here first and are therefore the “true” Britons, genetic research published today indicates.

While many post-war historians thought the Anglo-Saxon influence on England may have been limited to political and commercial elites, the new analysis reinforces the more traditional idea of an invasion of Germanic tribes.

Scientists from University College London found a stark difference between the men they tested in England and those in Wales. The genetic make-up of the Englishmen was almost identical to people in an area of the Netherlands where some Anglo-Saxons are thought to have originated.

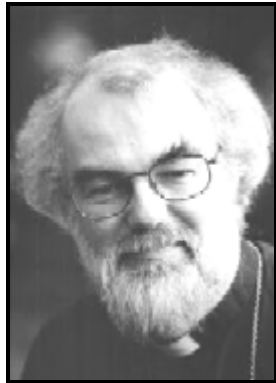
The researchers concluded that the “foreigners” invaded the area now covered by England, wiping out between 50 and 100 per cent of the indigenous population, but failing to move into Wales.

Analysts from UCL tested the Y chromosome—usually inherited unchanged from father to son—and looked for certain genetic markers.

They chose seven market towns in England and Wales mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 and compared the data with samples from Friesland, now a northern province of the Netherlands.

Mark Thomas, of the Centre for Genetic Anthropology at UCL, said it appeared that England was “ethnically cleansed” by people moving from the Continent after the Romans left.

Assistant’s Note: Perhaps, this will encourage the more isolationistic people of Britain to be more amenable to viewing their own country as a “land of immigrants?”



Why the Archbishop is Embracing Pagan Roots

From British News, Times Online,;
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk>
By Ruth Gledhill, Religion Correspondent
July 19, 2002

The man expected to be the new Archbishop of Canterbury will be inducted as a druid in a 200-year-old ceremony with pagan roots in Wales next month.

As the sun rises over a circle of Pembrokeshire bluestones, the Archbishop of Wales, the Most Rev Dr Rowan Williams, will don a long white cloak while druids chant a prayer to the ancient god and goddess of the land.

After a trumpet fanfare and the thrice partial sheathing and unsheathing of a 6 foot 6 inch sword, a citation will be read. Dr. Williams will close his hands in prayer while the archdruid, wearing a crown and shield over his bardic robes, will unfold them in his own and utter words of welcome.

That will be the moment that Dr. Williams, who will adopt a new, bardic name, is accepted into the white druidic order, the highest of three orders of the Gorsedd of Bards, the Welsh body of poets, musicians, writers and artists. The Mistress of the Robes, Sian Aman, will then clothe him in a druidic white headdress, and a steward will lead him to join the other assembled druids inside a sacred circle.

The ceremony will take place "in the face of the sun, in the eye of the light" at the start of the Welsh National Eisteddfod at St David's, Pembrokeshire, in early August.

Although organisers insist the Gorsedd's pagan roots are long behind it, contributors to discussion forums on the Church in Wales website have already suggested it is "nearer to Shintoism than Christianity." Evangelical leaders in the Church of England described it as "unbelievable". The Rev. David Banting, chairman of Reform, the conservative evangelical group, said: "We are concerned that Christian leaders should concentrate on the celebration and promotion of the Christian faith in all its wonder and power rather than dabbling in other things."

Dr. Williams will not be the only church leader admitted as an honorary druid to the Gorsedd. The Right Rev. Daniel Mullins, retired Roman Catholic bishop of Menevia, South Wales, is a member. He insisted: "It has no link at all with ancient druidism." A former Archbishop of Wales, the Right Rev George Noakes, is also a member.

Dr. Williams is a prolific author and poet. His book of poems, *Remembering Jerusalem*, is currently high on the religious bestsellers list.



The Gorsedd of Bards takes its name from the high seat, which in prehistoric times referred to the mounds on which the sacred kings were wedded to the female spirit of the land. It was invented in the 18th century by the Welsh scholar Iolo Morganwg (Edward Williams), a Welsh cultural icon suspected of sympathies with French revolutionaries and American rebels. On June 21, 1792, he laid out a circle of stones on the grass and proclaimed a Gorsedd of Bards--not in Wales but on Primrose Hill in Camden, North London.

Morganwg, who claimed to have found an ancient Welsh manuscript with the ceremony but in fact wrote it himself, pronounced his first Welsh Gorsedd at the Eisteddfod in Caermarthen, Wales, in 1819. The Gorsedd of Bards has been closely associated with the National Eisteddfod since it was founded in 1860 and the three ceremonies--the crowning of the best free verse poet and the awards for prose and strict metre poetry--attract thousands with their pageantry and Celtic lore.



The Archdruid, Dr. Robyn Lewis, a retired lawyer and deputy circuit judge, defended the archbishop's right to be inducted into the Gorsedd. Only fluent Welsh speakers are allowed in. He said: "The Gorsedd is an organization which concerns itself with literature, poetry, music and art of all sorts including architecture. We meet in a circle of stones, a mini Stonehenge, that we erect in the towns where the Eisteddfod takes place."

The three orders of the Gorsedd, white for druid, blue for bards and green for ovates, are the closest thing in Wales to an honours system. The Queen is an ovate, but the Prince of Wales has never been invited to join. The actor Richard Burton was also a member, as was Lloyd George.

Dr. Lewis said: "We are not like the English druids. The Stonehenge druids are a pot-smoking crowd. Ours is a very respectable society. The ceremony is not pagan. It is just a ceremony. It is quite innocent, there is no serious paganism about it at all. It is a society for the furtherance of the arts in Wales, nothing more. We are not theistic, atheistic, pantheistic, agnostic or anything." He added: "All sorts of people have been members. The Queen was given a green robe although not all of us want her and she never turns up."

He was saddened by the prospect of Dr. Williams's promotion. "Quite frankly, we do not want him to go to Canterbury. We feel he deserves it, but we feel we need him here. He is a fluent Welsh speaker for a start, and that will be wasted in Canterbury, wasted on the desert air."

The archbishop's chaplain, the Rev. Gregory Cameron, defended Dr. Williams. Speaking in Welsh on BBC Wales, he said: "The Gorsedd is not full-blooded paganism, it is an institution making an appeal to the natural universe, to what Wordsworth described as the power of nature."

Resources

From the Read Ireland Book Review
Serpent and the Goddess by Mary Condren
(Paperback; 13.99 Euro/13.50 USD/11.50 UK; New Island Press, 266 pages)

When first published in 1989, Mary Condren's brilliantly researched account of the decline of female power in Western civilization provoked considerable controversy and debate. Exploring uncharted territory, it precipitated and unprecedented amount of research and publication on Celtic religious origins and societal structures. Over a decade later, the book is widely regarded as the pre-eminent book in its field, a classic study of gender, power, and spirituality. Working her way through the corresponding ages of Eve, Brigit, and Mary, the author traces both the rise of patriarchal consciousness and its disturbing implications for society. By reclaiming a matri-centered culture that has been written out of history, the author offers the reader a view of a more optimistic future, reawakening us to the possibilities of an enriched female consciousness.

Read Ireland@Phibsboro Bookshop,
342 North Circular Road, Phibsboro, Dublin 7, Ireland
Mon-Fri 10-5 and Sat 12-5
Tel: +353-1-830-9828
Fax: +353-1-830-2997
www.readireland.ie

Calendar

Lughnasadh, when the Sun is half-way between the Summer Solstice and Fall Equinox, will occur on Wednesday, August 7 as 15 degrees of Leo at 9:40:44 a.m. Pacific Daylight Time, or alternatively as 16 degrees 18 minutes decl. on August 7 at 12:03:32 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time.

The Missal-Any is published eight times a year. Due to the increase in postal rates and the average length of each issue being now 22 pages, we at the Missal-Any have unfortunately had to increase the cost of the post mail subscriptions. They are now \$8.00, still a bargain at a dollar an issue. Email subscriptions are free. Or write an article or send us a cartoon and receive a year's subscription free. Write The Missal-Any, c/o Weinberger, 309 63rd Street, Apt. C, Oakland, CA 94618.

A Druid Missal-Any
Fall Equinox Y.R. XL
Vol. 18 Number 6
Sep. 15th, 2002 c.e.



Fall Equinox Essay: Sirona

Reprinted from A Druid Missal-Any, Fall Equinox 1987
By Emmon Bodfish



all Equinox, a minor High Day in the Druid calendar. The days are getting short again and the harvest is in full swing. This is the time of Cernunnos, and the other Deities of night, of the Season of Sleep, and the Otherworld. The Celts, as far as we know, did not have a specific lunar deity. (I often get asked for the name of a Moon Goddess.) In researching this I have come across the interesting information on the origins of the Goddess Sirona. Her name comes from the same Indo-European root as “star,” although She was later associated with the source of the river Seine, a spring where a shrine to Her was located.

As the Celts moved out of the Halstatt homeland in Austria and across Europe, they re-named rivers and springs for their Goddesses, perhaps merging them with local protective Earth Goddesses. A major shrine to Sirona, located at a spring in Hochscheid has been both traced in Roman reports and verified archeologically. This shrine was associated with healing, and Sirona is shown here on plaques and in votive statues along with a young male figure. This is probably Lugh, whom the Romans equated with Apollo after they took over the site in the second century AD. When Christians later took over the shrine, they dedicated it to a “Saint Sabine,” another euhemerism of a Pagan Goddess into a Christian Pious. In late Celtic times the sanctuary was a Nemeton built around a spring whose waters were directed into a pool. In the pool have been found small votive statues of the Goddess and of the Divine Couple, presumably Sirona and Lugh, and also coins and precious offerings. It is described by the excavators as an unusually rich shrine for one so far in the country.



Sirona is portrayed here, as elsewhere, in statues and wall reliefs, holding a serpent, and a bowl of eggs, probably serpent’s eggs. The motif of the Serpent’s Egg appears in Irish literature and in folklore about the Druid in the British Isles. Possession of these magical eggs was said to bestow divine wisdom, eloquence, and protection against spells and disease. This last quality may be a dim echo of the healing powers of Sirona and of Her ancient association with night and dreams. People seeking cures for chronic illnesses often made pilgrimages in order to sleep within the sanctuary of a healing Deity in hope of receiving a Divine Dream in which the cause and cure of their illness would be made known to them by the Goddess of the shrine. Dio Cassius wrote of a pilgrimage made by the Emperor Caracalla to the shrines of the Celts as well as to Greek and Roman temples in search of a cure.



Farther west in Gaul, Sirona takes on a more diurnal and agrarian image, and is portrayed holding an ear of grain and a bowl. The concepts of healing and of regeneration were always closely associated in Celtic culture, according to Prof. Miranda Green, archeologist and British expert on the Celts. The ear of wheat symbolized the power of growth and rebirth, truth to its name “spica” from the root for hope. Green calls Sirona “polyandrous,” but evidence simple shows Her working in conjunction with several different male Deities: Lugh, Bormo, Grannus, and several other as yet unidentified male figures. She is always associated with the serpent itself as an image of

healing and wisdom in the Ancient World, and a symbol associated with the Milky Way in several early astronomies.

Night, rest, and healing are the domain of Sirona. The nights will be getting longer now, taking precedence over the day. But as one devotee of Sirona, in spirit if not in name, put it, "I hold the darkness to be good no less than the light." Now begins the harvest of the benefits of the "good and covering dark." Between now and Samhain, try to visit some place in the deep country where you can see the Milky Way and the dark sky the way the Druids of Sirona saw it before artificial lights and smog lowered our vision. Anywhere you are, though, a few of the bright stars and planets are always visible, even in the city. If you can't sleep go out and look at the stars.

A meditative experiment for the radical and the brave: From now 'til Samhain, avoid all nighttime electronic media. Know darkness and stars.

News of the Groves

Carleton: News from Minnesota

Presidents at Carleton have certainly influenced the RDNA, and most have attended services since the first one, mentioned in the Druid Chronicles EC 1:2. In those days when Nason was President of Carleton, a decree went out from the Administration that all Sundays must be accounted for. Each went to their place of worship in order that their credit might be established on their record.

Well, Stephen Lewis (1987-2002) steps down after overseeing an unusually busy period of building construction on Carleton that gave us the ungainly monstrosity of a recreation center near the Hill of Three Oaks, and also the simple beauty of the labyrinth on Stewsie Island and the Stone Circle of Irony. He was a quirky humorous type who enjoyed student pranks (mine among them), starred in one of my Druidic movies, and attended one of my services.

The 10th president is Robert A. Oden, who comes from the presidency of Kenyon College in Ohio; a school similar to Carleton, with a largely student population in a small rural town. He is described as a Huck Finn and known as a great booster of endowments and protector of neighboring environmentally sensitive areas. His academic specialty is Middle Eastern religions and languages (reading ancient Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, Ugaritic, Phoenician and Syriac). Interestingly, he graduated from Vermillion high school in South Dakota in 1965, the same year that RDNA founder, Norman Nelson, founded the first missionary grove. Is there some kind of deep concurrence here? His passion is fly-fishing and daily six mile jogs in the Arboretum.

Also in news: A ghost was spotted in a nearby abandoned barn on Campus, with a predilection for pickles and sardines. The Carleton Calendar for 2002/3 has two large monthly photos, one for the Labyrinth on Stewsie Island and one for the Stone Circle of Irony in the Upper Arb. Mike Scharding is currently also trying to coordinate the 2003 reunion activities with current grove members; who are currently eyeing the Campus requirements to register marriages (including Druidical ones?) and refuse to house married ones.

Akita Grove: News from Northern Japan

Things are good here, I have a child growing, so good. Pat say no computer during time to stop radiation and live the simplest life. It is okay, but boring it isn't? Summer is very hot and all festivals are finished. Yeah! Now the quiet time of winter is come. I will read much this winter.

Pat has a new story for the Missal-Any! Maybe I sent it last month? It makes him a busy man, and I like it so. He has new job in roasted-chicken van. He drives around cooking chicken on stick.

The Lunasa Party was a big picnic at the BEACH! Quite fun. Mountain life is different. We will have special ceremony in the town for Sept 11 (your Sept 12th), and my father will be of help for planting tree. We will grow from this.

Shikoku Grove: News from Japan

Ikari graciously made a translation of the Order of Worship into Japanese for the upcoming second edition of A Reformed Druid Anthology. A few concepts were difficult to convey, such as the appropriate level of politeness and antiquity to the language.

Digitalis Grove: News from DC

After a hard summer's typing, I've gotten a lot of the material for the second edition of A Reformed Druid Anthology prepared. Primary changes are an additional 15 letters to the apocrypha, a three-fold growth in the liturgical section (quite astonishing) based on recent unearthings in the archives, numerous corrections to the customs section, two new Green Books, and a few new interviews. I am currently trying to engage David Fisher in a discussion on many unanswered questions.

A third-order vigil for Brother Wolf from New York was rather strange due to the unusually still air both at night and morning. The winds were absent, but a chorus of insects responded. Quite odd. As is my own custom, I also stayed up all night tending my own fire, and went out for a walk in the dark, dark woods of Green Belt National Park near DC. Although only two miles by two miles, I soon became quite lost, and had to spiral my way through the forest to eventually find a way out. Nature is nicest when you have a known path back home, I suppose, and I was shamefully pleased to find a service road after a few hours of searching. For such a young Druid, I found Wolf, to be unexpectedly confident in his foundations, probably due to so much ADF training, but still very inquisitive.

I am moving to a nearby apartment this month and have restarted Grad School studies, and hope to graduate next spring. After that, who knows? I will probably still continue to do a Japanese related job, but with more community involvement, such as tourism or cultural guide? That will be up to the fates.

Brother Eric in the grove, despite his own studies, has taken up the Bardic banner and will run the contest, send in all works to him at ericpowers229@hotmail.com.

Hemlock Splinters Grove: News from New York

The leaves here are beginning to change. Wild turkeys fight trespassing bulls for possession of the berm, the honey bees under the kitchen table are making delicious smells, and the temperature drops into the forties some nights. Irony has started nursing school, necessitating a return to the nylon-strung harp as the fingernails required for playing wires are not permitted in clinical settings. Full moon fires remain popular, drawing the occasional guest up from the cities (Syracuse and Oswego) and a poorly defined get together is planned for the equinox. Anyone in the area on Sunday September 22nd is welcome.

Ancient Circle Grove, MOCC: News from New York

Here in the Northeast we see and feel the first stirrings of autumn. The air is expectant with possibility and it is now that Ancient Circle reawakens. We are currently reorganizing and shall resume our regular activities at Mabon. A harvest potluck shall be hosted and as always, promises to be a culinary delight for all. This is a family event and the widening of our circle during the festivals enriches us all. Ritual will be celebrated and welcomes all who desire to fellowship with us.

A special rite will be held on September 11, 2002.

Ancient Circle remains sister grove to Oaken Circle Grove in Kentucky. Our hearts and souls are one with our sisters and brothers there. Over the past year, we have midwived Ancient Whispers Grove, an independent grove in upstate New York. (Not an easy birth!)

Our lending library has grown and is now in excess of 175 books, ranging in topics from animal totems to Zen. A schedule of informal study, practical instruction and ritual will be forthcoming.

Dravidia Grove: News from Maryland

All is well here in Maryland, the grove got some much-needed rain, and we could still use some more. Have not had much chance to do too much, this is the peak season for work. It is amazing, but we seem to have an ant problem in Maryland. The resilience of them is overwhelming. I spent an hour the other day watching a group go about their daily activities. Very industrious. Wish some humans were also. (B.E.G.)

My cat has also taken to annoying my wife. I think she is just waiting until it is big enough to make two slippers out of it instead of just one...lol.

—Dolanimus

Cat-In-The-Corner Grove: News from Colorado

The namesake cat passed away, suddenly and unexpectedly, on August 4; this fall's ritual will include a memorial to her. She will be greatly missed, yet her life and contributions will be remembered and celebrated. Fall is a time to remember that seasons turn, and there is an ending to every beginning. However, there is also a new beginning to each ending—a new cat (kitten) has joined, although she is yet too young to contribute anything. (Then again, perhaps she will fulfill that “cat in the corner” story and actually be tied in the corner, to keep her out of trouble!)

Other than that, a suitable Grovesite is still being sought; we make do right now with whatever place seems suitable and reasonably private at the time.

The computer, which had been dead for over a month, has been resurrected—perhaps the Grove may now get back into the “loop” so to speak.

Eurisko Grove: News from Virginia

Greetings from Eurisko in Virginia. We have good news and bad news. The good news is we had a new member join us. This brings the head counts for humans in the grove up to four. The bad news is our friend and grove member recently lost her unborn baby. In honor of Mabon, we are trying to organize a group trip to a local corn maze for family and friends.

Swamp Grove: News from Florida

Hark the Heralds,

Glorious new e-mail and fast Internet connection for the Swamp Grove. We have moved our shrine and circle area about five miles or so, new land and better location (much drier, can actually circle outside all year now) for first time since our inception in the early 90s. Will try to put together a new website and take pictures of the new grove soon. E-mail: spacerock@swfla.rr.com

Oaken Circle Grove: News from Kentucky

From the center of the circle, we spiral out to greet those who seek a deeper communion with nature, the ancestors and the Divine. Oaken Circle Grove provides an enriching and nurturing environment to all those who journey upon the path of the elder ways.

With roots that stretch into the philosophy of Reformed Druidic Wicca, we embrace and accept into our circle all traditions of earth-based spirituality. This rich blend has nourished our spirits and expanded our experiences. We value each member as a vital and unique gift, borne of the Great Mother. We celebrate the diversity of our membership and it is that diversity which brings unity and a greater sense of belonging. Each member is treated with dignity, honour and given the respect due them. We share our vision, goals, projects and common purpose, to enhance cooperation and foster tolerance within the community at large. We teach by example and we live fully and joyfully each day.

We welcome all who desire to share the journey with us and we walk together in Perfect Love and Perfect Trust.

Our grove had to postpone our Lughnasadh celebration until the weekend of the 31st due to a grove member with health issues. Our grove is getting much exposure on groups like the Kentucky pagan network and the Kentucky pagan forum. We will keep you up to date on our grove happenings.

Many blessings,

Oaken Circle Grove

http://oaken_circle_grove.tripod.com/oakencirclegrove/

MOCC—Muskogee/Mother Grove

Muskogee, OK has been sweltering hot lately. While re-starting the rites in Muskogee has been slow going due to scheduling problems, two new local students have appeared, and renewed interest among former members has also helped the slow revival. The Archdruid is currently teaching them Neopagan Cosmology 101: this is the way the metaphysical world is generally comprised, or so we think, or some of us at least. Pay no attention to the obvious b.s., and take everything with a grain of salt. Earth, Air, Fire, Water, that sort of stuff.

The traditional Three Protections over Muskogee will be renewed this autumn. They are placed over Civitan Park, the Muskogee Public Library, and Union Agency Hill (Honor Heights Park). We will be attempting to co-opt the assistance of a Runemaster in casting a protection over the Arkansas River that runs north and east of the city.

Mojo Proto-Grove

Mojo grove is taking sabbatical for an unspecified length of time.

Amon Sul Grove: News from Kentucky

Gandalf and Goldberry recently attended an Adult Weekend Retreat at Crystal Crow's Nest near Beattyville, Kentucky (also referred to as an Awesome Witch Retreat). My first opportunity to party naked in a couple of years. Tending a white-hot fire requires special care when swinging in the breeze. We are also planning on attending the Summerland festival in Yellow Springs, Ohio that is being sponsored by our ADF brothers and sisters in that area. (Amergin, Senior Druid of the Sixth Night Grove, is an old and dear friend of many years.)

I was out of town on business for two weeks during the end of July and we had some drought relief during that time. (Rented a floating cabin on Herrington lake and went fishing in the evenings. Co-workers stayed in local hotels in a dry county and really appreciated the cookout that I had for them that included plenty of ice-cold beer. Still in the broom closet at work so I was unable to explain to them the primary reason why I was at the lake while they were in hotel rooms.) The weeds had taken over close to half of the garden by the time I got back and I was pulling them in the ninety-degree heat. We have more tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, and zucchini than we can eat and the tomato harvest may still do well enough to do some canning if we get more rain. (We're still over two inches below normal.) The hop vines are crawling all over the back deck and I'm past due on starting a new batch of beer.

Repairing the termite damage to the log house on the abandoned farm that we own in the Daniel Boone National Forest is progressing well. We now have a floor again and the Fourth of July weekend was the first time in three years that we didn't have to tent camp. The Labor Day weekend project will be to install a new back door to seal the cabin part off from the rooms that were added later. Still debating on whether to dub the property the House of Bombadil or Imladris. The Forest Service map shows the house and two barns with the title Goochland (not sure but I think it's an Anglicization of Guteland which is German for "good land.")

—Gandalf, Amon Sul Scribe

News from the East Coast Members of the Amon Sul Grove

Greetings! This is BrightMirage, a new member of the Amon Sul Grove and the official coordinator of the East Coast branch. I suppose that would be me, my cat (Leo), my two snakes (Karma and Onyx), and two guinea pigs (Panda and Rygel).

News in the life of BrightMirage: I was offered and gladly accepted an internship for August at the wildlife bird rescue center I have volunteered/worked/interned at over the last few years. (I was an intern last year but injuries and such prevented me from finishing my "term.") This year has been wonderful so far...there are many diverse species of birds that we are working hard to rehabilitate, and it gives me great satisfaction to be able to release them back into the wild. It makes the long hours and such worthwhile.

The East Coast Branch of Amon Sul now has a new "grove"...inside the apartment! I recently purchased a little bamboo plant (the thick kind that you see in Chinese paintings) that resides in a little ceramic pot with three frogs as the legs of the base. Great calming energy and serenity comes from the tiny bamboo, and it brings me back to my roots as well (no pun intended, really!).

brightest blessings,
BrightMirage

St. Louis Grove: News from Missouri

The St. Louis Grove has a new e-mail address robertbentley@sbcglobal.net was r.bentley3@gte.net

Cattle Grove: News from Texas

Hey everyone,

Just wanted to chime in and let everyone know how I'm doing. Just to let you know why I've been silent lately is because I've been jammed into a military school in the wonderful (HA!) city of Harlingen, TX. I have no Internet access here save my i705(palm pilot with wireless modem) and all that is really good for is email and AIM. Out of 400 kids I'm the only pagan here, about 97% of the campus is Christian although I did find a handful of people who weren't really practicing and very skeptical of Christianity and they are asking me for information and are thinking of going druid, as they say here...Hoorah! I'm building an altar stone from a large river rock I found on a hike and lugged back and at work decorating it with a sigil using a knife I smuggled back from the mess hall. Anyways, I'm missing the contact with others who share my beliefs so it'd be great if any of you wanna chat my email is evilsmile@palm.com and my aim name is evilsmile. Well, that's about all I have to say right now.

Peace out,

Joss

Cylch Cerddwyr Rhwng Y Budoedd Grove: News from Oregon

Thou art God:

As we approach Mabon, the Order of the Mithril Star finds that it has grown some more. We have 24 new members since Midsummer, and the Order has a new Grove: Cylch Tylwyth Grove in Westmoreland TN. The Order has seen growth this year on both national and international fronts. We currently have solitary members in eight countries, and Groves or Proto-Groves in Washington, Oregon, Tennessee and California.

Our Cybernest email list has 60 members, and our current Druidcraft 101 course (taught three times a year via email) has an enrollment of 65. The current class ends on September 21, and a new class will begin the next day, September 22. To enroll send a blank email to: mithrilstar-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Enrollment is open until October 5th. The class takes approximately 16 weeks. We will soon be offering a more advanced course--Druidcraft 201.

Ceridwen Druid Seren-Ddaear \/\ 6th Order, Clerk of OMS-RDNA, has started a new "Astrology for Pagans" course over email. The course has 93 students (from 10 different countries and 33 states). The Beginning level started on August 1st, and it will segue into Intermediate and Advanced levels throughout the winter.

On March 1st, a new Beginning cycle will start again. If you are interested, please send a blank email to: astropagan101-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

This summer we inducted two "honorary members" into OMS, and bestowed upon them the 3rd Order. One is famed folk musician/songwriter Leslie Fish, author of our "official hymn,"

Sequoia Sempervirons. She has graciously accepted our adoption of her song, and has given her permission to use it on our website. You can hear an mp3, and read the words of this filk song, at <http://www.mithrilstar.org/song.htm>.

The other new honorary member is Church of All Worlds founder and Pagan sculptor, Oberon Zell-Ravenheart.

Planning for our Druid Monastery in So. Oregon has progressed. Pledges are beginning to roll in for purchase and development of the land, located 6 miles north of Grants Pass OR on 20 acres surrounded by some 850 (plus or minus) acres of BLM land. The vision statement says it all:

“Imladris is a vision for a poly-fidelitous-friendly, Pagan, intentional community located in Southern Oregon. The members of Imladris will share a love and reverence for the Earth and for each other.

Egalitarianism will be our greatest ideal. Every member of Imladris will have equal status with every other member. There will be no gurus or cult personalities among us. The community will gather on a monthly basis to discuss business matters, and decisions will be made by consensus. The execution of the business of the community will be performed by a committee of three who serve as clerk, treasurer and secretary for a term of office a year and a day. The same committee of three may not serve more than three periods in a row. Each member will share equally in the work of maintaining the community property, though some members may be more adept at some tasks than others. Members who have specialized skills will be expected to share those skills with the community, should those skills be applicable to the maintenance of the community property.

Each member will be expected to work either inside a community owned business or at a job outside the community, unless they are sick or disabled. As the community grows it is possible that some full time jobs could develop on the property, and those individuals would be compensated as if they worked outside. Every member will donate at least 75% of their income to the community, if earned outside. The community will pay for all utilities, phone, cable, Internet service, food or whatever. A member's long distance bill, and expenses for an individual's vehicle will be their own. The community will attempt to procure a group health care, dental, etc., plan for all the members. Perhaps even a special group auto insurance rate if possible, or a small fleet of vehicles, rather than members owning their own.

Imladris will serve the greater Pagan community as well. The main business of the commune will be to operate a clothing optional resort/convention center where individuals and or groups can stay on the property for conventions, workshops or the like. It would be expected that these types of gatherings would happen during the summer months mostly on weekends. The remainder of the time the commune's guest facilities would be open for use by any Pagan who wishes, much like a motel. There will be a swimming pool, hot tubs and an exercise facility for the use of both guests and residents. Dominating the property will be a 60-foot geodesic dome. This will be the central indoor meeting place, conference facility and all-purpose room. It will be equipped with a kitchen, and guests will be able to get meals there if they choose not to cook for themselves. Available facilities will include: a 50-space campground with a shower house; 10 adjacent RV spaces; five yurts; and two guest rooms in the main office building. It has been determined that if the commune has no more than 13 residents, than they could derive their entire living from running the resort aspect of the community, if open six months per year and averaging a 50 percent occupancy. Residents would have to work only four hours per day four days per week on average (more if there were a big convention using the facilities).

Seven residences (36 ft. geodesic domes) would be spread across the back, non-public side of the property. Hot tubs and ritual space would be in easy walking distance for all. Each residence will house up to five people. Some of these groups we expect will constitute group marriages, or nests.

Imladris will be a community of people who love and care for one another. Everyone will leave their feelings of jealousy, racism, classism, sexism, homophobia and other societal sicknesses behind.

Children of members will be considered the children of all, though an individual child's parents will have primary responsibility. All members will share equally the burden of raising and educating them. The community may eventually have its own school system. It is expected that the community will share in the cost of sending its children to college or trade school.

The spiritual life of the community will be based on those principles and ideals laid out by the Order of The Mithril Star.

Politics shall not be an issue within the community, though from time to time the community may decide (by consensus) to back a particular cause or whatnot. Membership in a particular Party will not be a consideration for membership in the community. Members will be expected to exercise their right to vote and to be informed about what they are voting on, but no one will be allowed to question or ridicule an individual's political orientation.

Membership in Imladris will be open to anyone regardless of race, sexual orientation, income, class or prior religious affiliation. Candidates will be nominated by members, and will be granted trial membership by a unanimous vote. Trial Membership will be granted for a period of a year and a day, at the end of which the member will be given the opportunity to decide if the community is their cup of tea. Naturally they may leave anytime they wish prior to the end of the period. It is encouraged that candidates spend a week or so with us to get to know us before making any commitment.

Imladris will also be host to the international headquarters, or mother grove of the Order of the Mithril Star. Residents of the community are expected to be members of the mother grove and participate in the rituals and organizational activity of the Order. More information on Imladris and the OMS-RDNA can be found on our website: www.mithrilstar.org

Druid Heart Spirit Grove: News From California

Greetings, all is well. I hope you have been doing well. What a fun filled weekend we just had. The Sacramento. Bardic Grove came out for John Winger's initiation into the Awenydd level at our Nemeton. It was wonderful! We had about twenty-five Druids and Pagans camping out and what a feast we had after the ritual, more food than we knew what to do with. My dad participated with us again and this is becoming a regular thing. Then of all things, my brother Joe finally makes it out and I think his spark of interest is coming back to him so he maybe trying to make it out for more rituals!

In the ritual the seeker has to spend about 45 minutes in the dark room (our new lodge out back), blindfolded, with his wrists tied. Then he is given the cup of death by his guide, the hound of Anwyn, my son Jimmy was the hound. He spends this time in rapport with his deity of choice while we set up and do the first half of our ritual, then he is led out to three gates where he is prompted by the hound to answer question given by the beholder/keeper of that gate, eventually after being turned down at each gate he is told that he may go through the little gate, which is, he had to crawl through my legs into the Nemeton--

almost knocked me over, he was a tall one, had everyone rolling with laughter, then he took his oath, tied the ribbon to the world tree, and received his torc of initiation and an Awen necklace. It went great anyhow, everyone's presence added to the energy.

Anyway, this is what I've been doing lately besides working at East West and preparing for the ritual. I finally built the sweat lodge journey house out back.

Duir De Danu Grove: News from California

Duir De Danu Grove (the San Jose area) is holding Celtic night on the second Saturday of each month until such time as we can find a suitable site for rituals, and through the coming Season of Sleep. We have regular hairpulls on a variety of Celtic and Druidic topics. As soon as the sticks can be obtained, we hope to have an Ogham few making session.

Bring a snack and/or beverage to share. Tegwedd's phone number is: 408-257-3864. Leave a message as she screens her calls.

Tegwedd ShadowDancer
Co-ArchDruid and Chronicler of the Duir De Danu Grove

Poison Oak Grove: News from California

Since the Bride-og from Oimelc did not sprout this past year, I bought a Scottish Carlin corn dollie at the Santa Barbara Heart of the Forest Renaissance Faire this August to substitute as the ceremonial last sheaf of wheat for Lughnasadh. This last sheaf, or the person last to harvest his field of grain, was often called the Cailleach or Carlin or old woman. I presented the Carlin at the Lughnasadh service and it is now hanging in a place of prominence until Oimelc when the Cailleach, the Old Hag of Winter, is reborn into Bride, Dawn Maiden.

Last Fall at the Orinda grove site the acorn crop was pretty sparse with nary an acorn to be found, perhaps in anticipation of this year's lack of rain: why send out acorns if they won't be able to sprout? Perhaps the trees did this also as a measure to save their water resources for their own survival. Are trees able to tell when there is going to be drought months in advance and prepare themselves? This fall's crop is already better. I will take special notice of the weather this coming Season of Sleep to see if there is more rain and whether the trees can indeed predict the rainfall of the following year.



Witness the Autumnal Equinox at the UMass Sunwheel

Sunrise @ 6:45 a.m., Sunset @ 6:00 p.m.
Sunday and Monday, September 22 and 23, 2002

Members of the University community and the general public are invited to witness the passing of the seasons by joining Prof. Judith Young of the U.Mass. Dept. of Astronomy to watch the Sun rise and set over the tall standing stones in the U.Mass. Sunwheel for the upcoming Autumnal Equinox. Visitors for the sunrise viewing should arrive at 6:45 a.m., and visitors for the sunset viewing should arrive at 6:00 p.m. The sunrise and sunset events will be held on both Sunday and Monday September 22 and 23, 2002. For those interested in learning about the sky, there will be a presentation that will include the cause of the seasons, the Sun's path in the sky, the phases of the Moon, and the story of building the Sunwheel. Bring your questions, your curiosity, and **DRESS VERY WARMLY**; a \$3 donation is requested. Sunwheel T-shirts and sweatshirts will be available for purchase to help cover the cost of future stone paths at the site.

The exact instant of equinox is 12:55 a.m. EDT on Sept. 23. The sunset closest to this is Sunday Sept. 22, while the sunrise closest is Monday Sept. 23. On the equinox, any observer located on the Earth's equator will see the Sun pass directly overhead at local noon and that person will cast no shadow at noon. For all observers on Earth (excluding the N and S poles), the Sun on the equinox is up for 12 hours and down for 12 hours, illuminating all latitudes! (At the N and S poles, the Sun would encircle the horizon for 24 hours, either very slowly rising or very slowly setting for the entire day.) From the Sunwheel here in Amherst, the equinox Sun will be seen to rise and set through the stone portals in the East and West, a beautiful sight as we experienced last year. This year, the sky will be particularly beautiful as the Moon, just past full, rises and sets opposite the Sun.



The U.Mass. Sunwheel is located south of Alumni Stadium, just off Rocky Hill Road. It can be easily reached from the center of Amherst, following Amity St. to the west, on the right hand side of the road about 1/4 mile after crossing University Drive. **ALL VISITORS SHOULD WEAR WARM CLOTHING, SUITABLE FOR STANDING STILL ON WET OR SOGGY GROUND.** In the event of rain, the events will be cancelled, and visitors are encouraged to visit the Sunwheel on their own. For more information on the U.Mass. Sunwheel, check out the web site at <http://www.umass.edu/sunwheel/index2.html> or call Judy Young at 413-545-4311. To arrange a Sunwheel visit for your class or group, e-mail young@astro.umass.edu



Some Optional Activities for Fall Equinox

By Alex Strongbow, a Druid Lost in the Woods

Fall Equinox is the opposite twin of Spring Equinox, only that life is now giving fruit and dying at this point in the year's cycles, sometimes known as Michaelmas in the Catholic calendar; when contracts and rents were collected (as at Easter). What harvesting began in Lughnasadh should be about finished by the Equinox. In times past, autumn was a dreaded season, as people scrambled to prepare food for the long, deadly winter. Only in recent centuries, with assured food supplies, have we begun to romanticize the season. For modern society it is a time for starting school and the end of summer vacations.

It's possibly the last chance to have the types of fun summer outdoor group activities that characterize Beltane, Midsummer and Lughnasadh. So it offers an opportunity to repeat previous ones, or try out one that you didn't have time for:



- A picnic is definitely in order or participation in final harvesting. Traditional choices would be grapes, acorns, wheat bread, goat, Indian corn, horn of plenty, corbread, corn, root crops (i.e. onions, carrots, potatoes, etc.), pomegranates, nuts, goose, mutton, dried fruits, apples, beans, and squash.
- Prayers towards protection, balance, and success in life are auspicious.
- Building a doll of grains to be burnt in the spring or fed to animals.
- Sitting under trees with nets to catch falling nuts and leaves, perhaps saving a leaf from each year in a collection. The rest should be made into a leaf pile for the kids.
- The changing leaves can also be dipped in paraffin and put on wax paper. After the leaves dry, they may be placed around the house, or in large jars with sigils of protection and/or abundance
- Take notes on which trees turn color first, which fall soonest, and into which colors.
- Follow the migration of birds.
- String nuts into a necklace.



- Plan a trip to see the fall colors in the mountains.
- Do the Halloween farm-visit early and beat the crowds.
- Make a grapevine wreath for the door.
- Deer season opens. Contemplate it and find some deer. Vegetarians can protest the sporting elements of it.
- A good time to give to local charities to feed the poor.
- When do certain animals begin to disappear?
- Bake bread from scratch (i.e. grind the grains into flour).
- Note the date of the first frost and its effects on plant life.
- Put up storm windows, check insulation and pack away the air conditioner.
- Start notice the location and time of sunrise, noon and sunset and continue through winter.
- Plant acorns and other nuts and wait for spring growth.

Great Websites to Browse:

For associations:

<http://www.geocities.com/lavenderwater37/mabon.htm>

A nice essay.

<http://www.scpagans.net/articles/wheel/mabon.html>

Fall Foliage Facts:

<http://ncnatural.com/wildflwr/fall/fallfact.html>

For fall activities:

<http://www.jpc-artworks.com/earthspirit/activities/fallact.html>

Crone's Autumn Walk:

<http://www.jpc-artworks.com/earthspirit/articles/walk.html>

Nice essay:

<http://www.angelfire.com/in/childgrove/fallequinox.html>

Lots of craft ideas:

<http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/5883/mabon.html>

Lots of recipes:

<http://www.geocities.com/heartland/estates/6120/Holidays/fall.html>



High Day Song

This came to our member She of the Storm late one night as she was trying to sleep. It is a belated Solstice song, but it would work for other Druid High Days such as this upcoming Fall Equinox as well.

Solstice Song
(Adapted from the popular Christian song "Shine Jesus Shine")

Shine, Be'al, shine,
Fill this land with your Solstice blessings
Blaze, balefire, blaze,
Purify us tonight
Flow, chalice, flow
Let the Waters-of-Life be blessed
Send forth the Sun, Bel
And celebrate the light!



Daily Druid Devotional

By Pat Haneke, Akita Grove, August 2002

I do this (almost) every day, and it is my incremental regimen, beginning with a cup of steaming coffee. No too much at any time, but like a snowball rolling down the hill (or Milo of Crotona carrying a calf up the stairs everyday) it strengthens your wits and brings you into a greater communion with the world of Nature and profusion of ideas around you. Most of it is stuff we do everyday, but taken one step further in Awareness. It becomes rather difficult to continue finding new examples after a hundred days, and it thus would be an excellent journal activity during the 180 days in the Time of Sleep between Samhain and Beltane. It's as easy as 1, 2, 3. Every day, when possible:



The Triples:

- Take one idea of whose veracity you're sure of, and think of three counter arguments against it or three people who would object to it.

- Take one idea you think is wrong, and think of three supportive arguments or people who would support it.
- Now, take one idea that you're unsure of and bring it up in conversation with three people.

The Doubles:

- Notice one parallel or lesson between Nature and human society, such as nesting and mortgages.
- Resist one urge and give into another urge every day until you are master of them.
- Notice an opposite in the world; and see if you can find a "gray" example.

The Singles:

- Touch a new and different organism every day. If you don't know the real name, give it a temporary name.
- Read one page that you don't have to, on a topic you don't know much about.
- Greet or salute one person you've never acknowledged before.

The Zeroes:

- Listen to someone without a preconception of them.
- Do nothing for a moment in the midst of your busiest time.
- Purposely skip one of the previous activities.



A Sociological Look at the RDNA at Carleton College Or 'The Epistle of Irony'

By Irony Sade
November 1998

Introduction

In this paper I intend to demonstrate that the great sociological theories of Schleiermacher, Marx, Durkheim and others are applicable to the study of the Reformed Druids of North America. I believe that these theories can shed useful light on even a movement as peculiar as the RDNA and that the Druids themselves hold some valuable contributions for the general study of religion. I intend to demonstrate that while they do not call themselves a religion, and perhaps ought not to do so on philosophic grounds, the Reformed Druids share enough of the qualities of a religious movement to be usefully studied as such. I will discuss the sources and methodological problems involved in this kind of study, give an introduction to the Reformed Druids, and a brief sketching of their origins and belief. Next I will address the question of religious applicability, and finally delve into the examination of the sociological theories of Schleiermacher, Marx, and Durkheim as they relate to the Reformed Druids.



Disclaimer and Acknowledgments

It must always be remembered that in matters of religious belief each individual can express only his or her conception of what a religion is or teaches. This is especially true of Reformed Druidism. The Druidic path is an intensely individualistic one and each Druid can only speak for sure of what he or she has found. To a certain extent this also holds for describing the movement as a whole. The way in which I see Reformed Druidism is only one amongst the many views that can be taken of it. Anyone wanting to take a serious look at the subject should be careful to view it through more than one lens.

Which brings me to a certain methodological problem with this study. Most--if not all--of the scholarly work that has been done regarding the Reformed Druids of North America at Carleton has been done by one man--Michael Scharding, Archdruid of the Carleton Grove from the spring of 1993 to that of 1994, he cosponsored the most recent revival of the Druids at Carleton (1995-6) and remains an influential--albeit absent--friend at the time of this writing. Michael Scharding majored in History as an undergraduate and in 1994 undertook the wonderfully self-referential endeavor of researching the history of the Reformed Druids for his Senior Integrative Exercise. In 1996 he revised this paper into a rather longer one, *A General History of Reformed Druidism in America*, and published it along with nearly all the collected writings of Reformed Druids past in *A Reformed Druid Anthology*, of which he was also the associate editor. "As a result of this research," he writes, "I've probably collected and read more Reformed Druid material and talked with more Druids from the different factions than any other Reformed Druid (except possibly Isaac Bonewits.) This means that I'm either an 'expert' or I am now more irreparably confused in my Druidism than ever as a result."¹ It also means that no academic study of Reformed Druidism to date--to my knowledge--has escaped from his shadow.

Daniel Hansen's *American Druidism* is a wonderful field guide to the various Druid groups of the Americas, and provides a fine history of the RDNA, but, as Mr. Scharding has commented, "it would not be a good book to compare my opinions against as I had a great deal to do with getting [it] published."

Margot Adler also talks about the RDNA in what many consider the definitive work on the Neo-Pagan movement, *Drawing Down the Moon*, but says very little that Scharding does not.

Isaac Bonewits also mentions the RDNA at Carleton in *Real Magic* but discusses them primarily in terms of one of their rituals, which he uses as an example to illustrate his theories on magic working. In short, beyond a few oral interviews performed by the College archivist and others and the preserved writings of past and present Druids there is little written work to study.

To date, Michael Scharding represents the most influential academic voice in the study of Reformed Druidism. Except by performing new, original research it is nearly impossible not to be influenced by his perspective on the movement. As mentioned above, any adequate study of religion ought to view it through more than one lens. Luckily most of the progenitors of the movement are still alive and much of its history has been recorded and stored so the possibility of original studies remains. I write this merely to make the reader aware of Scharding's influence. The study of Reformed Druidism is both indebted to and dominated by him, and, while I have drawn extensively on my own observations, interviews, research, and experience as Archdruid over the past three years, this paper is no exception. People who wish a clearer look at the movement are encouraged to explore it for themselves.

Finally let me make one technical note. Wherever I refer to 'Druids' in this paper I mean the Reformed Druids of North America at Carleton College, past and present. I do not intend to discuss the Paleo-Druids of the Old World, nor the Meso-Druids of Brittany revived in 1717, nor most of the other Neo-Druid groups in America except as they directly relate to our understanding of the RDNA. If you want an overview of them, read Hansen. With that caveat, let us begin.

Irony Sade
Prentice Hall 206
November 1998

Section I

An Introduction to Reformed Druidism

"Religions that combine humor, play, and seriousness are a rare species," Margot Adler wrote. "Once you embark on a journey of change in perception, even when you start this journey as 'play,' you can end up in waters far different from those you may have originally intended to enter."² Reformed Druidism represents the embodiment of this sentiment. Created partially as a joke, partially as a reaction against authority, it nonetheless blossomed and grew far beyond the hopes and desires of its founders, becoming both sillier than they had intended, and far more serious than they had ever imagined.

¹ In his forward to *A General History... A Reformed Druid Anthology*, pp. 331.
A Reformed Druid Anthology, pp. 16

² Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, pp. 299-300

Reformed Druidism began at Carleton as a humorous response to the ruling that all students attend a set number of religious services each term. The early flavor of the movement was always one of serious tongue-in-cheek, a combination of the intentionally profound with the pointlessly silly. The early Liturgy, for instance, was written in a playful pseudo-King James style both to provide a semblance of legitimacy and to tease the traditional profundity of holy writings. At the same time it contains some incredibly meaningful passages. Deborah Frangquist, one of the early formative members of the RDNA, recalls one of them nearly thirty years later.

O Lord, forgive these three sins, which are due to our human limitations:

Thou art everywhere, but we worship Thee here;

Thou art without form, but we worship Thee in these forms;

Thou hast no need of prayers and sacrifices, but we offer unto Thee these, our prayers and sacrifices.



"I still find that one of the most profound spiritual statements I have ever heard," she recalls. "It informs my understanding of what I as a believing Christian am doing in Christian liturgy, including the Eucharist. Every time I ended out on the Hill somewhere saying that prayer, I was moved anew by it, and I don't think I was alone in that."³ The Druids at Carleton today continue to exhibit this characteristic blend of the meaningful and the frivolous. Their celebration of Beltane--the first of May--in 1998 included both a pair of weddings as serious and beautiful as the nuptial pairs could ask and an extended bout of 'doughnut fishing,' a spontaneous game where people chased a doughnut suspended on the end of a string, trying to catch it in their mouths while being tickled.

It is, I believe, this persistence of humor and spontaneity, respect and seriousness that has kept Reformed Druidism alive at Carleton for the last thirty-five years and enabled it to spread as far as it has. Were it to lose either of these qualities the movement would be finished. It would become either the useless ghost of a religion or a sacrilegious joke. With them it becomes something both meaningful and liberating, a way of searching and of exploring life in the company of others and oneself that is not exactly one thing or another. Neither a religion by its own definition nor a philosophy by anyone else's, Reformed Druidism represents a unique and valuable creation of the human mind, and a fascinating confusion to the study of religion.

3 This triad first appears in the Order of Common Worship as the invocation and again in nearly all the early liturgy. The Druids at Carleton have currently fallen out of the habit of actually using the old liturgy, but they still read through it for a good laugh and ponder it's many truths. See *A Reformed Druid Anthology*, Part Three, Liturgy of the Druids. Deborah Frangquist in an interview with Eric Hilleman, Carleton Archivist, October 31, 1993;pp. 450 of *A Reformed Druid Anthology*.

To be continued in the Samhain issue.



Barrows—Mounds—Celts

In materials on megalithic culture I have mentioned that people in primeval ages already known and played energy of watercourses. I have reached a finding at study of history that people of further cultures made use of that energy all the time until our era. This ensued on appreciation of barrows and mounds from the energy standpoint. Barrows are given to a connection with burial rituals though in many cases residues of dead were not founded there. The Czech archeologist Zdenek Merinsky has mentioned in his publication *The Czech Countries Since the Arrival of Slavs until the Great Moravia* that in the whole Slavonic area appeared below barrows largely firing tombs without typical urns. Better told only with sporadic residues of burned human bones scattered in earthwork, so he has supposed another sense for the barrows too. The construction of mounds was very time-consuming business and the nesting of burial residues to the arranged mounds could be pious as well as practical. The energy function of mounds can be derived from technical literature where all technologic procedures by their constructions were described. The intensified care was paid to a separation of mass from subsoil. It was very functional disposal against energy losses and can be easy experimental proved.

Martin Brennan in *The Stones of Time* has mentioned how are inset layers of grass and brown loam by layers of slate and flint. The layers of organic and inorganic materials take turns. The plenary part of this material is by the present excavations withdrawn and it is surprising to what kind of rate can be in the course of renovated work fully replaced.

Kurt W. Mark writes in *Der erste Amerikaner*: "On the open space where they wanted to build a barrow they first cut all trees and shrubs. They removed loose soil and a layer recumbent below usually covered by stony soil. On this clay flooring they scattered then one or more inches a high level of sand or diminutive grit."

Magdalena Beranova in *Slovane*: "Volcanoes--they were antique barrows of Nowgorod Slavs. They were cyclical but had abrupt walls. Inside or outside there was a circle from rocks, above all from boulders, and up was a straight plateau. In the course of construction were first lighted piles and cinders was unfolded to the place where the barrow should be located. Up to the cinders they scattered a layer of mold to which they buried either in urns or in sockets. The next layer about 20 cm was again the cinders shuffled by scurf, whereupon was piled on another part of rampart up to the high 1.5 - 3 m and this operation was repeated. The each part of rampart was covered by a sward."

Zdenek Merinsky has mentioned, "Before own filling of barrow was the terrain intended for its creation compared, leveled and was removed all growth. In the course of researches on such modified areas for an own mound are often entrapped

traces of fireplaces probably combined with purgative function when the fire was called to burn all harmful effects and also material and spiritual elements. In any case but these ceremonies did not cohere with own cremation that proceeded at another place. In a lot of cases and at many localities in so modified area we find the construction of square or oblong from limbs, logs or scantlings from various species. Till this time explored residues of these wooden formations indicate that they were not constructions to all intents and purposes and a reason of their building-up is sought in the sphere symbolic joint with burial ceremonies.” From the energy standpoint was the wood used like insulating material for separation of rampart mass from subsoil.



In Celtic habitations as well as outside were constructed tetragonal mounds long in sides rounded 50 as much as 200 meters. The similar tetragonal mound 70 x 35 meters was constructed in the embattled habitation Zavist. At its periphery was built up a triangular mainly earthen mound in the width of ground 10 meters and 9 meters high. About 20,000 tons of earth and stones were needed for the construction of this mound. In other cases were earthen mounds smaller or the area was marked by the other way. Near village Makotrasz on sixty hectares big development from Younger Stone Age archeologists uncovered a square with sides around 300 meters formed by moat and initially also by palisade. Roundels originated around from the identical period were discovered in Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia, Austria and Bavaria. There are known about sixty. These circular surfaces were demarcated by only one or more moats. The greatest roundel was found in Bohemia near Kutna Hora. It is put together out three round moats per average 90, 115 and 250 meters. The moat in average 90 meters probably encloses the energy space, two others designate energy zones. Alike designate places for what it is impossible to find reasons are situated also at other places.

Out of the standpoint from a conception of mounds it was places with a concentration of energy components--it was a surface intersected by more energy zones. The mold or the rock of surface received from them the energy and created an isolated P-charge. If the energy value of P-charge was sufficient it was enough to mark its energy space by pales or by a ditch. The ritual place was prepared for transferring the energy to people coming together. People felt there fine and gladly listened to suggestions of their spiritual leaders.

In another case when the energy value of P-charge in the concentration place of energy components was not optimal and had to be increased, it was resolved by mass enlargement of energy place--by the construction of mound. The identical result could be reached at apposition of mass to one pile. In this case would be but necessary for the meeting of people to mark more the energy space in which happen to transition of energy. The pile of earth in the center of meeting-place would be in the way as well as in the center of cathedral. The different materiality of mounds reflects about various starting energy values of the place

with concentrated energy. Places like this are many and in following era there were built labyrinths too.



Long ago there were built in the USA more than 100,000 mounds of various sizes and forms. Wisconsin mounds are of great dimensions, ramparts are built up in a form of animals and archeologists gave them the name Effigy Mounds. These mounds had probably the same function like Celts areas bounded by ramparts. With notation by energy places with symbols of animals we can meet also on the plateau Nazca.

The order of Cistercians built their monasteries in central and top parts of watercourses, where quicker running water gains larger energy values and so creates effective conditions for the transition of energy to another matter. The whole area was situated to the energy space of watercourse. Below grounds of the church was installed a water piping where was enabled to manipulate with the energy value of church by the regulated flow of water. The same regulating equipment already had some megalithic constructions. In central and northern Europe were built more than thousand of Cistercian monasteries. The Cistercians also began to build gothic cathedrals that could seat more people. Cathedrals were built in towns with heavy concentration of inhabitants and at places with fewer folks were built churches. Near cathedrals and churches was not required to regulate the energy value by water running through, they were built at energy places and amassing of energy also ensured towers--they operated like menhirs (the known effect “charge flux”). The increased energy value of churches also bears to the reality that people did not stay there the whole day and manses were placed in the vicinity. The mass energy of church was dimensioned so that during the divine service a man drew such amount of energy what prospered to his fitness. A longer stay in a strong energy environment could call up an opposite effect.

People of megalithic culture, Etruscans, Celts, Slavs and people of the Middle Ages as well as other cultures on other continents built the energy constructions that prospered to their fitness. In the 21st century our advanced civilization builds up resembling constructions too but has no idea of their effect to organisms. They are mainly dumps of ground from large constructions, piles of material from abandoned mines, tips, some large buildings, energy systems etc. Energy components of natural and civilized sources what are interactive, in a large apposition of material could induce a harmful overstrain which negative influences the human health.

The description of energy in English you can find at <http://www.pribram.cz/centrum> in Czech in my book *Nezname Energie-(Unknown Energies)* that has been published in Czech Republic by publishing house Dialog.

Miroslav Provod, centrum1@ipnet.cz or centrum11@volny.cz



The Oak Tree: Quirky Quercus

By Sam Peeples, Free-roaming Druid

I have a soft spot in my heart for the Oak tree, both because of its Celtic associations and its general usefulness to society. I had a tree house as a young boy, cradled in those mighty boughs, and could clamber easily up the branches. Many wars were fought from that platform, and many days spent reading comic books and just sleeping in the breeze while leaves rustled overhead. With that in mind, we finally come around to do the most famous of the Celtic trees. There was so much information on the Internet, it was hard to narrow down the information that I thought was appropriate. Does one really need to know what color is associated with the oak? Any way, here we go.

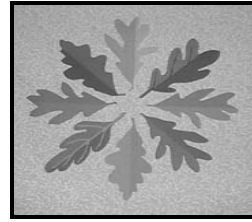
Etymology

The Anglo-Saxon root of Oak is "Ac" or "Aik" and the fruit "Aik-com," the Irish called it "daur," the Welsh "dar" or "derw;" which is cognate with Greek "drus." The technical name of the Oak is said to be derived from the Celtic "quer" (fine) and "cuez" (tree). We, of course, love to note that the term "druid" is derived from the Indo-European root of *der= oak and *wid= knowledge. Interestingly, the root for oak is also the root for the English word "door." Many deities associated with portals or doorways are thus associated with the Oak.

Physical Characteristics

Although slow in growth, some species of oak will reach 150' in height, 13' in girth and 46' in circumference (some grow much larger) and 800 years of age. There are about 80 species and hybridization is quite common, with the offspring of new species quickly adapting to new climatic conditions by interbreeding with local variants. In America, the most prominent are the White Oak (Eastern), Swamp Oak (Southern), and Burr Oak (Central). Species have adapted to Oak Savannah, Pine Forests, Appalachian Mountains, and Southern flood plain forest. The English Common Oak and Sessile Oak are rather similar to their American cousins, except they have this annoying accent and dry sense of humor. It is often a dominant canopy tree, which craves sunlight, and is useful in land reclamation on disturbed sites. It prefers elevations under 2,000 feet, but will be found as a scrub tree until 4,500 feet in altitude. It is resistant to fire, as long as there is little shade during recovery, with heavy damage in growing season killing only 60% of the trees if less than 66% of circumference is charred

(and dormant season casualties are only 20%) due to underground reproductive centers. Acorns do not survive fire at all. Nicks or scratches or stumps (under 16 inches) have been known to sprout, and sprout best when cut in dormant season.



Oak leaves are amongst the most easily identified leaves for school children; followed by maple, dandelions and (surprisingly) marijuana. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Society for Creative Anachronism lists the oak leaves and acorns as the most common heraldic plant device. Leaves emerge in Mid-March to May depending on climate. The yellow staminate flowers grow at the ends of branches. In August at the height of the summer when most other trees are wilting from the heat, the oak produces a new leaf called "Lammas shoots" thus adding new color and freshness to the tree. These new leafy shoots are golden-pink when young, turning from pale to dark green as they harden. In autumn the oak tree is at its most majestic as its leaves change color again turning from dark green to various shades of yellow, orange, russet and a pale golden brown. The leaves sometime stay on the tree until the following spring or until the new buds forming for the next year push them off.

Acorns ripen 120 days after pollination and crops tend to have peaks during their four to ten year cycles during moderately breezy summers (usually traveling less than 200 meters from the base), and begin bearing acorns usually between 50-200 years of age, but as early as 20 years. Acorns grow quickly in late July, and fall to the ground in September. Acorns do not have a dormancy period, germinating soon after falling, thus they don't store well, and last less than a year, 90% going stale after six months. A 70' tall oak may produce as many as 23,000 in a good year, but 10,000 is reasonable on a big tree or as many as 200,000 per acre, depending on April temperatures and early rains. I personally, have never attempted to count a tree's entire crop. Seeds are often dispersed the farthest by blue jays and other birds, although squirrels are often unwitting assistants. The acorns are a choice food for many species including deer, mice, squirrels, bears, boar, blue jay, pheasant, grouse, and rabbits. The leaves may be eaten in winter by deer and porcupine feed on the bark.



Practical Usage

- As timber, the particular and most valued qualities of the Oak are hardness and toughness; Box and Ebony are harder, Yew and Ash are tougher than Oak, but no timber is

possessed of both these requisites in so great a degree as the British Oak. It is easily machined, accepts finishes well, and glues into strong joints, making it an excellent choice for furniture, paneling, flooring and veneering.

- Many of the supportive beams in Cathedrals in castles use oak or yew, with specific forests linked to the church for its replacement timbers every 400 years.
- Oak has also long been used for railroad ties, fence posts, mine-timbers, caskets, shingles, cooperage, and the prime source for whiskey barrels (white oak). It is also excellent for firewood, and was once a primary source of fuel for eternal sacred fires.
- Oak bark and wood contains a great deal of tannin, which is what makes Acorns so bitter. It can be used to tan leather and other skins.
- The roots were formerly used to make hafts for daggers and knives.
- After the Oak has passed its century, it increases by less than an inch a year, but the wood matured in this leisurely fashion is practically indestructible. Edward the Confessor's shrine in Westminster Abbey is of oak that has outlasted the changes of 800 years. Logs have been dug from peat bogs, in good preservation and fit for rough building purposes that were submerged a thousand years ago. In the Severn, breakwaters are still used as casual landing-places, where piles of oak are said to have been driven by the Romans.
- *Quercus suber*, Cork Oak, is a Mediterranean variety whose spongy bark yields commercial cork. So you can use your bulletin board to encourage rain.
- An infusion of it, with a small quantity of copperas, yields a dye that was formerly used in the country to dye woolen of a purplish color, which, though not very bright, was said to be durable. The Scotch Highlanders used it to dye their yarn. Oak sawdust used also to be the principal indigenous vegetable used in dyeing fustian, and may also be used for tanning, but is much inferior to the bark for that purpose. Oak apples have also been occasionally used in dyeing as a substitute for the imported Oriental galls, but the black obtained from them is not durable.
- In Brittany, tan compressed into cakes is used as fuel. Oak-bark is employed for dyeing black, in conjunction with salts of iron. With alum, oak-bark yields a brown dye; with a salt of tin, a yellow color; with a salt of zinc, Isabelaia yellow.
- Acorns were of considerable importance formerly for feeding swine. About the end of the seventh century, special laws were made relating to the feeding of swine in woods, called pawning, or pannage. In Saxon times of famine, the peasantry was thankful for a share of this nourishing, but somewhat indigestible food. The Board of Agriculture has lately issued a pamphlet, pointing out the use as fodder, which might be made both of the Acorn and of the Horse Chestnut. The analysis of the Acorn given by the Lancet is: water, 6.3 per cent; protein, 5.2 per cent; fat, 43 per cent; carbohydrates, 45 per cent. The most important constituent of both the Acorn and the Horse Chestnut is the carbohydrate in the form of starch. Acorns contain a substantial proportion of carbohydrate and fat, and in many country districts are still collected in sacks and given to pigs, but they must also be mixed with other vegetable food to counteract their binding properties.



- After the oak bark has been used for tanning, gardeners then use it to make a decoction called "Tan." Tan is used to cover new plantings encouraging them to grow due to the warmth it generates. However care needs to be taken for it sometimes favors the growth of fungi, harmful to certain plants. Tan is also used as a cover for racetracks and circus rings, and as an adulteration of chicory and coffee. In Brittany tan compressed into cakes was used as fuel.



Ancient Oak Groves

Graves suggest that Oak Cults came to Britain by the Baltics somewhere between 1600 and 1400 BC. This places these people about 500 years before the Celts came to the Islands. Pliny mentions the Gaulish oak sanctuaries in 1st Cent CE, Strabo describes Galatian congregations in "Drunemetons," 2nd Cent Maximus says the Celts worshipped Zeus (Taranis?) in the oak, and "Dryads" were "those who delight in the oaks." Irish holy sites with "Derry" or "dara" in them are associated with oaks, such as Brigit's holy cell at Kildare. Many of these sites in the British Isles were approached with dread and reverence by local farmers until WWII. See the OBOD site for extensive discussion of some of these sites and their mythological connections. The second site of the original grove of the RDNA was the Hill of Three Oaks, a place now found on the Carleton Map, and a haven of kite-flying and Frisbee games. Modern Druids seem to prefer Oak Groves, although Hazel and Rowan are also popular.

Mythological Connections

- Oak is supposedly the most commonly lightning-struck tree, perhaps due to a rather deep root system or the ion formation on the tall branches, thus its association with Thor and Taranis.
- Mary was once worshiped as Our Lady of the Oak in Anjou, France. She later appeared to shepherd children in Portugal as Our Lady of Fatima, crowned in roses and hovering over an oak tree.

- In older days, the Middle East was more heavily forested. The oak was held sacred by ancient Hebrews. Abraham saw the angels under an oak tree. Jacob buried the idol of Shechem under an oak. The oak in Shechem made Abimelech king. Isaiah said that idols were made of oak. The angel, who gave Gideon his orders, sat under the oak of Ophra. Absalom sustained his sacred thigh injury in an oak grove at Ephraim. The biblical mother-shrine Mamre at Hebron included a sacred oak in a female-symbolic grove. According to the Bible, when Cain murdered Abel, Cain was obliged to carry the dead body of his brother for seven hundred years before Abel could be buried. To mark the burial place, Cain stuck his staff into the ground, whereupon Seven Oaks (now known as the Seven Oaks of Palestine) immediately sprang forth in a row.
- Blodeuwedd tied Llew Llaw's hair to an oak branch and made him stand with one foot on the rim of a bath and the other on the haunch of a sacred beast, in order to inflict upon him the sacred thigh injury that would allow him to be her husband, and king. When he died his soul escaped in the form of an eagle and perched in an oak tree.

The rapid oak tree,
 Before him heaven and earth quake;
 In every land his name is mine.

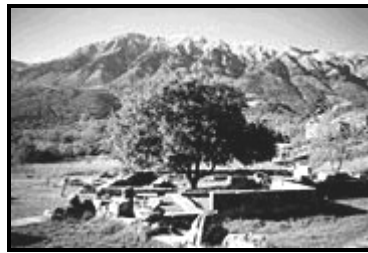
—Taliesin, The Battle of the Trees



- Thor was widely worshiped by Norse warriors but was also revered by farmers and peasants because of his capacity to create rain for the crops. Mjolnir the magical hammer was reputedly made by dwarves from the wood of a sacred oak tree, and not only represented the destructive power of the storms Thor created (the fires from heaven), but its image was used as a fertility symbol in marriages (in its connection with rain and crops) and in funerals (as a symbol of death and rebirth), and for accepting newborn children into the community (as a symbol of strength and protection). Such was he revered that the fifth day of the week Thursday (Thor's day) was named after him.
- When traveling Thor rode in a chariot made from oak drawn by two goats, Tanngnjostr (Tooth-gnasher) and Tanngrinir (Tooth-grinder), and when moving across the heavens dispensing weather, it produced the rumblings of thunder and sparks of lightening from its wheels. Thor and his followers undertook many expeditions to Jotunheim (Iceland) the land of the frost giants, and there erected

high-seated pillars of oak. These they used to hallow new ground enabling the gods to protect their people in new lands.

- Two black doves flew from Thebes in Egypt: one to Dodona and the other to Libyan Ammon in the oasis of Siwwa. They alighted on oak trees and proclaimed them oracles of Zeus, in human speech. The oracles were taken by priestesses who interpreted the sounds of the cooing of doves, the rustling of oak leaves and the clinking of brazen vessels that hung from the trees. The shrine of Zeus at Dodona, where an oak cult grew up, had oracular birds, a sacred spring, a sacred black dove and an iron basin. The black dove priestesses chewed acorns to control the oracle, as they listened to the wind in the trees for poetic inspiration. The iron basin was used as a gong to mimic the sound of thunder.
- The most famous of Zeus' interpreters was an old priestess called Pelias, who prophesied Zeus' messages from a sacred spring at the foot of a giant oak in the grove at Dodona.



An oak tree growing in the ruins of Dodona temple in Italy, where Zeus was once worshipped many centuries ago.

- Hera left Zeus after a fight. To get her back he pretended to marry the nymph Plataea, cutting down an oak tree and dressing it as a bride to make her jealous. Hera tore off the bridal veil in anger, but became reconciled to her husband when she saw what lengths he had gone to in order to win her back.
- When the baby Hermes stole Apollo's cows he disguised their tracks by covering their hooves with shoes made from the bark of a fallen oak tree. Erotic statues of Hermes were usually carved of oak.
- Erisichthion felled an oak tree sacred to Ceres that was inhabited by a nymph, drawing blood when he struck it with his ax. Ceres punished him by sending his entrails to Famine.
- Orpheus led a dance of wild oak trees down the Pierian mountains.
- Pan, son of the nymph Dryope and Faunus, son of Picus, were both hatched from the eggs of oak woodpeckers.
- The Virgins at the temple of Vesta in Rome burned fires of oak wood. The Roman Alban Holiday was the annual marriage feast of the Oak Queen, the nymph Egeria, to the Oak King of the year. The Vestal Virgins coupled with the companions of the Oak King, secretly, in a dark sacred cave, just as they did during the Saturnalia. The new Oak King was the child of the Oak Queen or of one of her vestal virgins. See the Golden Bough for more Sacred King theories.
- Ovid called the oak the Tree of Jove. White oxen were sacrificed to Jupiter as an oak god on the Alban Mount at Rome. The image of Jupiter at the Capitol in Rome was originally an oak tree. Could this have influenced Pliny's accounts to make them more understandable to the Romans, or was this merely a parallel custom?
- The oak is sacred to all thunder and lightning gods. Hercules attracted thunderstorms with sympathetic magic,

by rattling an oak club in a hollow oak, or by stirring a pool with an oak branch.

- The Titans were men who had been stretched over oaken wheels.
- Oak heroes include Ixion, Atlas, Hercules and Telamon. Hercules carried an oak club because oak provides mast. Herculean symbols include the acorn, mistletoe or loranthus, and the rock dove, which nests in oaks.
- Ancient Prussians revered sacred oak trees. The chief oak in the forest at Romove had priests who tended a perpetual fire of oak wood. This tree, draped with a cloth, was considered the dwelling place of the god. The Prussians adored it and hung images from it. There was a sacred oak tree at Hesse called the Red Jove from which omens were drawn and to which sacrifices were made. Holy oaks were preserved in Germany into modern times.



Ancient Prussians had a terrible habit of turning even the simplest things, like starting a fire, into a large-scale operation, which may be one of the reasons there are no more Prussians anymore.

- First fruits of the chase were hung on oaks in Saxony and Thuringian until the 13th century. Kirwaido, God's Mouth, ruled ancient Prussians in the name of the god. When he had become weak and sick he immolated himself atop a pile of straw and thorn bushes. The blaze was lit from the perpetual fire that burned before the holy oak tree.
- Estonians sacrificed oxen to oaks, with prayers for rain and good crops. They also annually smeared oak trees with the blood of beasts.
- Slavs sacrificed goats and bulls to Perun/ Piorun/ Pyerun/ Peron, a thunder god, in a grove with an oak tree. A perpetual fire of oak wood was kept burning before an effigy of Peroun/Perun at Novgorod, where the death penalty was imposed for allowing the fire to go out.
- The Bohemian festival of the Little Daedala was held in an ancient oak grove, with boiled meat set out for the birds. When a raven took some meat and flew into an oak tree, that tree was felled. Its wood was made into an image that they dressed as a bride and drew to the river with bridesmaids beside it. A crowd then followed it to town, dancing and piping. The image was saved for the Great Daedala, held once every 60 years, when all the images were taken in carts in solemn procession to the river Asopus and then to the top of Mt. Cathaeron, where there was a wooden altar with a pile of brushwood atop it. Sacrificial animals, the images and the altar were consumed by fire.

Magical Properties and Customs

(Caveat Magicus!)

- Pieces of lightning struck trees however would protect a house.
- Tannin is especially strong in oak bark, which is good for treating leather and its astringency for hemorrhoids.
- Many parish boundaries in Britain are still marked by an old oak tree The following is a quotation from Withers:

"That every man might keep his own possessions,

Our fathers used, in reverent processions,

With zealous prayers, and with praiseful cheere,

To walk their parish limits once a year;

And well-known marks (which sacrilegious hands

Now cut or breake) so bordered out their lands,

That every one distinctly knew his owne,

And brawles now rife were then unknowne."

- The ceremony was performed by the clergyman and his parishioners going the boundaries of the parish and choosing the most remarkable sites (oak-trees being specially selected) to read passages from the Gospels, and ask blessings for the people.

'Dearest, bury me

Under that holy oke, or Gospel Tree;

Where, though thou see'st not, thou may'st think upon

Me, when you yearly go'st Procession.'

--HERRICK

- An old proverb relating to the oak is still a form of speculation on the weather in many country districts based on when leaves emerged.

"If the Oak's before the Ash,

Then you'll only get a splash;

If the Ash before the Oak,

Then you may expect a soak."

- Oaks were believed to court the lightning flash. The English say: "Beware of an oak. It draws the stroke."
- British bastards born under an oak were exempt from censure.
- Irish churches used to be called "Dair-thech" or "oak house".
- Cornish toothaches cured by driving a nail into an oak.
- In modern magick circles, Oak is good at most any purpose.
- Gauls ate acorns to divine the future, and acorns gathered at night assist fertility.
- Welsh ensure good health by rubbing left palm on oak at mid-summer.
- In Wales, the rustling of oaks can inspire a poet.

- Remnants of old-time superstitions with regard to the oak were to be found in Wales so late as sixty years ago, when it was customary in many districts for the young men and maidens to dance and sing around the oldest oak in the village. This was called a "round dance." It took place as a rule at Easter, but Whitsuntide and Midsummer festivities were held under its branches.



King Charles famed for sleeping and hiding in oak trees, also reclaimed the throne in his spare time.

- King Charles II (mildly Scottish) started "Royal Oak Day" in May 29th to celebrate his restoration, due to the aid of a tree where he hid after a battle (coward). This displaced Beltane as the most popular maypole day in some counties. Many other people in history claimed sanctuary in the easily climbable branches.
- Oak is one of the traditional nine woods of a Beltane fire.
- Successful Roman commanders were presented with crowns of oak leaves during their victory parades, and oak leaves have continued as decorative icons of military prowess to the present day.
- Germany's put fairy haunts near the base of large oak trees, called Oakmen, who are unfriendly big-headed louts who offer food that will make you ill (usually disguised dung). Pillywiggins are pixies that live in the flowers under oaks.
- Fairy magic can be countered by turning your clothes inside out and shaking them at an oak tree.

"Turn your clokes,
For fairy folks,
Are in old oakes."

- Rain magic: Priests of Zeus dipped an oak branch into a spring on Mt. Lycaeus to make it rain by sympathetic magic. The spring water was said to send up a cloud of mist from which the rain fell. Tapping on an oak door is a charm to bring rain.
- An acorn in the pocket with preserve health and wood chips attract luck.
- Mold off of acorns assists in healing scabs.
- An oak leaf touching your heart will protect you from lies.
- Oils from pressed acorns alleviates pains in the joints.

- Oak bark when finely ground and powdered makes a remedial snuff that can be inhaled to arrest nosebleeds. It has also proved beneficial in the early stages of consumption.
- Sprinkled onto bed sheets it will help to alleviate bedsores.
- A pinch of powered oak bark mixed with honey and taken in the mornings will help and aid ladies with menstrual problems.
- Acorns should be gathered in the daylight, and leaves and wood by night. A waning moon is the correct time to harvest Oak.



- To catch a falling oak leaf will bring you luck and prosperity, and you shall suffer no colds throughout the winter.
- If someone is sick or poorly in the home, place an oak log on the fire to warm the house; it will help to "draw-off" the illness.
- If you wish to know whether you and your present beloved will marry, take two acorns, naming them under a full moon for yourself and your lover, and drop them into a crystal bowl of well water. If they stay close to one another, as though knit by a bond, you will be sure to marry, but if they float away from one another that is a sign that the bond will end.
- Knocking on an oak after bragging will protect you from divine retribution.
- The herbalist Gerard said, "that which growth on the bodies of olde Okes is preferred before the rest: in steede of this most do use that which is found under the Okes..." But rumors are that if done improperly a curse would befall any who came in contact with the item.
- East Saxon groves were dedicated to Thunor (Thor).
- In Scotland, one 19th century farmer said:

"It was believed that a sprig of the Mistletoe cut by a Hay on Allhallowmas eve, with a new dirk, and after surrounding the tree three times sunwise and pronouncing a certain spell, was a sure charm against the glamour or witchery, and an infallible guard in the day of battle. A spray, gathered in the same manner, was placed in the cradle of infants, and thought to defend them from being changed for elf-bairns by the Fairies."

Acorn Recipes

These are from THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF COUNTRY LIVING by Carla Emery, available at Amazon.com

Acorn Coffee:

Select plump, round, sweet acorns. Shell and brown in oven. Grind in a coffee mill and use as ordinary coffee. Or hull 1/2 c. small sweet acorns. Add 1/2 c. cracked wheat. Mix. Roast in your oven. Pound in a mortar. Boil with water to get your coffee. Add honey, molasses, or brown sugar to sweeten.

Acorn Meal:

Fortunately, tannin is very soluble in hot water. So, peel the acorns. Grind them up. Soak the "flour" in very hot water. The water will turn brown because of the tannin coming out. Throw away the water and repeat 4 times. Another way to do this is to line a colander with a straining cloth, put the ground acorns in, and gradually pour a gallon of water, as near boiling hot as you can manage, through. There will still be some dark chocolaty color to the paste, but after exposure to a gallon of hot water, you can be confident that enough tannin has been removed to render the acorn meal edible.

Spread the acorn paste on a baking sheet and bake at a low temperature until thoroughly dry. If it has caked, grind again, and you have your acorn flour. You can substitute acorn meal for cornmeal in any recipe, or use part acorn meal and part cornmeal, or 2/3 acorn meal and 1/3 oatmeal.

Oak Links:

Full of good lore and stories:

<http://druidry.org/obod/text/trees/oak.html>

Common Associations:

hometown.aol.com/birchfire/page18.html

Chock full of lore:

http://www.celticattic.com/olde_world/myths/oak_lore.htm

Everything you wanted to know (and more) about every species of tree in the U.S.:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/tree/>

What you wanted to know about British trees:

<http://www.british-trees.com/guide/commonoak.htm>

Royal forestry society:

<http://www.rfs.org.uk/totm/oak.htm>

Botanical Lore and greater details on British oaks:

<http://www.botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/o/oakcom01.html>

Good local lore of groves across Europe:

<http://www.indigogroup.co.uk/edge/trees.htm>

Excellent British angle on the Oak's symbolic power on British imagination:

<http://www.traditionmagazine.com/2%20King%20of%20the%20Wood.htm>

Extremely long and interesting, more so than my article. Music takes a long time to download it:

<http://www.controversial.com/Oak.htm>

Other sites:

http://www.growingnative.org.uk/oak_r.htm

<http://www.2020site.org/trees/oak.html>

<http://www.dutchie.org/Tracy/tree.html>

http://www.owlsdottir.com/elements/trees/celtic_trees.html

<http://www.treesforlife.org.uk/tfl.mythoak.html>

<http://www.silvabook.com/contents/ch3p64.html>

<http://www.angliangardener.co.uk/Lore/trees.htm>



Bardic Contest II

Winter/Spring 2002-2003

I cordially invite the reader to pass the winter doldrums away by writing poetry, stories, songs and chants. You need not submit, but I strongly urge you to pay off the karma of avoiding those forest walks, because you're afraid of freezing your tootsies off in the cold.

Last year we had 15 competitors, and despite Mairi's departure, I hope that everyone will surmount their shy ways and share their thoughts. Due to a resounding lack of competitors for judgeship, I humbly volunteer to oversee the contest. I will be as impartial as necessary.

Send them directly to me, Eric Powers, at ericpowers229@hotmail.com I am a grad student in Washington D.C., and well known as a writer of odd articles, and a member of Mike's grove, (but that won't help him if he continues to send in tripe).

Standards

1. Poems, songs, chants, short stories are accepted. About two or three will be published at www.geocities.com/mikerdna/bard2.html every two weeks starting November 1st until May 1st (inclusive). You might have to wait a while.
2. We are not responsible for lost compositions or your local weather.
3. We do not recompense the author, and the top three selections (chosen at then end by me and a dart board) will only receive slim praise and a metaphoric warm pat-on-the-back.
4. The words must be your own, but paraphrasing and spoofing is fine.
5. You may borrow pre-existing tunes (i.e. "filk" them) or send original music files with a simple tune (no vocals, perhaps, to save space) plunking out the melody.
6. All submissions are assumed to be without copyright and Internet published as Book of Songs and Poetry without profit to anyone, unless the poster indicates otherwise.
7. Overtly racist, sexist, genderist, and other nasty stuff will be nixed, but if you're clever enough to do so subvertly, congratulations.
8. No bribes under \$1000 will be accepted. We must have our principles.
9. Non-seasonal topics are accepted (you can write summer poems for December) and this is no preferred bias for humor or depressive tones.
10. There is no #10.

Update on Sudden Oak Death Disease in California

CONTRA COSTA TIMES
Posted on Thu, Sep. 05, 2002

Oak Disease Snares Redwoods, Firs

Finding marks the first time fungus has attacked conifers, raising concern about how far and fast the disease can spread
By Mike Taugher

BERKELEY - A deadly plant disease that has killed tens of thousands of oaks along the Northern California coast is now infecting the youngest of two more of California's signature trees--coastal redwoods and Douglas firs.

The findings mark the first time the fungus that causes sudden oak death has been discovered in conifers, adding to scientific uncertainty over how far the disease will ultimately spread and how dramatically it might alter the landscape of California's coastal woods and forests.



“We’re at the point where every single woody species in these forests can be considered a potential host,” said David Rizzo, a UC Davis plant pathologist who is one of two leading researchers on sudden oak death.

Rizzo, speaking at a news conference Wednesday to announce the latest findings, cautioned there is no reason to believe that the fungus is capable of killing mature redwoods or Douglas firs.

Still, the discovery of sudden oak death in redwood and Douglas fir saplings adds to a burgeoning list that now includes 17 potential carriers of the disease, including three kinds of oak, rhododendron, manzanita, bigleaf maples and buckeye.

Scientists said it is highly unusual for a plant disease to infect such a wide variety of plants, and they now say that the closest comparable plant epidemic occurred in western Australia. There, a relative of the sudden oak death fungus traveled through root zones to wipe out eucalyptus and other trees so aggressively that entire forests were converted to grasslands and scrub.



Sudden oak death is unlikely to be that dramatic, but scientists said it will be years before they can predict how the disease affects the landscape.

“It’s very difficult to say what trajectory this is going to take,” Rizzo said.

Gov. Gray Davis, saying the discovery “significantly raises the stakes,” asked President Bush for \$10 million in federal aid to help fight the plant disease.

Wednesday's announcement also triggers an immediate expansion of a federal quarantine that restricts movement of material from host plants from the area infected by sudden oak death, which now includes 12 counties.

Those counties account for 95 percent of the redwood harvested in California and 42 percent of the timber produced for California's \$3 billion timber industry.

Under the new quarantine requirements, timber companies are required to remove bark from redwood and Douglas fir logs before they can ship them out of the state. As it turns out, however, that will have little effect because most redwood and Douglas fir logs already are taken to local mills where their bark is removed.

But the quarantine also prohibits the movement of redwood bark chips across state lines. That could be a problem for the nursery industry and mills where redwood bark cannot be taken to wood-burning power plants.

“Most of them have the ability to move their bark to a cogeneration plant,” said Donn Zea, president of the California Forest Products Commission. “There are some who don't, and it will be a greater problem for them.”

Different plants have different levels of susceptibility to the disease, scientists said. In tanoaks, the disease has killed up to 90 percent of the trees in areas hardest hit by sudden oak death. Around 40 percent or 50 percent of coast live oaks have been killed in the hardest hit areas.

Meanwhile, bay laurel appears to be the Typhoid Mary of the disease, hosting high concentrations of the fungus and carrying it to other plants without dying itself.



Although scientists have been unable to kill redwood saplings with the fungus in laboratory experiments, they have found redwood shoots and saplings to be infected in several parks and forests between Santa Cruz and Sonoma counties.

On the other hand, Douglas fir trees appear more susceptible to the disease, but scientists have found infected Douglas fir trees only in a single site near Santa Rosa.

“It appears to affect Douglas firs more, but what the long-term implications are we don't know,” Rizzo said.

Rizzo and Matteo Garbelotto, a UC Berkeley plant pathologist, said they expect the sudden oak death to become more common along the Northern California coast.

“Humboldt County should be the most incredible place (for the disease, because of its cool, moist conditions) and yet

it's incredibly rare, suggesting it (could be) just a matter of time," Rizzo said.

The scientists said they have also detected additional samples of DNA this year from the sudden oak death fungus in the Sierra foothills, but they have been unable to grow laboratory cultures to prove that the disease has actually taken hold in plants there.



California Druid Candidate for Governor Update

The Orange County Register
September 14, 2002

Spitting incident could cost Copeland the Libertarian vote. The party's executive committee will meet Saturday to discuss pulling support for the gubernatorial candidate.

By John Howard

SACRAMENTO—Libertarian candidate for governor Gary Copeland of Orange County faces the wrath of his own party for spitting on a KABC radio talk show host during a heated discussion about immigrants' rights.

Copeland, confirming witnesses' accounts of the incident, said he spat on host Brian Whitman after Whitman switched off Copeland's microphone. Copeland was recounting past abuses of immigrants and suggested that Whitman supported such treatment when the host turned off the mike.

Copeland got up to leave, heard several on-air comments from Whitman, then turned and spit on him. The incident occurred Sunday evening at the KABC studios in Los Angeles.

"Since I could not say what I believed, I thought I would show what I believed," Copeland said Wednesday.

The 15-member executive committee of the California Libertarian Party plans to meet Saturday in Fremont to decide whether to rescind the party's formal support of Copeland, who lives in Trabuco Canyon. He won the party's nomination in the March primary election against a write-in candidate and was endorsed at the party's convention. The party has about 98,000 registered members in California, including 9,300 in Orange County.

Party chairman Aaron Starr said: "We were mortified when we first heard of this. It takes 10 votes of the executive committee, and we have the votes."

"Libertarians have their principles, and one of them is that you don't initiate force or advocate it. The party has to take a stand on this," Starr said.

But Copeland said the party's withdrawal of support means little. "They don't provide funding," said Copeland, 46. "I'm the candidate whatever they do."

Copeland, who owns a bio-information company, angered some Libertarian leaders earlier this year when he discussed his belief of the Druid religion in an interview with OC Weekly and had his photo taken in his Druid robes for the newspaper.

Resources

From the Read Ireland Book Review, August 24, 2002

Travellers Guide to Sacred Ireland by Cary Meehan
(Paperback; 30.00 Euro / 31.50 USD / 21.00 UK; Gothic Image Press, 712 pages)

This book is an essential companion for all those interested in Ireland's history, mythology and folklore. Ireland possesses such a vast number of ancient sites that most of them remain unknown and all but forgotten except by those who live nearby. This book offers directions to some 800 sites on the entire island of Ireland. Here are simple wells and stones that are still regarded as places of pilgrimage to the local people. Here also are sites of national importance, holy mountains, lakes and rivers created by giants and protected by fairies; ancient churches, round towers, high crosses and beautiful cathedrals built on sites held sacred for thousands of years. The author has explored these sites and reveals their secrets in historical and archaeological detail, the legends and folklore as well as the current information on earth energies relating to the sacred nature of these sites.

Read Ireland @ Phibsboro Bookshop,
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Tel: +353-1-830-9828
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www.readireland.ie

Calendar

The Fall Equinox will occur on September 22 at 9:56 p.m., Pacific Daylight Time, when once again the day equals the night. At the Equinox the Sun rises due East and sets due West. Wake up early this day and mark where the Sun comes up. At sunset go outside and mark where the Sun sets.

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