

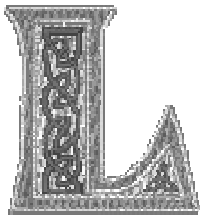
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Lughnasadh Essay:

Tales of Lugh

Reprinted from A Druid Missal-Any 1986
By Emmon Bodfish



Lughnasadh, festival of the funeral games of Lugh the Sun God, or, given by Lugh in honor of his father the Sun, depending on your tradition. It is the beginning of the Celtic harvest season, and is often called Festival of the First Fruits. Lugh, from the same root word as light and luminous, is one of the younger generations of gods in the Celtic pantheon. Like other Indo-European solar deities, his growth was rapid, being the size of a 10 year old when he was five, and gaining full manly size and skill by age 10 or 12. He is the multi-competent god, not specializing in one function, but capable in all. Even as a child he was expert at any craft or skill from his first attempt at it. As a boy of eight, according to Welsh legend, while his goddess-mother was measuring his foot for a shoe, he picked up a bow and arrow and shot a wren in the leg. This, the story goes on to explain, was the favorite demonstration shot of Celtdom's best crack archers. His mother was delighted, and Lugh went on to become a parent's dream come true. He was good at everything, polite, chivalrous, and an example of filial devotion.



Later, as a young man, when he applied for admittance to the company of the elder gods, he is quizzed by the gatekeeper as to what he can offer. "I am an excellent smith," he says. "We have Goibhne the smith," said the gatekeeper. "We have no need of that." And this continues to be the reply as he lists each one of his skills. The gods already have one of their number who is an expert in that domain. Finally, frustrated, the boy shouts, "But do you have anyone who can do them all?" The gatekeeper reflects that, no, they do not. And so Lugh is admitted.

Lugh is the patron of craftsmen, apprentices, and artists. In another tradition, he is also associated with money and the accumulation of wealth. This is his only functionalistic connection with a harvest festival. The Funeral Games of Lugh, whose title for this high day may also refer to the fact that by now the Sun is past his Zenith, and is declining again toward the South.

In the R.D.N.A. traditions, anyone who has a garden, grows anything, etc., should save their first picked produce of the summer season, and bring it or a portion of it to the Service, to be offered up in the altar fire, with hopes of prosperity in the years to come.

News of the Groves

Carleton Grove: News from Minnesota

Part I reported by Stephen Crimmins, Arch Druid

With Carleton out of session the Carleton Grove is taking a break from regular activities. The second part of the 40th Reunion was held around the solstice and, though very few of the people at the Beltane celebration were present, the second part of the reunion was also successful with a number of former Carleton students showing up for a few, or many of the activities along with two Carleton students, myself and Corwin, my fellow Archdruid. There was even a request that we sing The Ash Grove made by members of the class of '53, though we were sadly unable to comply.

Though the most of my fellow students have left, Northfield it self is certainly ripening...it's particularly nice to be out of session right now so that I can notice this... Though it means hot days and nights and mosquitoes, the summer has brought other gifts, including a ripening blackberry bush in the back yard. We started to pull the ripe ones off the other day and after a few minutes we had decided to turn our bounty into an after dinner treat of cobbler that night. We braved mosquitoes and thorns and found ourselves with a few cups of blackberries. Though not carried out with other druids, I think this was a thoroughly druidic activity.

Part II reported by Mike Scharding

It's summer time, and the June Reunion for the 40th Anniversary was a mixture of small successes amidst a baffling over-estimate of general turnout. Carleton had provided a mailing to 400 past members, and listed us prominently in the official schedule, yet only a handful showed up at any one event. The May Reunion had about 35 people over the weekend, as compared to June Reunion at 24 with a large overlap of 8 local people. I had been expecting about 50-60 people. That being said, the weather was all too sunny, 95F and not much wind. That might have had something to do with the reluctance to trudge about in the jungle-hot Arb.

Many people stopped by the lunch and dinner tables to comment on their memories of the RDNA or to inquire about Wicca. The planned movie had to be scrapped due to a missing tape. The archives rummage turned into a round-robin chat

session and photo-exchange from May Reunion. The sweatlodge went well with 6 attendees from the 1985-present period, with old-timer Brandon Schields and Alice Cascorbi leading one session. Unfortunately, the tarp and poles and broken shovel were thrown out by grounds crew two days later, after we forgot to take them down. Which was interpreted to mean it was time to get new materials.

The main service had nine attendees, and a rose was offered by one member, and Steven climbed up into an Oak tree and cut off a small twig and dropped into a large white sheet held by the members (ala Pliny the Elder). Mike also gave a severed head sacrifice [of cabbage], and then solemnly said, "Lettuce pray," and the winds politely answered. A fiery wooden wheel was rolled down the hill in the Scottish tradition to gauge the future, depending which direction it fell. The Druids were generally dissatisfied with the omens, after which Richard Shelton confided to me that you shouldn't state which side is good until it has already fallen down. I guess I still have much to learn about divination. After the service, we went to the Stone Circle for lunch, but due to the heat, it was quickly concluded and no games ensued.

The mysterious Midnight Torch-lit Tour of the Arb went well. As usual the wishing game was done on the field below the Hill of Three Oaks, wherein blindfolded members try to walk from one set of rugby goal, across the field, and through the other goal posts. Most members did loop-de-loops or amusingly wandered off into the cornfields. The toilet paper torch idea went reasonably well and was cheap amusement. If you soak the toilet paper roll on a stick in alcohol, be sure to use vodka or higher strength; but certainly keep it loosely wrapped to allow air in; and it is advised to have a light window screen wrapped around it to catch floating flaming fragments. On the way through the Arb's prairie section we were surprised to find a small herd of cows happily munching away as part of the restoration project. There hadn't been cows in the Arb since 1963, and so this was taken as a good sign of returning good times; especially for college pranksters. There were literally thousands of lightning bugs in the forest to match the star-spangled sky above us on that warm night.

There were no Vigilers and the farewell service on Sunday morning was attended only by two members. We thanked the spirits of the Arb for hosting us and asked them to look after the current students.

Akita Grove: News from Japan

Nozomi says that all is doing well and hopes to rejoin RDNA chats and society in December when she has more free time. Pat sends a new game called "Sigily" to the other RDNA members, and the full rules are listed in a separate article in this issue.

Birch Grove: News from New Hampshire

Birch Grove is meeting, when we can get a few minutes to rub together, in our beautiful woods. We are broke, not getting enough hours of work for the last three months and eating out a lot as we shuttle between the old property and the new, and stressed out. Our carpenter has almost finished cutting the remaining hemlock framing which he had to leave last Fall when the Winter came too early. He says we can start framing in a week or so. Phyllis & I are his crew. So we expect to be exhausted most of the Summer. We have a foundation, a septic system, and a well. We are still trying to sell the old house.

We love being up here. It is beautiful. The fireflies are so numerous it's mesmerizing to watch. The Milky Way stretches across the sky, the Moon sets in Maxfield Parrish blues. The cut

wood we are hauling from the hayfield to the building site smells so sweet. We are stressed, with our awareness pulled in so many different directions, and worrying about money, and yet...We have no real doubt that we will be able to finish the house, at least in some form {maybe not the fanciest finishes or appliances} and be able to celebrate Yule in it. We have worked and planned and dreamed so many years for this, it's still hard to believe we are here and doing it.

So there's our harvest. We hope our Autumn is long enough for us to enjoy what we are reaping for years and years to come. We have so much to learn & to do & to build. Being Human we often wish, of course, that we could have done all this years ago. But, like a garden, we grew in our own time & way, and this fruit, borne however late, is full & sweet.

Happy Autumn to all the Druids. We wish we could show all of this to all of you.

Bamboo Grove: News from Delaware

As Lughnasadh approaches, I have the sense that life has produced an especially bountiful harvest this year. After 6 1/2 long years, I've finally graduated college. I now have a beautiful condo to share with my significant other and assorted grove members (cat, guinea pigs, mice, snakes) and it overlooks a river, well, a river used by barges at times and industrial sites nearby, but a river nonetheless.

Lest you think my life is all berries and sunshine, there have been some thorns that have pricked my hand as I reached for the ripest fruits; the full time job I had lined up for after graduation, which I thought would be perfect for me, turned out to be something completely different from what I had imagined. I ended up leaving after a short time in order to find a different way to sustain myself financially and more importantly, to nourish my soul at the same time. So in this season of harvest, I hope to have a big plump job fall right into my gathering basket!

To me the harvest means that it is time to look for the fruits of my labor (be it physical, spiritual, etc.), to look back on a season of growth and hard work, to reflect on what could be changed for the better next time around, and a time to be thankful for what I have been given (even if it meant getting a hard lesson or two). It is a time of things winding down, a waning moon, sitting on the porch and reminiscing about the past year, a pause in the frantic rush of life, and a time to sit down to a full table filled with the bountiful harvest of the Earth Mother.

May you all have a bountiful harvest,

BrightMirage

Digitalis Grove: News from DC

Mike is looking for new grove members interested in chatting or meeting in the D.C. metro region, so write to mikerdna@hotmail.com.

In his spare time, Mike is looking for a new job with an international relations aspect, studying introductory Korean (to expand from Japanese specialty to North East Asian affairs), continuing to train a guide-dog puppy, and moving to a new house. No rest for the weary, I suppose.

As for the ever-extending deadline for ARDA 2 publication, it is sad to say, the main volume won't be ready until mid August (at best), with the Green Books and Magazines undergoing a second close review by Mike and Stacey respectively. Be sure, when the internet version does come out,

you'll hear quickly on the conference; but in the meantime be patient.

Dravidia Grove: News from Maryland

Hello all,

Weather is hot, rainy, hot, rainy, feeling like a yo-yo here. All is well except the adjustment to the local bullfrogs that have moved in under the back of the house, and the 2 billion ants that seem to be everywhere, have started my college courses and am quite busy due to work, college, family and all that.

Have spent a lot of time observing the stars when they are out doing some of the editing for the 400 and some files that everyone wants a copy of. Have added a friend to help with the editing and have added about 7 new books to my physical library, most of which are by Cunningham. When to find time to read them hmmm...

Well that is all...

Dolanimus

MOCC—Muskogee/Mother Grove: News from Oklahoma

In cooperation with the Muskogee Public Library, MOCC: Muskogee/Mother Grove's Bardic College put on a Bardic Circle in June. It was announced on Witchvox and in the Muskogee Daily Phoenix. Five people showed up, and we had selections from Cherokee mythology, 1950s-60s popular music and even a "rabbit-jumped-into-the-hole" story. For those of you unfamiliar with the "rabbit-jumped-into-the-hole" genre, it appears to be invented by Rebecca Jean Saunders and is carried on by her stepson Mark Sydney Harris. It begins with an anecdote, campfire story or urban myth type of setting, and then the protagonist is distracted by a moving color (white, brown, black, spotted or so forth). They begin following the color along by way of a merry chase that leads nowhere, then "rabbit-jumped-into-the-hole" The whole point of the story is, of course, that the rabbit jumped into the hole. We received more email than attendees at the meeting, so we assume there is enough curiosity about the Bardic Arts to warrant to warrant another Bardic circle.

In the MOCC Grove of the Three Rays, one of our online groves, there were a couple postings wondering about the lack of unity in the faith community. After posting my response, I spent some time wondering about unity in the M/M Grove. The song "Circles" says: "The greater the circle, the more the love grows..." M/M Grove learns this lesson every month. While some groves have problems with unity--even if they have lots of activities and a strong ritual base, our grove keeps getting this wonderfully eclectic bunch of folks. We freely admit that, direction wise, we may be different as day and night, but grove-wise we're definitely a community.

Being a community has meant a lot of things for us. I'd like to share a few of them with my colleagues. Not everyone can make meetings, even once in a while. Still, everyone who feels a part of it can identify with the grove. Our Rule may have a hierarchy, but we usually ignore it because our Grove has a heart. Plan for pliability. The Grove belongs to the Gods, not to a guru, and not to gossip. Like all relationships, a Grove takes work, communication and trust. Not everyone is at the same place spiritually...no two trees are identical either, but they seem to share the same dirt just fine. Be extended family for one another. Spend time on yourself. Wounds heal. Seeds happen.

Hibernation is cool. Everyone accomplishes, everyone shares, everyone benefits.

No grove is without its problems, but you don't kill a tree just because it is growing in a different direction than the rest. Wild is healthy. Diversity contributes to the survival of the whole. It is okay to have scrub brush among the oaks. In the eyes of the Old Ones, there is neither high-class nor low-class, only kinfolk. Do not let the banner touch the ground...if one leader falls, have extra leadership to help take up the slack. Everyone is capable of being a leader; they only need the opportunity to understand that fact with hands-on experience.

Br. Myrddin A Maeglin
Archdruid, MOCC: Muskogee/Mother Grove

Cylch Cerddwyr Rhwng Y Bydoedd Grove: News from Oregon

Thou art God/dess:

The Sun God Lugh has been sending one heat wave after another to us here in the Rogue Valley, and we are doing our best to stay cool! Gardening and magickal workings are only done in the early morning, dusk, or late into the evening during this season! The first Rogue Valley Druid leadership summit was held at Sybok and Ceridwen's cabin in the Cascade foothills in early July. We all agreed to disagree, and not let our differences become barriers to networking. In anticipation of their relocation to the "Redwood Empire" Sybok & Ceridwen handed over the controls to the So. Oregon Pagan Network website and discussion group to Aigeann, lead Druid of the Rogue River ProtoGrove (ADF). Future meetings were discussed.

Ceridwen and Sybok plan on a fact-finding mission to Arcata CA later in August. We'll meet with members of the Sequoia Pagan Alliance (<http://www.sequoiapagans.org>) and with old friends from the original "Jefferson Index", as well as meet, greet, and hug our friends, the sequoia sempervivons.

The Midsummer session of Druidcraft 101 is well under way. We started this time with a record breaking 120 total. With Lesson 3 just sent out, we are down to a more reasonable 86. So far no new members have joined. But, "waiting is." The next online Druidcraft 101 class begins November 2nd. To enroll, send a blank email to druidcraft101@yahoo.com or enroll online at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/druidcraft101> For more details, visit <http://www.mithrilstar.org/d101.htm>

Druidcraft 202 (A Walk Through the ARDA) began June 22. This is a revised class encompassing the NEW improved ARDA. Once again, Norm and Michael are with us sharing their unique perspectives, and they seem to be having fun doing it, although the class as a whole seems rather unfocused, therefore, most druidic! The next session begins November 30th. To enroll, send a blank email to druidcraft202@yahoo.com or enroll online at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/druidcraft202> For more details, visit <http://www.mithrilstar.org/d202.htm>

Proto-Groves are now forming in Talent OR, New York City, Connecticut and Georgia. The Mother Grove will relocate from Grants Pass OR to Arcata, CA in the Spring of 2004.

Progress is being made in Ceridwen's Astrology for Pagans classes: on July 7, the Beginning class has graduated into the Intermediate sessions, and there will be an Advanced session soon for the other Intermediate class. A new Beginning class will start in November 1, 2003, to enroll, send a blank email to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/astropagan101/>

Several students have expressed an interest in becoming "Professional Astrologers" as well. Ceridwen has been putting

together a Certification program towards this end, as well as working on a "Pagan Studies" program which will include other classes besides Astrology, such as Numerology, Tarot, Shamanic Pathworking, and many others.

If you are interested in a private consultation about your Astrological chart, please visit her home page at: <http://www.mithrilstar.org/huntersmoon/>

OMS wishes all of you in the RDNA a most bountiful first harvest for Lughnasadh, and abundant blessings throughout the season!

May you never thirst,

Ellis "Sybok" Arseneau, AD
Ceridwen Seren-Ddaear, Clerk
Cylch Cerddwyr Rhwng Y Bydoedd Grove, OMS-RDNA

Poison Oak Grove: News from California

Publisher of "A Druid Missal-Any"

The seven acres of native oak, bay, and shrub wilderness that belonged to long time member Emmon Bodfish, upon which our grove site is, has officially been preserved as open space. Emmon left the land in his will to the people of Orinda. After four years an agreement between the city, the Orinda Park and Recreation Foundation, neighbors, and the Muir Heritage Land Trust ensures that the open space remains an official wildlife sanctuary with public access. Rental income from his house and small cabin, which sit upon the land, will be used as an endowment for the park and to pay for its ongoing maintenance. Eventually, a portion of the revenue might fund parks and recreation activities citywide.

A dedication service was held on Tuesday, July 22, at the home of the president of the Orinda Highlands Association.

The community, who has known that the grove site existed since the early 80s when it was established, has graciously allowed us to meet upon the site and hold services. The only request they have made is no more fire in the altar for fire safety reasons. Your editor has worked hard to forge a relationship with the community leaders so that we might continue to use the site, and tend it as Emmon had. We continue to be grateful to the community and to Emmon's lawyer and executor Mr. Garrett Riegg for allowing us to be involved and to be able to use the land.

There is a memorial plaque now, set in a boulder covered with moss, alongside one of the hiking trails just off the driveway up to the house. On it is a poem written by Emmon in 1982 about the hill upon where his property resides, which he affectionately referred to as "Messeur Mountain."

The Mountain

From the thick grass
On the Mountain
I see this will be a
Rich year.
The last two
Were poor years.
And no amount of worry
Or effort of the will
Will make any difference.
I choose to pick and eat
This wild lettuce
And not that one.

How random
it is: (Death)
Without any connection
To the moral character
Of either herb.

NO BLAME, then
when Nature gathers me.
It is always cold
On the Mountain,
Not just this year.
Jagged scarps, forever fogged in.
Ferns in the dark gorges
Steep ravines
Unimaginably rugged...
I am afraid,
If I settle long
On Messeur Mountain,
I would not go back. [will]



Sigily, a Druidic Board Game

By Pat Haneke and Mike Scharding
(Refer to Board Graphic at End of Article)

Sigily Background:

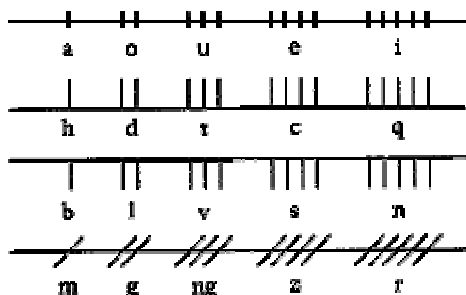
Sigily was invented by Pat Haneke and Mike Scharding in 2003. It is considered part of the Public Domain for free use. If you market it, please give half the profits to the Nature Conservancy charity. The original idea is based on 2000 year-old, but wildly popular, Korean New Year divination & gambling game called "Yut Nori". Pat suggested to Mike that it could be adapted for Druidic use and gave the basic additional rules and Celtic touches. The Druid Sigil was invented in 1963 by the Reformed Druids of North America (RDNA), and is used by ADF and Keltria also. It can be played any time of the year, but it is especially appropriate on Lughnasadh, famous for its summer horse racing and arts & crafts. There are many rules, but after playing the simple version first, the advanced rules will introduce more elements of strategy.



Game Summary:

King Connor wishes to divine the future of his new reign at Tara, the capitol of Ancient Ireland. To gauge the fates, he has called the best chariot teams from the four provinces of the kingdom to hold a year-long race around the circumference of the island of Erin, stopping at the holy groves of the kingdom; which are marked with Druid Sigils. The race will be both a

strange trip of time and distance, and death will be but a temporary lull for the duration of the game, as players will be reborn from the cauldron of heroism. The goal is to get all your chariot teams from your province (and your partner's chariots if 4 people are playing) in a complete circuit of the board. You toss Ogham sticks to determine how many moves you can advance a chariot. It is a grand adventure of both chance and strategy. Various treasure coins will be collected by landing on spaces, answering question cards, taking short cuts through the fairy land, and destroying your partner's chariots by combat. If you get rich enough, the Druids on your team can cast spells to improve your chances of winning.



Preparation:

Print out board and glue securely to wood, stiff plastic or metal background. Make four sets of four marked dimes (tape a letter of the province on them, "L", "U", "M" or "C") for the 4 chariots of each province's team. Players may number or "name" their chariots after friends or family. Collect 52 pennies for the treasure coins and place the number of pennies on each sigil (heads up, of course) as in indicated on the board (1 for plain sigils, 2 on the 8 holiday sigils, 2 each on the 8 fairy sigils, and 4 on the center sigil.) Get four short (3" to 5") pieces of half-circle rounded molding strips from a frame store or hardware store (or just use 4 Popsicle sticks), for the Ogham sticks using in counting moves. They should roughly land flat side up half the time, to be acceptable. Mark the flat sides of the sticks with the ogham letters for dog (cu), deer (fiadh), cow (tarbh) and horse (each), perhaps drawing a figure. The rounded side of the stick may be painted black. (If satisfactory sticks are unavailable, use four quarters, with face being equivalent to flat side up.) If gambling; 2 players put 26 dollars or quarters (depending on your instincts) in the pot on the side of the table to be divided at the end of the game; based on counters collected, 3 players put in 17 dollars or quarters in the pot, if 4 players, put 14 dollars or quarters in the pot. Agree on any advanced rules before the game starts!

Where to start:

The starting point of the game changes depending on the calendrical date on which it is played. The starting point is the nearest future (or current) holiday of the Druid year. Nov. 1 is Samhain, Dec 21 is Winter Solstice, Feb 1 is Oimelc, March 21 is Spring Equinox, May 1 is Beltane, June 21 is Summer Solstice, Aug 1 is Lughnasadh and Sept 21 is Fall Equinox. All chariots entering the board begin one sigil clockwise from that starting point and continue clockwise around the board.

Number of Players:

Can be played with 2-4 players, with possible allied teams in a 4-player game. If 2 players, use 4 chariots each; if 3 players use 3 chariots; if 4 players, use 3 or 4 chariots. With 4 players, using teams, both partners must finish all their chariots to win

the game. Connaught & Leinster are partners as is Ulster and Munster in 4 player games.

Ogham Sticks:

How to Throw the Ogham Sticks: The person who is going to drop the sticks (or 4 quarters) raises them about a foot off the ground, and another player makes a big circle with 2 hands. The dropping player drops the sticks through the hole or may throw them against a wall, ceiling, statue, etc. **DO NOT LET THE STICKS HIT THE BOARD!** Elaborate dropping methods are permissible, as is pleading to the gods to influence the results.

How to Count the Ogham Sticks: You generally count the number of sticks that are flat-side up. If they land on their end, remaining vertical, then they are considered flat side up.

One Stick Flat Side Up ("Aon") is one moves.

Two Sticks Flat Side Up ("Dha") is two moves.

Three Sticks Flat Side Up ("Tri") is three moves.

All four Sticks Flat Side Up ("Ceithir" or "Kay-her") is four moves.

All four Stick Round Sides Up ("Coig") is five moves. (If using 4 coins, treat the "head" as Flat Side Up.)

If you get A "Ceithir" (4) or "Coig" (5) everyone cries "Is Math Sin!" (Pron. "Smashing!"), meaning "that's great!", and it allows a player to another free throw after moving their chariot. A limit of three free consecutive free throws is in effect, after which the turn of play automatically moves to the next player.

In combat, if a tie results, the tie-breaking is determined by the highest animal on the flat side of their stick. From lowest to highest (dog, deer, cow, horse). If both tied players have the same animal highest animal, then they throw again. If using coins, throw them again.



Who Starts:

Advanced rules should be decided before the order of play is determined. Each player throws the sticks, highest goes first. Remaining players throw again to determine second, etc. Ties require players to throw again. Player 1 is Connaught, Player 2 is Ulster, Player 3 is Leinster and Player 4 is Munster. Each player sits on the appropriate side of the board. Playing on the floor is recommended, unless adequate table space permits the sticks to be thrown without hitting the board (and knocking things out of place).

General Play:

After throwing the sticks, a player may introduce one of their chariots onto the board to the number of spaces after the starting point of the game, or they may advance one chariot that is already on the board. You may not pass a turn or refuse to move, a chariot has to be moved or introduced into play. Only one chariot may move per throw of the sticks, a move cannot be divided between 2 chariots. Do not count the original holiday sigil from which the game begins as part of your move. (Example if game is played on November 1st, Samhain is the starting point. If a "tri" (3) is rolled, then a player may introduce a chariot and advance to the Winter Solstice.) When you finish

on a sigil with money on it, stack the coin under your piece, and this booty will travel with your piece. You do not collect coins from sigils that you jump over, i.e. on which you do not finish. Likewise, when you jump over another piece, they are unaffected, unless you finish your move on their sigil space.

To complete the circuit of the board, you must land on (or pass) the holiday sigil that you began from, after circling the board or taking a short cut. That chariot then leaves the game and is placed on the appropriate chariot marker on the bottom of the board. When all chariots of your team (and your partners) have finished, then you win the speed portion of the race. The game continues until there is only one player remaining on the board. The fastest team will have good health and fortune at love, while the richest player will do well in terms of business in the coming year. If playing by advanced rules with magic spells permitted, completed players may still cast spells on their turn using some of their stored treasure.

Outline of a General Turn:

1. Player has the option to declare and play one spell. Most spells can only be played at this time. Spell effects commence at this point.
2. If a player has a chariot in Fairy Land, they throw to see if fairy darts kill the chariot.
3. Player takes preparatory action needed to move a specified existing piece including: Declaration of intent to enter fairyland from entrance spaces (and tests whether they can enter). Intention to go backwards according to Home Territory Advanced Rules.
4. Throws sticks for their turn
5. Player decides if they will introduce a chariot or take action with a specified existing chariot.
6. Moves chariots, fights, etc.
7. After all moves are finished, a Druid Curse or a Stone Skin spell can be cast.
8. Says, "My turn is over" and hands the sticks to the next person.



Fighting:

Celts thrill in personal combat, and you should seek to clash with your opponent as often as possible. If your chariot (with all its accumulated booty) lands on a chariot from your own team (or your partner's), then the 2 (or more) chariots are fused piggy-back style on top of each-other until they reach the goal together (or die together) acting as one single unit, under the control of the "top" player, producing an even higher stack of combined coins that will be kept by the top player after completing the cycle. After completing a cycle, both fused players will be placed on their own province's chariot marker on the bottom of the board, but all the carried booty is split between the two players. If the "top" player had a "ceither" (4) or "coig" (5) move to reach that sigil, then they can use their free throw to continue after fusing together. Fused players do not get multiple attacks.

However, if your chariot finishes its move on an enemy's chariot, then you must fight! Both players throw the sticks. Whoever gets a higher score lives (attacker gets an extra point in attacking, putting the defender at a disadvantage, except possibly under the advanced rule of home territory advantage) and all the coins of the loser are stacked under the winner, and the loser is removed from the board, but may be re-introduced later in the game, just as they were in the beginning. Ties in fighting are broken by noting who had a "higher" animal on the flat side of the stick, but if both have matching high animals, throw the sticks again. If the winner had "ceither" (4) or "coig" (5) move to reach that sigil, then they can use their free throw to continue.

Note: On the Fairy (green) sigils, different rules apply. The fairies do not like fighting in their territory and punish those who participate. Both sides will lose all coins, which are added to the Center Sigil's treasure pot. Both players must roll to see who wins and loses. The attacker still has a +1 advantage. The loser is removed from the board as usual (to be reintroduced later possibly from the starting point), but the winner must return to the holiday sigil that they used to enter the fairy lands, and that specific chariot may not re-enter the fairy lands by that specific entrance for the remainder of the game, although that individual chariot may enter other fairy gates on other holiday sigils. Other chariots on the same team are not affected by this blockage. Fairy rules for fighting apply on Beltane, Lughnasadh, Samhain & Oimelc, but do not apply on the yellow sigils of solstices or equinoxes.

Holiday Sigils:

Solstices and Equinoxes: If you land on these solar holiday sigils, then you can throw the sticks again. If you are not playing with advanced card rules, then the first yellow sigil after the starting point should be "turned off" to slow down the start of chariots in the game. If playing by advanced rules, you need to answer a question card first and if you can answer it well, then you can throw the sticks again. Fairy rules for fighting do not apply on solstices or equinoxes.

Beltane, Lughnasadh, Samhain & Oimelc: These sigils are considered magical safe-havens and under the protection of the fairy folk, which discourages fighting (see Fairy rules for fighting). If you stop on one of these four holiday sigils, then on your next turn you can say (before your next throw of sticks), that you wish to attempt to cross the veil between this world and the next and proceed further into the fairy lands (the green sigils in the middle of the board) and attempt a short cut. To cross the veil between worlds requires a special throw before your normal throw. If you get "aon", "dha" you must throw again and move that many sigils into the fairylands. However, if your special throw had resulted in a "tri", "ceither" or "coig", none of your chariots may enter the fairy lands that round, and must throw your normal move and advance that chariot around the long way (clockwise) around the board; and a failed fairy land entrance attempt removes your right to a free throw (which would normally accompany a "ceither" or "coig").

Fairy Land:

The fairies are the shrunken remnants of the ancient deities of Ireland, and they guard their realm furiously from unwelcome mortal guests, who seek their treasure and wisdom. Certain days of the year are considered to bring the mortal world and fairy world into close contact, on which it is easy to cross-over. The Beltane, Lughnasadh, Samhain, Oimelc holiday sigils; plus the nine green sigils in the center of the board are all considered be places where the mortal and fairy world overlap,

and thus fall under fairy land rules for fighting purposes (see above).

Be warned, the deeper reaches of fairyland (the nine green sigils in the center) are especially dangerous to mortals. At the beginning of each of your turns that starts with one or more of your chariots in the deep fairy land, you must throw the sticks to determine if your chariot is overcome by fairy darts shot from the misty side of those roads. If your sticks result in a "aon" you are fatally wounded, and all the treasure under your chariot goes to the fairy jackpot in the center, and your stricken chariot returns to the holiday sigil that was used to enter the fairy lands, and may not re-enter the fairy-lands through that holiday sigil (you can try again through other holiday sigils). This is similar to losing a battle in fairylands. If you did roll a "dha", "tri", "ceither", or "coig", then you are entirely unharmed, and you may throw again and advance as normal. Each further turn with a chariot in fairyland requires a new saving throw of the sticks to defend each chariot that you have in there. Naturally, you don't want to dawdle in the fairylands, but to progress through very quickly.



You must move forward in the Fairy Lands, and once you cross over the center sigil, you have to choose which of the three exits you'll head towards. You cannot backtrack.

Wind spells do not affect players in Fairy Land. Druid Curses likewise cannot be laid in Fairy Sigils. Fireballs can hit players on Beltane, Lughnasadh, Samhain and Oimelc but cannot affect players in deeper Fairy Lands. Chariots cannot cast fireballs within Fairyland, or shoot them out of Fairy Land at players in the mortal realm outside.

Fairy Jackpot/ Sigil Coin Refill System:

A lot of money tends to build up in the center sigil from all the spells cast, confiscated wealth from fights in fairyland, and special backwards moves by home territory advantage. If a player lands on the jackpot they get all the money accumulated up to that point, and can cause the nouveaux riche player to get out of hand. If more money goes into the pot after that acquisition, the player still remaining on that spot will not collect the new money, but rather the new money will go on the side for the next person to land on the spot. The limit for the Fairy Jackpot is 7 coins. After that, all new coins that will "overflow the jackpot," and they should be distributed to empty fairy sigils radiating from the center sigil, one at a time. If all the fairy sigils have a least one coin, then the overflow should fill empty sigils on the main board beginning with the starting point

of the game and going clockwise around the board, one sigil at a time. This overflow mechanism will ensure that money will be recycled for use in later rounds of the game.

When you safely exit the fairylands, from any of the exits, you continue clockwise around the board. If the exit point happens to be the "finish line" (example, if the game starts from Samhain, and you'll probably choose to exit the fairylands on or past Samhain), then you are finished with that chariot, and then move that chariot to the "winner's platform" at the bottom of the board. Once a chariot finishes the course of the board, it may not be reintroduced into play.

End of Game:

At the end of the game, when only one player has not completed moving his chariots around the board and on to the winner's platform, then play will cease and all players count all their treasure. The first player or (team of partners) to finish his team of 4 chariots gets 2/3 of the remaining treasure still unclaimed on the board, and the remaining third of the unclaimed coins is distributed among the losers in order of game play, one at a time. Coins under chariots still on the board still belong to the uncompleted player for the purpose of counting. Each coin gets one dollar or quarter that was bet at the beginning of the game.

**** * * * *

Advanced Optional Rules

After the basics of the game are mastered, players may wish to add more rules to spice up the game even further and at more elements of strategy and excitement. The addition of some or all advanced rules should be agreed upon before the order of players is determined.

Random Gambling:

After mastering the basics of the game, you may wish to gamble on individual throws or fights. General rules of which can be worked out by those betting, using player's personal money. This has no affect on game play, but can be a fun addition, both sides must agree for a bet to go into effect.

Solstice & Equinox Question Cards:

Before the beginning of the game, before teams are selected, 12-16 index cards are divided among the players. Each player secretly (i.e. not even telling a partner) writes a question on the card, that is not impossible, but reasonably challenging, of a druidic nature. Then (without being read) the cards are shuffled and placed by the sides of the board. When someone lands on a solstice or equinox sigil, they draw a card, if they can reasonably answer the question, they will get a free throw of the sticks, and they rip up the old card. If the cards run out, then the players automatically get a free throw of the sticks from that point onwards. If they rolled a "ceither" or "coig" to reach the Solstice/Equinox, and answered the question card correctly, they do not get 2 free throws (but if they answer the question wrongly, they lose ALL free throws, and it becomes the next player's turn).



Home Territory Advantage Rule:

Each of the players has a territorial quadrant of the board between Beltane, Oimelc, Lughnasadh and Samhain that matches their team's provincial name. In that area, they are very familiar with the terrain and backwoods trails. All of their chariots beginning on a sigil there move an additional space.

If they have a chariot on one of those 5 sigils in their home territory, they may announce (BEFORE they throw the sticks) that they wish to move that chariot backwards on that turn. That backward jumping chariot loses one coin, which goes in the Fairy Jackpot in the Center Sigil, and the exact result of the Ogham sticks is then used to go backwards (they don't get an additional bonus space, which is only for forward moves). If they go backwards with a "ceither", and are still in their home territory than may announce to go backwards again (before throwing their free throw), otherwise if they have moved backwards out of their territory, they must resume clock-wise rotation on further moves of that chariot. If a player uses backwards moves to go past the starting point, they DO NOT WIN by then advancing past the starting point; they must make a full circuit or take a short cut, just like other players.

Two changes to fighting rules, is that in their home territory, that player has a +1 in attacking or defending, and the other player has no advantage in attacking or defending. Also if a partner lands on your chariot while in your territory, the piece with the home territory advantage goes ON TOP. Naturally, this rule should be agreed on before the provinces are allotted at the beginning of the game, as it will drastically affect the game.



Magic Rules:

Each chariot has three riders; a driver, a warrior and a druid. There are eight different possible spells whose inclusion may be individually approved before the game starts. A spell is generally cast before the sticks are thrown on your turn. To cast a spell requires you to sacrifice a few coins or "heads", which will then go into the fairy jackpot in the center sigil. Only one spell can be cast before each turn to throw sticks. Four spells require coins under one specific chariot; four spells can be cast using coins drawn collectively from several chariots of a province (including ones that have already gone to the winner's platform).

* Four Specific Chariot Spells *

1. **Druid Curse:** By sacrificing 2 coins under a specific chariot, a player can permeate that particular sigil under the chariot with a deadly curse for the remainder of the game. It may be cast before throwing the sticks on their turn, or, after their turn (but certainly before the next player throws their sticks). Only 1 Druid curse, by any player, per territory (Ulster,

Leinster, Munster or Connaught) is permitted to avoid an impassable mine field from developing. Beltane, Lughnasadh, Oimelc and Samhain sigils cannot be cursed. The 2 sacrificed coins are placed in the Fairy Jackpot in the Center Sigil. A special marker is placed on that sigil (such as a nickel) to mark the cursed spot. Any future chariots (including the one that cast that spell) that lands again on that cursed sigil, will die. All the wealth of that cursed chariot will go to the Fairy Jackpot in the Center Sigil, and the cursed chariot dies and goes off the board; but may be reintroduced again later.

2. **Fireball:** Before throwing sticks on your turn, you can sacrifice 2 coins from a single chariot. You can then fling a fireball up to two sigils in front or behind that chariot (even if the defender is on a Beltane, Oimelc, Lughnasadh or Samhain sigil; without fairy land fighting rules; but fireballs cannot affect people in deep Fairyland in the center). The defending chariot must throw sticks to determine if they take damage. If they roll a "aon" or "dha" the defender dies and is removed from the board, if "tri" there is no damage and the fireball dissipates, if "ceither" or "coig" is thrown then the spell is reversed onto the original caster, who must now throw sticks to determine their own fate (and this may continue to ping-pong back and forth). Whoever's chariot is killed by the fireball is removed from the board, but their treasure under the chariot remains on that sigil on the board, slightly roasted.

3. **Free Turn:** A single chariot may sacrifice 4 coins under it, before throwing sticks, to ensure that it will get a free turn after the sticks are thrown. If they subsequently get a "ceither" or "coig", they do not get 2 free turns.

4. **Stone Skin:** After your turn, but before the next player throws sticks, you may sacrifice 2 coins under your chariot to endow your chariot with invulnerability until it advances again. No one can land on that sigil of a stationary stonesskinned chariot without automatically losing combat. Once the player moves that chariot again, the spell is broken. Stoneskin also protects against Fireball.

* Four Collective Chariot Spells *

5. **Remove Curse:** Must be cast before throwing sticks on a player's own turn. Two coins from any or all of a player's chariots may be sacrificed to remove one Druid Curse from anywhere on the board.

6. **Clock-wise Winds of Speed:** Before throwing the sticks on their turn, a player may sacrifice 3 coins under 1 or more of their chariots (including completed chariots) from one province (e.g. 3 coins from 2 Ulster chariots), which will cause a fierce wind to blow for three complete rounds of play. All the chariots on his team and his partner's team will move one extra square when advancing, but other rolls (fighting and fairy entrance) are unaffected. Multiple spells of this nature may overlap and are cumulative. Backwards moves under home territory rules for anyone are impossible under the duration of this spell.

7. **Counter-Clock-Wise Winds of Sloth:** Must cast the spell before throwing the sticks on their turn. Cost: 3 coins. Similar to Winds of Speed, but all the chariots on your opponents' teams will move one space slower for three rounds of play. Backward moves under home territory rules for all players get a +1 on their moves. These spells are also cumulative.

8. **Freeze:** Before throwing sticks on your turn, you can sacrifice 3 coins from one (or more) of your chariots. This will force another player of your choice to lose a turn, unless that player sacrifices 5 coins to block the spell. A player cannot be frozen more than twice in a row. A frozen player will be passed on their turn of play, and may not cast spells, but may still defend normally against physical attacks on the board.

Stacked Chariots = Super Chariots Rule:

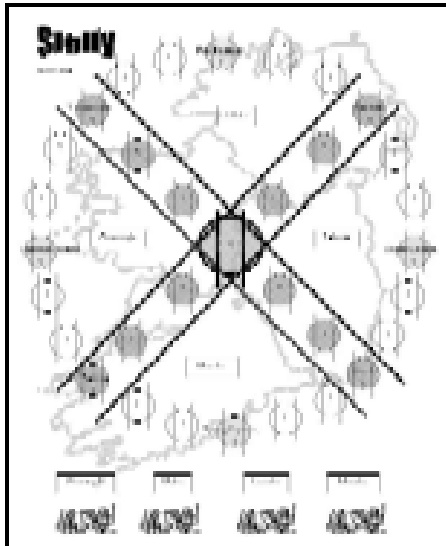
If the players agree with this rule, then stacked chariots in combat get one attack per chariot. E.g. If two chariots (from one or more partners) lands on an opponent's chariot, then the attacker gets two attacks and the defender gets one defending attack. The defender's roll is higher than both attackers, both attackers die. If one of the stacked chariots dies, it is removed but the remaining chariot may continue the attack. It is possible for one attacker and one defender to die in such situation. If two groups of stacked players meet in combat, then each attacking and defending chariots should be paired up for individual combats, until only one remains.

Territorial Starts:

Players may wish to begin on different starting points, especially if playing with the home territorial advantage advanced rules. If so, Ulster starts on Lughnasadh, Leinster on Samhain, Munster on Oimeic, Connaught on Beltane.

These are just the tentative rules that need to be worked out by some playgroups. I would appreciate any suggestions for an official set of rules to be published in the Samhain 2003 edition. Send those comments to mikerdna@hotmail.com

Click on image for large, clear, easy-to-read, full 8"x11" window with the game board ready for a color printout! Takes about 2 minutes to download.



<http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/sigily.jpg>



The Missionary Im-Position

By Mike Scharding, DC Grove

Naturally, I speak here only for my own opinion. As you may have been following in the RDNA talk conference, my thoughts have been turning to those young MIB who knock on my door to share the Good News with me. I'd like to share some thoughts based on my own limited experience in door-to-door sales of the mundane variety, although I have little academic marketing experience. However, perhaps some of the parallels may be interesting.

I should start off by admitting that I actually admire the dedication and sense of inquiry that most door-to-door missionaries possess. I am also a somewhat reluctant spiritual missionary myself, as is shown by the fact that most of you are reading this essay because of my outreach internet efforts, providing access to RDNA historical material. My strategy is however naturally passive. I make suggestions but do not insist on them to the exclusion of others. I am just there. People come, sometimes stay, and often leave soon. Like a tree, I passively watch their passage and shade them while they are near by. I occasionally invite a friend to attend. Many pass under my limbs without even knowing a Druid is present. This I feel is a rather common RDNA method of grove dynamics, it may not be the most organizationally effective way, but it is the most satisfactory method I have found. It is one way, yea, one way among many.

Now, if I was a Treant, like in the Tolkien movie, I could pull out my roots and walk about lobbing boulders about and being a noisy nuisance. And in certain circumstances, I might contemplate such action. Others make this a matter of course, and we see them at our doors every month or two, because we have a large Mormon barn in our neighborhood, so we tend to get the lazy ones who are not willing to travel far. It pains my cynical post-modernist heart to credit them, but most of those to whom I talk to are actually rather nice, wholesome people with more community spirit that my hermitic nature can muster up. But there is something rather unsettling about the whole door-to-door thing, and I'm not sure that they are aware of it. Occasionally, you'll get the hard sell from some door to door friends, that reminds me of a past part-time job that I once had, I think you'll see the parallels and be forewarned.

Nature Abhors a Vacuum Salesperson

In 1995, I answered one of those "Big money for part-time fun work" posters, and got sucked up into a scam-filled operation selling well-known expensive vacuum cleaners in Minnesota. I learned a lot about the way you set up a campaign with many applications to missionary activities. First you divide up a town among the employees, distribute invitations for a free "no-obligation" comparison test via newspapers or coupons, with free complimentary present and literature. When someone bites at the bait, you send out the young commission-paid worker to the address at the appointed time, with promises of how well they will be awarded on the often slim chance of

successful sales (10% conversion rate is considered high, with a 10% cut of the overpriced good). Other times you just knock on doors up and down the neighborhood taking advantage of your sad tired visage to entice compassionate people to invite you in.



What happens next is you give your spiel, and start doing good deeds (such as vacuuming like a madman around the house) and showing off the features of a professional cleaner. Now most people, (and few will admit it), don't mind a little grime in the corners, dust on the lampshade, or dirt under the sofa-cushions. People get by with a simple system of their own, but feel a bit guilty about it, and this is your entry point. You, as a seller, by your zealous example associate your vacuum cleaner with a virtuous clean lifestyle. Mites and dust are a natural part of life, and for most of us they actually build-up our immunological defenses against real parasites; but if given a choice in life, people would like to live in aseptically clean environment, free of grossness. The odds are, even if they buy your brand of cleaner, that they wouldn't put that much more effort into cleaning, but they COULD if they wanted to.

This is called "overbuying" and the car and computer salesmen ply this trick just as often as door-to-door salesmen. The customer is also acquiring "membership" or association with great clean people, who like mountains, are more often admired from afar or bypassed, rather than climbed and imitated. Certainly, some will actually read your cleaning suggestions book and may actually follow the instruction manual you provide; but similar results could probably be had by diligently using any other cheaper vacuum cleaner.

Cleanliness is like unto Godliness

Mark Twain once said, "A cynic knows the price of everything but not its worth." Every salesman must truly believe in the product that they are selling. You must study the other brands of vacuum cleaners only so far as to know their weaknesses, to be able to denigrate them, and then select tests that you know are going to show those faults. Few people are prepared to defend their own cleaners to a well-prepared offense that they are not expecting. The salesman makes it a matter of faith that your own product's deficiencies are more than matched by its strengths; and the cleaner must naturally be taken as a whole item. I spent 30 minutes being instructed in the cleverness of its foaming carpet cleaner head. All types of methods of agitating the cleaning liquid were attempted before the inventor realized that a simple cheap cloth mesh over the end would foam-up the liquid. When explaining this to the people, they begin to associate a few clever features of the cleaner to the rest of the whole contraption, which may indeed be pretty standard fare.

Now the vacuum cleaner sales pitch would start by discussing how much it cost to attain this marvelous product, for which a newly invented need was now apparent. For those of

you interested, this \$900 vacuum cleaner really only cost \$250 to produce, and were sold to the local head agent for \$300. The salesman would naturally calm down the customer and "call his boss" to cut a deal, say to \$750, which was still too much. Eventually you barter down to a reasonable \$500 in regular payments. They get a slightly sup-ed up cleaner, and probably put on a list of "easy marks" for other high-pressure sales agents. You and your boss split the profits. My idealism got the better of me, as did low sales performance, and I left soon afterwards.



What to do with Door Knockers

I know that most missionaries perform their actions as a matter of testing the strength of their faith, a sign of compassion to the benighted followers of the wrong faith, and to follow the instructions of their superiors, and these I tolerate and a few I admire. A few are witless and naïve people with but a few scraps of scripture to cover their nakedness, and I try not to scare them in their delicate condition. For some, their sense of self-worth is painfully dependent on getting others to follow their own pathway, and I feel sorry for these. Indeed I generally feel that those who come to my door may well indeed be the gods in disguise and I feel obligated to assist them in some fashion, even salesmen and missionaries. However, others are belligerently bigoted and seek to stamp out anything that disagrees with their vision, and these I abhor.

I suspect that many of these groups are outward oriented, sometimes in a pyramid scheme, with all the spiritual profits rising organizationally to the founder. It is true that perhaps some form of spiritual community is better than none, but I like to think that the ones that I choose are better, than the ones that choose me; assuming there is free will, of course. Most people, I believe, tend to belong to a faith that operates nearby out of convenience more than avid support of their "small print" of social policies and theological beliefs outlined by their inner circle of organizers. I have always wondered why they don't apply this strong energy into improving the members that are already part of their community? Some groups even seem to exist only to recruit more members. The Mormons are so desperate for growth, as to actually convert the already deceased ancestors of current members, and as a result, they have one of the most massive genealogical collections in the world, as my parents found out in their own family research. Quite likely, several of your own ancestors have been converted in this manner already! Thus much good occasionally does appear to result indirectly from these activities.

There appears to be a few common responses in the Neo-Pagan and Druid community towards these wandering doorknockers. Some choose the "duck and cover" maneuver and refuse to answer the door, which is avoiding the whole issue. There a few (like me) who politely listen and refuse to respond either way, giving neither support nor denial to their cause, basically taking up their time to save some other unknown resident the experience. The most popular and funny, but probably rarely performed, are the "shock and awe" responses of overwhelming these people from narrow backgrounds with lavish displays of "see how weird and unsettling my lifestyle is! Oooga booga!"

However, if you think you can surprise them with your Druidness, your mirthful days may be numbered. I recently came across a book, in which I read a 92 page point-by-point book of a series by Zondervan Guides to Cults and Religious Movement that teach how to witness to Pagans. It is called Goddess Worship, Witchcraft and Neo-Paganism. (ISBN 0-310-48881-8 \$6.00) If you want to go head to head against the toughest bible-thumper, I recommend you read it to see what arguments are coming. It was an interesting applying logical methods to sell rather non-sensical fantastical spiritual myths. It is another of those circular argumentative systems that once you accept one point, you are locked into a series of semi-logical faith-based points of belief. Maddening as I found it, it provides intriguing insights into the whole process.

A nice counterpoint is to realize that world views are a dollar a dozen, and I'd recommend reviewing the following two books: The Truth About Neo-Paganism written by one-time RDNA member Anodea Judith (of Chakra fame). ISBN 1-56718-567-3 which is \$3 at 60 pages. Another book is Pagans and the Law: Understand Your Rights which is a good handbook to simple legal questions that many Pagans should know, if you get flak for your religious beliefs. I'll hopefully be reviewing this book in a future issue.

In conclusion, I believe that the best preparation for dealing with the missionary is to follow the Druidic path of asking yourself the hardest questions ahead of time, to know what you really believe; and find out what areas of your spiritual life can be met with community involvement, psychiatry, lifestyle modifications and simple greater awareness. After you've done that you should be able to explain the satisfactory nature of your beliefs and perhaps give them a little useful insight to take back with them.



The Soul of Juliana Spring

By Irony Sade
Copyright November 2000

Here we bring you the third installment of a young lady who sells her soul to a Druid to become the best harper in the world, against the wishes of her father:

Chapter Eight

With no further prelude, Samhain was upon us. The displaced pair stayed on to wait out the weekend traffic and tie up some last loose ends. The celebration was at my house that year, in the woods out back. I invited my guests to join if they wished. Juliana begged off, pleading illness, leaving me once more in the kitchen. Baked pies, breads, and squashes; mulled wine, cider, and mead helped to distract me from her troubles. Sam came down after a bit to help me cook.

"What is Samhain, exactly?" He asked as we sat amid the smells and bubbling pots, a pile of apples and peelings between us.

I swallowed a crisp of red skin and reached for a Macintosh.

"Samhain is the Druidic New Year. The harvest is in, the god is dead, the goddess is going into mourning until she gives birth to him anew on the Winter Solstice, December 21st."

I flicked some seeds onto the table and shot Sam a hidden look. He was still listening.

"It is a time when we remember all the people and things we have lost that year. Friends who died, lives that changed, parts of ourselves that we choose to lay to rest. It is a time when spirits of the dead come half way back to earth. Some people believe that messages can be passed between them and the living, tonight." I paused. He waited.

"It is also the beginning of the New Year, and we remember that there is birth in all death, life in all change. It is a time to recall that things move on, however bleak or dismal the threat of winter seems." Sam was staring at me, the knife idle in his hands.

"What are you going to do?" He asked.

"Sit around a fire and talk, mostly. Sing, remember, tell stories." I waved a peeled apple. "Eat good food."

The right corner of his mouth twitched upwards.

"No devil worship?"

"Fraid not. Sorry."



His grin became a full smile. I smiled as well.

"You are a good listener, Sam. Thank you."

We piled in the last slices of fruit, added the final dusting of spices and lemon, then pinched down the sage sprinkled crust. The first batch of pies was ready to be pulled from the oven.

"Those do look good. I think I may join you."

"We would be honored."

Chapter Nine

That night I watched the flames, listening to the stories of loss, grief, and healing. Some of those who came remembered Sam from Beltain, half a year before, and they welcomed him quietly. Samhain is a much more subdued holiday, deeper than the festival of spring, and less wild. You could say that the one celebrates Life, the other Death, but that is only half true. Sex and Sacrifice are closer; Spring and Autumn. In the one, the world is leaping back to life, winter is vanquished at last, and all of nature pours forth its joy in reproduction and song. In the other we see the dark half of the year beginning. Winter is real, the leaves are down, and the god has given himself in sacrifice that the world might continue on without him. They are Beltain and Samhain. They may be irreducible. I sat between the old year and the new, and wondered what would become of us all.



A few people did actually burn letters to the dead. One man declared his life in the closet was over. A woman said good-bye to her father, killed in a car wreck eight years before. Food was passed, eaten, enjoyed. Sam said nothing, but his eyes burned, and I saw that he understood.

The stories continued. My mind was worn out by other peoples' troubles. I stared vacantly into the fire, content to merely listen. One lady sang of the Fairie Courts riding and the rescue of Tam Llyn from Elfland's Queen. The song seemed to take shape in the coals as I dozed, the great host passing, Tam with the star upon his brow, Margaret waiting, waiting, in her circle of holy water, the soul searing beauty of the Queen and her riders. I saw faces amidst that flickering host. One was a tall woman with eyes like the sunset and a face like Juliana might wear in another twenty years. She smiled, reaching out a long hand to brush my cheek; and then there was only the cold night wind, and smoke stinging tears from my old, tired eyes.

Chapter Ten

The morning they left I gave Juliana a new harp. The black cherry pillar gleamed like plaited hair in the low sunlight of my library. The knotted maple soundboard whorled, swirls and ripples of grain on grain, eddies of foam on a long white shore.

"She is strung with wires," I cautioned, as I watched Juliana's fingers quiver. "They ring differently than gut or nylon strings. You will have to learn to finger all over again."

"But where did it come from?" Juliana breathed.

"She is my harp, Lorelia--and older than you are too, I might add, so show some respect!" I smiled. The harp whispered, my voice resonating in her sound box. It sounded like a chuckle.

"You are a better player than I, Miss Spring. I think she would rather live with you."

Her sandy haired lover was grinning. Juliana threw her arms around me and squealed.

Chapter Eleven

The next day my phone rang, early. I answered. For a long moment there was nothing. Then came an indrawn hiss.

"Thrice damned Druid. I know who you are. Let me speak to my daughter."

"Good morning to you too, Mr. Raskin. That was a nasty way to start a conversation."

"You are a Devil worshipping hell spawn. Why should I be polite to you? Your soul will rot in Lucifer's bowels till the day when God dissolves you both."

"The Devil is a Christian figment, Mr. Raskin. You would know more about him than I."

"You are corrupting my daughter, leading her astray from the church and her family, encouraging her in that damned music and distracting her from God's will. Let me speak to her."

"Who is to say God did not give her that passion, those dreams, the gift she has for music?"

"Don't play games with me. Where is my daughter?"

"She is already gone. You have driven her away from both of us."

"Where is she?"

"I am sorry to say that is none of your business. If she chose not to tell you herself, then I am not about to."

"Tell me where she is! I'll kill you, Druid!"

"'Vengeance is mine,' saith the Lord.' You are not He, Russell Raskin. I am perfectly willing to be judged by God. Try anything yourself and I will see you in court."

There came a long drawn hiss of air forced between teeth.

"You thrice damned Druid. I'll see you in Hell."

"Only if you are there. Good night, Russell."

I broke the connection before he could curse me again. Leaves swirled past my windows in their endless autumnal Totentanz. I stood and watched them, breathing very slowly.

To Be Continued...



Calendar

Lughnasadh will be at as 3:25 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time, Thursday, August 7th, 2003. Poison Oak Grove will hold its Lughnasadh celebration on August 3, at 4 p.m.

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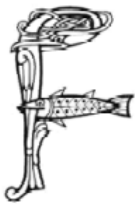
A Druid Missal-Any
Fall Equinox Y.R. XLI
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Glencoe in the autumn.

Fall Equinox Essay:
Michaelmas and Struans

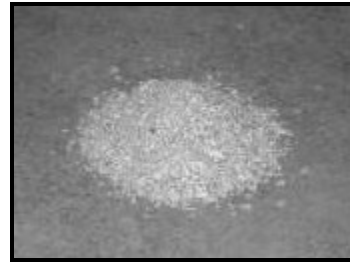
By Stacey Weinberger



underway.

all Equinox. A minor High Day in the Druid calendar, there is no evidence of a specific day or ritual being celebrated in Celtic tradition. However there was some evidence that the tribal communities involved themselves with ceremony that reflected itself in the process of the year that insured their survival: the Harvest. By the time of the Equinox the harvest is fully underway.

The harvest has become associated with the archangel Michael and Michaelmas, said to be the most pagan feasts of the Christian calendar, in Celtic countries. Michael is the Christian saint most often associated with Lugh. Early Christian missionaries co-opted the image of Michael as warrior with flaming sword conquering Lucifer for Lugh Lamfhada (of the long arm) as this image might have suggested to Celtic minds similarity to Lugh in his role as protector and defender with his spear victorious over the Fomorians. Lugh is associated with the sea. His foster father was the sea-god Manannan mac Lir. In Normandy St. Michael is the patron of mariners perhaps another co-option. Lugh was said to have invented horse-racing and that sport was a main feature of Lughnasadh celebrations in Ireland. The Highland image of Michael is of the saint pictured on a winged horse. He is also the patron saint of horses and horsemen, and there was also horse-racing, as well as the appropriation of horses, on his feast day, another link between Lugh and Michael. That Michael became associated with the harvest is no coincidence. In Scotland Lughnasadh is celebrated on St. Michael's Day or Michaelmas, which takes place on September 29.



On Michaelmas eve the women of the village baked a special bannock called the "struan Micheil." It was made from all the cereals grown on the farm during the year. This struan represented the fruits of the field (note that Lughnasadh is also known as the festival of first fruits). Oats, barley, and rye were the only cereals grown in the Scottish Isles. These were fanned on the floor, ground, and their flour used in equal parts in the struan. The struan contained a peck of flour and was baked on "uinicinn," a lambs-skin. The flour was moistened with sheep's milk, the sheep being deemed the most sacred animal. It was for this purpose that the sheep were retained in milk till Michaelmas (since Oimele), after which they were allowed to remain in the pastures and hills and run dry. The struan was baked by the eldest daughter of the family. As the struan gained consistency in firing, it was covered on both sides with three successive layers of batter of cream, eggs, and butter. Various ingredients were added into the small struans, such as cranberries, bilberries, brambleberries, caraway seeds, and wild honey. There was quite a bit of ceremony surrounding the baking of the Michaelmas struan. According to Alexander Carmichael in his collection of hymns and incantations, the Carmina Gadelica:



"Many cautions are given to her who is making the struan to take exceptional care of it. Ills and evils innumerable would befall herself and her house should any mishap occur to the struan. Should it break before being fired, it betokens ill to the girl baking it; if after being fired and before being used, to the household. Were the struan flag (baking stone) to fall and the struan with it, the omen is full of evil augury to the family. A broken struan is not used. The 'fallaid,' dry meal remaining on the baking board after the struan is made, is put into a 'mogan,' footless stocking, and dusted over the flocks on the following day; being the Day of Michael; to bring them 'piseach agus pailteas agus pronnachd,' progeny and plenty and prosperity, and to ward them from them 'suileachd agus ealtraidh agus dosgaidh,' evil-eye, mischance, and murrain. Occasionally the 'fallaid' is preserved for a year and a day before being used."

On the morning of the Feast of Michael all go to early mass, taking their struans with them to church to be blessed by the priest, who urges them to praise Michael for the bounty of grain and wool, the fruits of the field and of the flocks. This is

very reminiscent of Lughnasadh, celebrating the bounty of the harvest.

Here is a basic bannock recipe that can be used as a basis for making your own "struan Micheil."

2 cups plus 2 tablespoons oatmeal
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
Salt

1 ounce butter, melted

Approximately 6 tablespoons water (substitute here with sheep's or goat's milk for the struan Micheil)

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Combine 2 cups of the oatmeal with the baking soda and a pinch of salt. Add the melted butter and the sheep's milk, a tablespoon at a time, until you have a stiff but pliable dough.

Spread the remaining 2 tablespoons of oatmeal on a pastry board and roll out the dough to approximately 1/8-inch thickness. Using a wine glass, cut the dough into 3-inch rounds.

Back the rounds on a greased baking sheet for 15 minutes, or until they begin to turn a golden brown color. Turn off the heat and leave them on the oven with the door open for 5 more minutes.

Allow to cool and store in an airtight container. Makes approximately 12.



News of the Groves

Carleton Grove: News from Minnesota

Carleton is out of session until the 15th of September however that hasn't stopped news from accruing. Co-AD Corwin Troost has gone into exile in Japan for the fall. We're sure that he'll bring back news from the paleo-pagans that Mec (Ed. note: Mike Scharding) keeps telling us about. Meanwhile AD Stephen Crimmins has been having a druidic time at his summer job in the Carleton archives where he has been reorganizing the International Druid Archives and is working on updating Mec's out of date Index to the Archives. He is also preparing hopefully for the fall term and getting ready to stop sheep straying from the flock of new students heading towards the Arb. We'll see how it turns out in the next issue of the Missal-Any.

—Stephen, Arch Druid

News of the Groves in Japan

The Shikoku Grove and Akita Grove have not sent in their updates this summer, but they have been receiving very strange weather, according to the newspapers. Japan has experienced one of its coolest and wettest summers in history, which has led many experts to predict serious shortfalls in rice and other vegetable harvests throughout Japan (between 10-35% below average), and ruining the tourist trade in mountain retreats and beach-front communities. There were three prefectures, however, that were predicted to have a normal crop; Akita, Tokushima and Okinawa. The first prefectures happen to have RDNA groves, and Okinawa is an island so far to the south that it

doesn't really matter. So whatever you are doing out there in Japan, keep it up, and share it with the rest of the country!

P.S. Those of you who would like to work for a year or two in a traditional pagan village of Japan assisting in English instruction in junior high schools at a generous salary starting next July; contact mikerdna@hotmail.com for info on how to work on the JET Program.

Amber Oak Grove: News from Toronto, Canada

Membership: Four. Location: Greater Toronto area of Ontario.

The grove's main focus is on the myths of the Celts and applying them to our lives. We are a simple and open group of people who work together for the betterment of self and the earth. Many of us come from extensive Wiccan background and as such our work is influenced by our past associations.

We have a zero tolerance policy for the use of drugs and alcohol within our circle when we meet and an age restriction of 19 years or older. We, in the interest of group safety, screen all possible members before information is given.

The Hidden Wood Grove: News from Pennsylvania

We have been real busy the past couple of months. My son came down with Transverse Myelitis. He was in the hospital for a few weeks and is now home. He is able to start to move his feet and a little bit of his legs.

Otherwise we are looking forward to the Fall and the changing of the leaves and cooler weather. The apple cider festival will be coming soon (all that good apple cider and butter).

May your gods go with you,

Paul

www.angelfire.com/realm3/hiddenwood

Bamboo Grove: News from Delaware

I never got around to thanking everyone for the "Bard of the Reform XLI" award (or at least, I don't remember doing so in the newsletter)...so, um, thanks! Although it may have been bestowed with the wry sense of humor characteristic of the RDNA, I do appreciate the honor.

Well, as they say, there is a time for everything. And right now, my life is going through transitions within transitions. One relationship is waning as another blossoms, and there is a lot of sadness and happiness mixed into one confusing bundle of emotions.

The saddest transition of all is that the Grove will probably split up as one relationship ends...the two guinea pigs, Panda and Rygel, will probably go with my "ex," as will the two corn snakes, Onyx and Loki. The Arch-Druid is looking droopy and rather pale green-as opposed to the vibrant, bright green a healthy bamboo plant should have--so if anyone knows of any good advice for bamboo care, please pass it along.

Otherwise, the Grove is rather quiet for now. It is a time for reflection, and "getting my bearings."

Blessings to all,

BrightMirage (Bard of the Reform XLI)

Hemlock Splinters Grove: News from New York

Things at Hemlock Splinters are quiet due to the employment of the Arch Druid Irony and the loss to college of his right hand and younger brother Omen. Most of our efforts this summer have gone into the preparation of a wire harp and flute CD hopefully to be released later this year. The leaves are turning here in the north.

Winter is coming.

Digitalis Grove: News from the District of Columbia

Well, summer's over and my Korean classes are continuing. I spent many weeks perfecting the rules of Sigily from the last issue (there were not significant changes) and trying to research other Celtic games in an article that will follow in this issue. The potential grove members that I had expected, never materialized, so my Grove is operating on a minimum capacity still, as I casually spend the next three months in a job search and recover from a recent house-move of about one block to the south. ARDA 2 is still on my friend's computer being beautified for printing and release, which he says will come quickly this fall; meanwhile I sit on a pile of checks here.

Grove of Ynys Avallach: News from Georgia

I have gathered a group together here and we have been meeting for some time. We have concluded that we would like to form an RDNA grove. So far we have four people, a rough set of rules and offices and the like, we're sticking with just Nature is Good as tenets go, to minimize points of contention, and that covers the short list.

Oh year, we have tentatively name ourselves The Grove of Ynys Avallach and I have been thrown into the position of leading this quartet. We wanted to use something that expressed our mixed Irish/Welsh heritage and love of the Myths of Avalon and Camelot. I was hunting around and found a reference where the word Avallach had also been used as the name of Morgan Lafey's father, in Welsh myths, but still would be translated as Isle of Apples, so it worked out pretty good and we went with it.

Our little grove has a yahoo group set up at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/YnysAvallach/?yguid=155554261> and a webpage that is under construction, but I do not have the link for it right now.

Missionary Order of the Celtic Cross (MOCC)--Muskogee/Mother Grove:

News from Oklahoma

On Aug. 3 we had a Grove picnic at Elliott Park in Muskogee, OK. All was not sunshine and roses. One participant got sick from the heat, and while we were off at the picnic, one of our members' homes was broken into. Even so, before the problems started, a good time was had by all.

The following Saturday, Sis. Chenretzig was named and entered into the grade of Novice Ovate. She's the first one to be named in the M/M Grove since 1998 or 99. We are glad to have her among us.

The Liturgy Manual 2003 is almost completed. It looks like it may top out at about 100 pages. It combines not only things that were generated by the M/M Grove, but also the Sharayan Mystery School Tradition and a smidgen of RDNA

(like the Original Basic Tenets of Reformed Druidism). New to it is a timeline of the MOCC that demonstrate how a non-Carleton-affiliated Reformed Druidism just kind of sprouted up in the countryside of Northeastern Oklahoma, then how it kind of grew up wild. Attention is given to the difference in language used by the MOCC and other branches of Reformed Druidism, and the question of whether the MOCC is of RDNA or DCotSG descent.

Questions about the Liturgy Manual 2003 can be answered by emailing me at:

myrddinamaeglin@yahoo.com

We're looking forward to Samhain 2003. The MOCC turns 20 years old on that night. Rumors of the sacred event are preceding it, and it has taken on the name "A Really big kick ass party." Libations may be expected.

Rowan-Oak Grove, MOCC: News from Oklahoma

Rowan-Oak Grove, the Tulsa area grove for MOCC, is pleased to announce our listing at:

<http://www.witchvox.com/> and our online community sites: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rowan-oakgrovetbrsc> and: <http://www.msn.com/groups/creativepaganimity>

Our membership both on and offline is growing, not counting the three grove cats we have a grove community in Tulsa of about 35 at the moment including several clergy members and secular officers as well as novices in training and general congregation. Our online community has representatives from other groves in the area and members as far away as Nova Scotia, Canada, with about 15 members total.

Lughnasadh was our 25th annual picnic rite and it was a blast. we will be celebrating in September both full moon and Mabon. as usual these will be open meetings. 101 lessons are being held both online and at my home or area parks when the weather is nice.

Those wishing more information may contact m.s. white raven arch-druidess at: whiteraven_dragonwolf@yahoo.com

Brightest blessings and may the sea, sand, and sky always be your guides!

Cattle Protogrove: News from Texas

Hey all,

Just wanted to tell you all that the Cattle Protogrove has temporarily (the next 4 years or so, not including summers) moved to Commerce, Texas. Commerce is a small town outside Dallas and is surrounded by lots of open land, it's great.

As soon as I got here and I finished unpacking, I pulled out my travel altar and chalice and several book I tend to read over and over (not-so-classic titles such as: A Druid's Herbal, Tree Medicine Tree Magic, and Year of Moon Season of Trees). I walked to the spot in my closet area (which is actually very open to everyone) that I had deliberately not put anything on. It's just above all my drawers and has a mirror behind it. I twisted the peg-like legs into place on the bottom of my altar and placed it in the back, with the chalice to the front and off to the side a little. A small oak box I have (which I keep herbs in it cause it looks cool) was placed on the adjoining side. First thing off I ran out to the nearest liquor store and bought the smallest bottle of Jameson's they had (for usage in my dry dorm BAH!) As soon as I walked back into my room I had... oh a good three people staring at my little makeshift altar area, my roommate included. Being the good Christians they are, they first accused me of being a Satanist. Of course this was simply not true, I told

them I was a Druid and had to explain this to them, which I am not very good at I must say, and gave them Mike's site as a reference for all the questions I could not answer. Before long I think just about everyone in this college of 9,000 students knew that I was a Druid.

Well, I suppose now there will be no awkward moments when I am trying to explain to someone what religion I am. Anyways, I'll be sure to keep you updated further.

Walk in peace,

Joss Badger

Cylch Cerddwyr Rhwng Y Bydoedd Grove, Order of the Mithril Star: News from Oregon

Greetings,

Well, it's official: as of tonight (Sept. 4), The Order of the Mithril Star is now a schism (or satellite) group of the Reform and the American Druid Family. This decision was not made lightly, but with much deliberation and divination and soul-searching by myself and the MG, taking all recent factors into account. What this means:

We have remodeled the OMS website to reflect our new direction. It actually resembles the pre-RDNA state, with a few exceptions, and some dressing up. We have taken nearly all mention of RDNA out, except for a couple places where it is appropriate. We have made sure that any new people visiting the website will NOT automatically assume that the OMS speaks for anyone but itself as an independent entity and an "autonomous collective" of Reformed Druidry.

We will also be adding a "dedication" page that will list ALL of our sources of inspiration, of which the Reform is a significant one -hopefully in the next week or so. This is a work-in-progress, and by no means finished...

We are now an independent entity, yet still consider ourselves a part of the Reform and the American Druid Family--it's like we moved out of the house, but we are still in the neighborhood...

We realized that any closer relationship (as we were originally planning) is now a fruitless endeavor, as there are irreconcilable differences between ourselves and the very outspoken schism of the "N"-RDNA...and we are not really sure exactly what the "silent majority" actually feels, so...

Although the group entity of OMS has done this, this does not mean that as individuals we can't still remain connected with the friends we have made in the RDNA. There are some really nice people in here that some of us would like to stay in touch with...

Those of you OMSers who choose to leave all this behind are free to leave the RDNAtalk group, and those who wish to remain here may do so, that decision is up to you as individuals. There is no more group requirement of any kind for you to be involved herein.

As we have been told many times by the Reform, we are perfectly capable of standing on our own as an independent entity, and I think we will all come out of this stronger and more grounded than before.

Blessings,
Ceridwen /\

Hazelnut Mother Grove: News from California

The Abbott's Inn School of Magick is open once again!

The Abbott's Inn School of Magick was founded 33 years ago in Berkeley, CA. I founded the school because I felt there was a need to teach the magickal arts in a kindly, playful, and gentle way. Whenever possible I would engender humor and whimsy into the subject matter. The classes were more like workshops, where the students were encouraged to on occasion to teach the teacher. Sometimes there would be at least 10 people in the class. We would go around the room and each person would tell the group why they were interested in a certain arcane subject. There were a lot of people who would want one-on-one classes. As time went on there would be other teachers teaching other classes. The reason why it was called the Abbott's Inn School of Magick was because sometimes the classes would have no time limit and those present would stay until the wee hours. Thus the concept of an inn.

Today in 2003 I would like to teach in much the same style and encourage others to join the Inn and teach as well. Today there is a need to learn the magickal arts, to use this knowledge for practical purpose. I hope that I and others can help you in this regard.

Signed,

Stephen W. Abbott, AD
Dean and Founder of the Abbott's Inn School of Magick

Duir de Danu Grove: News from California

What the coming harvest means to me is the ready availability of a lot of my favorite fruits and vegetables. Corn on the cob, that all-American staple is available for a good price. Nectarines and plums are in abundance. My friend's tomatoes are ripening, and she usually brings over a few for me to savor.

Tegwedd ShadowDancer
Chronicler and Co-ArchDruid of Duir de Danu Grove, the South Bay Grove

Poison Oak Grove: News from California Publisher of "A Druid Missal-Any"

It has been quite active at Poison Oak Grove this past season.

The water situation is being worked out with the tenant of the main house so the driplines to the sacred trees up at the Grove site will stay running when the weather is hot. And soon we will have our own direct hookup to the top of the hill.

Undaunted by the demise of the White Alders we have purchased a new Himalayan Birch to go in the East direction of the Grove trees. The Himalayan Birch was recommended by the nursery as better able to cope with hot weather than the European Birch, which needs cold. I asked the nursery about planting in threes, which Emmon had said he was told to do with Birches, and he had never heard of that. I do know that since Birches like water, three would require more than one (which is perhaps why the Alders didn't thrive, in addition of having a particularly hot summer last without the benefit of a continuous drip until they had gotten established). Keeping that in mind I regretfully broke with the tradition of three Birches that goes back to '81 for the well-being of the tree.

With Poison Oak Grove now being over a year old now it seemed like it might be a good time for grove elections. It has been RDNA tradition to hold elections on between the Fall Equinox and Samhain Eve with the new officers assuming their roles Samhain day.

Poison Oak grove is looking at the upholding the long tradition of holding a Samhain vigil this year. We would hold a regular service with the last waters of life of the year at or just before sun down, vigil at the cabin with food and drink, good conversation, and cheer, and at sun up hold the Samhain service when the Third Orders exchange their red ribbons of office for white, and the waters in the chalice would be replaced the waters of sleep. This would take place, deities willing, the night of Nov. 1.

Famous Irish harper Patrick Ball is playing at the Freight and Salvage in Berkeley, and will be telling Samhain stories the same night as our vigil, Nov. 1. We might get industrious (overly zealous?) and do the sundown service, go to the concert, and come back for the vigil.

Grove member Stacey was invited to the board meeting between the Orinda Park and Rec Foundation and the Muir Heritage Land Trust, the organizations who now oversee the land that the Grove site is on. It took place on Emmon's property and they hiked the perimeter along Miner Road, to the Orinda Highlands, back down the hill

Member Stacey has also acquired a new Druid Mobile and requests Enbarr, magical steed of the Manannan mac Lir, to keep it running well and smoothly, and to watch over and keep it safe from harm.



Gandalf's Reflections On The Arts Zymurgical

By Gandalf, Amon Sul Grove

The Discovery of Beer

There are those who claim that one of the main reasons that our distant ancestors gave up their nomadic ways and began the practice of agriculture was to assure a supply of grain for the making of beer. Think of a time, eons ago, when our ancestors had learned to use fire and to make storage containers (tightly woven baskets or clay pots). Wild grain had been gathered and stored. Water was added to soften the grain. For some reason the grain was not eaten and sat for a day or two. Someone realized that the grain might be saved if it was dried over the fire. After being roasted, the grain had an odd sweetness to it. When it was needed, the grain was once again put in to soak. Someone drank the water and/or ate the uncooked grain and it was good. Grain gathering became a major activity. Someone discovered the cause and effect relationship between covering grain with dirt and new plants sprouting. One of the great things about it was that after you made the beer, you still got to eat the grain. What a concept! Why wander around taking your chances on where your next meal might come from when you could get drunk and eat well at the same time?

The Basics

Yeast are fungi that break down sugar molecules and by doing so produce alcohol and carbon dioxide. When one works out the physics involved, this molecular division process results in a release of energy that is used for metabolic and reproductive processes. Try this link if you are interested in the underlying science:

<http://www.yeastgenome.org/VL-yeast.html>.

Home Brewing and Vinting

First and foremost, this is not rocket science. There is an abundance of websites that are dedicated to beer and winemaking. Most stores that sell equipment and supplies also stock books. You can probably get everything you need for thirty to forty dollars. If you stay with it, you'll recoup your investment in a short time. You will know exactly what's in your libation. There's also a genuine satisfaction in drinking something that you made yourself.

Equipment Basics

If you have access to a major metropolitan area, there is almost certainly a location that carries everything that you need. If you are really out in the boonies, everything is also available through the Internet. The following is a list of essentials:

Primary fermenter. I used a plastic garbage can for a long time. A few years ago, the place that I get my supplies started stocking Ale Pales which are essentially seven gallon plastic buckets that have a spigot near the bottom. They have a bail, which makes them easy to pick up, and the spigot facilitates racking off (draining).

Secondary fermenter. Not an absolute necessity, but helpful for many projects. Usually a five gallon bottled water jug. The use of a secondary fermenter requires an airlock, because alcohol turns to vinegar with prolonged exposure to air. Since secondary fermentation still involves the production of carbon dioxide, any air in the container is forced out and the carbon dioxide protects whatever you are making. Using secondary fermenters produces a clearer product that has less sediment. Beer that is made using a secondary fermenter may take longer to build up a head.

Hydrometer. A hydrometer measures the specific gravity (SG) of the mix and indicates the potential strength of the end product (potential being the term because all of the sugar is not processed by the yeast). Bottling beer at the correct SG is essential to having the right amount of carbonation. A word of caution: malt liquors (beers with over six percent alcohol) are often a recipe for a hangover. I usually make mine at four-five percent. In making wine, knowing the potential strength is important for predicting whether or not the wine will be dry or sweet. The maximum alcohol content that can be achieved through natural process is eighteen percent, but that's under ideal conditions. Taking the SG to a potential of eleven will usually produce a relatively dry wine. Anything over fourteen may taste syrupy.

Beer containers. The best containers are rubber-stoppered bottles such as those used for Grolsch and Kulmbacher. That way, if you bottle with a little too much residual sugar, the excess gas forces its way through the gasket. No exploding bottles or beer that spews out when opened. It's also an excuse to drink some good imported beer. I originally used quart bottles. However, since there's usually some sediment in homemade beer, sometimes the second pint was a little murky. Twelve ounce returnable bottles can also be used (no twist offs). Bottles, caps, and capping tools are sold by most suppliers. The basic math for a five-gallon batch is 20 quarts, 40 pints, or about 53 twelve-ouncers. A few years ago, I inherited an old refrigerator.

For about two hundred dollars I was able to convert it to a draft beer dispenser. The home brew goes into five gallon Cornelius kegs (their primary use is for fountain soft drinks).

Wine containers. Once again, this is an excuse to indulge oneself. If you frequent your local pub, the bartender may also be able to help you out. Especially if you have demonstrated that Tipping is not a city in China. If my math is correct on the metric conversion, you'll need around twenty-seven bottles for a five-gallon batch. There are different types of wine bottles and some work better than others, primarily due to sedimentation issues. The best bottles are the tapered ones that many German wines come in. Sherry bottles do not work as well because the air has a tendency to bubble as it goes in stirring up the sediment.

Boiling pot. Unless you are really into beer making, you'll be using malt extract, which needs to be boiled. When making wine, an alternative to using sulfites (which I am allergic to) is to bring the wort (your mix before fermentation) to a low boil.

Stirring stick. During initial processing and primary fermentation, everything needs to be stirred a lot except for the last few days before racking off. I use a wooden spoon and dowel.

Funnel. Get one that has a groove in the side of the spout so that air can come out as liquid goes in.



Supplies

Beer. As mentioned, making beer usually involves malt extracts. Malt comes in a variety of shades from pale to dark and can be hopped or unhopped. What one uses is a matter of personal preference. Please note that even the light varieties will usually produce a beer that is darker than the American Pales that most of us are used to. The cans of malt sold by suppliers are intended to make five gallons. This is a manageable quantity that can be consumed while still fresh. The malt extract, by itself, will not have enough sugar to make the beer strong enough. I recommend powdered malt for the booster but in a pinch I've used regular sugar. Incidentally, most modern beers contain two drugs: alcohol and hops. The hops are one of the reasons that beer makes you sleepy. Hops are also a preservative (probably their original use). Since home brews are not pasteurized, the hop can be essential in extending their shelf life. If your supplier is well stocked, there will be a wide variety of hop available. Some brewers are very picky about their hops, but I've never found much difference between the different varieties. Hop is easy to grow but it needs to be trellised. The hop that I raise is a

generic variety that I ordered from the Gurney Seed Company. Email me around March if you would like a root cutting.

Wine. I've never used the concentrates, so I cannot speak to results from their use. I've been fortunate enough to have access to real grapes (usually Concord but I have used whites). If there's a farmer's market in your community, check with the sellers there. Wine can also be made from a variety of other ingredients. There are those who scoff at non-grape wines, but I am not one of them. I have peaches, pears, apples, strawberries, and kiwi planted but they're not producing yet. A bushel of grapes is sufficient for five gallons of wine, but unless you have wine grapes, there won't be enough natural sugar to get the job done. I typically use plain old beet sugar for wine. Grapes are easy to grow but take time and need a lot of room. We've been at our current location four years and the first vines that I planted (Concords) are just starting to produce. If you know someone who grows grapes, the prunings can be used to start new vines. Once you get started, you have an unlimited supply. For the last two years I have been buying wine grape cuttings from this location: <http://www.bunchgrapes.com/>. I should be able to start propagating my own wine grapes by next year. I may even have a few Concord cuttings that I won't need. Email me around March if you're interested. Mead requires using some honey for sugar content and taste. I have blackberry mead in a secondary fermenter as I write this. Mead can also be flavored with spices such as ginger, cinnamon, and nutmeg.

Yeast. Once again, there are many varieties available and some individuals are very passionate about what they use. Since the basic process is the same, I'm pretty indifferent. I typically use a top fermenting beer yeast. Incidentally, it's easy to keep a starter bottle. Just stir up the sediment, fill a pint with it, and keep it the refrigerator until it's needed. Miscellaneous. If making wine, you'll need corks and a corking tool. There are many flavorings, clarifiers, chemicals, etc. available. I usually forego them.

The Process for Beer

Boil the malt using about three gallons of water. The boil takes about 45 minutes. If using unhopped malt, add hops at the beginning and end of the boil. Let the wort cool; add malt or sugar to obtain desired SG. Add yeast. If using a top fermenter, in about two days, the mix will develop a corona. Use a stainless steel strainer to skim off the solids in the corona. In about a week, the SG will drop to bottling level (.10). If not using a secondary fermenter, rack off and bottle. If using a secondary fermenter, rack off and airlock. Let settle for about a month or so, rack off, add priming sugar to get mix to .10 SG, and then bottle. Store in a cool, dark place if you have one. In 2-4 weeks sufficient additional fermentation should have occurred to build up a head. Getting the head right is one of the most difficult parts of beer making. If you're using resealable containers, you can reprime if you don't get enough carbonation. If you're using screw caps and you get too much carbonation, you can loosen them and let them sit for an hour or two and then reseal. Rubber stoppered bottles will bleed off any excess carbonation. Since there will always be some sediment, pouring requires a steady hand and practice. When making beer, it may be a good idea to not start out trying to make Pales. I've found Ambers and Darks to be much easier.

The Process for Wine

I usually puree the grapes in a blender and then heat them to a low boil. Let cool. Some water can be added but you have to be careful or the end product will lack color and body. Add yeast. In a few days the solids will begin to float to the top. Skim off with a stainless steel strainer. If you are not using a secondary fermenter, bottle at around 10 SG. If using a secondary

fermenter, rack off and airlock. Two months in the secondary fermenter is usually sufficient but I've left it longer. Wine should be stored on its side so that the corks stay moist. To deal with sedimentation, shake the bottle and let it sit upright for a few weeks before opening. Uncork and rack off the entire bottle. Once again, a steady hand is beneficial.



Potcheen

Whiskey is essentially distilled beer and brandy is distilled wine. Unfortunately, in the United States, making your own spirits, even for personal use, is illegal. However, I'm getting tired of boiling the hell out green beans in a water bath canner to get them properly sterilized when half as much time in a pressure canner would get the job done. Pressure canners are also easily converted to pot stills. Be sure to spend the extra money for stainless steel. A friend of mine had an aluminum pot still and although it wasn't a poisoning hazard, his product had a definite metallic taste. Do some research before building a still. Lead poisoning is a serious hazard. I no longer drink moonshine unless I personally know the person who made it. Two drinks and you can go blind or die!

The Internet has a lot of designs for making refractory stills and some suppliers are selling them for around three hundred dollars. Refractory stills are much more efficient, producing an output that is up to 170 proof with a single run. Pot stills usually require triple distillation to achieve a final product that is around 120 proof (hence the designation XXX). My understanding is that there is pending litigation about the legality of selling refractory stills. My suggestion is, if you buy one, do so in person and pay cash. Otherwise there will be a shipping or credit card trail that might be used to track you down if the federal government and liquor lobby prevail. It is relatively easy and inexpensive to get a permit to make ethanol for fuel, which then makes your still legal. However, once again, you are on record as owning a still. The law requires that anything removed from the premises must be denatured (rendered undrinkable).

Cleaning Up

In general, zymurgy is a messy process. Many books and articles on home fermentation dwell at great length on all kinds of sterilization activities that involve chemical compounds of questionable utility. Zymurgy had been around for millennia before microbes were ever identified. In over thirty years of practice, the only time I ever lost anything was when I used some ground fall apples to make applejack and I didn't boil the mixture first. That was clearly an error on my part. Soap should

be used sparingly. Small traces of soap can throw off the taste. Soap also impairs the ability of beer to make a good head. I use lots of hot water and paper towels.

Epilogue

The preceding is an overview. Zymurgy is a learn-by-doing art. Almost everyone who practices it has the occasional batch that doesn't taste very good. However, considering some of the commercial products that I've had, even my failures have their counterparts in the marketplace. Even if the taste is a little off, the alcohol is still there. Just remember that, with modern techniques, what you will be drinking is almost certainly much better than some of the stuff that the ancients had.



A Druidic Vision of the World

A Commentary Series

Order of Whiteoak (Ord na Darach Gile)

Contact: Whiteoak@ziplip.com

Web: <http://www.geocities.com/ordnadarachgile>

There has been much debate in regards to White Oak's letter entitled "The Reinstatement of Truth" in the Druid community. Some have said that we, as Druids, should stick to spiritual matters and stay out of politics. The ancient Druids were however advisors to the kings. I feel that this letter is keeping in that tradition. --Ed.

* * *

In the spirit of Service and Involvement that is so much a part of contemporary Druidism, members of The Order of the Whiteoak have decided to honor a request to present our vision of the World as it Could Be in response to our understanding of the World as it Is. We have chosen to do so by addressing some of what we consider the most pressing national and international concerns of our time in a series of letters that express our understanding of the problems that exist and our vision for possible solutions. The following is the first of these letters.

August 27, 2003

The Reinstatement of Truth

One of the prime tenets of all disciplines of contemporary Druidism is the honor of the virtue of Truth. By our estimation, the viability of any governing body or political administration must be judged by the degree of trust that may be placed with the public servants in power. We live in a time of governance by an administration that places this sacred tenet in low esteem, and has betrayed the trust of the public it serves in numerous ways.

In the highest military and civil branches of our government, there has been the deliberate creation of an atmosphere that encourages only the reporting of information that supports the political agendas of the administration in power. Concurrently, information and intelligence that runs counter to that agenda has been ignored, obfuscated, and buried under the excuse of national security. Lies, fictions and exaggerations have been promoted and widely distributed to encourage warfare in Iraq, then excused as error or as a justifiable means to the administration's political ends.

The consideration of Truth in the decision making process is valued only when it supports the political goals of this administration and its few international allies. To our sorrow, we observe this lack of honor for the Truth becoming an acceptable habit practiced not only by those who hold power but by those who seek it, and as an example set by of our leadership, becoming more prevalent in all areas of our national public life. This lack of appropriate ethical behavior is evidenced not only in the promotion of the ongoing war in Iraq, but in the more general "War on Terrorism", and in policy building in the areas of civil rights, education, the rebuilding of the economy, and the protection and stewardship of national and world natural resources and ecological concerns. A brief list of insults to the ideal of Truth by this administration includes but is not limited to:

The deliberate use of fraudulent documents presented publicly by the President, notably in the State of the Union address, to gather public support for the war in Iraq...

Gross exaggerations, inaccuracies and misleading statements presented to the United Nations as fact in the United States' case for a legitimate war to overthrow the government of Saddam Hussein...

The administration's continued assertion of unprovable and unlikely connections between Hussein and Al Qaida...

The administration's attempts to circumvent the Constitution with the Patriot Act and the proposed Patriot Act II in an effort to convince the public that giving up our most precious civil rights would make us somehow safer...

This administration's refusal to release information about meetings concerning the establishment of a national energy policy where representatives of corporations such as Enron and Halliburton were present as consultants...

In spite of overwhelming scientific evidence of the damage still being caused to the environment by ecologically unsound business practices of major corporations, this administration still ignores the public interest in favor of increased profits for corporate cronies...

The use of the slogan "leave no child behind" as a description of a desperately underfunded and gutted education program that is instead leaving so many children behind...

Our vision of the world that could and should be includes a return to the understanding that as servants of the electorate, the powers that be are accountable for Truth in all facets of governance. With the clear understanding that the intelligence community must keep some state secrets secure, we envision an ethic in force that demands Truth in the use and gathering of this secure information. We envision an ethic in force that makes Truth an absolute imperative in the public administration of our laws and processes. We envision a world in which the ability to determine and act on and in Truth is a prime factor in deciding who will be elected to serve. We envision a world in which Truth is not used by the governing bodies only when it is convenient, and where lies are not used for expedience in place of the Truth.

While it is still True that in our form of government the authority to govern is still subject to the will of the People, our

vision of the world as it could be includes higher involvement and an assumption of responsibility for our national fate by the governed. The Order of Whiteoak members join with all the other voices that call for accountability from our current administration on these breaches of the ethic of Truth.

As contemporary followers of the Druid Path, we function in a society where Druids are no longer institutional advisors to those in the highest seats of power. We are therefore obliged to make our voices heard as individuals and from the combined voices of our Order to help fulfill our ethic of Service to Truth. We stand not only with other followers of our discipline, but also with those who are issuing this demand from other faiths, as Truth is held as a prime tenet of all faiths.

We refer you to one of our honored wisdoms from the ancient Triads of Ireland that resonates with the Truth in all faiths:

"Three ruins of a tribe: a lying chief, a false judge, a priest fond of refusing." --- The Triads of Ireland, 96.

The Order of Whiteoak

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Mystifying Celtic Board Games

By Mike Scharding, DC Grove

It appears that the Celts played many types of board games before the advent of Cards and Chess in the 2nd Millennium from the Middle East via the Caliphate. However, as usual, they never bothered to write down the rules for posterity. As a result when boards and tantalizingly incomplete folklore references were uncovered, no modern archaeologist has been able to very clearly explain which named game went with which board or rules. Where experts disagree, the rest of us can throw in our own guesses; and a result is a confusion of websites with contradictory rules for games of the same name. I'll try to give you the web-sites, possible rules and variations and then let you figure out your own satisfactory method of play.

One school of thought claims that all games of chance (drawing lots, spinning wheels, dice, dominoes, etc.) are derived from forms of divination by the common masses, and that some boards were designed to keep track of the score from these rolls. Another branch of board games were an imitation of deciding hunting strategies in the dirt, replication of real battles or children's playground fights; such as chess, checkers, fox and geese, tafl, and the Celtic board games in this article. There may well have been some mystical elements, or divine intentions that could be derived from the outcome of the games. Disputes could be settled over board games, rather than resorting to arms.

Hnefatafl

This is not strictly a Celtic game, but one introduced from the various Scandinavian invasions from the 5th century onwards, and likely spread throughout the British Isles. It soon died out with the advent of chess as a strategy game of choice for nobility and the rise of mercenary armies instead of brotherhood bands, and the rules are also a bit hazy, but have passably been reassembled in the 20th century, although some may be actual new creations unlike the original. Many of the following Celtic board set-ups are sometimes postulated to be variants of Tafl, so we might as well explain its rules first.

There are different sized boards, and different distribution of pieces, but the generally theory is that there is a "king" in the center, with a few bodyguards around him, and about twice as many enemies lined up at the edge of the board. The king's strategy is to escape to the edge (or corner of the board for an extra challenge). The enemy's strategy is to capture the king. Both sides proceed by alternate turns. Captures are made by either side by moving two of their pieces such that they are on directly opposite sides of their opponent's piece (not diagonally), which is then removed from the board. I call this "squeezing" or "pinching" them. All pieces move like rooks in chess and can move horizontally or vertically, as many spaces as they wish, so long as no one is in the way. There are many variations that try to limit the inherent advantage of the king slipping through the net of the enemy to freedom.



Possible rule additions:

Only the king can occupy the center or the corner spaces. King must be captured on all four sides.

The enemy cannot occupy both squares adjacent to a corner at the same time (diagonally one square away is fine, I think).

A piece can be "squeezed" against a corner square or the center square by a single piece on the opposite side. A player may move into and rest on a space between two of the pieces of the opponent, without dying, in effect, requiring the surrounding opponent to move away and then back to effect the capture.

The king and his defenders cannot enter the original squares held by the defenders at the beginning of the game.

A 22 page illustrated historical treaties of the Tafl family, its origins, and variants on huge and small boards is available at: <http://user.tninet.se/~jgd996c/hnefatafl/hnefatafl.html>

Full page Tafl variant board to experiment with. <http://www.dregate.org/tafl.pdf>

Another Tafl 11 x 11 setup arrangement (labeled as "Gwyddbwyll") is at:

<http://members.tripod.com/~thevole/game.html>

Tafl boards for sale:

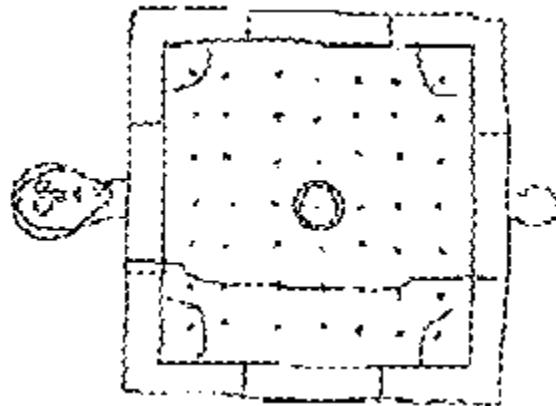
<http://www.tarahill.com/tafl.html>

Fidchell (Fithcheall) and Gwyddbwyll

Now we get to the murkier world of the Celtic board games. Fidchell and its apparent Welsh linguistic cognate, Gwyddbwyll, appear often in ancient legends of fairies and the recreation of nobility as seen at

<http://www.seekermagazine.com/v0499/tongues.html> and <http://ipc.paganearth.com/diaryarticles/history/games.html>.

There are also accounts of kings giving boards to honored guests, on the reservation that they never give it away or sell it, implying a kind of holy status to the gift. The translation, "wood knowledge," also implies that some type of wisdom can be gained from playing the game; and what that is, well, you'll have to find out and relate it to us.



A 7 x 7 board was discovered in 1932 in a crannog (lake dwelling) in Ballindary, Ireland up north with little holes drilled in it, and head-shapped pegs. (See the sketch to the right.) And so people tried to figure out whether it was Bran-dubh or Fidchell. Most have guessed it was Fidchell, and that it was basically a "mini-Tafl" board with king in the middle, two guards radiating from each side and three foes on each side of the board. The goal was likely to get the king from the "belly button" to the corner (or "arms and legs") where the special quarter circle was etched. Could this be a description of how the soul emanates from the center to the limbs?

Variations that have been suggested:

Players must answer a riddle or trivia question to move on their turn, possibly prepared in advance, according to agreed limits or a common agreed topic that both know well.

Have to throw a dice and get an even number to move on your turn, although I doubt how well this would work.

There is a Printable Fidchell Board:

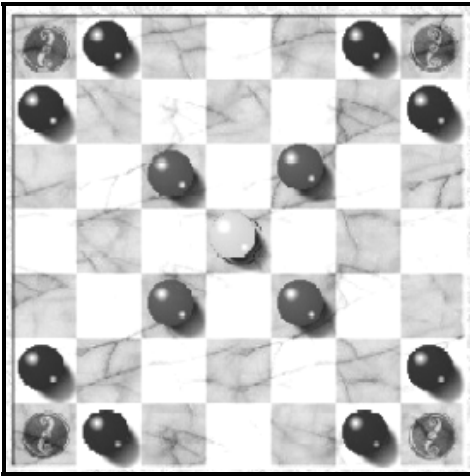
http://users.indigo.net.au/darke/treubh/brandubh/lg_board_blank.jpg

Fidchell Boards for purchase:
www.historicgames.com/wood.html

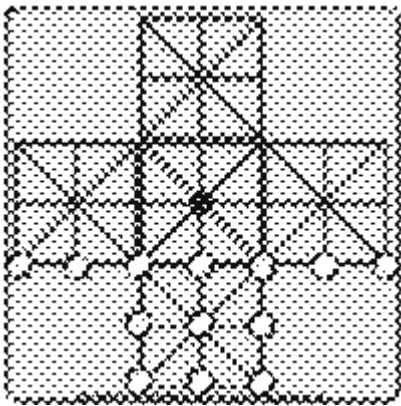
Bran-dubh and Ard Righ

(Which is pronounced Bran-doo and Ard-ree)

We know even less about these variants on the same 7 x 7 board graphic as above. Bran-dubh means "Black raven" and Ard Righ means "high king" from the Gaelic. One reconstructed postulation that I liked has the king in the center and one prince on each diagonal from the king (four total). One baron flanks each side of the corner squares (i.e. 2 in each corner), thus eight barons in total. See this link for a visual presentation of this arrangement.



Barons go first. All pieces can move one square in any direction, but barons and princes could also move two diagonally if the spaces are empty. You capture by stepping on someone on a single space move, but the king is immune to attack. The goal of the game is for the barons to wipe out the young princes and visa-versa. Usually, the princes run and hide while the king runs about like a maddened rhinoceros taking out the barons. If any piece stays in the corner for two rounds it is considered to be lost in the woods and removed from the board. Only the king can go on the center square. Most games I played end up with the king defending a prince in a corner region, with the prince bouncing between two squares behind the king, forcing a draw. Thus, it was recommended that players play two games, each time switching positions and adding up their total surviving pieces at the conclusion of their likely draws to determine an overall victor.



Fox and Geese (or Deer and Hounds)

Fox and Geese is probably also a Viking game of the hunt (and there are a few others) that spread widely in Celtic lands. 13 geese (some with more) and one fox are on the board (some with two). All move one square at a time, horizontally and vertically (others allow a diagonal move without capture). The fox captures by leaping over the geese, but can only jump one goose at a time. Thus two geese lined up are an insurmountable barrier to him. The goal of the geese is to chorale the fox until it cannot move. The fox is trying to eat all the geese.

One such variant board is at:

<http://www.stainess.freemove.co.uk/images/fgtbl.jpg>

How to Make the Boards:

These games have links to print out your own board that can be glued onto a stiff cardboard or sheet of plastic or glass. The playing pieces can be made from coins with affixed labels, colored glass baubles, draughts from checkers, pawns from chess, different colored rocks, candies, or carved wooden pieces. As far as I know, there are no on-line forums to play these games. Feel free to improvise the rules to make the games more balanced, or develop larger boards and new moves to widen the possibilities of play.

Naturally, the reconstructed rules may not resemble the original games, but then we'll probably never know those rules; but the gods appreciate the effort.



When Leaves Leave Us

By Mike the Fool, DC Grove

Those of us in the northern half of the American continent are treated to the spectacular cycle of the four seasons. With our Druidic tendency to learn from trees, I thought it appropriate to write a little about what I've raked up from our teachers. Trees and plants offer so many possible models to understand the world and our place in it. Naturally, it consists of only my own opinions.

The Science of Leaves

Leaves amaze us. They come in many shapes and sizes, some are single leafed, others are compound (like an ash or locust). It appears that the shape has much to do with strategy. The vascularization of the leaf (the plumbing) tends to be radiative from the stem and spine, and the farther you are from that "backbone," the harder it is to supply and receive nutrients. It's more efficient to keep the edge of the leaf equidistant from these veins. Thus you tend to see lobing like oaks, maples, and such rather than just round leaves. No leaf can utilize all the sunlight that falls on it, and by being slightly transparent and lobed, lower branches can pick up the excess that is missed.

If they are so wonderful, then why do leaves change color and fall off in the autumn? Actually leaves are never constant, they change from the first pale greens of spring, to the dark greens of summer, and then finish in a blaze of rainbow glory. This is all due to the varying concentration of chlorophyll, a vital green pigment, that is present in the leaves. This chemical aids in transforming water and carbon dioxide from the air into sugars and starch that will feed the rest of the tree, something science is still trying to imitate. There are also yellow to orange pigments hiding in those leaves, which are completely masked from view by the abundance of chlorophyll for most of the year.

In the fall after the fruits, nuts and seeds are ripened, due to dropping temperatures and declining sunlight, the tree turns off the mechanisms of the leaves, and begins to withdraw the sap from the leaf, and the chlorophyll is allowed to degenerate. The more hardy pigments like orange (carotene), yellow

(xanthophylls) or red (anthocyanin) gradually become more visible. Different trees tend to have different colors in the fall, and the amount of sunlight or water and temperature will also affect the display. Aspen, birch and hickory tend to be yellow. Oaks are usually brown from the tannin. Beech can be bronze. Dogwood and sumacs range from purplish to red due to the anthocyanin formed by trapped glucose. In order to slowly suffocate the leaf and protect the branch, a fragile cuticle of cells begins to build a barrier from the branch to the leaf. Eventually the leaf will be broken off by the wind or from its own disintegrating weight.

The Philosophy of Leaves

Leaves are the faces of the trees. Such tender, thin, flexible and fragile on the fringe of the organism. If they were made of the same sturdy materials as the branches, they would be unable to accomplish their tasks. It is their short, sad duty to be bombarded by the sun, munched on, blighted and live short lives, while sustaining the larger organism.

For me the leaves are representative of our interaction with the environment. We all have these little "antennas" out to bring in nourishment to different parts of our lives raining on us in all directions. Some of these leaves are attuned to sports, love, religion, food, politics, relationships, environment, entertainment, music, etc. The new ones on the top of our consciousness tend to get more attention and sunlight, while the older ones down a few stories, live in shade, doing the best they can to get the sun's eye. In such a way, our irregularities can nourish others near to us, allowing them to supplement our weaknesses with what they pick up.

Every season of the year has its rough storms and strong winds, but most of us have gone through a few periods of "autumn" when we have pulled away from our outer world, shunned tradition sources of comfort, withdrawing resources inside ourselves away from extremities, and hunkered down for a long winter of re-examination of our identity and roots. But these leaves, when they fall, also will land on the outside of our roots, enriching the exterior soil; and next spring, new leaves will likely emerge in most of the same spots as before on the branches. Sometimes a branch or limb may not grow back in the spring, but that's the changing palate of life.

The leaves never know
Which leaf will be the first to fall...
Does the wind know?
--Soseki

Leaf Links

- www.stormfax.com/foilage has an excellent list of toll-free foliage hotlines for about 30 states from California to Georgia; useful to check before making those trips to the mountains to see the fall colors. It also has useful instructional pages for children.
- www.fs.fed.us/news/fallcolors is run by the USDA Forest Service that details the foliage conditions at national forests from Washington State all the way to Washington D.C.
- www.yankeefoliage.com is mostly geared for the North East from Yankee magazine, but it also has some arts and crafts ideas for using those leaves that you collect.

The Leaf Quiz

The following quiz is to test your knowledge of the more common trees of North America. I only chose trees that lose their leaves or needles in the fall in the upper half of the U.S. and Canada, since it's eternal spring down in the South. Although each genus may have dozens of distinctive species (such as Red Oak, White Oak, Burr Oak, etc.), I tried to pick the most identifiable species for this quiz. To check if your answer is correct, rest the cursor on the picture, and after a few seconds of lying still, a small box will pop up with the name of the leaf. Keep track of your score.

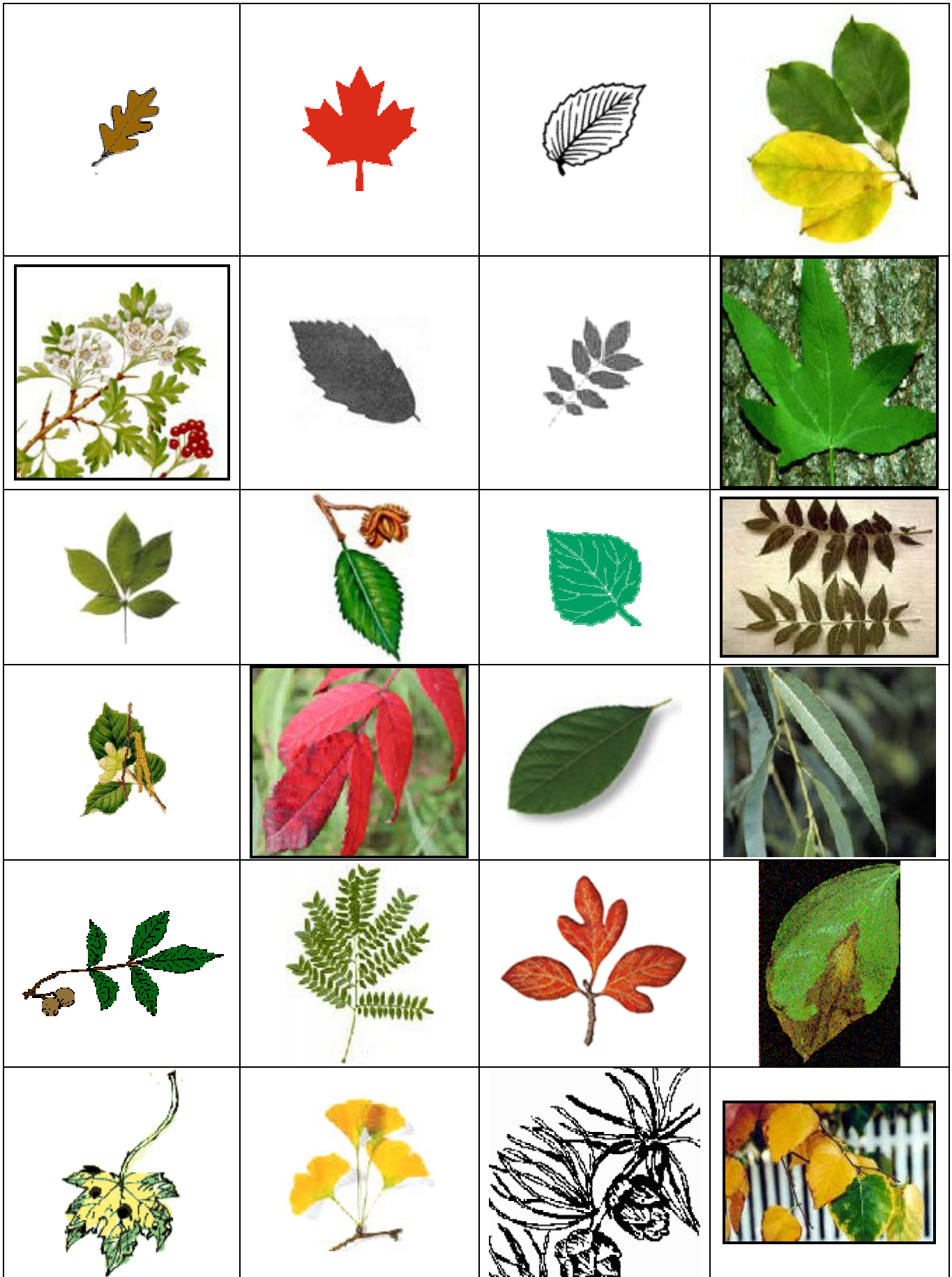
The leaf pictures are in a random order, but the following list of names is alphabetical: ash, beech, birch, cherry, chestnut, dogwood, elm, ginkgo, hawthorn, hazel, hickory, horse chestnut, larch, locust, magnolia, maple, oak, poplar, sassafras, sumac, sweetgum, sycamore, walnut, willow.

Scoring

- 21-24 Master of the woods.
- 15-20 You've obviously been outdoors a few times.
- 9-14 Average hiker
- 4-8 Average cubicle bound American (ACBA)
- 0-3 Hie ye to the forest, knave, and learn your trees!

Answers to the Pictures on the Next Page

Oak, maple, elm, magnolia
Hawthorn, chestnut, ash, sweetgum
Horse chestnut, beech, poplar, walnut
Hazel, sumac, cherry, willow
Pignut, hickory, locust, sassafras, dogwood
Sycamore, ginkgo, larch





The Soul of Juliana Spring

By Irony Sade
Copyright November 2000

A Druid Missal-Any is proud to present the fourth and second to last installment of the story of a young woman whose passion for the harp caused her to sell her soul. The Missal-Any staff wishes to remind the readers that before selling your soul, to consider carefully all the consequences. Can you live with them? Can you die with them?

We also would like to apologize for repeated chapters in the snail mail and email versions from the Lughnasadh issue. The Missal-Any had become a bit missal-aneous between the web and hard copy versions.

Chapter Twelve

The wetlands behind my forest rose and fell with the changing water table. A family of wood ducks moved into a dying soft maple, and I watched each May to see their chicks take their kamikaze leap of faith. The young ones hatch in a hole fifty feet up the trunk and are raised there by their long-suffering parents. When the ducklings decide they are ready to leave, they scramble to the opening and tumble out. They then have but moments in which to learn to fly. Each spring I sat watching in the moss, and the terror and the joy of each plummet peeled years from off my heart.

The young lady who had sold me her soul was making the most of those years. While Sam drilled and researched his way toward twin degrees, Juliana played. She studied, practiced, improved, discovered, and soon she was herself discovered. The fiddle player of Sheebeg Sheemore was quitting the band, and the group's manager had offered her his place. "What do you think?" She asked over the crackling phone from Seattle, "Should I take it?"

"That depends on what you want."

"What do you mean?"

"Do you want to be a popular, successful, possibly rich and famous musician? Or do you want to be the best harpist in the world?"

"I want to be the best in the world," she decided.

"When you know what to do."

"Yes, I guess so"

"Are you happy?" I chanced, just before she hung up.

"Deliriously! No worries at all!"



Chapter Thirteen

For several years after this she was traveling, six seasons in Ireland, three in Prague. She had moved beyond what any teacher could teach, into the boundless and stupefying realm of self-mastery. She learned something from every person she watched, heard, or played with, incorporated each skill into her own playing, and blossomed. She caught wind of an archaic bard in Scotland, of a novel percussive harping technique from Argentina. She traveled to see and to study, sharing always what she had learned.

A withering bout of Dengue Fever ended Sam's three-year tour as a village doctor in Papua New Guinea. He returned to the mid-west and started a family clinic, eventually buying a house with the profits. My own life and works progressed too, over that slow decade, but this is Juliana's story, not mine, so I shall not speak of those.

Late one December the couple invited me to spend the holidays with them.

"Julie is giving a Christmas concert," Sam told me. "And, well, we were thinking about getting married."

"After twelve years, I should certainly hope so!"

"We wondered if you would want to be in the ceremony."

"I would be delighted."

The concert taxed one's credulity. It was said that the old Celtic bards had three musical gifts: They could make an audience laugh, weep, or sleep dreamlessly at will, such was the power of their music. Juliana was almost that good. She played moods, memories, concert pieces, orchestral segments that were feats of pure skill, and songs that seemed dragged out of the listener instead of the harp. She played and played, and a hall full of musicians, students, artists, academics, fans, strangers, stragglers, and I sat in frozen wonder, our hearts scoured and our minds in awe at what her fingers drew from those shimmering chords.

When it was over I moved through the clamoring sea of admirers and stood beside the stage as the waves swept about her, saying the things that people always say when trying to express admiration of the inconceivable. Juliana stood flushed, as thin and tall as the day we had met, thanking them all with a quiet, blushing, angelic grace. One boy of ten or so was ushered forward between his parents and stood with fire in his eyes as they offered up their praise.

"My daddy says you must have sold your soul to play like that," he piped out between the thank-yous.

"Wow, wait," His father laughed, a hand on the boy's arm.

"That's not true, is it? It's just lots of hard work and practice, right?" His parents chuckled nervously. Juliana smiled.

"I practice all the time," she assured the young, earnest eyes. "Hours. Every day."

The boy nodded as he was led away, but I witnessed how the harpist shivered once his back was turned. The flush of exhilaration had drained from her. The crowds flowed on unheeding.

Chapter Fourteen

There was tension over the dinner table of Hammersmith and Spring that night. Sam looked silent questions at the both of us through the meal, while the conversation danced and wandered, avoiding things not said in threes. I retired to leave them alone after the pudding, but the walls were thin, and when I lay down to rest in the dark spare room, their words crept through the woodwork.

"But what if he's right?"

"This is what you've wanted your whole life, Ju."

"But what has it cost us?"

"What about it?"

"Then he asked that it was as if all the things I haven't thought of in ten years leapt back. I've been so busy playing I never thought about the price! Sam... I sold that man my soul! Do you have any idea what that means?"

"No more than you do, when you stop to think about it."

"What's going to happen to me?"

"Ju, That man's been the best friend either of us has ever had. Did you know he talked the Chair of the Admissions board into letting me enter that seven-year program when I was still a junior? I didn't find out till after I'd graduated! He's helped us with everything we've ever asked, been there when our own families were not around."

"And I owe him my soul."

"So what if you do? You thought about all that before you left college and decided it was worth the sacrifice."

"Well, now I'm thinking about it again. I don't want to go to Hell, Sam, or just stop when I die, or go wherever Druids believe soulless people go. How can we even be talking about belief? If he buys the things he must know what happens to them!"

"You're getting hysterical, Ju."

"No I'm not! I'm just scared."

"Would you rather give up your music?"

There was silence after that, or sounds too soft for me to hear through pine.

I turned slowly from the wall feeling every one of my years, and the bitter pit of all the things that men have ever called me. Judas, Efnisan, Heart-wrecker. What becomes of people who cannot forgive themselves?

The doorbell chimed.

Sam's soft tread moved to answer.

There was a crash, a scream, the sounds of struggle, and I was out the door and moving before I knew I had risen.

A man I had never seen was swearing in the hall. Sam sat upright but dazed against the sofa, blood coloring his sandy pale hair. Glass from the door was sprayed across the carpet. The intruder turned to face me. We both froze.

Juliana's father was skeleton thin, his flesh burned off by the flames within him. A long coat billowed round him like a dark, wild, robe, threadbare and whisper thin. He looked like a man to whom heat and cold were the same: both inconsequential

to the climate inside. His arms and jaw writhed in a frenzy of continual motion, the left hand, claw-like, snaking out toward me. He waved an iron crucifix like a blunt, inverted sword, and his eyes blazed with something that I never hoped to see. I looked up at him.

"You," he whispered. His knees crouched like a fighter's.

A door slammed and locked behind me. Juliana's voice was frantic on the phone. I studied his shoulders and the angle of his feet, feeling the room about me, and hoping there was space to move.

"I come only to reclaim my daughter's soul, and God sees fit to set a devil against me, to test my will and courage. Well?" He roared, "Curse me, Druid! You cannot stand before the wrath of righteousness. Do your worst."

"I am your daughter's friend, Mr. Raskin, and no more a devil than you are."

Blood from Sam's scalp dribbled from the crucifix.

"You lie. I've studied you. Orgies in the woods, preaching to young students, scheming and smiling and striving to undo two thousand years of Christ's work on earth. You seduce people away from the Trinity with your Triple Goddess and blind them with your nature worship. You tell them the world is God's word made flesh and the Good Books be damned and manage to hide my daughter's movements from me across eleven years! Yes, I know you, you thrice damned Druid. Curse away before I strike you down."

"We both teach what we believe, Russell. No human being knows the full truth of reality. We each live as we think best and pay the price for that choice. You know this. Do not make it any worse."

There was a siren and the squeal of tires in the drive. Record timing, that.

"Clever, Druid, trying to turn my mind against me. But you are wrong. I know." He shuddered. "I know the will of God as well as you do, who seek to pervert it. And I know this too," he swung the cross in an all-encompassing arc. "The Lord has told me that no human hand can stop me in my mission. Not him on the floor, nor the foolish arm of the law, nor you neither, devil though you be. Curse away and meet your doom."

"Put down your weapon!" Came a voice from the door. Young, scared despite its training. "Throw down your weapon! - - Base, I need backup!"

"I will not curse you, Russell, and I will not let you touch your daughter. I have been her friend for eleven years, watched her through every storm, helped her realize a dream you would not even see. I have been more of a father to her than you have, and not you nor God can take that from me."

"I will take her from you now," he growled, advancing. (Drop your weapon, Mister!) "The care of her soul is in my hands, and takes precedent over any dreams of the flesh. God condones all actions undertaken in the interest of the soul. I will have her from you before she ends up just like her mother!" He spat these last words with a roiling hiss and raised the cross on high.

I do not often read people's minds. Sometimes I wish I never did at all.

"You bastard," I breathed. "What that you've done would your God condone?"

Russell Raskin halted mid stride. His eyes bulged. His throat gurgled something that would never be a word. His left side spasmed violently, and the force of it spun him twitching to the ground. The crucifix leapt from his hand, hiding its face in the carpet. Russell curled and splayed, and then lay still.

The policeman came forward, gun drawn.

"I would have shot him. Really, I would have."

Shut up, I willed him.
"What did you do to him?" He asked in awe.
"Nothing. Call an ambulance."

Chapter Fifteen

The beeps and muted bustle of the world's worst waiting room fought the smell of antiseptic for possession of the air, as I sat down to wait beside Juliana Spring. The slump of her tempered shoulders informed me she had no emotions left. Sam was sleeping down the hall, six stitches, no fracture, and an egg on his crown fit to hatch the Christmas turkey we had not had time to eat.

"Is he awake?" I offered, by way of conversation.
"What did you do to him?"
My eyes winced shut.
"I did nothing"
Nothing.
"How is he?"



"Doctor Sato says his mind is clear, but his body is completely wrecked. She says it was either a stroke or a heart attack, or possibly both at once. She says it's hard to tell because we don't have any medical records..."

She trailed off, gazing through the tiles. Her hands tore at a Styrofoam cup.

"The police searched his house for paperwork, but they couldn't find anything useful. Just junk and religious tracts...no records...no will..."

"They found..." Her voice died. She tried again.

"They found..."

I put my arm around her, but she was done with tears.

"They found my mother's teeth in the basement."

"I know."

"You know? Why do you always know?"

I shook my head.

"What will you do?" Said I, when the silence became too painful.

"He's dying, isn't he?"

"Yes," I responded, knowing it was true.

"When I suppose I'll have to forgive him."

"That is up to you."

She sniffed.

Nurses flitted past, pale as ghosts, busy as angels, each sacrificing their Christmas day to make the world a touch less painful. After a timeless tedium Juliana squeezed my hand.

"Thanks." Only a whisper, but sincere.

I smiled thinly.

"He wants to see you, you know," said Juliana suddenly.

"What?"

"That's what he said."

"He?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"He didn't say. He just asked me to send in the damned Druid if he came around."

I contemplated the machines, the smells of death and healing.

"Then I will go and see him."



Witness the Autumnal Equinox

Sunrise and Sunset at the UMass Sunwheel!

SUNRISE @ 6:45 a.m.,

SUNSET @ 6:00 p.m.

MONDAY & TUESDAY

SEPT. 22 & 23, 2003

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 UMass. Dept. of Astronomy to watch the Sun rise and set over the tall standing stones in the UMass. 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 MONDAY and TUESDAY September 22 and 23, 2003. 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 & sweatshirts will be available for purchase to help cover the cost of future stone paths at the site.

The exact instant of equinox is 6:47 a.m. EDT on Sept. 23, very close to sunrise on 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 very lovely sight as we experienced last year. This year, the sky will be particularly beautiful in the early morning, with the waning crescent Moon visible before sunrise.

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, please e-mail young@astro.umass.edu

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New Roman Goddess Found

A new Romano-British goddess called Senua has been identified among a buried hoard of gold and silver.

The goddess was part of a hoard discovered near Baldock, in Hertfordshire, the British Museum revealed on Monday.

Previously unheard of in the Roman world, she is believed to be a British version of the popular Roman deity Minerva, associated with wisdom, the crafts, healing and springs such as the spa at Bath.

British Museum specialist Ralph Jackson said: "Senua might have been likened to Minerva for any one or more of these perceived powers."

The hoard, found by a treasure hunter with a metal detector and now acquired by the museum, comprises 26 objects including gold jewelry, a silver figure and votive plaques of silver alloy and gold.

The museum said the treasure was buried in a manner that suggested it was being stored for safekeeping against possible raids.

One of the key pieces was the badly eroded 15 cm tall hollow silver figure identified as Senua dressed in a full-length garment, her left shoulder bare and her left arm supporting a fold of drapery.

Her hair is parted on the crown and formed into a bun on the nape of her neck, but erosion has taken away much of her arms, her feet and her face.

Although there was nothing on the statuette itself to identify it with Senua, a silver base for a figurine and inscribed with the goddess's name was found nearby and is believed to be the missing stand.

Along with the figure, several of the 19 plaques were also dedicated to Senua.



"Much work remains to be done on the hoard and on the investigation of its context, and it is likely there will be new and significant revelations," Mr. Jackson said.

"For now though, this find has furthered our understanding of religious practices at the time and added a new name to the Roman-British lexicon," he added.

The Baldock hoard, thought to date from the late 3rd or 4th Century AD, will go on display at the museum from the middle of September.

The hoard was discovered in September 2002.

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/1/hi/england/beds/bucks/hearts/3199191.stm>

Published: 2003/09/01 17:02:49 GMT

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Editor's Note:

One of our subscribers sent in this etymology of the name Senua that offers some insight to Her name:

"Senua" looks related to "senos, senâ, senon" (of which, only "senos" and "senâ" are attested, *afaik*, and "senon" would be a reconstructed neuter form), which means "old, ancient." The Old Irish word "sen" (whence the modern Gaelic "seann" and "sean") is obviously cognate, as is the word "hen," found in Cornish, Welsh, and Breton. It could be "sen-" + *uâ or "sen-" + *u- + -â (the latter being the typical feminine suffix), but neither Gaulish nor Proto-Celtic lexicons list a word or root like *uâ or *u-, so these would be reconstructions and I would have to guess at a possible meaning. It could also be a dialectal variant of "senâ" (requiring a dialect that conjugated "senos" as a u-stem noun, for which there is no attestation, but we are talking about Brittonic here, and not Gaulish, so maybe; I'm not as familiar with Brittonic and its dialects) in which case it would mean "The Ancient One" (feminine).

Adoltoues Dêuonôm tei eti suobo,

Uolcomaglos Nesâcnos
 (Croman mac Nessa),
 Arduo-Drûis Nemetionos,
 Vlatimo-Drûis Nesâcnonôm
http://communities.msn.com/CromansGrove/_whatsnew.msnw



Austria's Road Safety Solution: The Druids

By Michael Leidig, Vienna
The Telegraph, London
Sunday, August 10, 2003

Druids have been brought in to reduce the number of accidents on Austria's worst stretches of autobahn.

The Druids have put up huge roadside monoliths to restore the natural flow of 'earth energy.' After the huge pillars of white quartz were put up beside a deadly stretch of road during a secret two-year trial, the number of fatal accidents fell from an average of six a year to zero.

Gerald Knobloch, who describes himself as an archdruid, used a divining rod to inspect the 300-metre stretch of Austria's A9 highway in Styria and restore "earth energy lines".

"I located dangerous elements that had disrupted the energy flow," he told the Sunday Telegraph. "The worst was a river which human interference had forced to flow against its natural direction. By erecting two stones of quartz each weighing more than a ton at the side of the road the energy lines were restored."

The pillars had a similar function to acupuncture, he said. "Acupuncture needles also restore broken energy lines. What acupuncture does for the body, the stones do for the environment."

Harald Dirnbacher, an engineer from the highway authority, admitted that they turned to Mr. Knobloch as a last resort. "We had put up signs to reduce speed, renewed the road surface and made bends more secure, but we still kept getting accidents. At that point we couldn't think of anything else to do and decided we might as well try anything.

I admit when we first looked at it (energy lines) we were doubtful. We didn't want people to know in case they laughed at us, so we kept the trial secret and small-scale. But it was really an amazing turnaround."

Scientists are skeptical of the claims. "Natural sciences need evidence. Whatever can't be measured, does not exist," said Georg Walach, a geophysics professor at Leoben University in southern Austria. "These energy lines and their flow cannot be grasped or measured, and their existence is therefore rejected by scientists."

However, the motorway authorities are extending the Druids' role across the country, paying them about \$5,600 for each investigation—a fraction of the cost of resurfacing the road.

"Of course, the fall in accidents could be due to something else, as we are continuously repairing the roads." Said Mr. Dirnbacher.

Resources

Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru, A Dictionary of the Welsh Language

Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru, the great Welsh historical dictionary, has been completed after over eighty years' work. The project began in 1921 with the first 27 years being spent on collecting material for the dictionary. The first 64-page part appeared in 1950, and the final part (the 61st) was published at the end of 2002. Complete sets (4 volumes) of the dictionary can now be ordered through bookshops or directly from the University of Wales Press for 150 pounds sterling until the end of February 2003, when the price will revert to the usual 190 pounds.

Work began in January 2002 on re-editing the A-B section of the Dictionary, first edited in a very concise manner in the 1950s, and the first draft of this work is available online at:
http://www.wales.ac.uk/dictionary/gpc_pdfs.htm.

The second edition will also be published in parts, and a shorter electronic version is also in preparation.

For full details, please see the Dictionary's website at:
<http://www.wales.ac.uk/dictionary/>. [Note: demand for sets has been so great that some volumes are currently being reprinted. There may be a delay of several weeks.]

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Irish Trees: Myths, Legends & Folklore by Niall MacCoitir

(Trade Paperback; 22.50 Euro / 26.00 USD / 15.75 UK;
229 pages, with illustrations throughout
Hardback; 35.00 Euro / 40.25 USD / 24.50 UK)

Ancient Ireland was once heavily wooded and a squirrel could travel from Cork to Killarney without touching the ground. So it is no surprise that the mythology and folklore of trees were part of everyday life. A sprig of mountain ash tied to the tails of livestock kept the fairies from harming them. A staff of blackthorn was the best to have when out walking at night to ward off evil spirits.

This book, beautifully illustrated in specially-commissioned watercolours by Grania Langrishe, brings together the myths, legends and folklore associated with the native Irish trees. There are two main themes: the tree as a marker of important places, such as the royal site or holy well, and the role of different trees as sources of magical power in folk customs and traditions. Many 'powers' were common to different trees in spheres as diverse as fertility, magic, and the tree as a link between this world and the spiritual.

From Read Ireland @ Phibsboro Bookshop,
342 North Circular Road, Phibsboro, Dublin 7, Ireland
Tel: +353-1-830-9828
Fax: +353-1-830-2997

Calendar

The Autumn Equinox will occur on September 23 at 3:47 a.m., Pacific Daylight Time. Grove celebrations will take place on Sunday, September 21 at 4 p.m.

A Druid Missal-Any is published eight times a year. Post mail subscriptions are \$8.00 and email subscriptions are free. Or write an article or send us a cartoon and receive a year's post mail subscription free. Write to:

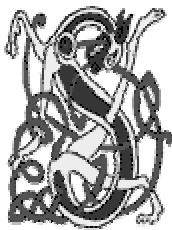
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Samhain Essay: Paying Respects

Reprinted from A Druid Missal-Any,
Samhain 1989
By Emmon Bodfish



Samhain, Celtic New Years, the Day Between the Worlds, the Druid year starts on Samhain. The sun is half way between Autumn Equinox and Winter Solstice. Samhain marks the end of the harvest season. All fruit and grain not gathered in by Samhain Eve must be left in the fields to feed the birds and wild animals, the flocks of Cernunnos, and its vegetable life essence, its "spirit" becomes the property of "The Little People," "the Sidhi," and feeds them. (Is our word "fairy," derived from "fear an sidhi," meaning in proto-Gaelic "a person of the Sidhi," one of the little people?) Sidhi is pronounced in Gaelic as English "shee." A Banshee, the spirit that gives prophecies and mourns for the dead, means literally "a woman of the Sidhi."

Another folk tradition, probably from old Druid times, holds that "Pukas," mischievous spirits, will come out on Samhain night and steal the nourishing essence of any food crops left in the fields, or, if it is not to their liking, will despoil it. Their mythic descendents swarm out in the forms of hordes of trick-or-treaters and disguised, costumed revelers.

This is the night when the Other World, the world of the dead, the future souls, and of the ancestors, comes the closest to our world and "dimension hopping" is the easiest. It is a time to honor dead ancestors, and remember old friends. This was the "day of the dead" long before the Christian era. The dead were thought by the ancient Celts to have a winder and truer perspective on things than we mortals do, and to be able to advise their descendents and friends. They know all history, are aware of all forces and causes, and can intuit the future better than we. Pay your respects at graves or memorials, ask questions of departed friends, ancestors, or mentors. Leave food offerings for them at you Samhain Eve celebrations and vigils. Get out old photographs. Review the past, this pre-Samhain week, and pay old debts, spiritual or emotional. Find lost belongings; make amends. Then celebrate.

Editor's note:

Readers might have noticed quite a few reprinted lead articles this past year. It has been a year of changes for your editor with the death of her mother and the unfortunately all too often ensuing family strife. Republishing was not meant to be a cop-out, but a way to maintain the standard of the Missal-Any as set by its founder Emmon, as well as to publish his words and research, which still have worth today and provide inspiration and impetus for further study.

News of the Groves

Carleton Grove: News from Minnesota

Carleton awakens, stumbles and continues. A few weeks into the term we have a few interested new comers (most of whom are from my dorm, and some of whom I didn't meet until they came to a druid event). We had a nice little fire on the Equinox. Currently, after a week cold spell Carleton warmed up a bit and now there is a plague of Asian Beetles, (for those not familiar, they look a lot like ladybugs except they bite) locusts, and others. We're waiting for all the town's first born to be taken next.

Dover Grove: News from Massachusetts

Eric, former member of Digitalis Grove in Washington, DC, has settled into Dover MA and established the Dover Grove of the Quiet Reformed Druids of North America. Using the Silent Liturgy that he and Mike Scharding devised in DC, he will meet regularly with his outdoorsy neighbours, Betty and Bob, at their local apple orchard or at the hills around Farm Pond in the town of Sherborn nearby or the banks of the Charles River by the railroad tracks on this lookout perch. They naturally are using apple jack at the services. As for recruiting, they're not really seeking more members, but just wanted to let us know they're doing fine, but anyone or anything that is there at the time of a service is welcome to partake.

Oh, disappointingly, there are no white cliffs, as far as Eric can tell in town, like its namesake in England.

Hemlock Splinters Grove: News from New York

Dark the night
Bare the trees
Cold the wind outside.
Sleeps the light
Laughter flees
Since the day god died

Rowan-Oak Grove, MOCC: News from Oklahoma

rowan-oak grove will be holding its convocation at our samhain costume party. we will also be holding a day of the dead vigil on nov.1 as part of our samhain rites the classes this month deal with development and control of mental and emotional discipline and how they relate to the druid path.

grove membership was added to when my new neighbor joined our outer court congregation making the official count 36 offline. bro. werebear has joined our staff as secretary/treasurer,

enormously easing the amount of paperwork the arch druidess must do.

rowan-oak grove is also forming a band called the new age bards (at least till we decide on a better name) and will possibly in a couple of months have our debut performance at the gypsy coffeehouse, our fave hangout.

That's all for now...

m.s. white raven, arch-druidess
rowan-oak grove, tag for mocc

Poison Oak Grove: News from California

Publisher of "A Druid Missal-Any"

Poison Oak Grove has held its first elections. Its new officers will assume their roles beginning Samhain for one year. The new officers are:

Archdruid: Stacey Weinberger

Preceptor Ignatz Fezman

Server Morag Bhann

Based on the observation from last year that an abundance of acorns at the grove site meant a wet winter, we are keeping note whether this year's abundant crop will do the same. We are experimenting with learning to predict the weather based on nature, like what we assume the ancient Druids did.

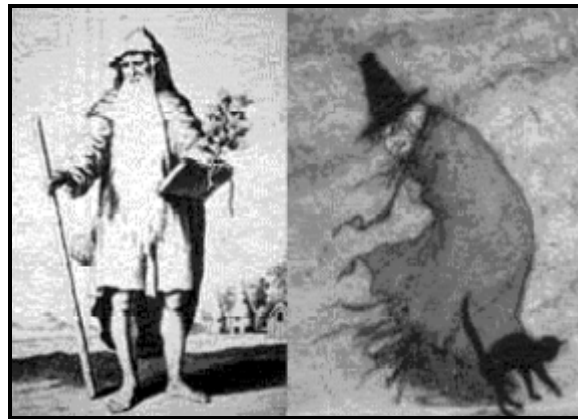


Dalon Ap Landu Research Project

Stephen Crimmins, Carleton AD, has decided to compile a book of Dalon Ap Landu myths. (Yes, he knows that only 1 exists, so far.) He is looking for anybody interested in Dalon Ap Landu to add their own myth. As he sees it at the moment it would be best to vaguely follow the outline provided by Thomas Lee Harris Jr. (if he doesn't mind) provided in the Samhain 2002 edition of A Druid Missal-any. However, feel free to write myths unrelated to that story.

Other suggestions for myths; you may want to imbed jewels of wisdom (or not) within your story, or perhaps involve Dalon ap Landu in the history of your grove or your druidry (or not), perhaps even try to explain some of the mysteries of the RDNA (in truly mythical form) (or not). And don't worry if your myth contradicts with other myths (or not), it'll look more like a real cycle of myths.

If you are interested in contributing, or if you have questions, email Stephen @ crimmins at carleton.edu (for the next 9 months or so before Carleton kicks him out.)



Druidism and Wicca: a Comparison

By Daven (Member, Ord Draiochta na Uisnech)

Web: <http://www.geocities.com/ordnadarachgile>

Version 2.0 (Last updated 7-29-03)

In my contact with Druids from other groups I come across information occasionally that answers questions many of us in the RDNA have, in regards to who and what we are as druids and what do we tell others when they ask. Sister Rhiannon of Druid Heart Spirit Grove has addressed the question of what is the difference between Wicca and Druidism in an earlier Missal-Any (put in the issue.) This is an essay by Daven who gives another in depth view on the differences between Druidism and Wicca.

On first meeting a Druid, many Wiccans feel a bond - a commonality must exist. Normally the Wiccan will start talking about The Goddess, their Circle and so on and be somewhat lost when the Druid starts talking about the Triune Thought, the Triskel and Honor or other relevant terms who's meaning may not be immediately clear.

I feel that the confusion stems from misunderstandings and misconceptions. This article will attempt to explain some of these concepts that may confuse the Wiccan.

The Rede/The Law of Returns

Of all the differences that a Wiccan has with Druidism this is probably the most prevalent. In Druidism, there is no "rede." In fact, the only people that the Rede pertains to are those who ascribe to it, it is unique to Wiccans.

Most Wiccans profess some version of the familiar "an it harm none, do as you will" or another. They are truly shocked, confused and/or even irate when the Druid goes "That's nice" and disagrees that this moral guideline has anything to do with them. Some may even accuse the Druid of lacking morals.

Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the moral concepts within The Law of Returns and the Rede, when boiled out of their archaic language, permeate Druidism. Normally Druids call this the Celtic Virtues. Generally these virtues are described as Honor, Loyalty, Hospitality, Honesty, Justice and Courage. These six principals permeate the entire body of Druidic thought and ritual.

Briefly stated the virtue of Honor requires one to adhere to their oaths and do the right thing, even if it will ultimately hurt others or oneself in the process. A Druid is obligated to remain true to friends, family and leaders thus exhibiting the virtue of Loyalty. Hospitality demands that a Druid be a good host when

guests are under one's roof. Honesty insists that one tell the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth to yourself, your gods and your people. Justice desires the Druid understands everyone has an inherent worth and that an assault to that worth demands recompense in one form or another. Courage for the Druid does not always wear a public face a-standing-strong-in-the-face-of-adversity, alone or with companions. Sometimes Courage is getting up and going about a daily routine when pain has worn one down without complaint or demur.

Outside of the scope of these six virtues, anything goes. Understand that the virtue of Justice demands that one consider the actions one is going to take before they are taken, since any harm to the inherent worth of another will demand that recompense be paid. It also covers many things like "The Law of Threefold Return." Justice, by necessity, is just. For actions that harm, you must pay a price, and actions that promote good things will pay good back to you. That's just. It acknowledges the divine in each and every person. It assures a truly committed society they don't have to fear a knife in the back, or a burglary. It makes sure that even enemies can sit down in a room together and be civil to one another.

It must be understood that the concept of Threefold Return came from Eastern Philosophy and is most closely associated with the Hindu and Buddhist concept of 'Karma.' There has never been anything similar to this concept in European thought.

These virtues do not preclude arguments or conflict. On the contrary, the Celts were some of the most combat-obsessed people we know. From myths we know Celts practiced blood feuds, had clan conflicts, wars. The individual Celt was proud, and fierce demands were made that self-independence was a supreme right. What the Celtic Virtues ensured were the continual functioning of an isolated tribal society.

Think about these concepts when applied to the current government. What if all leaders were truly loyal to those who swore loyalty to them? What if all those who swore loyalty to a leader were coerced by society to be faithful to that oath? What if a guest under someone's roof were guaranteed food and shelter? What if Justice was truly Just, not simply expedient or so concerned with the criminal's rights that crimes were un-recompensed?

This is the ethical standard of most modern Druids. Because it is not summed up in a couplet or long poem does not mean it's nonexistent. It is merely expressed in a different fashion.

Calling Quarters and Magic

Wiccan magic is concerned with projecting the willpower of the caster into the universe, normally through natural energy flows. Part of this magick and ritual is calling on the four quarters of the world, North, South, East and West. Generally there are classical Hermetic elements associated with those quarters, Air, Earth, Fire and Water. These elements give power and energy to the ritual and generally boost the "feel" of the ritual. Druidry is votive in nature, meaning that a critical component of the spirituality and magic is the relationship one has with the Gods, for they are never ordered or commanded, but they are petitioned as friends and companions.

Under very specific circumstances Druids occasionally used the same structure of calling upon the Natural World. Even then it's vastly different from "standard" Wiccan practices. In Druidic rituals the Land, Sea and Sky are called upon.

Each of the Three Realms has specific attributes and very definite associations with them. If I were to ask a Wiccan where the Gods lived, many would not be able to tell me, for the Elemental Quarters hold no answer. But ask a Druid who also uses and understands the Three Realms in a cosmological sense, and the immediate answer will be "The Sky."

Each Realm is associated with a time of life, a stage of development and a mental quality, as well as having several other associations, ranging from Magical to the Time of day.

The Sea is the time before time, when we are not born. All life comes from the Sea. It is where we go at death; it is the source of Dreams and Inspiration. It is the realm that is traveled over to get anyplace when coming from or going to Ireland.

The Land is the here-now. It is this moment, life, and creation, all that is around us. It is fertility, conscious thought, the Universe. All science fits into the realm of the Land, for it is all concerned with the physical realm.

The Sky is the dwelling place of the Gods, the super-conscious, logic and thought. It is where logical ideas come from, and it is a place we hope to gain eventually, to become one with the Gods. It is also where Divine Inspiration comes from.



Every single one of the associations for the elements in the classic Hermetic elemental structure exist in Druidic belief and practice within the three Realms. They are not broken out into separate aspects or spheres as they are in Wiccan beliefs and practices. There are no elementals, deva of the elementals, rulers of the elements or realms in Druidic belief or practice. The realms have no spirits, no consciousness of mystical places, and certainly no angels associated with them because the realms simply are all encompassing. For Druids, it would be like trying to reduce the entire universe down to one human consciousness.

Which brings us to Druidic magic. It's different in some very fundamental ways from Wiccan Magick.

In Wiccan magick, a Circle is cast, the Quarters are called, the Gods are (preferably) asked to bless the work, energy is raised and the spell is cast. After a while, the Wiccan will send that energy off with their desire "tacked on" to it. The intention being that the energy will work to bring their desire to pass.

A Druid, by contrast, is not raising energy. The Druid will invoke the Realms, invite the Gods to the ritual, possibly invoke the Hallows and Provinces (depending on the ritual structure the Druid uses) and then ask the Gods to do them a favor. For this, the Druid will offer food, service of body and/or mind to the Gods, a literal sacrifice to them. In one ritual to help me with a job, I dedicated a blood donation to the Red Cross to Lugh (for his Spear) and used that as my sacrifice to him for a favor I needed. In the same ritual, I baked the Dagda some bread and offered it to him and then gave it to the birds. It depends entirely on what you are willing to give and what the Gods want in return.

In this case, the reasoning is that as a druid, we are members of the Land. Things that could happen in the future belong to the Sky, where the Gods live. Therefore, it's easier for the Gods to make certain things come to pass than it is for us, since we are busy dealing with the now. So, asking the Gods to make an action more likely to happen is an efficient use of your energy. Nothing is free. The Gods will demand and have a right to demand a price from those who need something. If we want the object of the ritual, it makes sense for us to pay the price demanded in order to get it.

As my teacher pointed out to me, the Gods are reasonable. They won't demand anything that would decimate us to provide. If they did, it could be a test to see how strongly you are committed to gaining what you want. For example if a Druid was casting a spell to gain a new job, and barely had enough money to feed himself and his family, I doubt the Gods would demand gold from that Druid, mainly because the Druid probably doesn't have the means to gain the gold. They may demand a feast for themselves, which the Druid and his family would also share.

It should also be mentioned that witchcraft is a collection of granny-tales and native superstition, sometimes based in fact, but quite often based in protecting oneself from the Elves and Fairey. A Druid doesn't try to protect themselves from the realms of the Fairey, but rather strives to come to a partnership with those forces, so that they are working with the Druid, not against them. The High Magick in Wiccan practice is generally also influenced from other sources, most notably the Kabala of Judaism and the Ceremonial and Hermetic Magick of the Middle Ages. Druidic magic, rather than being "Do Steps A, B, C, D and E, in order to get outcome 78," is more of a give-and-take between working partners, a quid pro quo system of cause and effect.

Sacred Space and the Circle

Along with Magic, a concept that often confuses Wiccans when dealing with the Druid is the lack of a Circle in ritual. They point out that Stonehenge and other places similar to it are in a Circle, mounds are circular in shape, many Griannes are circular, and so too are the Celtic forts or duns. So why don't Druids use Circles?

It's because the creation of the Sacred Space is much different to a Druid. Since we are part of the Land, and the Land is everywhere and includes everything we see, touch, smell and taste, all that we interact with is sacred already. How can we, at the beginning of the ritual, sanctify that which is already sacred? Creating a "Sacred Space" is therefore redundant.

The Circle for a Druid is not for containment, as the Druid him/herself will become the container for the energy channeled into the ritual. It is simply an area that is set aside as "more sacred" than the surrounding area, or as a doorway through which other beings and ancestors can travel if they so choose.

The closest a Druid will come to this Wiccan ritual is to invoke the Ancient Provinces of Ireland. In this, once the Realms are invoked and the Gods invited, a Druid would call upon the Provinces of Ulster, Leinster, Munster and Connacht as well as the Center of Uisnech. The Druid will call upon the qualities associated with those provinces and use them to help in rituals. This is about as close to "calling the quarters" as Druidism gets. Each Order may use different processes in this case, and different representations. Most Druids stick with only invoking the Land, Sea and Sky.

Another reason Druids do not use a Circle is that a Circle excludes as well as includes. When a Circle is cast, the primary purpose is to contain the energy raised by the chanting, dancing, singing and other energy raising activities. Additionally, it protects the people inside the Circle from external antithetical influences, and in some cases it is designed to protect those outside the Circle from what is going on inside. The twin purposes of a Circle, containment and protection, would cut the Druid off from the very forces he wished to invoke for the ritual. Thus, most Druidic traditions discard the Wiccan concept of artificially designated "sacred spaces" altogether.

The Gods and Goddesses

One of the major differences that Wiccans need time to understand is that Druidism is not duo-theistic, but polytheistic.

Duotheism sees One God and One Goddess, both of which contain all the qualities possible within them selves, including attributes that could be assigned to the other sex. In this view, Kali is the same Goddess as Rhiannon who is the same Goddess as Sif who is the same Goddess as Athena and Artemis and Demeter and so on and so forth.

In Druidism, the Gods and Goddesses are separate individuals. Each has his/her own personality, desires, jobs, spheres of influence and flaws. Lugh tends to be arrogant, The Dagda overconfident, and so on. There is also no Maiden-Mother-Crone equivalent deity in Druidic practice. This also restricts the Druid to the Celtic Pantheon, although there is some choice as to which Celtic pantheon Irish, Welsh or Gaulish.

Shoving all the Gods together in one divine lump would be analogous to saying that I am the same as you, after all, we are both human. You have the same wants, the same needs, the same drives, the same hobbies, the same thoughts and opinions simply because we have the same general shape. To a Druid, this is not only incomprehensible, but also laughable to the point of idiocy since the Gods are not cardboard cutouts of each other. It's asking for a lot of trouble from the Gods for a human to tell Them what They will and will not be.

I feel this is probably the greatest sticking point for most Wiccans during their initial encounter with Druidism. But it can be overcome through the use of mythology.

The Book of Shadows and Mythology

Druids have no Book of Shadows. We may, as individuals, have a journal of our growth as people and as Druids, a place where we put down our thoughts and feelings on different topics. It's our Journal, and it's up to the individual to keep up to date.

When a Druid first joins an order or group, s/he may be given a ritual book, outlining the ritual structure or framework for the rituals the group uses, or a list of rites to do by rote for each of the holidays that are to be celebrated. This book of ritual structure and liturgy is about all they are given. Much of the spiritual path they will have to discover on their own.

Now, this does not mean that they have to eat hemlock to discover that it's poisonous. On the contrary, each Druid is encouraged to read and study the body of work that is available on different topics and not to take anything on faith or because their mentor says so. Studying is a requirement, not just an activity.

The student Druid is expected to read mythology, to read books on subjects such as the Ogham, divination, ritual structure, to study the whys and wherefores of the practice. Along with that they will, in some cases, be required to write articles on what they have found out, even if every other Druid in existence has already discovered and published the same piece of information. The student will still be expected to try to find it on his or her own. There is nothing like the thrill of discovery to ensure an idea remains in the student's mind.

It has been stated in the past that mythology is the key to Druidism, and that can be true. Not only are there clues and hints as to the actual history of Ireland, but also there are statements as to a Deity's personality, likes and dislikes, what will please one or anger another. In addition, hidden in the myths is a wealth of information on the beliefs of modern Druids. What qualities do the Land, Sea and Sky have, where are the places of power, how can one divine from the flights of birds what will happen and other such gems?

Without this reading and study, these gems will be hidden from the student, and in all honesty the student who is unwilling to do the work will probably be dismissed from the ranks of the Druids. But, in addition to this study, Druidism is a way of life. It is something that will be reflected in every action and every

thing the Druid does. You may not be able to say that someone is a Druid, but once you know you will never mistake it for anything else.

Unfortunately, there are no "one book and I'm a Druid" books out there. True Druidism is a compilation of many different books, not all of them directly related to Druidism, each of them providing a part of the puzzle. It's the gathering of pieces and putting them together that is the quest and hallmark of the modern Druid.

History

In this section I wish to make one thing clear, I am Wiccan myself as well as being a Druid. I have very few illusions about Wicca and I'm simply stating what I know to be the only conclusion one can come to based on current facts. I am not trying to put Wicca down nor am I glossing over facts.

Gerald Gardner created Wicca. He didn't create it in its present form, for like every living thing, Wicca outgrew what he thought it was and changed to something not readily recognizable by him. Does this invalidate Wicca? Not at all. Does the fact that a radio was invented invalidate the walkie-talkie?

Wicca has a history that can only be traced back to the 1950's or so. Some scholars place the actual dates of Wicca's invention earlier, some later, but most agree that it was in the mid 1950's. This ultimately means that Wicca is not centuries old, going back to the Paleolithic caveman as some have claimed. No religion that we currently have goes back that far. As society changes, so too does it's religious institutions.

While Gardner pulled from multiple sources to make Wicca, he did pull a few elements from the Celtic practices based on what was believed at the time. But Wicca is not Celtic. Ian MacAnTsoir and Dawn O'Laoghaire covered this particular point in detail in their essay "Why Wicca is not Celtic". [1]

Druidism has a documented history going back to the late 1600's and the Gentleman's Clubs and Societies of the time. John Tolland organized the first "Druid" Society in Europe, the Universal Druid Bond. From there, groups kept joining and splitting off, being created and dying, each with a kernel of Tolland's to start their particular brand of Druidism. The most recognizable group that is a direct line descendant of the UDB is the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids, or the OBOD. The OBOD and the Ancient Order of Druids stayed in existence through WWI and WWII and continue to the present.

In 1963 in Minnesota, the Reformed Druids of North America was formed, starting the first Druidic group on the American continent. With the focus shifting from a Fraternal order (which, admittedly, the descendants of the UDB grew out of) to being a scholarly order, modern Druidism was born. From humble beginnings as a protest against the requirement of Carleton College that there be religious services held for many school events with mandatory attendance, many new groups sprang into existence. The ADF (Ar nDraiocht Fein) started in the 1970's [Actually, in the early 1980s.] and spawned many splinter groups, The Henge of Keltria being the most famous and successful so far.

Modern Druids have a verifiable history that has been documented and researched. Druids do not claim straight-line descent from the Celts for that would be dishonest. We don't have to invent a history going back to the caves to justify our faith.

Tools

Tools do tend to be important to the Modern Druid. The tools aren't used the same way a Wiccan would use them.

The tools that are important to me are the Staff, Cauldron, Spear, Sword and Stone. Other Druids may disagree with this list. I have heard of other tool lists and certainly each Order will have their own valid ideas concerning what tools are necessary. Also, it should be noted, that a Druid can do a ritual without any tools at all except the mind.

These tools are not important in and of themselves, they are important for what they represent. For Wiccans, each tool is consecrated and identified as personal. Only the owner should touch/handle an athame for example because it is infused with their personal energies and another person handling the blade could contaminate that energy.

When a Druid sanctifies a sword for example, it is a representation of the Sword of Nuada. Any other Druid with access to it can use it in theory. The athame is exclusively the Wiccan's, the sword is Nuada's and it is He who grants his permission for Druidic use.

The Spear previously mentioned is the Spear of Lugh, the Cauldron the Cauldron of the Dagda, and the Stone is representative of the Stone of Fal. Each of these were treasures that the Tuatha de' Dannan brought with them from their cities when they came to Ireland from the North, and are each very magical artifacts.

The Staff is representative of a Tree, and a Tree connects the three realms, namely the Sea (represented by the water table) Land (Earth it rests in and on) and Sky (the air). As such, it reminds us to do the same thing, and to try to keep those connections in mind. This is why trees are revered in Druidism, although not worshiped.

As a part of this, the Pentagram or Pentacle do not appear anywhere in Druidic practice, at least not those practices that do not have a heavy dose of Wicca in them. The two main symbols of Druidism are the Triskel and the symbol of Awen /|. Both these symbols have threes contained within them, representing triune thought, in that everything comes in threes, Good-Bad-Indifferent, Land-Sea-Sky, Mind-Body-Spirit, and so on. The Triskel reminds us that it's important to bring those three qualities, whatever qualities they may be, together into one and in that point where they connect, become balanced in the center. This triune thought is central to Druidic thought.

Divination

One last component that may make many Wiccans do a double take is Divination. For the most part, Tarot cards are not used in modern Druidic practice. Now, that is not to say that Druids don't use Tarot to divine the future, because they do. It is saying that Tarot cards are not taught as a divinatory tool per se. Other means of divination are stressed and the Tarot only taught after those initial means of divination are mastered.

The tools most Druids use in forecasting the future are Ogham script, watching nature, and divining by scrying into water, smoke or even the fire. In most schools, Ogham is taught as one of the primary means of divination. Each of the 20 or 25 letters of the Ogham alphabet (there are several different and conflicting sets of Ogham letters that scholars have identified; none yet know which is more authentic than others) have a relationship to a tree, and in each case, that tree has a personality that can tell us a lot about what the Letter is saying. While interpretation may differ from FUTHARK superficially, the results and the spreads are the same.

In watching nature, the Druid simply sits outside and watches. They will watch the clouds, the flights of birds, the patterns water skimmers make on the lake, the sound of the crickets chirping, listen to the birds of the Gods and so on. Each of these will tell the Druid certain things from which he can extract information.

It must also be mentioned that in some cases, the Divination of a Druid comes from searching the mythology. By Druidic belief, things move in cycles, in circles. Actions in the past can and do repeat themselves in the present and in the future. By looking into the history or the myth, one may be able to extract what could happen next and make informed guesses and predictions on what should happen next based on what happened before. It is an intuitive leap to a possible new outcome based on understanding of the stories that we study.

Groves vs. Covens

The basic structure of Wicca is the Coven; the basic structure of a Druidic group is the Grove. Each has similarities in that there are attendees, leaders, watchers and guardians. Each person in the group has a role, and each has a specialty, even though ideally, everyone present has the same skills.

In contrast to a Coven, however, a Druidic Grove usually has a connection to a larger order. Whereas a Coven will normally only be connected to another Coven if it "hived off" from it, a Druid Grove is part of a larger overall structure. A central organization, like the ADF, is a larger umbrella group that directs all the Groves that call themselves part of the ADF. They have the final decision regarding who is or is not a member of their order, who may or may not study with their order and so on. Because of this, all Druids who are part of that order are members of the umbrella organization. Thus an ADF Druid from Lyon France could travel to Sydney Australia and worship with an ADF Grove there, and vice-versa as long as the language is not an issue. He could also travel to the United States and worshiping in any Grove in the States.

That also means that there is one office of information for the Order, one spokesman for the Order, and that the Head of the Order (sometimes referred to as an Arch Druid) can speak on behalf of the entire organization. The Head can also make rules, collect fees, give degrees and ordinations and so on. Most Druidic organizations like this are 501(c)(3) certified, which makes them a church in every legal sense of the word in the United States.

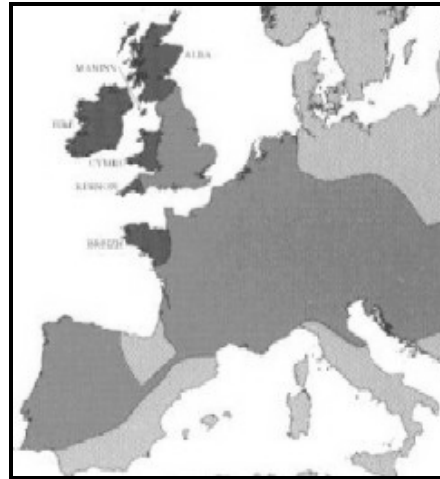
Each Grove, while not totally autonomous, does have its own teachers and leaders who are authorized to act on behalf of the Order in local matters. While the local Druid head of the Grove may speak out on taking down a monument in the local city, a statement on matters of national importance (like the Presidential Election) or world importance (like the Pope's apology) would come from the Head of the Order.

Solitary Druids do exist. While these Druids have every right to call him/herself a Druid, s/he should only speak for him/herself and not try to make all-encompassing statements. Solitary Druids are free to follow their own conscience concerning their beliefs and practices. Many Solitary Druids eventually become members of an Order to get a grounding in the basics of a style of Druidism, and from there may move on to develop their own form of Druidism. This is how the Ord Draiochta na Uisnech developed.

These differences are key to understanding the dichotomy between Wicca and Druidism. This document does not claim one is better, more right, more ancient or any thing else than the other. Instead, it is trying to explain the things that a Wiccan may not necessarily understand about Druidism. It is hoped it will help foster understanding and amicable relations between the two groups. Its goal is to affect an understanding that while we are both Pagan religions, Wicca is not Druidism and Druidism is not Wicca. Both have their strengths and weaknesses. Both are critical components to modern Neo-Paganism and both have a lot to learn from each other.

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About the author: Daven is a practicing Wiccan of 12 years, having studied for a significant portion of his life. Daven recently joined the Ord Draiochta na Uisnech to continue his Druidic studies, ceasing to be a Solitary Druid. To read more of his articles and thoughts on Druidism and Wicca



Celtic Sports Part One: Team Sports

By Mike Scharding, Digitalis Grove

The ancient (and modern) Celts didn't just do board games, but engaged in a variety of athletic pursuits, and from these countries, many of the organized team sports can trace their roots. Most popular team sports are historically merely a recent phenomenon. It is likely that most team sports derive from sacred festival games, where you had large groups of restless young people, into the more secular pastime of today. When I refer to team sports, I am generally referring to seasonal play between consistent groups of people; and not just the target competitions, fighting bouts and strongman contests of a single festival, which will be covered in the next installment of this series. In this three part article, I'll discuss the basics of outdoor sports, highland games, and drinking/pub games among the ancient and modern Celtic peoples; based on internet research, some SCA background, and a half dozen courses on medieval history.

You need to understand the geographical climate of Britain. Until the 10th century, the vast majority of the population of the British Isles (perhaps a total of 2 or 3 million), lived in small self-sufficient hamlets, surrounded by bogs, moors, forests, mountains, stormy seas, with only rudimentary deliveries unless they were on a river or ocean or near the king's highway. Most people probably never traveled more than five to six miles from home, except possibly on pilgrimages, marauding in war bands, cattle drives to the market, fishing or on church business (forerunner of the postal service). Divided by local dialects, long standing feuds, and roving bandits; these small populations were very suspicious of the next village down the road. People were generally always hungry, not very healthy (have you ever seen those small suits of armor?), sports medicine was crude, unfarmed open fields were rare

(churchyards, river banks and market squares were still a possibility), and non-necessary physical exertion or practice was not a highly prized social virtue. Regional sporting leagues were thus rather unlikely, but where large numbers of youths congregated for military training, or fostering in a royal court, team sports could be assumed to have popped up as a supplement to martial training, as we'll find with hurling. The diverse climates of the British Isles brought about summer and winter variations of this basic diversionary activity.



From the 12th to 18th centuries, as times began to get more peaceful, cities grew, and trade routes opened up in Europe, church officials and local lords often disdained or barred team sports as likely to erupt in violent mobs (which they usually did), accompanant gambling, and deviation from their spiritual and secular duties to the Lord and lord respectively. Such forms of peasant organization, training or traveling were considered subversive threats to the political-economic status quo, although the nobility themselves engaged in numerous ancient pastimes together themselves such as warring, whoring, hunting, and gambling with the fortunes of their country (the idyllic hopes of an actual knight was not too different from a gangster rap video if you read their epic ballads). Instead, serviceable peasants were encouraged to practice archery, do military drills, and prepare for war; which also was the most common form of population control at the time. Despite these bans, historical records increasingly find evidence of rudimentary sports developing; often in the form of progressively frequent bans on sporting activities, rather than detailed descriptions of the rules or team structures themselves.

Most sports federations, organized systems or rules, and teams date only from the late 18th or 19th century, when large portions of the population began attending public schooling; and some form of orderly dignified play was needed to release the repressed youthful spirits of children of Victorian Britain; who increasingly no longer needed to work in sweatshops all day. With increasing leisure time, free cash, personal hygiene, and interest in vigorous healthy exertion; sports soon bloomed as a respectable pastime for rich and poor until the 1970s. The world empires of the British, French, Dutch, Japanese and Americans quickly disseminated these games and lifestyles, and national teams began to proliferate and compete. Since the invention of the TV and computer games, and fitness clubs, with an ever-aging population demographic; sports participation has precipitously declined in Europe. In recent years, sports federations there have bemoaned an ever earlier age of specialization in one sport, intensifying focus on winning instead of playfulness, decrease in sportsmanship, increased interest in solitary exercise clubs, and a decline of interest in minor traditional sports by talented athletes. According to a recent survey, the top ten participatory sports in the United Kingdom are: walking, swimming, cycling, exercise,

snooker/billiards, ten-pin bowling/skittles, weight training, darts and—finally—soccer.



Large Team Sports

Hurling

Hurling is possibly the oldest known field game in Europe. It figures prominently in early Irish lore and the Brehon laws of the 6th century; thus going back at least 2000 years. The only definite thing we know about hurling is that this ancient game is the model for most Celtic sports, including camogie, a female version, Scottish shinty, Welsh bandy (or banty), Cornish out-hurling, ice hockey, field hockey, Gaelic football, and modern Irish hurling. Hurling was banned in 1366 by the Statutes of Kilkenny (along with mixed marriages by the invading Anglo-Normans) and strongly enforced by the Galway Statutes of 1527 due to the violent matches that would ensue after the game. Gaelic Football was devised as a substitute, by removing the hand-held sticks from the game. Hurling was revived in the 18th century by some local barons who added rules of honor to prevent fights, and hurling was institutionalized by the Gaelic Athletic Association in 1884. In the 19th century, variants of hurling, such as Scottish shinty (or camanachd at www.shinty.com) and Welsh bandy (played on ice) and hockey (Hokie), emerged and developed on similar rules. Golf (or kolf), a possible solitary descendent of Shinty, also became popular in the 18th century, but is recorded back to the 15th century, and probably has ancient antecedents of bored shepherds whacking rocks with a stick all over the world.

The legends, which were revived from extinction by Sechan Torpeist, a 7th century bard, tells the story of how Setanta, the nephew of King Conchobair Mac Neasa of Ulster, receives the name of Cuchulainn:

Setanta journeys to his uncle's court to join the boys' corps. He shortened his walk by hurling his silver sliotar (ball) and then throwing his bronze hurley stick after it. He would run and catch both the sliotar and the hurley stick before they hit the ground. Soon he arrived at court, and his hurling abilities amazed the boys of the corps. Legend has it that he was able to score with ease and when he guarded the goal he never let a shot in.

One day King Conchobair was invited to a banquet at the house of Culainn and asked his nephew to join him. Setanta agreed to go after he finished playing a hurling game. While at the feast Culainn asked the king if all the guests had arrived. King Conchobair, forgetting about Setanta, said yes, and Culainn unleashed his hound to guard the house. When Setanta arrived at the feast the great hound leapt up to attack him, but Setanta quickly hurled the sliotar at the hound and it went down

the beast's throat. The boy immediately grabbed the stunned hound by his feet and smashed its head into the floor of the stone courtyard killing him.

When the guests heard the baying of the hound they ran outside and were surprised to see Setanta alive and the beast dead. King Conchobair was overjoyed but Culainn was sad at the loss of his favorite hound. Setanta offered to find a hound worthy of the one he had slain and vowed to guard Culainn's home until such an animal could be found. Thus Setanta became known as Cuchulainn, which translates to "the hound of Culainn".

The stick, or "hurley" (called caman in Gaelic) is curved outwards at the end, to provide the striking surface. The ball or "sliothar" is similar to a field hockey ball with raised ridges. Hurling is played on a large pitch of 137m long and 82m wide. The goalposts are similar to those in rugby, with the crossbar lower than a rugby one and slightly higher than a soccer one. Each game lasts 90 minutes.

You may either strike the ball on the ground, or up in the air. Unlike hockey, you may pick up the ball with your hurley and carry it up to four steps in your hand. After those steps you may bounce the ball on the hurley and back to the hand, but you are forbidden to catch the ball more than twice. To get around this, one of the skills is running with the ball carefully balanced on flat of the hurley. The Sliothair may also be kicked with the feet, but only the goalie may use the hand to stop a hit ball, and this really really hurts. To score one point, you must put the ball over the crossbar with the hurley, or under the crossbar and into the net by the hurley for a goal of three points.

There are usually 15 members on a team, although some variants will have fewer players. Goalkeepers may not be physically challenged while inside their own small parallelogram, but players may verbally or physically harass them into playing a bad pass, or block an attempted pass. Teams are allowed a maximum of three substitutes in a game, which can be quite strenuous. Players may switch positions on the field of play as much as they wish.

60 pages of official hurling rules are at:

<http://www.gaa.ie/html/pdf/gaaguide.pdf>

		GOALIE		
Right corner-back		Full-back		Left corner-back
Right corner-back		Center half-back		Left corner-back
	Midfielder		Midfielder	
Right half-forward		Centre half-forward		Left half-forward
Right corner-forward		Full-forward		Left corner-forward



Gaelic Football

Gaelic Football can be aptly described as a rough blend of soccer and rugby, although it definitely predates both of those games. It is a field game, derived from hurling, and it is thought that the rough Australian Rules Football evolved from Gaelic Football through the many thousands of Irish who were either deported or emigrated to Australia from the middle of the nineteenth century. Gaelic Football is played on a pitch approximately 137m long and 82m wide and each team consists of fifteen players, arranged like a hurling team. The ball used in Gaelic Football is a little smaller than a soccer ball and can be carried in the hand for a distance of four steps, and can be kicked or "hand-passed," a striking motion with the hand or fist. After every four steps the ball must be either bounced or "soloed," an action of dropping the ball onto the foot and kicking it back into the hand. You may not bounce the ball twice in a row. When played by men, it may not be picked up directly from the ground. Physical contact is allowed, shoulder to shoulder, but no tackling. The goalposts are the same shape as those that are on a rugby pitch, with the crossbar a little lower than a rugby one, but slightly higher than a soccer one. To score, you put the ball over the crossbar by either foot or hand/fist for one point, or under the crossbar and into the net by foot or the hand/fist in certain circumstances for three points.



The rules of Gaelic Football:

<http://www.gaa.ie/html/pdf/gaaguide.pdf>

Rugby and Soccer/Football

The origin of soccer is widely contested by most countries in the world, which simply can't imagine a time when they didn't play it. I used to hear folklore stories from my father about English workmen in the 10th century who were digging in an old battlefield and uncovering the skull of a Danish soldier. Since the Danish had recently occupied England, the workers began to kick the skull around with glee, which probably hurt their feet. Most Celts reportedly showed greater respect for the

heads of their foes and friends. Actually, football games (known as soccer only in America) have been recognizably documented in the ancient writings of the Chinese (who generally kept detailed decent records of everything, long before the Celts even arrived in Britain) as early as 80 B.C., and soccer-like games have been appearing in Asian literature ever since. In Britain, the world-touring Roman soldiers who were unhappily stationed in that barbaric land probably introduced the game to the locals before the 5th century, possibly in an attempt to kill off the local population with this new violent sport. There is mention of the game as far back as 1175, in the book "History of London," and in those days it was a vicious mass scale hooliganesque contest between two villages:

"Up to two thousand people used to take part, there being no age restriction nor was it limited to the male population. There is evidence that matches took place between married woman and spinsters. The teams would meet at noon at a point decided upon by the leaders of the two villages, usually a point midway between the two villages, and a ball would be thrown in the air. The object being to take the ball back to one's own village where the goalposts were situated; these could be anything from a pool of water or center post in their own town square, and later in the town square of the opponent. The actual ball also varied from a piece of animal hide to a bundle of rags and signified either an item of warfare or of hunting. The means of getting the ball back to the goals was unspecified; but carrying it, kicking it and hitting it with sticks and clubs were the most popular. Some of the players were on horseback whilst others, carried swords in addition to their clubs and staves.

"The field of play was not restricted in any way and normally was anywhere between the two villages--up and down the hills, across valleys, through the farming fields and across rivers. Many people were maimed for life, some killed and others drowned when the mob went through a river or stream. It was thus an ideal way of settling family and other feuds. In many cases a game took place within a game, with ambushes being set to enable private duels to be settled. Play for the day was only abandoned at sunset. When a village was successful in getting the ball back to their own goal they symbolically killed it. The usual method was by drowning in the village fountain or rubbing it into the dirt at the local market. Afterwards the ball would be cut up and shared amongst the leaders."

A historical record of the development of soccer in England shows that Eton college produced the earliest known rules of the game in 1815, perhaps implying that until then, chaos was preferred over order, with street battles often ensuing afterwards. A non-carrying variant known as football soon began to be divorced from rugby. Order gradually came to the game, and standardized rules known as the Cambridge rules were adopted by England's major colleges. American Football began to radically diverge from rugby only after the invention of the quarterback's long-bomb throw in the 1930s at Notre Dame (due to a modification of the shape and a loophole in the rules), that allowed the ball to be thrown forward instead of sideways, that changed it into a staccato game to sack the quarterback or a few running backs, rather than the fluid chaos of rugby.

The rules they decided upon were roughly:

Each team has 15 players on the pitch (i.e. the field of play).

Only the player with the ball can be tackled.

No blocking, normally all supporting players must stay behind the ball carrier.

Forward passes are not allowed. Dropping the ball forward is also prohibited and is called a knock-on.

The ball can only be advanced by running or kicking the ball forward.

A tackled runner must immediately release the ball; the tackler must immediately release the tackled player.

Play is continuous; all stoppage of play must be immediately restarted (unless there is an injury).

A scrum (a large mass of players pushing together) restarts play after a forward pass or knock-on, a scrum can also be awarded in other situations.

A penalty results in the team penalized retreating 10 meters and the other team either tacking a quick tap ball, kicking the ball into touch for their own line out, or taking a penalty kick at goal.

A serious penalty or continuous infractions by a player can result in a 'sin binning'. The sin-binned player is sent off the pitch for 10 minutes and no replacement is allowed, reducing the team by one player.

After points are scored, the ball is kicked back to the scoring team.

The points are roughly: A Try for 5 points is awarded when the ball is carried or kicked across the goal line and downward pressure applied to the ball (i.e. touches the ball down) A conversion is the kick for 3 points is taken immediately after a team scores a try. The ball must be kicked through the goal posts.

History of Rugby:

<http://www.angelfire.com/biz4/bigbrian/origins.html>



Curling: Celts on Ice

For centuries, modern curling has been a favorite game in Scotland during the mild winters, and may be an old local adaptation of lawn bowling, which reputedly dates from ancient Roman times. The first unequivocal historical record of the sport is from notary John McQuhin, who noted a challenge about throwing stones across the ice between a monk at Paisley Abbey and a relative of the abbot in February 1541. Sir John Sinclair's Statistical Account of Scotland (1781 - 1799) wrote eloquently of the place in parish life that curling occupied. For example, the minister of Muirkirk in Ayrshire wrote: Their chief amusement in winter is curling, or playing stones on smooth ice. They eagerly vie with one another who shall come nearest the mark, and one part of the parish against another, one description of men against another, one trade or occupation against another, and often one whole parish against another, earnestly contend for the palm, which is generally all the prize, except that perhaps the victors claim from the vanquished the dinner and bowl of toddy, which, to do them justice, both commonly take together with great cordiality, and generally without any grudge at the fortune of the day; wisely reflecting, no doubt, that defeat as

well as victory is the fate of war. Those accustomed to this amusement, or that have acquired dexterity in the game, are extremely fond of it. The amusement itself is healthful; it is innocent; it does nobody harm; let them enjoy it.

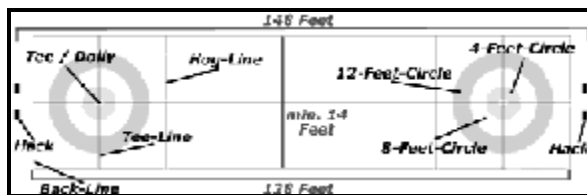
Although the Netherlands also has some evidence in favor of an independent origin, it was Scotland where the game matured and achieved popularity, and where you can still find the highest number of curlers per capita. Curling is popular in parts of Canada, United States, Australia, New Zealand, and a number of European countries. As early as 1924, curling made an appearance at the Olympics, as a demonstration sport, but it did not achieve full status as an official event until 1998, although it is probably the least televised aspect of the Olympics.

Curling is a large class of games, including lawn bowling, bocce, boules, shuffleboard, and (in some cases) marbles, that all have the same basic idea in common. Taking turns, competitors launch (throw, roll, or slide) a projectile (ball or puck) toward a target. After several rounds, the player or team with the projectile closest to the target wins; a large part of the strategy is displacing your opponent's projectiles while protecting your own. You get one point for each stone of yours that's closer to the target than the opponent's first closest stone.

It is only member of this class that is played on ice. A curling rink will have one or more playing surfaces, which are sheets of ice 146 feet long by 14 feet wide. At the end of each sheet is a circular bullseye-like target painted under the ice, consisting of a ring 12 feet in diameter with two smaller concentric rings and an inner circle called the tee, which is the target. The projectiles are big round granite stones about 12 inches in diameter and weighing up to 44 pounds. Handles on the tops of the stones enable the players to control them on the throw, and give a little spin. Each team has four players, and each player has two stones. Starting at one end of the ice rink, a player will "throw" (slide) the stone toward the target. Teams alternate until all the stones have been thrown, at which point the score is counted. Only stones within the outer ring of the target can be scored. The team with the stone closest to the tee wins that end (or round), collecting one point for each of their stones that are closer to the center than any of the opposing team's stones. After eight or ten ends, the team with the highest score wins.

The stones have a tendency to curve, or curl, as they slide down the ice, similar to bowling. By putting a deliberate spin on the flung stone, players can control the direction and extent of that curl and use it to their advantage. But the stone's fate is not determined only by physics after it is thrown, the fun still continues. As the stone slides toward the target, one or two players will slide in front of it, sweeping the ice vigorously with little brooms or brushes (called besoms). This looks rather goofy, but it's a key strategy of the game, because brushing the ice is actually polishing it, giving the stone a smoother surface of melted water and thus extending the stone's range and influencing the direction of the stone, making the competition much more complex.

http://www.gonzaga.k12.nf.ca/academics/physed/curling/%20rules/rules_of_curling.htm



Handball

Handball is simple and involves only two or four players (singles or doubles), a ball, durable hands and a few walls. The size of court (60 feet x 30 feet and 40 feet x 20 feet) depends on local custom. Handball is actually much like squash (but without rackets) with the players striking the tiny ball against the front wall, in the hope that it will bounce past their opponent or bounce twice on the floor earning them a point. You've probably seen kids do this at school with tennis balls. The ball is struck with the palm of the hand, or sometimes with a closed fist. When a player has twenty-one points, they have won the game and the player who is first to win two games is declared the winner of a match. One of its great appeals is that it can be played to middle age and beyond.

Uniquely among the Irish Gaelic Games, handball has a thriving international dimension due to Irish emigration in the nineteenth century, but US Army personnel were responsible for bringing the game to mainland Europe. Wherever the game is played throughout the world, the various versions are all thought to be linked to the traditional Irish game, with the possible exception of "Fives", a game played in the United Kingdom and "Pelota", a game similar to handball which was first played in Spain's Basque region.



What about Cricket?

Sadly, I'm out of space this issue, and Cricket is about as English a game as exists. Go to the following page for more information:

<http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/cricket.html>



The Soul of Juliana Spring

By Irony Sade
Copyright November 2000

Chapter Sixteen

Russell Raskin lay like a skull on a pillow, his hands gnarled and nearly lifeless on the sheet that pinned him down. Wires trailed beneath the cloth. A tube bled oxygen into the air beneath his nose. His eyes followed me as I entered the room. There was a chair by the window. I sat.

"You knew." His voice was quiet.

I nodded.

"How?"

"I looked into your eyes and saw the truth that lived there."

"God told you," muttered Russell. "He told you, so that you would tell me, that I might see my life for what it was. The bastard. You are no better than I was. Why should He let you win?"

I said nothing.

"He did not lie, you know."

"I do not think the gods can lie. It seems a purely human art."

"He told me no human hand would stop me, too. I did not realize that meant He would."

"Perhaps he was giving you the chance to stop yourself."

"Shut up with the righteousness, will you?"

I studied the wires and tubes, the machines that stretched his life.

"Look at me--a dying preacher discussing God with a Druid. I must be mad."

"I once read that the important religious distinction was not between those who believed and those who did not, but between those who loved and those who did not. What you or I believe may not matter so long as we act with love."

"Which does not leave me any better off," growled Russell.

I looked away.

"You loved them both, Russell. You could not have hated so powerfully else."

"Do you believe that?"

I shrugged carefully.

His eyes blazed.

"Answer me, damn you! Do you believe that? Or are you feeding me lies so I'll die content?"

"I was offering an interpretations of events that might bring you peace, should you choose to believe it. How could I know what you felt?"

"You knew what I did."

"What is not the same thing. Besides, is it not the role of priests to bring comfort to the dying?"

"Not this priest. I've never wanted comfort. Comfort keeps you from facing the truth."

"Facing the truth just got you killed."

"Bullshit. Hiding the truth got me killed. Owning up to it just let me die--that and your damned questions. And don't expect me to thank you for that either!"

"I don't. Believe me."

Raskin coughed, exhausted by the effort.

"Why did you do it, anyway?" He asked.

"For Juliana."

The preacher was silent.



"I heard her play, you know. At the concert. A friend of a friend told me about it. That's how I found you. She is good. If God loves music you may not have done such a bad thing."

"She has thrown her whole life into the harp," I responded. "I only hope she forgives me that."

"If not, it's nothing worse than what I've done."

"So? You only hid the truth. I let her believe a false one."

"That's not as bad as murder. Maybe I will see you in Hell after all." The pale Christmas sunshine sidled slowly down the wall. Church bells caroled in the steeple outside.

"Why did you want to see me?" I asked.

The old man chuckled.

Who else was I supposed to talk to? Juliana? My flock? Haven't you read your Nietzsche? All friends lie. Only your enemies will tell you the truth."

I smiled ruefully. There was nothing I could say to that.

"Speaking of which," said Russell sharply.

I stilled my features. Dying as he was, this man could still wound me.

"I've heard it said that Juliana sold her soul to play the way she does. Do you know anything about that?"

"There are different ways to sell ones' soul," I answered very carefully. "One can drive a supernatural bargain, one can destroy some thing or quality central to ones' identity, or one can commit ones' self so completely to a single pursuit that everything else must be neglected. Out of countless paths Juliana has chosen one--and never left it. She has never explored anything else, never tried to discover other worlds, other loves, other things she could be. She has brutally pruned her own possibilities, and thus accomplished something practically

impossible. In that sense she has sold her soul. To me that is an admirable and terrifying choice."

Juliana's father watched me very quietly.

"There was nothing supernatural involved?"

"There was nothing supernatural involved."

Russell grunted. It could have meant anything.

"What a strange way to think," he muttered at last.

Minutes drifted by. Raskin's breaths were getting weaker.

"Is Sam alright?" He asked me suddenly.

"A few stitches. He will be fine."

"Good."

A certain tension went out of him.

"Last request time, isn't it?"

I bit my lip, nodded.

"Tell Juliana she can perform at my funeral." He grinned savagely. "Bet she always wanted to play me to death."

"I'll do that."

Russell Raskin glared up at me. His grey eyes burned, dimming.

"Thrice damned Druid! Take care of my little girl for me."

"I will," I whispered, and he was gone.

Chapter Seventeen

Very few people can manage a funeral and a wedding in the same week with any sort of grace. Sam was one of those few. Watching him move amongst the wedding guests and the mourners from Russell's church, I realized what it was in him that my lovely harpist loved. Juliana Spring Raskin Hammersmith refused to have the wedding put off. She put on all the requisite roles and played at both events.

There was something new in her music now. In her triple guise as daughter, widow, and angel of death, she played at the funeral something I had never heard. There was grief in it, and longing, forgiveness, surcease and healing. She was burying both her parents that day, though none but we three knew it. She played what she played, and the gathered mourners wept, longed, suffered, and forgave, without ever understanding what it was for.

"What was that?" I asked her later.

"The music in my dreams. I just sat and listened and played what I felt. It is the first time that has happened."

"Maybe it was worth it," she added.

She was staring at nothing at all as she spoke. I knew not if she addressed myself, or the grave.

"Juliana," I began.

"No." She stopped me. "I am not the best in the world yet. Almost, but not yet. That might not be so important now, but this new thing is. This is a thing I need to explore."

She rose and left me where the wind played games with the snowflakes and the headstones, the memories and the souls.

At the wedding she played love, but that is an impoverished word to call what was in her music. She played the passion of the newly wed, the depth and humor that comes of knowing another life and mind through twelve long years. She played the tender care of a parent- and this from someone who had never had a child. And she played something else. A thing too powerful to name, that choked me with a private longing. It reached inside to drag out notions I had sworn I would never entertain, and left me shaken with its passage. Juliana's eyes caught mine as she touched the strings, and she smiled at me for the first time since the concert.



At last she released us and took Sam's hand in hers. The guests gaped, daring only to breath. The pastor stood slowly at the head of the chapel. He stretched forth tremulous arms and raised his face to the heavens.

"Amen!" He exclaimed.

And that was the wedding.

Chapter Eighteen

Now I grow weary of the passage of time, and this telling has nearly reached its end. Five years later Juliana was the best harpist in the world, without a doubt, by any standard you cared to name. There were those who said she was the best musician in the world; that she played on peoples' souls instead of strings.

The seasons' changeless change had swung through to Beltain again when the couple came to visit me. I led them down to the workshop where I had labored all winter.

"I have something for you," I let on as we approached.

Standing on the bench was a small traveling harp of darkest mahogany, completely unadorned, polished as glass. Its strings glowed like liquid sunshine in the clear spring light.

"Is that what I think it is?" Sam wondered aloud.



"Golden strings," I smiled. "The best harpists have always had them."

"You're trying to make a legend out of me, aren't you?" Said Juliana.

I laughed.

"If I am, I am too late. You are that already. I just wondered what gold harp strings might sound like, that is all, and you are the only one good enough to do them justice."

She gave me a quick hug.

"You are too kind."

"Hardly. But come outside. The Maypole is starting."

Chapter Nineteen

The rest of the day was a time of celebration and life, that fluid, wonderful, time defying clarity that once seen remains forever living in a persons' heart. The feast was consumed, the pole danced and braided, the King and Queen of the May chosen, crowned and married. I sat on a sun soaked log to rest my knees after the ceremony, watching the wedding games. The King and Queen stood in a circle of revelers, their hands tied to full wine cups, holding a kiss between them. Those in the ring joked, teased, and shouted, gleefully doing everything they could short of actual contact to make the couple laugh and break it off.



Juliana collapsed lightly to my right, flowers in her hair and laughter in her eyes.

"All these years, all these Beltains," she began. "How is it that you never married?"

I looked at her in surprise. Her eyes teased mine.

"Who would have had me?"

"I might have."

"I am twice your age, dear."

"Not any more you're not."

"True. But you had Sam."

"True." She gazed at him fondly from across the green.

"We are thinking of having children, he and I. I am not quite too old yet."

She laughed. "But what sort of mother would a soulless woman make?"

"Juliana Spring," sighed I, and took her hand in mine. "I never took your soul."

She stared.

"You what?"

"I never took it. Your soul has been yours all along."

"But you did! Our bargain--you spoke those words and I felt it leave!"

"It was all in your mind then. I do not really know if souls can be sold. Lost, saved, destroyed, nourished, abandoned, loved, certainly, but to the best of my knowledge your soul is with you always, love it or hate it, to do with as you will. What would I have done with an extra soul, anyhow?"

The harpist's jaw worked soundlessly.

"But if you couldn't buy my soul, why did you even want to meet me in the first place?"

"I wanted to see what it was like to want something that badly. I never have, you know. Most people never do. I could not imagine a desire so strong in a person that young. I had to meet you."

Laughter erupted throughout the glade. Someone had started people-fishing with doughnuts.

"You tricked us," she said at last.

"I did. Are you angry?"

"I don't know yet... If there was no bargain, then everything you've done..."

"I did nothing." I cut her off. "It was all you, Juliana."

"But why?"

"What would you have done all those years ago, if I had told you souls could not be sold, that only practice, passion, and infinite dedication could make you a better harpist? What if I had told you that even with guidance, time, and expert teachers there was no guarantee you would ever be as good as you wanted, or that dream music could never be properly reproduced? I had never even heard you play, remember?"

"I might have become a nurse," she reflected. "Why didn't you though?"

"Because you were serious. Because you were strong enough to make me wonder. Because the gods love it when we act bravely." Her deep, deep eyes searched mine.

"And because, watching you, I got just an inkling of how powerful that desire might be."

In an ideal world she would have kissed me then. But we were in this one, and the moment passed.

"I will name my firstborn after you."

I laughed.

"Even if it is a girl?"

"Even better! I could never have done it without you."

"Nonsense," said I, but it is hard to sound believably stern when your cheeks are flushing crimson.

Chapter Twenty

Juliana played her new harp for us that night, while the couples snuggled and the stars blazed down. She sat on our log in a borrowed cloak with her hair blowing long about her shoulders. The strings burned golden in the firelight as they sang, and a whole generation of listening fools began to believe in magic.

It was the story of her life we heard, made music, wordless and eloquent. Dream songs from her childhood, her mother vanished, father possessed, early despair in her years in college and the flush of young love in meeting Sam. Then came the power, the wonder, the mystery and horror of an unspeakable bargain, the surrender, confidence and strange purity it engendered, and at last the full splendor of the mature theme began. Two decades of concentration and skill in one ascending spiral, the struggle, journey, grief, love, discovery, mastery... and at the end, when I was sure there could be nothing left to feel, came joy.

The End.





The Language of the Picts

From the Orkneyjar: the Heritage of the Orkney Islands site:
<http://www.orkneyjar.com/history/picts/language.htm>

At the forefront of the great mysteries surrounding the Picts, and one that has stimulated the most discussion and argument over the centuries, is the language these people spoke.

According to historical records written by contemporaries of the Picts, they spoke a different language to that used by the other inhabitants of Scotland. A clear reference to this can be found within the accounts of St. Columba's life in which we learn that he required an interpreter in order to converse with the northern Picts.

However as the Picts themselves kept no written records of their lifestyles, beliefs or heritage, their language has now all but disappeared. The only sources that can give vague clues as to its nature are some of the carved inscriptions they left, placenames and certain accounts of Pictish names written by external sources at the time.

As with all things Pictish, however, the lack of concrete evidence has led to a number of opinions and theories as to the form of the spoken language of the inhabitants of Northern Scotland in the early centuries of the first millennium. Some claim that the Picts spoke an old language indigenous to area—a language that predated the language of the Britons, the Scots and the Irish. This language did not have an Indo-European origin but was instead a survival of the ancient language used by the Bronze Age people of the area.

Then there is the idea that the Picts merely spoke a variant of a Celtic language related to the language of the Ancient Britons. When the Celts arrived in this country, they brought with them an Indo-European language that replaced the existing languages of country.

Along the same lines is the idea that the Picts spoke a version of Ancient British that contained elements of Irish Gaelic—fragments picked up over the years through contact with the Scotti—the invading Irish settlers who claimed territory down the west coast of Scotland. This theory is strengthened by the fact that the writing system used by the Picts—Ogham—originates in Ireland.

The final theory is not actually related to the spoken language of the Picts but instead focuses on the later inscriptions they made using Ogham. It has been suggested that although the Picts used this Irish writing system, they used Old Norse. This is a convincing theory that consistently appears to make sense out of what was once thought to inexplicable.

Dr. Richard Cox, a lecturer in the University of Aberdeen's Department of Celtic claims that the ogham inscriptions found in Orkney as well as in other parts of

Scotland, were actually written in Old Norse, the Scandinavian language of the Vikings.

His discovery, published for the first time in 1999 went against the research community that had long believed the inscriptions to be an ancient form of Gaelic or a long forgotten Pictish language.

Dr. Cox explained: "The inscriptions are written in ogham, a writing system using a series of straight slashes on, through or below a central stem line. We think it was developed in fourth century Ireland and later brought to Scotland. While the system was used to write Gaelic in Ireland, no one has been able to make sense of the inscriptions in Scotland.

"But using Old Norse, the inscriptions can be translated meaningfully. Many are memorials, recording who carved the stone and in whose memory it was erected."

The 19 inscriptions Dr. Cox studied make-up about half the ogham inscriptions found across Scotland.

"This discovery is of major significance for our understanding of the early history of Scotland and Scandinavia. There is plenty of evidence, through placenames for example, of Scandinavian influence in some parts of Scotland but these stones provide clear evidence of strong links between Scotland and Norway in areas where other areas is absent." said Dr Cox.

"In Scandinavia memorial inscriptions like these would be carved in runes not ogham. The question is why are these stones carved in Old Norse but using a system of writing developed in the Gaelic speaking world? The evidence suggests strong links in language and learning and in religious custom between Norse and Gaelic-speaking communities."

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News



Breakthrough for Treatment of Oak Death

Scientists say Product Helps Infected trees fight disease

Peter Fimrite, Chronicle Staff Writer

Friday, October 3, 2003

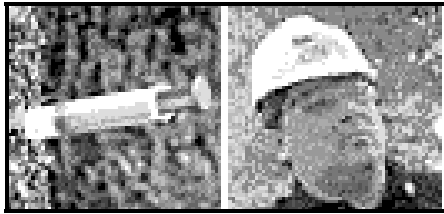
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sfgate.com/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2003/10/03/BA253925.DTL

The first major breakthrough in the treatment of the tree killer known as sudden oak death has been approved for use on oaks, a development that could save thousands of homeowners' trees from the plague.

The phosphite product, developed by the Australian company AGRICHEM, protects endangered oaks from infection and helps infected trees fight off the disease, according to UC scientists.

The California Department of Pesticide Regulation approved two versions of the compound Wednesday—one is a spray, the other an injection—for use by professional arborists and foresters.



"This is not the final solution," warned Matteo Garbelotto, the UC Berkeley forest pathologist who has led scientific research on the deadly microbe. "It is just one tool in a series of efforts to stop the spread of the pathogen. But it also gives us hope. The general belief had always been that you can't do anything to stop disease in the forest. This shows there are things that can be done."

The microscopic disease, known scientifically as *Phytophthora ramorum*, has killed tens of thousands of tan oak, coast live oak and black oak trees in California and Oregon, and has spread to at least 27 other tree and shrub species, most of which act as hosts but do not die.

Scientists believe 11 other kinds of plants and trees have also been infected, but the research verifying them as carriers has not been completed.

The virulent microbe, which throws off spores like flowers shed pollen, has, in essence, scraped whole sections of California's oak dotted hills and valleys bare.

In some canyons in Big Sur every tan oak tree has been killed. Some 40 to 45 percent of the majestic live oaks have died in hard-hit areas, including Marin County.

The chemical, also known as phosphonate, is expected to be available for use on private trees by Oct. 22, after arborists who want to use the product go through two days of training at UC Berkeley.

On Thursday, Garbelotto demonstrated its use—expected to cost homeowners about \$30 per application. One way to treat oaks is to inject the chemical into the tree's vascular system with a syringe. The other is to spray the bark with a mixture of phosphite and organosilicate, a chemical that helps the bark absorb the chemicals.

Phosphite is absorbed into the tree and moves up into the leaves, Garbelotto said. It then enters the cambium, the part of the tree the pathogen attacks. The presence of phosphites in the cambium prompts the tree to release chemicals that fight off infections, he said.

The original studies on phosphonate in 2001 showed marked reductions in lesions on trees, but it was registered as a fertilizer and could not be used to fight sudden oak death.

Garbelotto said further studies in Australia, where a different phytophthora is killing trees, proved the compound worked against the kind of disease affecting oaks.

The new product is good news for homeowners whose oak trees can add \$30,000 to the value of their property.

But the battle continues on many other fronts.

The disease has been found in nursery plants in Sacramento and in Placer and Stanislaus counties; in King County, Washington; and in Medford and Portland, Ore. A nursery in Vancouver, B.C., was also found to have the disease. And, for the first time, the two mating types of the disease were recently found in Portland, leading to fears that the two could mate and create a new kind of killer immune to the phosphite treatment. The other mating type was previously found only in Europe.

And, even if the disease can be controlled in some places by the newly approved chemicals, it can still live for years and

years in hosts like the bay tree and infect future generations of oak trees.

©2003 San Francisco Chronicle

Longtime Berkeley Bookstore Closes

TO ALL THE FRIENDS, COLLEAGUES AND PATRONS OF SHAMBHALA BOOKSELLERS:

It is with great sadness that I must inform you that I have decided to sell this business.

I have put this decision off as long as possible hoping that the economics of the book industry would stabilize and that of the community in general would improve. I have shared the grim realities of our situation with you in several previous "Open Letters". While many of our long-time friends have rallied to our support, market forces have proven stronger and the trend has continued to further weaken us.

For some months now we have been unable to pay our bills in a timely manner despite rigorous efforts to cut overhead, reducing both hours and staff. The past two years have seen a steady decline in business, a 20% drop in sales in 2002 (operating at a loss) and an additional 30 to 40% so far in 2003.

Things, as they say, can't go on this way.

There are many different factors that have contributed to this situation, but the principal two are the general economy and the current nature of the book industry. The downturn in the nation's economy has adversely affected small businesses all around the country, with perhaps a special focus on California and the SF Bay Area in particular.

Still, 35 years is a pretty good run for a little bookshop. I have always treasured and have striven to continue the legacy of Shambhala Booksellers. It has added untold benefit to my life to have worked here these past 24 years. It has been a privilege to have served and worked with you.

I urge those of you who have outstanding trade or credit slips to please come in and make use of them. I wish, as far as possible, to leave no debt outstanding.

Hopefully we will see, as the elders have told us, with every ending comes a new beginning.

Many thanks,

Philip Barry
Owner/Manager

Events

Oak Ash & Thorn in San Jose

Nov. 15th



Ah yes, another season is passing...twenty dollar bills are beginning to turn bright colors...governors are falling from the trees...and the cool breeze of autumn bears the faint whiff of another batch of home brew gone terribly, terribly wrong.

Must be time for a South Bay show! Join us at the Fiddling Cricket Folk Club on November 15th for an evening of food, drink and song as The Espresso Garden & Café presents an evening of sonic debauchery with Oak Ash & Thorn.

Tickets are \$14, the show starts at 8 p.m. and seating is limited, but the food is great and the beer is cold, so come down early for dinner and a good seat. Better yet, reserve a place by calling (408) 394-3353 or e-mail brundle@attglobal.net For

more information or directions, visit www.fiddlingcricket.com or our website at www.oakashthorn.com

We look forward to seeing you there!

Cheers,

Oak Ash & Thorn

3rd Annual Interfaith Pagan Pride Parade and Celebration Returns

Sponsored by K.P.F.A. 94.1, The San Francisco Bay Guardian, and Berkeley Community Media (Ch.25)

ALL DAY!

Theme: "DIVINE FEMININE"

SATURDAY MAY 15TH, 2004, 10am-5pm at CIVIC CENTER PARK IN BERKELEY, CA

New Location! New Celebration!

We are pleased to announce our third Annual Parade and Celebration, which will no doubt prove to be the best yet! This year, we have expanded the celebration to include vendors, crafts, and food (positioned nearby.) We are also excited to announce that we will be featuring an "Author's Circle," in which you can meet and converse with the Pagan community's leading published Authors!

Speaking of Authors, our Parade Marshal for this year will be none other than the wonderful Ms. Diana Paxson, author of NUMEROUS books, and Priestess of Hrafnar, an organization which practices the native religion of the Germanic peoples (Asatru) and Norse shamanic skills, such as oracular seidh. Find out more about Hrafnar and Diana Paxson Here:

<http://www.hrafnar.org/>

And Don't Forget...

AWARDS FOR FLOATS AND COSTUMES! We are continuing to encourage the participation of floats and costumed participants this year, and will offer special awards for both BEST FLOAT and BEST COSTUME, so don't miss your chance to show us how creative you can be!... and if your serious about building a float, We have a new handbook entitled "Building a Parade Float: A guide for Amateurs" that we would be happy to send you. Just drop us a line at paganparade@earthlink.net. Also, this years event will be covered by our newest sponsor, Berkeley Community Media (Ch.25,) so dress in your brightest and smile for T.V.!

Camera Shy? Bring a mask, or come down and cheer the community on...we would definitely love that!

What? You have not heard of this event? Then you are in for a treat! The Interfaith Pagan Pride Parade and Celebration started in March of 2001, as a community service to the "Interfaith" members of the pagan community, as well as friends and neighbors who support the unity that this celebration represents. The event is inclusive in that it brings together those members of the Pagan community (as described by the Interfaith Center at the Presidio,) who follow Earth-Based, Nature Centered, and or Polytheistic Beliefs. Among the many groups included in this description are Native American (North, Central, and South), Afro-diasporic, Neo-Pagan, Taoist, Shinto, Aboriginal, Hindu, traditional Shamanic, and African spiritual communities. These communities comprise roughly 1/4 of the World's Population, and we members of most of these communities to participate in the Event.

We are endorsed by the Interfaith Center at the Presidio, the San Francisco Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual /Transgender Pride Parade, Reclaiming, the Berkeley A.C.L.U, and the Covenant of the Goddess; all internationally recognized organizations.

Please feel free to pass this invitation on to others, and bring your Family and Friends! Check out our latest Newsletter here:

<http://ppp.magicclamp.net/mn/Newsletter.asp>

2004 Pagan Pride Day...Modesto

Greetings Everyone,

We are happy to announce that the date and location have been set for the 2004 Modesto Pagan Pride Day Harvest Fest!

The 2004 Harvest Fest will be on Saturday September 11th, 2004 at the American Legion Hall in Modesto, California. Admission to the event will be completely free with a canned food donation.

We plan on offering 20 to 30 craft vendors, covens, and non-profit booths in addition to 4 to 5 authors and speakers. Bands, mythic dancers, entertainment and more will grace our entertainment stage on the deck. We will also be featuring an art show, discussion panels, and a 9/11 memorial.

We hope some of you will be able to make the drive to Modesto and take part in our large 9/11 Memorial this year. It'll probably be one of the largest Pagan memorials around. We are planning a second memorial ritual in respect to 9/11. We will also be having a large Memorial Banner that we hope to get 100s of Pagan signatures on before we send it to New York and Washington DC!

You can get much more information about the Modesto Pagan Pride Day at this URL:

<http://www.aupagans.com/Modesto/PPD.html>

FOOD FOR THOSE IN NEED

AUP also features a year around food bank open to all of those in need of a little extra help. If you or someone you know would like to receive more information on the Association Of United Pagans Food Bank, please visit this URL: www.aupagans.com/Modesto/Services_FoodBank.html

Blessings and MoonLight,
DragonHawk & MoonRaven
Coordinators: 2004 MPPD
Modesto Pagan Pride Day
120 San Juan Drive
Modesto, CA 95354
(209) 549-1727
<http://www.AUPagans.com>

Resources

A Chàirdean,

Some of you may be familiar with Carmina Gadelica, a six-volume set of traditional Gaelic poetry -- hymns, chants, incantations, work songs, blessings, etc., collected by Alexander Carmichael between the mid-1800s and early 1900s. Carmichael himself lamented the fact that he was unable to transcribe the tunes and was only able to collect the poetry itself (although that, in itself, was a major feat of great importance).

Our Celtic group, Distant Oaks, has just released a new album entitled "Gach Là agus Oidhche: Music of Carmina Gadelica," which features thirteen songs from volumes I, II, and

III of the collection (various types of poems which we set to original music in traditional styles), along with dance tunes (reels, jigs, slip jigs, strathspeys) and slow airs (both original and newly composed tunes).

The line-up and instrumentation is as follows:

Deborah L. White: vocals, guitar, citole, cittern, fretted dulcimer, percussion.

Jared White: recorders, whistles, Scottish smallpipes, Border pipes, uilleann pipes, psaltery, bodhrán, percussion, backing vocals.

Shayne White: Celtic harp, Medieval harp, virginal, percussion.

David Douglass: Baroque violin

Julie Jeffrey: viola da gamba

Of particular interest to learners is the 20 page booklet, which includes all of the song lyrics in both Gaelic and English, along with historical and cultural notes concerning Carmina Gadelica, Alexander Carmichael, and the individual pieces on the recording (21 tracks of music in all).

If you're interested in reading more about it, listening to sound clips, seeing the beautiful hand-designed cover by Titus Woods, or obtaining a copy of the recording, please visit our new Web site:

<http://www.northernwindrecordings.com>

If you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail me at: gaidheal@distantoaks.com

Leis gach deagh dhùrachd,

Gobnait (Deborah)

Distant Oaks

Celtic & Early Music

<http://www.distantoaks.com>

<http://www.northernwindrecordings.com>

Calendar

Astronomical Samhain, when the Sun is half-way between the Fall Equinox and Winter Solstice will occur this year on Friday, Nov 7 as 15 deg of Scorpius at 12:14:45 a.m. Pacific Standard Time or by an alternate calculation as 16 deg 18 min. decl. 09:29:09 a.m.

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Yule Essay: Mistletoe

Reprinted from A Druid Missal-Any, Yule 1986
By Emmon Bodfish

Yule, Winter Solstice is one of the four minor Druid High Days. It is associated with the Holly and the Mistletoe, prosperity and purification. The hanging of mistletoe over doorways harks back to its protective function as the All-Heal. Sprits that bring disease will not pass under it. All mistletoe use and customs are carry-overs from Pagan, most notably Druidic traditions.

Though kissing under the mistletoe can't be traced back farther than the 17th century, it is probably much older. It reflects the herb's Paleo-Druidic attributes of protection, fertility, and prosperity.

Pliny the Elder, in his Natural History, gives us the best description of a Paleopagan Druid ceremony, that of cutting the Mistletoe. According to Stuart Piggot, the ceremonial mistletoe must be cut from an oak tree. The time of the ritual was set by the Moon as in Pliny's description.

"The time of the rite was the sixth day of the new moon, after preparations had been made for a feast and a sacrifice of two white bulls. A Druid in a white robe climbed the tree and cut with a golden sickle the branch of mistletoe, which was caught as it fell on a white cloak. The bulls were then sacrificed and all present ate of them."

The golden sickle is a puzzle, a pure gold will not hold an edge sharp and tough enough to cut through the woody stem of the mistletoe. Gilded, or simply polished bronze, are more likely materials. Though Pliny was allowed to witness the ritual, he probably could not approach the Druid or examine the sickle.



Nor would he have been able to talk to a Gaulish Druid without an interpreter. The ceremony was recorded in Roman Gaul. Gold may have been a description of a color, or a quoting of hearsay. Elsewhere in his book Pliny writes of the ritual necessity of gathering the mistletoe left handed, after fasting, and of the Celts plucking Selago without using an iron knife, barefoot and with the right hand through the left sleeve of a white tunic, but these were private rites, not public ceremonies. There is no mention in them of the presence of a Druid.

News of the Groves

Carleton Grove: News from Minnesota

Carleton sneaks on silently, nearly unseen (despite her best efforts). Winter blooms upon us, snow falls. And there is a great departure from the body of many students.

Nothing is, as yet, planned for Yule, which will probably be held privately, with most of the Druids off campus. However, we look forward to the return of the student body, and of my co-ArchDruid, Corwin Troost, from his self-imposed exile in Japan.

I am still looking for contributions for a collection of myth's about Dalon Ap Landu. It only takes a minute to write a myth and it can be about what ever you want it to be about (so long as it's about Dalon Ap Landu). You can email those to me, or questions, at: Crimmins@carleton.edu

Akita Grove: News from Japan

A simple New Year's card arrived at Mike's with the following message from Brother Pat: "All is well in the snowy lands of Akita. We were glad you had a chance to visit this year, and we may be visiting NC next March, and will definitely stop by in DC if we can get a connecting flight. Taiyo is growing strong, but seems to have a cold, perhaps because the sun is growing weaker in this season? We are too busy to write much, but try to read the Missalany in our spare time.

Blessings to everybody over there.

Pat

Bamboo Grove: News from Delaware

Reflections on Yule:

Whenever I do celebrate Yule (aka when I'm not frantically caught up in the chaos of the holiday plans of relatives and family and significant others' families, etc!) I tend to look for a simple way to celebrate the rebirth of the Sun King. My oldest memory of doing so was a simple red "log" candle, placed on a simple rectangular piece of thick, clear glass. I lit the three or four evenly spaced out candles on the log, and watched the tiny flames grow...the Sun King's reassurance to me that he was being nurtured for now, growing in strength, and would be ready to return for the New Year.

This year, while I was running errands and idly getting some early holiday shopping done, I stopped by the "SALE" area of the local Target store. (I'm fresh out of college aka broke, and Target is fast becoming my favorite store because it has great stuff that I always buy anyway!) Anyhow, I'd passed that section a few times but something drew me in this one last time. I saw an oil lamp that was in the form of a clear glass globe. Inside was a bit of an evergreen branch, three small pinecones, some "snow," and a bit of cinnamon, I believe.

It completely complemented the idea of what Yule means to me...a time to celebrate the joy and hope of the New Year

even in the midst of darkness and cold. The pinecones represent the seeds and potential of what is to come in the New Year, as well as the potent life force of the Sun King himself. The cinnamon is that bit of fire, a spark that will never go out within my soul even through the darkest times and coldest nights. The evergreen branch reminds me that even through the snow (the Time of Sleep) there is life...wild animals and flora quietly biding their time, waiting to be awakened, to unfurl their leaves once more. And so this simple candle holds promise for the future to me, which is a precious gift at this particular time in my life especially.

Grove News:

Although my ex-boyfriend/roommate has moved out with his snakes (sadly, one of his snakes we both cared for has passed on despite all our efforts) I have not had to "give away" any of the other Grove members; the Grove has managed to stay together through some minor financial miracles and I am grateful for that.

We are 9 members strong: myself (the only Human, and the Caretaker/Scribe); Archdruid (Bamboo plant); Muses: guinea pigs (Panda, Rygel); mice (Rascal, Spud, Lucky, as well as Cricket, who left this Earth so prematurely); rough green snake (Karma); and last but definitely not least, cat (Leo).

~*~A Big Announcement~*~

I suppose the biggest Grove News would be that I (Caretaker/Scribe of the Bamboo Grove) will soon be engaged to a wonderful and loving soul! He is in the Air Force Reserves, and his squadron is actively serving right now, which means a lot of chaotic work and such as of right now...not much dormancy! But Yule is the season of hope and of planting new dreams for the new year; my hope is that these dreams will take root, nestling into the fertile soil that lies beneath the cold frost, to burst into fruition in the spring and summer months ahead.

Blessings of Love and Light,

BrightMirage (Bard of the Reform, XLI)

Digitalis Grove: News from D.C.

Rumors abound that the ARDA 2 may make a debut in time for my birthday in Jan. according to Mark; but I will simply patiently wait and see if this comes true.

I missed a chance to attend a conference on Druidism in Alexandria in November, and Korean and Japanese matters have taken precedence over Celtic ones. And yet, every morning and evening I go out to walk the dog and stare up at the motions of the sun and moon, the falling leaves, and movement of birds and think on things. This and long commuting meditation and RDNAtalk discussion seems to be the whole of my Druidism lately. I also read from "Wisdom: Daily Reflections for a New Age" by Reynold Feldman.

As Christmas season approaches, and DC puts up the enormous Tree, Menorah and Yule log, I will get into the spirit and try to enjoy the holiday in the most Druidic way possible, chatting with my friends. Happy Holidays to everyone.

Dravidia Grove: News from Maryland

Hello All,

Sorry been off for a while, here we go...

A lot of weather changes going on here, and also got the chance to see the lunar eclipse about 2 weeks ago. School is rough, and so is work. In April we will be moving to Indiana

due to my youngest daughter going blind, it will be difficult for her to adapt at 11 yrs old, and a major change in my life since I have lived in MD all my life... We have had a lot of rain, and I have spent a lot of time reading some of my new books. The funny thing is just when you think you have completed the works of one particular author, he goes and writes another book. Well just a few more to add to my collection again.

—Dolanimus

Rowan-Oak Grove, MOCC: News from Oklahoma

rowan-oak grove will be having a feast and ritual burning of the yule log for yule 2003. the samhain/day of the dead costume party and convocation went off without a hitch. among the decisions voted on were the confirmation of all board of directors members and their offices within the grove.

confirmed are:

m.s. white raven- arch druidess

bro valens- arch druid

sis m.s. white tigress- druid in training and co hps

bro marson- head of the guardians of the planet (environmental protection team)

sis tsarah- head of corn maiden society (handles decoration of grove, feast preparations etc)

bro werebear - secretary/treasurer and gaurdian of the planet, (also scribe for our newsletter more on that later) sis marrissa- novice ovate and corn maiden

sis alice- summoner

absent officers were bro jeremy who is in training at mocc furthering his knighthood training this office is basically open until he either returns to tulsa or someone else cleet certified wants to take on heading up our security and bro marson who was ill

bro werebear suggested the name talking leaves for the rowan-oak grove newsletter and this was ratified by vote. he will be posting at our online grove site the guardian of the planet articles and has as well as being the scribe and editor an article in talking leaves.

the samhain convocation was our biggest in the 25 year history of the grove community. we had 15 of our now 38 members in the offline grove community present and our normal attendance for classes and rites it between 8 and 10 of the active membership. of our active members (around 25 now) 2/3 are inner court or holding a secular position within the grove. so this made it a double blessing as most were present for all 3 days of the celebration.

our wishes for a happy and blessed yule season to all our druid miscell-any friends. stacey we really appreciate you!

The Grove of the Ancient Oaks, MOCC:

News from Utah

Greetings Stacey,

I have had in the past not much to mention. Our Grove had seemed to grow dormant for what felt like ages. I am happy to report that we are up and running again. We plan to have a grand party the night before Yule and do a comfortable indoor ceremony seeing as how it will most likely be 14 degrees outside. I am not sure what else you would like to know... so if there is anything else don't hesitate to send me an e-mail asking for more.

With Blessings from the Gods and Goddess'

Llyr Brae
Archdruid of The Grove of the Ancient Oaks

Nemeton Awenyddion: News from Cohasset, CA

Well, things have been transforming a lot here. Had Ceinlys, one of our closest members move to our area and she's sure been a help. Our online classes are going well and I just took on three more students in our Seekers Class, and including our first level class of eight, I think I'm going to stop offering more Seekers classes for a little while so I can work on other things, writing, harping, fiddling, and art. For our Alban Gwyddion/Yule we will be doing the regular indoor ritual, there's usually snow on the ground here by that time. Probably decorate a Yule log and name it Llew before we put it in the wood-stove incubator, and then an all night vigil and drink mead til dawn, play music and hold the general Bardagh circle.

Changes have been plentiful, as part of the letting go of the old year before Samhain I went through a separation and am now single again. Enjoying the winter holidays with our members/kindred has been most enjoyable. We're in the midst of planning a Calon Mai/Beltain celebration for this next year with camping and the usual gathering space open for non-members to come as well.

Blessings and Happy Yuletide to all!

Ysgawen Rhiannon Am Nemeton Awenyddion

Poison Oak Grove: News from California

Publisher of "A Druid Missal-Any"

From the mess-ill-anyous file: one of the drawbacks of getting a fictitious business name is that one starts getting all kinds of junk mail, applications for credit cards, small business loans, health insurance, ad nauseum. I don't know how this happened frankly. I sent the proper forms to the Oakland Tribune for the announcement to be posted for the required four weeks in the classified section. (Is the Trib selling the names of poor unsuspecting people merely trying to set up their own businesses?) The most interesting was the "A Druid Massal Any" pen sample. It's amusing to me how the Missal-Any's name has already been morphed by some poor drone paid to solicit business from a bought mailing list. Too bad the name was misspelled--a "true" Missal-Any pen would have been a nifty thing to have. It reminds me of years ago when Emmon had box matches made for Live Oak Grove, R.D.N.A. The person fulfilling the order must have misread the application and put R.O.N.A. We still have those R.O.N.A. matches.

Many apologies to the readers who might have sent in articles or subscription checks and have had their mail returned. When I filled out the forms for the post office box I put on the card Poison Oak Grove, RDNA, NRDNA, Reformed Druids of North America, even Live Oak Grove, but not A Druid Missal-Any, which is the name I requested readers send mail to! I will remedy this oversight as soon as I get back from holiday in the Trinity Alps.

We Get Letters!

From one of our subscribers: Speaking of the missal-any... I've got a sad but also hilarious story for you! Last week, my "hard copy" came in the mail, with the (blank) address sheet all ripped and torn, and stamped "damaged in the postal service." When I opened it, I found not the Missal-Any but a newsletter from a local church (not my church). I made a mental note to drop you a line asking for a replacement copy, and then started thinking of the implications. What did they think when it seemed that their church was sending out Druid documents?!?!?!? Wish I could have heard the conversation when they reported it to their minister! Unless someone had opened it, they wouldn't have known to make the substitution; what I thought had happened

From Senator Barbara Boxer, CA, concerning Sudden Oak Death:

Dear Friend:

For a decade, the majestic oak trees of California have been under attack by a disease known as "Sudden Oak Death." For almost as long, I have been working in the U.S. Senate to provide funding so that we may better understand this disease, fight its spread and protect this wonderful symbol of California.

I am pleased to let you know that the United States Senate has approved a request I made earlier this year for a total of \$5.7 million for research to stop the spread of Sudden Oak Death Syndrome, which has killed countless oak trees in Northern California. The funding comes from both the Agriculture Appropriations bill and the Interior Appropriations bill.

Sudden Oak Death was first discovered in Marin County in 1994. It has since killed many trees in California and threatens to change the landscape of California. There has been some good news in recent months, as scientists have discovered a new treatment that may slow the spread of the disease. We need to continue to expand research in pursuit of knowledge that will enable us to slow the spread of this disease, and that will lead us to find ways to prevent it from killing this significant symbol of California.

If you have questions or ideas about saving California's oaks or any other federal matter, I encourage you to send your message to:

<http://boxer.senate.gov/contact/webform.cfm>

Sincerely,

Barbara Boxer

United States Senator



More Ramblings From Gandalf

By Gandalf, Amon Sul Grove

Many of us who study the ways of the Ancients are of the belief that their practices should be given consideration, but that modern day observances need to be tempered by the knowledge that has been accumulated in recent times. (As opposed to the strict re-constructionists who try to replicate previous practices with as much accuracy as possible.) Reconstructionism is particularly difficult when dealing with a culture that didn't leave much in the way of a written history, especially when what little was created has been actively destroyed by both the Romans and Christians.

I think that it is safe to say that most members of this list are focused on developing a perspective of religion that works for them on a personal level. I consider the RDNA to be one of the truly "big tent" religious organizations. (If, for the sake of discussion, you will allow me to refer to our loose confederation of Groves and individual practitioners as an "organization.")

For me, it was initially a struggle against my Christian upbringing. It was such a relief to be able to say: I am not a Christian. I do not want to be a Christian. It is all right not to be a Christian. I will not burn in Hell if I am not a Christian.

The preceding was the result of a realization that I could not accept any of the major tenets of Christianity: Jehovah is not the "one true God." Jesus was not his only begotten son, born of a virgin. There will be no Anti-Christ or Rapture.

Yeshua (if he existed at all) may have just been some poor old sod who was in the right place at the wrong time. There was a civil disturbance/riot in Jerusalem just before Passover (probably a protest against the Roman occupation/collaboration of the Sanhedrin). When it was time to "round up the usual suspects." Yeshua, as an outside agitator, would have been an easy target, especially if the story about the incident at the Synagogue is true. The moneychangers would have been renting their space from the Sanhedrin and paying protection money to the Roman army, only to be attacked by some lunatic. Business was probably off for several days. When the decision was made to make an example of someone, once again, Yeshua would have been an easy target (Barabbas was, by all accounts, a local boy).

Surviving crucifixion happened on occasion. Considering the fact that the accounts indicate that Yeshua was taken down early because of Passover, he might very well have been in a state of shock that resembled death. The entire Jesus mythology may have sprang from random events.

If Jesus was not literally the son of Jehovah, sent to redeem the world from its sins, then Christianity has probably been a huge mistake. Quo Vadis? Since I do believe that there is something that constitutes God, the study of which could be beneficial, Atheism was not a viable option. I soon realized that

earth-based religions are what I am best suited to. For years I was a generic Pagan. (My reasons for not being able to embrace WICCA are best kept for another essay.) Although I am part American Indian, I do not look the part and I would feel out of place at a powwow. (When in the woods I often feel more Indian than Druid but I do not consider the traditions to be incompatible). My studies would eventually lead me to an exploration of Pre-Christian Celtic religious practices and a conclusion that I am most comfortable within that framework. I consider returning to the religion of my pre-Christian ancestors to be an effort to correct a fifteen hundred year old mistake. It is my sincere hope that others will come to the same conclusion.



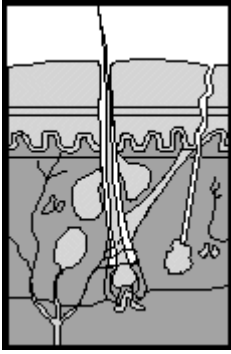
Whiskey and Whiskers:

What Makes Druids Hairy?

By Mike, Digitalis Grove

During a five-day camping weekend at the beginning of November, I decided to do what most men do when they are roughing it, forget about shaving and bathing everyday. When I woke up and prepared to return to work the next week, after showering I made one of those quiet heroic decisions, to put down the razor, hold my chin up high and look like the unkempt heathen that I am for a few nerve-wracking weeks. I'd like to share my insights and reflections into this mysterious process after a month of fretting before the mirror and other obsessive thoughts about these wiry tubes protruding from my face. I should warn you in advance that I've never taken a women's studies class or read anthropology, but why let ignorance stop a fun essay and stepping on a few toes?!

So, what really are my reasons for this rather small apparent act of rebellion against the norms of society? It certainly is not because it makes me look good; I'm simply not handsome material. I have a decent goatee, but it is a bit heartbreakingly scruffy on the cheeks; which has given me a lot of empathy for balding men, who ask why they have been blighted with balding, and the disturbing semi-nudity of scalp skin showing through thinning hair. The beard does feel nice, and has sensitized my face to the wind, and provides endless hours of fun of scratching, stroking and chewing. I've noticed many people unconsciously imitate this behavior when I do it, just as some people check for zits on their own face when they see a pockmarked teenager, or when one yawn triggers a whole room. Beards and facial hair runs in my family, mostly in the male members, but I have little fear so far of thinning at the temples (although my grove is currently overgrown), since that is apparently passed down from the mother's side. More than likely, I am probably compensating for something buried in my subconscious, as likely are most attempts at grooming and beautification. But what is it, and how deeply embedded is it in our consciousness?



Possibly, the motivation may be the same innate rebellious and questioning streak that led me into Druidism? Turning the question around, why should I not grow a beard? Why had I adopted the daily ritual of scraping a sharp piece of metal over my sensitive face, and indeed paying money for all these accoutrements, and possibly losing a liter of blood over the last 15 years? What condition or reality was I trying to avoid? Intractable life processes, including hair, hold their own lessons and mysteries. Scales, feathers, hair, nails and skin are all different forms of keratin protein growths on the body. Indeed, one hair after another will eventually fill out a head of hair, as does learning from multiple sources and experiences. Growing a beard, or any hair on your body, is both an exercise in doing nothing (because hair grows in lots of places, whether you want it or not) and also the inevitable grooming and maintenance (to keep others from forcefully trimming you.). In ancient days, people could roughly trim their hair, but due to technological difficulties in having effective shaving tools, most men in Europe and America grew some form of beard until the 19th or 20th century, except if they were rich or in a special institution, such as the military (for practical reasons) or priesthood (due to associations with sexuality maturity and balding habits discussed below). Then, with the growing awareness and constant commercial advertisement of self-cleanliness, mentioned by Brother Eric last year, "modern man" threw off their beards for the clean-shaven look that bespoke their discipline, conformity and delicacy.

Now, there are many natural actions in society that are either expressly forbidden, or (when allowed) are highly regulated by customs and standards; such as sex (ok in marriage), murder (ok in war), drugs (ok with doctor's permission), lying (ok in politics), theft (ok in taxes and public development) and of course hearing voices in your head (ok in an established church). There are probably some good reasons for these restrictions, and the most interesting stories in cultures tend to revolve around exploring those boundaries of appropriateness.

Before we examine the restrictions, let's ponder why we have those facial hairs in the first place? Druidism has taught me that change is a constant in this life, not only in the way that my body changes throughout my life, but how human bodies have changed over generations and eons. Some say we used to have a lot more hair than we do now... or did we? In fact, we have just as many hair follicles per inch of skin as a chimpanzee, although these tend to be short, thin, single strands that don't thicken and proliferate. We also have developed more advanced sweat glands. We were once famously categorized as "the naked ape" by an author in the 1970s who examined humans from the viewpoint and terminology of those animal behaviorists who make those nature TV programs. Humans are also noteworthy among animals for their willful resistance to evolve physically, choosing instead to use tools, wear clothing and adopt social customs to survive drought, war, famine, pestilence, blizzards, etc. which would have killed weaker members of our society

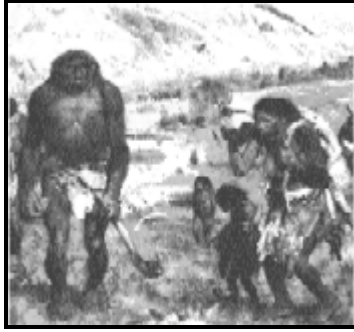
(including myself) and forced us to physically evolve into many new species, if we were only as intelligent as, say, cats or dogs. We likely dropped most of our chimpanzee-like thickened pelt about a million years ago in Africa, because of two theories: ocean and dirty homes.



Water and Earth are home to most of the animals on this planet, with a clever few able to know the mysteries of both environments. Apparently, a critical population of Homo Sapiens lived for a few hundred thousand years by the ocean and nearby river deltas of East Africa; and as any swimmer knows, hair causes considerable drag from friction; meaning lots of drownings. From the same period (I like to call it the Age of Sea Monkeys), we also gained partially-webbed fingers, bigger feet, a taste for salt, and down-turned noses to keep out water. In addition, since early humans lived in huts, tents, caves or lean-tos for a weeks or years at a time, that could lead to a lot of annoying skin parasites that love to hide in hair and animals hides (from 500,000 years ago). Being one with the Earth does not mean one must be dirty, as most animals demonstrate by cleaning themselves. Trying to groom all that hair would have taken an enormous amount of time; and that time was better spent on other activities. Then much much later, really only 20,000-45,000 years ago, people began to weave (based on the discovery of needles), enabling them to move into and stay put in temperate climates (instead of seasonally migrating north and south) where they kept their remaining hair; while those remaining in warmer Africa (and possible later emigrations to Asia, Pacific and America) continued to lose hair. Humans apparently liked this semi-aquatic phase, because over 75% of human population still live within 10 miles of the ocean or a major river, possibly bringing about the appearances of powerful maritime and riverine deities in the developing polytheistic religions among the descendents of a tree-scrambling mammal.

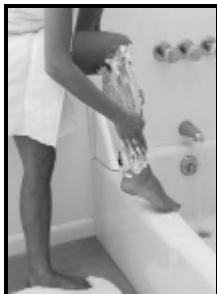
In addition, during that period, being less hairy, itchy and crawling with lice became a desirable trait in choosing a mate, a trait that continues to this day. Personality and eloquence became a desirable trait only with the discovery of language about 250,000 years ago. Groin and underarm hair keep the blood warm at these working joints (that's our best guess, besides indicating mating maturity), while remaining hair on the arms and lower legs kept those active members warm when they stuck out of the clothing and unscratched by bushes and branches. Hair on the fingers disappeared as an inconvenience when handling tools. Mono-brows only finally disappeared in the 1960s. You'd think that children, spending much of the day running about, would need more hair, but perhaps more common predators kept them close to the home hearth (invention of fire was 1 million years ago), more on kids later.

That much seems pretty understandable. But remaining body hair is not about practicality, but triggered by gender hormones of adolescence.



Which brings us to gender variations. So why do men generally have more developed hair on their lower face? It is possible that longer scalp hair was used in small handcraft activities, in addition to protecting the valuable brain from heat strokes and cold weather. Neither female or male primates are especially hairy on their heads, or bodies, but the solution may reside in the two types of mating habits found among primates; monogamous and polygamous. The females and males among the lemurs and smaller "primitive" monkeys tend to be about the same body size, less aggressive, vegetarian-inclined, nearly interchangeable in coloration, and rather faithfully monogamous pairs. (Does this sound familiar to a Golden Age myth? That break was over 30 million years ago.) One theory is that the males among the larger primates (like baboons, gorillas, chimps, and humans) tend to be about 30% larger, prefer to gather many females around them (conducive to building societies?), occasionally eat meat, and have strange traits that set them apart from the females (larger noses, bigger teeth, greater upper body strength, different color hair, exaggerated sexual organs, etc.) Doesn't make this right or desirable, but it is what they tend towards.

Another theory claims that perhaps the females are just 30% smaller than the norm; and this may be a reverse survival trait (along with other secondary female characteristics), to keep violent roaming males from confusing them with other alpha-males, ambushing the women and killing them during periods of ferocious raids. This is the reason it similar to why it is harder to hit an annoying 5 year old than an annoying 15 year old. Nature has stayed our hand because they are just cuter and look more immature, therefore not a threat. Well, the violence obviously still happened for other reasons, due to the strong libido and lack of self-control, especially among these male primates, but perhaps it was less often. I think it would have been smarter for the females to get bigger than the male to protect their young children when a new male took over the group and killed off those that were unrelated to him; but perhaps males selected smaller females that were easier to control? How many men like to date taller women, hmmm?



With our obvious physical differences, and a tendency for men to corral women and children when socially permissible, the growth of a beard indicated that the male child was now considered "sexually mature," and needing to be separated from the females. That "growth spurt" after an usually long childhood, was probably to get big enough to survive this dangerous transition period. Anthropologists could go into this in more detail about tribal sex segregation; but the important thing is to realize the symbolic association of a beard with a place in the male hierarchy. When people lived only 30 or 40 years old, beards at age 15 to 18 were actually a "mid-life" phenomenon. Many Celtic stories abound with stories of fast growing children (probably a story tool to keep the story moving after miraculous births and until the interesting issues of adulthood can begin again), and young warriors who achieve enviable levels of fame and prowess before even having any facial growth. In modern society for several centuries, possibly for accounting ease, we now legally mature at the same chronological age (16 for driving, 18 for marriage, work, voting, and contracts, 21 for drinking, 25 for insurance, etc.) regardless of actual physical or emotional maturity, with all the predictable problems for early and late bloomers. I remember at age 12-14 anxiously waiting for my first stubble, and then just as anxiously shaving it completely off, because I would some how not "fit in." One guy in my high school actually grew a rather nice beard, but the teachers vigorously disapproved, as if he was somehow trying to refuse their authority and move "a step ahead." Perhaps males want to continue to be submissive to other dominant males by continuing to shave and cut their hair, to seem less aggressive and mature, conversely growing your hair out was a sign of rebellion, especially since the 1960s ("Hey, hippy, cut your hair and get a real job,") while shaving your head is customary for entering many religious orders, a sign of penitence, mourning and militaries as a sign of rebirth or new beginnings.

However, in some religions and societies where gender differences are heightened and polarized, along dualistic lines, (i.e. 2/3 of the world), usually grossly in favor of male superiority, growing a beard is almost mandatory to avoid societal accusations of effeminacy. A common punishment in such cultures is to shave or yank out the hairs in their beard. Another symbolism of beards, as with accumulating wrinkles, is as an artistic short-hand for increasing age, with really old men with long beards being a sign of wisdom and experience (like Father Time or Jehovah in Renaissance paintings). Some men however do get confused and think their beard (rather than the transient social constructions) inherently gives them their social dominance and virility, and become superstitiously in awe of its power; even swearing oaths by it. Many kings (and queens) in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia wore fake beards, especially during their young years. Some tribal women tattoo beards and mustaches on themselves, such as the Ainu women of Northern Japan (who are the hairiest people in the world next to cab drivers) and in New Zealand, I believe.

Even in polytheistic circles, like modern Paganism, there is a greater emphasis now of equality of gender in social roles (although priests can get a bit high and mighty), there remains definite exaggerated differentiation of male and female traits in deities worshipped; most so among duotheistic Wiccans, perhaps. However, as we know, real maturity is actually about the ability to care about the needs of others in the community, weigh both sides of an issue, and responsibly follow the orderly rules of society without constant oversight. Such a point may not occur until the 30s, or never, in some cases, although we may adopt the physical trappings of adulthood. Druids are, among all the world's priests, most likely to be portrayed in literature and art as wise, long-bearded males; and this propaganda perhaps lingers in our sub-consciousness because we know so little else about them beyond shallow surface observations.

Thus, in conclusion, there is a long history of reasons leading to our current state of hairiness. The encouraging factors for modern Druids to become hairier are powerful associated images of rebellion, exaggerated focus on male/female deities, an affinity for emulating wild life, time spent outdoors in cold weather, desire for wisdom, a general noticed proclivity for multiple partners, usual distraction by studies from personal grooming, and compensating for something we have no doubt not listed yet. So if these theories are correct, we may have an understanding of why so many young males in Druidic circles tend to grow beards and enjoy being generally shaggy. (And I'd add that many of the female Druids also tend to let all their hairs grow out, at least in college.)

That's all for my armchair philosophy this season. Have a nice Yule-tide and perhaps you'll pester your co-workers why Santa Claus is usually depicted as a long bearded older male, when St. Nicolas was probably a shaven orthodox bishop.



Preserving Sacred Places

A Little Druid Takes on the Feds

By Julie Ann

Some people are just born lucky. I'm not one of them. Many of you, through the RDNA webchat, have gotten to know me more through my misadventures than anything else. From the now infamous Sister Suzanne of Catholic School days past, to my supernatural freeloadng ghost "housemate" named Walter, to my run-in this summer with a particularly disagreeable pack of ticked-off prairie chickens.

No, I'm not a lucky gal.

But eventually, all that bad luck building up has to erupt into something. Good or bad, sooner or later, she's gonna blow.

This September, it finally happened. I guess I need to give you a little background here. My brother, Mark, and I are tight. Out of all my siblings, he and I have always been the closest. Don't tell the others that, though. We're a team... the dynamic duo. Lewis and Clark... Bob and Doug Mackenzie (for those of

you old enough to remember Second City Television). That's Mark and I. Mark and I had been talking for a while about doing a Boundary Waters trip together. For those of you unfamiliar with the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, it is millions of acres of nothing but pure wilderness, nestled in the north woods of Minnesota. No roads, no houses, nothing for miles on end. Last chance for a latte is in Duluth. We set September 12th of this year as the date we would go in.

However, I can't speak for Mark... or any of the other characters in this story as it unfolds. I can only speak for myself. If you want Mark's side of this, you'll have to ask him. If you want Don the Fed's side of this story... I can get you his number. Stacy, a State staff archaeologist, is currently out "in the field", so you'll have to wait a while until she gets back.

This is my story alone.

Once we pitched camp, several miles into the Boundary Waters, we decided to do some hardcore bushwhacking to the next lake north of us. We were really out in the toolies. Once you get off of the portage routes, there are no trails; so you have to blaze your own. The scary thing about the Boundary Waters is depending on what direction you take, you can be walking in a place where no one has ever walked before. It's that desolate. It's really easy to get turned around up there. Because it doesn't get "traveled," the scrub grows pretty thick. What we were crawling through was unbelievable. Mark was the one who spotted the exposed Canadian Shield rock off in the distance (think large sheets of exposed rock). It would've been easier walking over hot coals than trying to crawl through what we were, so we squeezed and dragged ourselves over to the Shield. Walking the Shield was a whole lot easier. We were on the Shield for about ten minutes when we saw the first circles. A couple of little stone circles, about two feet in diameter. My first thought was "campfire rings." But these circles each had a center stone. And the rocks weren't scorched. These weren't campfire rings.



I don't know why we didn't think more of it at the time, but for some reason, we didn't. We continued walking, and a few minutes later we found a larger cluster of these stone circles. Each, again, had a center stone. None were scorched. Ok... now it had our collective attention. We continued walking to see what would happen. Along the way, we found more and more clusters of stone circles. Most were approximately two feet in diameter, but a couple got up to eight feet or so. All had center stones. No scorching. All I can vouch for is what was going through my mind at that time; we found something. We found something big.

Then Mark stopped dead in his tracks. For those of you who know me personally, you know I'm a runt... so Mark was

eclipsing the view for me. I walked around him, and my lower jaw hit the ground.

We were standing just outside the outer edge of a mammoth-sized stone circle. Boulders... boulders, folks. A perfect circle with a center stone. But that wasn't all. Neatly stacked on top of some of these boulders were more rocks, some were four stones high. Rocks don't do that by themselves, folks. These were cairns.

Mark slowly turned and looked at me. And for as long as I live, I'll never forget the expression on his face. Sheer terror. Last time I saw that look on Mark's face was back when Mark was in high school. When Dad found the beer in the trunk of the car that Mark had forgotten to remove the night before. His eyes were as big as saucers, and he said in almost a whisper "Is this like the Blair Witch Project, or what?" Leave it to my brother... that got me laughing. (Sigh) I love him dearly. When I finally composed myself, I said, "This is sacred ground. It's Ojibwe something-or-other, I'm not exactly sure what. But this is most definitely holy ground. Tread lightly, and disturb nothing."

That was when the camera came out. There was no way I was going to walk away from this without some sort of proof. We didn't touch the stones. I made sure of that. I wasn't exactly sure what it was that we were looking at; but as a Druid, I understand the significance behind circles. You don't break the circle. That is bad juju.

We continued to walk the site, taking pictures as we went, trying to get an idea of the scale of this place. Keeping in mind that the circles were in clusters, we estimated the site to cover 2 - 3 acres. We found hundreds of circles up there.

When we finally canoed, crawled, and portaged our way out of the Boundary Waters, we discussed what it is, exactly, that should be done with this. Do we sell the photos to The National Enquirer? Do we bury this as a family secret and take it to our graves? Do we seek out assistance in finding out what it was that we found out there? What do we do? It was unanimously agreed that we wanted to know just what it was we found out there. But then what? What happens to the site? Nothing could shake me from "This is sacred ground and it needs to be protected." But... there's also a lot to be gained from its study. What legacy in stone did the ancients leave for us to uncover? Where is the happy medium here? I was elected, mostly by default, to be the "family spokesperson" for the site. I then brought it up on the RDNA webchat to get ideas as to what I should do with this. Norm Nelson (bless your heart, I love ya Norm) suggested that I take the photos to the State Historical Museum.

When I got to the Museum, they looked at the photos for all of about two minutes and decided this was way over their heads, and referred me to the State Archaeologist's office. So I went down there. You could tell they didn't believe a word I said. I even got the "If I had a dollar for every person who came in here SWEARING that they found an Indian burial mound on their property, that turned out to be a garbage heap from the 1940's that grass just grew over..." speech. Seriously. That's what they told me. Ok, fine... so I pulled out the photos. Dead silence. What followed can only be described as the Great Inquisition. They kept me down there the entire afternoon grilling me with questions.

"Did you see bottles or cans or wrappers laying around?" "No." "Did you see tent poles or rope?" "No." "Did you see saws or tools, or anything that may have been left behind by loggers?" "No." "Did you see old steel traps or chains, like trappers would use?" "No." "Did you see any old log cabins, or foundations from buildings from old homesteaders?" "No." "Were you by a portage or a trail or a campsite?" "No."

This went on, literally, all afternoon.

Then they finally pulled out the maps. "Can you show us exactly where you were?"

SCREECH! went the brakes. Now it was my turn to ask the questions...

"Why do you NEED to know EXACTLY where it is?"

"What exactly would you do if you DID know the location?" "How do I know you won't ransack the site?"

"How do I know you won't go souvenir hunting?"

"How do I know this won't wind up as the topic of someone's doctoral thesis?"

"How do I know this site won't become public knowledge, and you guys put a flipping admission gate on the front of it and make it a god*%\$%#! attraction?"

"This is sacred ground...and it needs to stay that way!"

So now we're at an impasse. The State Archaeologists realized they had a legitimate site on their hands, but I was not about to put an X on the map for them to tromp all over it. And I'm no closer to finding out what it is we found out there. I don't mean to make it sound like it was hostile, because it wasn't. It most definitely wasn't hostile. We were talking and laughing and joking around... but neither side was budging, either.

Enter the Fed...

Because the Boundary Waters is federally protected land, the State Archaeologists were required to get the Feds involved. Apparently, from what I gathered, the idea was that this site has most certainly already been found and researched and documented. The State could side-step me, by just calling up the Feds and asking them to send down everything they had on the site.

The Feds had no idea what they were talking about. Nothing like this has ever been found up there. Nothing like this has ever been found in Minnesota PERIOD! After hearing what the State guys had to say about this site, the Feds' interest was a little more than aroused.

In a move that surprised me, probably as much as it surprised the State guys, the Feds opted to bump the State Archaeologists and take over control of the site. They can do that... it's federal land.

But they still don't have that all-important X on the map.



It was time for a family meeting. Don, one of the Feds, wanted to meet with me that weekend, to discuss the site and see the photos. While it was unsaid, I knew I was going to be asked to put an X on the map.

Since family meetings are hard to arrange on short notice, we did this via the telephone. We had to discuss our priorities. What is it we want to achieve? Our objectives boiled down to two: find out what it is that we found up there, and ensure that the site will be protected.

With this under my belt, I hopped in the Jeep and headed north.

I met Don the Fed at a class he was teaching on flint knapping. I guess this is what archaeologists do with their Saturdays to earn extra income. I walked into the classroom and asked for Don. Don strolled over and politely introduced himself. Then I told him who I was. While still shaking my hand, he smiled while he gave me the once up-and-down glance and said "Well, you're the right size for a Voyageur." (Fateful words, those, but I'll get to that later) That was a compliment. The Voyageurs were, even by standards of the day, runts. They had to be small to fit in the canoes, but they were unbelievably tough. These tiny men, who probably weighed no more than 130 pounds toted 180+ pound packs across miles of wilderness, blazing trails as they went. I fully expected that I would be sizing up the Feds... I had no idea that I would be sized-up myself. Apparently... I passed. Don wasn't anything like I'd expect for an archaeologist... much less a Fed. I guess what I was expecting was the "king of the nerds" who spent all his days buried in basement archives pouring over decaying documents and papyri; someone who perpetually smelled of dust and mold. Don, instead, was a big man, very tall, extremely muscular. Long graying hair pulled back in a ponytail. I'd put him about mid-fifties... and from the weathered look about his face, you could tell he spent most of his time "in the field."

So while Don taught the class, and while I was learning to make my very first arrowhead, we got our chance to talk. With others around and within listening distance, we had to keep the discussion vague. After the class, Don offered to buy me dinner while we got to the meat and bones of this site. Over dinner, Don poured over the photos and was stunned speechless. I went over and over how we came to find the site, how bloody inaccessible it is to get to, and everything we saw while out there. Then came the same questions the State guys asked (cans, wrappers, bottles, rope, tent poles, saws, tools, traps, chains, log cabins, foundations from old buildings, and distance from portages, trails, and campsites, etc, etc, etc ad infinitum).

Then came the million-dollar question. Don pulled a map from his backpack, and said, "Can we discuss the precise location?" Which was when I leaned back in my chair, crossed my arms, and said "Before we get to the X on the map, we have a few things we need to discuss." Don laughed a booming laugh, and reached back into his backpack and pulled out a notepad and pen. Still laughing, he said, "Something told me you were going to do this." Which was when I laughed and said "Yeah, well... something told me you were going to ask for an X on the map." Don, grinning from ear to ear, simply said "Touché"

He uncapped he pen, resettled himself in his chair, and with a heavy sigh gave me a long hard look. Finally, he said, "Look, I'm going to be up front with you. Probably a little too up front. We want this site. We want it bad. So what do you want for the X on the map?" I took a deep breath and began...

"We want to be kept in the loop every step of the way. We want to know what it is that we found out there."

"Done... what else do you want?"

"We want the Feds to take full responsibility for ensuring that this site is protected. The location can never be made public knowledge. No one will write a thesis paper on this site. It won't appear on any websites or books. We want this site to vanish. Study it; learn from it what we can. But then all documentation on this site has to be buried under so much beaurocratic red tape, that effectively, it vanishes from the face of the planet. This is unbelievably important to me, and is an absolute deal breaker. This is non-negotiable."

Don looked at me for a second on this last one. He was studying me. He finally said, "Why is this so important to you?"

"Because... this is sacred ground. How would you feel if someone strolled into your church, synagogue, or mosque and

ransacked it? You'd be horrified, wouldn't you?" Don just nodded, and I continued, "Well... this is a peoples' church. Show some respect." Don was silent. I noticed his eyes left my face, and landed on the gold Celtic cross I wear around my neck. I wear the Celtic cross as a symbol of my attachment to my heritage; I'm a Celt... a Belgae Celt to be precise. Most people assume it means I'm Christian. It's a common mistake. And I could tell from Don staring at my cross, it was a mistake he was currently making. It's a Celtic cross, not a crucifix folks. So... assuming that I'm Christian... he finally said "But they aren't your gods." I said back "No... They aren't my gods. But that doesn't negate them."

Don leaned back in his chair, and grinned from ear to ear. Here was a (what he was assuming to be) little Catholic girl not only acknowledging other gods, but demanding proper respect be shown to them. (That right there should've told him that I'm not a Catholic)

After a VERY long pause, Don leaned across the table and said "Julie Ann... I'm half Ojibwe."

Now it was my turn to be stunned into silence.

It was Don's people, his ancestors, who built this site. No wonder he took such an active interest in it. No wonder he was so insistent on being the one who talked to me. No wonder he would've traded his first-born for access to this site, and was readily agreeing to all our demands. This was his heritage. This was his birthright.

We sat there in silence, just staring at each other. Here is a man who has a vested interest in protecting this site every bit as much as I do. Actually, even more than I do.

Finally, I had a friend among the Feds.

After an agonizingly long silence, I finally piped up "Before we continue on with how we're going to protect the site, can I ask you something?" He nodded, so I continued, "After we got home from the Boundary Waters, I had to make an offering. I mean we really felt like we were tapped, for some reason known only to the gods. They led us there. We were meant to find it. I owed a huge debt of thanks, and I repay my debts... but I wasn't sure what to offer. I didn't want to offend with my ignorance, but I couldn't let it slide without making an offering. So I burned two entire sage bushes and a pile of myrrh... was this appropriate?"

This put Don (who was still assuming that I'm Catholic) completely over the edge. He burst out laughing. Once he pulled himself together, he finally said, "Technically, tobacco would've been the appropriate offering." Then he leaned over the table, and grinning from ear to ear he whispered "But I'm sure the Great Spirit was touched by your thoughtfulness, regardless of what you offered."

Although it never came up in conversation after that, I'm pretty sure Don has figured out at this point that I'm not Christian, and that Celtic cross has no religious implications attached to it what so ever.

Once promises were made, and the discussion complete, Don got his X on the map. And the business of the expedition began.

From here I was passed to Brian, another Fed, who would be the one acting as expedition leader. My brother Mark and I were instantly asked to be on the team. They needed guides out to the site. Even with an X on the map, the Boundary Waters is a huge chunk of land. Guides are necessary. We know the best routes, we know the best portages, we know the best campsites, we know the most direct route in, and we know the general boundary to the site. Due to his family obligations, Mark had to bow out. That left me. There was no way I WASN'T going to go. Still leery about any Feds other than Don, I was going to go along to make sure they didn't booger up the site. (Insert a

mental picture for yourself of a snarling pit bull with a sigil around its neck)



The expedition was set for October 23rd - 25th. With winter approaching Minnesota fast, this was only going to be a quick in and out expedition to map out the outer boundary, take photos, start the paperwork, and get a general "feel" for the site. Brian and Lee were the Feds on the team. Stacy is with the State who was granted permission on to the team, as a representative from the State. And lastly, I rounded out the expedition, as "Sacajewea and Sherpa-extraordinaire."

Brian secured a cabin for us close to where we would be pushing off into the Boundary Waters; for the night before we went in, and for the night when we came out. I had to fill out the paperwork to become a Federal volunteer. It left a bad taste in my mouth, but the Feds were claiming me as a Federal employee in case an issue of liability came up. Which, actually, was very nice. If I got mauled by a bear, the Feds would be footing the bill. If I wrenched an ankle while bouldering during a portage, the Feds would be footing the bill. If I threw my back out while hauling the canoe, the Feds would be footing the bill. If a poacher decided I looked an awful lot like a deer or a moose, and took a shot at me, it would be an assault on a Federal employee. Well, I didn't get mauled. I didn't get shot at. I didn't wrench an ankle, or throw out my back. But I did get a lovely Federal Forest Services Volunteer patch that I can sew onto something.

The morning we were going into the Boundary Waters, we woke up to discover it had snowed during the night and was still snowing. Remember me telling you that I'm not a lucky gal? Yeah.

For the duration of the expedition, at no point in time was it not snowing, sleeting, or raining.

Yeah.

It was going to be a hard day. Long, hard, bitterly cold, and very wet.

I had no problem guiding our merry band of damp outdoor enthusiasts out to the site. It took several hours worth of canoeing, portaging, hauling, and with the sun behind overcast skies, periodic compass checking, but really we got out there in record time. We went in stripped down to bare essentials, so we were traveling light. And the archaeologists got a kick out of watching me sing Sinatra's "Swinging On A Star" over and over, as my little "zen-thing" that I do while I'm in "the pain cave" ("the pain cave" is where you zone out from this world, to block the physical pain of carrying a 40-pound canoe and a 20-pound daypack for a mile over a brutal portage. I completely blank out and sing "Swinging On A Star" over and over, for the duration of the portage. That's just how I handle "the pain cave") There were four portages in, and four portages out. I think they all know "Swinging On A Star" by heart now.

Once out at the site, the circles were brutally hard to find. The large circles were unmistakable; but the snow-covered smaller circles, the vast majority of them, were indistinguishable

from the mounds of reindeer moss that is prolific throughout the area. If you are unfamiliar with reindeer moss, they're like big fluffy pom-pom tufts of moss. So all we could really do was walk the perimeter of the site, snap some photos, and start the paperwork. We couldn't look for artifacts in the snow. They explained that they needed "historical garbage" to use in conjunction with this site to help determine the makers. Right now, all we have are rocks. What we need are arrowheads, flint knapping shards, beads, broken bits of pottery, and the like. With the absence of "historical garbage" on the record they have to maintain that the site is "of unknown origins" Which is just fine with me. I don't want people coming out here and boogering with the site. Off the record, however, they seem pretty set on this being Ojibwe Vision Quest Circles.

The reason this site is so important is because Vision Quest circles have never been found in Minnesota before, much less four acres of them. Our early estimate of 2-3 acres was bumped up to 4 after the expedition.

Stacy, however, is still my ace in the hole. Stacy can date the lichen at the site. It will take her months to do so, but she can date the lichen. Once we have a ballpark date on the lichen, we'll know who the makers were. For example, if the lichen comes back 300 years old, well duh... that's Ojibwe.

For the sake of site preservation I truly hope we DON'T find any "historical garbage" out there. I would be tickled pick if this site had to be listed as "of unknown origins." Stacy can still date the site; we don't need the "historical garbage." So I'm very content to let her date it, and leave it at that. However, that brings me back to "what legacy in stone did the ancients leave for us to uncover." So...the site needs further study.

With the October expedition completely awash due to the snow cover, the expeditions have been set to resume in the spring. I've been asked, again, by both the State and the Feds to go along as "Sacajewea and Sherpa-extraordinaire." And, it's within compliance of my agreement with Don to keep us in the loop every step of the way.

So, I guess if you were hoping for a big resolution at the end of this installment, you're going to be disappointed. I'll have no new news to share with you until spring when the expeditions resume, or when Stacy dates the lichen.



My story doesn't end there, though. Since the expedition, some things have come to pass. Allow me to refresh your memory on a few things I stated early on. Don made a comment about me being "the right size for a Voyageur" and I made the comment that those turned out to be fateful words. I also mentioned that while talking to Don, I had made the comment that I couldn't shake the feeling that we've somehow been tapped; that we were led there, that we were meant to find this site. The time is now for me to clarify these things.

Winter is now in full swing in Minnesota, and now that I'm effectively grounded for the winter, I turn my hobbies to more "indoor tasks" One of them is I'm the family genealogist. I've been working my patrilineal side for years. Since I came back from the expedition, my mother has asked me to start working the matrilineal side of the family. I've been putting that side off for years because there isn't much information for me to really start from. However, she gave me what she had, and I began to work it. The job was further hindered by the fact that she really only had the women's names. Which wouldn't be a



Yule Gift Ideas

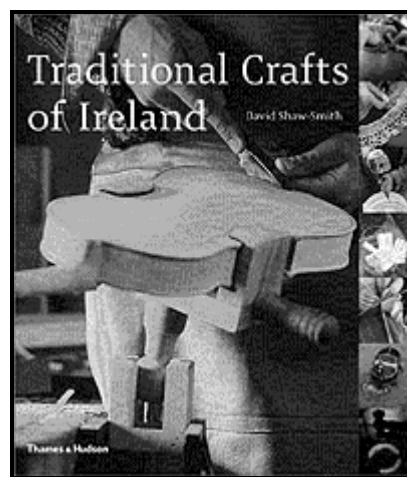
Traditional Crafts of Ireland

By David Shaw-Smith

The turn of the spinning wheel, the harnessed horses pulling the plow, the knock of the cooper's hammer, the scything of the summer's corn—all these were once familiar sights and sounds in and around Irish homesteads. They echo the history of crafts that may go back 3,000 years into Ireland's past.

In this book, time stands still as we meet the skilled practitioners of more than forty traditional Irish crafts, from woodcarvers, thatchers, goldsmiths, and potters to glassblowers of the world-famous Waterford crystal, crios weavers from the Aran Islands, and the makers of items as varied as harps and quilts, baskets and curraghs, drystone walls and Irish lace.

David Shaw-Smith has traveled the length and breadth of Ireland and its islands to assemble this record, documenting the crafts in their natural surroundings before they disappear completely. His superb color photographs include both poetic images of the finished craft pieces and informative sequences explaining the production process. They are accompanied by Sally Shaw-Smith's evocative drawings and by texts from some of Ireland's finest historians and craft writers.



A magnificent testament to the centuries-old traditions of a vibrant land, the book is both a chronicle of times past and a celebration of an enduring culture, and will appeal to anyone connected with the Emerald Isle or who has ever visited it. It is the culmination of a forty-year project, the first fruits of which were seen in David Shaw-Smith's earlier book, *Ireland's Traditional Crafts*, published in the 1980s.

David Shaw-Smith is a Dublin-born independent film producer. His films on traditional Irish crafts have been seen all over the world and have received many awards, including the Golden Harp. His research and photographs on traditional crafts are scheduled to become part of the Irish National Archives.

ISBN 0-500-51142-X, 677 illustrations, 621 in color · 256 pages, US\$40.00

problem, but once you get into the 1800's, when women really were little more than property, it's hard to track women down. One name in particular I had trouble with: Elizabeth Wells Gibbs. Before the age of 20 or so, she simply didn't seem to exist. I tracked her down to having lived in Beltrami County, Minnesota. Not being overly familiar with that county, way in the northern part of the state, I pulled out my atlas. It turns out that the Red Lake Indian Reservation occupies a solid third of that county. Then I hit pay dirt. I found out why Elizabeth didn't "exist" before she was 20 or so years old. Her name wasn't Elizabeth.

Elizabeth Wells was the name given to her by a court to make the recording of her marriage "prettier." Her real name was Nokezhigoke. Elizabeth belonged to the Red Lake Chippewa band of the Ojibwe. I had no idea I was part Ojibwe. My grandmother was darker-skinned, but many "white" folks have darker complexions. I have a couple of aunts who are "questionable" but they certainly pass for white. As for me hell when it comes to "passing for white" blonde hair and blue eyes are the only things that trumps my red hair and green eyes. But that is my PATRILINEAL Celtic blood speaking. I had no idea I was part Ojibwe... and I'm thrilled to find out that I am! I told Don that we were led there; that we were "tapped" for some reason. Don wanted this site because it was part of his heritage, his birthright. His ancestors built this site... and so did mine. Perhaps divine intervention did play a part in our discovery. Perhaps the ancients did lead a lost son and daughter home.

Don's comment on me being "the right size for a Voyageur" also turned out to be rather fateful. So how did Elizabeth / Nokezhigoke come to marry a white man? She lived on a reservation; and in the mid-1800's, white folks didn't have a whole lot of business being on a reservation. Not to stir up bad history, but let's face facts... there was no love lost there... on either side. Further digging led me to the Northwest Fur Company. In around 1850, The Northwest Fur Company dropped an outpost on the Red Lake Reservation to trade with the Ojibwe there. Only the fur traders had unhindered access and granted safe passage through the reservation at that point in time. I found out that my great great great grandfather was a Voyageur. Well I'll be dipped... Don was right.

In my life, I've been a great many things: daughter, sister, friend, wife, Druid, and Celt... now I get to be these things too.

Before I found out I was part Ojibwe, I was just a little Druid standing firm on my belief in protecting the sanctity of sacred places. And I was prepared to protect it with all the ferocity I could muster. But I had no idea when this journey began that it would become a personal one. Many things happened out on Shield rock. Many things lost, have now been found.

Maybe I'm lucky after all...

Yours in the Mother,

Julie Ann-

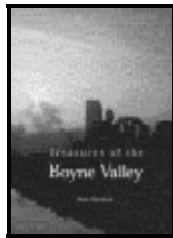
Note: If you noticed I was intentionally evasive on the location of the site...you're right...I am. I mean no disrespect; and while I don't worry about the Druids, all it takes is one idiot to learn the location of the site. One idiot can destroy the site. One idiot can pillage the site. One idiot can desecrate the site. I cannot, in good conscious, make the site's location public knowledge. I hope all of you understand and respect my decision.

Stay tuned as the expeditions resume next spring / summer. Updates to come...

Treasures of the Boyne Valley

By Peter Harbison

The River Boyne flows from west to east through the rich limestone land of Co. Meath, about 30 miles north of Dublin. Its combination of fertile soil and navigable access to the sea has ensured that it has been inhabited continuously from the end of the Ice Age. It is one of the most historic regional areas, not just in Ireland, but also in all of northwest Europe.



Peter Harbison's book discusses the history of the Boyne Valley, the landscape, the peoples who have left their imprint on the region since pre-history, the houses and monuments, the battle sites and all the other aspects that make it such a rich source of interest.

The highlight of the book is of course the three great Stone Age burial sites at Dowth, Knowth and Newgrange, all at least as old as the Egyptian pyramids, and the latter, one of the wonders of Europe. But Harbison also deals deftly with other matters: with the Battle of the Boyne (1690), so crucial for later Irish history; with writers like Mary Lavin, Francis Ledwidge and Lord Dunsany who lived in and wrote about the region; with the houses, churches and monastic settlements.

The book is richly illustrated with original landscape photography by Tom Kelly, himself a resident of the valley, and with historic prints.

Hardback, 192 pages, Publisher: Gill & Macmillan; ISBN: 0717134989, US\$40.00

Legendary Ireland: A Journey through Celtic Places and Myths

By Eithne Massey

This beautiful book visits twenty-eight richly atmospheric sties and tells the mythological stories associated with them. Woven into these landscapes are tales of love and betrayal, greed and courage, passion and revenge, featuring the famous characters of Celtic lore, such as Cú Chulainn the children of Lir and Queen Maeve.



The historical and archaeological facts, and the folk traditions of each ancient site are explored. Some are famous

such as Tara and Newgrange; others are less well known but equally captivating such as the Béra Peninsula in Cork.

In a world where many have lost touch with the land and their past, the legendary Irish landscape still survives and the stories are never quite over as long as there are people to tell them.

Hardback, 240 pages, publisher: O'Brien Press, ISBN 0-86278-766-1, US\$30.00



Witness the Winter Solstice

SUNRISE AND SUNSET
AT THE UMASS SUNWHEEL

Sunrise @ 7:00 a.m.,

Sunset @ 3:30 p.m.

Sunday & Monday—Dec. 21 & 22, 2003

Members of the general public are invited to join Dr. Judith Young of the U.Mass. Amherst Dept. of Astronomy to watch the Sun rise and set over the tall standing stones in the U.Mass. Sunwheel for the winter solstice. This is when the Sun is at its most southerly position in rising and setting, at its lowest noon-time altitude, and when days are shortest. Sunrise and sunset gatherings will be held on BOTH SUNDAY AND MONDAY, Dec. 21 & 22, 2003. Visitors for the winter solstice sunrise viewing should arrive at 7:00 a.m. and visitors for the sunset viewing should arrive by 3:30 p.m. The sky will be particularly beautiful at sunrise both mornings, since the waning crescent Moon will rise just before the Sun, and Jupiter will be high in the south. For those interested in learning about the sky, there will be a presentation, which will include the cause of the seasons, the Sun's path in the sky, the phases of the Moon, and the story of the U.Mass. Sunwheel. Bring your family, your questions, your camera, your curiosity, and DRESS WARMLY. A \$3 donation is requested to help cover the cost of additional stonework for the Sunwheel.

The calendars list Dec. 22, 2003 as the day of the winter solstice, with the exact instant of solstice being 2:04 a.m. Eastern Standard Time. The word solstice means 'standstill', and refers to the fact that the rising and setting location of the Sun stays relatively fixed on the horizon for a 2-week period around solstice, with Dec. 22 in the middle. Should rain cause the Sunwheel events to be cancelled, you can visit the Sunwheel on your own for another week and still see the Sun rise and set over the tall standing stones.

The U.Mass. Sunwheel is located south of Alumni Stadium, just off Rocky Hill Road. It can be reached from the center of Amherst, following Amity St. to the west. After crossing University Dr. at the light, continue on Rocky Hill Rd. for about 1/4 mile, and make your first right, on to Stadium Dr., and park. All visitors should wear warm clothing, suitable for standing still on frozen or soggy ground, and you may wish to bring a folding chair and/or blanket.

A Druid Missal-Any
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Berkeley, CA 94705
E-Mail: poppinjay@earthlink.net

For more information, see:

<http://www.umass.edu/sunwheel>
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Celtic Studies Course!

There is a new Celtic studies course being offered at the UC Santa Cruz Extension campus in Cupertino.

The Story of the Celts in Ireland X479 History (1)

This course attempts to answer some intriguing questions about the Celts of Ireland, a people often associated with fairy tales, folklore and fancy jewelry. The questions will take us back in time to discover a heritage that some call "Celtic Magic." A few obvious questions include the following: Who were the Celts anyway? Was Brigid a goddess, an abbess, or both? Were the Druids a secret society? Where is the land of eternal youth? For answers, we will investigate Celtic spirituality before and after Saint Patrick. We will listen to stories of mystery and imagination in literature, as well as decipher patterns of Celtic art in metal work, illuminated manuscripts and sculptured stone crosses. From a variety of sources, we will fashion a mental tapestry of how Celts on the fringe of Europe imagined the other world while maintaining a harmony with nature. Throughout the course, we will explore the roots of contemporary recordings from artists of Celtic music.

MICHAEL DONNELLAN, Ph.D., hails originally from the west of Ireland. He has taught at several San Francisco Peninsula colleges as well as at educational institutions in the Midwest and on the East coast.

Fee: \$195 (\$215 if registering after February 7). Enrollment limited. 5 meetings: Saturdays, 10:30 am-12:30 pm, February 21-March 20. UCSC Extension, 10420 Bubb Rd.

EDP 033W11 (use this EDP code to enroll)

For more information call (831) 427-6695 or email: Camille Martinez cmartinez@ucsc-extension.edu Stephanie Dekking sdekking@ucsc-extension.edu

Calendar

Yule, Winter Solstice, when the Sun enters Capricorn, will occur on Saturday, December 21, at 11:40 p.m. Pacific Standard Time.

A Druid Missal-Any is published eight times a year. Post mail subscriptions are \$8.00 and email subscriptions are free. Or write an article or send us a cartoon and receive a year's post mail subscription free. Write to: