

A Druid Missal-Any
Samhain Year XLII
Vol. 20 Number 7
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Samhain Essay: Paying Respects

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



amhain, Celtic New Year, 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 Cernunos, 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 form 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 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 wider 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 out food offerings for them at your 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.



News of the Groves

Carleton Grove: News from Minnesota

Here at Carleton, the leaves have been brilliant since late August, and have been spectacular in the past few weeks. We initiated several to the joys of walking the Arb on Autumnal Full Moons, and Ian Hill was ordained 3rd order (congratulations). Our weather has been nice, but we are afflicted with the yearly plague of stinging beetles.

Corwin

Akita Grove: News from Japan

Pat says things are going well in Japan, despite the recent hurricanes, and requests that Mike do something to ameliorate their severity. Mike sent him a pinwheel in response to brighten his mood. Pat says he has thrown the gauntlet down this year, and is fully determined to defeat Mike in the Bardic arts in this winter's contest.

Awen Proto-Grove: News from Calgary

It is a time of unions here at Awen Grove! Aspen and Athelia got married on September 18th and things are just starting to settle down now. As the wedding plans die down, new ones are starting as two of our grove members plan to be handfasted in November!

The weather is starting to turn to winter as we expect 15 cm of snow on October 16 and still more the next day! This is Calgary, however, and we could have +20 degree Celsius weather by the middle of November... who knows?

We wish everyone a wonderful Samhain season. Stay warm!

Blessings,

Athelia Nihtscada /\nSenior Druid, Awen Grove

Digitalis Grove: News from D.C.

As you'll see in this issue, with the help of Stephen Crimmins at Carleton, I've completed assembling and printing the Main Volume of ARDA 2. The files should be up at <http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/arda.html> and the physical books should be in the mail. Stacey and I are at work with typo-

checking and tweaking the illustration and layout of the final Magazine Volume of ARDA 2, by Oimelc. Stephen and I are also putting out two commemorative volumes of mid-1970s RDNA materials this winter. After that I promise not to print any more books, but I am releasing a Druid movie DVD called "Gatorr" this winter, and judging a Bardic Contest too.

I've ordained Joss Badger in Texas this month, and he has in turn ordained Lydia from Oklahoma City, so the RDNA now has a southwestern presence. I heard about the ordination of Ian Hill and Will Reckner at Carleton, so I am now feeling easier about the continuation of Druidism there.

Eurisko Grove: News from Indiana

In our grove at this time of year, we ritually celebrate the fall of the green man & the return of the horned god. This is similar to the wiccan oak king/holly king battle. But it seems more fitting to us to have this battle that causes the seasons to change to occur on the equinoxes a time when both are in balance for a moment then one gains the upper hand.

The reverse happens at the spring equinox. Cernunnos and his creatures are associated with the winter solstice yet cannot just appear there. Like all things cyclical there needs to be an ascent, climax, descent of power, energy & symbolism.

For us ivy is the link that is associated with both. We even try to spend part of the season of Mabon looking for unintended images of them in such as Robin Hood or a wild herdsman.

We closed with the final appearance of the green man in a secluded wood, in which we hope to meet a presence that we could only call Herne, the lord of the forest.

Not sure how, if at all, this fits in with most druid's interpretation of the season, or in interpretation of previous RDNA established materials, but wanted to try to share it with you all anyway.

Gwydion
eurisko grove
an rdna proto-grove

Hemlock Splinters Grove: News from New York

Grove activity at Hemlock Splinters has been hampered by the purchase of a home many miles from our grove site. Bonfires continue, but not on the scale they once did. Irony and Omen have just published *Rising Sea*, a collection of mostly Celtic harp and flute music, available from the grove (irony@starmind.org), or at CDBaby.com. Irony has also returned to full-time student status at the school for Environmental Science and Forestry, where he is quietly trying to create photosynthetic humans. Anyone with ideas in this regard is encouraged to write.

Aelven Star Grove: News from Pennsylvania

Oh dear! Time has a way of flying by! It's that time of the year, Samhain...my favorite holiday.

Aelvenstar Grove is meeting for ritual and fellowship this Samhain. Please email aelvenstargrove@yahoo.com for info.

What else is new? In addition to ogham and magick study and practice, I am currently studying hypnotherapy and hope to pass my exams and receive certification soon.

Oh, I would like to mention Meetup (www.meetup.com) You can sign up and meet with fellow druids in your local areas, some whom possibly may be interested in joining the RDNA.

Wishing you all a very blessed Samhain,

Autaini
Aelvenstar Grove
Philadelphia, PA
aelvenstargrove@yahoo.com

Palm Grove: News from Florida

Well 3 hurricanes right over the place has knocked down much of the storage buildings, power outs and all. It was very interesting. 2 of the 5 Sacred Palms perished in the onslaught but 3 remain, though a bit more worn for their trouble.

We mourn the passing of our valued member: Winston Pugnacious who was only 3 years old and still playful. Sadly, the heat of the day and perhaps a snake took him down while out on his chain. (The cutest pug you ever saw).

All in all it has been a very hard year here in the grove.

On a brighter note:

The Website is up at <http://palmgrove.bravehost.com/> The Site is designed to be a free and open meeting place for druids and druid curious from all walks and followings. Available is a chatroom, a forum area, a free classifieds area, a free links page and more. Stop on by and tell a friend.

I am learning about Celtic Runes and charms now and I am preparing to start making my own sets of rune stones, and amulets. Keep an eye on the website for them.

DraigMor
High Druid At Palm Groves, Florida

Missionary Order of the Celtic Cross – Muskogee/Mother Grove Oklahoma

The MOCC—M/M Grove disbanded sometime after Beltane. It's hard to say when, but a new AD was not forthcoming, and I knew my time in Muskogee was short. Mark Harris (Shadowdancer) tried to get it together for a while, as did a couple other persons, but, in the end, it was not to be. But walking down the streets, the trees whisper and stand witness to what was. The big question was what to do with the various items that belonged communally to the MOCC here in Muskogee. We did consider whether to give them to the Tulsa group or send them off to some sort of Pagan collection somewhere, but it seemed more of a tradition to give them to a up and coming Pagan group here in Muskogee (we found 2, one in Muskogee that is being started by a cousin of mine, Shannon Smith, and one in Ft. Gibson that is run by Vikki Valenzuela). The two of them have close ties to what was the MOCC--Muskogee/Mother Grove. Smith's group will be using the MOCC's rites as a template until they can get their ritual cycles up and going (a great-grandchild of the RDNA?) and the group run by Ms. Valenzuela is co-founded by an old MOCC member, Myk Rose. While the MOCC--M/M Grove fell, there is a considerable legacy that it has left behind here in the Pagan community.

As Samhain nears (locally, we give it the very improper pronunciation sa-MAIN) the cold weather is beginning to arrive just a little early. These rains and changing of the leaves usually come around just as the costumes are being put on kids and pumpkins are being carved. Now, it's happening in mid-October. I'm preparing for a move to Austin, where I'm pretty sure I'll become involved in the Druid community once again. Here in Muskogee, though, there's a feeling that the Grove is no longer quite human. The trees keep whispering, and I'm sure the pecans,

elms and oaks are disputing amongst themselves. The black walnuts are in a convocation of their own, I'm sure and the mulberry is just too easily distracted to be of any help in this great meeting of theirs. Both Oak and Pine vie for the Archdruidic Chair, I'm told, and Pecan is preparing the tables for Cakes and Ale...

This declare above all:

Thomas Lee Harris, Jr.
(aka Br. Myrddin A Maeglin)
Former Archdruid, MOCC--Muskogee/Mother Grove

Rowan-Oak Grove: News from Tulsa, OK

we are gearing up for the Samhain convocation and costume party we hold every year. we will be voting on new board members, ratification of the current by-laws or modification there of and other issues which came up earlier this year. the tulsa grove has had several people move out of town in the last few months which necessitated the replacement on the board of directors at least as an alternate.

the wagner grove has been going through similar problems and i haven't heard from our gray angels grove in texas in a few months, and no response to emails so i must assume sis joker's wild is offline and will contact me when she can.

my ministers license is now registered downtown so i'm officially able to do marriages etc.....

finally done with the remodeling to the apartment so bad weather will not keep us from meeting.

i guess that is about it for now stay safe and well everybody.

healing light and peace

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

Rose Rock Grove: News from Oklahoma

Samhain is almost here, and with my third order vigil still creaking my bones, I'm happy to announce that our grove is up to official grove status. Our Druid-on-the-go hasn't actually begun his journey, but we hope to hear from him soon. Plans for the upcoming holiday include writing to those who have left, for those of us with loved ones or ancestors still on our minds, finding representations of those ancestors we plan to honour, (whether objects they owned, pictures, or just something from or representing a particular country, depends on the individual) and figuring out what we're going to cook. There will be a sugar cookie baking party, some of which will be eaten at the party, some to be reserved for Samhain, and some to go to the Campfire USA Pumpkin Patch booth. Samhain ceremony to take place in my back yard, followed by divination and horror movie watching in the living room. Not to mention passing out candy to trick or treaters.

Current plans for November: A quilting bee for the Eric "Groo" Jones memorial quilt, a culling of closets, drawers, and pantries for clothes and canned goods to donate to one (or more, depending on amount) of the local shelters. Also coats to be culled for the Share the Warmth program. That's all we have going right now.

Lydia "Mouse" Van de Grift

Dravidia Grove: News from Indiana

Hello all,

Not much new here, am getting ready for Samhain. Have been invited to participate in an online experience, sounds different... Will also celebrate with the usual candle lighting and food placement... Maybe even a few spirit conjurings... Have a good Samhain

^v^ ^v^ ^v^ ^v^

|/vvvvvvv\|

BOO!!!

/\ Dolanimus /\

Cattle Grove: News from Texas

Yes, yes, I know it has been quite a while since there has been any news from Texas but there is a reason (a reason, not an excuse!). Everyone that was part of the Cattle Protogrove seemingly went their separate ways. I stopping going to A&M Commerce for financial reasons, as did 2 of the other members, and one stayed there. So the protogrove has been hibernating for a while, waiting for the right moment to come back and that time appears to be now. It has moved back to Dallas, TX so hopefully we will actually find some more members (there are several of us talking and really all we need to do is find some initiative and meet somewhere). Also, I was recently ordained 3rd order by Mike (thanks Mike!) so hopefully we can turn what was once Cattle Protogrove into Cattle Grove!

Anyways we will keep the updates coming!

Joss Badger

Rogue River Protogrove: News from Oregon

It was exciting for all of us to take part in an official ritual in connection with taking the Waters of Life. Mr. Abbott also led us in an elaborate reading of the future of RDNA in northern California and Oregon. We plan to report the details in the Winter Solstice Missal-Any.

Additionally, the Rogue River Protogrove looks forward to hosting a fundraiser for Mr. Abbott next Spring, which will consist of a slide show of the history of the Hazelnut Grove and some of RDNA's influential members of the past. We will post the details as soon as they are finalized.

A great time was had by all!!!

Blessings,

Aigeann

Sierra Madrone Grove: News from California

We at the Sierra Madrone Grove held a beautiful Ritual along the Bear River to mark the Autumn Equinox. We spent the day walking in the forest and had a nice picnic with the kids. We did the opening Rituals at both the North Valley Pagan Pride and the Sacramento Pagan Pride. We had a booth at both and our Grove Diviner/Seer Stephen Abbott performed his trademark divination for crowds to see.

Sean Mac Dhomhnuill
Sierra Madrone Grove

Nemeton Awenyddion: News from California

Nemeton Awenyddion is going through some very interesting changes, as the seasons change, so does the Grove. With local members moving or going through major life changes it seems that they would want to be more involved in the Nemeton space and worship/meditations to help them to gain more clarity and balance. This Samhain will be a quiet one for us this year and I will be making a venture out to visit dear Sister Stacey towards the end of Oct. to make up for that. Our online classes just started booming again and going full force but without any more local inquiries for membership. I've also decided to undertake, after being asked for the last ten years by Lakota family, to participate in Sundance ceremony this next year so I'll be preparing to be a singer for that as well.

Yours In The Mother,

Rhiannon Hawk Ard Gwyddon/
Druid of Nemeton Awenyddion
and of Proto-Grove Druid Heart Spirit
Cohasset, California

Sunset Proto-Grove: News from California

Long Crunch leaf walks are in store. In the past week the weather has changed, and we are enjoying brisk evenings and mornings. Our elm out back has decided to begin dropping its share of leaves, and makes me wish I'd called the trimmer earlier. (Every tree needs its haircut.)

We really enjoy celebrating Samhain in style at our home, as we have a birthday the day before. This year we will have about 20, 11 and 12 year old girls carving pumpkins in our garage, eating spider cupcakes, and watching scary movies through the night. With that kind of crowd we ought to have a bonfire... but then I'd have to get a permit.

Don't forget to feed the brownies b'fore you go to sleep, else they'll come and play tricks on you!

"Woooooshh went the wind...& out went the light, & five little pumpkins rolldled out of siiight..."

Happy Samhain to all

O.

Poison Oak Grove, News from California

Publisher of "A Druid Missal-Any"

When I first moved into the new house I drank distilled water because the water came directly from a spring that wasn't the best to drink from. After starting to feel poorly, low energy, easily out of breath, tired all the time, bad nails, I found out that distilled water leaches minerals out of your body. Though I see an herbalist it wasn't getting better. At our last service two weeks ago I asked Diancecht, Physician to the Gods and his daughter Airmid, Herbalist for assistance in find out how to treat this malady. The very next week in conversation with another RDNA member, the Druidess from Texas, when I told her of the symptoms, she looked them up and said it was a vitamin B deficiency, easily treated by B-complex. After just a few days of taking the vitamins I felt so much better. I've been a member of the RDNA for 20 years now and it always amazes me when the deities come through. This is a religion that works!

On October 23 was the first Northern California Druid Moot in Cupertino. A good time was had by all. Bonds were forged and re-established. Because of the friendships made at the Moot it looks like Duir De Danu Grove will be able to have a grove site on which to meet again!

This promises to be the first of many on-going moots that will happen in Northern California. We will be changing geographic locations to accommodate the various pockets of RDNA members in the area.



The Llyr Tract

By Irony Sade, Pending Patriarch of Llyr, 9th Order

REFORMED DRUIDS OF NORTH AMERICA
To the COUNCIL OF DALON AP LANDU
Greetings,

I am humbled and honored to be nominated for the patriarchy of the Order of Llyr. Having lived beside, sailed on, and all but drowned in the sea perhaps I can attempt to begin to understand its mysteries.

As one of the younger druids I have watched this discussion of the higher orders quietly, hardly feeling that it was my place to speak. Their utility beyond the funerary is unclear to me, though in the course of time that may change. As I understand it, nomination to the order of Llyr conveys no power, but three responsibilities: To seek to understand the sea; to offer membership to those druids who do the same; and to nominate someone to the Order of Danu.

If Llyr is one of the most obscure deities - just as the sea is a largely unknown realm, even to those who sail upon it, then Danu, as the patron of the Otherworld, is even more mysterious. It does seem that only those who have died might understand her.

I like the notion that those druids who have died are offered membership in her order by Danu herself. This argues in favor of Mr. Crimmins's idea that the patriarch should be a dead druid, possibly the first third order who died in the Reform. At the same time, it seems reasonable that there be one living member of the Tenth, to look after Death's business on earth, so to speak, or to speak for the dead, if you prefer. What his or her role would be, I do not know. Catholicism aside, people die without help. Would the role of the Danu's priest be to acknowledge the dead, to set them on their path to the Otherworld, to remind the rest of us that our path does not end here, or something else?

I would appreciate the input of the more senior druids as to potential nominees for the order of Danu. Some of you I will be contacting directly. Everyone else in the counsel, specifically those whom I have not met, is invited to contact me: irony@starmind.org

Yours in the Mother,

Irony Sade
Pending Patriarch of Llyr



ARDA 2 Main Volume Completed!

By Mike Scharding

Yes, its about 15 months late. My apologies to all the inconveniences it has caused you.

As you remember, the massive 846 page Green Books volume came out in March 2004, and the Main Volume is done and will be mailed out promptly on Thursday Oct 28th, so you should be looking for this monster a little after Halloween. The 820 page Magazine Volume will be out sometime before Oimeic 2005 with 26 years of NRDNA newsletters and magazines since 1977; although we have gone double over-budget already due to poor estimation on size and binding costs; a subject covered in a plaintive letter accompanying the books.

The Main Volume is also a real hefty beauty, what we call "Minnesota Size." It is expertly hand-sewn with a hard-back spine in a lovely shade of shocking orange covers, weighing over three pounds and 883 pages and a few thousand articles. By the time you read this Samhain issue, the on-line files will be securely hosted at Carleton's server in both .pdf and .doc format. Thus, the rest of you can freely download your own copies to your computer and just print out the sections that you like; double-side them and bind them with either a super-stapler or take them down to Kinko's copier shop and spiral bind them (usually in two 440 page halves, splitting Parts 0-4 and 5-10 for \$8 each.) The website address is <http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/arda.html>

What can I say, but there's something for everyone in here. It is too large to be easily carried out in the field, and it is really meant to be a reference tool, and semi-portable abridged copy of the plentiful Druid Archives stored at Carleton College. Here are some highlights in the Main Volume (marked with asterisk in the 20 page Table of Contents).

Part Zero: Expanded Study Program from 12 to 20 steps; with an online study group this winter (see next article).

Part One: Druid Chronicles, with few changes.

Part Two: Apocrypha. Expanded from 25 to 100 letters, adding debates regarding Codex Affair, Smiley's draft-dodging, Tom Cross Affair, and most recent internet shenanigans.

Part Three: Liturgies. Expanded from about 30 to about 120 services and liturgical articles. More of Isaac's late 70s services, comparisnal studies of ADF, Keltria, and OMS services, on-line service, new orders, French, German, and Japanese Orders of Worship, seasonal festival activities, various divination methods, meditational techniques, and new funeral and wedding services.

Part Four: Trivia and Customs. Doubled in size to include more calendrical articles, graphic diagrams of the family of Druid groups in America, on-line propaganda samples, constitutional variations, organizational structuring of ADF, Keltria, and OMS, and standard correspondence formats.

Part Five: The Druish Books of the Hassidic Druids has few changes.

Part Seven: Druid Miscellaneous has relocated most of its contents to the Green Books volume, and has new essays on the RDNA by Irony Sade and Stephen Crimmins.

Part Eight: General History of RDNA has been updated slightly.

Part Nine: Books of Latter Day Druids has added the "Dead Lakes Scrolls" of recent historical accounts of Carleton and Akita Grove.

Part Ten: Oral Histories has added interviews of Isaac Bonewits, Alice Cascorbi '88, Mike Scharding '04, Irony Sade '99, Merri Beth Weber '03; and as a special treat, David Fisher '65 Founder of Reformed Druidism.

I hope you enjoy it, and I'm taking in submissions of liturgies, epistles, articles, poems, essays, etc for ARDA 3 to be published in 2013, so



2004-2005 Wintry ARDA 2

Study Session Begins

Well, you've finally got the enormous files or books of the Main Volume. You're welcome to flip through it by yourself, but you might want a little company if you are going to seriously plow through its entire unfamiliar contents. For this purpose, I've established a free on-line conference at yahoogroups.com called "Reformed_Druoid_Texts" that you can join by clicking this button and registering or e-mailing me at mikerdna@hotmail.com.

The RDT conference will last from Nov 1st 2004 to May 1st 2005 and will closely follow the Study Guide's 20 step program to wend our way more-or-less chronologically through 40 years of baffling materials. There will be about 30 people or so in the class, and jump in whenever you want, but realistically join up before Nov 15th. I reasonably expect about one serious posting of a few paragraphs per lesson from participants. People who satisfactorily complete the rigorous regimen will get a spiffy shiny certificate of a "Deanship of Druid Textology" (D.D.T.) to go on their wall.



Druid Chronicles (Evolved) 30th Anniversary Reprint

To honor Robert Larson's passing this August, Stephen Crimmins and I are releasing a new edition of the RDNA literature that Larson and Bonewits assembled in 1976. It was a work of beauty, and disseminated Reformed Druidism to a wider audience and DC(E) kind of put us on the map, so to speak, as the most over-published Druid group in America; a tradition that has continued. We're trying to faithfully replicate much of the art and layout (minus Celtic border designs) and reprinting the contents of DC(E) word for word, correcting typos, although the pagination will differ slightly. It will be about 250 pages long. If you'd like to write a small nostalgic memo for its introductory section, then email me at mikerdna@hotmail.com

DC(E), 2nd Edition, will be released on-line this winter, for free downloads and print outs, but if you'd rather order a commemorative hard-back edition, you should send \$50 by paypal.com to Mike using my address easternasia@hotmail.com as the destination account; and then send me another e-mail with your proper physical mailing address. Deadline for those special orders is Dec 1st 2004.



Reformed Druidic Movie DVD Released

If you wish to give a loved one something that hurts more than a lump of coal for the Yuletide exchange of presents, consider a copy of the worst Druidic movie ever made at Carleton College in 1996; with a cast drawn mostly from the

Carleton Druids itself. "Gatorr: the Fighting Rabbit" is a two-hour barbarian spoof filmed amidst the lush forests and fields where the RDNA was founded. Although not officially made as a Druid project, it is nonetheless permeated with the humor, spirit and sites of that Grove in the early 90s.

Gatorr is the ponderous saga of a young pacifistic barbarian, in a post-apocalyptic Uzbekistan, whose tribe is ruthlessly slaughtered by bandits. Young Gatorr staggers off to the mountain-bound Lepus monastery to train in the fighting style of the rabbit, gains very little wisdom, and then wanders chaotically about in search of his sister, fighting monsters, meeting strange friends, communing with nature, being barbarically bored, breaking into castles and attempting to wreak vengeance for his family. The usual stuff of the genre. Did I mention the long walking scenes, and peppy soundtrack?

Gatorr is being distributed free with all ARDA 2 book orders, but if you'd also like to buy a copy for your own, send \$10 by paypal.com to my account, which is called "easternasia@hotmail.com." After that, send me an e-mail to that address with your own mailing address before December 1st, and I'll guarantee the DVD will be in your stocking before the Solstice.



2004-2005 Wintry Bardic Contest Begins!

Just because the Time of Sleep is approaching after Halloween, means that your creative urges have to go dormant! Last year's 3rd Annual contest fizzled out, but we're ready to try yet again.

The RDNA will have our 4th Annual Wintry Bardic Contest from Nov 1st to May 1st, on this conference. Anytime during that period, submit to me your poems, songs, SHORT epic sagas, free-verse, or SHORT stories to me at mikerdna@hotmail.com I will host them this year as the judge [That way, I'll have a better chance of winning, no?]

Rules:

0. Anyone can play and enter, even your friends.
1. You can spoof an existing song/poem or be an entirely original creation, but the words have to be your own or a collaboration. If spoofing, please list the source of the music or original lyrics.
2. Subject may be anything vaguely "Druidic," what ever that means. Quality is not a big concern for me either. Have fun. Maximum of 20 entries per person, meaning you Pat.
3. Humor, anger, vexing, angst-drawn, serious, thoughtful, weird, drama-queenish is all perfectly acceptable; but naughty words may be tsk-tsk'ed and finger-waggled.

4. Poetry will be collected throughout the winter. spurts of poetry will be issued forth regularly every two weeks between November 1st and May 1st (about 13 mailings).
5. Bribes must be at least \$500, to be acknowledged.
6. Winner will be announced May 1st, 2005 and will bear the honor of "Bard of the Reform" from May 2005 to May 2006.
7. Entries will be posted on RDNAtalk and at <http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/bard4.html> and sent by e-mail.
8. Submission of an entry is considered to be accepting their reprint in the Green Books of ARDA 3 in 2013. Unless you tell me that they are copyrighted, I will assume they are for the public domain. I will label them either way according to your choice.

To see previous Bardic contest entries go to:

<http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/bard.html> 2001-2002
Winter
<http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/bard2.html> 2002-2003
Winter

Yours in the Mother,

Mike the Fool
mikerdna@hotmail.com



Mystery of The Dragon: A Ritual Meditation

By MaDagda, Duir De Danu Grove

Here lies the Mystery of The Dragon. The Mystery of the Dragon is comprised of two ritual meditations, which are to be held for the feasts of Samhain and Beltaine. These meditations, predominately the same meditation, but worded to fit each feast is based loosely on Arthurian Druidism and parts of the whole are based on the movie "Excalibur," produced by John Boorman and the book "Dancing with Dragons," written by D. J. Conway.

These meditations were primarily written for inclusion in Druidic ritual, however, they may be used within a Wiccan circle. If done within a Wiccan Circle, it would be ideal to include deities of Celtic origin.

Ritual preparation, concluding the ritual, and other ritual activity outside of these meditations should be done according to personal taste and tradition.

For the Feast of Samhain

The Beginning

Everyone holds hands around the ritual area. The participants are to close their eyes and take several deep breaths and as they breathe they are to think of The Dragon.

Leader: I would like you now to begin thinking about The Dragon. The ancient one who has existed before the dawn of time. The one who is everywhere and is everything. Its body is the Earth itself. Its forked tongue strikes upon the land like lightning. Its breath is the mist that casts shrouds and veils the land. Its scales glisten upon the waves of the sea. And Its Spirit lies in the wisdom of the cycle of awakening and sleep.

We are here to seek The Dragon so that we may learn from It, to seek Its wisdom, and to feel Its power and strength. But, to encounter The Dragon we must enter Its mouth and descend into the Dragon's heart.

The Mouth of the Dragon

Leader: You now find yourself standing before the mouth of a cave. You notice that along its edges, on both top and bottom are large, vertical rock formations that appear as if they were teeth. You now walk into the cavern into the cavern, which is dimly lit, and head down a narrow passage that ends at the top of a stairway.

The Spiral Staircase

Leader: You descend the stairs and soon discover that the stairway is a spiraling staircase. You travel downwards, spiraling deep into the Earth. After a while it seems that you will never stop, yet you continue onward.

The Cavern of the Tap Root Forest

Leader: Soon you descend into a cavern filled with taproots that plunge from the ceiling and then bore down into the floor. It is as if a forest of these tap roots lay all about you in all directions. The air is thick with the rich, loamy scent of the Earth. You take note of the varying sizes of these roots; some are as big as tree trunks while others are as thin as wire. You also notice that this cavern is alive with tiny creatures; insects, spiders, reptiles, and other such animals that have shunned the light of the sun and live in eternal darkness. After taking some time here, you now proceed your descent of the Spiral Staircase, going deeper into the Earth.

The Well of Hidden Flowing Waters

After some time, you begin to hear a faint sound of flowing water, and as you descend the staircase, it becomes louder and louder. You soon come to a landing beside an underground river and the waters roar as they flow from a waterfall at the end of the cave. The air is moist and cool. You feel refreshed standing along the shore of this river. If you wish, you may drink of the waters. As you drink in the waters, you find them to be cool and refreshing, giving you renewed strength and vitality. When you have finished, you continue down the Spiral Staircase.



The Vault of Hidden Gems

After going deeper down the Spiral Staircase, you end now in a cave filled and glowing with every sort of gem known. The room is brightly lit and it seems as if the gems themselves are the source of light in this chamber. You see before you giant diamonds, clusters of rubies and emeralds, long spires of quartz, gems of all shapes and size. As you look around you see to one wall an exit, which is ringed about with giant points of amethyst, arranged as if they were teeth within a gaping mouth. You walk towards this exit and find yourself again before a spiraling staircase. You now step down the staircase, once again going deeper, deeper, and deeper within the Earth.

The Heart of the Dragon

Leader: After what has seemed to be forever, the stairs now end in a brightly lit, circular chamber. You notice the entire room; the walls, the floor, and the ceiling are made of crystal as if this room was cut out from once giant crystal. As you enter the chamber you are filled with wonder and bursting with the urge to ask about what you see.

Note: If there are enough people, assign someone to play the Voice of the Seeker.

Voice of the Seeker: What is this place?

Leader: here you enter the Heart of the Dragon. Here all things are possible and all things meet their opposites.

Voice of the Seeker: The future?

Leader: And the past.

V.S. Knowledge?

Leader: And oblivion.

V.S.: Fulfillment?

Leader: And emptiness.

Here within the Heart of The Dragon fear meets courage, weakness meets strength, wasting away meets health, hate meets love, and folly meets wisdom.

Within the Heart of The Dragon you may change that which you will to change. Now take some time to think of that which you will to change within your life and as you do so, I shall awaken The Dragon so that we may ask for Its blessings and to aid us with Its power.

Awakening The Dragon

Here the Leader repeats the Charm of Making x9

Anail Nathrock Uthvoss Bethudd Dochiel Dienne

Leader: We, who are assembled here within the Heart of The Dragon, call You forth. Awaken and arise O' Ancient One!

Mighty One, who is everywhere and everything, aid us with Your power and strength. Guide us with Your wisdom! Great Serpent, ancient before the dawn of time, AWAKEN AND ARISE!

Note: The leader will let out a roar at this point signaling the presence of the Dragon.

Leader: Behold and feel The Dragon within you. Feel It move through you, out of you, and then back into you. Feel yourselves joined together in this circle enclosed and linked together by the power of The Dragon. Feel the Power of the Dragon. Feel Its strength and Its wisdom.

Know that aided by The Dragon, you may change that which you will to change and it shall come to pass. Know that you are planting seeds of change within the Dragon's Heart, allowing them to nurture and germinate until the time of awakening when they shall burst forth full of life and promise.

Know also that you may call upon The Dragon whenever you have need. For the power, the strength, and the wisdom of the Dragon are yours. Here lies the Mystery of The Dragon. We are all part of The Dragon, therefore, we are The Dragon.

Now breathe deep. Breathe in the Essence of The Dragon. Feel it in your feet and ankles. From your ankles to your knees, to your thighs, and up into your hips. Bring the power of the Dragon from your hips to the your stomach and now up to your heart. From your heart, bring the Essence of the Dragon up to your shoulders and then down your arms.

Feel the power of The Dragon move about the circle as it moves to the person next to you and then back into you. Feel it leave and enter you at the same moment. Feel yourselves joined within this circle by the power of The Dragon. Savor this moment. Remember it always, for we are all one, bound by the Essence of The Dragon, because we are The Dragon.

Now bring the Essence of The Dragon up from your shoulders to your throat and then to your forehead. From your forehead, bring the Essence of The Dragon rise to the top of your head and form either the wings or horns of The Dragon there.

Now, let go. Release the wings or horns of The Dragon and watch them fly within the circle and then out of it, soaring into the universe, breathing deeply as you do so.



Ascending the Spiral Staircase

Leader: It is now time to depart, yet before we leave, take a moment to thank The Dragon as It returns to Its rest. (Pause) When you are ready, go to the spiral staircase and begin to climb up to the Mouth of The Dragon. Soon you reach the Vault of Hidden Gems. You continue on and reach the Well of Hidden

Flowing Waters. If you wish, you may stop and drink of the waters, feeling them invigorate you to the core of your being. When you have finished, you continue your spiraling ascent and reach the Cavern of the Tap Root Forest. You breath in the cool, rich, earthy smell of the cavern, feeling yourself becoming grounded. You continue onwards and upwards and climb quickly, spiraling out of the Earth and soon come to the cave which leads to the Mouth of The Dragon. You follow the passageway down, coming to the Mouth of The Dragon, where you step into the warm, shining sun.

Now take a few deep breaths, and be here, in this place from whence you began your journey. Be here at this present time. When you are ready, open your eyes. Should you feel the need, you may return a portion of The Dragon's power to the Earth.



Random Acts of Druidry

By Gwyddion Realm, Eurisko Grove

I was driving home from the Autumn Moon Festival on Saturday night trying to figure out what to do with all the harvest decorations from our table. I didn't want to throw them away. Then it occurred to me. Why don't I make a harvest altar? Not only that, why don't I put it in one of the special places I like to stop when I go out for a walk. I have a special place by the water - a place where the water, earth, and sky all meet.

Imagine the sense of curiosity, wonderment, and possibly even magic when a passerby happens to come across it. If they're in the know on these things themselves, they may be even more happily surprised. I wonder if ancient Druids left altars like this in the forests. I wonder what would happen if more people started to leave such altars in places like city parks or down nature trails. What if people started doing this for every solstice, equinox, and other Pagan holidays?

Guidelines for a Nature Altar:

1. Use it to celebrate solstices, equinoxes, and other Pagan holidays.
2. Position the altar somewhere off the beaten path. Place it somewhere that is semi-public, but not heavily trafficked. You don't want it somewhere where it will be trampled or desecrated.
3. Make sure it's all natural and biodegradable. We don't want to litter the earth. Use plants, stones, and other items of the season:
 Fall/Harvest - pumpkins, gourds, autumn leaves, and acorns.
 Winter/Yule - evergreens, pine, holly, pinecones, and mistletoe.
 Spring - Ivy, flowers, and so on.
 Summer - Oak branches, apples, and other plants, fruits, and flowers of the season.
4. Pass it on. Suggest to your friends and others that they do the same.



Seasons of Food

Samhain 2004 - Apples

By Oriana Lewallen, Sunset Proto-Grove

There are only a few fruits that I can call 'icons' of the fall season. These are the fruits that seem to be the last ones offered at the vegetable stand down the road before the winter season comes, and they take down their hand-painted OPEN signs. The other thing that creates a fall food icon for me is the smells that conjure images I can relate to, as summer becomes fall. Who can deny that when they think of fall they think of the smell of pumpkin pie spices, or my personal favorite apple cider mulling on the stove with cloves, oranges and cinnamon? These smells invite me to, slip on a chunky warm sweater, go for a brisk mitten and scarf laden walk in the crunchy fall foliage, light a log in the fireplace and afterward cuddle down for a long read, with a steaming cup. They also invite me to make and enjoy warm leisurely meals with my family, and to share the fruits of the harvest with my friends.

There are a thousand plus varieties of apples grown in the United States currently. (4cs.com) Apples are varied in size, flavor, shape and color and each person seems to have their own distinct variety as a favorite. (My personal favorites are the Jonagold and the Gala varieties.) Everyone seems to know the Granny Smith and the Red Delicious; here are some lesser-known varieties to try. Of course this is just a basic list-

Arkansas Black Baldwin Criterion Doctor Matthews Gold Coast Honey Crisp Idared Lady Moyers Prize Northern Spy Snow Apple Sweet Emma

(A master list of apple varieties can be found at www.bighorsecreekfarm)

The Apple goes back as far as written history allows and farther. Though no one knows for sure who cultivated the apple originally, the remnants of apple seeds have been found in Southern England during excavations, and have been attributed to the Neolithic era. It is assumed that the crab apple was a common part of the human diet at this time. (Originally the wild apple tree, *malus pumila var mitris*, produced a large quantity of small sour, mostly seed and core fruits.

Though in mythology there are many instances where apples are named, it was not until later that the variety of fruit we know today was named an 'apple'. Until this point in time, many fruits were classified as 'apples' including, "melons, avocados, cashews, cherimoyas, dates, eggplants, lemons, oranges, peaches, pineapples, pine nuts, pomegranates, potatoes, quinces, and tomatoes (vegaradise).."

The Health benefits of the Apple are great. Many nutrients and vitamins are present in the Apple. These cause the Apple to be one of great benefit to the consumer. Apples are high in fiber and contain pectin both of which aids in digestion and digestive tract health but also aids in reducing blood sugar and high cholesterol. Apples contain antioxidants that aid the immune system, and reduce the risk of heart disease and some cancers. A grated apple, due to high water content, if served to a patient can greatly reduce their fever. "Steamed apples sweetened with

honey are beneficial for a dry cough and may help to remove mucous from the lungs. (vegparadise)" Eating apples cleans your teeth, and gives you a dose of potassium, folic acid, and vitamin C. If these aren't enough reasons to believe the adage, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away." I don't know what is.



Some Samhain apple traditions are:

Bobbing for Apples- Unmarried people would attempt to take a bite out of an apple bobbing in a pail of water. The first person to do so was believed to be the next to marry.

Peeling Apples- Attempting to produce a long unbroken apple peel was said to estimate the number of years you had to live. The longer the peel, the longer your life expectancy.

Peeling an apple and throwing the peel over one's shoulder was supposed to reveal the initial of one's future spouse.

Apple Games-

Snap apple is a game where a coin is inserted into an apple by pushing it in as far as possible. The apple is dangled from a string. The arms are tied behind the back and people bite at the apple. The first person that succeeds at biting into the coin inside the apple, wins.



Apple Recipe:

Apple Coleslaw*

Serves 8

- 1/2 head red cabbage, cored and thinly sliced
 - 1/2 head green cabbage, cored and thinly sliced
 - 2 Granny Smith apples, cored and coarsely chopped
 - 3 carrots, peeled and shredded
 - 1 C mayonnaise
 - 2 T apple cider vinegar
 - 1 T honey
 - 1 tsp caraway seeds
 - 1 tsp salt
 - 1/2tsp black pepper
1. In a large bowl, combine the red and green cabbage, apples, and carrots.
 2. In a small bowl, combine the remaining ingredients; mix well. Pour the mayonnaise mixture over the cabbage mixture; toss well.
 3. Cover and chill until ready to serve.

*Recipe found at Ivillage.com - tried and tasted by the Lewallen family... yummy!

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News



Job Opening: Lecturer in Prehistoric Archaeology, University of Wales Bangor

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND WELSH HISTORY
Lecturer in Prehistoric Archaeology Salary: Lecturer Grade A: £23,643 - £27,116 p.a. Closing Date: 12-11-2004 Post Description: Applications are invited for the above post. The successful candidate will be a specialist in Prehistoric Archaeology with the ability to make an important contribution to the research profile of the Department. Research interests in any aspect of prehistoric archaeology are welcome, including landscape archaeology and the prehistoric archaeology of Britain and Ireland. The successful candidate will be required to play a significant role in the teaching of prehistoric archaeology and the principles and techniques of archaeology, including theory, and to take part in administrative duties in the Department.

The post will commence in January 2005.

Other Information:

Application forms and further particulars should be obtained by contacting:

Human Resources,
University of Wales,
Bangor, Gwynedd,
LL57 2DG.
Tel: (01248) 382926 / 388132
E-mail: personnel@bangor.ac.uk

Please quote reference number 04-4/66 when applying.

For informal discussions concerning this position, candidates are encouraged to contact:

Email: Dr. Raimund Karl r.karl@bangor.ac.uk or Dr Nancy Edwards his010@bangor.ac.uk

Events

The Mysteries of Avalon

November 12-13 - Ben Lomond

Mara Freeman presents The Mysteries of Avalon at the Amity Center. This weekend we will explore the beauty, wisdom and power of Avalon, which will take us through many magical paths in the Forest, including:

The Faery Realm of Morgen le Fay, the Nine Sisters, the Dark Goddess and Mysteries of the Cauldron and the Chalice of Healing;

The "wild wisdom" of Merlin: originally known as Myrddin, Welsh bard, prophet, magician and archetypal Guardian of Britain.

The Mysteries of Glastonbury: the small town in southwest England, where Avalon meets our own world; the hidden secrets of Glastonbury Tor, the Chalice Well, and the ancient Abbey with its legends of Joseph of Arimathea and King Arthur.

The Wasteland—the myth and its meaning for us today in our current planetary crisis—and how we can redeem it through reconnecting with the Goddess of the Sacred Land who guards the Grail.

To set sail for this magical isle, we will go by the "three arts" of the Western inner tradition: ritual, meditation and the Vision Journey. This experiential work will enable us to discover how "Avalon of the Heart" can open us to wisdom and healing for our lives and our Earth today. Information: 800-694-1957 or avalon@celticspirit.org

Book Review



Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Art: Geometric Aspects

by Derek Hull

From Read Ireland Book News - Issue 286

Trade Paperback; 40.00 Euro / 48.00 USD / 25.00 UK; 250 pages, with colour and black-and-white illustrations throughout

Much of early medieval Celtic and Anglo-Saxon art is based on the display of motifs keys, interlacing, spiral and zoomorphic in well-defined panels in simple and complex arrays. A study of the arrangements of the panels and the fine details of the motifs indicates that the artists relied on geometric methods and principles first used by Egyptians and Greeks. Some of the works are incredibly intricate and challenge us to unravel the way they were created. This book reflects the authors life-long

interest in interpreting the exciting and exotic patterns revealed by scientific studies using light and electron microscopes. His interest in Celtic and Anglo-Saxon art started with a casual observation of an interlacing pattern on an early medieval stone cross set in a churchyard. There followed many years of exploration of art in metal, stone and vellum from all parts of Ireland and the British Isles. This book reveals new and intriguing facets of these works that add to our appreciation of the beauty of the art and the skills of the artists.

To order books from the Read Ireland Book Review send an email to the order department at: greg@readireland.ie

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Read Ireland Web Site Home Page: <http://www.readireland.com>

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Calendar

Astronomical Samhain, when the sun is mid way between the Autumn Equinox and the Winter Solstice, will occur as 15 degrees of Scorpius on Nov. 6 2004, at 8:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time, or by an alternative method of calculation as 16 degrees, 18 minutes declined on Nov. 6, at 2:59 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:

A Druid Missal-Any

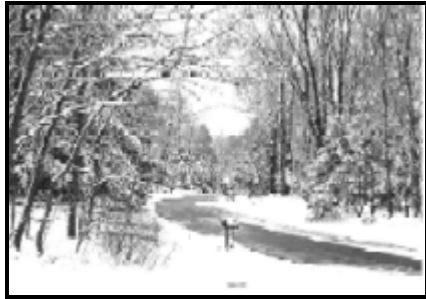
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Please note the new mailing address!

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A Druid Missal-Any
Yule Year XLII
Vol. 20 Number 8
December 23rd, 2004 c.e.



Yule Essay: Bards, Ogma and Ogham

Reprinted from A Druid Missal-Any, Yule 1985
By Emmon Bodfish



Yule begins Winter, Geimredh, season of the Bard. The File and Bards, like the troubadours who followed them, practiced their art "from Samain until summer" as in the old poem of Forgoll, the Bard, who tells King Mongan a story each night from his wise repertory. And, as Keatings explains, commenting on the Old Irish, the winter practices of the File, lodging from house to house in exchange for their songs and stories, had become such a great burden for Ireland, that a king had the idea of banishing them:

"It is by Aodh son of Ainmire that a great assembly of Drom Ceat was convened where there was a gathering of the nobles and ecclesiastics(?) of Ireland. Aodh had three reasons to convene this assembly, the first of them being to banish the File and Bards because they constituted a heavy burden and were hard to govern."

At this time, Keatings adds, almost a third of the well-born men in Ireland belonged in some way to the Bardic class. "And from Samhain to Beltaine, they lodged at the homes of the nobles of Ireland." The project failed because Conchobar, to show his Druid orthodoxy and generosity, gathers up the File and Bards and maintains them for seven years, and also sends Cuchulainn to meet them. (It is not, in the light of this, accidental that we have more verse remaining about Conchobar than about any other Pre-Christian Irish king.)



The tradition continued after the Christianization. A folklorist whom the Rees quote recalled that

"Just until recently, the Irish story tellers, heritors of the Bards, also did not exercise their art during the summer. In order to feel at ease, it had to be winter and night had to have fallen."

The patron god of Bards and storytellers is Ogmios, Champion of Strength and Eloquence. Lucian, writing in the second century, equates him with Roman Hercules, but notes these differences. First, Ogmios is portrayed as an old man, white haired, but still powerful. The Gauls, he learned through his native acquaintance, associate eloquence with the old champion, and not with Hermes, whom they see as too young and callow. On one of the temples or art works then extant, Ogmios, he says, is pictured leading a joyful band of men, attached to him by thin chains which link their ears to the tip of his tongue, a striking visual portrait of persuasive ability. The Irish god Ogma or Oghma, is clearly the same divine persona, though Prof. MacCana feels that the name may be a borrowing instead of a genuine cognate. But the figure appears, often qualified by the title "Grainainech" of-the-Sun-like-Countenance, and The Honey-Mouthed, both in Ireland and Wales as on the Continent. He is also known as "trenfher," champion, or literally the "heavy man." In insular traditions he is not only the patron of eloquent speech, but also the inventor of writing, in the old Irish system of Ogham letters. This is a system of writing made up of bars of varying lengths placed above and below a central line. It is of uncertain origin, but clearly designed for carving on stone, or at the end of square pillars.

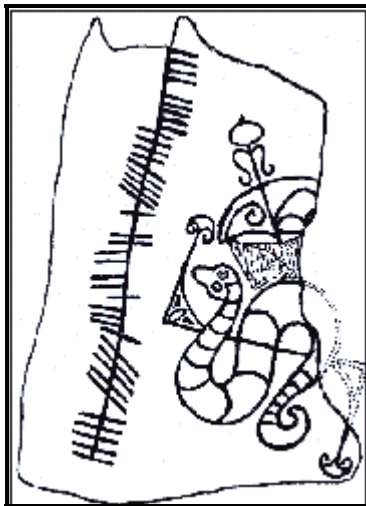
It continued in use into the Early Middle Ages. MacCana believes it probably evolved out of an earlier set of magical symbols; perhaps some of the same ones that gave rise to the Norse Runes.

As Ogham came into use after the Celts were exposed to the Latin alphabet, MacCana contends it may have evolved thus: "seeing the utility of the Sound=Letter system of Latin script, the Gauls may have let the magic symbol whose name contained the sound stand for that sound in all words." Other scholars, such as Prof. Rhys, and Charles Squire, believe Ogham was the indigenous script of Ireland. They stress that it more closely resembles a binary or trinary code, akin to the bars and lines of the I Ching, than the picture writing of sound diagrams from which Mediterranean and hence all Western systems of letters evolved.

Most Ogham inscriptions are found in Ireland and Scotland, where the Romans never came. (Druidism is full of these riddles.)

Being in this way the God of Writing, it may not be an accident that Oghma is one of the very few Celtic gods for whom we have written records of his worship, i.e. prayers. Two "defixiones," inscribed tablets, were found in France on which Ogmios is beseeched to avenge the author and wreck a curse on certain individuals. In Irish sources, he is also the Champion in

this sense of judge and avenger, and to him binding oaths are made. He is invoked as "the god who binds" the binding power of words and oaths, the spell-binding power of eloquence, so graphically portrayed by the thin golden chains by which he leads his listeners, in the scene described by Lucian. This ability to persuade, convince, and enchant with words was highly regarded in Celtic society, and a part of the training of Bard, Filidh, and Druid alike. LeRoux speculates that the "magic of Ogham" that Cuchulainn used in the Tain Bo Cuailnge to stop, single handed, the advance of the Connaught army, was not supernatural magic, but persuasion, or eloquent diplomacy and playing for time.



Thus, Oghma is the one to invoke in negotiations, when eloquent speech and persuasive ability are needed.

Oghmic Incantation Here is an incantation to an Oghma like figure of "Sun-like Countenance" from the Scottish oral folk tradition. The Preceptor has used it and gives testimony of its utility.

The litigant went at morning dawn to a place where three streams met. And as the rising sun gilded the mountain crests, the man placed his two palms edgewise together and filled them with water from the junction of the streams. Dipping his face into this improvised basin, he fervently repeated the prayer,

Ionnlaith mise m'aodann
 'S na naodh gatha greine,
 Mar a dh'ionnlaid Moire a Mac
 Am bainne brac na breine.
 Gaol a bhi 'na m'aodann,
 Caomh a bhi 'na m'ghnuis,
 Caora meala 'na mo theanga,
 M'anail mar an tuis.
 Is dubh am bail ud thall,
 Is dubh daoine th'ann;
 Is mis an eala bhan,
 Banruinu os an ceann.
 Falbhaidh mi an ainme Dhe,
 An riochd feidh, an riochd each,
 An riochd nathrach, an riochd righ:
 Is treasa lion fin na le gach neach.

I will wash my face
 In the nine rays of the sun,
 As Mary washed her Son*
 In the rich fermented milk.
 Love be in my countenance,

Benevolence in my mind,
 Dew of honey in my tongue,
 My breath as the incense.
 Black is yonder town,
 Black are those therein,
 I am the white swan,
 Queen above them.

I will travel in the name of God,
 In likeness of deer, in likeness of horse,
 In likeness of serpent, in likeness of king:
 Stronger will it be with me than with all persons.

*A later introjection which does not rhyme.

News of the Groves

Carleton Grove: News from Minnesota

The grove here at Carleton is mostly silent these days, empty not only of animals and seasonal plants, but also of students. Before leaving for the term, we had a sweat and a fun anonymous sealed message distribution day. We also got a mysterious letter asking for the attendance of "The Chief Druid" of the grove at a store opening in London. All goes well, except that our exorcism of the White House seems to have had only limited effect.

Stephen Crimmins has completed his editing of the second edition of *Druid Chronicles (Evolved)* and is reviewing Richard Shelton's "Carleton Druid Compendium".

Digitalis Grove: News from D.C.

Mike has decided, failing the acquisition of a cushy Federal job by April, to relocate to South Korea next summer and teach English there from July 2005-July 2006, perhaps longer on the EPIK program. He invites you to join him, if you're interested in working in the same city with him.

After finishing ARDA 2's third and last volume with Stacey (NRDNA Magazines 1976-2004), Mike wishes to go out on new adventures overseas where the cooking is better, and Republicans are scarce. He will study local religion and get a better feel for Northeast Asian politics on the side. Most likely, a new Grove will be established, the first in Korea; much like the Akita and Shikoku Grove were established during his stay in Japan from 1996-2000.

Rowan-Oak Grove: News from Tulsa, OK

With the arch-druidess finally getting her financial life back under control we were able to turn our attention once again to the needs of the grove. the decision was made to start a culdee sect study group within the grove since so many members were christo pagan, and were interested in exploring this aspect of druidism. showings at our rituals have been almost nil unless the arch-druidess was putting on a feast anyway so for the time being we are exploring other avenues. for the past two Saturdays our culdee group has been doing studies from an antique bible reading for the home study group book given to me by my erstwhile mentor myrddin a maeglin and we pick apart the scriptures going back to the hebrew, arramaic or greek to find the connotations found in the original languages. everyone has remarked that doing so has given them a new perspective on what was really written. we have also discussed the evolution of the early church history, both in rome and in the british isles and how the two christian sects differed enormously and the influence of the druids on both. this has been an interesting class

and will probably evolve into a full seminar for our students seeking the priesthood. AS for yule itself while nothing specific is planned we might try learning some of the older pagan carols and do a bit of caroling- if anyone actually shows the interest in doing it. the change over to sis crystal as vp of the board of directors, sis erika as head of corn maiden society helped enormously, bro velderonne and bro thomas are alternating as our summoners and everyone else retained former positions in the board of directors. sis m.s. sylver catt was raised to eldership at samhain, she heads our wagner grove and has more than earned this elevation. secretary bro m.c. werebear and the arch-druidess m.s. white raven have joined a peace activist group and have become involved in helping to end the war in our own small fashion. oops gotta run, got a member online who is trying to stop someone from oding. back into counselor mode.

healing light and peace
m.s. white raven

Dravidia Grove: News from Indiana

Hello all,

It is once again that time of study and that is what I have been doing with my time. I did manage to see a few raccoons out back last night. There were a total of 5 of them playing around the yard. The weather has not turned too cold yet, but it is cold enough to put a damper on your outdoor plans. We had a fantastic Samhain, and a few good scares by hiding under the pile of leaves in the front yard. Have some really good video shots of it that went back to England with my Brother-in-law. Enjoy the changing of the leaves.

Dolanimus

Canine Grove: News from Oregon

I am still a wandering Druid wannabe in the watery clutches of western Oregon. I foresee a damp solitary ritual out in the woods begging the sun king to hurry up and return! Also, this diehard single woman finally consented to a proposal of marriage after forty-five years of happily traipsing about on this planet on her various errant adventures. (Besides, who can say no to getting hitched at the Church of Elvis?!)

Bindi, somewhere in the vicinity of Portland, OR

Sierra Madrone Grove: News from California

We at the Sierra Madrone Grove are planning two events to mark our "Season of Sleep". We are planning a large public Yule Gathering to be held Dec 17th at the Unitarian Universalist Church on Sierra Dr in Sacramento. The Event will start at 7:00 pm. We will also be holding a private Hogmanay Celebration on Dec 31 to mark the New Year.

Sean Mac Dhomhnuill

Sierra Madrone Grove

Sunset Proto-Grove: News from California

It is the season of sleep. Every day now, I go to work in the dark and come home in the dark. I only really see the sun on the weekends. This really brings the seasons true self out for me. It's these months when I don't really get to see the beauty of our

earth daily, that make the spring so wondrous. I concentrate now on catching up on projects in the house. Updating scrapbooks, decorating for Yule, continuing to try and fill the empty spaces still present in our new home, in an effort to bring the 'cozy' feeling into every room. Cooking more hot meals now. A roast in the oven, a stew simmering on the stove...baking.

The cozy feeling I search to create for my family is much like a warm nurturing womb in the dark season. And in the spring we open the windows. Dust, clean, sort, store, sell. Opening the house to the newly emerging season and the light.

Lovely the circle of life.

"...Now I see the secret of the making of the best persons,

It is to grow in the open air and to eat and sleep with the earth."

—Walt Whitman

Best Wishes to all-

Oriana

Poison Oak Grove, News from California

Publisher of "A Druid Missal-Any"

Our Samhain Social was celebrated this year in the ArchDruidess' new house. We sent a place for those who have gone on before, putting on that plate a bit of everything from our feast. When dessert time came and everyone got a piece of the AD's specialty, persimmon pudding, our Server, who was seated next to the "empty" place setting proclaimed, "I don't know who is sitting there, but he sure wants that cake!" Later that night the AD set the plate outside for the spirits. In the morning everything was still there, except for the persimmon pudding!



Call to the Morrigan

By Morag NicBride, Server, Poison Oak Grove

Asking help of gods has always been an uncertain business: how do you know when you are answered, or even heard? Who is listening, and what allows one cry to be heeded, and not another?

And what happens to one's system of rational thought when it seems a call has been answered, not by the modern accepted version of God, but by something much older and more dangerous?

At a grove service in early June, I made a request for help. My neighborhood, a small, quiet Oakland street near San Leandro, was under siege from a band of young men who had attached themselves to the household directly across the street

from my home. They were present day and night, in and out in clusters, glaring at anyone who looked at them, loud at late hours, their friends and associates visiting in a steady parade of arrogance.

For two years, the situation had been increasing. Weekends, especially three-day holiday weekends, had ceased to be times of relaxation and pleasure. When the tenant was gone, as she frequently was over the weekend, people came in carloads, blocking my driveway and loitering on the sidewalk, talking loudly, bringing their laundry, stashing items in an unlocked car on the property. Drugs and petty prostitution were part of the mix; my partner of 16 years had been offered both. It embarrassed and offended him to think that these people regarded him as a potential customer. The father of one of the young men, the most belligerent and aggressive of the lot, would come over himself to participate in the activities.



Our little block was marked territory, nearly a gang zone, although the young men, mostly in their early twenties, were not a gang. Calling the police was dicey, as it was never clear whether or not the tenant had given her permission for the crowd to be at her house. The owner was more or less hoping everything would go away, apparently unaware of the Oakland statute that allows the police to evict tenants who have become a severe nuisance, and that he could be liable for a hefty fine upwards of \$12,000. When I mentioned it to him, he still didn't want to do anything.

Useless to describe the irresponsibility and indifference of the tenant herself, she is a good-natured individual who is hard to dislike, but she really does not care what her neighbors must endure. Nothing changed until it began to affect her directly.

The last episode in this silly drama had occurred on the Memorial Day weekend.

At a subsequent grove gathering, after consulting with my Arch-Druidess, I called upon the Morrigan. I asked them for help in protecting my home and neighborhood, not for any punishment for or revenge upon the people involved. As I spoke aloud, great vultures circled low over the trees of the grove, continuing their flight until I finished my request. I am not making this up; they did not begin circling until I began my request, and they did not long remain after I was finished. I recall seeing two, but am not sure how many were actually there.

The next long weekend was July 4, and, as expected, the tenant of the problem house departed with instructions to the homeowners left, right, and across the street (me) that "no one" was to be in the house. Leaving it in our hands, was, of course, a convenient way to be sure that nothing really would be done, because we were concerned about retaliation, among other things. The big, bluff middle-aged man on one side was reluctant to call police, because he did not want to see young African-American men in jail, but he was not afraid to let them know that he was ready to make the call.



Late on a weekend night, the party began. Cars slipped by and people disappeared into the house, but no lights were on. Quiet or not, there was a lot of traffic for a house that was supposed to have "no one" in it. I am not sure that it was our call that initiated the visit by the police. They had to have been very close by. We called the Oakland non-emergency number to ask what we should do, as we knew that the tenant was not home, not to ask for police intervention, but while we were on the phone, the patrol cars arrived.

My partner and I stayed inside, peering out the window of a darkened room; there were at least five patrol cars, and a helicopter circling above. The racket was frightening; later, neighbors from down the street collected on the sidewalk in front of my house to watch after danger of gunfire had passed.

The Morrigan is said to fly shrieking overhead, in the form of a raven, or carrion crow, and to call up a danse macabre of dead warriors to stoke the fury of battle; indeed it seemed so that night. There were fifteen or so people in that tiny house, and those that were not immediately arrested attempted to flee. Three, a man and two women, hid under the car of the neighbor to the left of the raided house. Others jumped fences and fled through yards. It is my understanding that all were apprehended, including a person who was on probation, and most certainly faced a much longer jail term than he had before.



It was well after midnight before the last of those arrested had either been taken away or released. The house was locked up again. We managed to get some sleep; I learned from the neighbor whose car had played temporary "donjon" that she was none too pleased with the action, as she was imprisoned in her house for most of it, but she was not surprised that it happened.

There was more to come; Sunday night, even after the ruckus, we saw one of the miscreants come to the door of the house, and go in. I called the police; they came, and, this time, unleashed a police dog when the people inside refused to come out. Two young men were wrestled out of the house and onto the ground. One was let go, and the other taken to jail. The one released had a key, which, we found later, he had made on the sly when he had had one of the tenant's keys in his possession.

To say that quiet and contentment ruled afterwards would be wishful thinking, but things are definitely more peaceful, and far less confrontational.

Was this juxtaposition of ancient lore and modern action actual cause and affect?

As I stated earlier, perhaps the call to the Morrigan gave me and my partner and, as a result, others, courage to finally act; we were not the only people who called out the law, or stood up to the belligerent crowd in the months that followed.

Literature concerning the Morrigan warns of residual violence, and disquiet and physical threat continued to plague the woman who lives in the house. She did not really want everyone to go away, nor did her son, both of them giving lip service to the idea while allowing some of the people hauled out of their house by force to return. As of today, the arrogance and overbearing invasive nature of the visitors has by and large ended, as if the events of the summer caused them to understand that they did not have free rein on the street. Whatever they may say, their behavior has changed. The most threatening and troublesome individuals are gone, some for good. Nonetheless, it is clear to us that she profits by the activity in her home, and has used the hands-off attitude of our neighborhood to quietly continue other ugly goings-on, for which there will no doubt be another kind of reckoning, only not just now.



The Morrigan is too powerful and unpredictable a force to call upon for anything less than full battle. Don't ask for their help unless you mean it, or, in a more familiar phrase, be careful what you wish for; you may get it. Also, as the matter began to finally wind down over the weeks, I had the very strong feeling that it was best to look for help elsewhere in the pantheon of Celtic deities, should there be a need. It was and is time for gentler influences.

In psychological, and maybe karmic, terms, it might be said that my neighbors and I got ourselves charged up to take on the problem, and had to deal with the fallout. We fielded it the best we could for the time, and, because of our own unacknowledged fears and hidden intent, we got what we asked for.

Or the Morrigan did what I asked of them, and left the pieces to fall as they might.

Comments on the nature of the Morrigan and some of their symbols:

The Morrigan, also Morrighu, is a triune deity, composed of the three goddesses, Badb, Macha, and Nemain. Together they are so powerful that it is considered wiser to invoke them separately, as their collective energy can turn violent.

"Morrigan" is translated by two separate sources as "great queen", and "phantom queen".

Among the animals associated with the Morrigan are the carrion crow and the raven.

Carrion crows do not inhabit the West, and I thought that they might be a European bird. To my surprise, they are well known in the south and middle parts of the United States, but by other names: turkey buzzard, or vulture. The California species is slightly different in appearance, but they were indeed the birds that flew over the grove.

These big, black birds have an unsavory reputation because of their eating habits, but they are wonderful flyers. Vultures most likely evolved from eagles and hawks, and the former, at least, are not beyond dining on carrion themselves. It is also good to recall that the carrion eaters keep things clean for the rest of the world.

Locally, there is a large flock that roosts in the tall trees around and about San Leandro. I have seen them circling high in the air directly above St. Leander's Catholic Church, and once I saw them perched, broad-shouldered and ominous, atop the eucalyptus trees situated directly next to San Leandro city hall. From all appearances, they stay there regularly. The raven is one of my favorite birds. Intelligent, clever, resourceful, and playful, it is a figure in the folklore of many cultures.

Many ravens roost in the trees around my house and along the streets in this community. Right now, as it is nearly winter, they are not as plentiful as in the summer and early fall, when the pickings are better. They are huge birds, which we often do not realize, because from a distance, it is easy to mistake them for crows, which are much smaller, and have a more raucous cry. The raven makes a low croak, and there is language in it.

One such is the double word "croak-croak" which means "here I am". I have heard a raven give such a call when it has made a kill, or has got hold of some other food, perhaps calling its mate to share the meal. As I was leaving my door for work one day, a raven took flight from my front yard. Its wingspan was nearly as wide as the span of my arms, and it had a body as large as that of a big hawk. I have also seen them close at hand, begging for food with great birdly charm, in the Grand Canyon. They stand as tall as my knee, and have beaks three inches long. The head boatman on one of my Grand Canyon river trips pointed out an aerial squabble between a gathering of ravens and a raptor, which was getting the worst of the fight. He claimed to have seen ravens harass hawks and eagles for the sheer fun of it.

My favorite raven prank happened during one breakfast on that same trip. The cook had set up the food on long tables, as usual, including a platter of English muffins. One of our winged camp followers was hopping about on the rocks behind the tables, ignored by every one. As we sat about the camp eating, we saw the bird launch itself into the air, swooping in a wide arc overhead, the pale round circle of an English muffin dangling from its talons.

Plants associated with the Morrigan are henbane and nightshade. Nightshade is common in this area, and, if the berry is ripe, it is quite edible and very tasty, sweet, with an intense tomato flavor. I would not recommend trying it unless you are very sure.

Sources:

The Druids, Peter Berresford Ellis
Celtic Myth and Magick, Edain McCoy
National Audubon Society Web site, www.audubon.org



The Heart of the Spiral: A Story in Two Parts

By Brian Jeffries

(Editor's Note: occasionally we at A Druid Missal-Any receive worthy submissions of fiction of a Druish nature from RDNA members. Previously we published The Soul of Juliana Spring by Irony Sade of Hemlock Splinters Grove. This one was submitted by a member of the RDNAtalk conference, who not long ago was asking questions on the conference for his research on the Druid's favorite tree, the oak. Little did I know it was for this intriguing story!)

Foreword

I drink from the flowing phenomenal well
My thirst for experience deep
I hunger for secrets the ages foretell
The secrets that they did not keep

Story and style are written in stone
A burial mound shows the place
The point of an arrow, an altar, a throne
Illuming the ways of our race

To tell about time is the simplest thing
The way of a spiral, an uncoiling spring
Bedrock to capstone, the key is in place
A conscious revival, a memory trace

To those who remember, I leave it with you
Retelling's the way it can last
A crystal portrayal - the best we can do
Inspiring future through past

More than twenty thousand years ago, Stone Age Europeans worshipped the immortal Great Goddess, who was personified as the wild, primitive woman in her threefold aspects of beautiful maiden, motherly matron, and wise old crone. It was She who presided over all acts of creation and destruction. Represented as Earth Mother, Moon Goddess, and Sea Goddess, She had countless other titles.

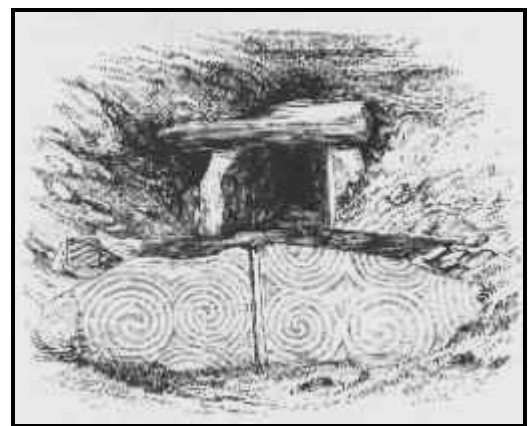
Gradually, the early nomadic hunter-gatherers turned to agriculture, and among the farmers were those who observed the cycles of the heavens and the seasonal changes of the land and sea. They became able to predict natural events, and thus were considered to be valuable members of society. These were the druids, who came to be the educated class among the warriors, farmers, craftsmen, slaves, and eventually, metal smiths. The science of the druids crossed over into the realm of magic, rituals of which were performed on hilltops in groves of oak trees.

Twisted and split and blasted by bolts
Yet stately serene grew the dark sacred oaks
On top and defiant of wind and of weather
Their deep diving roots held the mountains together

Among the several different types of druids were the ollaves, or master poets, who were the keepers of myth, history, genealogy, and the Spirit of Poetry, which reincarnated down through the ages. For them, the Goddess as Muse was the ultimate source of all inspiration.

Her symbol, the spiral, is a fundamental design of nature, and for humankind, it represents life, death, and rebirth through the Immortal Spirit.

This is the tale of Dylan O'Cleary; family man, athlete, adventurer, and natural landscaper, who was given a mysterious book for his research on oak trees, leading him to the very heart of the spiral.



The Heart of the Spiral: A Tale of Poetic Rebirth

In the sea-womb's mist
Lies the Isle of the West
Gray Spiral Castle
Upon its mount rests

In his sleeping chamber within ancient stone walls, the Master Poet stirred, his blue-gray eyes focusing into wakefulness. Gesturing to the hooded figure waiting by the chamber door he queried: "Apprentice, how long have I slumbered?"

"It is the early twenty-first century after Christ, Master. This is a time of great change for the Mother of All Living and consequently for poetry as well."

"A change for the better it surely must be," yawned the Master, "for upon my last awakening I found both to be held in small regard. Once again, it seems that She has a task for us to perform in the Realm of the Living. Tell me now," he directed, arising and stretching, "who and what has awakened me from my dreams?"

Peering into a large crystal pyramid set atop an oaken pedestal, the Apprentice replied, "A man named Dylan recites from 'The Song of Amergin', Master."

I am a stag: of seven tines

"So. The Celtic calendar-alphabet within which is contained the Name of the Creator. This is an incantation of great power. Apprentice, where dwells this man?"

I am a hawk: above the cliff
"In the Land of the Lightning Bolt, on the western shore of the Southern Sea."
I am a hill of poetry



"This Dylan is a simple man who finds joy in the experiences of the natural world, and who has had little formal training in poetry and myth."

I am a wave of the sea

"Think you that such a one would be suitable for our purpose, Apprentice?"

I am a tear :
The sun lets fall

"Perhaps I do, Master, for it is plain that he feels the magic present in the verse that he reads, although he is ignorant as to its meaning."

I am a wizard:
Who but I
Sets the cool head
Aflame with smoke?

"What text does this man recite from?" queried the Master.
"'The White Goddess' by Robert Graves," came the reply.

I am a breaker: Threatening doom

"Ah!, Graves is it!" exclaimed the Master. "'The White Goddess' is his excellent history of poetic myth and a guide to the foundations of language. Its influence should serve well to facilitate our work with this 'man of the natural world'."

Invoke, People of the Sea, invoke the poet,
That he may compose a spell for you.
For I, the Druid, who set out letters in Ogham form,
I, who part combatants,

I will approach the ring fort of the Sidhe to seek a cunning poet that together we may concoct incantations.

I am a wind of the sea



* * *

As he finished reading the last line of the three thousand year old poem, the hair rose on the back of Dylan's neck. A rush of energy coursed up his spine and he was flooded with an ecstatic feeling he had never before felt. "Wow! Incredible!" exclaimed Dylan to himself.

"This poem, what's it called? 'The Song of Amergin.' Why is it affecting me this way? These ancient words mean little to me, but I can't stop the feeling that I've known them before in other times, other places."

Late into the moonlit night he read on in wonder, and finally, with the sea sounds outside the window lulling him, he slept.



When Dylan awoke the next morning, the sun had been up for an hour. Rubbing the sleep from his blue eyes, he went outside to look for his wife, Dana. He found her pruning plants among the array of green hues in the garden. After a morning kiss, Dylan took her hand and they sat down beneath an oak tree's gently bobbing branches, where he related to her his experience of the previous night. "The feeling that I've known that ancient poem before is accompanied by the equally unlikely notion that Robert Graves, in the year of my birth, wrote 'The White Goddess' specifically for me to study," he said wonderingly.

"Maybe it does all have a meaning," replied Dana. "In my studies of the metaphysical, I've read that there are no coincidences or intuitions without some reason, and that it's wise to heed them when they occur."

"Honey, as you know," answered Dylan, "I've always been skeptical of accounts of magic and mysticism, but from the words of a long-dead bard, my imagination has been given a tremendous charge of energy, and I have to know what it's all about."

"You had better read on then, and hope for some clues," she advised, turning back to her task.

That night, after a long day of planting oak trees and arranging a landscape with Dana, Dylan relaxed in a chair with a spiral notebook in his lap, regarding the pen in his hand. In the twenty-five years that had passed since finishing school, he had used this instrument of power mostly for the writing of checks and the filling out of bills. Seldom did he even write to his kin, many of whom lived far away. A medieval Welsh Triad from the book came into his mind:

Three things that enrich the poet:
Myth
Poetic power
A store of ancient verse

The ecstatic feeling returned in a rush and his pen found the paper. Considering some of his life's elements, and weaving in knowledge gained from the book, he wrote:

Youthful sun beckons a new season's shoots
Winter leaves carpet the old oak tree's roots
Song of the Earth flowing upward in prayer
Bass note of thunder rolls down through the air
Melody strong let the new day begin
A summoning call to the druid within
A summoning call to the druid within

Old oaks and thunder bestir memories
Of dark forests ancient with tall sacred trees
Acorns and seedlings are what they have been
The groves will return like the druid within
The groves will return like the druid within

Sylvan cathedral a sacrifice burns
In thanks to Earth spirits as the great year wheel turns
Hooded forms chanting as magic begins
To call 'cross the ages to the druid within
To call 'cross the ages to the druid within



* * *

As they turned away from the image within the crystal, the Master Poet, with an amused look on his weathered face, asked, "What say you about these lines, Apprentice?"

"It may be that we attempt to turn base metal to gold, Master," he replied, "though rhyme and meter are passable."

"Because of his connection with the oak tree, gained by his diligent propagation and conservation of its species, this Dylan has unknowingly tapped the ancient power of druid magic. Therein lies the key to his journey, and it will enable him to express the essence of the realms he has mastered in the language of poetry," replied the Master.

* * *

Later, reading into the early morning hours, with Dana and their two young children long asleep, Dylan encountered the thirteenth century poem entitled:

'The Tale of Taliesin.'

Primary Chief Bard am I to Elphin
And my original country is the region of the summer stars
I have been winged by the genius of the splendid crozier
I have obtained the muse from the Cauldron of Cerridwen
I have been in an uneasy chair above Spiral Castle
And the whirling round without motion between the elements
I shall be until the day of doom upon the face of the earth
I was originally little Gwion
And at length I am Taliesin



Taliesin! The power in that name and in the antique verse was so intense that Dylan could only shake his head and blow through pursed lips as poetic ecstasy once again coursed through him. "What is the story and meaning behind these lines? Why do I feel their words so strongly, as if I knew them well? How does the Muse inspire?" he asked himself in amazement. From his love of the sea and his long experience as a surfer, he was able to relate to the words:

...the whirling round without motion between the elements.

This was a fair description of surfing within the vortex of a curling wave - a barrel ride, which also happened to be an ecstatic experience. Too, the lines brought to mind the eye of a hurricane; the calm within the heart of that mighty elemental force beloved of wave riders. The pen in Dylan's hand moved toward the notebook, and words flowed:

Daughter of the Sun and Earth
Scirocco has been given birth
Libya's dunes feel her growing desire
Whose shape shifting sands are the fuels of her fire
She whirls on so lightly down through the Sudan
To the Ivory Coast and Liberia's span

There as two passionate lovers they meet
The white-capped Poseidon embraces her feet
Above them are flying her bright cirrus tresses
Far down below his blue face she caresses
God of the sea and her most willing slave
He joins in the dance of the wind and the wave

Westward she flies! - A scirocco no longer
Unfurling her beauty, her love growing stronger
The Lesser Antilles receives her clear eye

She spins a pirouette from the sea to the sky
 Seeking a path in her amorous quest
 With great pomp and majesty she waltzes northwest

Yes, I call her the Dancer - the one I long for
 Her ranks roll in rhythm upon the wild shore
 Sirens' sweet singing - I too am the slave
 For I must dance the dance of the wind and the wave
 My dance is my prayer in our aqueous bliss
 To the whirling White Goddess - please spare me death's kiss



* * *

Stroking his thin, grizzled beard, the Master looked at the Apprentice and asked, "Wouldn't you say that he has hit upon a worthy topic here?"

"As you know, Master, I have a particular fondness for sea rhymes, and although it lacks technical sophistication, his passion lends it a certain grace," came the grudging answer, as the image faded from the crystal.

* * *

To be continued

News



Iron Age Cornish Hill Fort For Sale

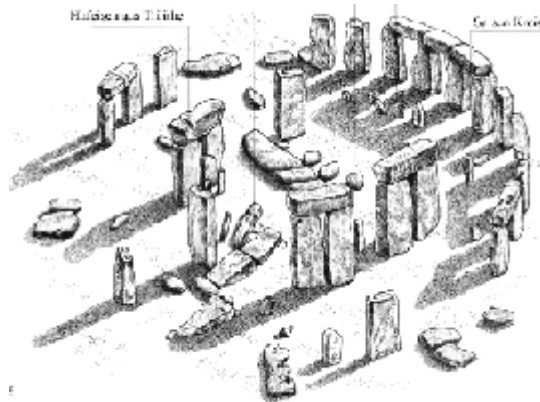
A hill fort in Cornwall, south-west England, will go on sale next month. Lescudjack Hill Fort, the area's largest Iron Age settlement, is to be auctioned by Fulfords Estate Agents in Penzance on 2 December. The guide price of £28,000 includes a 2.5 acre area of land off Pendennis Road, Penzance, with stunning views over Penzance to Mount's Bay and the Mousehole Peninsula. Historians and schools have raised concerns about the sale. Local author and historian Ian Addicoat said: "Clearly it is imperative that such an historic and important

site is maintained and preserved correctly. I think if there were any plans to develop such an important site there would be an outcry, and I would be very surprised if the planners would allow it. I hope whoever takes it on appreciates its history and considers allowing it to be used as an amenity. I'm not sure the public is aware of its significance. They probably think it's a field with a nice view. But historians are certainly aware of what it represents."

In 2002, children from Penzance Infants School made the hill fort their summer project, and 30 children delivered a 500-name petition to the Mayor of Penzance calling for improvements to the site. Headteacher Nikki Owen said: "It took us some time to track down the owner of the site, who turns out to be somebody in Newlyn. It is very disappointing that it is being sold off. I only hope that any future owner will develop it as a public amenity and show its historic significance."

The site, which is believed to date to around 300 BCE, has never been properly excavated. Historian Craig Weatherhill, who mentioned Lescudjack in his book *Belerion*, said: "Some 15 to 20 years ago there was a proposal to do a hefty excavation but it came to nothing. It has never really been dug properly. I would be delighted if local historical groups are successful, because they would have the well-being of the site at heart."

Source: Western Morning News (15 November 2004)
<http://www.thisiscornwall.co.uk/displayNode.jsp?nodeId=144143&command=displayContent&sourceNode=144131&contentPK=11312399&moduleName=InternalSearch&keyword=hill%20fort&formname=filtersearch>



A new Theory about Stonehenge

(Editor's Note: As we know, the Druids DID NOT build Stonehenge, but it does not cease to fascinate those associated with Druidism, harkening back perhaps to our Indo-European megalithic-building roots. Most probably it is because it is ingrained even in our minds due to faulty yet earnest research in the 18th century. One mystery loves another. For that reason I include this article.)

For more than 20 years, Derbyshire carpenter Gordon Pipes has been striving to find an answer to a 4,000-year-old question that still confounds archaeologists; namely: How, without roads or wheels, did Neolithic man transport 80 sarsen stones, each weighing an average of 30 tons, 20 miles from the Marlborough Downs to Salisbury Plain to construct Stonehenge? The site also comprises 98 blue stones, each weighing six tons, from the Preseli Mountains in Wales. The question of how these were conveyed over land - it is agreed they must have been ferried in boats along the Severn Estuary and River Avon - is also unanswered. But Pipes is convinced he has found the solution. "In terms of Stonehenge, theories that one stone could have been dragged a mile a day by 700 men

using rope and wooden rollers seemed as viable to me as alien involvement. The rollers wouldn't have taken the weight and the physical effort required would have been super-human," he explains. "It occurred to me that a megalith could be picked up, moved a short distance, put down and moved again.

Further research suggested this would be quicker, require less manpower and negate the need for muscle power. Also, the initial inertia the body experiences when attempting to drag large stones, is all but nullified."

Called stone rowing, the procedure involves laying down a number of logs - the number determined by the weight of the stone - in a parallel formation. Resting on supports, the logs are positioned just above the ground. Some are then used to support the stone, while the rest act as a continuous fulcrum for wooden oars, or levers, inserted underneath the stone. By pressing down on the levers, the stone rises two inches clear of the support logs, and when the levers are moved sideways, the stone moves forward.

Pipes tested his theory in his garden. "Four of us carried out this experiment using a four-ton concrete block, four logs and four levers," he explains. "We were able to move the block between six and 12 inches at a time with ease. I then set up a ramp and discovered that the method also worked uphill when using more levers and incorporating a break mechanism."

Mike Pitts, editor of British Archaeology, suggested that, "Few archaeologists ever consider practical issues like moving stones. Gordon's ideas fascinate because they come from an understanding of lifting and moving things, rather than from theories dreamt up at a desk. And while he doesn't underestimate the difficulties facing the Stonehenge builders, neither does he come up with impossibly complicated solutions. It's the first time that someone has come up with anything really sensible for a long time."

Pipes is planning further experiments on Salisbury Plain next summer, including an attempt to move a 40-ton block.

Source: The Guardian
<http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/research/workinprogress/story/0,11109,1362131,00.html>

before proceeding through western Wales, the Isle of Man, troubled Northern Ireland, the western seaboard of the Irish Republic and The French region of Brittany, the author weaves solid historical research into the language, religion, music and customs of the peoples concerned with first-hand encounters with a host of priests, ministers, government officials, cultural activists, musicians and writers. The author finds talk of a Celtic revival much misplaced, for while the term "Celtic" is banded around as never more, largely to suit the needs of commerce and tourism, the fragile cultures the word actually refers to in the north-west of Britain, Ireland and France are closer than ever before to extinction. As the author discovers on his journey, the tide is going out at different speeds in different places. While Welsh culture and language are (relatively) robust, the rich culture of the Bretons is heading for almost certain oblivion in a decade or two at most, as relentless, centuries-long pressure to be French reaches its climax. Nor are the prospects much brighter for the small Celtic communities in the New World. As the author travels from Cape Breton in Canada to Patagonia in Argentina, he finds the once sturdy communities of Gaelic and Welsh speakers facing exactly the same threats of assimilation and ultimate disappearance. It is a development that impoverishes as all.

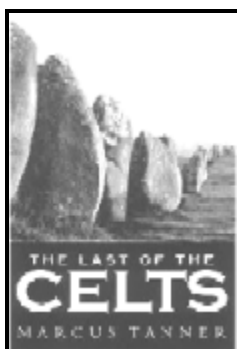
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Read Ireland Web Site Home Page:
<http://www.readireland.com>

All Prices and Rates are in Euro (US Dollar and UK Sterling prices are guidelines based on current exchange rates.) Euro prices on books reviewed above are firm. Post + package is charged at cost.

Book Review



The Last of the Celts

By March Tanner
From Read Ireland:
Hardback; 37.00 Euro / 45.00 USD / 25.00 UK; 390 pages

A cultural tour spanning the Celtic world from the Outer Hebrides of Scotland to Brittany, and from Cape Breton to Patagonia, this book sets out to find out what has happened to the Celtic peoples in a world where pressure to conform to Anglo-American culture has grown ever stronger. Taking the form of a journey that starts in the wilds of north-west Scotland,

Events



The Avalon Mystery School

January 15, 2005

The Avalon Mystery School presents a series of six monthly classes on the Arts of Sacred Magic with Mara Freeman. Discover; The basics of Western Magic as taught in the Avalonian Branch, How to open your psychic and spiritual centers to contact innerworld beings Guides, Teachers and Guardians, The Three Arts of Meditation, Vision Journey and Ritual whys and hows, Ways to forge a strong connection to Self and Spirit that will transform your life. Our Mission: The goal of the Mysteries is the conscious realization of the self as

connected with all beings, visible and invisible, on the great Tree of Life, and ultimately with the Source of All. From this understanding comes the power to mediate spiritual energies into the physical plane for healing both ourselves and our world. 10AM-4PM in a beautiful secluded location in Ben Lomond, CA. \$60 per class or \$300 to register for series. Please call 1-800-694-1957 or e-mail avalon@celticspirit.org for more details. To learn more about the Avalon Mystery School, visit us at <http://www.avalonmysteryschool.net>



Festival of Brigit: Goddess of the Growing Light

January 29, 2005

Mara Freeman hosts Festival of Brigit: Goddess of the Growing Light at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 490 Aguajito Rd, Carmel, CA, from 10:00am- 5:00pm. This weekend is the traditional time of the Celtic festival of Brigit, the powerful Goddess of Fire who brought the gift of the sun's growing light and the abundance of earth to her people, and later became the most beloved and powerful of Irish saints. Revered as a woman of wisdom and inspiration, Brigit was also a healer, keeper of the sacred fire, guardian of holy wells, and the muse of poets and visionaries. We will bring our sleeping winter senses to the radiance of this Sun Goddess, and waken to the luminous world of Celtic magic by entering into her Mysteries through: Listening to the old stories, poetry and lore about Brigit from different Celtic lands -- Practicing ritual and meditations that will open the gates to her temple of wisdom -- Working with the Three Fires of this Triple Goddess: Fire in the Head, Fire in the Hearth and Fire in the Forge -- Weaving Brigit's Crosses, symbols of the sun and ancient talismans of protection -- Celebrating the ascending Light of the Year through song and circle dance. And like our Scottish and Irish ancestors did every year, we will once again perform the lovely ancient ceremonies that welcome back this goddess of the early spring who brings the promise of renewal. We will return to the world with gifts for the soul and the power to call upon these ancient teachings to fire the glow of spirit and beauty in our own lives. Cost: \$80. Information: 800-694-1957, events@celticspirit.org or visit <http://www.celticspirit.org/sacredgrove.htm>



Announcing Canada's First National Pagan Conference

<http://cnpc.officeprofessor.ca/>
Theme: Past, Present and Future.
Place: Edmonton, Alberta, U of Alberta campus.
When: May 20-23, 2005

Special guest: Kevin Marron (author of *Witches, Pagans, and Magic in the New Age*. Toronto: Seal Books, 1989) His book was a ground-breaking piece on our presence and culture.

Agenda: There will be panels on the various Pagan paths, on Paganism in the various regions of Canada, as well as on the various subjects that concern us - interacting with the mainstream community, forming "churches" and getting marrying rights, Pagan parenting, how are we living our beliefs environmentally, Pagan chaplaincy, etc.

Hopefully this will be an annual event, with the second one held in some entirely other part of the country (Maritimes?)

There will be more announcements as information becomes confirmed and available. (Costs - to be determined soon.)

We are looking for suggestions for panels or talks, and looking for participants.

An open discussion list for all things about the conference other than actual planning can be found at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Gaia_Gathering.

Calendar

Yule, Winter Solstice, Sunstop, when the Sun reaches its lowest point in the sky as it travels along the celestial equator, will occur this year on Tuesday, December 21, at 4:42 a.m. Pacific Standard Time.

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