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Summer Solstice, Year 43 (June 18, 2005)

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midsummer, the Summer Solstice, the longest day, the shortest night, this is one of the four astronomical High-Days of the Druid year. It is associated with Danu, Mother of the Celtic family of deities the Tuatha de Danann. She is cognate with the Irish Anu and Breton Ana. She may be cognate with classic Roman Diana, though Her character and role are more like those of Juno. Like Her, Danu is the patroness of marriage and sanctifier of

the home. The particular luckiness of June weddings may be a folk memory of the time when this time of the year was sacred to the Goddess of marriage. She is associated with fertility of grain as well as of women, and

She is linked to rivers and river valleys which bear Her name or cognates of it stretch all across Europe from the Danube to the Don and the De in Scotland. Rivers, valleys, grain, home, fertility and prosperity formed a thematic group in the Celtic mind. Her festival was on Midsummer day and all night bonfires, dances, and games of courtship and revel continued to be celebrated on the day and the preceding night well into this century. Again we see the Druid custom of counting the night which precedes the high-day as the one sacred to that day. There are many, many references to this night of revels in medieval and Renaissance folksong, as well as in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries.

The tension between the folk customs and the Christian church is succinctly in the traditional verse:

"Mierry do not tell the priest,
For I fear he would call it a sin,
But we have been in the woods this night,
A' conjuring the summer in."

This fragment of a ballad was quoted to us by a folksinger whom we talked with at the Live Oak Park Faire, who had collected it in England. In this case the folk tradition probably goes back to Druid times.

This would be a propitious night for a vigil, or just to try sleeping out of doors if possible. Following another folk tradition whose roots are probably Druidic, single women might try sleeping with a pillow stuffed with mugwort, an herb sacred to Roman Diana, and probably to Danu or Ana, under their heads. This will bring dreams of their future husbands, and was a practice carried on into this century in Celtic countries. The only similar divination practice I have ever heard of for young men involved looking quickly into a particular sacred well, in which he might catch a glimpse of his future mate. But this had nothing to do with Danu or Midsummers.

By Emmon Bodfish, reprinted from A Druid Missal-Any, Summer Solstice 1989



News of the Groves



For the [Full Grove Directory](#)



Awen Grove: News from Alberta, Canada

(bagpipe medley and drumming)

After lengthy study, voluminous correspondence and rich reflection, Sister Julie (Awenydd of Awen Grove, Alberta Canada) has entered the Third Order, May 8 2005 c.e. I look forward to her formal establishment of the first full Grove in Canada as the RDNA continues its growth in foreign countries (outposts in Japan, France, Turkey, Antarctica, Portugal, and Brazil over the last few years [but Alaska and Hawaii don't "count" I'm told.]).

Peace, peace, peace
-Mike



Digitalis Grove: News from D.C.

Well, either April Fool's day came late or Friday the 13th came early, but on May 11 I got bad news from the town where I was supposed to go to Korea and teach English. Due to a long list of problems and requests, the previous teacher renewed for one more year, and I was not able to be re-assigned to another location. I spent several furious days re-establishing my job here, finding a new place to live nearby, and changing all my contact information. In other news, my application to the State Dept is doing quite well, and I may be sent off to exotic lands to spread the Silly News of the Druid Gospel to benighted Christians and other well-adjusted content unsuspecting peoples. Bwa ha hahahaha!

All the Magazine Volumes of ARDA 2, the Carleton Druid Collection, and Druid Chronicles (Evolved) were mailed out Saturday May 28th in a flurry that overwhelmed the local post-office. You should have most of the materials by the Solstice or July 4th. I included two CDs with all the files for you to print out more copies, and as a back-up for the archives. I hope you all enjoy it, as I am now officially not publishing anything else until 2011, nada, zilch, no way (except for helping with Missal-Any). That's your responsibility.

Julie of Awen Grove in Alberta entered the service of the Earth Mother and the Third Order on Mother's Day, May 8th, and we look forward to her establishing the first official grove of the RDNA in Canada during the coming months.



Palm Grove: News from Central Florida

Well here at the Palm*Grove, things are looking up.

The weather is bright, hot and sunny out. The earth Mother is awake and vibrant in all her glory, the flowers and some of the herbs have started growing nicely. We are planning an entire area for a nice herb garden to plant enough for resale in the next harvest season.

We offered up and planted a nice lime tree to Aine at Beltaine this year. In one to two years it should start producing nice fruit. It was a small but very exquisite ceremony.

We are preparing to go to a festival of the mind -body and spirit where many new things are there to be learned.

I have begun Training in the art of "Quantum Touch Healing"

I have also reattuned myself to distance reiki healing, and I am offering it to any one who needs some extra healing energy free of charge. Just write DReiki at pascoportal.com, give full name and state and affliction so I know what and where to send it.

Again let me restate that the palm grove is open to all who wish to enter. Of any pagan or christianic faith who are seeking a bit more from their belief system. Especially if you are in the pasco, or tampa bay area of Florida. We are working on getting at least a monthly ceremony going for our members.

IF you would like to join just contact email: [JoinPalmGrove at Pascoportal.com](mailto:JoinPalmGrove@Pascoportal.com) Spread the word. let all your friends know.



New Grove! Hesperus Grove of Denver, Colorado

A partisan and revolutionary group of freelance Druids, Hangers-on, and various 'others' have banded together to form a new grove in Denver Colorado for the pursuit of all things Druidico-Celty-Gaelik. Non of us are graduates of theology school, neither have we been through OBOD, AODA, Henge of Keltria, RDNA (although I myself count myself as a member), ADF or any other respectable institution. Following in the great tradition of unlettered prophets and religious organizers in history, re: Jesus, Moses, Mohammad, Buddha et al, we rely on basic (and sometimes complex) life experiences as our guidance and spiritual education.

My main reason in contacting you is to ask if we may register as a grove with RDNA, primarily for the purpose of making contact with other groups/groves and drunemetons and spread the word of peace ect.

You yourself may decide to join us, if it be your pleasure. Here is the basic information;

Hesperus Grove of Denver
Denver, Colorado USA
13 Members (currently)

contact; mr_david_drew_at_yahoo.com or goto Yahoo group page:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/hesperusgrove/>

General information about the grove, our foundation, beliefs, purpose and direction are included in the Grove Constitution.

Please contact me (as above) if you require any further information.

With kisses under the mistletoes,
David J Drew



Rogue River Grove: News from Oregon

Sierra Madrone Grove (Sacramento, CA) along with the Rogue River Protogrove (Medford, OR) co-hosted a three day celebration for the Beltane holiday. This event honored Arch Druid Abbott and included an elaborate ritual, First and Second Order Ordinations, seasonal blessings, a slide show late into the night, a special phone conversation with Isaac Bonewits, Eggs Benedict breakfasts as well as in depth tarot readings. New friendships were made and existing ones were strengthened. All ages were included in the learning and fellowship.

Thank you, Arch Druid Abbott!!!

To contact Arch Druid Abbott for a tarot reading, please see:
http://www.keen.com/categories/categorylist_expand.asp?sid=5271959

For more information about the Sierra Madrone Grove, please email: [somerled at surewest.net](mailto:somerled@surewest.net)
For more information about the Rogue River Protogrove, please email: [aigeann at earthlink.net](mailto:aigeann@earthlink.net)



Poison Oak Grove: News from California

Publisher of "A Druid Missal-Any"

After much work using maul, hammer, and chisel and many trips hauling stones, we've come to the conclusion that we won't be able to completely take down the altar at the old Grove site; it is just too well cemented in. However most of it is gone so it is unusable as an altar, which was of great concern. We were afraid that if anyone used it to burn anything or light candles, we would be blamed by the group who oversees the property now. We will be using the stones to build the altar at the new Grove site. Speaking of which, the leveling of the new Grove site is now finished. It overlooks a canyon of redwoods and live oaks. We learned in the process to go with the feeling of the site to determine which direction the altar should face rather than imposing a preconceived structure upon it or even using the same directional set up of the old Grove site. Work can begin on planting the sacred trees, building the altar, and digging the shaft for the new Toll Uaigh.

Now that we have a new site, I as AD started to put a lot of thought in how to make the new site a sacred space. I based what I came up with 1) on what I observed at the shamanic journey circle I attend once a month where the leader essentially takes a classroom and makes it into sacred space and the feel of the room totally changes; and 2) during the meditation at the last service (creating sacred space was my topic) it came to me that it is a three (!) part process: naming the space sacred, setting it up as sacred, and using it as a sacred space. I will also be putting small pieces of obsidian into the earth at the Grove site to help it heal after all that excavating, to ground the moved dirt, and as a way of thanking the site for letting us do the work on it to make it a Grove. There's that old Celtic concept of reciprocation again.

A month ago the AD took a class in braintanning buckskin at the recreated Miwok village, Kule Loklo, on the Point Reyes Peninsula. This coincided well with our rogue Druid Julie Ann's bearskin tanning article later in this issue. Between having to physically scrape the wet slimy stinky hide through several steps to remove first the flesh, then the hair then the membrane, and finally the grain, mixing a vat of cooked deer brains with egg yolks and mixing the deer hides in the warm liquid with my hands, this is not something I will want to do very often. Not being used to working with such I had to go to my "happy place" several times to get through the class. At least I've got a half a hide to show for it! (See photo below. The AD is on bottom row, far left. We are all smiling so much because it was two full grueling days of grueling and we were very proud of our work).



I am tempted, however, to try hair-on tanning, with a white tail deer hide Julie Ann so courteously will provide all the way from Minnesota, if I want to try it. Tempted, not definitely, is the operative word here.



Celtic Numbering

Part One of Four: Triplism

By Daniel Hansen, Olympia Grove WA

Numbers played an important role in Celtic symbolism. Most sacred or magical of all was the number "three." The idea of threeness is, indeed, a very common feature

of Indo European tradition, as it is in other family cultures. Indo European society itself was structured according to a tripartite classification: Priests, Warriors, and Cultivators. The resonant symbolism of the number three runs through Celtic tradition from earliest times. The Celts, like other Indo-Europeans, attached significance to nearly all frequently used numbers but gave the greatest to three. Triune and tripartite figures appear from earliest times. While in Wales and Ireland, the triad was a literary formula used for traditional learning, which combined three concepts. No gloss in a Celtic language explains why this should be, but commentators apply interpretations that have arisen in other Indo-European contexts. Pythagoras cites three as the perfect number, signaling beginning, middle, and end; a tripod or three-legged stool (as at Delphi) is stable and will not rock. Three can represent life: male, female, and progeny; time: past, present, and future; the visible world: sky, earth, and underearth; space: before, behind, and right here. Triune figures often have a single dominant personality and two ciphers; perhaps there is really only one person referred to, as can be seen in early Irish dynastic records that cite triplets all with the same name. In the vernacular literature, constant reference is made to triadic groups and triplication: the Morrigna (Badb, Macha, and the Morrigan) were a triad of Irish war goddesses, but really only one existed as a genuine entity. She was sometimes presented singly, sometimes as three divinities, but there was only one identity, one character, and one personality. The same is true of Macha, who is also a triad figure. In Irish legend, there are three sons of Uisnech but only one, Naoise, the lover of Deirdre, has any real identity, his two brothers, Ardan and Ainnle, are distinguished only by the tones of their voices. The triple Brigit is slightly different in that poets, smiths, and doctors worshipped her three different aspects respectively. Significantly, as a triple goddess, she was propitiated by the sacrifice of a fowl buried alive at the meeting of three waters. Triadic groups with different names form part of the Irish Celtic pantheon: there were three craftsmen Goibhniu, Luchta, and Creidhne, and three female personifications of Ireland, Eriu, Fodla, and Banbha. The Roman poet Lucan (1st century C.E.) proposed that the Gaulish gods Esus, Taranus, and Teuyates were mentioned so often together as to form a triad. There was a tradition of a threefold killing of the king by wounding, burning, and drowning. The threefold death is a popular motif where a person fulfills an unlikely prophecy that they would suffer three different types of death. Diarmuid Mac Fergus's multiple death is a typical example of this. The hero CuChulainn had braided hair and killed warrior's in-groups of three. In the Mabinogi, Branwen is described of as one of three matriarchs of Britain.



In the vernacular literature, the repetition of numbers had the dual effect of exaggeration and intensification, but this is in addition to the symbolism encapsulated within "threeness" itself. Three was sacred and magical and multiplication was often constrained by this sanctity. Three may have symbolized totally: in time, past, present, and future may be reflected, in space, behind before, and here, or sky, earth, and underworld. In the Irish literature we have Tri Truagha na Sgealighaechta (The Three Sorrows of Storytelling; The three Sorrowful Stories of Erin) which include the Deirdre story, Oidheadh Chlainne Lir (The Tragic Story of the Children of Lir), and Oidheadh Chlainne Tuireann (The tragic Story of the Children of Tuireann).

Triplism is extremely prominent in the Pagan Celtic religious iconography of Western Europe. That triplication preceded the Romano-Celtic period is demonstrated, for example, by the deposition of three horse skulls together in Iron Age settlements, such as that of Winklebury Camp in southern Britain, but Celtic triplication manifested itself most prominently in the imagery of Germany, Gaul, and Britain within the period of the Roman influence. Two main types of triplism occur: where part of the human or animal form is multiplied, and where the whole form of a deity is represented three times. One of the more distinctive of the first category is the triple faced or three-headed image. It is a commonplace that the human possessed special significance for the Celts, so it is no surprise that this element of the human body should be singled out for triplism. Thus, among the Remi of northeast Gaul, their most important god's was represented as a stone block with a triple male face: sometimes youth and old age are presented on these triadic forms. What is interesting about the Remi is that this tradition did not begin in the Roman period, their Iron Age coins depict the same triple headed imagery. Triple heads or faces are recorded from Britain, though generally without datable context. Such heads are



known from, for example, Corleck County Cavan, and from Sutherland in Scotland. A secure context exists for the triple head from the Roman town of Wroxeter in Shropshire. In Burgundy, there are several male images of deities with single bodies but three faces. Where there is evidence, it appears that the three-faced type belonged to the large group of benevolent Celtic gods whose Tain concern were the blessings of abundance and prosperity. Certainly, a three faced image is a recognition of potency the image is unreal and thus supernatural, it can gaze in three directions at once and its image enhances to the factor of three the power already residing in the human head. It is worth mentioning here that occasionally it may be the phallus rather than the head, which is triplicated, this occurs on a figure of the Celtic Mercury at Tongerlan in Belgium and on the image of a horse on an Iron Age coin from Bratislava in Czechoslovakia.



Triplism in animal imagery usually takes the form of a third horn added to the representation of a bull. About forty triple horned bulls are recorded from Gaul and about six from British context. These bull images are unequivocally sacred in character; they come from shrines and graves or may be accompanied by religious dedications. Here, we have a potent symbol of fertility and aggression as if to augment the symbolic source of Power, but the horns are never more than three, the need to increase the visual symbolism of horns was constrained by the equally magical or sacred power of three. In Irish myths there is a three-headed bird, a creature that devastated Ireland but was slain by Amaigen.

Of the deities whose entire beings were triplicated, the most distinctive male image is the Genius Cucullatus, the "Hooded Spirit, who appears in continental and British contexts, but only in Britain in triadic form. Like the triple faced images, the Cucullati are concerned with fecundity and well being they appear at healing spring shrines and in company with goddesses. In Britain, there are two distribution clusters, which are similar to those of the Mothers, the Dobunni of the regions of Hadrian's Wall.

Female deities are often represented in triple form in Celtic iconography, just as they frequently appear as triads in the vernacular tradition. The Goddess tradition uses the Threefold One to describe the trinity of use of energy of the Three Worlds: the Otherworld of the Celts, the Earth we live on, and the heavens, the home of the gods. The number three is sacred to the Goddess. The Three-fold nature of life plays a pivotal role in Celtic spirituality as the Goddess is worshipped in her three aspects of Maiden, Mother, and Crone (Daughter, Mother, and Grandmother). The Three-fold faces of the Goddess link directly to the phases of the Moon and the Wheel of the Year. In the imagery it was the Mother goddesses who were constantly envisaged as triad. These ubiquitous divinities appear all over the Romano-Celtic world. Sometimes, as in Burgundy, it is human fertility that is emphasized, but often it is the symbols of earth's plenty fruit, animals, bread and wind which are the emblems and attributes of the Mothers. Often the triadic images are accompanied by inscription dedications to the "deae matres" or "matronae." As with the Romic triple faced images, the Mothers frequently demonstrate the representation of youth and maturity. In the Rhineland, there is a distinctive form of triadic Mother goddess, where two middle-aged matrons wearing huge linen headdresses flanked a young girl with free flowing hair. In many cases, in fact, the three Mothers are not identical triplets, but have slightly different hairstyles, clothes or varying attributes. So whilst intensity of symbolism may be one factor in triplism, the idea of three entities in one may also be present, we may have three goddesses, or one Mother with three facets. In triplism, as in many other features of Celtic cult expression, fluidity and ambiguity in religious symbolism play a part, and the imagery does not lend itself to any one rigid interpretation.



So in many aspects of Celtic imagery and mythology, "Threeness" played a dominant role. Plurality and intensity in an image increased the amount of honor paid to the deity and the potency of the god himself. Repetition was important but so was triplication, presumably for magical or sacred reasons. What is important is that it was the Celtic deities who were concerned with the fates and fortunes of humans, their

well being and fluorescence, who were consistently represented in triadic form.



Druidry Reborn

By Myrddin Faolwen

Within the last 300 or so years many Druid orders have been established, first in the British Isles, and then spreading to other countries. These range in age from very old to recently new and in size from a few participants to thousands. Estimates run to as high as 400,000, with Celtic inspired Neopagans included with the self-styled Druids. (1)

In spite of any false steps (i.e., unproven statements made in documents, often straight from someone's imagination) and those who have 'looked down their noses' at the modern self-styled Druid, we have grown into hundreds of orders with (perhaps) millions of members. As such growth only occurs where the root is strong enough to support it, and where that root has life still in it, we may say that Druidry is a living force in modern times and not simply something from a dead past.

When the "tree of Druidry" was cut down centuries ago the roots were left to re-sprout. Though many scoff at modern Druids, we know where our roots lie and are seeking to add to our knowledge of this viable spiritual path. Regardless of whether it is centuries old or just a seedling, an oak is an oak. An oak grows, from seedling to great old grandfather of the forest, year by year. And Druidry has grown in the last 300 years into a mature tree.

Seeking the wisdom of our ancestors is the determined work that we may pass on to our children. Our heritage is still strong, and the ancient ways can be searched out by those who persevere. "The songs of our ancestors are also the songs of our children."(2) As we add to our knowledge and understanding and prepare to pass it on to the next generation, those songs begin to take shape. The greater our understanding, the more powerful the song will be as it comes from their hearts.

The Gods of our ancestors are still our Gods. They have never gone away or died. If we as a people tried to forget their existence, They as our Gods have never forgotten ours and are still there awaiting our contact. For the Celt seeking the old way -the old Gods- regardless of whether they are seeking to become a Druid or not, is seeking a path home where open doors and open arms are waiting. The Home of the Heart is the True Home and Hearth; seeking it will only enrich the seeker.

We have a wealth of understanding to apply to the ancient tales as written down in the middle-ages, and to the ancient histories, travel accounts, etc. We can uncover much of the wisdom that is hidden in them. This ancient wisdom, in its turn, can be applied to modern knowledge with the result of gaining a greater understanding of its place and purpose in our lives. The purpose, then, of our studies is to apply modern understanding to ancient knowledge and ancient wisdom to modern knowledge.

This application can only be from the standpoint that we do not already know everything. We must be willing to study with an open mind in order to add truths to our store of knowledge as we find them. If, due to the source, you must keep a bucket of salt handy, then do so. The truth may be hidden, but it can be found. Truth found becomes truth known, and what has been found can then point to further avenues of investigation. Looking into the past of Druidry can lead to many perceptions that can differ from one another. Yet even these differences may be found to be a part of Druidry. These differences, in leading to further truths, add to our store of knowledge and give opportunities for further research as well as developing our spiritual path. In this manner Druidry has been and is being restored.

We find then that Druidry is a viable way of life. As we rediscover old truths and explore new ones, the roots of Druidry are shown to be as deep and alive as ever. Growth has been and will be on-going as more people are drawn to its ancient Truths. The Gods of our ancestors are still there for us, and have been all along. This way of life is a growing, living thing of many parts that have and can open new avenues of living, learning, and spirituality for us.

(1)Mike Scharding RDNA [e-mail 3 May 2005]
(2)Philip Carr-Gomm "The Druid Way" pp.35



Myrddin Faolwen
29 January 2005



Animal Hide Tanning: A Modern Ahnishinabae-Ojibwe Perspective (Or, "Gee, Your Bear Smells Terrific")

By Julie Ann (Laughing Otter)

Disclaimer: This article contains graphic content pertaining to the preparation and tanning of animal hides. If you are at all squeamish; find a nice humor piece elsewhere. This article will have you tossing your cookies.

Well, Druids, once again our editor, Stacey, has bullied me into writing an article. Why she seems to think I have anything of interest to say, baffles me. But she's a goofy gal. Some of you, on the RDNA web chat, have been following along with my trials and tribulations of tanning a bear hide. Now, I've done deer. Deer aren't bad. But that bear-not to be a cliché was a bear. I took some of my frustrations out in the form of a rant and a call for help on the web chat. Madam Bear had a certain-aroma-what I had not encountered before with deer. Folks, it was so bad, it curled my toes and dang near knocked me over, when I first opened the garbage bag the aforementioned hide came in. I'm sure you've all heard of Eau De Toilette. I began to refer to it as Eau Dee Doo Dah Day. Some of the Druids, and their delightful morbid curiosity streak, began to question the process of just what it was I was doing with a fermenting bear. What follows is part tutorial, part narrative-have to get my two cents in somewhere -of that process.

I guess I was a bit leery of even writing this article. I was afraid of grossing people out. Or offending others. Fur is a sensitive subject for a lot of people. I can never condone a \$6,000 arctic fox coat walking down Rodeo Dr., when a jacket can be purchased at your local Columbia Outlet store. But I have no problem with fur when it comes from animals that were taken for food, and used in total. Other folks have condemned me for working with fur altogether-while they sport a spiffy leather jacket, a lovely leather Prada handbag, and leather shoes. The only difference between them and myself, is their leather products are "shaved" and mine are au natural. Hypocrites are a constant plague to tanners.

In the end, people are more violently opposed to fur than leather because it's easier to harass rich women than motorcycle gangs.

And on the other end-rich women really don't need the fur. And I highly doubt they dined on the rest of the bounty. While motorcycle gangs actually have a functional NEED for leather. And you KNOW they're eating meat.

For myself, I use the tanned hides on my bed as blankets. These are functional items. I also plan on making myself a new pair of knee-high hair-on deer hide mukluks for snowshoeing.

Where to begin? Tanning a hide is a lot like Tator Tot Hotdish. Meaning, if you ask 100 people how to make it, you'll get 100 different recipes-at least. Likewise, there are many different ways to process animal hides. None are wrong. Hair-on, hair-off, chemical tanning, brain tanning, to smoke, or not to smoke, to stretch, or not to stretch, with a pickle, without a pickle, and a hundred different salt processes. There are even different schools of thought on just how to flesh the hide out (removing excess meat and fat from the hide prior to tanning). So I guess what it boils down to is there is more than one way to skin a... -bad choice of words- there's more than one way to do this.

For myself, I do hair-on chemical tanning, with a pickle, and two salts. Sounds like a bloody mary, doesn't it? Definitions of all are coming.

I get my hides from local hunters. Now don't get the wrong idea. I don't support or endorse trophy hunters. I have no respect for trophy hunters. The folks I get my hides from use EVERYTHING on the animals they take. They are NOT trophy hunters. This is how they feed their families. This is their meat for the year.

Vegetarian: noun. Native American word for lousy hunter.

The only part of the animals that DID go to waste were the hides. And honestly, that bothered them. When along comes a goofy little Druid with a penchant for getting wild inexplicable hairs in the nether regions. For reasons I still ponder to this day, tanning hides sounded like a good idea to me.

Now I'm mixed Ojibwe, as many of you know. My ancestors were pros at this. In fact, tanning hides was considered "women's work." I figured if those old-time Ojibwe gals can do it, than so can I. I'm genetically predisposed to tan hides.

"We are forever here,
We are forever gone.
Though we stand always still,
We also travel on.
The Circle joins again at our elusive now;
When our memory blurs,
Our souls remember how."



Well, it sounded good in theory, anyways.

So I began collecting the hides of the animals they took, and began tanning them. Now this was a fly-by-the-seat-of-my-pants operation at first. I had no training, no books on the subject, no elder to mentor me, I had never even seen it done. So, I did what all good Druids do, I hit the internet-HARD. There were plenty of sites on tanning, but no real good tutorials. And very few, if any, pictures of the process being performed. No guts, no glory, right?

After going over all the various processes (the Tator Tot Hotdish factor), I came up with a game plan of what seemed to be a reasonable process. Thaw the hide (they came to me frozen to keep them from spoiling), flesh it out, scud, wash, pickle, salt, salt again, wash again, tan, and break (make the hide soft and pliable). Again, different people will do it differently, but this was the procedure I settled on.

It was important for the hides to be hard frozen immediately after butchering, and KEPT hard frozen until I was ready to work with them, for three reasons. First of all, this is raw flesh. Leave a steak out on your counter for a week and tell me what happens. The second reason, is to kill any parasites on the animal- specifically ticks. With Lyme's Disease, you can't be too careful. The last thing you want is to pick up an

infected deer tick off of a hide you're working with. And lastly, and this is important, to keep the hair from "lipping" On any hide that isn't hard frozen, bacteria begins to develop. This bacteria literally eats the hair follicles on the hide. This causes the hair to fall out, or "slip." Now if you're doing buckskin, that's not an issue. If you're doing hair-on-slippage is a huge problem.

Important safety tip: the hides have to be HARD frozen until you're ready to work with them. So if you're ever at my house, exercise great caution going into my freezer-you never know what you might find in there. I'm a candidate for keeping a defibrillator in the kitchen for house guests.

So once I get the frozen hide, and am ready to work with it, I'll thaw it in lukewarm water (NEVER hot water) until it's pliable-usually two hours. You never want to soak a hair-on hide for very long, soaking will also cause the hair to slip. Again, if you're doing buckskin, then soak away. Once the hide is thawed, you're ready to start fleshing it out.

This is the icky part. Hides will come with all manner of whatnot still attached. As silly humans, we tend to forget that critters have many of the same parts that we do. On my second deer hide I found a strange little piece of flesh along one of the edges. It was brown in color and hairless. I couldn't place what it could possibly be. So I worked backwards on the hide determining what side was up, so to speak. "Ok, the head was up there, there are the front legs, there are the rear legs, and here's the tail, and this goofy little piece of flesh is right below the tail, so that would make it "YOHHHHH! Oh that's SICK! EWWW! EWWW! EWWW! (sobbing) Why did I have to use my GOOD knife?" Suffice it to say, that part was removed. Yeah. We forget critters have those parts. And tanning a female is always interesting. The first female I had, I was inspecting the fur for slippage when I found something interesting, and "Oh, what's that? A tick? No! A mole? No! A skin tag of sorts? No! Oh look, here's another one and- EEH! It's a girl!"



The truly fun parts are when you flip the hide over though, and start fleshing it out. Hunters are not going to scrape the hide clean for you. And butchering gets to be a messy endeavor. As I've been told by them, "You want the hide? You get it how you get it." There's blood. Lots of blood. Other miscellaneous bodily fluids. Rancid meat and fat. Some entrails that were missed. And, my favorite- the tailpipe. Kindly remember what happens to muscle control once we are shaken loose of the mortal coil. On the plus side with deer, deer don't have an innate smell-outside of those things listed. The bear, on the other hand, had a musk that could wilt flowers. The bear's musk alone brought tears to my eyes. This in conjunction with the rest of the list mentioned above, and I nearly threw the towel in on several occasions. You can call it 'musk' - the hunters refer to it as being 'scenty' - but I refer to it as Eau Dee Doo Dah Day.

Now there are a lot of different knives you can use to flesh out a hide. The most common fleshing knives are arced with a handle on each side. These work best if you're fleshing your hide out with the hide thrown over a log. Others will use the standard buck knife. For myself, I use a small meat cleaver. I've found it just works best for me. It's easier for me to hang on to, and I feel like I have the best control of it. In the end, whatever works best for you is the best knife for you to be using. The idea with fleshing is to remove everything that isn't the skin itself. It's easy to identify meat, fat, and entrails; but where it gets harder is with the membrane. Deer, in particular here, have persnickety membranes. The membrane is a slimy flesh layer in between the meat and fat, and the hide itself. The membrane has to be removed- all of it- for the tanning solutions to get into the hide.

The bear wasn't a problem here. The bear was taken last September / October, so the bear was at its peak weight right before it went into hibernation. That provided for a nice large hide. Unfortunately, that DID

leave, in spots along her back, fat that was four inches thick. All that had to be cleaved off. The membrane on the bear pretty much just scraped off. On deer, though—deer seem mighty attached to their membrane. For hard to remove membrane, I found that scudding works well. Scudding is basically roughing up the membrane so that it can then be scraped off. And for those of you who remember the last article I wrote, on the Ojibwe Stone Circles in the Boundary Waters, you'll remember that one of the Feds had taught me the ancient art of flint knapping. Or the making of stone tools. This is what those stone tools were made for. So I grabbed my stone tool, and roughed the membrane up with it. The membrane then was scraped off with my knife.



I can flesh and scud a deer in about two hours flat. The bear took me seven. That was due to the amount of fat, meat, and entrails that had to be cleaved off. And, alas, periodically coming up for air.

If I was doing buckskin, the hide would then be turned over, and the hair scraped off. But since all of mine are hair-on, all I have to do is side B.

Next comes washing. When placing an untanned hide into water, you need to use cold or lukewarm water. NEVER hot. Again, remember this is raw flesh. You don't want to "cook" your hide

before you get it tanned. Deer aren't innately greasy, so cold water is fine. Bear, beaver, and boar are VERY greasy hides. I recommend lukewarm water to help break up the grease. I also use an antibacterial grease-cutting dish soap to wash the hide. Grease-cutting elements take care of the grease, and the antibacterial agents help kill any bacteria growing in the hide just waiting to cause your fur to "slip". With the bear, her grease factor, and the delightful Eau Dee Doo Dah Day, I also used a full bottle of full-strength Lysol. A hide, that looks (mostly) clean at this point, will shock you once you get it into a bath. The amount of blood and dirt that comes out of that hide will shock you. I usually empty and refill the water several times until the water stays clean. This, unfortunately, can take quite a while.

A word on wringing out a hide—don't. Bad idea. Again, if you're doing buckskin, then knock yourself out with the wringing. NEVER wring a hair-on hide. It will pull the fur out. I found a neat little trick, though. Some of my trapper buddies give me a lot of crap for this, but even they have to admit that it works great. A soaked hair-on hide weighs a ton. Most folks will squeeze out the extra water without wringing. I toss the hide into the spin cycle of my washing machine. Let the machine spin the water out. But don't clean your washer out just yet—we'll be using it again in a minute.

After the hide is all nice and clean and spun out, I do a pickle. The purpose of a pickle is to "set" the fur in, begin the curing of the hide itself, and aid in the killing of bacteria—the tanners public enemy number one.

A pickle consists of one pound of salt for every gallon of water to soak your hide in. You can buy 40-pound bags of salt at seed, farm, and tack stores—or you can go the grocery store route. As long as it is fine iodized table salt, you're good to go. No sea salt. No rock salt. No kosher salt. Just plain 'ol table salt. I first fill the laundry drain tub with water, guesstimate the number of gallons, and dump the corresponding number of pounds of salt in. Then in go your hands to swish it around to try to dissolve as much of the salt as you can. A typical deer hide takes about 8 - 10 gallons of water, hence 8 - 10 pounds of salt. Madam Bear took considerably more. Once you've got your pickle ready, you can toss your hide in. Swish it around in the water. Try to keep it moving. The idea here is to work the salt INTO the fur all the way down to the roots. Remember, this helps to "set" the fur. But, if you're paying attention, you'll remember that I said never to soak a hair-on hide for too long. I work the hide in the pickle for only half an hour.

Once the pickle is done, the hide either gets squeezed, to get the excess water out. Or, you can try my trick, and toss it back in the washer on the spin cycle only. Don't rinse it. No rinsing. You want the salt to STAY in

the hide, to continue working. Only spin it out-twice.

Next comes the salting. The salting happens twice. The purpose here is to cure the hide. You're preserving it now. Remember that long ago, travelers on long voyages would pack their meat in salt to preserve it-same thing here. For salting, I go to a hardware store and buy a roll of that clear plastic sheeting dropcloths that painters use. You can buy a huge roll for about \$6. Lay the sheeting down and place the hide on it fur-side down. Work with the hide a bit to get it flattened out. You may also want to "drag" your hide across the plastic a bit to get all of the fur going in one direction. Now you're ready to salt.

First rule of salting-there is no such thing as 'too much' salt. There IS, however, such a thing as 'too little' salt. What the salt is going to be doing is drawing all the water and moisture out of the hide. This 'cures' the hide, and preserves it. As the lower layer of salt saturates, you need salt on top of it to keep the process going. So go heavy on the salt. I recommend for the first salting, no less than a quarter of an inch of salt covering the ENTIRE hide. Makes sure the edges get it really well, and any "holes" the hunters made while bringing the animal down. Yes-hides will have bullet holes. Another one of 'those things' you don't like to think about. As an idea of how much salt you'll be using. Start to finish with a deer, with everything from the pickle to the second salting, I'll go through 45 pounds of salt-easily. Madam Bear-by the time I finished the second salting, I think I'd topped out at around 60 pounds of salt.



Once you have the hide salted-walk away. Do not touch the hide for 24 hours. If it's getting close to 24 hours, and it's getting close to your bedtime, just go to bed. Work with it in the morning. Leave it sit for at least 24 hours. Not 48 hours, you need to get the second salting done before that, but at least 24 hours. After 24 hours, pick the hide up and shake the salt off-another reason why that plastic sheeting is so nice. Get rid of the old salt. Either sweep it up, or roll up that part of the plastic, and roll out some fresh stuff. During the first 24 hours of salting, the salt really pulls out a lot of moisture. So that salt will be pretty nasty. Just get rid of it. Lay the hide back down on the plastic, again, hair-side down, and salt the hide a second time the same way you did before. This time, though-go even heavier on the salt. The second salting will stay on for six days (for a total of one week in salt). Again, as the lower layer of salt saturates, you need fresh stuff on top to keep the process going, so go a good half inch deep on the salt for the second salting. Again, make sure you get the edges and any holes really well. When you're done salting-walk away. Leave the hide alone-let the salt do its job. Leave the salt on for AT LEAST six days. If you need to let it go longer than six days, get rid of the old salt and re-salt the hide.

While we're waiting for the hide to cure, I'll share a little story about what it is, exactly, to go buy 60 pounds of salt. I live in Saint Paul, proper. Ok? So I don't have a corner farm, feed, and tack store I can go to, to buy 40-pound bags of salt. I have to go to the grocery store and pick up good ol Morton's in 4-pound boxes. Ok-do the math. 60 pounds of salt at 4 pounds per box-that's 15 4-pound boxes of salt. Not the one-pound shakers that most folks have in their kitchen-the four-pound boxes of salt. Fifteen of them. So here's everyone's favorite little rogue strolling down the aisle at the local grocery mega mart with 15 4-pound boxes of salt in my cart-and a box of mild Slim Jims, because obviously, it's going to be a long night. You can't begin to count the number of heads that turn at that sight. From time to time, some brave soul will actually approach me and say the most obvious of all things, "Wow-that's a lot of salt." It reminds me of a line from The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy- "Oh dear, you've fallen down a 50-foot deep well- are you ok?" But instead, I smile politely, and reply, "Yes-it IS a lot of salt." Invariably, the answer back is "Is it for a restaurant?" "No-I'm tanning a bear hide." Dead silence. And then they slowly back away; no doubt wondering if I'm the Unabomber.

DING! Ok, the hide is now done with its second salting. Again, pick the hide up and shake all the salt off. You're loving that plastic sheeting at this point. Try to brush off as much salt as you can from the hide. Roll up the salt in the plastic, and throw it away. Roll out fresh plastic for the tanning process.



Once you've gotten the majority of the salt off the hide, next is to wash it. Now we're trying to get all of the salt OFF of the hide, and don't forget that the hide was also pickled, so there's going to be a lot of salt in the fur as well, that is now dried and crusty. I use this opportunity to use pretty-smelling dish soaps to wash the hide with. But with the bear, and her grease factor, she got pretty lavender dish soap-and another full bottle of full-strength Lysol. Fill the laundry drain tub up, and start washing. Again, cold or luke warm water only. In order to get the salt out, you're going to be draining and refilling the tub several times. Once you're done washing it, either squeeze the water out, or toss it in the spin cycle twice.

Note: you'll also want to keep a couple of gallons of bleach on hand to clean and sterilize your washer after you spin out your hide each time. At this point, it probably isn't necessary-but I? anal retentive like that.



Ok, so the hide is now spun out twice and mostly ready to be tanned. Lay the hide down on the CLEAN plastic, with no salt on it, hair-side down. From here a decision that you needed to make earlier comes into play. What tanning process do you want to do? Chemical tanning, or brain tanning?

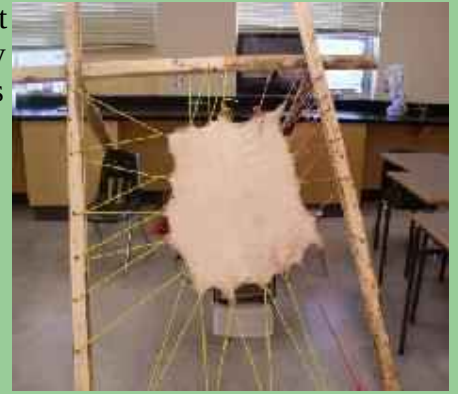
Brain tanning is, unfortunately, exactly what it sounds like. Every animal on the face of the planet, with the exception of the moose and the buffalo (and I would imagine elk), has precisely enough brains to tan their own hide. How convenient. If you choose to go the brain tan route, and don't have access to the animal's head, you can go to a butcher and buy either cow or pig brains-and imagine the expression on THEIR face. How the ancients figured this one out, I will never know. Who would've originally thought to use animal brains to tan hides? You prepare the brains by, well-plunking them into your Cuisinart, and letting 'er rip. From here you can either spread the brains onto your hide, I'd recommend using a paint brush, or add a little water to the brains and boil the hide in a kettle you never intend on using again-**EVER**. Boiling works great for buckskin. For a hair-on hide, use a brush. You only need to do the hair-off side. While this is the traditional way of tanning hides, I apologize, but it will be a cold day in hell before I plunk deer brains into my Cuisinart. Nor will I sacrifice any of my Calphalon for boiling purposes. I do chemical tanning.

There are several pre-bottled chemical tanning solutions on the market. I use a product called "Trapper's Hide Tanning Formula"-yeah-original. They also have a variety that is specific to deer hides called (you guessed it) "eer Hunter" Hide Tanning Formula." No nonsense-straight to the point, I like that. One 8-ounce bottle will do a deer hide. I bought four bottles for the bear. If you don't have a local taxidermy place you frequent, or a trapper's joint handy, you can order online from either Cabela's (at www.cabelas.com) or Cumberland's Northwest Trappers Supply (at www.nwtrappers.com). I have both stores right here in Minnesota, so I go to Cumberland's. I tend to pick too many fights at Cabela's-mecca to the trophy hunters. So I need to stay out of there. But Cumberland's is an interesting place. These are multi-generational, hardcore, lifelong trappers and tanners. Their shop is filled to the rafters with traps, snares, cased hides, knives of every variety, and snowshoes. It's the kind of place Leatherface would feel right at home in- minus the snowshoes. They also offer free hot apple cider while you shop. You might want to check the bottom of the cup first, though. Cumberland's also emits that unmistakable Eau Dee Doo Dah Day, that reminds you constantly of just what it is that they do there. There's always a few fresh kills laying in the snow bank just outside the front door that you'll have to step over. And there is always an interesting mix of individuals milling about as well. I'm proud to now be one of them.

What can I say- some folks go to The Gap, I go hang out with old school trappers. And they still aren't entirely sure of what to make of this little woman (and probably the only woman) who periodically comes in, KNOWS what she's looking for, and actually buys it.

Veni, Vedi, Visa: I came, I saw, I did a little shopping.

This is the point where most people "stretch" their hides on a frame. I don't stretch my hides. I do an effective job at breaking, and I stretch the hide by hand as it dries. My hides come out quite soft and supple. I find the frames cumbersome, but to each their own. The downside to not STRETCHING, is I wind up losing some of the original skin size to shrinkage. But not enough to warrant wrestling with a frame, in my book. Mind over matter: if you don't mind it, it doesn't matter.



Ok- so now that you have tanning solution in hand, warm the solution by putting the bottle in a bowl and pour hot water in the bowl. Let the bottle warm there for half an hour. The heat helps the solution penetrate into the hide better. While the solution is warming, I dab the hide with paper towels to absorb as much extra water off the hide as I can. The hide should be moist, but not wet. The fur, of course, will be wet. When the solution has warmed, I use a paintbrush to apply the solution. I apply in a circular motion digging the bristles of the brush firmly in, to work the solution in. Go heavy on the solution. Make sure the edges of the hide and the holes get it well. Once the solution is on, walk away. Leave the hide alone. Don't touch it. Two days later, I'll start to pull and stretch the hide while it's still drying. For the record, hides can take a week or longer to tan and dry. When I'm done stretching for the day, I'll then fold the hide over, skin on skin, exposing the fur to air, allowing it to dry. The next day, I'll go back to stretch the hide, and fold it again in half; this time exposing the other fur side to fresh air. On day four of tanning, after I've stretched the hide, I'll leave the hide open, skin-side up, so the skin side can dry more. I'll leave the hide skin-up after stretching until the hide is mostly dry. Then I'll begin to alternate flipping the hide hair-side up, and then hair side down after my daily stretching. This gives open air time to both sides to dry.



Regardless of what kind of hide you're doing, the hide needs to tan for at least a week before you start to break it. Once the tanning solution is on, you're basically "done". The hide is no longer in danger of rotting. So you can take your time from here.

Most of the deer took a week to tan. Madam Bear may go to two weeks. Currently, she's sitting in her tanning solution.

Once the hide is dry, even though you've stretched it-it's still going to be hard as plywood. And thus begins "breaking". The tanning solution, once completely dried, forms almost a "shell" on the skin. This "shell" must be broken, and the leather worked to soften the hide. There are a lot of schools of thought on how to break a hide. None are wrong. Some will wrap the hide around the trunk of a tree, skin-side in, and buff it back and forth over the tree bark. The old-time Ojibwe gals actually used to chew on the hides. I'm sure a real treat, after brain tanning. Others use a saw horse. Some will toss it over a pole and buff. I've tried all of those methods (all but nibbling). I now have a

sawhorse that was used once-for about five minutes-for sale if anyone is interested. Again, it's what works best for you. Sawhorses work for some folks. It didn't help me at all. What to do in a case like this, wasn't on any of the websites I had hit while doing research for my first hide. They all said to use a tree, or a sawhorse, or a pole. So I had to improvise. I had read that some tanners will use sandpaper after they've done breaking to smoothen out the skin. Obviously sandpaper wasn't going to break the hide for me, but it got me thinking "What's stronger than sandpaper?" How about a pumice stone? I hopped in the Jeep and headed for my local Walgreen's, and bought the biggest pumice stone they had. And you know what? The pumice stone worked like a charm. I used the pumice stone like an eraser, breaking through the tanning solution shell, removing the outer shell, and working the hide below into a soft suede.

Once you are done breaking-and note: this will take HOURS of labor-intensive work-our hide is done. Deer usually take me 6 to 7 hours (including breaks) to break the hide completely. I shudder to think what the bear is going to clock in at.

When you're completely done breaking the hide, I then trim up the edges with a pair of scissors to make a clean edge all the way around. One final little tip that got me a lot of finger-pointing and snickers at Cumberland's is how I choose to "reshen up" a hide once it's completely done. They just rub a little talc into the fur. I spritz the fur with a water bottle to moisten the fur, then I'll toss the hide in the dryer on high heat with several dryer sheets. The steam action of the water vaporizing in the dryer fluffs up the fur nicely, and the dryer sheets make the hide smell fabulous. (Just makes sure you clean your lint trap out later)



Well congratulations! You've made it to the end of this article. Great diet plan, huh? By the time Stacey gets this article in, Madam Bear will be completely done, and I'll be able to submit some photos of Her Ladyship for this article.

It's not really sure what I had hoped to attain by teaching myself tanning. Obviously I'm getting something out of it-otherwise I wouldn't be doing it. A firm connection to my ancestors? Reviving a (nearly) lost art? Another notch on my fifteen minutes of world fame? Or giving a healthy flu shot to my innate fear of ever stagnating. Most of my wild hairs come out of nowhere. I can't claim it as "ethnic pride", although that one would be the easiest. While it'll definitely be in my genes somewhere, albeit temporarily misplaced, really the Native card had nothing to do with this one.

At least, that's what I keep telling myself.

In the end, I guess only the ancients know-and they haven't clued me in yet.

Gigawabamin nagutch'ee you later,
And yours in the Mother,
Julie Ann (Laughing Otter)
Red Lake Chippewa Band of the Ojibwe
-And rogue Druid extraordinaire!



Squirrels: Arboreal Acrobats

By Mike of D.C. Grove

Introduction

My first article on Druidic beasts was about the Salmon (Spring Equinox, 2001), so after a brief hiatus I would like to describe an often overlooked Druidic denizen of the forests. Other (larger) animals have captured our attention and have primary roles in myths and legends, such as; wolves, bears, deer, oxen, boar, horses, rats, eagles and even fish. At first glance, it would seem that the industrious squirrel's predilection for acorns, careful storage for the winter (although absent-minded), and scrambling about trees all day would have made them a natural mascot for the ancient Druids. After a few days of exhaustive research on the internet, I found remarkably few references to

the critter in European folklore. However, an interesting fact arose, the squirrel we are familiar with now in the British Isles or America, is actually a much different species than the one 2000 years ago, due to ecological changes and introduction of continental species.

Etymology

The squirrel's common name dates from the ancient Greeks, where Aristotle used the term 'Skiouros'- "kia" meaning shade, and 'Oura" meaning tail; thus "he who sits in the shadow of his tail." Many centuries later, the French called him "esquirel" which the English adopted. Gray is spelled "grey" in England, Ireland and Canada. Being solitary, there is no group name for squirrels, although I like to refer to three or more squirrels as a "grove" The Webster Dictionary defines "squirrelly" as "Odd or crazy, an allusion to the squirrel's diets of nuts "Squirreled" to have buried nuts, is considered the longest single syllable word in the English language. In most languages, the squirrel is simply known as the "Tree rat"



A squirrel nest of leaves and twigs

The 365 species of the seven families of the genera Sciurus and Tamasciurus (tree squirrels, ground squirrels, flying squirrels, chipmunks plus gophers, ground hog and prairie dogs), which belong to the order of Rodentia, whose 1650 species constitute about 40% of the 3600 known species of mammals (including mice, rats, hamsters, guinea pigs, beavers, muskrats, porcupines, marmots, chinchillas, voles, lemmings, etc; but not rabbits and hares which are lagomorphs; shrews and moles and hedgehogs are different too). The greatest variety of squirrels and rodents is in South America.

Physical



Tree squirrels are about one pound and reach about 15 inches in size, although they range from pygmies (3 inches, 4 ounces) to giants (3 feet, 40 pounds) in different areas of the world. Their high set eyes permit a wide range of vision without moving their head. They have good hearing and have a diverse vocabulary. They apply scent to the nuts before burying them, and can smell them up to a foot below the snow. They can run at up to 20mph, but usually scamper at 12mph. Their powerful incisors grow six inches a year, hard on the outside, soft on the inside, self sharpening. Their brains are about the size of a walnut, and they are considered quite clever. Often called a "dapper rat with a good P.R. agent" their tails make them one of the most recognized animals in the world.

Squirrels are diurnal, but most active in the morning and evening, with a nap at noontime. Although a tasty snack, squirrels have few natural predators (coyotes, foxes, bobcats, hawks, owls, raccoons, snakes, weasels), because they are able to hide on the smallest branches of a tree from ground attacks, and easily dodge most airborne attacks, once they are in a tree. From their place of safety, they enjoy shrilly castigating their opponents with clicks and flicking their tail in anger. They can also swim in extreme necessity across large rivers. Although most rural squirrels die of hunger, most urban and suburban squirrels die from automobile accidents, as their evasive maneuvers of feints and dodges do not distract the straight line approach of vehicles.

Squirrels are sometimes called the "monkey of Europe and North America" They prefer to travel by leaping from one tree to the next on small branches, up to 2.5 meters, but will briefly descend to the ground to gather fallen nuts in the fall, and to cross roads or open areas. Their sharp claws, slightly opposable thumbs, reversible wrists and light weight (300g for a red, 500g for a grey) allow them access to all parts of a tree, and their fluffy tail acts as an air-brake/cushion on the rare occasion that they fall. Several species of squirrels have loose skin that can be pulled taut into a sail and used for gliding up to 20 meters. In addition, their tail acts as a blanket during the winter months.



A variety of squirrel foods.

Squirrels prefer dense stands of forest, and lots of underbrush, but can occasionally be found in cropland, hay land, marsh and pasture. Squirrels are primarily granivorous, or seed and nut eating, but also enjoy fruits, flowers, leaves, buds, berries, roots, and sometimes even the under-bark of a tree



during famine. They are known to feed on insects, bird eggs, nestlings and even carrion when hungry. Mastig trees (which produce large seed crops on a periodic basis) provide their critical larder for the long winter, as tree squirrels do not hibernate (ground and mountain squirrels do). They eat about a pound of food a week. A red squirrel, native to the Isles when they arrived at the end of the last Ice Age, can put on up to 12% of their weight in fat, but the larger grey squirrel can reach 30%, giving it an edge in surviving the winter. Red squirrels prefer to eat pinecones, and lack the tolerance for tannic-acid that is found in acorns, which are favorite diet of the grey squirrel. As the great forests of Scots Pine have declined throughout Britain and Ireland since the 17th century due to the voracious lust for lumber of the British Navy and later sheep ranching (see Canny Conifers Yule 2001, by Sam <http://www.rdna.info/newmissal18.html>), the red squirrel has become an endangered species, whereas the gray squirrel (introduced in the 19th century to liven up the gardens of England and for furring) has occupied this ecological niche, thriving on birch, oak, hazel, beech, blackgum, hickory, magnolia, pecan, walnut, chinkapin and pines. Gray squirrels are rarely found amongst pine trees. Gray squirrels tolerate man's presence more than almost any other species of animal. They can survive without drinking water for several weeks, relying solely on the moisture of their food. Some populations in Britain and America became so rampant that various types of weasels were brought in to control them, to no avail.

Squirrels are fertile for only one day in a season. Squirrels begin to mate in January and again in the summer (if there is a good crop), bearing litters of two to four offspring (squirrels have 8 nipples) in April and August in their nests, called dreys. Dreys are found in hollow trees, or in strong branches, lining them with moss, thistle-down, dried grass, feathers, twigs, leaves and bark. If they use fishing line or string, there is a great chance it will tangle with their tail during winter sleep and trap them. They tend to change dreys several times a year, due to parasite infestation. The eyes and ears of the young are closed for the first four weeks, possibly to ward off parasites, after which the mother will begin to hunt for the offspring. The males are not involved in the rearing. After weaning at eight weeks, the young live more or less solitary lives, although their overlapping hunting grounds (three to five hectares per squirrel in the forest, marked by urination, an acre at a campus or city) may bring about toleration, and they may share dreys in the winter to help stay warm (up to 24 have been recorded to do this). If there were many nuts in the fall, perhaps 40% of the squirrels will make it through their first winter, but less than 10% will survive on years of few nuts (and few would breed the next January). The lifespan of a squirrel is usually less than 4 years, but have lived 12 to 18 years in captivity.



Practical

Squirrels, like minks and marmots, were highly valued for their winter fur, and their trusting nature made them an easy target for young hunters, although some cultures reportedly fear to hunt them, and will lose their hunting skills. The modern Finnish word for money, raha, meant squirrel-skin.

Professional makeup artists and ceramic painters prefer to use brushes made from the belly of the squirrel for fine details. They are also used for making spinning lures of fly fishers.

Squirrel brains were considered a delicacy in the South, eaten with scrambled eggs, fried and served in stew called "burgoo" However, some doctors warn that squirrels might carry a fatal strain of "mad cow" disease.

"Bounty of the Earth Cookbook" published in 1994, has dozens of recipes for squirrel, including Curried Fried Squirrel, Squirrel Cakes. She recommends a white Zinfandel and favo beans with her dishes.

Folklore



The most famous mythological squirrel in Europe appears only once, called Ratatoskr, from Snorri's Edda in Grimnismal 32 "ratatoskr heitir ikorni, er renna skal at aski Yggdrasils; arnar orth hann skal of an bera ok segia Nidthoggvi nithr" translated as "the squirrel called Ratatoskr runs up and down the ash-tree of the world, carrying hateful words between the eagle and the dragon Nidhogg." Due to his purposeful inclusion of the word "hateful" over an older version, perhaps, the Norse have a popular misconception that it is the squirrel itself who is the source of this negative relationship between the Eagle in the branches and the Dragon at the roots, when in fact this is a case of "Shooting the messenger."

Cherokee Indians believed that squirrel meat would cause rheumatism, based on the squirrel's "poor posture" Those tribes that sowed nut-bearing plants, would abstain from squirrel meat.



Some European folk legends believe the squirrel was present at the Garden of Eden, and was so shocked at what transpired there that he covered his eyes with his tail, for which God granted him an extra busy one.



At Carleton Grove, seeing a squirrel during a service or vigil was auspicious. The heraldic device for the SCA Baronial Colleges of the Canton of Nordleigh (Carleton and St.Olaf Colleges) is a black background with three golden rampant squirrels surrounding a golden wreath.

By the early 1800s, Ohio pioneers organized squirrel hunts to keep the squirrel population down to manageable numbers. By 1810, it was not uncommon for hunters to kill 2,000 squirrels per hunt. The largest squirrel massacre occurred in Franklin County, taking the lives of 19,600 squirrels.

On April 6, 1903, large numbers of red and grey squirrels were shipped from Texas and Colorado into the small midwestern town of Hinsdale, Illinois. The arrival of the squirrels culminated the efforts of village president and local banker Deming Preston, who argued before the village board that the bushy-tailed rodents should be proclaimed a protected species and the town should begin a crusade to repopulate its territory with squirrels. Today, April 6 is celebrated as Squirrel Day in Hinsdale. Locals traditionally lay out gourmet nutty delicacies on their doorsteps for their beloved squirrels.

During the 1960s, the North Carolina legislature approved a bill to make squirrel the official state mammal. During consideration of the bill, Representative Basil Barr argued: "The grey squirrel is thrifty. He buries nuts." To which Representative Henry Boshamer wryly replied, "Any animal that buries nuts would be dangerous to this General Assembly."

The most densely squirrel-populated area in the world is Lafayette Park in Washington, D.C. where surrounding offices pooled together resources in the 1960s to provide a constant supply of peanuts for their furry neighbors. However, the squirrel population has caused problems with plant life and traffic, and federal authorities have periodically attempted to trap and relocate large numbers of squirrels to other Washington area parks.



While in the Oval Office, President Dwight Eisenhower despised the squirrels that grazed on the White

House lawn. Eisenhower ordered federal officials to trap the bushy-tailed creatures and deport them in bagfuls in order to protect his private golf course. Angry protestors drove by the White House and unleashed squirrels onto the property to irk the anti-squirrel President.

President Ronald Reagan was well-known for his love for the squirrels that shared the White House lawn. Reagan frequently brought back acorns from Camp David for his furry friends and once commissioned a local artist to paint a squirrel scurrying across the White House for that year's presidential Christmas card. In one of his final interviews, Reagan reflected on his fondness for squirrels when asked about his experiences living in the White House.



Princess Diana was extremely fond of the squirrels which made their home at Kensington Palace. The princess frequently scattered nuts with Princes William and Harry for the royal rodents. Shortly after her death in 1997, five dozen squirrels were found drowned in the Kensington Palace pool, allegedly by royal gardeners who were glad to finally rid the grounds of the pesky rodents. An investigation by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty for Animals turned up empty.

Squirrels have been blamed for causing at least one confirmed stock market crash and a Miss America Pageant disaster in the United States, as well as precipitating countless fires and power outages which have left entire cities without electricity for days. For example, New York City officials claim that squirrels cause at least one power outage every day.

Celebrity Pop Culture

Beatrix Potter had several books for children about the Red Squirrel. Rocky the Flying Squirrel, of Frostbite Falls Minnesota, is Bullwinkle's buddy and well known since 1959 with a TV cartoon series and a recent movie. Secret Squirrel and Morocco Mole had a show on Hannah Barbara cartoons in 1965, and returned in 1993 for another series. Chip and Dale, the feuding chipmunks, are third tier Disney characters from the 1960s. Twiggy the Squirrel became famous in 1973 for being the only water-skiing rodent. Slappy and Skippy Squirrel are known in the 1990s for Warner Brothers. Skunny the Squirrel, "a squirrel with attitude" with his girlfriend, Rosie, is the star of his own computer games from Atomic Entertainment. Before the Frappuccino, there was the "pink Squirrel" with cream, cr?e de cocoa and amaretto over ice, shaken until frothy. General Mills mascot for Honey Nut Cluster Cereals, especially it's "robo-squirrel" episode reach epic fan levels in the late nineties. The recent rants of Foamy the Squirrel, the star of online raunchy diatribes, are now quite legendary.



Quotations

"The wildness of squirrels is an awesome wildness." - DOUGLAS FAIRBAIRN

"If we had a keen vision of all that is ordinary in human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow or the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which is the other side of silence." - GEORGE ELIOT

"A squirrel leaping from bough to bough, and making the wood but one wide tree for his pleasure, fills the eye not less than a lion, is beautiful, self-sufficing, and stands then and there for nature." - RALPH WALDO EMERSON

"Squirrels for nuts contend, and, wrong or right for the world's empire kings ambitious fight. What odds? To us 'tis all the self-same thing: a nut, a world, a squirrel, and a king." - CHARLES CHURCHILL

"Like a small grey coffee pot sits the squirrel." - HUMBERT WOLFE

"The steeples swam in amethyst, the news like squirrels swam." - EMILY DICKINSON

"Be hopeful, you righteous ones... You shall ascend and enter the crevices of the earth and the clefts of the rock forever, like squirrels..." - THE PSEUDEPIGRAPHA

"Here Skug lies snug as a bug in a rug." - BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, in a letter to his friend Georgiana Shipley on the death of her pet squirrel in 1772. 'Skug' was a dialect word meaning "squirrel".

"She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes in shape no bigger than an agate-stone... Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut, made by the joiner squirrel... And in this state she gallops night by night through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love..." - WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, in "Romeo and Juliet."

Come play with me;
Why should you run
Through the shaking tree
As though I'd a gun
To strik you dead?
When all I would do
Is to scratch your head
And let you go.

"William Yeats "To a Squirrel at Kyle-na-no"



Story Links

<http://www.rdna.info/SunsetStrip/Birdland/6682/poetry.html> Gluskap tames and shrinks giant squirrels.

<http://www.gma.org/Tidings/myths/>

http://www.pbs.org/wnet/africa/explore/sahel/sahel_folklore_lo.html Moon and squirrel in Africa

<http://stpetersburg-guide.com/folk/saltan.shtml> Squirrel helps a Russian princess

<http://www.msu.edu/user/hamza/Folktale13.htm> Hamza legend of squirrel and elephant

<http://www.msu.edu/user/hamza/Folktale23.htm> Hamza Legend of squirrel and gull

<http://www.msu.edu/user/hamza/Folktale16.htm> Hamza legend of squirrel and hyena.

<http://hillhouse.ckp.edu/~bobgore/story.html> Anansi (spider) and the Witch and the Squirrel

<http://www.ferrum.edu/applit/bibs/tales/animalball.htm> How squirrel became a bat, Cherokee

<http://members.aol.com/nonstopNY/howlween/howltale.htm> Anishanabe tale, squirrel becomes bat.

http://www.rdna.info/cheyenne_language/squirrel.htm Cheyenne squirrel and turtle

<http://www.darsie.net/talesofwonder/hcsf.html> How Coyote stole fire with Squirrel's help

http://www.turtletrack.org/Issues02/Co11022002/CO_11022002_Squirrels_Fool_Coyote.htm Squirrel fools Coyote

Information Links

<http://www.squirrels.org/faq.html> FAQ on Squirrels

<http://www.squirrels.org/video.html> Videos of amazing squirrel acrobats and thievery

<http://www.squirrels-r-forever.com/> Praising squirrels

<http://www.rdna.info/Heartland/Lane/4033/lit.html> Books about Squirrels

<http://www.rdna.info/Athens/Forum/1734/squirrel.html> Good page to work with

<http://www.rdna.info/Athens/Forum/1734/squirrel.htm> Essay on squirrels in Norse mythology

<http://www.rdna.info/Heartland/Lane/4033/lit.html> Great Source

<http://www.scarysquirrel.org/special/movies/foamy/> 30 different cartoons of foul-mouthed Foamy and his Wiccan room-mate ranting about American culture.



SERIAL STORY



Druidical Treasure

A.k.a. "The Dave Fisher Code"

Written by B. N. Tavern
For the Public Domain, 2004 CE

Part Two of Eight

In photos, "Matt" is the blonde played by Ian Hill
"Sean" is dark played by a fellow called Raven,
Filmed by Stephen Crimmins
On-site at Carleton College

(Place mouse over pictures for secret messages.)

In Our Previous Episode

Two poor undergraduate juniors, Matt (a Cricket & football star) and Sean (a philosophy major), are spending winter vacation under-employed at Carleton College in rural Northfield MN. Desperate for money, they follow up on a mysterious ad in a newspaper that implies a great treasure was hidden at Carleton for the future rightful heir of David Fisher, the founder of Reformed Druidism. Following a tip from the campus Chaplain, Sean infiltrates the local Masons, while Matt goes ga-ga with the Druids. From the various clues they discover, they decide that only possible solution to the mystery is to check the original written materials by David Fisher, which are stored at the Druid Archive Collection.

The previous episode can be read in the entirety in the Beltane Issue at <http://www.rdna.info/newmissal37.html>

Now let's re-join our protagonists at the Druid Archives.

Chapter Six: The Druid Archives

Carleton's library was a squarish four-level brick building that you oddly entered on the top floor and then descended to the other levels. This is because the library stood carved into the side of the hill that overlooked a valley which cradled the twin frozen ponds of Lyman Lakes and its two islands. Each island was linked to the land by small arching quaint wooden bridges. Beyond Lyman, the massive Arboretum stretched to the horizon, as the sun was setting at 4:30 PM. Being normal students, Matt and Sean had never left the main campus to explore that wild frontier, and certainly not in this type of weather. Semi-arctic winter keeps you focused on your destination. In front of the library, an enigmatic back-lit stone arch, which loomed upwards from within a circle of patron-inscribed stone blocks like a brooding sentinel. Sean wished he could find such a patron to help support his studies during Senior year. Even in the wintertime, everywhere you looked across



the campus, odd large stones popped out of the snowy mantle, like prairie dogs on the alert in the South Dakota plains. Sean always had the creepy feeling that they were watching him.

Sean and Matt passed through the winter airlock and reached the warm interior of the library with relief, and immediately began to frantically shed layers of clothing that they draped over a nearby chair and went to the librarian who directed them to the basement level. Four levels down, there were no students, and the shelves were lined with the least popular books and musty old geological maps. Along



the wall were a few quiet padded benches, perfect for quiet snoozes during the middle of a long research session at night.

The Carleton Archives' main office was the only light that was currently lit on for the entire floor. Like moths before the torch, Sean and Matt approached the room and went in through the open heavy oak door. The walls of the greeting room were festooned with the odd souvenirs of 150 years of eccentric college kids. Wooden ducks, trophies, class photos and yearbooks lined the walls. A large wrap-around desk was cluttered with various neglected projects that were attempted by the archivists during the peaceful winter breaks, when visitors were scant. In this bright room, a darkly-clothed female student looked up from the shadows, rather surprised at the sudden company in mid-December, much like a man on a deserted island receiving paratroopers. She quickly resumed her accustomed dismissive disdain. Her dark makeup hid her features, as did the various piercings and long tresses of blue-black hair.

Matt smiled and irresistibly pushed a bell directly in front of her marked, "Summon the Archivist," and said, "Hi."

"Hi, my name is Dylan Llewellyn. Can I help you?" She asked, apparently not wanting to, but unable to avoid the basic courtesy of her job description,

Sean stepped over, "We'd like to do some research on..." How could he describe this? Sean felt stupid even asking.

"...on what?" Her eyes drilled into Sean, but then turned to Matt's gaze. There they rested, completely captivating Matt who smiled wider than Sean thought possible, with a look of wonder of a deer on the highway facing an oncoming truck at night. Her scowl evaporated slowly.

"...on the Druids. Well, Matt here," Sean shook Matt. Matt waved. "Matt is a Druid doing research on the founder, uh, David Fisher," Sean fumbled and Dylan pounced, eager to dismiss him.

"Have you read the Anthology?" She interrupted him, spinning a pencil on her finger, obviously a bit bored. "We get a lot of people here inquiring about Druids. The records from their collection are a bit of a mess you know, and most of the interesting stuff is already in the anthology collection, so you should start there. It's on the library shelves, and you can download it at <http://www...>" She was interrupted in return by Sean.



"Yes, we've already read it, or Matt did. But, you know, he's a history major, so we'd like to see the original documents, make contact with the past..."

She thought about this and conceded, "I see, sorry I barked at you. I'm bushed doing my own research here for my Comprehensive Thesis on the roots of the patriarchal value system in the Roman Church in the second century, mostly Pauline but also some... sorry to ramble...ut I understand your position, I'd like to go to the Vatican's vaults myself, but those are as tight as they come. Hey. Sit down." Sean and Matt sat by some Trivia contest trophies. "You see the problem really is, that I am a student worker, and the actual full-time archivist is down in Antarctica on an expedition with students for winter break, retracing the legacy of the former explorer and Carleton president, Professor Gould."

"Antarctica?!" The two men exclaimed on cue.

"Yeah, well, Yule-time is the warmest time of the year down there. Southern Hemisphere and all. So he won't be back with those students until, like, January 10th next month when classes resume here. In fact, another fellow, Stephen was in here, researching early Druidism, maybe you could talk with him in January, and do some collaborative research, he is quite knowledgeable. Normally the archives are open during winter break, but I don't have authority on my own to let you muddle about in there now. Sorry." She crossed her legs, leaned back, and spun a wooden drum stick and tapped the desk in an annoying staccato.

"Well, gosh." Matt said dejectedly, making sad puppy eyes. That seemed to work, because her demeanor changed.

"Hey, you guys are Druids right?" They looked at each other and nodded convincingly, and she leaned over conspiringly, "Why don't you guys look into Wicca instead? These Druids are kind of small potatoes, if you know what I mean, magically. You guys are philosophy-of-life, storytelling and chuckleheads all around. Now, Wicca has it more together, and there are lots more books out there on it, and I even know a coven or two in the town," she looked coyly at Matt, "If you're interested in Gardnerian or Alexandrian Wicca." Matt looked confused and had no idea what to say.



"What's the difference between Wicca and Druidism?" He asked, inquiring student that he was. Sean merely looked at his watch, dinner would be open soon he thought.

"Oh, it's night and day, literally, you know. Wicca is mostly a ceremonial magic system, Druidry is mostly a system of inquiry and celebration. Wicca focuses on the phases of the moon, Druidry on the seasons of the sun. Wicca is duotheistic and Druidism is eclectically pantheistic, usually. Different foci, you see, but kind of parallel in construction drawing on similar myths; plus we give most Christians the hee-bee-jee-bees." Matt smiled and nodded on, following this. "So, Matt, it's a totally different way to explore, you know, you should keep your options open, there are many more Wiccans after college than Druids, and you can stay indoors, where it's warm. You would enjoy that." She finished on what she thought was its strongest point in Minnesota with a raised tattooed finger.

"Oh, well, sure, that all sounds good to me," Matt began, warming up to the idea. Sean cut him off.



"Hey, what am I here? Chopped liver?" Sean protested.

"Please, don't talk like that, I'm vegetarian." Dylan frowned.

Shaking with impatience, Sean nudged his friend, "Stay on target with me, Matt." Turning to Dylan, "What's really interesting, but we'll focus on Druidism this year, it has, um, something we think is valuable, uh, for us, that we're looking for." Dylan raised a plucked eyebrow, rubbing a swollen puffy ear. "And so, maybe next year, we'll do that, cause, but we're really open to all

that."

Dylan pouted a bit, "Hey, no problem, it's cool. Lots of people cross-register you know, just a matter of time."

"So we can't get into the archives this month?" Matt asked warmly, bringing the conversation back on track.

"Uh, no, I already said that, cutie." Dylan quipped, chucking him under the chin, "Today's the last day before Christmas week vacation, and the library will close soon, at 6 PM. I have to lock up early now and go home at 5 PM. I'm going to Wales to see my relatives for festivities tomorrow."

"Need a ride to the airport?" Matt offered, jangling some keys.

"No. Maybe later, I actually have my own transportation," she smiled. "Well, good luck on your research, and I hope things work out for you guys next month, with everything and all."

Sean and Matt got up and started to leave. Matt noticed that Sean was looking around at the displays and the three heavy locked doors behind Dylan. Dylan collected her things and ushered them out, delicate golden chains on her waist noisily clicking, and locked the office door and went to the staircase, returned and handed Matt a slip of paper, "If you have any questions later, about Wicca, or anything, just give me a buzz." She smiled darkly and gracefully clomped away in heavy dark snow boots.



"Matt are you thinking what I'm thinking?" Sean whispered.

"Yeah, she thinks I'm totally hot." Matt chuckled with one hand planted on his hip peering proudly at the e-mail address on the paper, which he then lovingly folded and carefully filed into one of the pockets of his interior layers of clothing.

"No, no, Matt," Sean said, amazed at the tunnel vision of Matt, "We need to go back to my dorm room and get some tools and get back here quick." Sean looked like he was going through an internal checklist.

"Tools for what?" Matt asked, doggedly falling into step behind as Sean strode away.

"We're breaking into here tonight!"

Chapter Seven: Out for a Constitutional

As they crossed the campus to Sean's room in Davis Hall, a dorm for the more cultivated party-goers on Campus, Sean was peppered with questions from Matt.

"What are you talking about? We can't break in," Matt complained to Sean's determined back ahead of him. Sean didn't slow down at all.

"Why not? I've got the tools and a sure-fire plan." Sean said over his shoulder as they approached the dorm.



Matt caught up and blocked Sean. "Hello? Cause we'll get kicked out," Matt stood his ground firmly as Sean plowed forward, agilely ducking around him, ignoring his protest.

Sean raised a finger, "Only if we get caught!" They entered the dorm and went up to Sean's room, the hall was as quiet as a tomb, as he noisily unlocked the door and went inside. Sean rummaged through his closet, tossing odd items in a small backpack and changing to even darker than normal black clothes. "There that's everything," Sean said and rubbed his hands gleefully together. "Now, let's go get your cloak."

"Huh?"



Sean laid an arm on Matt's shoulder, speaking slowly, as to a child, in small words, "It looks like that silly thing might prove useful after all."

Sean and Matt stopped by Burton Hall and Matt changed clothes at his wood-beamed raftered room, and grabbed his cloak. A few minutes later they were back in the library, shivering. "Follow me," Sean advised. Matt followed with an un-necessary, but impressive, flourish of his cloak and the two went to the second floor to some large trashcans. "It's 5:30 now, so, jump on in. They'll close in a half hour."

"What are you talking about?" Matt looked at him.

"We'll wait in here until 6:00 PM, then after the final security sweep, we'll sneak into the archives. I do this all the time in the Assassin game, it never fails, they named me "Sneaky Sean."

Matt thought about this carefully, shrugged, and climbed into the big trashcan.

"Now don't move or your name will be..."

"I'm, Russell? Rustle, get it?" Matt beamed and shook in the trash with delight, making crunchy noises. Sean did not appreciate canned humor.



"No, your name will be Mudd!" Sean piled trash over the top of Matt, then slithered into the other can and wiggled the garbage up to the top, up and over his own head, firmly sealing it. Then they both waited.

And waited. Time passes slower than an election year when you're in a trash can. A small eternity passed, and then both heard the hard bootsteps of an approaching security guard, which came, paused for a moment at the water fountain for a century or two, and then they heard the harsh static of a walkie-talkie. "Breaker, this is Andogje Palavi down in the library. All floors check out, I'm coming out and activating the security system. Out." The clicking footfalls moved away, climbed the stairs and disappeared. Five minutes passed and then a klaxon sounded for five seconds and a blanket of silence fell resoundingly. After a pause, here and there around the library, little "click" sounds emanated from odd corners, as the alarm sensors kicked on.

Sean stuck his head out like a groundhog and looked around cautiously into the shadows. "All clear, Matt come out." Matt's can shook a little, rocked, and fell over with a clang, spilling trash all over the floor along



with half of Matt's upper torso. Matt groaned and crawled the rest of the way out of the can.

"Idiot, you'll get us caught doing crap like that!" Sean thundered.

Matt stumbled trying to stand and came over, "ude, I can't feel my legs and arms, it's like 33 degrees down here."

"Do you know Scottish Rite Masonry has 33 degrees?" Sean commented, walking over.

"Really?"

"Yeah, but the first three are the same as those of the York Rite, which has 10 degrees.¿?"

"What's the First Degree like?" Matt asked.

"I'm glad you asked for it, this is the sign of the first degree." Sean's arm swung widely, and in mid-arc it slapped a hand across Matt's face, to end by his own chin. Matt winced, looking a bit hurt and angry.

"Uh, huh, I think the only degree I'm going to want is my bachelor's degree." Matt groused.



"Sorry." Sean said, only half apologetically. "Now we're here to do business. This library has a few dozen infrared and motion detectors, according to my roommate's friend who did security detail last year. No cameras until 7:30 PM. The heat sensors aren't very sensitive, and can only detect a change warmer than 10 degrees above or below the ambient room atmosphere, or any movement over a slow crawl." Sean was digging in his backpack. "Now, we're going to have to just cross this floor, through many scanned areas, to the air-conditioning duct over there without being detected. That's where your cloak comes in handy."

"Um, Sean, I hate to break it to you, but I haven't got the invisibility thing down yet, you know. That's Harry Potter stuff, you know, not Reformed Druidism." Matt explained patiently.



"I'm actually thinking of a different movie. Think "Predator" when Arnold dips himself in mud to evade the Alien's infrared vision. Science, not fantasy."

"Hey wait, you said 'Mudd' before, I don't want mud on my cloak, it's brand new," protested Matt. "This is high quality wool, I don't want it damaged."

"We don't need mud, all we need is this!" He whipped out two silver space blankets and motioned for Matt to remove his mantle. He pinned the twin shiny blankets to the interior of the cloak, stood under the cape and said, "Voila! an anti-thermal invisibility cloak!

Now get inside." Matt entered into the heavy cloak, and Sean closed it tightly and pinned it shut. "Now as long as we move slowly, even an icy mammoth could pass by these sensors theoretically without being detected. No shaking or sudden movements. We're going to gracefully shuffle across the floor, let's go. The cameras will come on in about an hour or so and it will be harder to move about undetected."

Sean and Matt started to slowly step out of the recessed cubby hole onto the carpeted floor. All they could see was the floor illuminated by Sean's flashlight held in his teeth. They moved at a glacial pace, Sean's ears perked for the security alarm that would spell the end of his academic life at Carleton, and force him into the great unknown of "life-without-a-plan," one year earlier than expected. Their arms soon began to cramp from the stress of holding up the dense woolen garment, knowing even a small shake might bring doom. Spasms that they had thought had gone away from the trashcan returned and doubled in intensity. Yet, they did make it, weaving ever so slowly around furniture like some blind wooly shambling shibboleth from a bad Cthulhu story.



"I think we're almost there, hold on, just a few more steps." The carpet edge appeared at their feet, followed by slate flooring, indicating the destination. "We're there. Okay you can relax." They collapsed on the floor, throwing open the suffocatingly hot steam-box of a cloak. The level was mostly unlit, and Sean's flashlight was focused on a metal panel on the wall. Sean handed the light to Matt and began unscrewing the wide panel and lifted it and set it down firmly and flatly on the floor. He stuck his head inside, took Matt's light and looked about and swung his feet and sat half-way in.

"Now I don't know if this is going to work, but wait for my signal Geronimo!" and he disappeared, leaving a frightened Matt in the pitch dark.

Chapter Eight: Pressing Research



Matt waited listening. There was a skidding noise, a few 'uumphs!' and a final thud about 20 feet down on the first floor below. After a short pause, Sean called up, "Throw down the cloak! And then come on in." Matt pushed the cloak in which fell more or less noiselessly and shimmied his larger frame into the hole and fell, slowing his descent by pressing against the smooth sides. He soon reached the bottom of the shaft and it split off in two different horizontal directions. It was about three feet wide and

high.

"You know, I've always wondered if these ventilator ducts were really so large. It's surprising that they are just like in Dr. Who and those science fiction movies." Sean mused to himself. "Come on, this way, and don't get too close to me, the supports may not be strong enough for both of us." They inched their way in a prone crawl about 40 feet and another grate in the floor appeared. Sean opened the panel, crawled past it and lowered his feet and then hung from the ventilation system and let go, falling about 10 feet. Matt followed behind him, falling a little less gracefully, knocking over some furniture. Sean fiddled with something in the dark and flicked on a switch and Matt looked around. They were in a huge underground warehouse of the archives. Shelves stretched about 120 feet long and about 12 feet high and were on rollers, and pancaked flat into the corner, like a giant slumbering accordion.

There were several crates, boxes, gold-tone shovels, paintings and statues all about; each with an untold story. Sean looked carefully at the index on the end of each shelf and found one, and began to crank a wheel with all his might to roll the shelves, one by one, over far enough to enter and went down the line to the very end, pulled down a few gray boxes and began leafing through the contents. Meanwhile, Matt was inspecting the various crates, including a rather large wooden one with some large stenciled German shipping instructions in black on the side and "CONT: ARK./ COVEN" on the other side. It was firmly nailed shut. But something golden and glittering was inside and the wood container felt warm. He called out to Sean.

"Hey, Sean, there's a box here labeled 'Arkansas Coven,' could that mean something?" He yelled, but no reply, "I think I read that there's a Reformed Druidic Wicca group in Oklahoma descended from the RDNA! Might be related!"



"Matt, you dunderhead, get over here, we're looking for treasure!" Sean bellowed, "I need your help here, now. We're researching Druids from the '60s, not Witches from the '80s. Focus, man!" Matt reluctantly obeyed, and the faint static sound on the periphery of his sense disappeared as he left it, probably just from the cooling vent overhead, and he ran to join Sean.



"There's a lot of stuff here. Right, now, we're looking for an original constitution, or anything written by David Fisher. Now here's a recently-made index by that researcher Stephen, and it seems that Fisher's liturgical materials are simple photocopies of photocopies of the original, from the look of the various black edges on them." Sean held up another piece of paper, inviting Matt to look, "However, this here, this is the actual 1963 Constitution signed by David Fisher, and this is his original 'Book of Faith'" epistle." Sean handed them to Matt, "Matt, go run and make a photocopy and bring me back the originals, and hurry."

Matt ran over to the copy machine, and turned it on, and made copies and ran back. "How much time do we have?"

"About 15 minutes until the cameras turn on."

"And then, what do we do?" Matt asked, looking at his watch.

"Hopefully no one will be watching. We just slowly walk out, just like we came in. All doors in the library and offices open out from the inside without needing a key. Emergency safety reasons." Sean said, carefully replacing the originals with the photocopies, in case that Stephen guy comes back next January to do more research. "And, if he is also a treasure hunter, he'll be sorely disappointed." Sean smiled. "That's all of them, I think, according to Stephen's index."



Matt grabbed Sean's arm, "Sean, I feel really bad about doing this, I? a historian, English minor of course, and we shouldn't be taking primary documents out of the archives."

Holding up the documents, Sean puzzled. "Yeah, uh huh. Don't worry. We'll take them back in January after we've inspected them thoroughly for clues." Matt came over and took one and pulled out a Bic lighter and lit it and held it behind the paper, illuminating them.

"I don't see any hidden lettering, like you know, invisible ink! Perhaps..." Matt's words were cut off by a stern recorded voice overhead.

"Intense heat source detected. Initiating preliminary containment procedure." They looked up and saw a fire detector flashing.

"Shit!" they said in unison, and extinguished the lighter. Both turned towards the entrance side of the shelf. A large metal plate fell quickly from the ceiling with a jarring clang, blocking off the open ends of the shelving

aisles. A generator kicked to life, a powerful throbbing noise was heard, and the shelves began to shake.



Without exchanging words, they both knew what the other was thinking, the horror of a hundred action films impinging on their version of reality. The shelves were being mechanically closed, pancaking shut like a pressed accordion, and they saw them perceptibly sliding along the floor. They shuffled along with the moving shelf toward the wall. First one, then another was reaching the far wall, and locking into place with a heavy thud, and six or seven on their other side were coming towards the fully closed compact emergency position.

"We gotta get out of here!" Sean cried, stuffing the papers in his shirt.

"Where? The entrance's blocked!" Matt whimpered looking around.

Sean yelled, "Then we need to make one or hop into an empty shelf..." He stopped, pointing up. "There's space up there over the shelves. Up! Matt! Up!" They began to scramble up the bookshelves, knocking off books and boxes. Sean poked his head up. There was no more slack down the line of the cases, it would be closed in a few seconds. Below him a few books were being crushed and/or pushed up by the slanted base-shelf scoopers, like cow-catcher-grills on a run-away train, buying him only a few precious seconds.

Matt climbed on top and helped Sean clamber up, who suddenly yelled, "YAAAARRGGH!" Whirling motors whined under stress. Sean's left snowboot was caught in the shelving, and they both yanked hard, eventually freeing it. Sean was unable to right himself, "My ankle, I think it's broken!" It had only been about 40 seconds since the alarm had sounded. As the shelves snapped shut, the room began to fill with a light, noxious, airy dry green foam from various nozzles in the ceiling that obfuscated the exits of the rooms from sight.



"We gotta get out of here, now!" Sean repeated, they scooted to the edge of the shelves and dropped down. Sean noticeably in pain from the 10-foot drop this time. As he opened the archive vault's door, an alarm went off.

"Containment breach detected, the fire alarm is being activated." Followed by a shrill oscillating klaxon that vibrated their head's inner-ear painfully and left them perceptibly wincing and twisting, hands futilely over their ears.

"Which way?!" Matt asked, confused. He had never spent much time in the library before, and the foam in his hair was beginning to run down and blind his eyes with a burning sensation.

"There's an emergency exit on the second floor stairway, the guards are coming from all the way across campus, entering on the fourth floor." He paused, "It's a fire alarm, they have to call the fire department first, let's move! We have only seconds." Matt began to run, remembered Sean, returned and hefted his cloak and threw Sean's arm over his own shoulder and they both began to stagger through the two or three archive doors, trailing foam behind them, heading to the stairwell, no doubt tripping several motion detectors.

They laboriously hustled their way up one step at a time in the stygian, pitch darkness punctuated by a blinding strobe-like alarm flashing and that incessantly disorientating piercing alarm. They had reached the second floor, and the emergency exit, when they heard yells and cries from the top of the stairs. Matt and Sean leaned on the door, which didn't open. In the next light flash, they read "5-Second Delay Before Opening."



"Fire alarm tripped somewhere in the basement." A loud distant ordered, "Flashlights on, let's go!" And the heavy echoes of the steps were hustling down towards them. Every Teutonic bootstep brought the possibility of security guards and expulsion maddeningly closer.



"Keep pushing, let's go. Nine Mississippi, Ten Mississippi. Come on, damn it!" Just when the guards would come around the winding staircase, the door popped open, and the two fell outside, and they whipped the door around and slammed it shut, which went unheard in the infernal din. Despite being 7:00 at night, the white snow picked up the soft reflecting light of Northfield's lights bouncing off the cloud, giving everything a surreal twilight-quality of peace. They breathed once or twice, Matt rolled Sean onto his cloak, and began dragging him away from the library and disappeared into the relative safety of the spruce trees at a nearby parking lot. Un-noticed by them, a shadowy figure from the forest watched them and slipped away into the night towards the deep Arboretum.

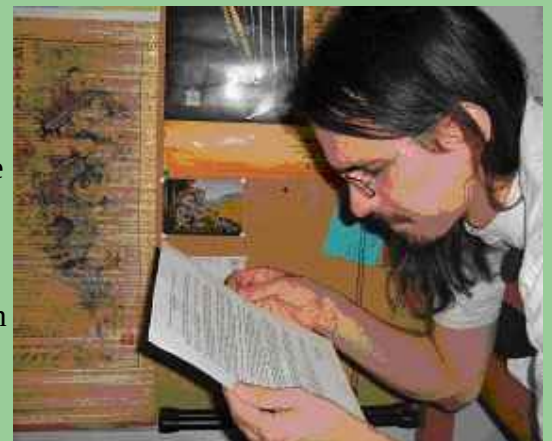
Chapter Nine: The Hidden Text

It was a long time before they got back to Davis Hall. Back in Sean's Edwardian-era dorm room, they locked the door, a bit paranoid that someone somehow might follow and punish them for their heinous disregard for college etiquette and archival policy. When their breathing resumed a normal rhythm, Sean fished the documents out of his shirt, snapped on a desk lamp and began to peer at them, sifting through each word carefully as if he had discovered the sequel to the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Matt tried to peek over his shoulder frequently with knotted eyebrows, saying words like "HmMMM" helpfully and pacing the small dorm room. He had a sudden thought. "You know, Sean, if we had NOT gotten out of that shelving, or had crawled into an empty shelf and it had closed, we could have been, like, stuck there for a few weeks, before anyone found us, dead of starvation and dehydration. Dude, we'd be... like, history, in that archives."

"Matt, don't talk like that. I don't like irony." He snapped, fingers in his ears, focusing harder.

"Why not? He's a good writer..." He trailed off, because Sean wasn't listening again. Eventually, Matt got tired, sighed and went to pour himself a little whiskey toddy, humming happily at the clear amber liquid's graceful sloshing in the cup. Meanwhile Sean fumed and fussed behind Matt's back, turning the document over, inverting it, holding it up to the fluorescent and black lights, lemon juice, a hairdryer, and a dozen other tricks he learned from the Internet to no avail.



"Damn it." Sean's voice was dejected and a tone higher, nearly hysterical from lack of sleep. His throbbing left ankle wasn't satisfied with just ibuprofen, and it rested in a wastebasket of iced water. "It's just a constitution and the epistle is little different. It looks like any standard constitution for any Carleton group, a strange group, yes, but still an ordinary constitution. What could be so damn important about it?"



Sean threw his arm over the chair, turning and glowering at Matt, "It's the same words as the one in the ARDA collection, just blue ink with differing line breaks. If a secret message is encrypted by positioning, we may never figure it out, we might need a template with holes in it to read the message or something like an algorithm to skip letters in a certain sequence. Maybe we're barking up the wrong oak tree with our line of reasoning?"

"Encrypted? Back in the 1960s? No way! You watch way too many spy movies on TV." Matt pooh-poohed, then tilted his head and tentatively jested, hoping that it would lighten the mood. "I heard a joke about George Bush at the debates in 2000,

who when asked what was an Algorhythm, he said, 'monotonic and repetitive.'" Sean merely scowled at the unwanted distraction. Matt then snapped to attention, "Hey, wait a minute, let me see it again, Sean."

"Will you shut up! Okay! Fine, you look at it!" Sean roared and his hand grabbed Matt's collar and pulled him towards the desk. Matt was startled and spilled his tumbler all over the desk.

"Bloody hell, Matt! What have you done, idiot! You ruined my roommate's keyboard. Do I have to teach you the second degree now?" His eyes darted back to the document, whose edge was soaked too and wrinkling a little, "Oh my God! We have to return that, you know." Sean shouted, stood up, shaking Matt as best he could for a sputtering, apologetic Matt, but then Sean sank into his chair despondent, dabbing up the whiskey with a shower towel.



"Sorry, man, I've always had trouble holding my liquor," Matt apologized. Dang, Masons are grumpy, he thought.

Sean grimly mumbled, "Oh, what's the use? Maybe I can go to a community college to finish up. Illinois State, here I come." Then his eyes lit upon a soaked corner of the constitution, which glittered a little strangely. Was it just his crusty sleepy eyes? He looked closer, and something seemed to be darkening under the paper.

"Matt, look!" Sean flipped the constitution to the reverse side and tiny flowery-script words were slowly appearing under the yellow stain.

"Give me some water!" Matt ran to the bathroom and came back with water. Sean dappled some on the page. Nothing happened. "More whiskey!" Sean bellowed. Matt looked up.



"But it's expensive," he whined.

"Damn it, Matt, so is Carleton! More whiskey!" Sean generously drizzled about a half cup of whiskey over the document and like a bobber floating to the water's surface, the words stretched across the previously blank page in swirls and curlicues. "My God, the paper or ink must be somehow chemically treated to react only to whiskey. Who could devise such a thing?" Sean pulled out his reading glasses from a pocket and squinted furiously at the text.

"It makes sense," he said in a self-congratulating pose, "The newspaper ad said, 'May your spirits find the message divine.' And Fluid Druids love their booze."

"Actually only on religious occasions," Matt observed pedantically.

"And let me guess, you are very religious?" Sean asked and Matt acknowledged the point, tossed his shoulders, smiled, rather flattered, with blushing cheeks.

"Well what does it say?" Matt said crowding Sean by the table's light, as Sean scanned the document between trembling hands and wiped his brow.

"Wait a minute, will you! It's in really fancy calligraphy, but I'll try to read it." Sean then struggled at first, but began a rhythmic chant.

Congratulations Dear Brother,

*To claim the treasure you must surmount many fears
For great it has grown over four hundred years.
Mending the souls from the journeys of sages
Rich is the tithe drawn from his wages.*

*Two tenets there be in our Druidic code
Tall pillars and strong, 'tho their base may erode.
Between them you'll rise to great heights
A name they will give to show the next site.*

*Our voices were carried on the wings of the birds,
Borne on the winds, our words were far heard.
Look under the speaker for the sign of the clan
Whose leader now knows a key to the plan.*

*Those Cursed children who seek their salvation
Live apart from you in a higher pure nation
Safe in those castles that are built of strong stone
Clothed in white samite with faces of cold bone*

*High o'er the heads of those deep in prayer
Bestruck by the gods and polished by the air,
Known only well by the folk of the sky
Use wits to reach there or learn how to fly.*

*The Queen of Hearts in spring holds sway
None can resist her green charms in May.
When the maypole rises and drama ensues
Below her blue skirt lies her precious clue.*

*When black and white are one day in line
When all forms of God are known to be divine,
Sight the two and carefully through them peer
The path to her cave will be sharp and clear*



*Deep in the earth, her tunnel will twist
When all seems done our leader has been missed.
One bard has a harp, the rest but a lyre,
Which of them built the Wonder of Wiltshire?*

*Great are the Earthmother's charms to be sure
White, firm and round and full of allure.
Seek the middle path and where it will lead
Look under the stone of the zealot's last deed.*

*Finally you know to whom you must meet
Stare fast at him or he will certainly cheat.
His journey is endless, but no longer will roam
Not all that come here will return to their home.*

*Yours in the Mother,
David H. Fisher*



There was a hush then, as they savored the experience. There is no feeling in the world like finding a real treasure map. It makes even the Easter Bunny and political parties seem plausible. There was a long pregnant pause, and finally Matt exclaimed anticlimactically, "Wow, that was a whole lot more complicated than I expected."

"Yeah," said Sean suddenly had a headache to accompany his inflamed ankle, "Damn Druids! This thing's chock-full of riddles. Why do Celts have to be so darned clever?! I was so hoping this would be over quickly. You know, 'The treasure under the teacher's desk in Laird 202.' Something simple like that. This cursed Fisher must be testing us in some perverse way to make it so damn difficult." Sean slapped a stack of papers off the desk, and he span around, "It must have been written right before he graduated, and he must have been in a mean mood. At least that epistle by Fisher has no hidden text to plague us any further, I just tested that one."



Matt tapped the document, "Sean, did you notice the handwriting is a little different on the last four verses?"

Sean just shrugged in response. "Yeah, perhaps they were written by the other founders, like each one wrote a verse or something?"

"Why don't we just solve the last riddle, and skip all the ones in the beginning?" Matt offered, quickly typing up a copy on the computer.

"No, we probably should start at the beginning, or we'd be wasting our time. Each riddle probably leads to the next one, unless he's just yanking us about for some twisted fun." Sean paused. "However, I think the first quartet is just a description of the treasure, a warm-up, you know to get us hooked, and the second verse is the first actual clue, so let's start there." Sean noticed that as the whiskey dried, so also did the letters began to fade away again, even the yellow stain disappearing, leaving an unharmed white paper.

"I'm going to order some pizza, this might really take awhile." Matt said, turning the heat up a little on the room's thermostat. "You know, next month when school resumes, we should return the originals, right?"

"Sure, whatever, Matt." Sean was making some sort of an imaginary list in his head, "Tomorrow we're going to need to buy some supplies downtown." Sean mused rubbing his chin.

"What kind of supplies?"

"Generic treasure-hunter supplies." Oddly, Sean sung the next words, "I'm making a list and checking it twice."

"Happy Solstice, Sean." Matt said.

"Yeah, you too, Matt," Sean quipped, and surprisingly, he meant it.

"You don't get Christmas presents like this every year!" Matt burbled.

That evening, they worked out a long list together, puzzled over the riddle, ate pizza and around 2AM., they called it quits, without any hard results to comfort themselves. Sean hobbled across the room, rolled off to sleep on his own bed, and Matt closed the pizza box and sleepily took Sean's roommate's bed, not noticing that the green foam on his clothes was staining the sheets. He dreamed of great piles of gold coins, but his reality after he woke would be even grander.



END OF PART TWO OF EIGHT

Tune in next issue (Aug 1st), for the further exciting adventures of Sean & Matt.



I AM Campaign Press Release

DATE: May 24, 2005

SUBJECT: 2005 IAM Campaign

Let's gear up for PUC's 2005 I AM campaign!

As we have since the year 2001, PUC will lead a post card mailing to congress, and the president as well as local officials on Summer Solstice, June 21st.

On these tens of thousands of post cards to the leaders of Lady Liberty's great land, we will simply state, "I am a Pagan -fill in the blank-" (i.e. Mother, Soldier, Policeman, Nurse, Teacher, etc.)

With this simple message delivered en masse we hope to educate the government on the facts that many of their constituents are Pagans, and that we are average 'people-next-door' that are 'everywhere' in society not just some unseen unheard small fringe group, that many assume we are.

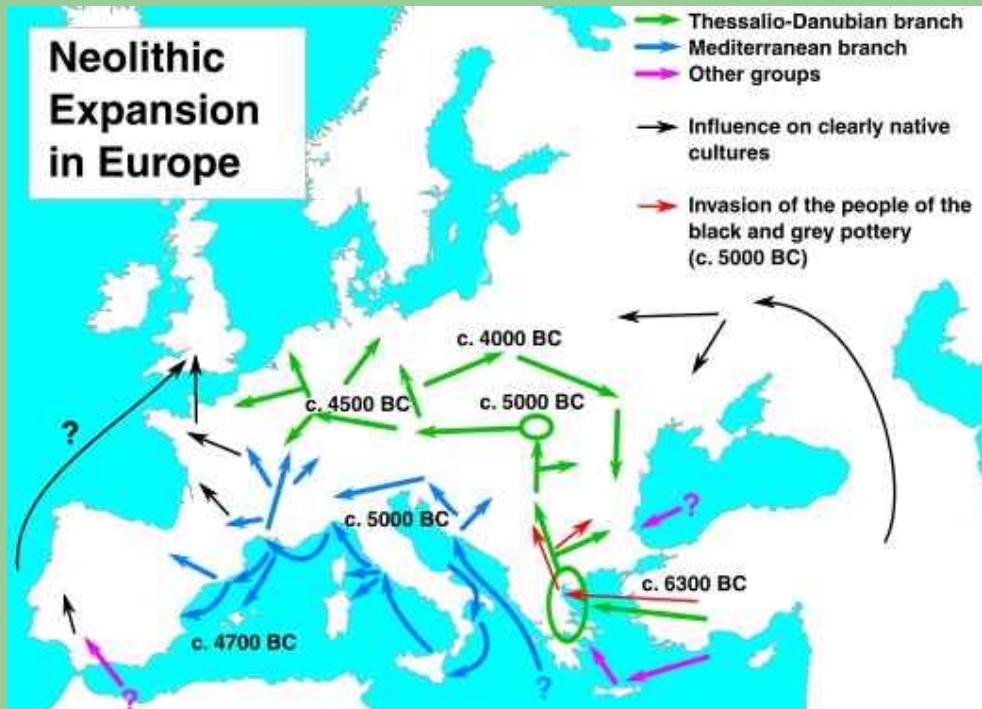
You may find your US Senator's email addresses, phone numbers, and faxes at:

http://www.senate.gov/senators/senator_by_state.cfm

You may find your US Representative's email addresses, phone numbers, and faxes at:
<http://www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW.html>

So Vote It Be!

Rev. Marsha Tomlinson, MA, DD
Pacific Regional Director, Pagan Unity Campaign
<http://crystalblue.spiritualitea.net>
<http://californiapuc.spiritualitea.net>
<http://www.paganunitycampaign.org>



Found: Europe's oldest civilisation

By David Keys, Archaeology Correspondent
2005 Independent News & Media (UK) Ltd.
11 June 2005

Archaeologists have discovered Europe's oldest civilisation, a network of dozens of temples, 2,000 years older than Stonehenge and the Pyramids.

More than 150 gigantic monuments have been located beneath the fields and cities of modern-day Germany, Austria

and Slovakia. They were built 7,000 years ago, between 4800BC and 4600BC. Their discovery, revealed today by The Independent, will revolutionise the study of prehistoric Europe, where an appetite for monumental architecture was thought to have developed later than in Mesopotamia and Egypt.

In all, more than 150 temples have been identified. Constructed of earth and wood, they had ramparts and palisades that stretched for up to half a mile. They were built by a religious people who lived in communal longhouses up to 50 metres long, grouped around substantial villages. Evidence suggests their economy was based on cattle, sheep, goat and pig farming.

Their civilisation seems to have died out after about 200 years and the recent archaeological discoveries are so new that the temple building culture does not even have a name yet.

Excavations have been taking place over the past few years - and have triggered a re-evaluation of similar, though hitherto mostly undated, complexes identified from aerial photographs throughout central Europe.

Archaeologists are now beginning to suspect that hundreds of these very early monumental religious centres, each up to 150 metres across, were constructed across a 400-mile swath of land in what is now Austria, the

Czech Republic, Slovakia, and eastern Germany.

The most complex excavated so far - located inside the city of Dresden - consisted of an apparently sacred internal space surrounded by two palisades, three earthen banks and four ditches.

The monuments seem to be a phenomenon associated exclusively with a period of consolidation and growth that followed the initial establishment of farming cultures in the centre of the continent.

It is possible that the newly revealed early Neolithic monument phenomenon was the consequence of an increase in the size of - and competition between - emerging Neolithic tribal or pan-tribal groups, arguably Europe's earliest mini-states.

After a relatively brief period - perhaps just one or two hundred years - either the need or the socio-political ability to build them disappeared, and monuments of this scale were not built again until the Middle Bronze Age, 3,000 years later. Why this monumental culture collapsed is a mystery.

The archaeological investigation into these vast Stone Age temples over the past three years has also revealed several other mysteries. First, each complex was only used for a few generations - perhaps 100 years maximum. Second, the central sacred area was nearly always the same size, about a third of a hectare. Third, each circular enclosure ditch - irrespective of diameter - involved the removal of the same volume of earth. In other words, the builders reduced the depth and/or width of each ditch in inverse proportion to its diameter, so as to always keep volume (and thus time spent) constant.

Archaeologists are speculating that this may have been in order to allow each earthwork to be dug by a set number of special status workers in a set number of days - perhaps to satisfy the ritual requirements of some sort of religious calendar.

The multiple bank, ditch and palisade systems "protecting" the inner space seem not to have been built for defensive purposes - and were instead probably designed to prevent ordinary tribespeople from seeing the sacred and presumably secret rituals which were performed in the "inner sanctum".

The investigation so far suggests that each religious complex was ritually decommissioned at the end of its life, with the ditches, each of which had been dug successively, being deliberately filled in.

"Our excavations have revealed the degree of monumental vision and sophistication used by these early farming communities to create Europe's first truly large scale earthwork complexes," said the senior archaeologist, Harald Staeuble of the Saxony state government's heritage department, who has been directing the archaeological investigations. Scientific investigations into the recently excavated material are taking place in Dresden.

The people who built the huge circular temples were the descendants of migrants who arrived many centuries earlier from the Danube plain in what is now northern Serbia and Hungary. The temple-builders were pastoralists, controlling large herds of cattle, sheep and goats as well as pigs. They made tools of stone, bone and wood, and small ceramic statues of humans and animals. They manufactured substantial amounts of geometrically decorated pottery, and they lived in large longhouses in substantial villages.

One village complex and temple at Aythra, near Leipzig, covers an area of 25 hectares. Two hundred longhouses have been found there. The population would have been up to 300 people living in a highly organised settlement of 15 to 20 very large communal buildings.





Archaeologists Find Hoard of Celtic Coins

Associated Press
Fri Jun 3, 10:43 AM ET

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands - Archaeologists have uncovered 17 ancient Celtic coins in a field in the south of the Netherlands, the first hoard of such coins found in the country.

Amsterdam's Free University excavated the site in April and will display the coins, which are made of silver and mixed with copper and gold, in the Limburgs Museum in the city of Venlo on Saturday.

They are estimated to date from 20-50 B.C., shortly after Julius Caesar began the Roman conquest of the region.

Leaders of local Germanic tribes "probably used these coins to reward their followers for loyalty," researchers said.

Similar finds have been made in neighboring Belgium and Germany.



The Triumph of an Ordinary Tree

By William Bryant Logan, William Bryant Logan is a certified arborist and the author of "Oak: The Frame of Civilization," which will be published next month by W.W. Norton.
Copyright 2005 Los Angeles Times
May 30, 2005

Trees are the tallest, the most massive and the longest-lived creatures on Earth. But oaks hold none of the records. The oak is not the tallest tree. That distinction belongs to a redwood in Northern California, which tops out at about 368 feet, easily twice as tall as the tallest oak. Neither is the oak the most massive tree. That honor is held, if you wish, by the General Sherman sequoia in Kings Canyon National Park, weighing in at about 2,000 tons, though if you are thinking genetically, the record may instead be held by a clonal aspen grove in Utah that covers more than 106 acres. The oak is not the oldest tree. The bristlecone pine holds that record, at something in excess of 4,867 years. The oak is not the strongest tree. Ebony, teak and many other tropical woods have greater strength under tension, compression and shear forces. And the oak is far from the fastest-growing tree. There is a species of albizia in Malaysia that can grow more than an inch each day; an oak is lucky to do a foot each year. Any old maple, pine, poplar or eucalyptus can easily outrun the oak.

So what is so special about oaks? Nothing at all.

Then why are oaks everywhere? Why can you go from Massachusetts to Mexico City, from the Yucatan to British Columbia, from the vale of Kashmir to Cadiz, from the Atlas Mountains to the fjords of Norway, from Borneo to Hokkaido, and never run out of abundant, native oak?

Exactly because oaks are not special. Blue jays feed on the oak and in return carry acorns far afield. Some oaks graft roots beneath the ground, so the grove offers mutual support to its members. Oaks themselves hybridize freely, so a new habitat is likely to find an altered oak to live there.

Consider, by contrast, the chambered nautilus, that outsized, tiger-striped mollusk that moves from room to room each year inside its growing shell. The nautilus was once part of a diverse genus that could live all over the ocean, but then it began to specialize, until at last it can live only in one tiny niche.

But the oaks have never sought a niche. "Oaks have been so successful exactly because there is no reason that they are," Cornell University taxonomist Kevin Nixon said. "Restricted distribution happens because there is just one reason for a creature's success." This is a tantalizing idea. The persistent, the common, the various, the adaptable is valuable in itself. The oak's distinction is its insistence and its flexibility. It specializes in not specializing.

And indeed, although the biggest, fastest-growing, strongest or oldest of trees attract their share of awe and appreciation, no tree has been anywhere near as storied or as useful around the world as the oak.

In the Bible, Abraham met the angels under an oak. The oaks of Dodona in ancient Greece spoke oracles. The oak carried Vikings to Vinland, and with oak ships, the new European nations knit the globe. Shakyamuni, the name of the historical Buddha, means "the sage of the oak tree people." The word "druid" means "possessing oak knowledge."



The tree champions are well described as niche holders: The giant redwood can survive only on a cool, fogbound band of temperate coast. The ancient bristlecone pine grows only on one high mountain ridge, where no pest can survive long enough to attack it. Ebony needs great heat, lots of water and little variation in temperature to make its strong, flexible, durable wood. None of these record trees thrive in the middle of the world, throughout the temperate zone, where the unpredictable is commonplace.

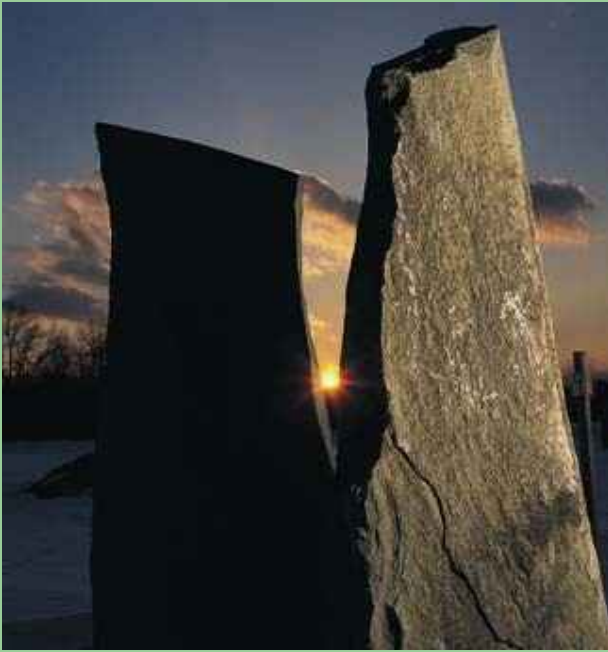
A great oak story concerns Milo of Croton. He was known as the strongest man in ancient Greece. Armies were said to have fled when they saw him coming. When he was hungry, he killed an ox with a single blow and ate it on the spot. One evening, Milo was out walking in the woods when he saw an old oak. The woodcutters had got their wedges into a crack in the tree but had left the rest of the work for the next day.

Milo decided he would finish the job. He thrust his massive hands into the crack to pull the tree apart. The wedges fell out. The trunk clapped shut on his hands, and he could not pull them out. Later that night, the wolves found him.

The biggest, best and fastest met his end because he thought himself more capable than the common oak, one of thousands just like it stretching as far as the eye can see.



**WITNESS THE SUMMER SOLSTICE AT THE UMASS
SUNWHEEL**



SPECIAL EVENT: FULL MOON at the southern limit!

GATHERING TIMES:

TUESDAY June 21, 2005

Sunrise at 5:00 a.m.

Sunset at 7:30 p.m.

Southernmost Full Moonrise at 8:45 p.m.

WEDNESDAY June 22, 2005

Southernmost Full Moonset at 4:15 a.m.

Sunrise at 5:00 a.m.

Sunset at 7:30 p.m.

Members of the University community and the general public are invited to witness the passing of the seasons by joining Dr. Judith Young of the U.Mass. Dept. of Astronomy to watch the Sun rise and set over the tall standing stones in the UMass Sunwheel for the upcoming SUMMER SOLSTICE. Visitors for the sunrise viewing should arrive at 5:00 a.m., and visitors for the sunset viewing should arrive at 7:30 p.m. The sunrise and sunset events will be held on both Tuesday & Wednesday, June 21 and 22, 2005.

Visitors interested in the Full Moon will have a special treat in store, as the Moon reaches the peak of its 18.6-year cycle. Following the sunset on June 21, the Full Moon will rise in its southernmost direction over the Southern Moonrise stone in the Sunwheel (around 8:45 p.m.). Early the next morning, shortly after 4:15 a.m. on June 22, the Full Moon will set in its southernmost direction over the Southern Moonset stone in the Sunwheel. The rising and setting of the Full Moon over the Southern (and Northern) Moonstones in the Sunwheel occurs every 18.6 years, and can be witnessed this summer for the first time since the building of the Sunwheel in 1997.

For those interested in learning about the sky, there will be a presentation which explains the significance of the solstices and the equinoxes, the cause of the seasons, the annual cycle in the Sun's position in the sky, the phases of the Moon, the 18.6-year cycle of the Moon and its observable consequences, and the story of building the Sunwheel. Bring your questions, your curiosity, insect repellent, and be prepared for cool temperatures when the Sun is down. Visitors are also welcome to bring lawn chairs or blankets to sit on. A \$3 donation is requested to help with the cost of stone pathworks and exhibit expansion which are planned for the Sunwheel. Sunwheel T-shirts and sweatshirts will also be available for purchase.

At the time of the summer solstice, when the days are longest and the nights are shortest, the Sun rises and sets at its most northerly azimuth, over the tallest stones in the Sunwheel. The word 'solstice' means standstill, and refers to the fact that at solstice, the Sun appears to rise and set in the same direction for over a week. Even though the instant when the Sun is most northerly is on June 21 @ 2:46 a.m. EDT, visitors will be able to see the Sun rising and setting over the summer solstice stones from about June 17-26. The astronomical cause of the Sun's standstill is one of the topics which will be explained during the solstice gatherings.

The UMass Sunwheel is located south of Alumni Stadium, just off Rocky Hill Road. The Sunwheel can be easily reached from the center of Amherst, following Amity St. to the west, on the right hand side of the road about 1/4 mile after crossing University Drive. In the event of rain, the gatherings will be cancelled, and visitors are encouraged to visit the Sunwheel on their own.

For more information on the UMass Sunwheel, visit the web site at <http://www.umass.edu/sunwheel>



A Druid Missal-Any

Summer Solstice, the longest day of the year, will take place on June 20th at 11:46 p.m. Pacific Daylight Savings Time. Poison Oak Grove celebrations will be on Sunday, June 26th at solarnoon, 1 p.m.

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

A Druid Missal-Any
P.O. Box 406
Canyon, CA 94516

Please note the new mailing address!

E-Mail: poppinjay@earthlink.net

This is the end of the Summer Solstice Issue



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Webmastered by Mike Scharding