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imelc, imelc is one of the major high days of the Druids. A pastoral people, this holiday marks the first births of lambs and the lactation of the ewes. It is the end of "black January" and we are past the bottom of the year. It is clear, now, that the light and fertility invoked at the Solstice is indeed returning. This festival is presided over by Bride, (Bridget) as Lugh presided over Lughnasadh at the opposite point of the year. Bride and Lugh are

poles, complementary figures, who balance each other in the Celtic system of male/female checks and balances. Though a patrilinear society the Celtic was less male dominated than our own has been, and certainly less patriarchal than the Middle Eastern or Mediterranean societies of the time, or than the Christian society that replaced it.

Bride is the goddess of the hearth and of fire, the inspirer of craftsmen and poets. Her ensigns are the fire essence and the rays of the Sun. Though a Celtic goddess, and associated with the fire sacrifice, a rite not used by pre-Celtic peoples, Bride, in England and Scotland, has absorbed many elements of the local, pre-Celtic Earth goddesses. This, her time of the year, is associated with the visiting of strings and the circumambulation of wells and sacred stones, with the thawing of the streams and the beginning of the year's fishing. The rites of wells and stones may be older fragments of Megalithic religious conceptions. Certainly the stone circles and cairns and the rite of circumambulation, predate the Celtic arrival. Some of the oldest stone circles and altars are found in Mesopotamia and South West Asia, so it is conceivable that the Celts may have brought some of the rounding rites with them from the Indo-European homeland, as well as by having been influenced by these Megalithic rituals, which reached their greatest heights in Western Gaul and Britain, of the pre-Celtic peoples that they encountered on the migrations westward.

John L. Smith, writing in 1780, in *Gaelic Antiquities*, has this to say of circumambulation rites still being practiced by local peasants and attributed to "the old Druids." "...that at the thawing time, the supplicant should go, upon three occasions, to a certain well or spring, and there bath himself three times; or make three journeys to some ancient stone, and there pour the new water out upon it and go three times around it in the deiseal direction" (from East to West). The classic writer, Pliny, ascribes a similar ritual to the Druid rites of healing. He records that the Druids prescribed this rightwise circumambulation of stones and triplicate bathing in the newly thawed water, as part of their treatment for mental disorders or lingering internal complaints.



Bride's function as goddess of fire and the hearth are purely Celtic characteristics. The prominence of the Sun and of fire symbolism, and the fire sacrifice are uniquely Indo-European, as contrasted with the rites of earlier peoples. They mark a shift from the Neolithic and early Megalithic concern with earth's fertility and continuance, to the importance of the regularly recurring cycles of the Heavens, characteristic of the Indo-European religions. Extrapolating from those sacred stone and cairn beliefs that persisted into nearly modern times, it is found that when the divine spirit is felt to reside in the stone, or cairn, which is an embodiment of Earth and a concentration of it, the offering is poured over the sacred stone, or buried within the circle or cairn. Evidence of both these practices have been found connected with Stone Henge. However, fire sacrifice and solar symbolism is connected with a conception of a usually anthropomorphic deity living at a distance, in the sky, as with Taranis of the Celts, or in an Other World, as with Bride, Fire, then so much like the sun in warmth, is conceived as a connecting link to these deities, as the smoke and the offering rise and disappear. Though the Celts shared with the pre-Celtic peoples buried and other forms of sacrifice, they brought with them this idea of the fire sacrifice in which fire and smoke ascend and carry the offering and the prayers to the sky dwelling or distant deity. A tower or cloud of fire is sometimes used in Irish lore as a symbol for Bride. This association continued right down to her co-option by the Christian church, as "Saint" Bridget, when, according to the hegemony, a pillar of fire appeared over her head at this young girl's investiture into holy orders.

By Emmon Bodfish, reprinted from *A Druid Missal-Any*, Oimelc 1983.



News of the Groves



For the [Full Grove Directory](#)



Digitalis Grove: News from Arlington, VA

All is in Chaos in this Grove as the forces of Loki reign supreme before my departure to Asia next month. Services are unlikely to happen, e-mail is not likely to be answered quickly, and I tend to drool with a blank expression when faced with a task more complicated than tying my shoelaces. It is hoped that by the Equinox, balance in my life will be restored and time will be found for patently Druidic pursuits, such as the Mission-ary Impossible column and my presence on the conferences. Fear not, just as the sun returns from the south, Mike to will reappear to plaque you with odd news and bad puns, some hopefully enlightening as well.

Your Sibling in the Mother,
Mike the FoOl



Rockspray Proto-Grove: News from Indiana

Its never to cold to go outside and enjoy Mother Earth, at least for short trips. For Yule we gathered with friends and celebrated with several religions such as Asatru, general Pagan, Christian, and of course Druid. We continue to meet once a week however these are more of gatherings than specific grove meetings.

Matt

Rockspray proto-Grove
Fort Wayne, IN



Moose Breechcloth Proto-Grove: News From Minnesota

Ohhhhh...the weather outside is frightful...but the campfire...just popped a burning ash into my lap.

Wow...I didn't know polar fleece burned like that.

Such is the trials of winter camping.

Another year...another pair of singed polar fleece pants. Yep...been winter camping like the lunatics we are. Now if we would only get some more snow, we could go snowshoeing and dogsledding.

Seasonal salutations siblings!

I trust we all survived the holidays? Yet another set of holidays, and the succubus-in-law lives to snipe another day. I'm losing my touch.

In other news, my Polar Bear Plunge for Special Olympics Minnesota was this past weekend. The pledges I collected brought in about \$200 for Minnesota Special Olympic athletes. The temperature was a balmy 1 below zero, with a 7 below zero windchill at plunge time. The water temperature was, of course, 33 degrees. There was a huge group of plungers this year...early numbers are saying approximately 370 folks jumped into White Bear Lake this year. This was my sixth year doing the plunge. And I'll be back again next year.



For those of you in warmer zones who are questioning whether or not you'd have to be crazy to jump into a frozen lake in Minnesota in January...the answer is...DUH! It's Minnesota in January. There is something very very wrong with us! BUT! All the money raised goes to charity, and you'd be hard pressed to find a more noble cause than doing it for Special Olympics. Our White Bear Lake group averages \$60,000 - \$70,000 per year in pledges. It's a good thing. My \$200 in pledges obviously doesn't make me a major player in the Polar Plunge realm. But I don't get company matches from my employer. Some folks do. Some local sheriff brought in \$10,000 in pledges by himself for the plunge. Maybe some day I'll get to that level.

Those who clear the \$5,000 level have an opportunity to do the "Super Plunge" in Rochester, MN here in a couple of weeks. They plunge once an hour...for 24 hours straight. It takes a lot of sand to be a "Super Plunger."

I'd do it in a minute.

So if any of you have \$5,000 sitting around burning a hole in your pocket, and you need one dilly of a tax write-off....here's your opportunity. Send me to the "Super Plunge."

Lou and I finally joined the Sierra Club. It was purely oversight. Busy busy busy. Why we haven't before now, I have no good answer for. We just hadn't. We'd been getting invitations to join for years...it was just always the "yeah...we need to do that...I'll fill it out and send it in tomorrow." Then it gets lost in the jumbles of mail, and it just never got sent in. Got another invite last week, and I just said "that's it." I sat down and cut the check on the spot.

Other news....hmmm....I finally figured out the best oil to gasoline ratio for my snowblower. Uhhhh...I have a

guy coming this week to fix my basement steps. I ordered a metal detector on-line tonight (ok...I'm a geek...leave me alone!). I've discovered that Iam's Hairball Remedy cat food seems to have cured my cat of her "squishies." And I finally threw the towel in on my plantar fasciitis, and went to an orthotist to have professional arch supports made for my shoes.

Aren't you glad you're so curious about what's going on here in Minnesota?

It may not be glamorous...but it's real.

Until the next installment.....

Gigawabamin nagutch,
and yours in the Mother,

Julie Ann and Lou



Order of the Mists Proto-Grove: News from Arizona

Nos Calan Gwanwyn greetings to all from Northern Arizona!

Yes, it has been bitterly cold up here, ranging in the 40s/ 50s during the days and in the low teens at night. We've had a bit of snow to frost the edges of the landscape, but, alas, not near enough to help with the drought.

Granted, we don't get out as much in the frigid weather, but still do our best to get out and enjoy the beauty of the season, if naught more than a casual drive along the backroads. The spattering of snow against the red stone hills, topped by a brilliant blue sky, framed on the sides by flocked junipers, is quite the beautiful sight. Elk foraging the grass by the roadside are a common occurrence.

Yule and Hogmanay were quiet, it being just Anna and myself around. We did a simple, quiet ceremony on Midwinters, and stayed at home for New Years. With the chilly weather, our indoor altar gets quite the workout, yet we always share a bit of something, leaving it outside for the Gods.

Well, Imbolc blessings to all!

In the Mother's service,

Tully Reill
Order of the Mists Protogrove
Northern Arizona



Sierra Madrone Grove: News from California

We at the Sierra Madrone Grove have been busy. Our Yule Ritual was a success and we drew in around 20 people. Our Imbolc Ritual is going to be mostly chants and songs, in the spirit of Brigid, the Patron of Bards. We are drawing quite a few people to us lately, and we have seen our membership grow steadily.

Peace of the coming Spring!

Sean mac Dhomhnuill
Arch-Druid
Sierra Madrone Grove



Duir De Danu Grove: News from California

Well, I'm doing a lot of reading and writing. I just started a vampire novel. Writing it, not reading it, although I am doing a bit of reading in the field of vampires, also watching movies about vampires. Darren Lochinvar is researching and writing short papers about prominent Free Masons to deliver at his Lodge. MaDagda, our esteemed Arch Druid, is painting pictures. He's moved from strictly landscapes to rendering the human form, most of them female. If you want a portrait done, email him at cinnabarjones@hotmail.com. I'm sure that between the two of you some kind of arrangement can be worked out.

Tegwedd ShadowDancer Co-Arch Druid of Duir de Danu Grove, NRDNA



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

As you know I attend a monthly shamanic practice circle and have individual sessions with the leader of the circle. Ironically the feeling I get from the circles are very similar to the ones from the grove services Emmon led. Whereas the leader is not a druid, though he does have Irish and Welsh blood and did practice paganism at one time, and other than Celtic history, mythology, language, and folklore (oh is that all?) what he knows and teaches in terms of "esoteric" and shamanic knowledge is also similar to what I was studying with Emmon back in the late 80s, early 90s. So, I am able to continue my studies with Emmon in absentia. That said I got a query from the leader a few weeks ago. He had had a dream about an offering shaft and did an internet search about the tradition. He ended up finding something I wrote (in the Missal-Any!) about planting the trees at the grove and how the altar and the offering shaft are next. Talk about "coincidence!" (There is no coincidence in shamanism or according to Jung it is called synchronicity.) I met with him and shared information about Iron Age offering shafts as well as the history and use of the grove's offering shaft that dates back to the Live Oak years.

January has been another busy month meeting new druids. The Arch Druid met with Jeffrey Sommer, a long-time member and Third Order in the RDNA, who took over running the Berkeley Grove (now Tuatha De Danann Grove) from Isaac when he moved to the Midwest. We caught up on old times, of days before this druid even knew about the RDNA. As his grove is currently inactive he would like to come to Poison Oak Grove's services. We also had a visiting druid from ADF. She is currently working on their Dedicant's Program. Liking what she read about the RDNA, its sense of humor and play about life and religion (what else is there?), and that the grove is active, she was interested in attending a service. I found out it would be her first druid service (no pressure, none at all) and wanted it to be representative of the kind work that we do. It turned out to be a lovely day for a service. The meditation which started out about gratitude ended up becoming a bird meditation with the sounds of their calls all around us. We look forward to her future visits and the exchange of ideas and thoughts that another druid brings.



We Get Letters!

The article by Wade Baugher ("Celtic Consciousness and the Concept of Evil, or Is There a Celtic Hell?") in your Midwinter issue was top-notch.

I have only one complaint about the article: "Geasa" is not singular, and "geasas" is not a true Goidelic plural.

The modern Irish word "geis" is nominative-accusative singular and the nominative-accusative plural thereof is "geasa."

The modern Gaelic (formerly called "Scottish Gaelic") word "geas" is nominative-accusative singular and the nominative-accusative plural thereof is "geis."

The Old Irish word "geis" is nominative singular and the nominative plural thereof is "gessi" (I have also seen "gessa" given as the nominative plural for the Old Irish word "geis," but DIL doesn't give that as any form of 'geis,' so I'm not sure from where it comes; "geasa" is mentioned in DIL as a plural from the time of Early Modern Irish).

Aside from this concern, the article was really first-rate. I hope to see more articles of this calibre from Baugher in future issues of the Missal-Any.

Orddan ocus tocad duit,
Cromm? mac Nessa

<http://groups.msn.com/CromansGrove/whatsnew.msnw>



Inner Sight

By Celdwyn

Saint's Alive!

Bridget/Brede: Goddess or Saint?

When I was a child I found that I would always go to the local parish and speak with St. Bridget. Little did I know that my Celtic roots were calling me through the ancient goddess. Later when I walked the old sacred sites of Ireland, I discovered her shrine, nestled in the lowlands of County Kildare or Killdara (originally: Cill Dara, which means 'church of the oak'). I soon realized that I could not relate to the outward trappings and modern symbology of the Saint, but much preferred the depth and presence of the Goddess Brede herself. Shunning the hundreds of grotto candles, I sought out the stone well in the small courtyard that was sheltered by a larch, a cloudie tree which was tied with hundreds of strips of cloth (entreaties for healing from the goddess herself). There I sensed the internal power of presence that was as old as time, as fraught with primal energy as if the old druid rituals were lately enacted.

There are many legends and folklore surrounding Bridget (Brighid or Brede) in many cultures and traditions throughout the centuries. She was said to be a shield maiden, a protectress of Ireland, a prophetess and healer, a virgin nun comb bishop, and a druidess. Tales of Brede the Goddess annotate the legends of the Saint. Still, her genealogy and heritage were most interesting. Bridget, who was canonized by the Catholic Church in 453 C.E., was born to Dubhtheach, a Druid of KillDara and his bond-woman; and said to have

been raised on the Druid's Isle known as Iona. The legend of the Saint is now inextricably merged with the Goddess of the Sacred Flame of Kildare.

Brigid, extant several centuries earlier, was originally believed to have been a Sun Goddess, with rays of sunlight stemming from her forehead at birth. She was recognized as the Goddess of poetry and music, protector of warriors and inspiration to smiths, the Goddess of Child-bearing and foretelling, but was most often revered as the Goddess of hearths and Holy Wells. Both the saint and the goddess are seen to be a woman's goddess; her triple aspects of prophecy, healing and inspiration bounded by love. Her festival at Imbolc (also known as Candlemas) is likewise seen to be a maiden's celebration of the conquering of Spring over Winter, as the crone aspect of Cailleach diminishes; hence, Winter gives way to the emergence of spring through her maiden aspect, Brigid.

As I stood looking down at the well, I felt myself drift back to my childhood. I remembered the power and presence of the Saint, presiding alone to one side of the Christian alter. I realized somehow that my life too had been shaped by Bridget as much as Brigid; that the physical aspect of the phenomenal world was somehow merged with the prophetic, and that what I could not see clearly through one aspect, I saw quite lucidly through the other. So is the goddess saint or druid-protectress?

Rituals around the pagan world laud her as the daughter of Dagda, (who was himself The Good God, the son of Danu, who was the Mother of all things). She is known as the Radiant Arrow of Flame, the White Lady of Peace, and the inspirer of hope, kindling the eternal flame of life. A White wand of Burch or willow symbolizing Brigid in her healing aspect is often used in her ritual, sometimes entwined by a white snake representing the birth of spring as the serpent emerges from the depths of the earth. New spring flowers such as snowdrops adorn her ritual along with 19 candles and water from sacred wells. Celtic women traditionally call her forth on Embolc/Candlemas, laying a doll dressed all in white with a green mantel and many bright beads, to bring forth the Goddess's blessing and protection for the household for the year. (The Bridie doll is kept all year long in a place of honor, usually near the hearth.)

Even now, I can remember the feeling of the shrine's courtyard, the almost soundless flowing of the waters of the well, the iron gates and the larch, but mostly I recall the intangible feeling of the air, the brightness of spirit that surrounded the sacred site. This is a gift that I have received from the Lady, above and beyond my own mortal talents. So does it truly matter how we perceive the ineffable? I think not! Only that we can recognize the sacred in the mundane; that is all that is required of any of us as we make our journey.

Bridget/Brigid.:

Symbols: flame, water, sword or anvil; white snake, white hind, white fox, and white swan. Her colors are: white for purity (as the snow before spring and all dairy products), red for the hearth-fire, blue or green which symbolizes her cloak and its guardianship of Ireland. Sacred trees: willow, oak and the apple. Sacred device: white wand made of Burch or willow. Sacred numbers are 3, for her power as a triple goddess of inspiration, healing and prophecy; and 19 for the 19 virgins who were said to guard her perpetual flame. Some of her most predominant accolades are: Muire na nGael "Mary of the Gael"; "milkmaid of Jesus Christ; midwife to the Christ-child; Bride of the Mantle; Bride of the Isles; bonny Brede; patroness of healing and fertility; patroness of smithcraft and martial arts; mother to craftsmen and farmers; protectress of childbeds; patroness to the Druids, as well as warriors (in her fiery aspect of Briga).

Candlemas, the festival of St. Bridget celebrated on Feb second, blesses candles and thus brings her protection to home and hearth. This is the time of the quickening of the goddess, the time of growth and new life.

*"Brede, Brede, tar gys my thie tar dyn thie ayms nocht.
Foshil jee yn dorrays da Brede, as lhig da Brede e heet staight."*

(Bridget, Bridget, come to my house, come to my house tonight.
Open the door for Bridget, let Bridget come in"
-Manx Invocation.

In creating this essay, I found lots of wonderful sources that increased my own awareness of Brede/Bridget, two of the most interesting were:

Druidry.org/obod/festivals/imbolc/ - 74k
unc.edu/celtic/catalogue/femdruids/Bridget.html

I wish you blessings of light and sacred waters in this new year of Spring!

Celdwyn, OBOD
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The Celts

Edition 5.0,
By Cromm? mac Nessa
Part One

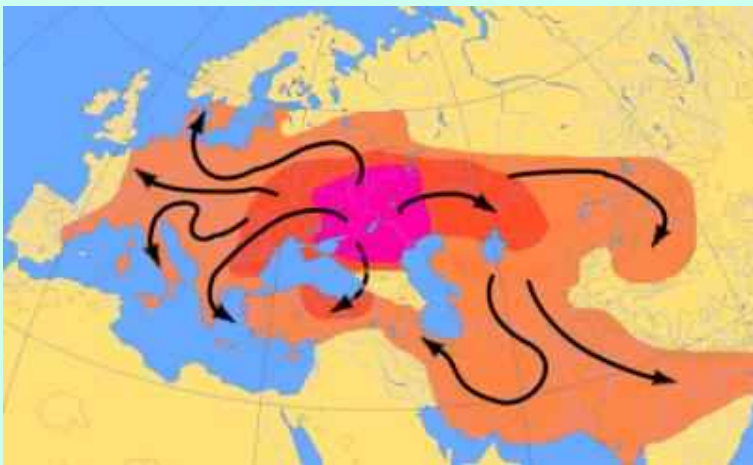
Origins and Spread

The origins of the people who became the Celts are lost in the mists of time, but we can give some fairly reliable ideas as to how they came to be. I make no pretence of infallibility, nor of being the sole arbiter of what is and what is not "Celtic." However, the following article is the product of my own conclusions about Celtic history, identity, and cultural context, after much research into past scholarship and keeping up with the latest findings in the fields concerned with the term "Celtic." Much of what is said here is based on scholarship by Linguists, Archaeologists, Folklorists, Antiquarians, and Historians. Much is based on the Literature of the Celtic cultures. Some is based on learned guesses. Some is opinion. There may be factual errors contained herein. However, I have endeavoured to make it consistent with itself and to see that it coheres with reality, rather than subjective fantasy or an imperialistic agenda, which are blights afflicting so many claims about "the Celts." As my concern is primarily with the northern Ivernian groups of Celts in Ireland and their migration to, and influence upon, Scotland, this work may tend to focus upon origins, history, and culture of those tribal groups known as Darini, Robogdii, Voluntii, Ulaid, D? Riata, and D? Riada. Other Celtic cultures are not intentionally ignored in this article, but may be discussed primarily in passing, rather than in the depth they deserve.

The first thing which should be pointed out is that "Celtic" is not a "racial" term. It has nothing whatever to do with "blood" or genetics. The fact that a large portion of my Ancestry involves people who were Celts of one sort or another (my Ancestry includes Scottish, Irish, Welsh, and Breton antecedents, and possibly Manx and Cornish also; it also includes non-Celtic antecedents) does not make me a Celt. "Celtic" is a cultural term, as distinct from a "racial" term, and this will become apparent in the course of this discussion. As language is one of the primary vehicles of culture, and one of the keys to any given culture's worldview, language figures heavily into what it means to be "a Celt." However, mere fluency in a Celtic language does not make one "a Celt," in spite of claims by linguists to the contrary.



Although "Celtic" was a term first coined by linguists to refer to a branch of the Indo-European language family, it has antecedents which are not restricted to linguistic context (the ancient Greeks referred to a people they called "Keltoi," and Julius Caesar notes that the people whom the Romans called "Galli" or Gauls called themselves "Celtae"). In addition, the reasons behind the relation between the Celtic languages indicate connections which embrace culture as a whole, and not merely the linguistic aspects of culture; the term has also been used in the context of Archaeology to refer to remains of material culture which exhibit certain artistic characteristics. Language is only one part of culture, though an important one to be sure. There are, however, cultural values involved in being "a Celt" (which may vary slightly from one Celtic culture to another), which do not always inhere in a person simply by virtue of his or her ability to speak the language of a particular Celtic culture. There are also cosmological, ontological, and metaphysical perspectives which are salient characteristics of a Celtic worldview (note that by "metaphysical" here I do not mean to refer to New Age concepts of "Magic," but rather to ideas connected with Metaphysics, that branch of the academic discipline of Philosophy which deals with questions about the nature of Reality, such as "one or many," "material or spiritual," "universal or particular," etc; a brief study of the history of early Greek Philosophy or early Hindustani Philosophy will explain what I mean in greater detail than I have time for in the present article, though many of these questions, it should be noted, have historically been posed as false dilemmata). Language can be studied and taught in a purely clinical, disinterested, scientific manner, which takes little account of the cultural worldview of which the language is a part. However, there is no denying that language is a vital part of Celtic cultures. This is something which certain authors such as Simon James should note well; attempts to deny any meaning to "Celtic," or to assert that it is a purely modern construct, need to explain the virtual identity between the Brittonic language (from which the modern Brythonic Celtic languages descend) and the Gaulish language. "Celto-skeptic" arguments are far too weak to be taken seriously by those familiar with the linguistic evidence. The point is that "Celtic" is a cultural designation, and if applied to something apart from the cultural context, it has no meaning other than preposterous and presumptuous blather. Due to the importance of linguistic matters in connection with culture, I will be emphasizing language to some extent in connection with the idea of Celtic identity in this article, but as I have noted, there is much more to Celtic identity than that.



The language from which the Celtic languages arose, called "Proto-Indo-European" (often abbreviated as PIE), itself seems to have arisen first in the central Eurasian steppes in the Bronze Age (the Bronze Age began *circa* 4000-3000 BCE and ended shortly before 1000 BCE). These tribes began to migrate, and some went to the West and occupied areas of present-day Europe, where they diversified into distinct cultures, including that of the Celts. "By the iron age they [the Celts] were well disseminated into the lands we now know as Celtic." (Barry Cunliffe, "Introduction," in Nora Chadwick, *The Celts*.)

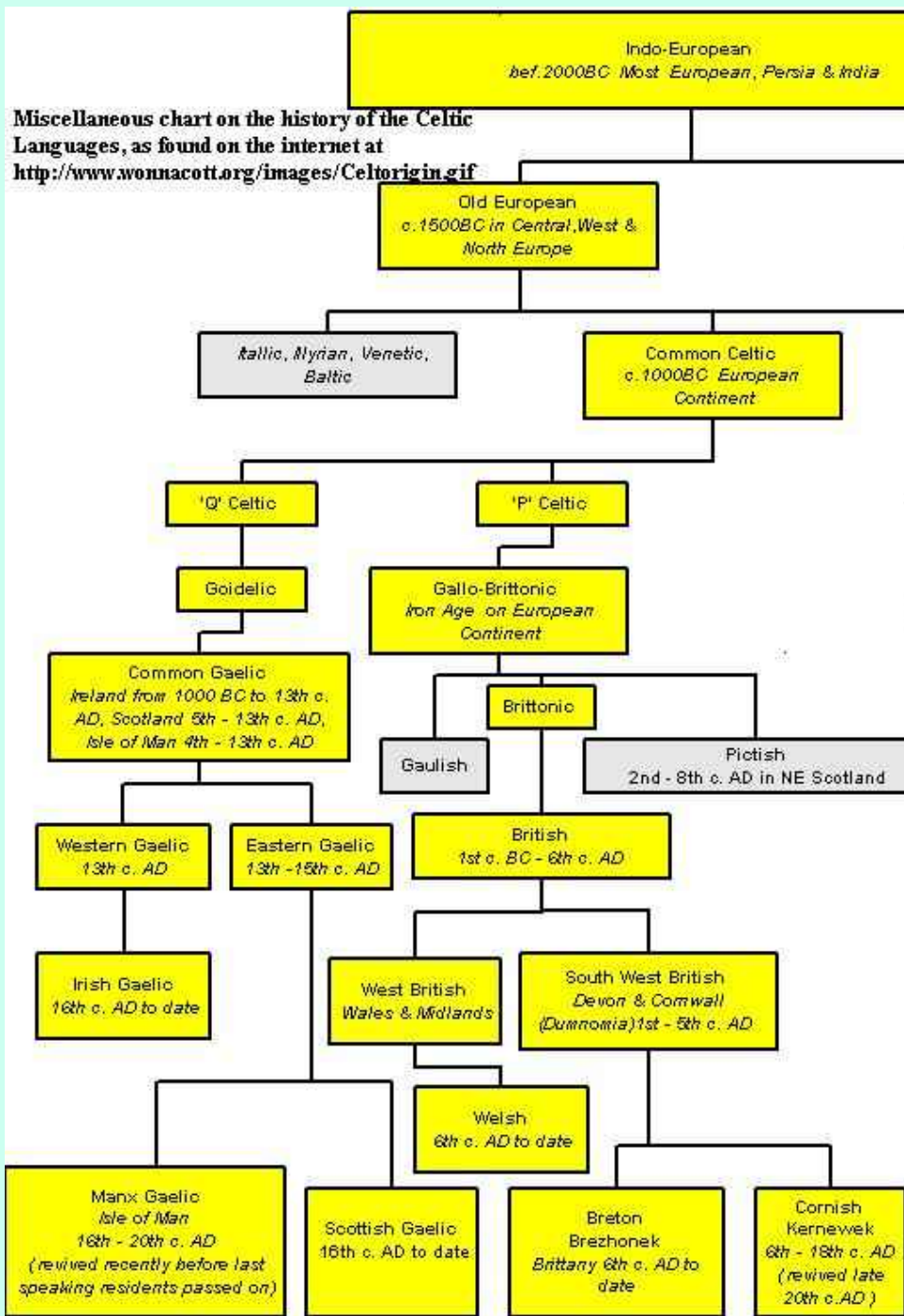
Due to the coverage the finds received and the sensationalism initially connected to that coverage, mention should be made of burials found in the Tarim Basin of China of people with tartan-like clothing and obviously Indo-European features, and wall paintings of people with red hair and "priestesses" with pointed headresses. (Vide, e.g.: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/transcripts/2502chinamum.html>) These date from the Bronze and Iron Ages, and DNA evidence has in fact linked some of them to European populations. However, these are now believed to have been antecedents of the Tocharians (an Indo-European people known to have lived in the region, who were not Celtic). See further *The Tarim Mummies*, by Victor Mair and J.P. Mallory (Thames & Hudson, 2000); I am indebted to Christopher Gwinn for this reference. Red hair is not as characteristic of Celtic peoples as stereotypes would have it, and plaid is not unique to Celtic peoples; superficial similarities notwithstanding, there is no evidence whatsoever that the remains in question are those of "Celts," and quite a lot of evidence that they are those of Tocharians.

The first Celtic culture is said to have arisen during the Iron Age, in Hallstatt, Austria, and the earliest Celtic artifacts are from this culture, the Hallstatt Culture (*circa* 900 - *circa* 500 BCE). (Barry Cunliffe, *The Ancient Celts*) The Hallstatt Culture seems to have emerged from the Urnfield society, which goes back to *circa* 1300 BCE.

The forebears of the Celts were nomadic people whose culture was very much connected with the horse. They were horsemen and possibly charioteers of the steppes, but the chariot did not come into its height among Celtic warriors until the La Tène period, long after the Celts reached Europe. In fact, the very words 'car' and 'chariot' and 'carriage' and such derive from a primitive Celtic root. (Timothy R. Roberts, *The Celts in Myth and Legend*)

The last period of the Hallstatt culture (the Hallstatt C period) was around 720-600 BCE (Cunliffe in Chadwick, op. cit.), and the next Celtic culture arose in La Tène, Switzerland, about the time of the end of the Hallstatt era. The La Tène culture (*circa* 500 BCE - *circa* 15 BCE) is typically described in terms of its art and artistic motifs.

As time went on, the Celtic languages spread into Gaul (modern-day Brittany, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Monaco) and Iberia (modern-day Spain and Portugal), and some Gaulish mercenaries were invited into what is now Turkey, where they settled and became the Galatians. In connection with the Galatian Celts, it is noteworthy that Strabo mentions a place in Galatia where the Galatian council met, which was named "Drunemeton." This toponym looks to be derived from Gaulish "Dru-uis" + "Nemeton" (= "Druid" + "Sanctuary"); while there are other possibilities for the first element in the name "Drunemeton" (including words meaning "oak," "wood," "wooden," "solid," "steadfast," and "true," all from PIE **deru-*, which is also the source of the first element of the Gaulish word "Dru-uis"), the possibility that the name means "Druid Sanctuary" is enough to cast reasonable doubt on assertions that the Druidic Priesthood was not universal amongst the Celtic peoples (some have suggested that Druids were the Priesthood of the Gauls and the British and Irish Celts only, based on a supposed lack of evidence for their activities in other



the name means "Druid Sanctuary" is enough to cast reasonable doubt on assertions that the Druidic Priesthood was not universal amongst the Celtic peoples (some have suggested that Druids were the Priesthood of the Gauls and the British and Irish Celts only, based on a supposed lack of evidence for their activities in other

Celtic cultures). There are of course other hints of the universality of the Druidic Priesthood amongst Celtic cultures as well, and other reasons why denials of such universality should be questioned, but further discussion of these here would be a diversion which is outside the scope of this present article (however, I should point out that, although I myself am a Draoidh, I have no vested interest in demonstrating a supposed universality of our Priesthood amongst the Celtic cultures at any point in time; I simply find the suggestion otherwise to have little or no support from the evidence, and I view it as another of the all-too-frequent attacks on Celtic identity which tend to come from people with their own vested interests in denigrating Celtic cultures and Celtic Heathen Sacred Tradition).

Finally the Celtic languages faced the English Channel. This was not the end of the influence of Celtic culture and language, however; indeed, some might say it was only the beginning, because it has been in the islands of Britain and Ireland that the Celtic languages and cultures have survived (and it is due to Brythonic Celtic migratory influx into Armorica from the island of Britain following the Anglo-Saxon invasions of the formerly Roman-occupied region of Britannia that there is any living Celtic language on the European Continental Mainland at all in the present time).

Celtic Influence on the British Isles

Traces of Celtic artifacts from both the Hallstatt and the La Tène periods are found in the British Isles, indicating trade by the Aboriginal Irish and British with the Celtic tribes on the continent, but the earliest British and Irish groups to adopt some form of Celtic language probably did so no earlier than about 800 BCE. These were the **Pretani** (or **Pritani**), or Cruithni (note that "Cruithni" is a Q-Celtic expression of the P-Celtic name "Pretani:" omitting the variable vowels found in the stem of the name, which could elide under various conditions, we are left with PRTN and the nominative plural ending I; in a Q-Celtic language, this would be expected to be something like QRTNI, which would have become CRTNI by the Old Irish period). These folk were sometimes called "**Picti**" (said to be Latin for "Painted Ones," from their custom of tattooing) by the Romans, and thus are most commonly referred to today by English-speaking persons as the "**Picts**." However, the name "Picti" may have been derived from a native name,



possibly related to the Aquitanian tribal name "Pictavi" or "Pictones." The "Pictavi" or "Pictones" were an Aquitanian tribe living south of the Liger in what is now the region of Poiteau-Charentes, and were antecedents of modern Basques. Whatever the source of the name "**Picti**," the Pretani were Brittonic Celts, in that they spoke a P-Celtic language, "brought from the Continent by Gallo-Brittonic settlers" (James MacKillop, *Dictionary of Celtic Mythology*, p. 324). When this dialect arrived in the British Isles, the aboriginal British and Irish were already there, and these non-Indo-European aborigines and Pretanic merchants, warriors, and eventual colonists influenced one another and intermarried (it should be noted that little if any archaeological or genetic evidence exists of large-scale invasion or migration by Celtic tribes from the Continent into Britain and Ireland at this early date, or any other date, but it is inconceivable that none of the traders from the Continent bothered to settle in Britain or Ireland, so there must have been some migration and intermarriage, however small). MacKillop notes (following Kenneth H. Jackson) that the **Pretani** also may have had a second language which was non-Indo-European with some Celtic vocabulary. This suggestion is only rational, in part because of the still largely undeciphered portions of "Pictish" carvings in the Ogham alphabet, but also because the Aboriginal people of Britain and Ireland were not Indo-European (and thus could not have *originally* spoken an Indo-European language), whereas all Celtic languages are obviously Indo-European in the bulk of their vocabulary (and their inflections/conjugations also show Indo-European derivation). The name "Britain" itself is derived from the name of the **Pretani**, and

the earliest surviving record that mentions Ireland and Britain without question as to their identity, made by the Greek navigator Pytheas, refers to the two main islands and their smaller island neighbours by the adjective "Pretannik?">." **The Pretanic culture arose in the British Isles between 800 and 500 BCE.** (C. Thomas Cairney, *Clans and Families of Ireland and Scotland - An Ethnography of the Gael AD 500 - 1750*)

Sometime between 500 and 100 BCE, another Brittonic Celtic culture, that of the ?ainn, likewise arose in Ireland and Britain, promoting La T?e culture in the British Isles, having superior iron weapons technology, their main residence being in Ireland. These "Ivernian" tribes are associated with the Fir Bolg in the politically-motivated pseudo-history (*Lebor Gab?a ?enn*) written by the F?i (see below). T.F. O'Rahilly (*Early Irish History and Mythology*, Dublin, 1946) argued on this basis and some other grounds (also particularly noteworthy in O'Rahilly's argument is the Name of Bolg, one of the most important Gods of this people) that the ?ainn were of the tribes of the Belgae (the identification of the Belgae with the Fir Bolg goes back to at least 1685 with Roderick O'Flaherty and his book *Ogygia*). Noteworthy in this connection is the variant spelling of Belgae as Bolgae in some of the classical sources. Indeed, there were Belgae in southwest Britain who could easily have been a remnant, though Roman history records that the Belgae in southwest Britain had only lately arrived thither from the Continent, and these seem to have had a still more sophisticated development of Celtic culture beyond the La T?e, so perhaps the ?ainn represent an earlier influence; O'Rahilly however argued that the Roman history has been misinterpreted and that the Belgae in southwest Britain had been there longer than most believe. MacKillop notes in his article on "?ainn" that noone has yet overturned O'Rahilly's views. However, in his article on "Belgae," he states "T.F. O'Rahilly's argument (1946) that the Belgae were identical with the Builg and ?ainn, early invaders of Ireland, is now rejected." He gives no explanation why this should be so, and all the arguments I have seen have failed to impress me, based as they are on archaeological artifacts which cannot (as O'Rahilly pointed out in anticipation of such objections) tell us anything about what Celtic language their makers spoke, especially since the artifacts in question date from a time before the Celts inscribed such artifacts. Unless the criticism has to do with O'Rahilly's use of the invasion model (popular in his time, and now fallen from favour, but hardly the main distinguishing feature of his position), I can see no reason for MacKillop stating that O'Rahilly's view on this matter is "now rejected." Other frameworks can be used in connection with O'Rahilly's ideas, as I have done in this article by putting the theory largely into the cultural diffusion model. Some scholars still favour O'Rahilly's ideas, in spite of claims by others to the contrary. No less a scholar than Alexei Kondratiev, though definitely not accepting all of O'Rahilly's theories, identifies the Fir Bolg with Belgic tribes in one of his essays ("Danu and Bile: The Primordial Parents?"). Adding to the apparently mixed messages in his *Dictionary of Celtic Mythology*, MacKillop also says, in his article on the "Builg:" "They were a division of the P-Celtic Belgae of Gaul and Britain. The Builg were also known as the ?ainn (latinized as Iverni or Ivernians). They also appear to be identical with the Fir Bolg... According to their own invasion legend, the heroic ancestor Lugaid came from Britain to conquer Ireland." MacKillop also points out that the Builg were an historical people and that they originally settled near what is now the city of Cork, which we know was the stomping-ground of those *Ivernians* known as the *Corcu Lo?de* (who, according to *Lebor Gab?a ?enn*, were said to be descended from Lugaid the son of D?re). I should note that "Iverni" (more accurately "Iuerni") is probably not a "latinization" of the name ?ainn, but is instead probably an earlier, Ivernian or Iuernian, form of the name. O'Rahilly also identified Cland Nemid (the "Children of Nemed," often referred to as Nemedians) with the ?ainn. Nemed was a mythical personage included in *Lebor Gab?a ?enn* as a legendary Ancestor (like M? mentioned below), and his name means "Holy One." In calling these two personages *M?* and *Nemed* "mythical," however, I do not necessarily mean to deny that they had actual existence, only that some elements of their stories are fantastic and incredible (this should not be taken to suggest that I disbelieve in what some might call "the supernatural"), and that legends and wonder-tales may have become attached to their hoary and honourable names which had no original connection therewith (ditto here), and that the superficial literality of the stories concerning them are of lesser importance than the deeper meanings of those stories (and again), but these things need to be pointed out, as there are still many folk involved in the study of Celtic Heathen Sacred Tradition who

seem quite willing to accept the Written Tradition literally and at face-value, and who have at times been as vehement in their defense of texts like *Lebor Gab?a ?enn* as any Protestant Fundamentalist has been in defense of the Bible; fortunately, however, *LG?/i>* does not claim to be inspired of the Gods, nor can there be any doubt that is an inaccurate representation of the traditions of the peoples of Ireland before the coming of Christianity, and so this tendency to bibliolatry (facticity from a Christian upbringing in many cases) can be fairly easily discouraged. There may have been an actual person Nemed, and there may have been an actual person Golam (*M? Esp?ne*), but our faith does not require belief in the literal existence of either man, nor in the often dubious literary claims connected with them in mythical pseudo-historical works like *LG?*(I do not believe that there is nothing of historical or doctrinal value in *LG?/i>*, only that its nature and the reason for its being should be kept in mind at all times when perusing the text). In the south the ?ainn were primarily represented by the Iuerni (this seems to have been the name used by Ptolemy's source for those who were later known as the ,i>Corcu Lo?de), while in the north, they were mostly represented by the Voluntii (Ptolemy's source was probably referring to the T?th which would later be known as the Ulaid, from whose name came C?ced Ulaid, the province of Ulster). Among the other northern ?ainn were the Robogdii (possibly antecedents of the D? Riata, whose descendants would go on to establish the kingdom of Scots in Alba centuries later) and the Darini (this would mean something like "the ones of D?re." D?re is the Ivernians' Chief God and Principal Ancestor, represented by a Bull, and called by assorted Names and Titles, including Bolg, Cromm, Cend, Sen, and others). From the name of an apparent Ancestral Goddess of the ?ainn (a Goddess known as ?iu in *Lebor Gab?a ?enn*, where She is said to be a Queen of the T?tha de Danand) comes the modern Irish name of Ireland, ?re.

For more information on the ?ainn, see Appendix 1 ("Ivernian Heritage: The ?ainn and their Legacy") in the GARR? BUILG Ivernian Heathen Revivalist Virtual Nemeton website (Appendix 1 is currently being revised; for the correct URL address, see this article on "The Celts" in the GARR? BUILG website after the final installment of the article "The Celts" is published in "A Druid Missal-Any," by which time I hope to have completed the latest edition of Appendix 1).

Another group of Celts seemingly came to the British Isles during the first century BCE and had influence in sundry places, including the eastern province of Ireland, Leinster, which gets its Irish name "C?ced Laigin" from these people, the Laigin. They themselves claimed to have been Gaulish and to have come to the British Isles from Armorica (present-day Breizh, also called "Bretagne" and "Brittany," and currently an occupied nation under French control). The Laigin were supposedly accompanied in their migration to Ireland by the Domnainn (probably P-Celtic tribes from Britain, the Dumnonii), whom some commentators connect with the Fir Bolg in the pseudo-history *Lebor Gab?a ?enn*, and the Gali?n (*Lebor Gab?a ?enn* refers to them as a branch of the Fir Bolg, so they and the Dumnonii may have allied with the ?ainn against the F?i; Kondratiev [op.cit.] connects them with Gauls). (Cairney, op. cit.)

The "F?i" (so called in their own language; this word is not related to the word "fianna," though confusion between the two words resulted in the word "Fenian" being used to describe not only stories of Fionn mac Cumhal and the Fianna, but at the same time to refer to the F?i the tales of Fionn and the Fianna should properly be called "Fianna?cht" tales) are those generally known as the Go?il (Goidels), called in their mythical pseudo-history, *Lebor Gab?a ?enn* (the Book of the Taking of Ireland), "Cland Miled" (the "Children of M?," this being "M? Esp?ne, a title meaning "Soldier of Spain"; the given name of this mythical personage was Golam, but most folk refer to him simply as M? Esp?ne, or even just M?), often referred to as "Milesians" (not to be confused with "the Ionian Milesians," viz., Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes, a trio of ancient Greek philosophers associated with the city-state of Miletos), which Sons of M?, so the tale goes, along with his widows, migrated to Ireland. How long ago the *Lebor Gab?a ?enn* says these Q-Celtic speakers came to prominence in Ireland is fanciful, as their influence began to rise only sometime in the first century BCE, following the arrival of the Laigin. (O'Rahilly, op. cit., Cairney, op. cit.)

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This is a work in progress and subsequent editions will be found in the GARRÁN BUILG™ website: <http://groups.msn.com/CromansGrove/whatsnew.msnw> and (eventually) in Crommán's forthcoming book.



Guidelines for Hospitals and Other Care Givers

Care of Pagan Patients

Part Two

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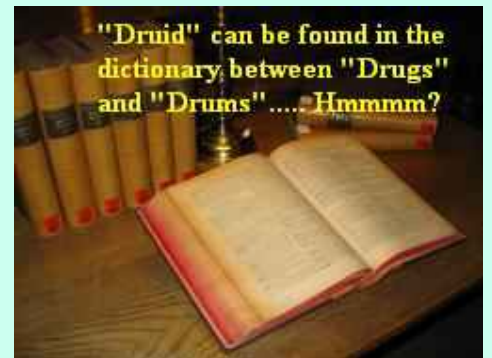
This is part two of the presentation *Druidess Ellen Evert Hopman* gave on Pagan patients for hospital chaplains at Baystate Hospital in Western Massachusetts. Due to the length of the piece it has been divided it up between the Yule and Oimelc issues of *A Druid Missal-Any*. Please note that it is really one document and is meant to be passed along to hospital chaplains in one piece.

* * *

What is a Druid Anyway? A Modern Druid's Perspective By Ellen Evert Hopman

Most Pagans, here in the US as in Europe, are Witches or Wiccans. There is still a lot of confusion as to what a modern "Druid" actually is. Please keep in mind that there are many different Druid Orders and as is the case with most Pagan groupings, no two Druids will see things in exactly the same way.

To further confuse matters there is a different focus and feel to American Druid Orders and English ones. I can only speak for myself, as an American Druid of the Order of the Whiteoak (Ord Na Darach Gile) (www.whiteoakdruids.org)



Who the Druids Were

"Gaine daughter of pure Gumor,
nurse of mead-loving Mide,

*surpassed all women though she was silent
she was learned and a seer and a chief Druid."*

(From The Metrical Dindsenchas, Gwynn translation, 1903)

There is plenty of evidence that women as well as men were Druids in ancient times. Druids presided at divinations and sacrifices and praised the Gods, but the primary task of all grades of Druids was to follow an intellectual path. The Druids were the learned class of the ancient Celts, analogous to the Brahmins of India.

Both Hindu and Celtic culture are derived from the same proto-Indo-European roots. The cast system of the Hindus and the cast system of the Celts were essentially the same; both were fluid, that is one could move up or down the social ladder depending on skill and learning (it was only in the 10th century that Hinduism "froze" its cast system a reaction to invaders from outside).

The Druid was analogous to the Brahmin, the warrior to the Kshatria. There was the producer class of farmers and craftsmen and finally the slaves who were analogous to the Hindu untouchables.

Among Druids there were specialists, it seems unlikely that every Druid was mistress of every Druidical function. Druids did not commit their knowledge to writing; important facts were memorized and passed down orally.

A Druid could be a Sencha, or historian for the tribe. They could be a Brehon, in which case they would have memorized volumes of Brehon Law making them eligible to be a lawyer, a judge, or an ambassador.

A Druid could also be a Scelaige, or keeper of myths and epics. These myths were recited at important occasions like weddings and births, at the onset of a major journey or a battle.

The Cainte was a master of magical chants, invocations and curses. They could banish or bless with a song. The Cruitime was a harpist who knew the magical uses of music, she was mistress of the "three kinds of music", laughing music (the sound of young men at play), crying music (the sound of a woman in the travails of childbirth), and sleeping music (the sound of which would put a person to sleep).

The Druid might be a Liaig, a doctor who used surgery, herbs and magic to heal, or a Deoghbaire, a cupbearer who knew the properties of intoxicating and hallucinogenic substances.

Further specialties included the Faith, or diviner, the Bard, who was a popular poet and singer, and the highest grade of Druid, the Fili, a sacred poet and diviner whose words were prophetic.

Like Sorcerers, Druids performed feats of magic in the service of the king or queen and in the service of the tribe.

"Then Mogh Roith said to Ceann M?: 'Bring me my poison-stone my hand-stone, my hundred-fighter, my destruction of my enemies.'

*This was brought to him and he began to praise it, and he proceeded to put a venomous spell on it..."
(Forbhais Droma D?hgh?re, Se? O'Duinn translation)*

Druids were the teachers of the sons and daughters of the nobility. It was their task to hand down from generation to generation the knowledge of sacred animals, trees, plants, stones and all the details of the landscape, its history and how each feature got its name, as well as the tribal laws and precedents.

In contrast to village Cunningmen and Wisewomen (Witches), who were counselors, midwives, magicians,

herbalists, and veterinarians for their community, the Druids advised and worked closely with the nobility. A king or queen was a person from the warrior class who had spent their entire life learning the arts of defense and war, who was then elevated to the "Nemed" or sacred class by means of an elaborate ritual.

Druids were hereditary members of the Nemed class who had spent their lives learning the laws. A king or queen had to have a Druid advisor by their side at all times so that they could rule according to precedent. The stories of Arthur and Merlin are a good illustration of this relationship.

The justice of the king was so important that it would determine whether strong and good-looking children would be born to the people and if the weather, crops and animals would prosper.

There is evidence that the Druids supervised at human sacrifices. However, there is no evidence of the type of wholesale immolation in wicker cages reported by Julius Caesar. It is well to remember that Caesar was attempting to paint the Druids in a lurid light in order to get funding from Rome to continue his military campaigns and further his personal political ambitions. It seems likely that prisoners of war and criminals were dispatched in much the same way as we do it today, after judgment and sentencing.

Who the Druids Were Not

The Druids were not priests and priestesses of Atlantis, nor were they a lost tribe of Israel. Early English historians could not imagine that groups such as the Irish (whom they considered to be backward and inferior) could possibly have produced such a class of noble intellectuals and clergy.

The Druids did not build Stonehenge or the magnificent Cairns of the Boyne Valley; Knowth, Dowth and Newgrange which were built by pre-Indo-European, Bronze Age peoples. However, it is quite likely that the Druids used those monuments. In the case of the Irish structures, there is plenty of mythological evidence that the Iron Age Celts and their Druids revered these sites as sacred.

The Druids were not proto-Christians. They had their own system of ethics and deities that pre-dated Christianity.

What is a Druid Today?

All of which brings us to the difficult question of what it means to be a Druid in the new millennium. All Druids attempt to honor Celtic tradition. They also understand that there is no fully intact tradition of Druidism that stretches back to the wise ones of ancient times and that of necessity every Druid Order must create its own ritual form. Some are happy to include recent speculations, such as the poetry of Robert Graves (inventor of the Celtic Tree Calendar) and others try to stick to more rigorously researched, scholastically verifiable sources.

It is more common to find practicing Christians among the English Orders. American Druid Orders, such as Whiteoak, Keltria, and ADF, place a larger emphasis on Pagan Celtic scholarship, seeing themselves as lore keepers for Pagan Celtic cultural, religious and magical tradition.

Irish Druidism is often concerned with the Forest Druid tradition, seeking to keep alive the ancient woods lore of the forest dwellers of the Elizabethan era and earlier.

As in the past, modern Druids tend to be intellectually curious, reading voraciously subjects such as Celtic tribal law, history, philosophy, poetry, magic, religion, mythology, spirituality, traditional healing methods, music, archaeology and astronomy.

Druids love nature and seek to know the land they live on intimately, observing seasonal and astronomical

changes and animal behaviors as timing for our festivals and as portents for the future.

Druids honor rivers, trees, mountains, green herbs, rocks, animals and every living thing. The Whiteoak Druids, for example, take an oath to protect "the Earth and Her creatures", making offerings to trees, stones, and to the local River Goddess of the Druid's bioregion.

Druids place an emphasis on praising the Gods and less of an emphasis on magic, using song, poetry, and crafts to express their love and kinship with their chosen deities. Druids make offerings to fire and water as a regular part of their rituals, in keeping with ancient Indo-European tradition.

Celtic Reconstructionist Druids, in keeping with tradition, work with the Three Worlds (Land, Sea and Sky) more than the Four Directions. Druids invoke and thank the ancestors, the Nature Spirits and the Gods in their rites.

Druids are true polytheists, understanding each deity as a distinct individual with His or Her unique likes, dislikes, and spheres of influence. Among Druids is considered somewhat rude to bring deities from different religions and cultures together in the same circle and every effort is made to work within genuine Celtic pantheons. A Witch's circle is a closed space, designed to hold and contain energy to build it into a "cone of power." A Druid circle is a permeable affair; persons may walk in and out at will. Since part of the energy raising involves inviting the Nature Spirits to participate, Druids feel that there is no point in walling off the circle. Druid ceremonies are most often performed out of doors, ideally in the presence of living water, a fire, and a tree (or a pole or staff substitute).

What Druids are Not

The Druids are not a male priesthood. There are a few popular authors and at least one old English Order that try to perpetuate that idea, but thankfully they are in the minority and do not represent the majority of Druids today.

Modern Druids do not practice animal or human sacrifice, regarding hard work and artistic achievements as adequate offerings.

Druids are not among those who seek to exploit or ignore the Earth in Her time of need. They recognize that nature hangs in a delicate balance and that all life must be tended with care.

Druids do not ignore the needs of the people. As in ancient times they care for the welfare of the people, giving comfort in times of sickness and death, rejoicing in each others life passages and achievements, and seeking to advise, as best they can, the secular leaders of their towns, states and nations. They donate time and money to cultural and humanitarian projects that capture their imaginations.

In short, Druidism is not a solitary path. The Druid is not isolated from her spiritual community, her town, her city, her nation or the world.

Dearbhaig (Oath) of the Whiteoak Druids

*By those who are over me By those who are below me
By those who are in the earth
By those who are in the air
By those who are in heaven
By those who are in the fire
By those who are in the great pouring sea
I bind myself with Truth to these:*



*Nothing before the three-fold Earth
And in these worlds, my people's Gods
And in these Gods, all life, my tribe
And in all beings, I bind my self.*

*I begin the ring of virtue:
In justice shall I be impartial
In impartiality shall I be conscientious
In conscience shall I be firm
In firmness shall I be generous
In generosity shall I be hospitable
In hospitality shall I be honorable
In honor shall I be stable
In stability shall I be beneficent
In beneficence shall I be capable
In capability shall I be honest
In honesty shall I be eloquent
In eloquence shall I be steady
In steadiness shall I be truly judging
In truly judging shall I be merciful
In mercy shall I be just
Thus unites the ring of virtue.*

*This I swear by land, sea, and sky
the ancestors be my witness.*

*For a list of links to the major Druid Orders, book lists and Pagan service projects please see
www.whiteoakdruids.org*

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Modern Paganism The Simple Version

By Scott Chisholm Lamont, High Priest, Circle of the Winter Moon

What Exactly is Paganism? Where Does Wicca Fit In? And How About Those Heathens?

Pagan: An umbrella term representing all positive, Earth-based, polytheistic and/or pantheistic/panentheistic faiths. Comes from the Latin: "paganus" meant a country dweller, and was a term of derision by the city folk for the unsophisticated country bumpkin. Over the course of time, it came to mean the non-Christian religious practices of those people.

Wicca: A specific religion within Paganism, made up of many different traditions (sects). It is more specified ritualistically than most other Pagan faiths. Central tenets include immanent Divinity in the form of Goddess(es) and God(s), the importance of balance (gender, energy, polarities), the cycles of life, attunement to the natural world, the use of magick for personal growth, and the responsibility of free will.



Heathen: A term of Northern European origin. It simply meant someone who lived in the heaths, or who's house sported a roof made of heath sod. Therefore, like Pagan, it meant a country dweller. It is the term preferred by practitioners of Asatru.

Asatru: A common name for the Northern Tradition or Nordic Tradition, which are based on Norse and Anglo-Saxon myth. It is sometimes referred to as Odinru. They worship the Divine in the form of the Gods and Goddesses grouped into two classes: The Vanir, or nature spirits, and the Aesir. Central to their faith is the concept of Yggdrasil, a shamanistic world tree.

My experience has been that the Pagan faiths are very much about people reconnecting with spirituality as a part of the process of reconnecting with the living planet, and that is certainly how I came to this path as a young teen. I think that one of the most positive aspects of the revival of the old Pagan faiths is that as they connect people with the spiritual aspect of life in a concrete way, as it is lived and experienced, it allows them to reconnect with their ancestral heritage, to feel the continuity of generations of spiritual practice.

One good definition for Pagans is that they are "nature-worshippers, finding joy and a sense of true belonging in places of natural beauty. Pagans love and honour the Earth as Mother Goddess, celebrating her cycles." That covers pretty much any of the different traditions.

Three more terms commonly mentioned are "Earth Spirituality," "Neo-Pagan," and "Goddess Spirituality."

"Earth Spirituality" is the catchall term, which pertains to any spiritual practice, formalized or not, that holds the sacredness of the Earth and/or the immanence of the Divine in the natural world as its central tenet.

"Neo-Pagan faiths" are more formalized, in that they have some specific traditions or teachings that are passed on in a recognizable way. Many people prefer to use the term "Neo-Pagan" instead of "Pagan" to emphasize the break in the teaching of these traditions over the past several centuries. These faiths are, in fact, revivals or recreations. Wicca, Asatru, and Druidism fall under "Neo-Pagan," whereas surviving shamanistic traditions (such as the Siberian, Mayan, and Sammi traditions) can truly be described as "Pagan."

"Goddess Spirituality" is both a practice in itself and a descriptive grouping for those Neo-Pagan faiths that have the primacy of the feminine Divine as a central tenet.

Pagan worship is often at the individual or family level, with participation in group activities only occurring at certain public festivals. Pagan worship groups (called covens, circles, halls, groves, and other names) that offer teaching and ongoing participation tend to be very small, ranging from three to 50 people, though generally not larger than 13. Where possible, worship will be in a natural space, but is often done in private homes. Public gatherings can be quite large (attendance at Spiral Dance in San Francisco is 1500 or more, DragonFest and Pagan Spirit Gathering approach 1000, in New Mexico, the annual Beltane is over 450), and usually correspond to seasonal holy days, called Sabbats.

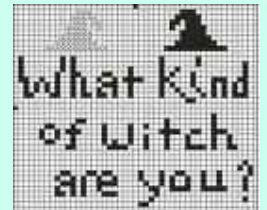
There are eight Sabbats (often referred to as the High Holidays) which correspond to the Earth's seasons and rotation. It is on these days that Pagans celebrate the cycles of life and attune themselves with Mother Earth. Additionally, there are 24 to 26 Esbats (ritual days in accordance with the new and full moon of each month). The generic Pagan Sabbats are as follows:

***October 31 (Samhain, Sowyn or All Hallow's Eve),
December 21 (Yule or Winter Solstice),
February 2 (Called Candlemas, Imbolc, Brigit, or February Eve),
March 21 (Ostara, Eostar or Spring Equinox),
April 30 (Beltane, May Day, or May Eve),
June 22 (Midsummer, Litha or Summer Solstice),
August 1 (Lughnassad or Lammas), and
September 21 (Mabon or Autumn Equinox).***

Pagan clergy are often referred to as Priest or Priestess (prefaced by the word "High" if they lead a coven or circle) or Elder. Some will use the style "The Reverend" as they feel it is more recognized by the general public. There is no formal, overall leadership or hierarchy, no set doctrine or book, nor any universal practices. Most Pagans consider themselves in charge of their own spiritual development, and are therefore their own clergy for all intents and purposes.

Why Use the Term "Witch?" Isn't It a Pretty Negative Word? Aren't There Better Choices?

Witch: A practitioner of the magickal arts; can belong to any spiritual path, including Christianity and Judaism. "Witch" comes from the Anglo-Saxon wicce (wicca is actually the masculine form of the word), which in turn derives from an Indo-European root word meaning to bend or change or do magic/religion (making it related to "wicker," "wiggle," and even "vicar"). It is possibly also related to the Old Norse vitki (meaning wizard), derived from root words meaning "wise one" or "seer." "Warlock" (rarely used, for male Witches) is from the Old Norse var?okkur, "spirit song" (not Scots Gaelic for "oath-breaker").



Witchcraft: Roughly translated to "the craft of bending or shaping the world based on attunement to and understanding of nature", or more simply: "The Craft of the Wise", shortened to "The Craft". Wicca is an Earth-based religion that includes Witchcraft as a core spiritual practice. Therefore, generally speaking, Wiccans are Witches, but not all Witches are Wiccan.

Modern Wicca is really a new religion, although its roots are very old. The foundation of the religion is the ancient fertility religions of the Western world. The primary annual celebrations are named for Celtic & Norse festivals, which are the Greater Sabbats (based on the Celtic lunar calendar, also called the Cross-Quarters) and the Lesser Sabbats (based on the Nordic solar calendar, also called the Solstices and Equinoxes). Many of these festivals were celebrated continuously for centuries, long after the arrival of Christianity to Europe. Those who followed the old traditions were often the "wise women" and "cunning men" of their very rural communities. They offered advice on when to plant and harvest, had knowledge of healing herbs, and performed magick to promote fertility and to ward off harm.

These practices became perceived as harmful, even evil, and were discouraged actively starting in the early 1200s. Britain did not repeal its last witchcraft laws until 1951. Beginning in the early 20th century, people began to reconstruct ancestral practices of the British Isles, coupled with Eastern philosophy, Western High Magick, conjecture, mythology, archeological findings, and inspiration from surviving Earth Spirituality practices from around the world. Wicca remains a highly creative and evolving faith, although it has certainly gelled around certain key principles and practices. Science has also contributed

to the development of the religion. Many Pagans find spiritual lessons in the findings of science with regards to the natural world, much as their ancestors found lessons in the observable facts of the world around them. The take-away point is that there is no central text, no set dogma, and no hierarchy. Wicca is a faith of exploration and personal responsibility for discovering spiritual meaning. It has been described as a faith made up entirely of clergy.

In reclaiming what many perceived as a suppressed faith, the choice to be called "Witch" had several possible purposes. One was to be iconoclastic and counter-cultural. Another was to be very deliberately distanced from the monotheistic faiths (and in some cases, in opposition to them, generally due to personal history). Yet another was to return a word that had been maligned to respectability, even to remove its negative charge by using it as if it were positive, much as the Queer community has done with the various epitaphs used against its members. To this day, there are some who just like it because it is "cool" and "edgy". On the other hand, there are those who will avoid the term, and prefer to be called "Wiccan". Make no assumptions! Druids and Shamans have not had the public relations issues faced by Witches. Druidism & Shamanism are also both reconstructions of practices from pre-Christian Europe. Because the Druidic system was very formalized, it was at least partially documented by the Romans. Shamanism was not documented, but there are combinations of archeological evidence and some surviving traditions, which have evolved into current practices. Both are now well established in western countries and have large memberships, although not as large as Wicca.

There are many other Pagan faiths that are practiced in North America. An example of one that has an established community in New Mexico is the Radical Faeries. Part Queer cultural movement, part spiritual movement, part political and social movement, there are Faerie communities all over the world. Unfortunately, I cannot provide any helpful information on Yoruba, Santeria or Voodun, all of which are partially African in origin, and of which I have only limited knowledge.

Keep in mind that there is no hard and fast doctrine in the Pagan world, and many people have slightly different interpretations of wording that would seem exactly the same. Someone, somewhere in the Pagan world would take issue with almost everything I've written down here. In the end, Pagans love to sort out how the world works for themselves (feisty lot, those Pagans).

Beliefs Regarding Death and Dying:

Pagans view all of life (spiritual as well as physical) as being cyclic. Just as winter is followed by spring, and the bright sliver of Diana's bow is followed by the dark of the new moon, so too is every life followed by death. Generally, Pagans do not shy away from discussion regarding what are perceived to be natural parts of life, such as sex, birth, aging, and death.

Death is viewed as a transition, preferably one that can be approached mindfully and without fear. Just like everyone else, fear is still a big issue for Pagans, as is sadness, and the sense of tragedy when the death is sudden or the person is young. However, most Pagans believe in some form of reincarnation, or at least continuance of the spirit. The afterlife may be conceptualized as a resting place (sometimes called the Summerland, Land of the Young, or the Underworld), where the soul has an opportunity to digest the lessons of the life just experienced, in preparation for the next incarnation. Many Pagans believe that souls choose their lives, for reasons of spiritual growth. Karma is also a common belief. It is not viewed as a reward and punishment scheme, rather it is a type of balancing, where choices made lead to ties and connections that must be followed through. Therefore, even when people die in difficult circumstances,



Historical burial methods, preferred or not, may not work due to zoning regulations.

Pagans often believe that there is a purpose to not just the death, but also the manner of death, even if it is not one easily discerned.

Many Pagans will perform magick to assist with healing (only with permission!) or to provide energy for what work the person involved needs to accomplish for their own highest good. Pagans will often avoid trying to force energy to flow in a particular direction (for example, to cure with energy someone who is unlikely to survive a disease process), rather they will try to make energy available without being tied to or directing the outcome. This work (a very focused type of prayer) does not have to be done in proximity to the person for whom it is being done. Sometimes, objects or images will be charged with energy in a ritual, and then given to the person to keep with them.

During the dying process, Pagans will often gather in small numbers to support the person in transition. Chants may be sung, or music played, particularly drumming. The area may be blessed and purified, and the spirits of ancestors called to attend. The God may be invoked in the form of the Dark Lord, the keeper of the Gate of Birth and Death. Many believe that it is this God form which will accompany the person's soul on the journey to rejoin the Great Mother, or to the Underworld.

After death, the body is cared for in the usual manner. Family may wish to bathe and dress the person, but they may not. There are no restrictions or timeframes that must be adhered to. Some prefer that the body be kept naked, wrapped in a simple cloth, in order that it may be returned to the Earth in its most basic state. Some may reject embalming, as they feel it is contrary to the natural cycle of decay that allows the person's energy and matter to be returned to the world for use by new lives. Many Pagans will choose cremation. Organ donation and autopsies are usually acceptable. Memorial services (called a Passing Over ritual) do not have to include the body, and so may occur many days to weeks after the death. Additional remembrances often take place at Samhain, which is the end of the Pagan year, and a festival which corresponds to the Mexican Day of the Dead, when ancestors and the recently departed are honored.

Dos and Don'ts for Pastoral Care Staff and Other Caregivers:

Assure people that you respect their beliefs and practices, and that you will maintain confidentiality. Many Pagans worry about being "outed", as people have lost jobs, apartments, and even custody of their children over their beliefs.

Let them know that you can connect them to resources in the community if they do not have a contact of their own. Many will want only their own contacts to visit them.

Sincere offers of prayer or blessing are generally welcome. Pagans believe that all paths lead to the center, and all voices are heard by the Divine.

Assist with any healing practices they may be using, such as ointments, or aromatherapy.

Assist the person to connect with the natural world in any way possible: pet visitation, growing plants, trips outside, open windows, playing recorded sounds of water and wind.

Ask about supplements they may be taking. Pagans are sometimes very wary of Western medicine, and prefer to use healing systems that have a more naturalistic philosophy.

Pagans often use more than one name. The name they offer for use may not be their legal name. If a legal name is important (for example, durable powers of attorney), be sure you are clear on both preferred and legal name.

Make no assumptions about relationships. Pagans are very accepting of non-traditional relationships, so don't be surprised by any combinations you might encounter. Covens or circles are often very small and intimate, be prepared to treat the members as if they were family. Also, be prepared for there to be conflict or distance within the person's family if their choice of spiritual path is in conflict with the larger families.

Do not touch or disturb any ritual items, including jewelry, without asking for permission first.

Avoid even a hint of witnessing or proselytizing. Pagans believe that people must find their own path

for themselves, and generally resent the concept that they need to be converted.

Don't be surprised if offers to have chaplains visit are rejected. Many Pagans do not understand the role of chaplaincy in a hospice or health care setting, and will believe that someone in that role will intend to speak to them of their own faith. Explain the role in a neutral manner, and leave the offer open.

Web Resources:

The Wiccan Church of Canada: <http://www.wcc.on.ca/>

Covenant of the Goddess: <http://www.cog.org>

The Witches Voice: <http://www.witchvox.com/wvoxhome.html>

Circle Sanctuary: <http://www.circlesanctuary.org/>

The Reclaiming Collective: <http://www.reclaiming.org>

There is also an excellent site on religious tolerance, which is privately run but so thorough and well reasoned that it is referred to by many university religious studies departments. It is called the Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance Web site, and is run by four volunteers of different faith backgrounds, including a Wiccan. The address is: <http://www.religioustolerance.org/welcome.htm#posit>

The Wiccan Rede

*By Lady Gwen Thompson
Shortened version*

*Bide the Wiccan Laws we must
In Perfect Love and Perfect Trust.
Live joyously, and let live,
Fairly take and fairly give.
Soft of eye and light of touch,
Speak little, listen much.
When the moon rides at her peak,
Then your heart's desire seek.
Cast the Circle thrice about
Round the cauldron sing and shout.
Where the rippling waters go,
Cast a stone and truth you'll know.
Heed the North wind's mighty gale,
Lock the door and drop the sail.
When the wind comes from the South,
Love will kiss thee on the mouth.
When the wind blows from the West,
Departed souls will have no rest.
When the wind blows from the East,
Expect the new and set the feast.
Heed ye Flower, Bush and Tree,
By the Lady, blessed be.
Merry meet and merry part,
Bright the cheeks and warm the heart.
Mind the Threefold Law you should,
Three times bad and three times good.
Eight words the Wiccan Rede fulfill:
An ye harm none, do what ye Will.*

Eight Virtues of the Craft

As revealed in the Charge of the Goddess

*Beauty and Strength
Power and Compassion
Honor and Humility
Mirth and Reverence*

The Nine Noble Virtues of The Odinic Rite

These virtues simply and briefly encapsulate the broad wisdom of our Gods and ancestors:

*Courage
Truth
Honor
Fidelity
Discipline
Hospitality
Industriousness
Self-Reliance
Perseverance*

Additional for Clergy:

Charge of the Goddess

By Doreen Valiente

*Listen to the words of the Great Mother;
she who of old was also called among men
Artemis, Astarte, Athene, Dione, Melusine,
Aphrodite, Cerridwen, Cybele, Arianrhod,
Isis, Dana, Bride
and by many other names:*

*Whenever ye have need of anything,
once in the month, and better it be when the moon is full,
then shall ye assemble in some secret place
and adore the spirit of me,
who am Queen of all the witches.*

*There shall ye assemble,
ye who are fain to learn all sorcery,
yet have not won its deepest secrets;
to these will I teach things that are yet unknown.
And ye shall be free from slavery;
and as a sign that ye be really free,
ye shall be naked in your rites;
and ye shall dance, sing, feast,
make music and love,
all in my praise.*

*For mine is the ecstasy of the spirit,
and mine also is joy on earth;
for my law is love unto all beings.
Keep pure your highest ideal;
strive ever towards it;
let naught stop you or turn you aside.
For mine is the secret door
which opens upon the Land of Youth,
and mine is the cup of the wine of life,
and the Cauldron of Cerridwen,
which is the Holy Grail of immortality.*

*I am the Gracious Goddess,
who gives the gift of joy unto the heart of man.
Upon earth, I give the knowledge of the spirit eternal;
and beyond death, I give peace and freedom
and reunion with those who have gone before.
Nor do I demand aught in sacrifice;
for behold,
I am the Mother of all living,
and my love is poured out upon the earth.*

*Hear ye the words of the Star Goddess;
she in the dust of whose feet are the hosts of heaven,
and whose body encircles the Universe.
I who am the beauty of the green earth,
and the white Moon among the stars,
and the mystery of the waters,
and the desire of the heart of man,
call unto thy soul.
Arise, and come unto me.
For I am the soul of nature, who gives life to the universe.
From me all things proceed,
and unto me all things must return;
and before my face, beloved of Gods and of men,
let thine innermost divine self be enfolded in the rapture of the infinite.
Let my worship be within the heart that rejoiceth;
for behold,
all acts of love and pleasure are my rituals.
And therefore let there be beauty and strength,
power and compassion, honour and humility,
mirth and reverence within you.*

*And thou who thinkest to seek for me,
know thy seeking and yearning shall avail thee not
unless thou knowest the mystery;
that if that which thou seekest
thee findest not within thee,
thou wilt never find it without thee.
For behold,
I have been with thee from the beginning;
and I am that which is attained
at the end of desire.*

Healing Prayers

Heal her/him Blessed Brigid

O Brigid, Goddess of Healing. Grant a speedy recovery to _____, who is in need of Your powers. Bless him/her with strength and vigor. Spread your Cloak of Protection over him/her and shield him/her from excessive pain. Support _____ in facing fear; fill him/her with courage and a calm heart. Fill _____ with hope, transforming weakness to strength, sickness to health. May he/she be granted complete healing; mental, emotional, physical and spiritual. Praised are you, blessed Goddess, thank you for your gifts.



Prayer Before Surgery

O Brigid, Goddess of Healing, Guardian of the flocks and of the people, watch over _____ as she/he undergoes surgery. Bless all who are involved in the surgery, whether they work in physical, emotional or spiritual realms. Send strength to _____, spread over him/her your Mantle of Peace and Protection. Support him/her in facing fear and fill her/him with calm courage. Fill _____ with hope, turning weakness to strength, sickness to health. All praises to you, Mother of the flocks. Protect _____, protect the people.

Prayer After Surgery

We offer thanks to you, Brigid, for your strength of Healing. With Your help and the help of dedicated healers _____ has safely emerged from surgery. Our fear has been turned into relief. Bless _____ with continued strength and vigor. May his/her health be quickly restored. All praises to You, Mother of the flocks and protector of the people.

Prayer for a Sick Child

O Brigid, Patroness of Motherhood, protect this child _____, who needs Your care and protection. Spread your Cloak of Healing over him/her. May he/she find shelter in Your loving care. Shield him/her from harm. Watch over her/him both day and night. Support him/her in facing pain. Fill him/her with calm courage. May You bless _____ with complete healing in mind, body and spirit. All praises to You, Mother of the flocks and of the people.

Prayer to the Ancestors

Ancestors, accept my prayer. Do not turn away. Please forgive me for the times I have disappointed you. Show me Your wisdom and guidance that I may place my feet upon the right road.

Adapted by Ellen Evert Hopman from Numbers 12:13 and Modeh Ani.




NEWS



The Green Goodbye

Eco-friendly burials eschew headstones, embalming and pricey caskets made from exotic imported wood

January 26, 2007

***By Nancy J. White
The Toronto Star***

Imagine a gently sloping hill covered with fallen leaves, green ferns and bright wildflowers, the branches of sturdy oaks and maples arching overhead. Birds chirp in the trees. Squirrels and chipmunks scamper on the ground.

Now imagine yourself buried underneath.

No proud shiny headstone engraved "Beloved." No manicured, fertilized grass. Just your body decomposing inside your biodegradable shroud, your tissues feeding the tree roots and who knows what else.

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. You can now be politically correct when you're six feet under.

It's known as a green or natural burial, a way of combining an eco-friendly interment with land conservation. Make your burial a statement of values by helping create a forest, says Mike Salisbury, one of the founders of the Natural Burial Coop, a group in southern Ontario. "If you're buried where roots grow through your bones, you're doing what you're supposed to do give back in the end."

This idea could take root. Baby boomers, forever defying time, wouldn't so much die as just get replanted.

Several groups are trying to establish Canada's first natural burial cemetery. Janet McCausland, vice-president of Green Living Ventures, part of Key Publishing, has proposed that some of the federal Downsview land be converted and is talking with land conservation groups. Salisbury's co-op is looking at three potential sites outside Toronto. And on the west coast, the Memorial Society of B.C., has hopes for two possible places.

"It's a way to finance environmental restoration of land, to make sure a Wal-Mart never grows on the old family farm," says Salisbury, 40, a landscape architect and Guelph city councillor.

(In Ontario, a potential cemetery must first get municipal approval then comply with provincial standards before it can be licensed.)

This latest back-to-the-earth movement started in England about a dozen years ago, then spread to the United States, where four green cemeteries have blossomed, including one in upstate New York.

A green goodbye means no toxic embalming chemicals such as formaldehyde. That one is on the European Union's list for possible banning.

A nature-loving corpse is entombed in a biodegradable container or shroud. "The metal from coffins buried each year in the U.S. is more than was used to build the Golden Gate Bridge," says Joe Sehee, founder of the Green Burial Council in the U.S., which sets ethical standards for the budding practice.

Rather than rip out a hunk of rainforest for a coffin, a burial box might be made from locally harvested wood, wicker or even recycled paper, perhaps decorated with good-bye messages from friends.

"As long as the cardboard doesn't look cheap," warns Salisbury, "like you're UPSing the guy to the afterlife." But could eco-sensitive send-offs really deliver?

The Natural Burial Coop, formed six months ago, has 25 consumer members who've plunked down \$25 in an act of faith to secure a site.

The Natural Burial Association, a separate group dedicated to spreading the green grave gospel, has a loyal following of about 50, says executive director McCausland. She speaks to church and interfaith groups who praise the interconnected web of existence concept.

In upstate New York's Finger Lakes region, Greensprings Natural Cemetery is 100 acres of old pastures and fields bounded by two 4,000-acre protected forests. Opened last May, the cemetery has sold 55 sites.

It has attracted interest from people all over the country, mainly traditional Christians, environmentalists and people looking for a simple, affordable alternative, says Mary Woodsen, president of Greensprings Natural Cemetery Preserve.

A Greensprings gravesite costs \$500 with another \$450 to open and close it.

Conventional burial digs deeper into your pockets. On average, Ontario consumers spend \$2,300 on a casket, although you can go in high style, about \$25,000 for the Cadillac version.

For a cemetery plot, it's all about location. A gravesite in the Toronto core costs about \$5,000, while a 905 area one goes for about \$2,000, according to Rick Cowan, assistant marketing vice-president for the Mount Pleasant Group, owner of 10 GTA cemeteries.

He's heard about green burials at industry meetings, but no one has been asking about it here. "If it raised itself as a void in the marketplace we'd look into it," he says.

Mike Driscoll, a small business consultant in Guelph, is a recent green burial convert. He had figured cremation was the way to go; it costs less (about \$400 to \$500) and you take up less space. But then he got concerned about the fossil fuel used in the process and the toxic materials, such as mercury, released into the air.

Natural burial, he decided, was preferable. "It's a beautiful way to end life, to give back to the soil."

One of the founders of the co-op, Driscoll, 51, is helping the group plan a line of benign burial products — pine boxes without toxic glues, baskets by Maritime weavers — for members. "No one will get rich on this," he says.

Back in upstate New York, the Greensprings cemetery has so far had four burials, two in biodegradable cardboard caskets, one in a coffin made from locally harvested pine, and one in a shroud. "The family,"

says Woodsen, "prepared her body themselves and sewed beautiful white ribbons on the shroud."

One body, packed in dry ice, was flown in from Ohio. The deceased wanted a natural burial, and Greensprings, found online, was the closest.

The cemetery has made one not-pure-green concession. The soil is so rocky, a backhoe digs the graves. Some burial preserves with kinder, gentler conditions use old-fashioned muscle-power and shovels.

At Greensprings, some of the gravesite ceremonies have been quiet and religious, while the others included music and poetry readings.

Some have planted saplings to mark the site. While headstones are verboten, a natural unpolished stone, possibly engraved but flush to the ground, would be permissible, says Woodsen.

"What could be more beautiful than to become a part of nature, that a molecule from your body ends up in a berry that a bird eats," says Woodsen. "It's completing the circle of life."

For more information, see naturalburial.ca, site of the Natural Burial Co-operative, or naturalburialassoc.ca, for the Natural Burial Association. For Greensprings Natural Cemetery, see naturalburial.org. For the Green Burial Council, go to greenburialcouncil.org.



PantheaCon 2007

Welcome to the thirteenth annual PantheaCon, our wonderful gathering of the tribes. We are the only annual pagan convention in the western US. The Bay Area is the mother lode for pagans and nature religion ideas. Again we have the best events and most knowledgeable speakers that the West and beyond has to offer. We have many well-known published authors along with unpublished local talent. We are keeping with two 90 minute sessions in the morning (9am - 10:30 am and 11am - 12:30pm) and two in the afternoon (1:30pm - 3pm and 3:30pm - 5pm), with a one-hour lunch and a two-hour dinner break. The evenings have plenty to choose among with rituals, music, discussions and workshops along with room parties.

New to PantheaCon 2007

The Changes Altar PantheaCon only happens once a year, and so many things happen during the rest of the year that we thought it would be nice to have a place where we can all share our changes with the community at large. So look in the hallway outside the Santa Clara room for our new Community Changes Altar. Feel free to put things up on the altar. Suggestions might be a photo of a new baby, or someone who has passed beyond the veil. Perhaps a wedding announcement or a new pet. Did you achieve something special, let us know. Because the altar is in a public space we recommend bringing copies of photos or documents. PantheaCon cannot accept any responsibility for the safety of items left on the altar.

\$75 after Jan. 15 and at the door. This includes all events for the entire conference. \$35 for a full day, \$20 for an evening only. If Pre-registering, please have your payment and info to Ancient Ways, 4075 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, CA 94609 by February 8.

Programming

We start the Conference with a small Opening Ritual with Glenn Turner and Isaac Bonewits and others at 1 pm. (Hotel room check in is typically at 3 pm, but bags can be left with the hotel Bell service people.) Then at 1:30 the Con gets going with lots of diverse presentations. We will have up to 14 different simultaneous workshops going on during the day. At night we will have many different programs plus postings for parties and possibly some discussion groups that can reconvene at night in some "extra" rooms.

During each day on Saturday and Sunday we have as many as 60 different workshops and subjects to decide among. So many hard choices. And Monday is chock full as well this year. You'll have to look at the pocket program to figure it all out. There is so much to do!

Here is a listing of events that might be of interest to Druids. There are a lot more sessions that are geared towards Druids this year that it will be difficult to decide which to go to. There are many familiar names as well

Saturday, February 17, 2007

1:30

The Sphere of Protection John Michael Greer

One of the fundamentals of any system of magical training is a basic ritual for protection against hostile energies and entities. The Sphere of Protection, a standard ritual in the Ancient Order of Druids in America (AODA) and several other orders, is designed to call on the deities and symbolism you choose. This instructional workshop will teach the Sphere of Protection and show how it can be adapted to fit whatever tradition, pantheon, and symbolic structure you wish to use.

Druid Ritual with Danse Macabre Druid Groves of OBOD

The Druids of Grove of the Oak, Taliesin, Doire Bhrighid, and Croi na Gleann, will present Druid ritual celebrated with the performing arts. Participate in a grand procession led by Danse Macabre, followed, dancing, drumming, and props that you help create. Bring your creative center: a drum, your voice, your dance, your instruments, and artistic skill. Ritual is not something you watch. It is something you do.

Paganism - What's new, what's changed, how are we different today. Margot Adler

Drawing Down the Moon was first published in 1979 - since then the movement has changed in hundreds of ways. There are more than 5000 Pagan websites, there are Pagan AA groups, prison ministries, international interfaith works, charities, seminaries and rites for the dead. All these things have changed who we are as a movement in complex ways. This is a presentation and discussion of all these issues. I'll also discuss how being a public pagan during these times has changed and affected my life.

3:30 p.m.

Geology for Pagans Richard Ely

The workshop will be a wide-ranging discussion that may include such topics as earthquakes, climate change, magnetic field reversals, 2012 and Earth changes, and (my specialty), how to do a geologically correct grounding. The workshop will close with a grounding meditation specifically prepared for the Pantheacon location.

Introduction to Wheat Weaving William Blumberg/Angela Pearson

This class focuses on beginning weaving techniques along with straw preparation and sources on books, materials, and local groups. In this class, each student will make at least one weaving either a Bridget's Cross or Harvest Knot to bring home and many students will be able to make both. All material and supplies are provided. For an example of the project go to www.weaverssharp.com

7:00 p.m.

Brewing magical Druid mead Grey Badger

Learn the mystic art of brewing your own magical Druid mead. We will be making a ritual mead which one lucky participant will get to take home! Due to the ritual nature of this presentation, all participants must be over the age of 21, bring your ids, we will be checking them, and there will be no admittance after the beginning of the presentation.

9:00 p.m.

A Druid Gathering! AODA

Hosted by the Ancient Order of Druids in America, this informal gathering of Druids welcomes members and friends of all Druid orders as well as those simply curious about Druidry as a spiritual path for today.

Sunday February 18, 2007

9:00 a.m.

ADF Ritual ADF (A Druid Fellowship)

A Druid ritual in the ADF tradition.

11:00 a.m.

Pirates and Pagans Ardantane

What are the myths of piracy, and what was their world really like? Were the values and traditions of pirates like those of Paganism in any way? You might be surprised. Yo ho, is The Pirate's Life for you? Come enjoy a overview with lots of real information, plus some songs, discussion, swordplay, and fun. Guest speaker: Captain Jack Sparrow (no, just kidding). Wear pirate costume if you like, no rum or parrots but practice yer pirate lingo, aarrrrgh matey. Avast!

Ogam Divination: Techniques and Philosophy Erynn Laurie

This will be a hands-on demonstration of ogam divination with opportunities for practice led by Erynn Rowan Laurie. Her 18+ years of experience with ogam and over 30 years of divinatory experience will be a good guide to working with this old Irish system.

1:30 p.m.

Varieties of Initiatory Experience Isaac Bonewits

People in the New Age, magical, metaphysical, and Neopagan communities frequently refer to 'initiation,' but few seem to have a clear idea of just what an initiation is or should be. Isaac will talk about three overlapping types of genuine initiation: the 'acknowledgement of status newly gained,' the 'ordeal of transformation,' and the 'transmission of the gnosis.' He'll explore the differences and similarities between them, and give helpful advice on how initiators and initiatees can get the mo

3:30 p.m.

The Rite of Glastonbury: The Mysteries of the Abbey and the Temple of the Stars Mara Freeman
Mara Freeman and members of the Avalon Mystery School present a ritual on the theme of the Mysteries of Glastonbury Abbey, the Glastonbury Zodiac, the Arthurian Cycle and the Holy Grail. The aim of the ceremony is to create a gateway for the stellar intelligences to pour their transformative and healing influences onto the Earth to seed a new Temple of the Stars here below. Mara will speak on these mysteries and answer questions on Avalonian magic before the ceremony begins.

7:00 p.m.

The Art of Shapeshifting Ted Andrews

This workshop will explore the foundations of shapeshifting and the use of simple movement to align with the animals and to awaken the animal's medicine within you. It will show how to use movement, posture and dance to awaken more fully within ourselves the qualities of the animal. It will teach the technique of "Walking Between Worlds" and the workshop concludes with an exercise in shapeshifting, incorporating simple movement and meditation to awaken owl medicine within us.

Brigid's Forge / Brigid's Well Acorn Productions

Brigid's clergy will guide us with music and poetry to find the Irish Goddess who is healer, smith and poet. Together we will walk through her forge to clear the obstacles that riddle our path, be renewed in her well and find the clarity of vision we need to heal ourselves, our communities and the world we share.

9:00 p.m.

Evening Concert with R J Stewart and Guests R J Stewart

A concert of ancient magical ballads and new songs and instrumentals with R J Stewart, on guitar, flute, and 73 stringed psaltery. Featuring songs written during the last year, and celebrating 30 years of recording performance and creation. R J has recorded/performed with many leading artists, including Finbar Furey, Van Morrison, Clannad, Shirley Collins, Cyril Tawney and Robin Williamson. He has written music for films by Jim Henson and Tony Richardson. R J Stewart plus surprise guests!

'Oss 'Oss, Wee 'Oss, Fifty Years Later Sabina Magliocco

Special PantheaCon premiere! If you've seen NROOGD's Beltane Hobby Horse and/or folklorist Alan Lomax's film "'Oss 'Oss, Wee 'Oss," on which the ritual is partly based, you won't want to miss this new film about the Cornish May Day custom today, more than 50 years after Lomax and English folklorist Peter Kennedy shot the original. Based on 2004 fieldwork by folklorist Sabina Magliocco and documentary film maker John M. Bishop.

Monday February 19, 2007

9:00 a.m.

An American Druidism Todd Covert

Many contemporary polytheists struggle to balance a deep respect for ancient Pagan systems such as Druidism with the reality of their existence as native English speakers living in a multicultural, post-Enlightenment society. This workshop will identify essential building blocks of a modern American Druidism from within the body of evidence that remains from ancient practice, including such core concepts as sacred hospitality, bardic inspiration, and a harmonious relationship with the Land.

1:30 p.m.

Filidecht: Celtic poetic mysticism from the inside Erynn Laurie

Filidecht is the path of the sacred poet and nature mystic in Irish and Scottish tradition. Join Erynn in exploring the roots and uses of this powerful Celtic Reconstructionist path.



Circles of Wisdom Events Winter/Spring of 2007

**Tuesday, Feb. 20th, 7-8 p.m. at Circles of Wisdom in Andover, Mass.
Priestess of Avalon: An Introduction to the Mystic Path**

Join us for this unique evening presentation as we learn about the mysteries of Avalon, the magical Celtic Otherworld of British tradition. We will discuss sacred sites and talismans, ancient wisdom and the powers of transformation, and the goddesses and female divinities of ancient Britain. Through discussion and meditation we will begin to tap into personal pathways that will enable us to begin working in this venerable priestess tradition.

**Saturday, April 7th, 1-5 p.m. at Circles of Wisdom
The Feathered Cloak: An Introduction to Celtic Shamanism**

Journey into the heart of the Celtic shamanic tradition as we explore the ancient world of Celtic shamanic cosmology and mystic wisdom. Through discussion, ceremony and shamanic journeying we will learn about the wisdom and power of sacred animals and trees, symbols and talismans of power, and aspects of shapeshifting and the decoding of ancient wisdom texts. We will also begin to form relationship with power animals and ancestral spirit teachers and guides. Knowledge of shamanic journeying highly recommended, but not required.

Please contact Circles of Wisdom at their website for registration.

**Circles of Wisdom
90 Main Street
Andover, Massachusetts 01810
(978) 474-8010
<http://www.circlesofwisdom.com/index.cfm>**



The 29th Annual California Celtic Conference at the University of California, Berkeley March 8-11, 2007

The conference is one of the three principal Celtic studies conferences in the United States, attracting the attention and the participation of the most distinguished scholars in the field from North America and Europe. This year the conference will have a special focus on Scotland, Scots and Scottish-Gaelic languages and literatures.

Program

Thursday, March 8:

5-5:30 p.m.: Registration.

5:30-5:40 p.m.: WELCOME. Joseph J. Duggan, Associate Dean of the Graduate Division.

Keynote Speaker (Co-Sponsored by the Graduate Medievalists of Berkeley): 5:40-6:40 p.m. Sioned Davies (University of Wales, Cardiff). "The Mabinogion: A New Translation."

6:40 - 7:45 p.m. RECEPTION (Buffet).

Keynote Speaker: 7:45-8:45 p.m. Maire Ni Mhaonaigh (Cambridge University), "Of Saxons, a Viking, and Normans: Gerald of Mayo and the Monastery of Mayo."

Friday, March 9:

8:30-9 a.m.: Coffee & pastries.

Keynote Speaker: 9-10 a.m. Joseph F. Nagy (UCLA). "Cailte, Phoenix, and Phoenicians."

10-10:15 a.m. Break.

First Session: 10:15-11:45 a.m.

10:15-10:45 a.m. Judith L. Bishop (Mills College). "Cheeky Lepers and Absent Poets: Satire and Heroic Generosity in Early Medieval Irish Hagiography."

10:45-11:15 a.m. Jane Cartwright (University of Wales, Lampeter). "The Middle Welsh Lives of Mary Magdalene and Martha."

11:15-11:45 a.m. Robert Tracy (Emeritus, University of California, Berkeley). "Shaping Things to Come: Prophets and Prophecies in Old Irish Literature."

LUNCH: 11:45 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. [Local Restaurants]

Keynote Speaker: 1:30-2:30 p.m.: Barry Lewis (Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, Aberystwyth). "Beyond Early Celtic Nature Poetry: Looking at the Natural World in Early Welsh."

2:30-2:40 p.m. Break.

Second Session: 2:40-4:10 p.m.

2:40-3:10 p.m. Erin Paul (University of Cambridge). "From Fosterage to Teaching: The Role of the Athro in Early Medieval Wales."

3:10-3:40 p.m. Colby Freeman (University of San Francisco). "The Welsh Proxy Blow of Counsel: A Motivating Force in Welsh Literature."

3:40-4:10 p.m. Ansel Staton (University of California, Berkeley). "Mauvais sang et race inf?ieure: The Celtic Identity of Arthur Rimbaud."

4:10-4:20 p.m. Break.

Third Session: 4:20-5:20 p.m.

4-4:30 p.m. Amy Hale (St. Petersburg College). "Cornish Holy Wars: Language Policy and Discontent."

4:30-5 p.m. Elizabeth K. T. Hoen (Seton Hall University) "Nuala N?Dhomhnaill and the Reclamation of

the Irish Woman."

5-5:10 p.m. Break.

Keynote Speaker: 5:10-6:10 p.m. Eric Falci (University of California, Berkeley). "Reading Among the Gutters: A Few Poems by Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill and Gearóid Mac Lochlainn."

6:10-7:15 p.m. RECEPTION in 371 Dwinelle. Wine & hors d'oeuvres.

7:30 p.m.: Music presentation in The Albert Elkus Room (125 Morrison Hall): Melanie O Reilly/Seó O Nualláin & "Tir na Mara." "Irish Poetry in Performance – a Celtic-Jazz Expression."

Saturday, March 10:

8:30-9 a.m.: Coffee & pastries.

Keynote Speaker: 9-10 a.m. John Shaw (University of Edinburgh). "Gaelic/Norse Folklore Contacts, and Oral Traditions from the West of Scotland."

10-10:15 a.m. Break.

Fourth Session (Co-Sponsored by the Folklore Roundtable): 10:15 a.m.-11:15 a.m.

10:15-10:45 a.m. Barbara Hillers (Harvard University). "'Joint to Joint and Sinew to Sinew': Gaelic Versions of the Sprain Charm."

10:45-11:15 a.m. Nancy McEntire (Indiana State University). "The Power of the Stone: Handfasting and Healing in the Orkney Islands."

11:15 - 11:30 a.m. Break.

Fifth Session: 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

11:30 a.m.-12 p.m. Martina Gillen (Oxford Brookes University). "Ancient Ways and Ancient Laws: A Pathway to Regional Autonomy?"

12-12:30 p.m. Dorothy Kim (UCLA). "'O' dulcis Scotia': Uppsala University C. 233 and Thirteenth-Century Scottish Music."

LUNCH: 12:30-2 p.m. [Local Restaurants]

Keynote Speaker (Co-Sponsored by the Department of English): 2-3 p.m. Christopher Whyte (Budapest, Hungary). "Into the Labyrinth: Christopher Whyte talks about his English fiction with Ian Duncan, and reads from work in progress."

3 - 3:15 p.m. Break.

Sixth Session: 3:15-5:15 p.m.

Keynote Speaker: 3:15-4:15 p.m. Ian Duncan (University of California, Berkeley). "Secret Nations: The Figure of the Celt in Modernity."

4:15-4:45 p.m. Alison Tara Walker (UCLA). "'And cald ochane': Affective Narration in Henryson's 'Testament of Cresseid.'"

4:45-5:15 p.m. Andrea F. Jones (UCLA). "The Making of an Outlaw in 'Edward' (Child Ballad #13)."

5:15-5:30 p.m. Break.

Keynote Speaker: 5:30-6:30 p.m. Christopher Whyte (Budapest, Hungary). "An Daolag Sh?nach / The Chinese Beetle: Scottish Gaelic poet Christopher (Cr?dean) Whyte reads from new and published work with accompanying English translations."

Keynote Speaker: 6:30-7:30 p.m. Chris Grooms (Collin County Community College) "A Whole Lotta Pluckin' Goin' On: Persona and Style in the Folk Music of Nineteenth-century Wales" (Music performance with discussion; <http://docgrooms.com>)

8:15 p.m. BANQUET [Please see the end of this Program for Reservations, which should be made in advance.]

Sunday, March 11:

8:30-9 a.m.: Coffee & pastries.

Seventh Session: 9-10 a.m.

9-9:30 a.m. Mark Hall (University of California, Berkeley). "Ironworking in Early Medieval Ireland: The Evidence from Deer Park Farms."

9:30-10 a.m. Jo Coffey (University of California, Berkeley). "Hints of Ancient Astronomy at Knocknarea: The Beast in Fionn Mac Cumhaill agus An Bhean Ruadh."

10-10:10 a.m. Break.

Eighth Session: 10:10-11:10 a.m.

10:10-10:40 a.m. Denell Downum (New York City College of Technology). "T.S. Eliot's Celtic Portrait of the Artist."

10:40-11:10 a.m. Susan Wilson. (University of Victoria). "Hugh MacDiarmid and Sorley MacLean: Men of Letters."

11:10-11:30 a.m. Break.

Keynote Speaker: 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Catherine McKenna (Harvard University). "Marw-nated Welsh Prince and Other Recipes from the Bardic Tradition: Reflections on Genre."





A Druid Missal-Any

Oimelc, Imbolc, Bride's Day, will occur astronomically on. Feb. 3 at 9:19 p.m. Pacific Standard Time or as 16 degrees 18 minutes declination on Feb. 4 at 12:19 a.m. PST. Grove celebrations will take place the following Sunday at 4:00 p.m.

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Webmastered by Mike Scharding
