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## Spring Equinox, Year 44 (March 21st, 2007)

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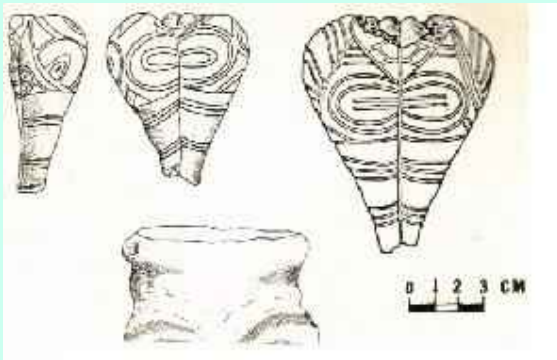
**quinox**, a Druid Minor High Day, the emphasis is Balance. Some customs of this season, still held over from pre-Christian times, include colored and fancy eggs, and the Easter Bunny who brings them, though this was not the original sequence or association.

Nora Chadwick, a noted Celtic historian, describes the spring rite of the coloring of the Cakes and Eggs, noted by classic authors in their descriptions of Druid customs. Egg hunts, egg rolling games and rituals are still current in Ireland, Lithuania and Eastern Europe and may have a pre-Indo-European origin. Decorated eggs, and painted clay models of eggs are a frequent theme of Pre-Aryan, Balkan culture. They are part of the ensign of the Bird Goddess, whose worship seems to have been particular to

spring, and to the time of the spring rains, to judge from holdovers into Greek times. Eggs are also part of the imagery of the supreme Goddess of the Old-Europe culture. In this connection, they represent the Cosmic Egg, laid by a swan or Nile goose, which was said to begin the world. Small painted clay eggs were included inside statues of this Great Goddess, as in Marija Gimbutas' drawing below.



A Cosmic Egg may also be laid by a mythical water birds: this myth is almost universally known between Africa and the Arctic Zone; it is recorded in ancient civilizations and was known among hunting and fishing tribes. In an Ancient Egyptian myth, the Cosmic Egg was laid by a Nile Goose which was worshipped as the great chatterer, the creator of the world. According to the Orphic story, untreated Nyx (Night) existed first and was regarded as a crest black-winged bird hovering over a vast darkness. Though unmated, she laid an egg from which flew gold-winged Eros, while from the two parts of the shell Ouranos and Gaia (Heaven and Earth) were trotted. The beginning of the myth must lie in the Paleolithic era.



The Egg, plus chatter, words, began the world.

The Bunny wasn't one at all, it was the Hare, not the rabbit, that was the sacred animal among the Celts and Germans. Julius Caesar, in his War Commentaries on Gaul, describes the Gauls as keeping hares and certain other animals to amuse themselves, and which they do not eat. (or hunt.) The hare was seen as a messenger animal, associated with prophecy and madness. The March Hare brought in the Spring and gave the seeds their fertility, or withheld it. To run afoul of him caused

madness. By the Middle Ages, the madness element predominated, and he came to be regarded as a demonic species. Many pagan ensigns and symbols suffered like defamation; and prophecy has always been associated with madness in Indo-European traditions. And underlying the egg theme, the theme of the March Hare is solidly Indo-European; its sacred and tabooed nature extends to most of the eastern European languages and early cultures. If language is the oldest witness to history, as Lockwood asserts, then the Cult of the Hare must go back to at least 3,500 BC. and the second wave of Indo-European expansion before Celtic, Germanic and Italic languages diverged. In these, the true word for hare, hara/haso, was tabooed, and euphemisms were commonly invented for it in everyday speech.

Our American Ground Hog Day, may be a dim and distant reflection of the March Hare theme, with its element of prophecy for an early or late spring. In the days of plowing and sowing magic, it was by the hare's behavior that people tried to foretell the spring weather and the prospects for the seeds about to be sown. By the shadows of posts and menhirs, not groundhogs, and by the points of the sun's risings, the priestly castes at the Great Henges determined the day of the Equinox and kept the calendar of sowing and reaping in line with the Heavens.

*(It bears saying again: The Druids did not build Stone Henge. Nor as far as we know did they make use of it as a calendar. This was the work and genius of the pre-Celtic peoples of the British Isles.)*

**Notes:**

- 1 Marija Gimbutas, Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe. University of California Press, 1982.
- 2 W.B. Lockwood, Indo-European Philology. Hutchins University Library, 1969.

By Emmon Bodfish, reprinted from A Druid Missal-Any, Spring Equinox 1983



# News of the Groves



For the [Full Grove Directory](#)



## **Mango Mission: News from Southeast Asia**

A.K.A. The Digitalis Grove in Exile

Mike has arrived and begun his new job here safe and sound. Conditions are not good for formal grove activities. Will be more of a hermitage and information clearinghouse. More details to follow in later issues, once I've settled in, and understand the local laws.



## **Awen Grove: News from Canada**

Greetings,

Today, as I write this, the weather is quite warm as one of Calgary's famous Chinooks ("snow eater") sweeps the land. Winter has been unusually warm this year, with a few weeks of snow and cold here and there.

Interestingly, these cold, snowy snaps seem to have happened just before Samhain, Winter Solstice and Imbolc. (In between these dates, the weather's been amazing, of course)

Since we now live out of the city, getting together for rituals is a moot point when the weather is bad. My husband and I have enjoyed the last three seasonal rituals at home and are hoping that the weather will be nice for the next few so we can gather with others.

We have been seeing a lot of people out at the monthly Druid Meetups since they often occur on warmer days.

At Imbolc, the weather was dark, miserable and snowy. The secular observance of Groundhog Day coincides with Imbolc and none of the gophers here in Alberta saw their shadows...meaning we're likely to have an early spring. Given the lack of scientific proof that these rodent prognostications are correct, we'll believe it when we see it.

However, that being said, I have noticed that the geese and ducks have returned and are breaking off into pairs to settle down for the Spring and Summer. The sun is rising earlier and soon, my bulbs will begin to sprout.

If it comes to rodents or geese predicting weather...I'll take the word of the geese!

Blessings,

Athelia Nihtscada /\



## **Palm Grove: News From Florida**

Well, Its been a hectic year so far here in the Palm\*Grove.

My apprentice has made Ovate status, and has begun a new journey to new enlightenment. He is doing very well if I do say so myself (but don't tell him) ( his head is already big enough!!!) We have initiated Karen into the grove and she is coming along nicely on a new spiritual journey.

Some people that dropped out of the scene, recently re-emerged for the Brigantia Festival held this year at the Renaissance Fair here in Tampa.

Although the cold winds were a bit much to put up with, it was as close to an authentic Celtic Festival as anyone could ever come. There was beer and mead and food galore, and all of the jousting and merriment one could ask for. I sure wish that there was a fair for all the high days like that.

Brigantia went off without a hitch and we all paid our homage to the great Goddess, then drank and had more fun.

As for the weather here, it has been very cold, the frost at night has once again wiped out the herbs that I was growing. Guess I will begin again in March.

The website has been completely redone, and is up for viewing at [Http://palmgrove.bravehost.com](http://palmgrove.bravehost.com)

We have met many wonderful people from all over the United States via [www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com) and they are from many sects of the spiritual realm. You can find me at [http://www.myspace.com/coyote\\_dragon](http://www.myspace.com/coyote_dragon) . (coyote\_dragon)

If you open your ears and listen you can learn much from those that view the world from a different angle.

We welcome all to voice their opinions here at the Palm\*Grove, so that all may hear and learn.

We are trying to keep the grove structure as close as we can to authentic Celtic , where in all may do what feels best for them at the gatherings, whether they be witch or druid or warrior or artisan, and the gathering is the important part.

Speak freely and learn all that you can and enjoy the day. For in the days of old the gatherings were for all and they celebrated the day for what it was and what it meant in a seasonal viewpoint.

As for those that are seeking further enlightenment and a life of a druidic priest , we have separate lessons to help them on their path.

That's about it for now.

Darmock, High-Druid of the Palm\*Grove of Florida



## Moose Breechcloth Proto-Grove: News From Minnesota

### Seasonal Salutations Siblings!

All the bunnies on this side of the pond are down with nasty colds. Ever wonder where it all comes from? I mean really. My head simply isn't big enough to house all that viral-laden liquid. So where does it all come from? Just how big are sinus passages? I no sooner fill an entire Kleenex, and I'm reaching for another. Where does it all come from?

It's a stumper.

Spring cleaning is in full swing around here. All the dust in the attic is really helping my labored breathing. Time has come for my annual Goodwill dump. It's amazing what you find in your kitchen cupboards. A bagel slicer. No really. A plastic form that you ram a bagel into, with incisions on either side as knife guides. First of all...do bagels come unsliced? Secondly...if you really need that much help cutting a bagel, then you really shouldn't be handling a knife, or a bagel for that matter....period. I didn't actually buy aforementioned bagel slicer. It was one of those "buy a dozen bagels, get a free bagel slicer" deals. Which makes no sense whatsoever, to give away with a bag of presliced bagels.

So the bagel slicer wound up in my kitchen cupboards where it has remained unused for countless years. Thank the gods it's actually labeled "Bagel Slicer" on it...because I'm sure the folks at Goodwill wouldn't know what it was anymore than I would have when I first spotted it under that apple corer that I just had to have all those years ago.

You know, I thought women were the only ones who harbored "skinny clothes" in their closets. Lou, however, upon going through his closets is hanging on to pants YEARS past their expiration date; and if he loses one of his legs in an accident, he might actually fit into them again someday.

I really shouldn't tease. Hanging WAAAAAY in the back of my closet is a pair of size 4 stretch pants. And 25 years ago they actually fit and they were just the bomb! In the words of Aerosmith...Dream On....

Why do we cling so hard to the fashions of our high school years? Especially when those fashions come back around in style once again, they are always a really poor reflection of what the fashion actually was. When the sixties came back into style it was all shag fun fur and lava lamps. Eeew. Then the seventies came back into fashion. Honey...bell bottoms were awful the first time through. And since when does brown, pink, and turquoise go together? I shudder to think of how my high school punk days will be remembered. Teeny-boppers everywhere walking around looking like gothic bottles of Pepto-Bismol. Just shoot me now.

In news other than my intermittent rants...next weekend Lou and I are supposed to be doing a 5k snowshoeing charity gig for a summer camp for underprivileged inner city kids. With temperatures expected above freezing all week, and considering we've only got about three inches of snow left (this IS Minnesota, isn't it?), I think Lou and I will be doing our 5k in hiking boots...not snowshoes.

We did my birthday this year at the Minnesota Zoo. It was a big group this year. That was wonderful. It was also rather timely. The lemurs and the otters were busy engaging in....uhhh...activities to ensure the continuation of their species. It was fun watching all the parents trying to scurry their kids away, so the kids wouldn't see nature at work; while our merry band of middle-aged farts pointed and stared at their...endeavors. Not sure if the parents were more worried about the critters doing what critters do, or by our play by play commentary on it. Or maybe it was the ad-libbed cheesy adult B-movie soundtrack we sung along with (bow-chica-bow-bow-chica-chica-bow-chica-bow-bow...). Guess it just goes to show, no matter how old you get, there's nothing like watching critters scrogging that will turn your humor straight to junior high level.



And on that enlightened note...

Gigawabamin nagutch,  
and yours in the Mother,

Julie Ann and Lou



### **The Nine Oaks & Mystic Well Protogrove: News from Nevada**

The season, here in the desert SW, was a bit more brisk than normal in the month of December but as on an average, we Druids here sure aren't complaining, as we oft times enjoy more milder winter currents than the rest of the Country.

The protogrove was active during the Imbolc time, going out into nature, meditating and working on tree identifications that grows in our region ,as some of the trees began to bud early on this year and then a hard cold and frost came late in mid January.

As we begin to connect with the waxing spiral of Spring to come, we give a good greetings to all in the RDNA.

Beleno s



### **Clan of the Triple horses: News from Oregon**

The unexpected snows have kept most of us inside since Imbolc. We are looking forward to our combined egg coloring/Rune Workshop on Saturday, March 10. Later this spring we will have more workshops covering numerology and Ogham. A very special outdoor Spring Equinox ritual is also planned. The exact date will depend upon the weather. Please contact us for details about any of our events: [triplehorses@gmail.com](mailto:triplehorses@gmail.com) and our website: <http://home.earthlink.net/~triplehorses/>



### **Nemeton Awenyddion: News from Cohasset**

Things are wonderful here. The weather has been divine and we still have no snow! It has been good for too many reasons. We got two new members last winter solstice and both came from a wild horse sanctuary. One is a six month old colt whose name is "Pharoh," and a seven month old filly "Abred". Both were living in a wild herd of Spanish Mustangs until they were rounded up one month before they came to us. I've been working with them on walking the path of the serpent and making the round corral "our" sacred space. As you may well know, all of the members of our Grove are my family including our equine members. There are four of them with us now. And yeah, this year's passed by winter here like it already happened!

Deep Peace,



## Sunset Proto-Grove: News from California

Today driving to work I noticed that spring has arrived. There are new lambs in the field. They have slowly been appearing since Monday. The first wild mustards are blooming underneath the still barren rows of vines. The wild cherry trees, always the first to bloom are covered in pink blossoms.

The wild cherry trees remind me of a spring-time song I learned as a child. I only know it as the Popcorn Song. I sing it with my kids now, and they love it as well.

On another note, I was doing some research online the other day and came across the fact that a new regional open space preserve will be opening to the public in my county. Maybe---just maybe a new grove-site will make itself known. I plan to go over on opening day and scout it out.

All my best-  
Skye



## Duir De Danu Grove: News from California

Our weather here is about the same as yours. Last Saturday it was in the 70s, so warm that we didn't need our jackets. But it is back to the 50s, with wind and rain. The rain is all right. The Earth Mother needs it desperately.

If Dagda gets the house he wants, there will at last be a place for the Duir de Danu Grove to meet. He reports that there are trees on the land that the house is on, so we are hoping he gets it.

Speaking of trees, there is a message I would like everyone to tell everyone they know. The message is: Trees are absolutely essential for human life. That is the message. What I say next is by way of explanation, but is not part of the message. Trees give off oxygen, and humans and animals both need oxygen. I don't know what the proportion is, it's shared by algae in the oceans of Earth, but Earth's forests give off some huge percentage of the oxygen needed to survive, and take in carbon dioxide, one of those notorious greenhouse gases we hear so much about. I do not know what, if anything trees have to do with global warming. But all anyone has to remember and spread around is that trees are absolutely essential for human life.

Tegwedd ShadowDancer Co-ArchDruid and Chronicler for Duir de Danu Grove  
aka Rita Trevalyan author of

Yule Yelps [The Fattigman Files] available at <http://www.silksvault.com/booktitles/YuleYelps.htm>

Arianrhod's Bracelet available at <http://www.silksvault.com/booktitles/ArianrhodsBracelet.htm>

Aengus' Sweet Duet available at <http://www.silksvault.com/booktitles/AengusSweetDuet.html>

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## Poison Oak Grove: News from California

Publisher of "A Druid Missal-Any"

This falls under the topic [be careful what you wish for.](#)

I have probably told the story in the News of the Grove before how in the first year of our grove the then Arch Druid jokingly said that for our Oimeic Social we should have for desert It's It of the Ewe. For those of you who are not from the San Francisco Bay area, there is a locally made ice cream treat called an It's It. It is an ice cream sandwich made with oatmeal cookies and covered in chocolate. Not to be daunted I made goat's milk ice cream for that first Oimeic and included the recipe in the Oimeic 2001 issue of A Druid Missal-Any.

Still, I did not feel the challenge was adequately met. Making It's It of the Ewe remained in the back of my mind, ever a dream waiting to be fulfilled until this Oimeic. Goat's milk ice cream I could make. Oatmeal cookies I could make. But what about the goat or sheep's milk chocolate?

This sounded like something that would be available at the health food store but the two that I checked, one of which is quite large, did not carry either. I did a search online and found Choco-Lina sheep's milk chocolate and Choco-Lisa goat's milk chocolate from Austria, but they were only available through mail order from Austria or from England. Where to go next? Perhaps someone on the RDNA email list would know as there are members there who live in rural areas or have candy making skills. I got several replies. One person suggested buying a goat. Then Tully of the Order of the Mists Proto-grove suggested a simple method of taking a high quality bar of dark chocolate, such as Lindt, with about 30-40% cocoa butter to it and adding goat's milk to make the milk chocolate coating. The percentages he recommended were two to three parts chocolate to one part milk for a more solid consistency with the more chocolate, the thicker. I ended up using Lindt Excellence 70% Cocoa Dark Extra Fine.

I made the ice cream (the freezer-type ice cream maker broke so I had to churn the ice cream by hand) and the oat meal cookies (using organic Scottish oats). The assembling of the It's Its had to happen pretty quickly so the ice cream wouldn't melt especially with sandwiches being dipped into the hot chocolate. I quickly wrapped the finished It's Its and put them in the freezer.

They were very much enjoyed by the grove (though I would like to work on the cookie recipe a bit) except the very person who made the suggested was not able to come! Our Preceptor (who was AD then) had to work on that Sunday as he is in IT and when duty calls, you've got to go. Somehow I am a bit suspicious that he really did have to work knowing his affinity (or lack thereof) for goat's milk. Not to worry I still have some extras wrapped up safely in the freezer next time we have a High Day Social at my house.



## The Celts

Edition 5.0,  
By Cromm? mac Nessa  
Part Two

**Celtic Differences**



The Celtic cultures of the Iron Age had primarily linguistic connections with one another, and were not all of the same ethnic origins (this fact cannot be stressed too much, as it bears strongly on the meaning of "Celtic" as a term of identification). There are myths about "the coming of the Celts" and such things in the literature of the Old Irish and Middle Welsh periods, and there have been additional myths about the Celts ever since. Some of these myths involve invasions, some involve treaties, some may involve other explanations for "the coming of the Celts." There is no doubt that Celtic culture, particularly the linguistic aspects thereof, owes a great debt to the Indo-Europeans; and this can also be seen, for example, in the motifs accompanying certain Gods and Goddesses, both stylistic and narrative motifs, which are obviously connected to the myths and iconography of the Indo-European cultures. Today, the Goidels (speakers of "Q-Celtic" languages) and Brythons (speakers of "P-Celtic" languages) are the major divisions of the peoples known as Celts, and this distinction is one of language. Scholars disagree as to when exactly the linguistic differences between these two groups of tribes began, but it boils down to either before or after the arrival of Celtic languages in the British Isles. Pretty simple. My *opinion*, based on the apparently Q-Celtic nature of Celtiberian and the obviously P-Celtic nature of Gaulish, Galatian, and Lepontic, and the undeniable kinship between Gaulish and Brittonic, is that the distinction began before any "Celtic migrations" to (or Celtic influences on) the Isles.

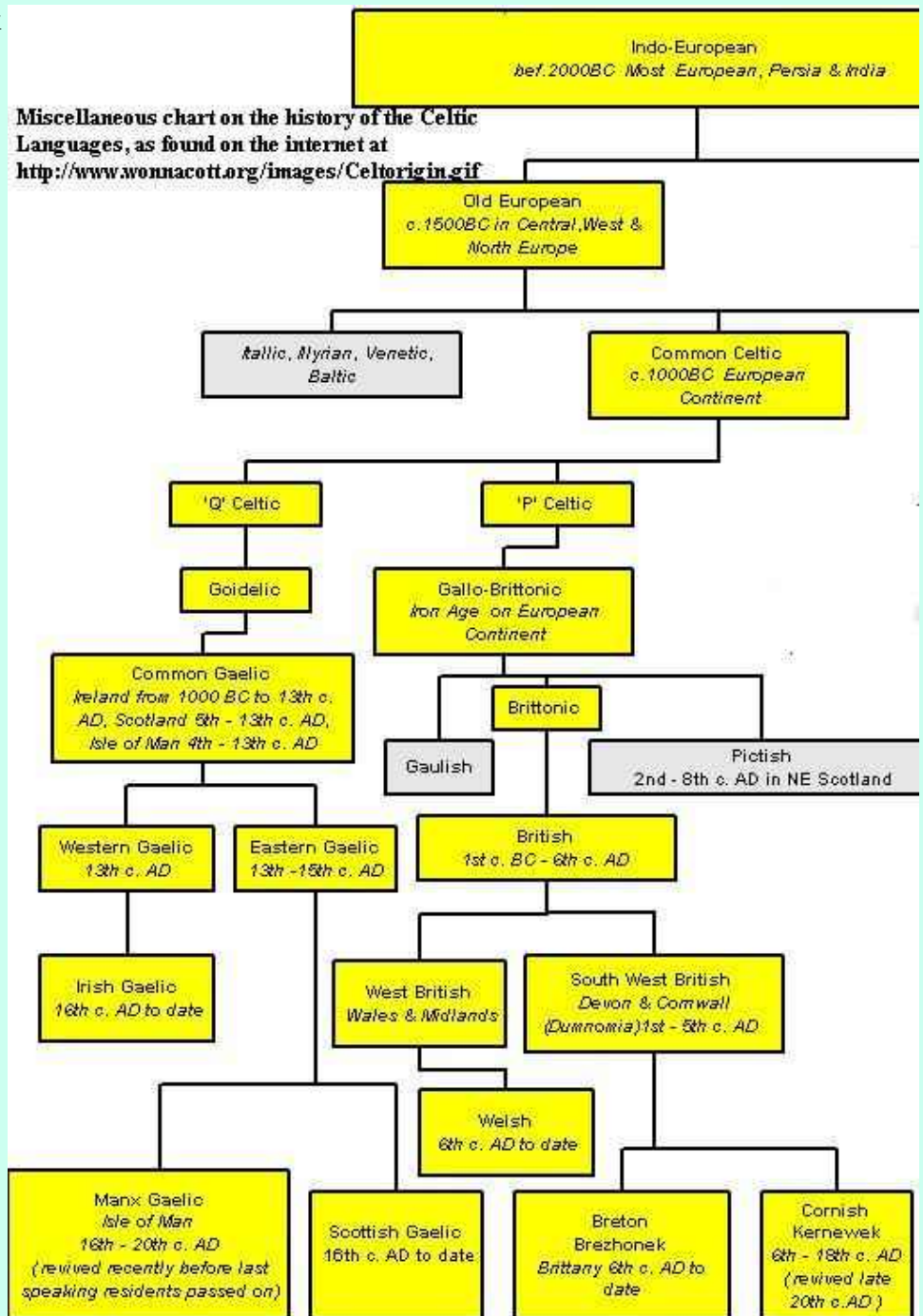
As I said, the F?i, who came to be known as Go?il, began to influence Ireland heavily in the first century BCE, and are said to have come direct by sea from Europe, apparently from the Celtiberian lands of what are now northern Spain, without passing through Great Britain first as the others had done. It should be noted, however, that Q-Celtic languages are the older variation, and therefore the fact that both Celtiberian and Early Irish were Q-Celtic does not prove that the Goidelic languages descended from Celtiberian, as they could both simply have been linguistically conservative without any ancestor-descendant relationship. In fact, the surviving vestiges of Celtiberian do not resemble scientific reconstructions of Ancient Goidelic much; they are both definitely Celtic languages, and both definitely Q-Celtic, and so they have some common features, but not enough to suggest that one is derived from the other, nor to suggest that they are even as closely related as, say, Brittonic and Galatian. That said, however, I see no reason to doubt that the F?i would have told the truth more or less about their own origins, regardless of their politically-motivated misrepresentation of the traditions of other Irish Celts; we have been given some evidence in recent years from DNA studies, which strongly suggest that the Aboriginal British and Irish, like the Basques, were of predominantly Pre-Indo-European ancestry (for those who claim to be "Celtic" and advocate racist nonsense, I'll spell this out bluntly: "Pre-Indo-European" means "Non-Indo-European," that is, "*non-Caucasian*"), and that their descendants are still so to this day. Of course there is no such thing as "pure" blood anywhere; all of us are a mixture of several ancestries. But this does suggest (to some) that a migration at some time in distant prehistory from what is now Spain into what are now the British Isles is not out of the question. This evidence also demonstrates that customs associated with certain pre-Celtic sites in western Europe and the British Isles may have themselves, occasionally, pre-Celtic origins, and may have passed into Celtic Tradition from pre-Celtic cultures.

There has been much speculation about these people and their megalith-building culture, and various names have been applied to them. They have featured in the myths and legends of the Celtic cultures, and done so in connection with the Sidhe mounds, stone circles, standing stones, cromlechs, and so on. In many cases, these structures are specifically associated in the myths and legends with the Dead, that is, the Ancestors. In some cases, these structures are also connected with Gods and Goddesses. In some cases, they are related to figures whose ultimate nature remains mysterious, but Who may be Gods or who may be Nature Spirits.

The Ancestors have always been a part of the consciousness of Celtic peoples, and honouring them has always been a part of Celtic Heathen Sacred Tradition. The Aboriginal Europeans apparently mingled with the Indo-Europeans, and perhaps especially with the Proto-Celtic groups. Recent DNA studies provide strong support for a conclusion that there are several models for the spread of language and other aspects of culture, including mutual influences, territorial skirmishes, trade, military service, diplomacy, technological advances, treaties, hunting/gathering/foraging, athletic competition, poetic competition, musical competition, storytelling competition, legal activities, business deals, religious ceremonies, seasonal/agricultural/pastoral

festivals, philosophical discussions, the establishment of educational systems for various trades and vocations, etc. These may or may not always include "invasions" and "conquest" or even "migrations," though some of these things seem to have happened from time to time. There is not always much in the way of archaeological evidence of a battle even in cases where the exact location of a major battle is known with certainty. Migrations would, however, theoretically leave some trace in the DNA of the people of a region to which migrations occurred.

Apparently, the people who speak what we call "Celtic languages" are largely genetically unchanged from pre-Indo-European times, with the most Indo-European mix of DNA in more eastern areas, where known Indo-European cultures and peoples are recorded in History as



migrating/invading/raiding/colonising. What are we to make of this? We are to make of it a *cultural diffusion and influence*, and take into account the fact that the pre-Celtic peoples eventually became Celtic, in the sense of language and the cultures which developed from those linguistic perspectives. We are also to note the legacy of the pre-Celtic culture. Those cultures did not die out, they were not wiped out, they were not conquered. **They developed into the modern Celtic cultures**, with mutual influence from the Indo-European cultures leading to a consistent mingling to produce a synthesis. As such, we cannot dismiss the megalithic structures of the "pre-Celtic" peoples of western Europe from the idea of what it means to be "Celtic" (though this does not mean that the builders were themselves "Celts;" it seems evident that they were

members of non-Celtic, and even non-Indo-European, cultures but their descendants were Celts, and so those structures *are* part of Celtic heritage, arguments to the contrary notwithstanding). Were those structures built by "Druids?" No. Were the builders of those structures among the Ancestors and/or Predecessors of later "Druids"? Absolutely. Ancestors of Body, Ancestors of Soul, and Ancestors of Spirit. The Gods and Goddesses of the older cultures would also have survived, though the mutual influence would naturally lead to evolution of concepts about Divine Personalities.

Certainly we know that the megalithic structures have been part of Celtic Literature since the earliest days, with the Sidhe mounds and their mysterious inhabitants featuring prominently in many stories. There are practices which supposedly predate the arrival of any Celtic linguistic influence on western Europe which survive long after "the coming of the Celts." The question of continuance of the cultures of the Aboriginal Irish and the Aboriginal British, then, is answered with a resounding "Yes!" Did they survive unaltered? No, of course not. Motivations, dramatic presentations, ceremony, narrative, and many other features which might accompany any given practice may be quite different from their aboriginal significance. But at least some of the practices and beliefs did survive into the beginning of the Celtic period (and some survived longer, and some survive to this day, it would seem), even if their accompaniments might not all be identical to what they were *ab origine*.

Who, then, are the *Daoine Sidhe*? They are some of our own Ancestors, of Body, of Soul, and/or of Spirit. They are some of our Forefathers and Foremothers. They are some of our Gods and our Goddesses. They are the Spirits of Nature and Place. They are the Old Ones from before "the coming of the Celts." They are the Old Ones since "the coming of the Celts."

Did the Celts actually migrate into western Europe, did they invade, did they spread their culture by trade? There were probably instances where each of these situations, and others, played their r?es in the spread of Indo-European linguistic and cultural influence. No one single method of cultural spread is likely to be the answer. Rather, there were some migrations, there was some trade, there were some invasions, there was some diplomacy, there was some sharing of hostages and thus treaties, there were some arranged marriages and thus alliances, there were some shared offspring and thus dynasties (of a sort), and there were some other ways in which the aboriginal people of western Europe and the incoming Indo-Europeans influenced one another to eventually produce the synthesis that became the basis of the Celtic cultures.

At any rate, O'Rahilly asserts that a Gallo-Brittonic form of Celtic was the dominant language of the British Isles about 800 - 100 BCE, and that a Goidelic Celtic language began to take over in Ireland in the late first century BCE. Other speakers of various forms of Celtic still lived on the European Continent.

## **"Pre-Celtic People" in the Isles**

Who, then, were the aboriginal people whom the first Celtic visitors to the British Isles would have met?

These people were not Indo-European, and many various speculations about their origins have come forth over the years. I suspect that the aboriginal British and Irish were a part of the "Northern Atlantic" culture (or Arctic culture), which was/is essentially those peoples called Esquimaux (Eskimo), Inuit, Siberian, Saami, Lapps, etc. The well-known authority on the Proto-Indo-European language, Julius Pokorny, also theorised that there were settlements of Esquimaux in Ireland (though T.F. O'Rahilly views this as far-fetched, and, to be sure, Pokorny's supposed basis for the theory was a bit questionable; see O'Rahilly, *op.cit.*). The suggestion that some of these people in Western Europe were Cro-Magnons and/or Neanderthals has also been put forward from time to time, and the possibility that there were such humans in the British Isles at the time is intriguing. I still feel, however, that the Arctic or "North Atlantic" culture was responsible for a large chunk of the "aboriginal" population of the British Isles and western Europe generally.

A recent newspaper article and an episode of Nova told about a series of ice- and land-bridges as the glaciers

receded at the end of the last Ice Age, which connected the northern areas of North America with Greenland, Iceland, Ireland, and the north of Great Britain, which is certainly not news, but the theory was proposed that since the "Northern Atlantic" culture seems to have arisen at this time, then there were no "Beaker People," but that this far-reaching Northern Atlantic Ocean culture were the actual so-called "Beaker Traders," which would be an explanation of similar artifacts found throughout all of those regions as well as the similarity of the "shamanic" practices of the peoples in question. More and more evidence is coming to light that suggests that Europeans and Egyptians and Phoenicians (and possibly others) may have been in touch with the Americas long before the Vikings (but let's not lose our minds in enthusiastic speculation which the scant evidence known at present does not support), and that people were in the Americas long before Clovis. The business about Americans before Clovis does seem to be backed by solid evidence, but there have been challenges to the right of scientific study in some cases (see, e.g., Nova ).



For an interesting alternative theory, see the 1997 interview with Dennis Stanford (chairman of the Anthropology Department at the Natural Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution) [here](#). (seems to be a dead link, I need to check with Croman.)

and see also Ben Fenton's article "First Americans were Britons who went west," in issue 1629 of *Electronic Telegraph* (this link appears to be dead, but perhaps someone can find the article from the information here provided).

The references to the Beaker People are particularly interesting, in that Philip Carr-Gomm (Chosen Chief of the Order of Bards, Ovates, and Druids), in *The Elements of the Druid Tradition* (pp. 11-15), asserts that the fusion of the Beaker People with the so-called "Battle-Axe folk" who came from the Eurasian Steppes was the union which produced the Celts; I would have to agree. Other, somewhat similar speculations regarding the Beaker People and the Battle-Axe folk can be found [here](#).

## **The Celts in the British Isles**

Some Celtic tribes were still in Europe, primarily in the areas of France, northern Spain, Poland, Switzerland, Bohemia, Belgium, western and northern Germany. Those in the British Isles were the Brittonic tribes in Britain and Ireland and Goidelic tribes in Ireland.

The Brittonic tribes in what became Scotland were the Britons of Strathclyde and the Pretani. The Brittonic tribes in other areas of Britain eventually became the Welsh and the Cornish. However, at this early point in time, these divisions are anachronisms. The Brittonic Celts of Britain were not so different in this pre-Roman era. There was no geographic division between the Welsh and the Britons of Strathclyde. That area was later conquered by the Romans, creating the division, and then conquered by the Angles, Saxons, Frisians, and Jutes, adding further to the division, and finally by the Normans, at which point the division was thick indeed.

The Brythonic Celts today are represented by the languages of their cultures, and so the Britons of Strathclyde and the Scottish Pretani who were once Brittonic Celts, but now speak a Germanic language, Broad Scots, and a Goidelic language, Scottish Gaelic (more properly "Gaelic"), are not considered "Brythonic Celts." The descendants of the Picts, who once had their own language that was probably Brittonic (and from which language, called Ivernian or Iuernian, we have apparently only two surviving



samples and a few suggested loanwords; see Appendix 1), today speak Goidelic languages, as do the descendants of the Laigin and the Irish Picts, and certainly those of the F?i, and when they don't speak Goidelic languages, they speak Germanic languages like Broad Scots or English. None of these, therefore, can today be considered "Brythonic," unless they have learned and embraced a Brythonic Celtic language and its culture.

The Brythonic nations today are thus *Cymru* (Wales) and *Kernow* (Cornwall) in Britain, and *Breizh* (Brittany) in France. Cornish is said to be a dead language, but there is a revival in progress. See [CornishLinks](#).

As the Romans conquered the Gauls, the Insular Brittonic *teut?* began to prepare for what might come. When the Romans invaded Britain in the first century of the Vulgar Era after having already conquered the Celts in France and Spain, they met with stronger resistance, because the British Celts had begun to prepare, but still had not united enough to truly stop the Roman military machine. This again was due to the Celtic love of tribal liberty (call this an "anti-imperialistic confederation" and note that "confederation" implies an opposition to, and mistrust of, centralised government).

The Romans never conquered northern Britain (present-day *Alba*, or Scotland), did not fully subdue the Welsh, and never even tried to take Ireland. Evidence (scant, but there) of at least one Romano-British outpost in eastern Ireland does not support any claims of "Roman invasion" of Ireland.

The Romans had already started a propaganda campaign against the Celts in their war on the Gauls, and referred to the Celts as barbarians and savages, as well as accused the Druids of human sacrifice (of which there is no unambiguous archaeological evidence), and seeing the Druidic priesthood in such a position of authority, and knowing that they were actively encouraging resistance, the Romans slaughtered every Druid and Druidess they could in southern Britain, ending in a huge massacre on the Isle of M? (also known as Anglesey). Some have claimed that this was the end of the Druids, while others have claimed that from this massacre a few Welsh Druids escaped to the Isle of Idha (which later became called "Iona"), off the west coast of Scotland. Regardless of the latter possibility, Celtic Heathenry and its priestly class survived among the Pretani of northern and eastern Alba, the Britons of Strathclyde, the Goidels in Ireland, and the D? Riada of the Western Highlands and the Western Isles of Scotland.

Let me repeat that.

The north of the island of Britain was never conquered by the Romans and they never tried to invade Ireland. The Celtic Heathen Sacred Tradition was retained among the other Celtic nations as well (probably to a lesser extent), but in Gaul and Britannia the Priesthood was at least severely weakened if not completely wiped out. However, the Sacred Tradition and the Priestly class of the Celtic Heathen peoples survived the Roman conquest of Gaul and Britannia, at least in Ireland and what is now Scotland. Most of what is now Scotland and all of the Isles in between it and Ireland, and Ireland itself, preserved Celtic Heathen Sacred Tradition, and Druids continued to flourish in those places well past the time of the Massacre on the Isle of M?.

In time the Romans left Britain. According to some historians, they left to attend to troubles in the east and with the Vandals and such, but this is spin intended to save face for the Romans. The "Picti" and the Irish raiding them constantly was the real reason that they left. After all, the Romans even built a wall across Britannia to keep the Picts out, and had to retreat to another wall built subsequently, though of course, those "historians" who are blinded by their love of Rome will always refuse to admit that the Romans could ever have been afraid of such "barbarians." An issue of *British Archaeology* [Issue 58, April 2001, ISSN 1357-4442] featured an article called "Defensive Spikes Point to Roman Fear of the North," which bears out my assertion that the Picts were much more than an annoyance to the Romans in Britannia. To read the article, go to:

<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/ba/ba58/news.shtml#item3>

The literature of the Welsh and the Irish preserve the majority of what we know of the myths and traditions of the Heathen Celts. The Goidels' lore is preserved primarily among the Irish literature (and Oral Tradition that survived among the Scots, some of which was later recorded by such researchers as Alexander Carmichael), and the Brythons' lore among the Welsh, but when the Romans left Britannia, the culture of the Welsh was already forever altered, and it was about this time that the northwestern Germanic tribes (Angles, Saxons, Frisians, and Jutes) began to invade the areas of Britain formerly under Roman control, eventually establishing England and separating the British Celts further.

Wales (and for a while, Cornwall) remained independent, as did Alba (the area that eventually became Scotland), which by this time had a colony of Goidelic-speaking Celts of the Ivernian D? Riata living in the western isles and in the Argyll region.

These were the Scotti, the Scots Gaels.

### **To Be Continued at Beltane**

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<http://groups.msn.com/CromansGrove/whatsnew.msnw> and (eventually) in Cromm?'s forthcoming book.



### **William Blake: Poet-Painter, Visionary, and Chosen Chief**

By Celdwyn

William Blake one of OBOD's [early] chosen chiefs said, "The wisest of the Ancients considered what is not too explicit as the fittest for instruction, because it rouses the faculties to act." 1

### **Blake, a Druid?**

Yes, William Blake (1757-1827), noted poet, painter and visionary was also, and perhaps foremost, a druid. Perhaps what makes such a man a druid comes from an innate trust in the truth of the phenomenal world and the Absolute realm. That is to say, Blake's grounding in both the realities of the human realm and the mystical reality of the Divine realm made him both a mystic and a skeptic. Whatever attitudes he may have held, it is of a certainty that he was a Seer of Truth, and that in itself made him a likely candidate for 19th-Century druidism.

William Blake has long since been lauded as a visionary, poet and illustrator. But only recently has it come forward that he was an unacknowledged druid. In fact he did much to form the views and attitudes of modern druidry along with William Stukeley and Henry Hurle. Ross Nichols (1975), another notable chosen chief, found Blake to be "Profoundly conscious of great supernal design" and quite adequate to the "mystical side of any religion". In fact, it was said that he was a rather Intuitive teacher, often using "hyperbole of the highest truths" to illustrate a point of mystical origin:

Ancient man contained in his mighty limbs  
All things in heaven and earth



- (Nichols, pp. 18-19.

Now I a fourfold vision see  
And a fourfold vision is given to me  
Tis fourfold in my supreme delight  
And three fold in soft Beulahs night  
And twofold Always. May God us keep

- From Single vision & Newton's sleep (Blake, p 722)



The apple tree never asks the beech how he shall grow, nor the Lyon the horse; how he shall take his pray.  
- (Blake, p37)

One can not only glimpse the magnificent depth of Blake's verse, but also the cynicism. When Blake writes on the sleeping science of Newton, he objects to his predilection for leaving out the profound nature of God, man and human experience. The poet-visionary was always in search of Self and Nature over materialism; always seeking the spiritual within the mundane.

At one time his visit to the Magical Island of Scotland brought him to such a profound understanding of this kind of altered state experience that he was quite overwhelmed. Iona was a community in Scotland, a scattered hermitage desert at the end of the island of Mull. Its main principle was a Communion of devotees that practiced unitive consciousness with the Divine, achieving an ecstatic state that they believed would never cease to be. Blake found in these simple monks seeds for a spiritual reformation as well as self-renewal, based on the tenets of Iona's founder, Columcille, who Blake realized was a visionary not unlike himself.

I rest not from my great task!  
To open the Eternal Worlds, to open the Immortal Eyes  
Of Man inwards into the Worlds of Thought: into Eternity  
Ever expanding in the Bosom of God. The Human Imagination  
O Saviour pour upon me thy Spirit of meekness & love:  
Annihilate Selfhood in me, be thou all my life!

And later when he was Chief:

I assert for myself that I do not behold the outward creation, and that to me it is hindrance and not Action; it is as the dirt upon my feet, no part of me. What, it will be questioned, when the Sun rises, do you not see a round disc of fire somewhat like a Guinea? Oh no, no, I see an innumerable Company of the Heavenly Host, crying Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty.

- William Blake Vision of the Last Judgment 1810.



Not well appreciated during his lifetime, he was widely considered to be an eccentric at best and somewhat of a madman at worst. However, he never was daunted by social criticism, preferring to exonerate the truth he saw no matter the form it took Social injustice, political skepticism, religious insight these seem to be everything within the two realms of reality that he desired to reproduce. His visionary insight seemed to blend Creator and creative into one emergent truth, whether it was verse or visual arts, Christian mysticism or metaphoric hyperbole. Nonetheless, there was always a hidden connection to the path of druidry.

## **Blake, Philosopher or Poet?**

In 1789, Blake became interested in James Emanuel Swedenborg's ideas of manifested spiritual realms, which emphasized the manifestation of the after-life. Swedenborg (1688-1772) was an 18th-Century

religious reformer and visionary, who promoted a Neoplatonic attitude to Divine transcendence. He maintained that there was a definite correspondence between the physical human realm and the Absolute spiritual planes of existence, and that one's subsequent journey through these higher and higher spheres of existence would bring one ever closer to God. He promoted this in an occult movement within the Orthodox Church of England, which he named The New Jerusalem, to which many fellow theosophists, including William Blake and many notables of his time attended. But Blake was less attracted to the anti-ecclesiastical bent of Swedenborg's radicalism than he was to his esoteric mystical themes. Still, for a while, he gravitated between Swedenborg's mystical after-life vision and Boehme's energetic view of Soul-Self, that is, right up until the writing of *The Marriage*:

By the time Blake wrote *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790), Blake had seen through Swedenborg's brand of spirituality. He thought that Swedenborg was wrapping religion all up in clean linen and there was much to be desired in Swedenborg's vision of God. Disenchanted with pseudo Christian platitudes, Blake sought to go beyond Swedenborg's idealism of heaven and hell; good and evil. Ultimately, Blake finally rejected Swedenborg's radical reforms and turned to Jacob Boehme (1574-1624), finding in the Theosophical mystic a spiritual viewpoint more cogent with his own inner visions.

Boehme influence Blake on many levels, not the least of it was his views on the integration of Divine soul into Source. Boehme's treatise on *The SuperSensual Life or The Life Which is Above Sense*; greatly influence the 33 year-old poet and redirected his focus to a more humanistic viewpoint, as seen in the following description of Boehme's SuperSensual Life :

Two DIALOGUES between a disciple and his Master showing How the Soul may attain to Divine HEARING and VISION - to a life above sense; and What its Childship in the Natural and Supernatural Life is; and How it passeth out of Nature into God, and out of God into Nature and Self again; also What its Salvation and Perdition are and What is the Partition Wall that separates the Soul from God and How the Breaking down of this Partition is effected; of the two Wills and two Eyes within the Fallen Soul; and What is the shortest WAY to the attainment of the Internal Kingdom of God and Why so few Souls do find It.  
( Jacob Behmen (Jacob Boehme) 1622; (Bibliomania.com Limited, 2005)

Still, these two great esoteric philosophers tremendously influenced Blake, and he brought much of their philosophies together with his own inner vision in its entirety into druidry, and, eminently into his poetry:

To see a world in a grain of sand  
And heaven in a wild flower  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand  
And eternity in an hour.  
-(From *Auguries of Innocence* 1788))



## **The Visionary:**

Blake believed in the infinitude of spiritual perceptions, yet he did not feel that there was any grounds for a natural religion (1788). He felt that all religions were an expression of man's inward nature, or in his words poetic genius, which is attained only through artistic and/or spiritual imagination. Blake felt that all religions were man-made; that they were universal and essentially, one human institution (1788), and that only the visionary life was the rightful path to human tranquility and emergence with the Divine essence. Since Blake felt that movement of Divine energy was essentially etheric or energetic, most of his views were in direct opposition to rationalists of his time such as John Lock and David Hume. He confuted all literary avenues to 18th-century philosophy that clung to physical perception, reason, and the limits of knowledge. In *Songs of Innocence* (1789), Blake evokes a purely pastoral world before the incongruity of Adult dual consciousness can set in. Not until *Songs of Experience* (1789) & the emergence of these two lyrical works (1789-1794), does he separate human, natural, and divine states.

Thus, the traditional hierarchy of society (including its propensity for declarative religion), which Swedenborg advocated (along with Medieval scholars who saw the Fall of man as a happy sin, in that it presaged the life, death, and resurrection of Christ), which Blake once regarded as a benevolent position conceived in Innocence; he now in experience perceives the whole institution as a vast exploitative deceit. As Blake would say:

Experience brings a bitter wisdom.  
Harmony has been lost but insight comes in its place.  
-(Songs of Experience, 1789/94)



Thus, the prophetic bard would say, in the wisdom of Experience lies the possibility of reorganizing man's divided self; if not of regaining the lost innocence, then of forging a new unity (Paley, 1976, P.336). Blake might phrase it this way: innocence dwells with wisdom but never with ignorance [and] without contraries [there] is no progression. Where progression is a condition of being, [and] where the harmony lost in the Fall is regained. Blake saw the regeneration of spirit and spirituality as energy, and any and all movement towards that divine state was the way to Eternity in an Hour.

### **The Marriage of Opposites:**

Blake sought to bring to balance his belief in the natural progression within the phenomenal world and the transcendence or emergence with Divine nature. This was never more clearly demonstrated than in his prophetic diatribe against organized religion in favor of the human soul seeking its natural source. In 1790, Blake wrote and illustrated *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (touted as an apocalyptic satire), but it was, not only a parody on the times, but an actual attack on Swedenborg's theology, Milton's ethics (*Paradise Lost*), and the Biblical morality of church and state. Blake portrayed evil in the representative form of an Angel (reason and temperance); good in the human-like figure of the Devil (energy and passion). The former was characterized as unnecessary restraint on spiritual insight and human self-expression, while the latter was seen as a natural aspiration and thus had great value. In the final engraving, Blake portrays the Devil devouring the angel, thus prophesying the coming spiritual revolution.

For many scholars (then and now) this was an apparent corruption of Good and a further demonstration of Blake's madness. But, in the sense of the Celtic, the union of the dark and light was not intended as a victory over good, but rather the transformation, or even the transcendence beyond evil and good.

From time immemorial, Creation itself has been vouchsafed as death/life/death or the reunification with the divine essence understood to be a reunion of all things with the One who has no author, the Uncreated One. The Celts understood this basic principle of the unification of life in its dual nature; and through the recombination of the polarity of life/death, they formed all other unities male/female, sun/moon, light/dark, mother/father and set them in a context which was developmentally fluid and highly individuated.

\*(Saunders, 2002, p. 10)



By the time Blake conceived his major work, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, he had become dispassionate about Swedenborg's view of good and evil; the bright always overcoming the dark. In the end he came to the point where he believed that religion (Christianity) only masked the reality of good and evil; that, contrary to overcoming one over the other, heaven and hell arise together and co-exist within the human

boundaries of earthly incarnation. This was the essence of the union of the contraries (merging of angel and devil) in *The Marriage*.

Blake's effort here was a satirical anatomy of Swedenborg's overt sweetness, a mixed prose and verse attack on what he strongly felt was nothing less than 18th-Century grave intellectual error. Blake thus posed the angel as the villain and the just man as the devil. But this was no simple reversal of good and evil. Blake's intent was on juxtaposing the eternal cycle between the 'cast out' just man (human nature) and the 'ever lofty' angelic villain (Christian dualism): nature giving way to death; the eternal villain usurping the path of life ever into death. He asserted that this never-ending cycle would continue to play out, until and unless, the awakened Self (the Eye that sees) cast out nature's form. (This is very like the Buddhist concept of "Form is form; and emptiness is emptiness. Likewise, there is no form, no emptiness only suchness.") But from the context of 18th-Century Orthodoxy, this idea was something of a hard sell. Still, from the standpoint of a druid) wild-wise-one), not an untenable stance at all.

What's more, he thought that as the cycle intensified, the evil (nihilism) would increase exponentially. He saw this reflected in the extant villainies of British society as it tried to fend off the three great revolutions of his time Industrial, 1760; American, 1776; French, 1789). Blake clearly understood that opposites must arise together, that oneness can only emerge from duality; hence heaven and hell must arise coincidentally before they can be devoured or vanquished, much less, merged. So it is that "Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence" (Bloom, 1971, p. 65). For Blake existence was 'to be human' and to 'be human' there must be 'progression'; without it there can be no union of opposites, no creative strife towards oneness.

In Blake's time there was no comprehension of the mergence of opposites, no integration of light and shadow; thus the marriage was viewed as an incomprehensible interplay between reason and energy, where the former was lauded and the latter was feared as yet another path to Satan. Blake struggled with this backwardness, but he dealt with it by eventually labeling Christian dualism as a hindrance to the progression of the human spirit, whereas the energies of body and soul were nothing less than the natural, emergent truth of the inner imagination, the interiority of Being that we today know as enlightenment. Consider this fragment from *The Marriage*:

Man has no Body distinct from his Soul.  
For that, call'd Body is a portion of Soul,  
discern'd by the five Senses,  
the chief inlets of Soul in this age.  
Energy is the only life  
and is from the Body.  
And Reason is the bound or outward circumference of Energy.  
Energy is Eternal Delight.

## **Blake, 1790**

Thus for Blake, to act is a virtue, while to maintain the status quo is the accidental indifference of human nature. Further, to hinder another is to restrain action, and hence revoke virtue. The path of humanness is the manifestation of both sides of man's dual nature (the prolific and the devourer), without which there can be no turning to the imaginal, no effort towards progress to the Divine.

But Blake takes a turn here that is not so easily understood. According to Harold Bloom, (1971) Blake's risen body becomes the expanding imagination, while the finite corrupt nature of man transforms to a Divine emanation. He thus held that the Doors of Perception were cleansed by sensual enjoyment, the wild-wisdom side of human nature, while the body and the imaginal rose to mergence with the Divine. Blake's proverbs (teachings) were clustered in four phases: 1) apocalyptic, sexual in nature and includes:



images of plowing and harvest, water and wine, prayer and praise, baptism and intercourse ; 2) Levels of Moral Rectitude, including: strength and weakness, desire and restraint, body and soul, wisdom and foolishness ; 3) animal powers (more antinomian in nature), includes: violence, revenge, law, and religion ; and 4) Doors of Perception, which included matters of time and eternity, space and form, art and nature, cycles and comparisons of the elements and the human body (Paraphrased from: Bloom, 1971, p. 67).



Blake's dialectical stance, with its apotheosis of the physical and its simultaneous rejection of the merely natural, is most frequently misunderstood at just this point. Against the supernaturalist, Blake asserts the reality of the body as being all of the soul that the five senses can perceive. Against the naturalists, he asserts the greater reality of the imaginative over the given body. The naturalist or vitalist, in Blake's view, teaches heat without light; the orthodox theist wants light without heat. Blake insists upon both, and finds his image of consummated marriage between the two in poetic genius or imagination.

\* Bloom, 1971, p. 70

### **The Druid Renaissance:**

Blake strongly felt that the tradition of secrecy within the Order would lead to misunderstanding and provoke misinterpretation. Still, to be the chief of a secret order and, at the same time, to write critical and tersely to the English public at large, must have appealed to such a keen and satirical mind. But William Blake did not coddle the weak-minded or did he suffer fools lightly.

Blake, again a singularly truthful man saw the created shapes between man and God under two guises each had its Spectre and its Emanation, its direr form and its blessed one. Blake did not believe in spelling truth (divine or otherwise) out. His sharp wit and profound insights were often couched in paradoxical and aphoristic language. For example, when he characterized his most famous creative shapes he put forth only that: each had its Spectre and its Emanation, its direr form and its blessed one . Nothing more was forthcoming. It was up to the reader/receiver of that insight to attest to its truth; not for Blake to delineate the vagaries of its meaning. This fundamental principle was so elementary a truth for Blake that any, who did not immediately come to understand it, simply was not worth his time to explicate his thought. Thus, he acquired a reputation for indifference, boarding on apathy.

Blake hated the obvious negative consequences of England's Industrial Revolution (1760), the travesties of war of the American Revolution (1776), and the inhumanity of the French Revolution (1789); he anticipated the establishment of a New Jerusalem in England, his beloved green and pleasant land . Ironically, his ambivalence and ecstatic revelations came out in his prophetic writings throughout the 1790's and early 1800's, where he expressed his lifelong concern over the soul and its potential to free its natural energies from reason, and this, of course, included freeing itself from organized religion. Therefore, it wasn't unexpected that he aligned himself and his teachings with the principles of Druidry, a long well-established tradition of truth, wisdom and, for all intent, Godliness.

### **Blake as Chosen Chief:**

Blake simply never denied being a druid; because in point of fact, no one ever had asked him, save on the two rare occasions where his affirmation was not seriously considered. In 1803 In Chichester (England), he refused to take the oath upon the Bible at his trial, because he avowed that he was a druid. Elsewhere, he did mention in the preface to one of his books that, in fact, he was a druid but even this written avowal was taken for one of his quite frequent hyperboles. Beyond this He simply ceased to acknowledge his druid

standing. Other than these rare occasions, most did not believe him to have had any standing amid the ancient order of druids (English or Welsh) until quite recently (Blake was the CC from 1799 to his death in 1827). Even one of his most famous researchers, Cathleen Raine was late to learn of his predilection for the deeper truths of druidry, much less the 28 years he stood as chosen chief of his order.

Raine (1968) has written extensively about Blake, delineating his metaphysical teachings as akin to a comparative study of symbol and myth. She characterizes him as a metaphysical master of great scholarship and profound expressiveness but nowhere does she suspect his spiritual insights to be grounded in druidism. (See: Ross-Nichols, P. 23).



We don't actually know much about what Blake did as an active Chosen Chief, beyond his prophetic writings and their practical applications; at least, not as a matter of public record. Much of what is known about his activities has been pieced together by circumstantial evidence. For example, Blake seemed to have banded together the flagging English druids after a protracted period (from about 1791 to 1795) of reproach and recrimination by the Welsh druids, which seemed to have centered around the issue of open druidry and a language division. It was about that time that Blake linked up with Henry Hurle's newly founded order of Ancient Druids, and hence, the subsequent merging of the Cymric lineage and the British took place.

Blake incorporated the concept of openness with his reviving order, while at the same time, eliminating Public druidry. Thus the Welsh druids could side-step having to offer public ceremony while the national love for poetry competition through Eisteddfod could be retained. In the end, when the two orders were finally merged (around 1800), Blake Returned to the idea of inner illuminations, which were kept strictly within the Order, while the more public and universal rituals were openly allowed along with the Eisteddfod (or national poetry competitions). The year after he took over as chief of the English Druids, he at Hayley's instigation went to live in Felpham in Sussex for about three years, where he, not only completed art illustrations for Cowper, but also, devised the Basic groundwork of the druidic rituals, largely based on his conceptual work dealing with the shapes-- (Shapes and meanings; engraved in 1796, were the core of his essential mysticism). Thus the obvious conclusion that emerges is that his poetry reflected through his shapes; then, as a mirror to the extant teaching in modern druidry. It's clear that for Blake, druidry was (and still is) a way of life that went beyond conventional religions of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. His keen perception of the cruelties and vagaries of human negativity together with his own life's inward visionary nature made him both obscurely profound and socially controversial.

According to Ross Nichols (1975), from this point on, the British druids had gained something far beyond the convergence of the Cymric-Celt lines of druidry; Blake's ideals were a scheme for the [whole] world (P. 104). Although not noted for any direct (public) writings on druidry, many of Blake's Christian mystical writings were said to be allegorical, and hence endemic to his views on the well-being of mankind. Thus, to the 19th-Century Druids Blake's Jerusalem was more than just a hyperbole or metaphor; it was meat for all humankind. It represented archetypal England, a template for all humankind. Jerusalem was written as a Parable of Jesus coming to Glastonbury to reestablish the ancient house; wherein the strength of Albion was realized. It was a recapitulation of Blake's personal mysticism and Biblical historicity; it incorporated his views on everything from sexuality to epistemology, from druidry to the reunification of divided humanity; a definite union of Christian Jerusalem and pagan Albion.

## Jerusalem



And did those feet in ancient time Walk  
upon England's mountains green?  
And was the holy Lamb of God  
On England's pleasant pastures seen?  
And did the Countenance Divine  
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?  
And was Jerusalem builded here  
Among these dark Satanic mills?  
Bring me my bow of burning gold!  
Bring me my arrows of desire!  
Bring me my spear!  
O clouds unfold!  
Bring me my chariot of fire!  
I will not cease from mental fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In England's green and pleasant land.  
- William Blake 1804/1818



### **Blake, The Man and the Myth:**

Blake's Life's Work: Beyond his major paintings and prophetic verse, Blake's unique art form was portrayed in the creative manifestation of form and verse together on one page. He self-published all but his first art book, *Poetical Sketches* (1783), which was conventionally published. After this experience, he produced all his own engravings from a copper-plate method he himself derived to incorporate both his verse and his illustrations. The majority of his work remained in manuscript form until long after his death; only attaining commercial success posthumously. He never attained fame for his own work during his lifetime, dying in poverty on August 12, 1827.

It was said that even at the end, he quarreled with those closest to him. Still, he worked until his last day, setting aside the half-completed illustrations he was commissioned to do for Dante's *Inferno*; then, singing his favorite hymns, reciting his prayers and seeing his last visions, he passed into the Otherland, peacefully. Blake's paintings and illustrations were radiantly creative and realistic; his imagination together with his mystical bent brought out color, form and theme in incredible detail coupled with a blending of his interpretative visions. Blake's verse was vibrant, long and flowing, containing immense clarity and energy and often great lyric tenderness. Blake was not clouded by convention or political opinions, but wrote with great sincerity and attunement.

Blake did not believe in religion, he thought that there was no natural religion, and that the institution of religion was man-made and hence fraudulent. He felt that good and bad had been corrupted, and for the most part, reversed; that the endless recycling of good over evil was a hindrance to the spiritual evolution of human beings. He came to believe that the only way to transcend the dual nature of heaven and hell was to rise above it; to neither accept nor reject it, but to evolve spiritually beyond it. He did this through emphasizing the interiority of spirit, focusing on the imagination and poetic genius of human beings. He felt that art and spirituality, fostered by the imaginal, were in themselves transcendent. Because of his unique views of god, nature, and spirit, he was often thought to be mad. Blake was a visionary far seeing beyond his time, perfectly suited to druidry and the perennial wisdom; his only outlet was his writing, particularly his poetry.

Blake's search for the Authentic in self and nature was everywhere present in his art, his verse and prose as well as his life. Subject to images of angels and monk-prophets since childhood in what the Celts would term the Otherworld, Blake took quite seriously his visionary states as well as his utter devotion to God

and his unshakeable belief in man's place in the universe. He held that spirituality was in the power of vision and the majesty of human imagination — only when we could finally perceive the radiance of this in all things could we become something more.

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Celdwyn, OBOD

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### **Press Release New Gaelic Language School Announced!**

Atlantic Gaelic Academy Press Release, March 1, 2007

A new Gaelic language school based in Nova Scotia, the Atlantic Gaelic Academy (AGA), has been established.

The new school will offer in-class and online courses in the Gaelic language and has a mission to increase the number of Gaelic speakers across the region.

The AGA is a non-profit corporation and its executive is comprised of Angus MacLeod, President, of Goose Cove, Cape Breton, Michael Linkletter, Vice President, of Antigonish, N.S., and Bob Leonard, Treasurer, of Fredericton, N.B.

We created the Atlantic Gaelic Academy to bring this historic language to a whole new generation of interested students of the culture, said President MacLeod. It's something we're very proud of and we look forward to serving many thousands of students of Gaelic in the years to come.

The AGA will provide programs mainly for part-time students of the language and offer a unique structured approach to learning the language. It will conduct classes at specific locations and make live Gaelic-learning classes available to remote locations through computer technology.

The school will offer a three-year program consisting of Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced levels with each level running from September through May of the following year. The program is designed to teach students to read, write, and speak Gaelic with 75% of class time devoted to Gaelic conversation. CDs and online sound files by fluent speakers are available to students on a continuous basis, and students can study and speak the language together using the AGA's online technology.

President MacLeod is enthusiastic about the endeavor, I am pleased to be associated with the AGA. I have conducted many Gaelic courses over the years and I find the AGA's program to be unique and designed to overcome many of the problems encountered by students in learning the language. Best of all, it has proven to be quite successful.

The AGA's program is available throughout North America, and there are AGA representatives across Canada and the Northeast United States.

Additional information is available on the AGA website at: [www.gaelicacademy.ca](http://www.gaelicacademy.ca).

Media Contact: Angus MacLeod, President, at (902) 453-1503, Email: [amacleod@gaelicacademy.ca](mailto:amacleod@gaelicacademy.ca)



## Druid Radio

*Brother Jeff announces that his radio program has returned to the airwaves: For those of you that, like me, happen to be plant geeks (or aspiring plant geeks) as well as druids.*

### **The Blue-Collar Gardeners Return To Radio**

AUSTIN, Texas, January 30, 2007 - Popular garden hosts Drew Demler and Jeff Rodgers announced today that they will be returning to their radio audience via internet podcast. Formerly known as the morning hosts of the Red Barn Garden Hour on KWNX, the local garden gurus left the radio scene in 2003 to further their landscape careers. After a long hiatus and much demand, the two have decided to once again join forces to bring their unique brand of fun and factual garden advice to the Austin area.

The Blue Collar Gardeners weekly internet podcast can be found, along with tons of great garden advice, at <http://www.bluecollargardeners.com>.



## Irish theme at Philadelphia Flower Show

By ALISON LAPP, The Associated Press

Fri Mar 2, 9:58 AM ET

Shamrocks have long enjoyed a monopoly on evoking the luck of the Irish, but at the Philadelphia Flower Show this year, tulips, rhododendrons and azaleas are giving the old classic some competition.

The Legends of Ireland is the theme for the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's annual show, running March 4-11 in the Pennsylvania Convention Center. It could be called the Emerald Isle's greatest hits.

Leprechauns made of ivy wear impish smiles as they paint a rainbow that dips into a pot of gold-coin yellow leaves. Trickles of water make natural music streaming off the cords of an oversized harp. A cobblestone path leads to a quaint village front, complete with a wool shop, jewelry store and pub.

Without a pub, it's not a town, John Young said of Vallygael, the quintessential Irish village that he dreamed up with his colleagues at the Mens Garden Club of Philadelphia.

Their display of greenery and woodwork relies on bold colors that would stand out in an Irish fog and the warm culture that invites insiders into village shops made attractive inside and out.

It's often said in Ireland that if you want to find a really good pub, look at the outside for fresh paint and fresh flowers, Young said. Then you're pretty much assured the food and drink inside will be good.

Sam Lemheney, the show's director of design, said the Celts' rich storytelling heritage guided his work.

The feature exhibit in the center of the show's 10 landscaped acres was inspired by the legend of Tir-Na-Nog—the land of the young.

The trees always have leaves, the flowers never stop blooming and the smell of spring is always in the air, Lemheney said. It's just perfect.

At the show, that translates into giant man-made tree trunks reaching skyward, above a floor of daffodils and ferns that one might imagine as the preferred home for Ireland's mythical faeries.

Beyond the wood, which shows off Ireland's natural beauty, the Knot Garden flaunts the artistic skill honed for centuries by the island's residents. Colorful cut glass and blooming annuals meld together to form sparkling versions of tradition Celtic designs, spread over a mock hillside.

The glisten helps the garden hold its own in the shadow of the spikes and turrets of a castle that could have housed one of Ireland's noble families. Planted walls and a perennial garden surround the outer quarters and lead visitors to the castle stage, where Ragus, a dance and musical act from Galway Bay, Ireland, will give daily performances.

A free daily lecture series also will provide guests with everything from tips on organic gardening to lessons in Ireland's cultural past.

To start it all out, The Living Wall, an archway lined with plants in intricate Celtic patterns, serves as an entryway into the show.

It gives a feeling of a portal into ancient, Old World Ireland, said Barbara King, manager of Valley Forge Flowers in Wayne.

King said thousands of flowers would go into the display, including some varieties she'd never seen before.

The buds form bright bursts of color standing out against a green backdrop that wouldn't be complete, of course, without its shamrocks.

Dates:

Sunday, March 4 - Sunday, March 11

Location:

Pennsylvania Convention Center  
12th & Arch Streets  
Philadelphia, PA 19107-2299

Hours:

Sundays, March 4 & March 11: 8 am to 6 pm  
Monday, March 5- Friday, March 9: 10 am to 9:30 pm  
Saturday, March 10: 8 am to 9:30 pm  
(Best viewing hours are after 4 pm)



### **Gaeltacht Deirreadh Seachtaine Irish Language Weekend**

27 - 29 April 2007, Kingston, ON, Canada  
Location: Best Western Country Squire Resort  
[www.1000islandsbestwestern.com](http://www.1000islandsbestwestern.com)

**BEGINNER TO CAINTEOIR L?FA:**

Irish Language Classes at 7 Levels  
SIAMSA, DANCING, SINGING, IRISH MUSIC  
\$180.00 CDN, \$160.00 US

Includes:

Meals from Supper Friday Evening to Lunch on Sunday

2 NIGHTS ACCOMMODATION, C?L? WORKSHOPS

Double rooms guaranteed  
A Full Weekend of Irish.  
Application Deadline: 2 April 2007

Return this Form  
(with cheque payable to Harp of Tara, CCE)

TO:  
Bob Mac Diarmid,  
202 Main Street,  
Kingston, ON, K7K 5S3, Canada

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Spelling of Name in Irish (for name tag): \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Length of study in Irish:  
No previous study \_\_ less than 1 year \_\_ no. of years \_\_  
Ability: nil \_\_ odd words \_\_ can understand but can't converse \_\_  
Simple conversation \_\_ moderate conversation \_\_ cainteoir l?fa \_\_  
Are you currently attending classes: (Y/N) \_\_  
Teacher's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Workshop Saturday (check one): dancing \_\_ singing \_\_ Irish music \_\_  
Workshop Sunday (check one): dancing \_\_ singing \_\_ Irish music \_\_  
A complete application as a Word Document will be sent upon request.



## The 14th Annual Beltane in the Park

Saturday, May 5th, 2006

11 AM to 6 PM in Wantagh Park, NY

<http://www.rdna.info/nancyvenus/longislandbeltane.html>

**Rain date: Sunday, May 6th**

Admission donation requested: \$5.00 adults, \$1.00 children 12 and under

Come Dance The Maypole With Us!

The 14th annual maypole fest with: live music, drumming circle, vendors, speakers, readers and workshops followed by a potluck feast.

Special Guest: author Lexa Ros?n who will be doing a Tarot workshop.

You should bring 18 feet of ribbon if you plan on dancing the maypole, or you can buy ribbon at the welcome table.



Please bring food to share for the potluck feast!



## Berkeley Annual Pagan Parade and Festival

Hello friends,

The time of year has come again to prepare for the annual Pagan Parade and Festival sponsored by The Pagan Alliance. This year's theme is Magical Journeys, and the event is family- and child-centered. We welcome adult and youth groups to march in the procession, offer information tables and booths, and weave tighter the fabric of community we share.

The Festival will take place on Saturday, May 12, from 10 AM to 5 PM at Martin Luther King, Jr. Civic Center Park in Berkeley (as in previous years.) This year, we have made a slight change in the Parade route- the procession will take place within the park itself to accommodate the safety needs of parents with children. We are seeking groups of people, small, human-powered floats, and other safe and creative additions to make our procession lively and fun for youth and the young at heart.

If your group would like to march in the Parade, please visit this link and fill out the application:  
<http://thepaganalliance.org/participants.asp>

If your group wishes to have an information booth at the Festival, please visit this link <http://thepaganalliance.org/vendor.asp> and fill out the application. Be sure to use PayPal to send the \$30 information booth fee. This link also works if you would like to vend goods or services, and the fee for a vendor booth is \$120.

This event relies on its volunteer staff for its growing success each year. If you or your group would like to volunteer to help out with the 2007 Pagan Festival, please visit this link and sign up to be a do-gooder!  
<http://thepaganalliance.org/vendor.asp>

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Blessed be.

Joyfully,  
Rabbit  
Outreach Director  
The Pagan Alliance  
The Sacred Well  
<http://www.sacredwell.com>



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This is the end of the Spring Equinox issue



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Submissions to [poppinjay at earthlink dot net](mailto:poppinjay@earthlink.net)



Webmastered by Mike Scharding

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