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Calendar



Summer Solstice, Sun-stop, the longest day of the year, a minor High Day in the Reformed Druid calendar. According to my teacher the Summer Solstice is associated with the goddess Danu whose totem was boar as was the Roman Diana's, goddess of the hunt.* He writes, "She may be cognate with the classic goddess Diana, not only on the grounds of word origins, but on the witness of Gallo-Roman writers who noted the similarities in character and type in the days when her worship was still current in Gaul." In researching this article which

was begun last year I haven't been able to find this literary source, and would appreciate from the readership if they are familiar with it to write in to this newsletter.

There is a specific Boar goddess in the Romano-Gaulish pantheon: Arduinna of the Ardennes Forest. The Ardennes Forest, located in formerly what was known as Northern Gaul, is an area that stretched from Belgium to France and to the Rhine River in Germany. Arduinna is considered a topographical goddess as indicated by her name, according to Miranda Green, and personified the spirit of the Ardennes Forest. (Though I am loathe to use the internet for any sort of serious research, when looking for the image of the figure Green references I found this interesting etymology in Wikipedia: "The name Arduinna is derived from the Gaulish *arduo-* meaning height (Delamarre, *Dictionnaire de la Langue Gauloise*. 2nd edition. p.51). It is also found in several place names, such as the Ardennes Woods (*Arduenna silva*), in personal names Arduunus and **Arda** the latter from coinage of the Treveri, (editor's note: a Gaulish tribe), (*Receuil des Inscriptions gauloises-4*, 36-43) "



From iconography we can assume that Arduinna was venerated by the communities in the region. On a small bronze figurine found there in the 19th century Arduinna is depicted as both boar-goddess and huntress, is dressed in a sort tunic and boot, similar in fashion to clothing of the Roman Diana, and riding a wild boar. The boar is shown in all its ferociousness, galloping with raised dorsal crest and curved tusks. Arduinna carries a quiver on her back and a small spear or hunting knife at her side. Green writes, "The statuette displays the ambivalence of some Celtic divine hunters towards their prey: Arduinna carries hunting-weapons, but her attitude to the boar is itself unaggressive. She rides him like a horse and is clearly at one with her mount. She is both huntress and goddess of the forest, protectress of its denizens, a spirit who must be appeased and propitiated by human hunters if their expeditions were to be successful and without mishap. The hunting of boars was dangerous and the correct rituals would have been observed."**

Thus hunting, in addition to being a sport for the equites or noble/warrior class as well as practice for war, was also a ritual activity that required divine aid in protecting the hunter and insuring the capture and killing of the hunted animal. The Greek classical historian Arrian wrote in his *De Venatione* that the Celts never went hunting without their gods. By this he meant that the hunt was an activity that needed divine permission and assistance. Killing an animal was a dangerous act that required great skill and courage and "could not be carried out without the consent of the gods, or at least without the ritual precautions that its place" (Brunaux, *The Celtic Gauls*, Seaby, London, 1988). Misstep or misjudgment could cause the death of the hunter, his hunting companions, his dog, or horse. As such Arduinna would have been the deity beseeched, thereby insuring a successful and safe boar hunt. The hunters would have made an offering of the "first fruits" or a sacrifice to Arduinna, a practice that was recorded by Arrian. This shows once again the Celtic practice of reciprocation. The capture of game was considered as a theft from nature and perhaps from the goddess herself, and one that had to be repaid.

*Emmon Bodfish, *A Druid Missal-Any, Summer Solstice 1983*,

<http://orgs.carleton.edu/Druids/ARDA2/doc/2part11-2a.pdf>

** Green, Miranda. *Celtic Goddess*, British Museum Press, London, 1995



News of the Groves



For the [Full Grove Directory](#)



Mango Mission: News from Southeast Asia

A.K.A. The Digitalis Grove in Exile

I'm now thoroughly settled into my new home here, and it is rainy quite frequently in little blasts every day or so, which does my little Taranis-oriented heart well. I've been thinking about changing weather conditions lately, and being in the realm of my Order, I'm going to do a little more research on climate change, zero-carbon-footprints, and that kind of subject.

ADVICE: If any of you are travelling this summer, please do your research on the country you are going to at www.travel.state.gov. Every country has its unpleasant aspects that the tourist books and agencies don't want you to know about. Use common sense, even when you don't want to, keep clever, be polite, and ask for help or permission whenever reasonable.



Carleton Grove: News from Minnesota

Our grove has been blessed this year with a wonderful spring! The arboretum is in full bloom and fireflies grace the night sky with their fluttering dances. We had the pleasure of having our friend Azeem join us from Maryland in our celebration of Beltane, as the festivities lasted well into the evening as one of our bigger celebrations we can remember.

The Carleton grove has also been alive with the induction of many members into higher orders. A lot has happened since we've last submitted news, and we would like to congratulate:

- Corrie Thomas to the third-order on May 19th
- Sean Hill to the second-order on May 31st
- Daniel Lessin to the third-order on June 1st

Allison and I would like to also announce that Daniel will be the new Carleton Archdruid for years to come, as Allison and I move on to Chicago and Minneapolis, respectively. We wish him the best in his journey with the Mother and offer him our blessings as the chalice is passed!

Peace!

Ian Hill and Allison Smith

Palm Grove: News From Florida



Well Bealtaine 2007 went off wonderfully. I just wish the water table was up higher, as the spring fed lake was nearly dry.

I finally conducted my first handfasting. It was a bit shaky but they both enjoyed it.

Yep!! Dave and Karin are now wed for one year and one day. (Let's see if they make it or not. Just kidding I know they can do it.) Next Bealtaine we will check in with them again and see if they will make it official for life.

Nearly all the regulars showed up this time. A miracle in itself and one or two others, which was really good.

We are looking at many wonderful things this coming year.

Myself and my apprentice (now learning Ovate status) are working on putting together a druid style tv show. If you have any ideas you would like to see please send them to darmock@earthlink.net. (Put tv show idea-in the subject line-We are also getting a weekly ritual going, as some of the newer members are requesting it. Sounds good to me. I think it will be part ceremony (RDNA style), part Lessons and part open forum with party and gaming after.

IT is Extremely dry down here so fires are out for now, and most of the herbs have since dried up and turned to dust. Hey I did the best I could but severe water restrictions are in effect with hefty fines. IF any one knows a good rain dance and can direct it to Florida, Please do, as we really need it to put out the wildfires with.

Dave has his own place now, and we are slowly turning it into a citadel for the priesthood in our group, looking good too.

We are looking at having a great Summer solstice festival, and hoping some of the witches in the area show up this time (hint hint).

I continue my studies as there is always more to learn. And my apprentice is beginning to learn on his own as well, which is really nice.

Well that's it for Florida.

I hope all are doing great in their respective Locales.

Peace Brothers.

~Darmock of the Palm*Grove of Florida



Swamp Grove: News from South Florida

Swamp Grove is stumbling ahead into the wet and hot summer months down here in south FL. Activities of the outdoor variety are limited to early morning and late afternoon if possible, it rains every afternoon around 4:00 and stays humid all day. Not to say that we don't enjoy our seven months of summer, this tropical land can be inspiring and a variety of fruits grow all year round. We are almost the opposite of our northern friends: they limit their activities during the bitter cold season and we thank the Gods for air conditioning during our hot months. We do plan, to possibly venture outside for a

summer solstice thingy, after 4:00 mind you.



Moose Breechcloth Proto-Grove: News From Minnesota

Seasonal Salutations Siblings!

Just got back from an extended trek in the toolies. Life is good. I took Lou to Minnesota bluff country in the unglaciated (or "driftless") zone. He had never been there to bushwhack before, so it was a first for him. Didn't see any rattlesnakes... we're both a bit disappointed.

A head's-up to all the friskier folk... we found a book entitled "How To Have Sex In The Woods." We highly recommend it. Altoids... who knew?! Goggle search the book title, the author's name escapes me right now.

Other news, I'm officially in my Invisaligns now... feel free to giggle. I'm still working through the lisp. It's supposed to go away eventually.

I finally discovered the reason why all my plants on one side of my yard kept dying. Here I was questioning the greenness of my thumb. Turns out the neighbors have declared war on their weeds and began spraying goddess-only-knows what kind of toxic sludge on their yard. The toxins apparently have been seeping via the soil, into my yard. I'm not exactly sure how to bring it up to them. English isn't their first language. Every time I try to strike up a conversation with the matriarch, her response to everything is "Fine, thank you." She gets high marks on being polite; but trying to discuss toxicity of lawn products on my hydrangea will probably be lost in translation. So now I'm debating which would be perceived as "less rude"... drawing pictures, or pantomime.

Lou and I have decided to contract out some of our home projects that have been sneering and jeering at our self-taught abilities to handy... errrr... .handyfolks. I know when I'm licked.

I'm licked.

Who knew replacing doors would be easier than redoing the trim? We figured the trim would be a walk in the park after replacing doors. We were wrong.

Well folks, aside from a lot of camping, bushwhacking, lispings... .and Altoids, it's been pretty quiet this time around.

After the non-winter we had here, we're really enjoying the warming weather. And here's hoping the season finds all of you in the best of health, and the brightest of spirits.

Gigawabamin nagutch,
and yours in the Mother,

-Julie Ann and Lou-

Clan of the Triple Horses: News from Oregon



News from Clan of the Triplehorses includes our participation in the local Arbor Day celebration where members of our grove planted several trees in a local park as well as co-presented a public presentation on tree husbandry. We also had a fantastic Beltane/healing ritual on Saturday, May 26 which included the annual creation and destruction of our wickerman. Our feast included barbecued trout. Entertainment included a special guest from the Yukon retelling myths of the First Nations peoples. Don't miss next year's wickerman event!

Our outdoor Summer Solstice celebration will be on Saturday, June 16 in the Wimer, Oregon area on private property overlooking BLM forests. An herbal healing workshop will be held as well as a potluck feast.

Additional Triplehorses Events include:

August 3-5, 2007

Co-sponsoring the West Coast Gathering of the Reformed Druids and Friends in Humboldt Redwoods State Park, California

See <http://rdg.mithrilstar.org/2007wcdruiddat.htm>

September 29, 2007

Co-sponsoring 2007 Eight Winds Mountain Earth Gathering at Diamond Lake Resort, Oregon

See <http://home.earthlink.net/~triplehorses/id7.html>

For information about any of the above, please send an email to triplehorses@gmail.com



Hazelnut Mother Grove: News from California

The Season of Waking is here, and that means the season of online ordinations. For the First Order, the only preparation is to make up Waters of Life for yourself. This early in the season, the mix is one part whiskey to one part spring water. You won't need much. Those little shooters available at most liquor stores will be sufficient. You will be marking yourself with the Druid Sigil on your forehead. It might help to familiarize yourself with how the Sigil looks. Go to Michael Scharding's RDNA website <http://www.rdna.info/> The Sigil is displayed there. Just be ready when we ask you the three questions. Don't worry. They are very easy questions. Nobody's gotten them wrong yet. I just ordained an 11 year old young man, and he knew the answers to the questions. Certainly you can do at least as well as a fifth grader. That takes care of the First Order. We do them via Instant Messenger, so get yourself on either Yahoo Instant Messenger or Windows Live Messenger. On YIM, I am penelopeweasel2007 and on Windows Live Messenger, I am tezra156@hotmail.com. The Arch Druid of the Grove is Taroch Windtraveler and his ids are: YIM: abbotts_inn@yahoo.com and on Windows Live he is known as abbotts_inn@yahoo.com. Get on either my or his chat buddies lists or both. I am usually at home and online.

For the Second Order, more preparation is required. You should have been a First Order for at least a year and a day, and you should have read to read sections 1 and 3 of the ARDA, that is, the Chronicles and the Liturgy. They can be found on the website given above in the First Order's Section. Look under "oodles of non-dogmatic literature." A short vigil out in nature is also a prerequisite. It can be anywhere from 15 minutes to two hours. Build yourself an altar out of the materials you find out in nature. During the short vigil, you are to meditate upon the five aspects of the Earth Mother, the Power of the Mother (fire of earth), the Beauty of the Mother (water of earth), the Understanding of the Mother (Earth of Earth), the Wisdom of the Mother (air of earth) and the Magick of the Mother (spirit of earth). Then get us at either Yahoo IM or

Windows Live and we'll ordain you a Second Order.

If you are currently a Second Order and deem to become a Third, we'll need a bit more lead time as we'll have to write up a Third Order Ordination Ritual. For that you'll have to sit a vigil out in nature for the entire night. Build yourself an altar, as in the Second Order. By now, you should know how to create sacred space.

So get in touch with us, and tell us which Order you need.

le gra,

Tegwedd ShadowDancer Co-Arch Druid of the Hazelnut MotherGrove Online Branch NRDNA



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

As mentioned in past issues the AD has been attending a monthly shamanic practice circle. This summer, under the guidance and assistance of an elder in the Native American community, the leader of said circle has arranged for a vision quest in the Mount Shasta area. Wanting more of a challenge in her spiritual development (call it a kick in the pants) the AD decided to participate. It will involve sitting in a chosen spot for four days and three nights, meditating and praying (editor's note: not to be confused with Judeo-Christian praying. I need to have Julie Ann of the Moose Breechcloth Proto-grove write that article on prayer she promised last year that was inspired by a posting she made on the RDNA talk email list). In addition to dealing with the "stuff" that came up (call it emotional meltdown) that is common when one commits to a quest, she has been preparing by making 707 prayer ties, collecting willow staves (and getting ticks in the process), and collecting the sundry items needed for this "gentle" version of a vision quest (water and sleeping bag are allowed). Motivated by the ancient druids who spent as part of their training time alone in the woods, she hopes to have not some woo-woo mystical experience (she's too Capricorn for that...but you never know be careful for what you don't wish for) but to follow in the footsteps of her forbearers.

The young buck from last year has returned, at least we think it is the same one. He is making the same rounds as last year, walking the path to the grove site, sleeping under the front deck, and walking close to the house remembering where the tenderest new growth of the blackberries is to be found. And he is not running away when he sees us. The old deer who was his companion last year is not around. Perhaps he crossed to Apple Isle over the winter.

Letters, Though Not to Us



Saving Tara: A Reply from the Irish Labour Party.

Morag NicBride, Server, Poison Oak Grove

I had seen the news story about the M3 motorway through Tara Valley some days ago, and was reading the thread on the RDNA list. Following the link in Croman MacNessa's posting of May 26 on the RDNA list "Help Save Tara," I sent this e-mail to Pat Rabbitte, head of the Irish Labour Party, on Monday evening, June 11:

To: pat.rabbitte@oireachtas.ie

Subject: Save Tara Valley

Mr. Rabbitte,

Please add my plea to those who have already written you to save Tara Valley. Ceasing development and rerouting the M3, and allowing it to become a World Heritage site is a greater legacy than any modernization will leave.

Thank you,

Sara Beth _____
Oakland, California, USA.

I received the following reply the next morning:

Dear Sara Beth,

I write in response to your correspondence to the Labour Party Leader, Pat Rabbitte, T.D, regarding your opposition to development at Tara Valley.

The Labour Party, as stated in its' Election Manifesto 2007, (see www.labour.ie), is opposed to the building of a motorway through the Tara-Skryne Valley. We accept that the M3 is necessary to relieve commuter congestion and that it should be built in three sections. However, the section through the Tara-Skryne valley should be re-routed to avoid the destruction of our Celtic heritage.

We are particularly concerned at the possibility of major development being attracted to the area around the motorway, which would contribute further damage to Tara and its environs.

I trust that this clarifies our position and thank you, on behalf of the Party Leader, for making contact in the matter. Please be assured of our continued opposition to the development.

Yours sincerely,

Adrian Langan
Chef de Cabinet,
Office of the Leader of the Labour Party,
Room A.5.27,
LH2000,
D?l ?reann.
Dublin 2.



'Tis the Season to go Vigiling, Falalala-lalalala!

By Mike the Fool

Stacey's upcoming vision quest this summer had me thinking about the need for folks to put aside their busy hectic people-oriented lives, and go outside and reflect "on it all". A vigil (from the Latin *vigilia*, 'wakefulness') is a period of sleeplessness, an occasion for devotional watching or observance. This is perhaps one of the oldest sources of inspiration of mankind, besides intoxicating substances, sex, and rock & roll (or rolling rocks, see below). In addition, to the requisite lack of sleep, one can make complex activities during a vigil to test yourself, use your imagination; songs, dances, exercise, lack of water or food, etc. However, trust me, even if you do nothing else but sit still, after about 20 to 28 hours awake, you will begin to "see things you have not seen, and hear things you have not heard" (Meditations 1:15)! Nature is abundant with mini-dramas, structures, cycles and raw examples to draw upon for Druids with the time and patience to watch and learn. Reformed Druids typically do a vigil as part of the preparation for entering the Third Order; but it can be done whenever you need to recharge the old acorns. So whether it is a vision quest, a knightly vigil in a chapel, climbing up a mountain to see a sage, going out to ostensibly "catch fish", or being a hermit on a desert island; it is a powerful opportunity to do some internal cleaning and spiritual house-keeping. I hope you will all try a vigil this summer too, whether at night, day, off in a secluded park or in your backyard. I'd like to finish here by sharing a short story on a vigil, where even a badly done one can teach you.

Enjoy.

The Vigil

By Lame Deer at Willow, at Rosebud, South Dakota, 1967, recorded by Erdoes.

Also found in Green Book 2 of ARDA, page 41-42

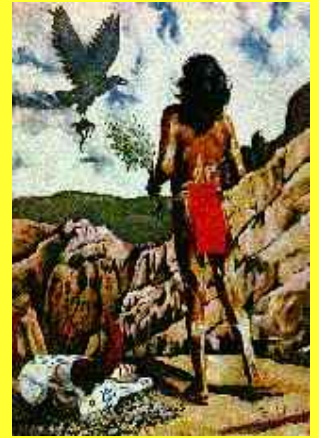
Sumbitted by Mike the Fool

Editor's Note: The Following story is from Myths and Legends of the American Indian by Boez and Endroes (available on Open Reserve) describes what can go wrong on an all night vigil, one like the RDNA do in preparation for entering the Third Order.

The vision quest is a tradition among the Plains people. A man or woman seeking the way an the road of life, or trying to find the answer to a personal problem, may go on a vision quest for knowledge and enlightenment. This means staying on top of a hill or inside a vision pit, alone, without food or water, for as long as four days and nights. It is said, that if the quiet voices reveal or confer a vision that shapes a person's life, then the quest is worth all the suffering'. The following tale, however, treats the vision quest with less than complete solemnity, with Sioux man Lame Deer's characteristic quirks.

A young man wanted to go on a lumbasa, or vision quest, thinking that would give him the stuff to be a great medicine man. Having a high opinion of himself, he felt sure that he had been created to become great among his people and that the only thing lacking was a vision.

The young man was daring and brave, eager to go up to the mountain top. He had been brought up by good, honest people who were raised in the ancient ways and who prayed for him. All through the night they were busy getting him ready, feeding him wasna, corn, and lots of good meat to make him strong. At every meal they set aside everything for the spirits so that they would help him to get a great vision.



His relatives thought he had the power even before he went up there. That was putting the cart before the horse, or rather the travois before the horse, as this is an Indian legend.

When at last he started on his quest, it was a beautiful morning in late spring. The grass was up, the leaves were out, nature was at its best.

Two medicine men accompanied him. They put up a sweatlodge to purify him in the hot, white breath of the sacred steam. They smoked him with the incense of sweet grass, rubbing his body with salve of bear grease. Around his neck they hung it with an eagle's wing. They went to the hilltop with him to the vision pit and make an offering of tobacco bundles.

They told the young man to cry, to humble himself, to ask for holiness, to cry for power, for a sign from the Great Spirit, for a gift which would make him into a medicine man. After they had done all they could, they left him there.

He spent the first night in the hole the medicine men had dug for him, trembling and crying out loudly. Fear kept him awake, yet he was cocky, ready to wrestle with the spirits for the vision, the power that he wanted. But no dreams came to ease his mind. Toward morning light, the sun came up, he heard a voice in the swirling white mists of day.

Speaking from no particular direction, as if it came from different places it said: "See here, young man, there are other spots you could have picked; 'there are other hills around here. Why don't you go there and cry for a dream? You disturbed us all night, all us creatures, animals and birds; you even kept the trees awake. We couldn't sleep. Why should you cry here? You're a brash young man, not yet ready or worthy to receive a vision."

But the young man clenched his teeth, determined to stick it through. He resolved to force that vision to come. He spent another day in the pit, begging for enlightenment, which would not come, and then another night of fear and cold and hunger.

The young man cried out in terror. He was paralyzed with fear, unable to move. The boulder dwarfed everything in view; it towered over him, he stared open-mouthed, but as it came to crush him, it stopped. Then, as the young man stared, his hair standing up, his eyes starting out of his head, the boulder **ROLLED UP THE MOUNTAIN**, all the way to the top. He could hardly believe what he saw.

He was still cowering motionless when he heard the roar and ramble again and saw that immense boulder coming down at him once more. This time he managed to jump out of his vision pit at the last moment. The boulder crushed it, obliterated it, grinding the young man's peace pipe and gourd rattle into dust.

Again the boulder rolled up the mountain, and again it came down. "I'm leaving, I'm leaving!" hollered the young man. Regaining his power of motion, he scrambled down the hill as fast as he could. This time the boulder actually leapfrogged over him, bouncing down the slope, crushing and pulverizing everything in its way. He ran unseeingly, stumbling, falling, getting up again. He did not even notice the boulder rolling up once more and coming down for the fourth time. On this last and most fearful descent, it flew through the air in a giant leap, landing right in front of him and embedding itself so deeply in the earth that only its top was visible. The ground shook itself like a wet dog coming out of a stream and flung the young man this way and

that.

Gaunt, bruised, and shaken, he stumbled back to his village. To the medicine men he said: "I have received no vision and gained no knowledge." He returned to the pit, and when dawn arrived once more, he heard the voice again: "Stop disturbing us; go away!" The same thing happened on the third morning. By this time he was faint with hunger, thirst, and anxiety. Even the air seemed to oppress him, to fight him. He was panting. His stomach felt shriveled up, shrunk tight against his backbone. But he was determined to endure one more night, the fourth and last. Surely the vision would come. But again he cried for it out of the dark and loneliness until he was hoarse, and still he had no dream. Just before daybreak he heard the same voice again, very angry: "why still here?" He knew then that he had suffered in vain.

He now knew he would have to go back to his people and confess that he had gained no knowledge and no power. The only thing he could tell them was that he got bawled out every morning. Sad and cross, he replied "I can't help myself this is MY last day, and I'm crying my eyes out. I know you told me to go home, but who are you to give me orders? I don't know you. I'm going to stay until my uncles come to fetch me, whether you like it or not.!"

All at once there was a rumble from a larger mountain that shook the hill. It became a mighty roar, and the whole hill trembled. The wind started to blow. The young man looked up and saw a boulder poised on the mountain's summit. He saw lightning hit it, saw it sway. Slowly the boulder moved. Slowly at first, then faster and faster, it came tumbling down the mountain side, churning up the earth, snapping huge trees as if they were little twigs. And the boulder WAS COMING RIGHT DOWN ON HIM!

He barely made it back to the village and talked to his uncles. "I have made the spirits angry. It was all for nothing."

"Well you did find out one thing," said the older of the two, who was his uncle. "You went after your vision like a hunter after buffalo, or a warrior after scalps. You were fighting the spirits. You thought they owed you a vision. Suffering alone brings no vision nor does courage, nor does sheer will power. A vision, comes as a gift born of humility, of wisdom, and of patience. If from your vision quest you have learned nothing else, you have already learned much. Think about it."



Cult of the Head?

By J. Craig Melia

We would like to welcome Craig Melia as a new contributor to the Missal-Any. He lives near Liverpool in the north of England. By day he works as a web development manager, but originally trained in multimedia design. Craig has self identified as a pagan (small "p") since childhood, with an obvious leaning towards matters Celtic though he also has links to Heathenism.

The most rewarding project he has worked on has been the Virtual Shrine of Brighid at <http://www.celticheritage.co.uk/virtualshrine/> where as he says, "Reading people's pleas and prayers and thanks is quite a humbling experience."

* * *

Citing iconographical evidence, classical quotations and mythological evidence we are presented with the existence of a tradition of a widespread belief in the head as the seat of the soul (common amongst many peoples) and that this represented a medium for communication with the OtherWorld.

It is generally taken as fact that in the early Celtic period :

- that the head was believed to be the vassal of the soul.
- that great honour was to be found in collecting the heads as trophies in battle.

There is, however, much debate amongst Celtic Historians as to the validity of the so called Celtic "Cult of the Head".

Authors such as Dr Anne Ross have speculated the Cult of the Head as a pan-Celtic religious tradition. Others disagree.

Professor Ronald Hutton has the opinion that "the frequency with which human heads appear upon Celtic metalwork proved nothing more than that they were a favourite decorative motif, among several, and one just as popular among non-Celtic peoples", that the use of the head as icons is merely due to the practice been a favoured artistic image.

Marian Green, in *The Gods of the Celts* states that 'there is no doubt that the head was considered the most important part of the human body - the emphasis on head-hunting demonstrates this - and the stress on the head in Celtic art is incontestable. Yet I believe it is a mistake to think in terms of a specific head-cult.'

The taking of heads as trophies is well documented, with enough classical, mythological and archaeological evidence to back it up. It is however harder to prove the reasons for the practice, did it imply a sacred act, a way of demonstrating prowess on the battlefield, or a combination of the two?

Iconography

Iconographical evidence to back up the theory is always going to be open to individual interpretation, whether the "tete coupee," or severed head, is an artistic motif or religious motif.

There is evidence to suggest that the positioning of skulls, discovered during excavations of Celtic earthworks, indicate that heads were displayed upon entrance gates of hillforts and sanctuaries. The shrine at Roquepertuse in modern day France was entered through a brightly painted stone archway, into which human skulls were placed in niches within the upright pillars.



A stone tete coupee, complete with grasping hand was unearthed in Entremont, along with numerous head groupings. Many have been found throughout the British Isles, with a great many found within the kingdom of the Brigantes in the north of modern day England.

There is, however, an over use of the phrase "Celtic Head" as a catchall term to describe the often crudely carved stone heads that are found around the British Isle and mainland Europe. Some are prehistoric in origin, others from the early Christian period (although they themselves may be considered a continuation of the "sacred head" as a motif) and it is important that we view these as separate, although connected.

Classical Citations

"(The Gauls) cut off the heads of enemies slain in battle and attach them to the necks of their horses. The

blood stained spoils they hand over to their attendants and carry off as booty, while striking up a paean and singing a song of victory, and they nail up these first fruits upon their houses just as those who lay low wild animals in certain kinds of hunting. They embalm in cedar oil the heads of the most distinguished enemies and preserve them carefully in a chest, and display them with pride to strangers, saying that, for this head, one of their ancestors, or his father, or the man himself, refused a large sum of money. They say that some of them boast that they refused the weight of the head in gold" - Diodorus Siculus.



There are a number of Classical Writers who cite a reverence to the taking of heads as a seemingly sacred act, including Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, Livy and Julius Caesar.

We do however have to be very careful with using classical references as legitimate sources of information. Both Siculus and Livy were writing from a second hand source, both received their information from Poseidonius, whose main focus of interest was the south of Gaul. Strabo too quotes Poseidonius as a source.

"There is also that custom, barbarous and exotic, which attends most of the northern tribes, when they depart from the battle they hang the heads of their enemies from the necks or their horses, and when they have brought them home, nail the spectacle to the entrance of their

houses. At any rate Posidonius says that he himself saw this spectacle in many places, and that, although he first loathed it, afterwards through his familiarity with it, he could bear it calmly" EStrabo

Julius Caesar makes a single reference, which is taken by many to refer to the act of head hunting, namely where Indutiomarus, a leader of the Treviri is slain by Labienus, having been overtaken at the ford of a river, his head is taken and carried to the camp.

It has been suggested that someone such as Caesar, to whom acts such as head hunting would have been used for propaganda and political capital, and taking into account his level of detail of the customs of the people he came into contact with in Gaul and Britain, it seems interesting that he is completely silent on the subject.

Pagan Celtic Britain

Dr Anne Ross, is one of the strongest supporters of the Celtic "Cult of the Head."

"The cult of the human head then constitutes a persistent theme throughout all aspects of Celtic life spiritual and temporal and the symbol of the severed head may be regarded as the most typical and universal of their religious attitudes."

Within Pagan Celtic Britain, Dr Anne Ross gives over an entire chapter to the study of the proposed cult, detailing at length countless carvings and various mythological tales. Reference is also made to examples of folklore pertaining to sacred wells which seem to be a continuation of ancient belief. Although the book was first published in 1967 it is one of the most important studies on the subject.

Mythological Evidence

Dr Anne Ross states that "the evidence for the cult of the head furnished by the iconography, and testified to be the comments of the classical writes, is fully supported by the literatures of the British Isles."

The main corroboratory evidence from British Mythology is that of the Head of Bran. The Tale of Branwen, Daughter of Llyr, the Second Branch of the Mabinogion, refers to Bran, sometimes Bendigeidfran, who is

fatally wounded in battle. He asks his comrades to bury his head within the White Mount in London, later Tower Hill."

"And take you my head," said he, "and bear it even unto the White Mount, in London, and bury it there, with the face towards France."

In another tale from the Triads, Arthur has the head of Bran interred as he himself wishes to be the defender of Britain.

Additionally within Gaelic Mythology, from the tale of the Tain Bo Cualinge we have numerous references to the practice of head taking E#060;p> "When they found him they fought foul and fell on him all 12 together. But Cu Chulainn turned on them and struck off their 12 heads. He planted 12 stones for them in the ground and set a head on each stone."

Later tales, such as those pertaining to the Celtic Saints, as well as tales such as Sir Gawain within the Arthurian Cycle all hint at an older mythos and tradition.

Peter Berresford Ellis, within Celtic Myths and Legends states, that "it is important to remember that, for the ancient Celts, the soul resided in the head," and although this in itself does not signify a Cult of the Head, it does imply a reverence of the head was seen as a belief amongst Celtic people from Gaul to Britain and Ireland.



The Druid & the Power of Memory

Edition 5.0,
By Greysleeves

Article first published in The Hedge Druids magazine "Greenways,"
reprinted by request of the author

* * *

Three Things Which the Good Poet Preserves for Posterity:
Memory of the Praiseworthy
Delight in Thought
& Instruction in Knowledge

At the beginning, when one is first called to a Druid Path, one can look to the end outcome and ask oneself:

What is a Druid for exactly?

The path of the Bard or Poet is usually given as the first grade of study a druid enters into at the start of their training. The above triad shows that one of the responsibilities of a Poet is "Instruction in Knowledge." As you learn, you should bear in mind that one day you may be called upon to remember, and pass along what

you have learned, in a manner that will be understood and easy to memorise.

It is for this reason, and to help you progress through the vast amounts of study material, that mnemonics and the power of memory are often given as one of the very first topics for discussion on the path of the Bard.

Druids are known to have eschewed books for writing down their sacred teaching. Mention is often made of St Patrick burning Druid staves, probably written in the sacred language known as Ogam, but we will never know what knowledge they contained. It is known that Druids used Greek and Latin for more mundane matters, however.



If we wish to become Druids ourselves we should do as they did, wherever possible, and find an alternative which fits the spirit of Druidry when that is not possible. Nurturing a good memory, as the Druids did, is therefore a logical first goal, as is the understanding of why those early Druids thought it so necessary.

In re-learning the practices of the Druids we have had to rely a great deal on the endurance of Druid mnemonic devices. The efficacy of such devices is attested to by the fact that they lasted into a time period when oral traditions were finally put into writing. They cannot, and should not be taken as sacred and unchangeable texts, though. It is a fact that such written source materials play a larger part in modern druidry than they did in ancient times, being more convenient nowadays. Referring to such texts is common, especially in a world where a great filing system can act like a mind map which improves recall in and of itself. However, the reasoning behind the Druid reliance on memory goes beyond such a simple thing as a convenience we have now, which they did not.

So why the taboo on writing down sacred teachings which led to a reliance on memory, when more mundane matters were committed to Greek or Latin?

Some think that these matters were too sacred to be written down.

Others think that to commit one's beliefs to print is to invite a "setting in stone" of those beliefs. This "setting in stone" does not encourage us to evolve a greater understanding of our spirituality as we evolve as individuals, and as a race. It is true that in cruel and harsh times our understanding of our world was cruel and harsh. Druidry was a force for enlightenment beyond such things by its very insistence on evolving and growing. The negative aspects of not evolving are obvious. People who still wish to connect with cruel and harsh attitudes of past times will often quote beliefs from those times, as excuses for their behaviour. Many will also quote cruel and harsh practices of ancient times as a means to connect them to modern Druidry, with the intent of vilifying your beliefs. Even if everything written about the Druids had been true, it does not follow that such things fit into the living tradition as it evolved to become today, and this is true of most religions, which have also evolved beyond earlier practices.



In embracing a belief which evolves you come to a simple truth. That the Divine is every thing, and the possibility of everything; and any other definition limits the limitless. Therefore, what aspects of spirituality you embrace from that "everything" says more about you than it does about the Divine. This kind of evolution of belief is possible by having no sacred texts to cause the kind of stagnation that results in negative types of behaviour. In the end, through evolution of belief, the pupil is supposed to surpass the teacher, and a good teacher may measure their worth as such by this standard, without any feeling of inferiority.

Another theory for the taboo on writing is that it was part of a

system to protect that which gave the Druid priestly caste advantages over others, assuring their power by controlling access to knowledge. Certainly this is a factor. Other such methods of protecting secret knowledge are known to have been in use by the Druids, such as the method of committing sensitive material into a set of secret code languages. Knowledge hidden within mnemonics can be passed down orally within a family during training, and so the knowledge they contain cannot be learned by someone who has no teacher. The Brehon Law system is a good example of this. It was under the control of the Druids until the Church undertook to commit it to the written word, thereby allowing them to train up their own judges, with the ultimate aim of ending their reliance on having a Druid Brehon.

It is probable that all these reasons played a factor. It is apparent that learning to memorise vast quantities of knowledge from an early age, when first joining the ranks of the Druids, also builds up the thought processes and physical connections in the mind so necessary to becoming the kind of priest who can, within their own person, provide a clan with a vast resource of knowledge in law, science, healing, genealogies Etc Etc Etc the list goes on and on. Where a clan has access to more than one druid, in populated areas, there is room for specialisation in one subject, and many Druids were famous in the bardic, healing and warrior schools for some such speciality. A Druid in a more remote area would have to be able to cover more disciplines, though, and might not have a speciality.

Whether or not it was the sole goal at the start, Druids were able to become a vast resource of knowledge for their clan, through the memorisation of large amounts of esoteric lore, often using mnemonics in the form of triads. When asking yourself "What is a Druid for?" it becomes apparent that one of the things they are "for" is as an asset to their gods and their people.



A Modern Mnemonic Aid

In a modern take on the triads, I have constructed a computer desktop with backgrounds appropriate to each triad, which can be downloaded full size from this website: <http://s178.photobucket.com/albums/w242/theninmaidens/celtictriads/> You can run these wallpapers as a slideshow where the text appears and disappears, using Windows Fax-Viewer, or some other type of rollover desktop program available free from such sites as download.com.

If you don't have the resources or time to download a full size version to use as wallpaper on your computer, you can view a smaller version of the slideshow here:

<http://s168.photobucket.com/albums/u170/CelticTriads/?action=view&slideshow=true>

I hope these visual triads will be entertaining to some, and will serve as a useful mnemonic device for others. For myself, in making them, they fulfilled an obligation to pass along wisdom in a memorable and succinct way, which is summed up thus:

Three Foundations of Wisdom

Discretion in Learning
Memory in Retaining
& Eloquence in Telling

Choibhidh mor gad gleid /\

Greysleeves



Do Trees Make it OK to Drive an SUV?

By Michael Hill, Associated Press Writer

May 27, 2007

If you plant some trees, is it OK to drive an Escalade?

The question isn't as silly as it sounds. People worried about global warming increasingly are trying to "offset" the carbon dioxide - the leading greenhouse gas - they spew into the atmosphere when they drive, fly or flick on a light. One idea popular with the eco-conscious is to have trees planted for them. You get to keep driving and flying, but those trees are supposed to suck in your trail of carbon.

Whole forests have been funded by tree-loving celebrities like Leonardo DiCaprio and Coldplay, and more modest packages tailored to typical consumers are proliferating.

But some researchers say planting trees - while a good thing - is at best a marginal solution to global warming. Still others decry tree planters who continue to jet off to Cannes, drive their SUVs or generally fail to reduce their fuel-hungry lifestyle. To those critics, plantings and other carbon offsets are like the medieval practice of selling indulgences to wash away sins: It may feel good, but it doesn't solve much.

"The sale of offset indulgences is a dead-end detour off the path of action required in the face of climate change," says a report by the Transnational Institute's Carbon Trade Watch.

Groups that offer tree offsets typically rely on Web calculators requiring users to type in how many miles they drive, how much electricity they use and how far they fly. Figure out how much CO₂ someone is responsible for (output), compare it to the work average trees can do (input), and you have a formula for neutralizing a person's "carbon footprint."

While the band Coldplay famously funded 10,000 mango trees in India to soak up emissions related to the production of a CD, the average consumer can get off far easier. For \$40, Trees for the Future will plant 400 trees in a developing country to handle your car emissions. In June, Delta Air Lines will allow online ticket buyers to help offset emissions of their flights through tree plantings in the U.S. and abroad: \$5.50 for domestic round trips, \$11 for international.

"It's easy to do and it makes a big difference," said Jena Thompson of the Conservation Fund, Delta's partner and one of many groups that will plant trees on your behalf.

The science is sound: Trees take in carbon dioxide as part of photosynthesis and store the carbon. But even conservationists caution it's not as simple as planting a sapling so you can crank up the air conditioning without guilt.

Offset groups use averages to estimate how much carbon a given tree or forested acre can capture. For instance, the nonprofit Conservation Fund figures that each tree planted captures less than 1 1/2 tons over 100 years.

To put that in perspective, consider that about 7.3 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide was produced from the burning of fossil fuels worldwide in 2003, the most recent estimate available.

And how much carbon dioxide a tree can soak up varies, said John Kadyszewski of Winrock International, a nonprofit that works on environmental projects. A huge California redwood might have 30 tons of carbon stored while a 100-year-old pine might have less than a ton.

"Trees are all different," said Kadyszewski, coordinator for ecosystem services for Winrock, "and the amount of carbon in the tree depends on how old it is and where it's growing and what kind of tree it is."

Kadyszewski notes that most of the calculators use conservative numbers, meaning they're not likely to exaggerate benefits. The Conservation Fund and Carbonfund.org both say they plant more than enough trees to deliver on promised offsets.

There are other potential problems, however. Some researchers suggest forests in the snowy North might actually increase local warming by absorbing sunlight that would otherwise be reflected into space. And dead, decaying trees release some of that captured carbon back into the atmosphere.

Maybe most importantly, some researchers say it's simply not possible to plant enough trees to have a significant effect on global warming.

Michael MacCracken, chief scientist at the nonpartisan Climate Institute in Washington, said tree-planting has value as a stopgap measure while society attempts to reduce greenhouse gases. But University of Victoria climate scientist Andrew Weaver fears tree offsets could steal the focus of a problem that requires technological advances and behavioral changes.

"The danger is that you could actually think you're solving a problem," Weaver said. "It makes you feel good. It makes you feel warm and fuzzy, like changing a couple of light bulbs. But the reality is it's not going to have a significant effect."

Eric Carlson of the tree-planting nonprofit Carbonfund.org notes that his group does not promote trees as the only solution to climate change. Participants also can purchase offsets that support projects aimed at expanding renewable energy or improving energy efficiency.

Carlson bristles when critics focus on the perceived hypocrisies of the jet-setting, tree-planting rich people.

He fears the indulgence argument shifts the focus from what normal, everyday people can do to fight global warming: Cut down on electricity and gasoline use, support renewable energy and, yes, plant trees.

"You can find pluses and minuses to all the offset options," Carlson said, "but the worst thing is to do nothing."

Dryosaurus



From Wikipedia, with a Copy Submitted by Mike the Fool

Dryosaurus (DRY-oh-sawr-us) meaning 'oak lizard', due to the vague oak shape of its cheek teeth (Greek dryo meaning 'oak' and sauros meaning 'lizard') was a genus of an ornithomimid dinosaur that lived in the Late Jurassic Period. It was an ornithomimid (formerly classified as a hypsilophodont). Fossils have been found in the western United States and Tanzania and were first discovered in the late 19th century. The Tanzanian site proved to be an especially fertile hunting ground for Dryosaurus fossils, this specimen was previously called Dysalotosaurus (Lost wood reptile). An expedition led by German paleontologist Werner Janensch found a great many fossils that represented Dryosaurus at all stages of development.

Dryosaurus had a long neck, long, slender legs and a long, stiff tail. Its 'arms', however, with five 'fingers' on each 'hand', were short. It was about eight to 14 feet (2.5 to 4.5 m) long, five feet (1.5 m) tall (at the hips) and weighed 170 to 200 pounds (80 to 90 kg). Its eyes were quite large, leading many to believe that it possessed excellent eyesight.

Dryosaurus had a horny beak and cheek teeth and, like other ornithomimids, was a herbivore. Some scientists suggest that it stored food in its cheeks. It was probably a herd animal, which raised and protected its young after hatching.

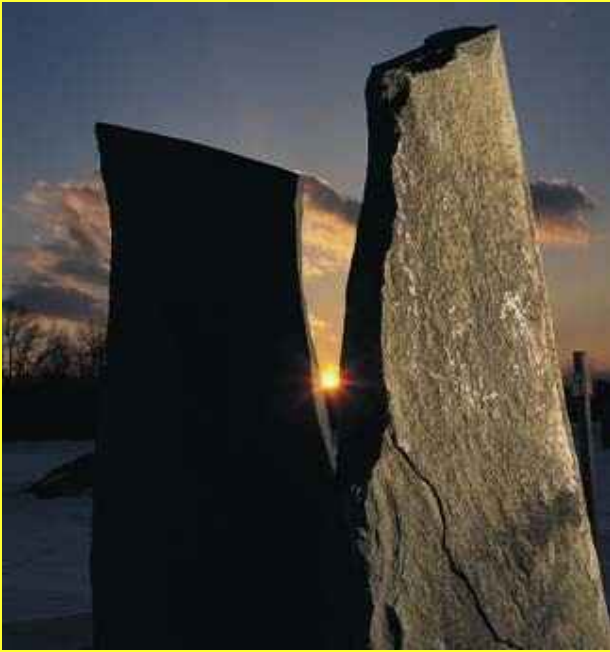
A quick and agile runner with strong legs, Dryosaurus used its tail as a counter-balance. It probably relied on its speed as a main defense against carnivorous dinosaurs.

Its intelligence, as measured by its Encephalization Quotient (brain-to-body ratio), was midway when compared to other dinosaurs.

If there is a dryosaur, might there also be a druidosaur, too? Anyway, to see a three-minute little video about a dryosaurus http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=joAIOcZ3r_0



**Summer Solstice 2007
Sunrise and Sunset Gatherings
at the UMass Sunwheel**



Thursday and Friday June 21 & 22, 2007
5:00 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. (EDT) Both Days

You are invited to witness the passing of the seasons by watching the Sun rise and set over the tall standing stones in the U.Mass. Sunwheel for the SUMMER SOLSTICE of 2007. The sunrise and sunset events will be held on BOTH THURSDAY and FRIDAY, June 21 and 22, 2007. Visitors for the sunrise viewing should arrive at 5:00 a.m., and visitors for the sunset viewing should arrive at 7:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

For those interested in learning about the sky, there will be a presentation which will include the significance of the solstices and equinoxes, the cause of the seasons, the changes in the Sun's position in the sky during the year, the phases of the Moon, and the story of building the Sunwheel. There will also be an explanation of the Moon's 18.6-year

cycle, since 2005-7 is the peak of this cycle, also called the Major Lunar Standstill. On June 22, the Moon will be 1st quarter, and located due South at sunset (click here for Moon watching information: <http://www.astro.umass.edu/~young/moonwatch.html>). Bring your questions, your curiosity, and dress warmly including waterproof footwear; the gatherings typically last an hour.

A \$3 donation is requested to help with the cost of the additional stones and exhibit expansion which are planned for the Sunwheel. Sunwheel T-shirts and sweatshirts will also be available for purchase.

About the Summer Solstice:

The word solstice means 'standstill of the Sun,' and refers to the fact that the observed rising and setting location of the Sun stays relatively fixed on the horizon for almost two weeks around solstice, with June 21 in the middle. Stated another way, the Sun's Declination (latitude on the sky) changes very little from the week before through the week after June 21. The astronomical origin of the Sun's apparent 'standstill' is one of the topics which will be explained during the Sunwheel gathering.

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



Horse-Human Relationship Conference

I'd like to invite you to participate in a unique conference that will use the Indigenous worldview to explore the horse-human relationship. As a Druid, you are aware of the deep connection shared between all creatures. Explore the power of this relationship with top equine professionals, artists, singers, and Native American presenters. Through the powerful medium of story, presenters and attendees, both online and onsite, will discuss relationships they have had with horses and the powerful messages horses are giving us.

This is the beginning of a whole new discipline - one that explores the horse-human relationship by listening to the horse first.

"The Voice of the Horse" conference, being held at Iowa State University and via live, interactive webcast this June 30 and July 1, is the first horse event to explore the horse-human relationship. Internationally-known clinicians, trainers, and equine artists, as well as filmmakers, musicians and authors will present stories about their horse-human relationships. In addition to presentations, participants will be treated to an online art exhibit, a live "Horse Legends" concert by Michael Martin Murphey ("Wildfire"), and a special viewing of Robert Vavra's new documentary on the wild Camargue horses of France, "Such is the Real Nature of Horses." Conference attendees will collaborate in the final panel discussion by contributing their own stories for the presenters to consider before the panel convenes.

A key focus will be the impact of the horse-human relationship on training, showing, and riding in venues as diverse as backyards and wilderness trails to therapeutic sessions and show rings. The conference will also consider the impact of the horse-human relationship on human health and well-being by exploring interactions in which horses have befriended, healed and taught humans, and the ways these relationships have been expressed through art, music, and literature. Registration is only \$40 for the all-inclusive online package and \$429 for in-person attendance.

To learn more about the presenters and register for this unique and innovative conference, please visit the official website at <http://www.thevoiceofthehorse.com> . This conference is being presented by Tapestry Institute, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that carries out original research on different ways of knowing, learning about, and responding to the natural world, and applies these ways of knowing to innovative education programs. You can learn more about Tapestry and its Horse-Human Relationship Program by visiting <http://www.tapestryinstitute.org> . I particularly recommend this page about the Sacred Circle applied to ways of knowing: <http://www.tapestryinstitute.org/circle.html>

MoonSinger



Wild Mystic: Skills and Spirit in the Sierras

September 2 - 8, 2007
Sierraville Hot Springs, CA

Is the earth your cathedral?

Do you long to crawl around in the bushes, checking out bugs, tracks, birds, scat with the intention of learning from and honoring them? ~ Have you ever built a fire or lit one with friction? ~ Do you wonder what the birds are eating off the ground or which plants you can eat? ~ Do you crave time to simply sit and be in nature instead of ticking off the hiking miles day after day? ~ Have you ever co-created ritual experiences with others under the stars?

If these questions call to your mind, body, and soul...

We invite you to join us in co-creating an intentional community in the wild for seven days while honoring the earth. Teaching and/or facilitation will be offered on camping skills, ritual skills, nature awareness, tracking, bird language, survival skills, meditation and more.

Meal preparation and other camp tasks will be shared in small groups. Nature hikes and optional overnight group backpacking trips and/or 24 hour solos will be offered.

The Intensive will be facilitated by 5 experienced wilderness leaders who practice earth based spirituality through eclectic traditions. We will camp on land abutting the Tahoe National Forest near Sierraville Hot

Springs. Space is limited.

For more information and to register: Visit <http://www.wildmystic.net> or call 510-550-7217



Midsummer, the when the Sun reaches the highest point in the sky and it is the longest day of the year, will take place on June 21st, 2007 at 11:07 PDT. . Grove High Day services will be on Sunday, June 17th when we will celebrate the "Druids of Summer." Play Gaul!

A Druid Missal-Any is published eight times a year. Post mail subscriptions are \$9.00 and email subscriptions are free. Or write an article or send us a cartoon and receive a year's post mail subscription free. Write to:

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This is the end of the Summer Solstice issue



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Webmastered by Mike Scharding

