

A DRUID MISSAL-ANY

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ule, Winter Solstice, was a minor High Day in the old Druid calendar. The festival's association with a Mother and newborn Son is very old through-out the Eurasian cultural area. It predates Indo-European occupation of Europe, and probably included the Proto-Indo Europeans in their steppes homeland. A Goddess and a Young Year God were worshiped in Balkan Europe before 3500 B.C. and in Summeria and the Caucis even earlier, In Rome, (much later) it was the Festival of the Three Mothers, probably cognates of the extremely popular Triple Mothers cult of the Celts. Mass produced, molded pipe clay votive figures of the three are found throughout Britain and Gaul.*



Left. Pipe-clay mother-goddess and mould; Toulon-sur-Allier, France. Photograph: Miranda Green. Musée des Antiquités Nationales, St. Germain-en-Laye. Right. Pipe-clay mother-goddesses; London. Copyright: Museum of London.

As deVries's, Grenier's, Green's, Szabo's and Ross's work has shown, the mother-goddess cult, so popular in Gaul and Britain during the Pre-conquest period and extending into Romano-Celtic times, has its origin in Proto-Indo-European culture, and shares features with similar cults in some of the other Indo-European peoples. The parallel has been drawn many times with Tacitus' description of the Teutonic Earth-goddess Nerthus who rode in procession through cities. This imagery recalls and is corroborated by Strettweg processional wagon with its female figure and also, later Romano-Celtic Mother figures portrayed in chariots. Another parallel is suggested in Irish literary tradition in descriptions of Connaught's Queen Medb being driven in her chariot around her camp before battle. Medb is a problematic figure, somewhere between a goddess and a heroic archetype. But it must be remembered that the "Tain Bo Chuailgne" was not written down in pagan times.

*Proving that mass-produced little religious goodies are not a modern tackiness.

By Emmon Bodfish, reprinted from A Druid Missal-Any, Yule 2007

NEWS OF THE GROVES

Mango Mission: News from Southeast Asia

Samhain seems to have finally arrived, in December, with four Americans dying in my consular district in 10 days in different cities, and one in the ICU recovering from pneumonia. Dead people. Not as scary as I thought to visit a morgue or crematorium. I felt they had already gone onward, leaving these behind, although the body felt like a "connection" to them if need be, which is how I think we see graves and such, a telephone to a departed soul. Said a quiet prayer, and fixed up their effects, boxed them and sent them home. Not a happy Christmas for those families, but at least they will have some closure.

In-laws from Japan are visiting my five-month son, happy times there. Seeing Laos through fresh eyes, going to nice restaurants, going to little boutiques with them that I'd normally skip in favor of going through more fraud files over lunch. More hands to watch the baby, means occasional naps for Mike!!

Carleton: News from Minnesota

As we of the ever-regrowing Carleton grove, literally sextupled in size now over the course of this year, are dispersed during the time of Yule (it is our winter break), our activities as a group will be limited to the possible instant messaging conversation of maybe a chatroom Yule, if anything. However, separately, I, as Archdruid, shall encourage everyone to, as they celebrate their respective forms of Yule, be it Christmas, the Winter Solstice, or Jultomten (for indeed, there are many of Swedish ancestry in Northfield) take a nature walk, jog, ski, ride, or whatever other means of getting out into the environment and revel in the beauty of Gaia (as we tend to use, in general, an Ancient Greek Neopagan pantheon as the basis for the time being, though all faiths are, of course, welcome and involved) and, in addition to following their respective faiths' festivities on the matter, I will further encourage my grove community to, while mourning Persephone's time in the underworld against her will and nature's temporary death with her for the time being, marvel at the morbid wonders of that which remains and how there can be beauty in death, and therefore perhaps there is less to be feared than first thought in this vein.

Having lulled the God to his restful sleep for the Winter with a series of lullabies and Dr. Seuss and other story books for the coming of winter, I am excited to rouse him from his slumber. To do so, I intend to spend the week of Yule in Colorado, skiing and hiking with family and friends in celebration of his return from the land of dreams (as I felt it wrong to trespass on his lands while he rested), in addition to celebrating the winter solstice by leading the family in a multi-denominational Druidic service based around meditation, nature walks, and communion with animals, in addition to any other forms of celebration and worship of the Yuletide with which we of the family and friends convened at the time are comfortable.

Daniel Lessin
Archdruid, Carleton College Grove

Hemlock Splinters Grove: News from New York State

Know knew Gnus.

We are flirting with winter here in the Fingerlakes. Snow geese and Canadian Geese wheel over a field of winter wheat, beautiful in the low angled sun. The horses are warm in their winter coats, but we break ice in the outdoor trough each morning. Firewood, scarves, and mulled cider weather. Yule coincides with the end of our school year. There will be much celebration.

Irony

Moose Breechcloth Proto-Grove: News from Minnesota

Seasonal Salutations Siblings!

We finally get a real winter here in the northland, and all the beautiful white snow outside my house is covered with shingles, wood chips, tar paper fragments, nails, and soot. Folks next door are getting a new roof, and my yard is the recipient of the garbage. They dang well better clean that up good when they're done.

Surgery on my right hoof was in October. Too many sprained ankles over the years had left me with a severed anterior talofibular ligament and peroneal tendons that were just a mess. I spent just over a month in a wheelchair, spent a couple of weeks in a walking cast, and now I'm using a cane.

Enter...the seasonal soap box speech...

The season of sleep is a good time for reflection, and seeing as I had a lot of time on my hands to reflect...truth being told, with the meds I was on, I pretty much spent my time flat on my back watching the ceiling move...

Anyways...reflections.... So what do you take for granted? Funny how you take things for granted until they're taken away. Case in point...my mobility, post-op. The simple action of walking. How many of us even think about it? I spent just over a month wishing for the simple action of getting up off the couch and walking across the room. I had to spend the first 10 days post-op flat on my back with my ankle elevated above my heart for 23 HOURS A DAY.

That hour off included bathroom breaks, showering, and meals. Do you know what you eat when you can't walk or stand on your own, and you only have one hour per day to take care of business? TV dinners. Something you could pull out of the freezer, rip the box open with your teeth, plunk in the microwave, and then nudge across the floor with the ball of your crutch over to the table. All I ate for two weeks was TV dinners. Stairs? You've got to be kidding me. Even if I could navigate them, I was so strung out on the meds, that I wasn't stable enough to stand very well.

After my two weeks in hell were over, I thought all would be well in the world. Nope. Try driving with a massive cast on the foot that operates the pedals. Still can't navigate stairs, even now that the oxycodone haze has been eliminated. I was still in a wheelchair at that point. Do you know how many buildings are NOT handicap accessible? (Starting with your house.) Seems like all of them when you're in a chair. Even the ones with the ramps. They still have doors that you can't open. They still have hallways with obstacles. Stairs, stairs, stairs. Area rugs which slip out from under you when you're on crutches. And for the record...shag carpeting and wheelchairs do NOT mix.

And you know what is REALLY irritating? Another one of those things most folks never think about...rolling yourself into a public restroom, there's an entire row of 10 stalls completely empty, and the ONE stall that's occupied is the handicap stall. You can't get the wheelchair into the other stalls, so you have to wait. After waiting and waiting and waiting...the woman finally comes out...healthy as a spring doe. She didn't need the handicap stall, she just took that one because it was the big stall.

You would never think that people would park in handicap parking spots that didn't need them. It never even crossed my mind to TRY it, because of the threat of a \$200 fine. Apparently, some folks are really willing to risk a \$200 fine over a parking spot. In another one of those things that you don't see until it's you...during the 4 1/2 weeks I was in a wheelchair, not only did I see SEVERAL cars parked in handicap parking without the handicap permit tags, I was actually cut off in parking lots three...count them...three...times by people pulling into handicap parking spots in front of me with no handicap permits on their cars. And when they got out of the car, it was obvious they weren't in need of the parking spot. Meanwhile, I'm now parked way out in left field, hopping on one foot in snow and ice trying to pull my wheelchair out of the back of my car. My temporary handicap tag flapping in the breeze. It was then that I also noticed how many other cars are parked out in left field also sporting handicap tags...it's not just me getting stiffed. Although, those could also be other drivers of that car who aren't handicap. Hard to tell. Probably some of both.

So what have I learned from all of this...aside from there are a lot of jerks out there.

Respect. I've learned a world of respect. I've been merely inconvenienced by this for a limited time...granted, I have to go back in next year and have surgery on the other foot...my time in this has been brief, no matter how irritating. There are people who wake up to this every day. Every day is a daunting task. Every day has hazards like stairs, doors, area rugs, crap littering walkways, jerks who take handicap parking spots when they don't need them, women who apparently really need to spread out in the ladies' room stall.

Respect. They take things in stride; like watching a new bottle of fabric softener get knocked down the basement steps by your crutch, only to have the cap crack open when it hits the bottom. And they have to stand there, like I did, helplessly frozen, unable to do anything about it as a puddle of blue oozes out of the jug. And when their S.O. gets home, they get to tell them, like I did..."Honey? I made a mess." Then open the basement door and show them the blue pond at the bottom of the steps. And the infinitely patient S.O. grabs the paper towels, and goes down to clean up the mess.

Respect. People who have to do this crap every single day...these people have earned my respect. And the folks who walk back up the basement steps and say "It's ok, I'll go get another bottle of fabric softener," the people who held doors for me, the unknown man who pushed me and my wheelchair up a steep ramp, the folks that held my food trays for me in the cafeteria at work, the staffers at the Science Museum who pulled me aside and pointed to an elevator...these folks are heroes.

So in this season of sleep, take the time out to reflect. Be a good person. Do nice things. Hold doors for people. Hold cafeteria trays. Don't park in handicap spots. Don't use the handicap stalls. Clean up the blue pond at the bottom of

steps for people. Identify something that you take for granted, and then stop taking it for granted. It's one of the better gifts that you can give yourself.

And may your season be merry and bright....

Gigawabamin nagutch,
and yours in the Mother,

—Julie Ann and Lou—

Clan of the Triple horses: News from Oregon

For pictures and ramblings of our recent activities, please see our Live Journal at: <http://triplehorses.livejournal.com/>

Our next formal ritual will be our annual Druid service asking for protection of the Gods during the dark cold nights of the Wild Hunt as well as through the days ahead. For more information about the Wild Hunt, please see-<http://www.maryjones.us/jce/wildhunt.html>

Our ritual is free and open to the public and children are welcome. Our ritual will be immediately followed by a potluck feast and a Bardic Circle inside our guests lovely (and warm) home. For our Bardic Circle, please bring a meaningful poem (original or otherwise) to share and/or a piece of artwork/handicraft. Our Bardic Circle can be a bit of a Druidic show 'n' tell. A friend of our Grove will be playing the guitar.

For more information, please contact triplehorses@gmail.com

Poison Oak Grove, News from California

May you have or maybe you have not noticed the lateness of this issue. For that I apologize. I never thought I would be one of those people whose lives have been consumed by their jobs, but this year this is what I became. My job ate my brain. Granted it was an unusual circumstance. In March one of the other print buyers left (I work for a college science textbook publisher) and her work was split between me and the other buyer, who was a manager. Then in June this manager quit...leaving only me. Thankfully I got some help from two production managers who came up to speed very quickly learning what a print buyer does and sending some of the work to our Boston office. But it hit me...I'm it. In a company of 150 people I'm the one with the most knowledge and experience in manufacturing books and media. Though I was the one with the most knowledge and experience any way I felt like a deer in the headlights. There was no one for me to go to for advice regarding manufacturing. It was more than daunting, worse than my first year as grove AD. Unlike at Carleton where it is said whoever runs the slowest gets to be AD I had nowhere to run to!

Then came the hiring of three new buyers, each very different in personality, different in level of experience, different in following direction. On top of a traditionally heavy end-of-year workload (publishing books for January classes and Spring selling season), I had to train them without being their manager. Being AD did not prepare me for this sort of leadership role. I had to learn how to stand up to people with some sort of weird ego problem and didn't like being trained in the procedures of a new company. Then I found my voice. One particular sot, I mean soul, would not write anything down when I explained to him how to do something. When he came to me a week later asking again how to do something because he didn't write it down I told him I would not tell him a second time if he did not write it down. He got it. It was the hardest thing to get to this point, for the brain to kick in and the mouth to get in gear. But this is what comes from being forced into a leadership role. Perhaps this will help me be a better AD.

The Samhain vigil didn't go quite as planned, but the evening regular service and morning Samhain service went off quite well. We felt *something* happen. I for one want to work on getting into a vigiling head space. On vision quests the questor will fast as a method to mind-flip into place to connect with spirit. Merely eating dinner and going outside to sit for six hours or so is not enough. I want to set the internal spiritual atmosphere, aka head space, better. One of the ways I came up with is eating a more Paleolithic-type meal with nuts, dried fruits, meat, grains. We'll try this next Samhain and see if it works.

In November the San Francisco Bay suffered the worst oil spill in 20 years, harming and killing a great deal of the wildlife, especially birds, that live on the Bay. At the beginning of December the AD took part in a Peace Tree Ceremony, passed down to several of us by a Buryat shamaness Sarangerel Odigan, on Angel Island which is near the epicenter of the spill. This ceremony was done to enlist the support of the human ancestors of the land in the ongoing task of healing and transformation of toxins. It was breezy and a little chilly but beautiful with billowing clouds. A turkey vulture kept us company flying repeatedly in the pathway of energy between the tree and the Bay Bridge (site of the oil spill), a powerful transformer of heavy energies.

The AD and Server, in addition to regular and High Day services, will be supplementing their druidic training by taking a year-long monthly workshop in earth medicine ways dedicated to the healing and vitality of the San Francisco Bay. There we will learn how to deepen the sense of connection and commitment to the well-being of the San Francisco Bay and the surrounding lands, learn the use of ceremonial/ritual practices to relate with the ancestors, other-than-human relatives (animal, plant, and mineral beings), and natural forces in the San Francisco Bay Area. We'll learn skills for earth healing and harmonizing with the elements, do at least one over night vigil (!), and participate in discussion between gatherings to integrate what we've learned and prepare for the coming month, AND improve ceremonial skills by helping to craft monthly gatherings. This training sounded SO druidic, and for the want of a druid teacher, we jumped at the opportunity to take this. You get your training where you can.

Missionary Impossible, File 7: Sometimes People do Admirable Things for Less than Great Reasons.

By Mike Scharding, Diplo Druid

Here in LaOs, people ride little mopeds and scooters predominantly rule the road, while hulking cars do their best to get around these slow obstacles. The LaOs have decided to more or less drive on the right-hand side of the road, but still enjoy slowly weaving through traffic (going both ways) which was kind of thrilling and amazing that they don't get smashed more often. They don't like to wait at stop signs or stop lights (only three years here so far), unless a car is immediately in their way in the middle of the intersection, at that time they slow down, creep into the middle of the intersection, then when no further traffic can squeeze through, they stampede across the remainder of the intersection. I thought they must have a Zen-like sense of total surrounding awareness, perfectly in tune with where every one else was at that moment, or so it seemed at first. Now, the way they pull in to traffic, don't stop at lights and drive the wrong way on one-way roads to save a minute, its just because they are oblivious, untrained and reliant on the good will of others to get out of their way and not kill them. It's more like managed chaos to me now.

LaOs has a tradition where all the young men spend at least a few months as a monk. Until recently, as in much of Asia, temples were the only place to get an education; now they are more and more places solely for spiritual training, and thus losing a bit of their real-world practical attractiveness, as students are less willing to stop secular schooling to do the monastic thing. The people here still respect monks because of their austerity and services that they provide to the community; taking in orphans, teaching, preaching, assisting the poor and officiating at rites. The monks go out in bright orange wrappings, barefoot, in the morning with their large bowls to collect offerings from the neighborhood of which their temple is the central focus. Ladies of the households are usually waiting there kneeling, dressed up to place food, snacks and some pocket change in the bowls for the silent boys and men. It's kind of like daily trick or treating, but more humble, and certainly with more equality of exchange. Naturally, I'd think what's good for the gander is good for goose, and the women should have the opportunity to escape the ties of their house and chores for months or years to improve their spiritual training. Usually here, women cannot enter the temples until they are in their 60s or 70s, kids all grown and gone, and then they are more like caretakers, called "Mothers in white," wearing white instead of orange, to indicate they are definitely not monks. I can make suggestions here, but they'll change when they are ready to, if ever.

The Celts used to be these kind of barbarous rule-breakers in the eyes of their neighbors. I sometimes wonder if Druidism had been somewhat like this in ancient Europe? Is this a glimpse of another system, also in decline, or in transformation to something new?

Tapping into Large Energy Sources

By Tegwedd ShadowDancer

Co-ArchDruid and Chronicler for Duir de Danu Grove, San Jose, CA and Hazelnut MotherGrove, Online Branch
(Look at all the puns!)

When we do anything, and especially when we do magick, or any ritual, we need a source of power or energy. You don't want to tap people because they are small finite sources that are soon depleted, and then you have become a psychic vampire, which is unethical, as well as very wasteful. People are like batteries, especially the tiny AAA type. It is better to tap into "house power." House power is a huge readily replenishable source of power. We will be dealing with four of these sources of power. The four I will be discussing are: The Earth, the Ocean, The Sun, Space. "

The Earth

We can tap directly into the Earth Mother. You can either sit on the grass or directly on the dirt. For those of you who are also Wiccans, this is very similar to grounding and centering. Sit or stand on the ground. Shut your eyes. Inhale, then exhale, picturing all your stress, tension, and negative energy going into the Earth. She can transmute all that negative energy into positive energy. Inhale again, and as you do, visualize your body being filled with green light. Exhale, carrying any residual negative energy into the Earth. Inhale again, making sure that you are filled with green power.

The Ocean

If you are fortunate enough to live near a large body of water such as either the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean, this is wonderful for carrying away any negative energy and filling yourself with the ocean's power and majesty. In many ways, it is similar to the Earth exercise above. Take your shoes off and roll up your jeans. Let the water lap at your feet. Inhale, then exhale, sending your negative energy, tension, all the stresses of the day or the week out into the ocean. Like the ground, the ocean transmutes all your negative energy into positive energy. Now inhale. If you can, try to time it with the coming of the waves into shore, exhaling as the water recedes. Inhale as the water laps at your toes, visualizing your entire body being filled with blue light.

The Sun

The Sun, in partnership with the Earth Mother, is responsible for all life on Her. We can also tap into the Sun's light and power. During the '70s there was a TV show where an ancient man, but who appeared young, tapped directly into the Sun's power. Everyone on Earth could tap into this source and there still would be plenty left to illuminate the Earth for billions more years. The exercise is similar to the previous two sources. You might want to go outside at noon, when the Sun, old man Belenos, is at His height. If you have sensitive skin, put on sunblock, of course. You don't want to get a suntan. This is to get the Sun's energy within you. Inhale, then exhale, sending out all your stress, tension, and negative energy with this outgoing breath. Inhale, filling your lungs with air, visualizing your entire body being filled with golden light. As you exhale again, visualize all the rest of the negative stuff being carried out of your body by this outgoing breath. Inhale again, and visualize all the parts of your body that carried stress before being filled with relaxing golden light.

Space

For this exercise, you have to go outside at night. It is better in the country, since in the city, the light pollution hides the stars from our eyes. There is much power in space, because now you are not limiting yourself to the Earth or the Solar System, but drawing upon the full universe. Pick a constellation that you wish to draw power from. When I have done this before, I have selected the stars in Orion's belt, but it can be any of the constellations that you recognize. You can also draw from the Moon if you wish to pick a source fairly close by. Or the Crab Nebula. There is a wealth of power in the Crab or the Horse Head Nebula. Let's say that you wish to tap into the power of the Pleiades, the Seven Sisters that are in the horns of Taurus the Bull. Shut your eyes, and inhale, then exhale. As you exhale, visualize all the stresses of the day, the tension, and the negative energy you have collected through the day

leaving your body, and going into space to be transmuted into positive energy. Now as you inhale again, visualize your body being filled with scintillating diamond hued light. That is the power of the stars. If you are going to sleep soon, it can be stored for the next day by visualizing all that light going into your spleen.

So you see that it is a simple thing to tap into these huge sources of power. Practice every day or night in your chosen place, and soon it will become second nature to you.

Press Release

Digital Project to Boost Irish Studies with ‘Virtual Ireland’ Website

By Kathleen Maclay, Media Relations
15 November 2007

BERKELEY – Irish studies scholars tend to be scattered in isolated enclaves about the globe, as are the critical literary, scientific, cultural and historic resources needed for related research. It can easily take years or even decades of an academic career to track down and contextualize one’s sought-after information.

That may be about to change, thanks to a joint project between the University of California, Berkeley, and the Queen’s University of Belfast, Northern Ireland. Their digital collaboration, “Context and Relationships: Ireland and Irish Studies,” aims to better connect Irish studies materials and to make them easily accessible 24/7 from anywhere with a quick click of the computer mouse.



The “virtual Ireland” collaboration between UC Berkeley and the Queen’s University aims to create “a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary digital library of e-resources relating to Ireland.” (*NASA satellite photo*)

The project is primarily supported by a \$349,996 “Advancing Knowledge” grant funded jointly by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Institute of Museum and Library Services to bring the trans-Atlantic humanities scholars together with museum, library, archive and information technology (IT) professionals. The institute is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s libraries and museums.

“This project transforms Irish studies and reinvents the library reference service,” said project leader Michael Buckland, an emeritus professor in UC Berkeley’s Information School. “In the past, one could use reference works in the library’s reference collection to find explanations. We intend to show how that valuable service can be made available online. It’s a bigger deal in Irish studies than in almost any other discipline.”

UC Berkeley's task is to develop open source search and retrieval tools and interfaces to explore contexts and relationships through names, places and other words in maps, atlases, bibliographies, dictionaries, primary texts and secondary works.

"We need to handcraft these tools and show they can work," said Buckland, calling the assignment "the perfect niche for humanities scholars and IT professionals in the ivory tower to show how it can be done."

UC Berkeley's project participants include the campus's Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative, Celtic Studies Program, Information School, and Emma Goldman Papers Project.

Faculty as well as undergraduate and graduate students in UC Berkeley's Celtic Studies Program will be involved in evaluating the effectiveness of new electronic tools and the cultural, historic and linguistic complexities of materials. Faculty and students at the Information School will lend a hand with development of advanced search tools, particularly to explore materials by time periods, geographic regions and across different fields and genres. The Emma Goldman Papers Project, which has archival papers relating to Goldman's Irish contacts and interests, will assist with designing and testing tools such as the embedding of notes, live links and hyperlinks.

At Queen's University of Belfast, the Centre for Data Digitisation and Analysis is taking the lead. The British government and JSTOR, a not-for-profit organization established to create and maintain an archive of important scholarly journals that cover many disciplines, have funded the scanning, digitization and preservation of the back issues of 100 leading journals that represent approximately 1 million pages of material. The project also will include 205 monographs and 2,500 manuscript pages from core collections on Irish culture and history.

"This will create a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary digital library of e-resources relating to Ireland," said Paul Ell, a professor of geography, archaeology and palaeoecology at Queen's University and director of the Centre for Digitisation.



With a few clicks of the mouse, visitors interested in Irish castles, like the famous Blarney Castle above, would be able to find locations, descriptions, historic and literary references on the Web. (*Valdoria photo*)

Deirdre Wildy, a principal investigator for the project at Queen's University, said the project offers a solution to the underutilization of the treasure trove of influential materials relating to Irish studies.

Digitization of some Irish studies material has lagged behind that of other collections, said Daniel Melia, co-principal investigator for the new project and a UC Berkeley professor of Celtic studies and rhetoric, as well as an authority on Irish Gaelic and Irish folklore. Valuable material often is in storage or difficult to access, without published indexes to guide scholars to what is available.

The new system, Melia said, should enable visitors to the website to draw a loop on a map and enter the word “castles,” for example. Next, users would see links to a list of castles within the designated area, as well as written entries about each castle and historic and literary references to it.

Or, someone could enter a Latin medieval place name for an Irish location and discover related information such as the location’s longitude and latitude, maps identifying nearby sites, census data, fairy tales, folk tales, tribal names that influenced the place name, oral histories, overlays of modern political boundaries and photos.

“All these links and bridges will add up,” said Buckland. “Before, it would have taken years of study to figure out there are even these materials or resources. The implications are huge.”

Ironically, Ireland itself has tended to focus more on foreign and contemporary topics, said Wildy, since it experienced a technology boom in the last 15 years or so. But interest in digitizing Irish studies materials now appears to be increasing, said Melia.

“This makes it so much faster and easier for anybody, anywhere,” said Buckland. “You don’t have to be in Belfast or Dublin for long periods of time looking for a book, finding it and studying it - or honing in on your particular issue.”

It is likely to dramatically speed up doctoral study in Irish studies, said Melia.

Ell and others acknowledged concern that humanities scholars have not used digital resources as extensively as other scholars. Melia lamented that too many online resources have relied on “the Google model” with its “million grains of sand with no hierarchy or difference between them.”

“The mission of the NEH has always been to advance excellence in the humanities, and today that must mean maximizing the use of advanced technology,” said Bruce Cole, chair of the NEH.

More details about the project, which could serve as a model for other humanities efforts, are online at: <http://ecai.org/neh2007/>.

NEWS

Reindeer: It’s What Was For Dinner

By Jennifer Viegas, Discovery News

From: <http://dsc.discovery.com/news/2007/12/20/reindeer-meat-cavemen.html?dcitc=w19-502-ak-0000>



Once a Staple

Reindeer like those pictured here were once a dietary staple for prehistoric cave dwellers, according to researchers studying bones left behind in the ancient dwellings.

Dec. 20, 2007 -- Reindeer meat went from being an occasional treat to everyday fare among prehistoric cavemen who lived in Southwest France and what is now the Czech Republic, two new studies suggest.

In fact, so many nibbled-on reindeer bones were present in their caves that possible calendars circa 26,000 years ago might have been carved on the leftover bones. They may have also been used as counting devices or for ornamentation.

The first study, authored by J. Tyler Faith, analyzed bones found in limestone cave and rock shelters at a site called Grotte XVI at Dordogne near Bordeaux. The numbers and types of bones revealed plenty -- how, for instance, the hunters butchered the meat, how far they traveled to hunt, and details about populations of the animals themselves.

“If an archaeological assemblage of large mammals is dominated by only the most nutritional skeletal parts (thigh bones, for example), it suggests that the other skeletal elements of lower nutritional value (foot bones, skulls, little bones) were probably discarded at the kill site,” Faith told Discovery News.

“Conversely, if we see equal frequencies of all types of skeletal elements it suggests that carcasses were transported intact and that minimal butchery was taking place at the kill site,” said Faith, a George Washington University anthropologist.

He determined that 64,600 years ago, the cave dwellers -- including Neanderthals -- only brought back the choicest reindeer cuts. The meat seemed to multiply over the years so that by 12,285 years ago, virtually all parts of the reindeer were being eaten, with the animals constituting 90 percent of large mammal game.

This suggests the reindeer population in the region steadily increased over the years, so the cavemen didn't have to travel far out of their homes to get a nutritious reindeer dinner.

“If you don't have to carry the carcass very far, why both investing lots of time butchering it at the kill site and carrying only certain parts of it back home?” Faith said.

By the looks of things in the cave, during the Magdalenian era the dwellers filled themselves on everything from reindeer ribs to roast of reindeer as a result.

The findings have been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Archaeological Science*.

Donald Grayson, a University of Washington anthropologist who has also extensively studied the French site, told Discovery News that the new study is “important, insightful and innovative.”

The pollen record for the region, which reflects past vegetation, shows ever-decreasing summer temperatures favored more and more reindeer, which thrive under cooler conditions. According to Faith, when temperatures rose sharply after around 12,000 years ago, “reindeer became locally extinct and their southern boundary in Europe retreated northwards.”

Before this happened, prehistoric hunters in what is now the Czech Republic were also up to their ears in leftover reindeer bones.

A separate study published in this month's *Antiquity* describes two decorative art pieces from Predmosti that were carved on bone that likely was reindeer. Rebecca Farbstein, who co-authored the paper with Jiri Svoboda, admitted to Discovery News that “the small size and fragmentary nature of these pieces make interpretation about their meaning speculative.”

Farbstein, a researcher in the Department of Archaeology at the University of Cambridge, and her colleague determined that the bones were covered with a distinctive grid pattern on one side.

Based on a review of other objects from the same time period, the carved bones could indicate that prehistoric Europeans may have marked their time on bone calendars made out of the then-common animals.

Cal Mulls What to Do with Tree-sitters



By MICHELLE LOCKE, Associated Press Writer
Thu Nov 22, 4:55 PM ET

University of California officials have won the legal right to oust a band of tree-sitters who've taken up residence in an oak grove standing in the way of a planned sports center.

But how do you uproot a tree-sitter in Berkeley, one of America's most politically correct cities? "Extremely difficult," acknowledges campus spokesman Dan Mogulof.

As the protest nears its one-year anniversary, plenty of people have suggestions: Fire hoses, skunk spray and tranquilizer darts are among the thorny ideas Internet posters have planted.

So far, the university has moved cautiously.

The university wants to remove dozens of the picturesque trees, called evergreen coast live oaks, to build a \$125 million training facility for its Golden Bears athletic teams.

There have been scuffles between police and tree-sitters; and campus officials have put up chain-link fences around the grove. University lawyers have told a judge they are considering pruning lower branches — to make it harder to ferry supplies up to the protesters.

Both sides say they don't want a treetop confrontation.

"It's not an easy thing to do, to climb up into a tree, first of all," said Doug Buckwald, member of a group that supports tree-sitters but doesn't join them. "If you're climbing up into a tree to try to wrestle with somebody and drag them down, you are taking on a high level of risk."

A judge ruled last month that school officials would be within their rights to oust the protesters. Mogulof declined to comment on what tactics campus police might use but said they are "not currently contemplating a forcible removal."

"Any decisions we make are going to be guided by an overriding desire to minimize the chance of harm coming to our officers or the people in the trees," Mogulof said.

The protest began last Dec. 2. It's unclear exactly how many tree-sitters there are, or whether they are students or outsiders. Many rotate in and out at night and wear masks, and they usually give false names.

Although some just spend a few hours in a tree to show solidarity, others seem to hang out for days or weeks, helped by supporters who hoist food, water and reading materials to them in buckets and haul out trash, excrement and other waste.

Notable milestones have included an appearance by conservationist Sylvia McLaughlin, 91, who briefly sat on a tree platform in January. There have been two nude photo shoots, and two sitters have fallen, breaking bones. The next big development in the case could be a ruling, expected soon, on lawsuits filed by the City of Berkeley and others challenging the building plans. They argue the athletic center would be environmentally and seismically unsound, which campus officials deny.

The judge hearing those lawsuits previously issued an injunction banning construction while the case is pending. Campus officials say a new gym will allow the school to move athletes out of cramped and dilapidated quarters in Cal's 84-year-old Memorial Stadium. They promise to plant three new trees for every one felled.

Berkeley has changed since its '60s heyday as an epicenter of student protest, and the tree-sit doesn't appear to have generated huge interest on campus. "Unfortunately, a lot of the people are detached," said Jerlina Love, a graduate student who supports the sitters.

But sitters have vowed not to descend as long as the oaks are in peril. The sound of laughter and guitar music wafted from the trees as sitters enjoyed mild temperatures on a golden afternoon this week.

The group was feeling "awesome," said a sitter who would give only her nickname of "Dumpster Muffin." Still, she said, they are concerned for their safety. "It's definitely coming to a head of some sort."

Robin Hood's Forest Is in Trouble

By KATE SCHUMAN, Associated Press Writer
Sunday, November 4, 2007

EDWINSTOWE, England (AP) --

Robin Hood might have a hard time hiding out in the Sherwood Forest of today.

The forest once covered about 100,000 acres, a big chunk of present-day Nottinghamshire County. Today its core is about 450 acres, with patches spread out through the rest of the county.

Experts say urgent action is needed to regenerate the forest and save the rare and endangered ancient oaks at its heart.

Some 15 organizations have joined forces to draw up a rescue plan, hoping to win a \$100 million grant through a TV competition in December.

"If you ask someone to think of something typically English or British, they think of the Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood," said Austin Brady, the regional director of the East Midlands Conservancy Forestry Commission. "They are part of our national identity ... but the Sherwood forest is a real place and the real forest needs help too."

The forest is beloved for its connection to Robin Hood, the legendary 13th century bandit who supposedly hid there from his nemesis, the Sheriff of Nottingham, in between stealing from the rich and giving to the poor.

One of Sherwood's oldest and most celebrated trees is Major Oak near Edwinstowe, the town where legend has Robin marrying Maid Marion. Historians believe it and other Sherwood oaks could have been saplings back in Robin's time.

Park rangers say the collection of ancient oaks is one of the greatest in Europe. But they see an increase in the trees' rate of decline.

Over the centuries, the forest was carved up for farms, mines, towns and logging. Sherwood timber built medieval ships and even part of London's St. Paul's Cathedral.

Now, the ravages of age — and, some fear, climate change — are taking their toll. On average one veteran oak per year would fall; this year seven have come down and the rate seems to be accelerating, said Izi Banton, the forest's chief ranger.

Currently 997 ancient oaks stand on the 450 acres known as the "beating heart of the forest," Banton said. About 450 are still living, and of those, 250 are good shape, while the other 200 are particularly vulnerable. The remainder are standing deadwood, still valuable to the forest because of the life they support.

Each oak has its own management plan and some even have names, like Medusa, Stumpy and Twister. Rangers monitor them closely, watching for branches that look droopy or stressed, anxious to ensure that each tree lives as long as possible, said Paul Cook, a senior ranger.

"Every time I come up here I think, 'Has that one gotten slightly lower?'" Cook said, looking at one aging oak. "It is a shock every time one comes down."

Ancient oaks survive about 900 years, of which 300 years are spent growing and 300 dying. Of the seven trees already lost this year, four were felled by high winds on one February night.

With fallen trees go the mostly unique kinds of beetles, moths and bats that live in them.

"It's the hidden side of Sherwood—everyone knows about the amazing trees, but they're not aware of life it supports," Banton said. "They're not all cute and fluffy, but they have just as an important role to play."

The oaks and wildlife will become more vulnerable as long as they remain isolated from the rest of the forest, Brady said. The rescue plan would focus on planting 250,000 trees to knit the parts of the forest back together.

Hopes are high that Sherwood Forest will win the grant from BIG Lottery, a branch of the National Lottery that gives out money to good causes. Last year, the lottery launched Living Landmarks, a TV program that encourages communities across Britain to work together to improve quality of life and environment.

The lottery committee has shortlisted Sherwood and four other projects to vie for the \$100 million.

"This lottery project is the biggest one that there's ever been," Brady said. "It's almost a once in a lifetime opportunity to get the forest back on track."

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/n/a/2007/11/04/international/i113452S63.DTL>

EVENTS

Lughnasad Druid Conclave East

A gathering for members of all Druid Orders and their friends. Formerly known as the "Druid Summit," it is a place in the forest where Druids from all paths come together to share and discuss issues of common relevance. This year we will feature a bardic competition and a craft competition as well as a ritual in the forest. It is a primitive camping event on the weekend of August 16, in the hills of Western Massachusetts. The food and drink are potluck, bring your own solar shower (and extra wood and water), dried or fresh herbs and flowers, silver coins (dimes and quarters) and butter or oil as offerings for trees, water and fire. Sunday morning we will have a blueberry pancake feast, we ask that you bring the bounty of the season to share with everyone (including pancake mix, blueberries,

eggs, milk, bacon, etc.). Applicants will also be asked for a small donation to cover the rental of sanitary facilities. Please note* this is not a “Pagan” gathering or a gathering for the general public. It is for Druids and close friends and family only.

To sign up please write to membership@whiteoakdruids.org

Book Review

Temples of Stone: Exploring the Megalithic Tombs of Ireland by Carleton Jones

Hardback; 28 Euro / 38 USD / 19 UK; 334 pages. Color and black and white photos, maps. The Collins Press. ISBN 978-1905172054.

Dolmens and burial chambers dot the Irish countryside and fascinate all. Once dismissed as ‘rude monuments’ shrouded in mystery, fresh archaeological interpretations provide new ways of understanding these ancient structures. Who were the megalith builders? Why did they heave these massive stones on top of one another? What can these evocative monuments tell us about how their builders understood the world and their place in it? How did the monuments alter ancient people’s experience of place and time? What rituals took place in and around these monuments? Were drugs and hallucinations part of the rituals engaged in? How were the giant megaliths erected? And finally, why did people stop building them? Insights and answers to these questions are presented in a fully-illustrated popular format. All key sites in Ireland are discussed. 100 ‘Sites Worth Visiting’ are listed in a final chapter with photos, maps, and detailed directions for visiting each site.

CALENDAR

Winter Solstice will take place on Friday, December 21st at 10:08 p.m.

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