

A DRUID MISSAL-ANY

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Oimelc, festival of Bride, La Fhèill Brighde, Brigid, Bredes, Bride, Celtic goddess of fire and the hearth, poetic inspiration, and healing. Though astronomically Spring takes place around the 19th of March, agriculturally and otherwise as evidenced in nature Spring begins at Oimelc. The days grow noticeably longer. The ewes come into milk and give birth. Trees that were dormant during the winter begin to show signs of growth in their swelling buds. Preparations for planting begin. Oimelc was especially important to the ancient Celts because the milk produced by the ewes and the cheese made from it was the first fresh food they've had since Winter had begun.

This celebration of the change in the season in pre-Christian Ireland survived into Christian times as St. Brigid's Day. Though the "heading" might have changed the day was still associated with the perceptible changes in Nature. In the folklore of Cúil Aodha, a Gaelic-speaking village in west County Cork, two accounts of St. Brigid's Day show the connection of the day to the changing season and its evidence in nature. They also show the community's connection to the land and to nature as the second account especially describes the growth of vegetation in Springtime.

"It is said that the lark begins to sing on St. Brigid's Day and the blackbird also, and that all the birds of the air begin to mate from St. Brigid's Day onwards.

"The old people used to say that things would be thinking of growing on St. Brigid's Day; that one "Veiled One"/hag would be pushing the vegetation upwards while two hags would be keeping it down. Then, when St. Patrick's Day would come round, two hags would be pushing it upwards. But when the first of April arrived, the three hags would join forces to push the vegetation upwards. The farmers say that it is time to think of the spring work when St. Brigid's Day arrives and it is the music of the birds that reminds them of this."*

Before potatoes were introduced to Ireland grain, or corn as it is called there, was the predominant crop grown. Corn left its mark on the celebrations of the festival of Brigid. One of the chief materials in the making the Brigid's cross is straw. Straw suits and hats were worn by those who took part in the Brídeog, or Bríde doll, procession from house to house that took place on St. Brigid's Eve. When Francine Nicholson was still alive and the moderator of the Celtic Well email list, I asked the question where did the straw come from that was used for making the Brigid's crosses. Was it from the grain harvest at Lughnasadh? Was it made from the last sheaf that was hung in the barn over the Winter? In researching this article some five year later I found the answer. The material used came from the Threshold Rite.

While the popular and better-known procession of the Brídeog took place in the southern parts of Ireland, the Threshold Rite was found in the north such as in County Donegal. Both rites included a variation of the dialogue "Go on your knees and let the blessed Bride come in." The Brídeog procession went from how to house whereas the Threshold Rite took place at individual houses.

Before sunset on the Eve of Brigid's Day, January 31st, green rushes were cut by the man of the house and placed in a bundle outside the door. While this was happening a pot of potatoes were being prepared and boiled. Right before they were mashed the man of the house would go outside, close the door behind him, and take the bundle of rushes in his arms. He would then say in a loud voice, "Go on your knees, open your eyes; and let the Blessed Brigid enter. The family who was inside the house would reply, "She is welcome. Welcome to the Noble Lady." This exchange was said two more times, and after the third time the woman of the house wearing a veil opens the door. The man would bring the rushes into the house and put them on the floor. The pot of potatoes was placed on top of the rushes and the potatoes were mashed (*brúitín* or "poundies"). Then the family ate their supper with the potatoes being served from the pot on top of the rushes. After supper was over the pot was removed and the family divided up the

rushes and made Brigid's crosses. The old people would tell stories or make predictions or tell stories of the Fianna. On Brigid's Day proper the crosses made the night before were blessed and hung up in the house.

Oddly and ironically enough this is how Poison Oak Grove inadvertently planned our celebration of Oimeic! We had a special guest Padraigean from the Gàidhlig class several members of the grove attend, come and teach us how to make Brigid's crosses. Padraigean is a master wheat weaver who has studied with Morgyn Owens-Celli and Nan Rohan, and has taken awards for her weavings at the county fair.

For supper we had beef and Guinness stew served on top of boiled potatoes and parsnips (next year we mash them!). While we were eating Padraigean recounted the story she was told at an Irish Arts Foundation seminar by Eddie Stack, author, folklorist, and faculty member of New College in San Francisco. The original Celtic cross had three arms and the Christians later added the fourth. Therefore it was not unusual to find the four-arm Brigid's cross in the house to keep the priest happy, and the three-arm cross in the byre with the livestock, which was probably more important to the family's well-being.

The three-arm cross was the kind we learned how to make. Padraigean first had us practice by making crosses out of 12" strips of colored paper folded in half. After we mastered our crosses in paper and figured out how to "lock" the strips so they stayed in place we graduated on to wheat. The wheat was soaked for about an hour so it wouldn't break when we worked with the straw and bent the stalks into place. Here are photos of the colored paper test cross and two finished crosses.



A grand time was had by all. Padraigean will be coming again to teach us how to make other kinds of corn dollies. Perhaps she will come at the opposite side of the wheel of the year at Lughnasadh to teach us how to make the "Neck."

*Sean O Duinn, *The Rites Of Brigid : Goddess and Saint*. Dublin: The Columba Press, 2005, pp. 21 and 22.

NEWS OF THE GROVES

Mango Mission: News from Southeast Asia

Mike is currently in the throes of choosing his next post of assignment by Valentine's Day. Looking like either Belgium (Hey Julie!) or Canada (Hey Ric!), so we'll know before Spring Equinox. Both places are infinitely more conducive to Druidism, because, well, they have four seasons. (grin). Sadly, too busy to write for the Missionary Impossible column this issue, what with baby, job and post research.

Carleton: News from Minnesota

All quiet within the Carleton Chapter. We were away for Most of November and all of December, so we're just getting back into action with meetings every other week. We celebrate Oimeic on the first weekend of February with a feast and a cross country skiing excursion inside the arboretum, looking for signs of Spring. I trust everyone else is well and possibly a bit more active?

Acorn Proto-Grove: News from Canada

Stacey,

Good to hear from you... Nothing new to report on my end... Still a protogrove of one

The site you are looking for is;

<http://www.archaeoastronomy.com/>*

Still one of my favourites... The Almanac for 2008 on this site has the current dates and times for Northern and Southern hemispheres.

Cheers

Ric

*This site lists the High Days astronomically.

Hemlock Splinters Grove: News from New York

Hello Stacey,

No news from this grove besides exasperation over global warming. 71F in January? In upstate New York?!? Anyone who hasn't should watch *An Inconvenient Truth*. Some of the science is simplified (I say with a degree in environmental science) but the conclusions are accurate and very well presented.

Attached is a new piece of writing which you may wish to save for the Beltaine issue, just before Mother's Day. It is a letter I wrote to my mother in 2001 after reflecting on parenting and wondering how to raise a good druid. Raising druids, I realized could not be the goal, but now that more and more druids are becoming parents themselves, I thought it might be useful.

Enjoy-

Irony

Moose Breechcloth Proto-Grove: News from Minnesota

Seasonal Salutations Siblings!

All is mostly well in Minnesota. My physical therapy, post-op, is going very well. My PT told me yesterday that in four weeks of PT, I've doubled my mobility. Not to say that I'm half-way to healed, but I'm twice as good as I was when I started PT. Still have a very long road ahead. However, I've been forbidden from snowshoeing this year, per my PT. The fiend.

Zeus, our older cat, cut his lower lip on something; wound up with an infection and an impressive vet bill. He's now getting antibiotics twice a day. I'm supremely confident that Zeus has already reported Lou and I to PETA for forcing yucky medicine down his throat.

Oh, the drama.

If you've ever had to give a cat meds before, you know exactly what I'm talking about.

We got some scary news recently. Lou's dad is having some heart trouble. His dad is 87 years old...and he's just now being told to watch his heart. Since Lou and I live four miles away, we're pretty much on call 24/7 right now.

My 7th Polar Bear Plunge for Special Olympics of Minnesota is next weekend (Jan 12). For those of you in the warmer climates, we jump through a hole in the ice into a frozen lake...in January...in Minnesota. No wussies need apply. All the money collected, in the form of pledges, goes to support Special Olympics of Minnesota. Lots of folks have been asking me if I can do this just 2 1/2 months post-op. Hey...my surgeon, my family doctor, AND my PT all want me keeping my ankle iced...so there you go. Jumping into a frozen lake should help with the swelling, no?

We've decided to do my birthday again this year at the Minnesota Zoo. We had so much fun doing it there last year. It came about because trying to get all of our friends together in one place is like trying to herd cats. "Love to go, can't get a sitter." "Love to go, can't get a sitter." It's all we hear.

Replicators.

Lou and I are confirmed non-replicators. Well think about it...if Lou and I had kids....Irish Indians...think about THAT one for a while. Irish Indians...our kids wouldn't stand a CHANCE with alcohol.

Back to the zoo...Well if the difference between getting together with our friends or not, is what to do with the kids, then why not do something that you can do WITH the kids. Ergo, the birthday at the zoo, and we get it catered by our favorite deli.

(By the way, Ross...consider this your formal invite. I'll call you with the details later.)

Last year, we happened upon the otters...uhhh....doing that thing they do to ensure the continuation of their species. More replicators. The babies were born in July. And since we were there to witness their conception, I've named myself as their godparent, and I've named all the babies (male and female) "Julie Ann." So sayeth me. After all...they already have my namesake (Laughing Otter...my Ojibwe name).

Well folks...that's pretty much it for now. Wish I had more interesting things for you. But then my life isn't ALWAYS a circus...sorry.

Gigawabamin nagutch,
and yours in the Mother,

—Julie Ann and Lou—

Nine Oaks Proto-Grove: News from Nevada

Greetings from Southern Nevada!

The protogrove has been a little sleepy as of late, with the very cold desert temps that seems to have lingered on this year. We have been switching between a more 'earth based' NRDNA ways, taken from the RDNA rites and modified a bit. We have also been engulfed with a strong Nordic-heathen view in the 'in between times' (as the coming Oimeic *ours will be Feb 2nd* will be followed by the Teutonic 'charming of the plow' rite *ours will be Feb 14th*)

Most of our 'waters of sleep' time has been on self-renewal' and much study (about the Druidry, etc)we hold a weekly Thursday eve 'druid study and conversation' time and have gained a few new members and expect more in the coming months.

Our rites, what we have actually done 'in nature Herself and in Grove' will be placed online in a blog in about a month, with pics and other interesting 'whatnots'!

Be well and strong RDNA!

In the service of the Mother!

Finegas ShadowDragon

Sierra Madrone Grove: News from Sacramento

The Sierra Madrone Grove just finished our Winter Solstice/Hogmany Ritual/Gathering and Rib Feast. We had an incredible spread that included our famous winter BBQ ribs and a huge potluck. With over 20 people in attendance, we had an amazing time.

We will be holding our Imbolc Ritual and Gathering on Saturday, February 2nd at 5pm at the Grove Nemeton in Sacramento, CA. Contact Arch-Druid Sean Harbaugh at seanthedruid@yahoo.com for more details. Peace! Peace! Peace!

Sunset Proto-Grove: News from California

Oimele is nigh...is right. The field I pass on the way to work is already full of lambs and Ewe's here in our warmer climate. Time seems to slip away faster and faster as the years go by. I can't even begin to guess where 2007 went. (After writing that statement, I realized I must make myself sound ancient. LOL)

I enjoyed Tegwedd's article in the Yule Missal-Any, and it caused me to think about what I get out of meditation in the areas mentioned in her article. For me Earth, Ocean and Sun are the most powerful. Even when one is not consciously meditating, but just 'enjoying' think about how good you feel after laying the grass for a nap, or playing in the breakers at the beach, or my personal favorite (having earned me the nickname of 'Sun-Tracker' because I tend to move my chair throughout the day so as to take full advantage) just sitting in the sun, with a glass of water and a book. I wonder about snow...There are wonderful meditative qualities to a walk in the snow. Especially a snowy wood. The insulating quiet and silence of a blanket of snow punctured by the noise of an animal or the sound of the snow crunching underfoot, is amazing. Image how much more you'd get with a concentrated meditation. As no snowy hikes are planned this fall, I'll have to lay on the grass and meditate in my circle this year after its construction is completed, (More on that in the next update.)

The article, 'Reindeer...It's What's for Dinner', brought back memories of my 2002 trip to Lapland, Finland. Reindeer meat I can attest is a cross between bad steak and venison. If anyone ventures to the resort town of Levi in Finland, I recommend the 'Hullu Poro' or 'Crazy Reindeer' for an authentic Reindeer dinner. When you get into the bar keep walking back through the building and outside then into the log hut that is lined completely with Reindeer antlers. (You may have to reserve ahead to eat out here.) You'll know you are in the right place when you get there. If you are lucky, like I was, after dinner on your way out of this log lodge, you might be treated to a view of the aurora borealis. Some trips you never forget.

Back to the present-

This week I will attend the wedding of a fellow RDNA member as a witness. A wedding a long time in coming, and my heart smiles to see these two people take this leap. No two people have I met during my life have been more suited to one another. I took upon myself the charge of making the bridal bouquet and have been spending some time looking up the meanings of seasonal flowers and herbs. It brought to mind the importance of action coupled with intention. It is one thing to go through the actions of performing a task. It is so much more to do things not only for the right reason but with thoughtfulness, purity of heart, and consideration for others. Even when the task is small.

Thanks to you all for inspiring such wonderful thoughts and memories during this season of sleep.

Oriana

Poison Oak Grove, News from California

Here, there, and everywhere...

Okay, I'm done with this leadership thing. The fellow at work who I wrote about is continuing to not "get it" and I'm ending up having to think for him as well as do my own job. This is not conducive to a person who is spiritually trying to evolve. In fact it is draining. Small bags of something barbecued and crunchy aren't helping (in fact just makes me feel guilty because I'm eating crap and that to me is not very druidic) Cole Coffee,* the ultimate in "mood

beverage,” the Elixir of Strength and Awareness, Nectar of the Javacrucians, isn’t helping. Couple with that the odd of burn out and melt down of my Gaidhlig teacher. And so the Missal-Any is late *again*. This cannot continue. There needs to be balance again. This is where it would be good to insert mentor-type person for feedback, support, and encouragement. Interesting thing is, it looks like there is someone like that already here. The woman who was the ceremonial leader of the vision quest I did last year has been there to offer advice personal and spiritual, to help work through “issues,” and one who can give that needed kick in the butt when necessary. She isn’t a druid but is an elder in the Native American community up at Mount Shasta (sudden realization...that is where Emmon is buried...) So we’ll see if this needed outlet is the outlet needed. This Missal-Any is courtesy of her gentle and encouraging kick in the butt.

*<http://www.colecoffee.com/colecoffeeeshop.html>

Stephen Abbot Fundraiser

Dear Brethren and Kin,

I wanted to update on what we have done to assist Stephen Abbott in his time of need. I also want to sincerely thank those who gave of themselves to assist a pagan elder in need, in particular the ADF and RDNA Groves of the Pacific Northwest.

As you might know, Stephen is a longtime friend of Isaac Bonewits from the Berkeley Grove days of the NRDNA along with Robert Larson, one of the original Carleton students from 1963. He has been a pagan leader in the Northern California pagan community for many years in the Bay Area, and then fell out of sight in the 90s. He was and is friends with just about every name from the beginnings of the Neopagan movement, and he is in one of the pictures in *Drawing Down the Moon*. He also is mentioned in several of Isaac’s books and Skip’s book *The Solitary Druid*. As he is in his late 50s he developed glaucoma, and has some other disabilities that prevent him from working. He currently runs the online Hazelnut Mothergrove of the RDNA and does divination to supplement his paltry monthly social security of \$355 a month. Stephen is a founding member of the Sierra Madrone Grove, ADF/RDNA, and is master of divination.

Donations received:

Sierra Madrone Grove Fund - \$100
Sierra Madrone Grove individual members - \$200
Clan of the Triple Horses - \$120
Poison Oak Grove, RDNA/Stacey Weinberger - \$100
6th Night Grove, ADF - \$100
Order of the Mithril Star, RDNA - \$25
Individual contributions from around the pagan spectrum - \$670.69
Compassionate Membership from ADF

Donations pledged:

Feather River Protogrove - \$125
Sierra Madrone Grove individual members - \$150

You can send donations to:

Sierra Madrone Grove
PO Box 220034
Sacramento, CA 95822

Or to Stephen’s PayPal account at AbbottsInn@gmail.com.

I have contacted Stephen's landlord, and worked out a plan that will keep him from being evicted. I have also talked to AT&T, and his other utilities about placing him in low income assistance on his bills. I have assumed the role of manager of his funds and placed him on a real budget. Thanks to some good information, I will be in contact with social services and legal aid on Monday to get him some additional financial assistance. I have been in contact with his old friend Glenn Turner, and she is working on setting him up a divination table at PantheaCon to help him raise some money. I will be transporting him to the Con so many of you will be able to meet him. While he isn't Isaac, he can tell you stories about the early days of the Neopagan movement that will amaze you. Also if you are looking for a source for info on the early Neopagan movement, he is a direct one. He can be reached at 916-455-2267 if you want to talk or get a reading. Be prepared for a long conversation.

Peace, Blessings, and Many Thanks to All of You!

Sean Harbaugh
Arch Druid - Sierra Madrone Grove
ADF Northwest Regional Druid

Lord of the Council Ring



While it may sound like what Frodo carried from the Shire to Mordor in Tolkien's classic tale, a council ring isn't something you wear on your finger. Rather, it's a community gathering space surrounded by a curving wall of stones. And Carleton now has its very own, thanks to a gift from the Class of 1954.

Nestled in a wooded area on the northeast bank of Lower Lyman Lake, the College's council ring boasts 15 tons of native Minnesota limestone and four tons of New York bluestone. Designed by Herb Baldwin, a landscape designer Carleton has worked with since the 1970s, and constructed in fall 2006 by Landshapes, a Minneapolis-based environmental design firm, the ring is focused on a fire pit, regularly stocked with wood by the College's grounds department. "We provide the wood; otherwise students tend to get a bit too creative in what they choose to burn," says grounds superintendent Dennis Easley. A lighting strip in the stone slabs covering the ground helps visitors navigate the ring in the dark.

Carleton's council ring may not have the invisibility-making power of Frodo's ring, but it's a quiet, secluded spot that is ideal for small gatherings or for talking with a friend. It may even inspire a ring of the "Will you marry me?" variety.

From the Fall issue 2007 of the Carleton Voice, submitted by Brother Mike

The Celtic "Lorica"

By David J. Drew

The lorica or 'shielding' has a long and venerable history in Irish Gaelic spirituality and history. It is known primarily as a morning prayer of protection, oft used by Christian saints such as Patrick to guard themselves against

the evils of the world. However, this chanting and lyrical form of poetry predates monotheism in Ireland and can be traced to the incantations and oaths recited by warriors before battle. Adopted then by the ‘soldiers of Christ’ in their spiritual warfare. The Pagan intention was to assume an impenetrable sphere or shield of energy around themselves, much like armor, and this power was one bestowed upon an individual by the gods supreme, as can be seen in this exchange between Conchobar and the hero Cuchulainn in the Tain:

“I swear by my Gods whom I worship, they shall all come under me... just as I have put myself under the shielding and protection of the Gods.”

The other great lorica is ‘*Rop tu mo Baile*’ or ‘Be Thou my Vision’ attributed to the 8th century High-Poet of Ireland and Christian saint Dallan Forghail, (born 830 CE and martyred in 898). Dallan was famed for preserving and reforming the ancient Bardic Order of Druids, and writing the eloquent biography of St. Columcille ‘*Amra Cholium Chille*.’ Dallan’s lorica focuses specifically on adopting virtues as a shield, and it is in this context that I created my own chant, together with the use of his primary phrase ‘thou vision’ as a repeating mantra. A short gloss in Dallan’s *Amra* gives a further insight into his beautiful and poetic mind with relations to virtue:

*“Fo is a name for good and for honor;
Fi is a name for evil and for disobedience;
An is true and it is no weak knowledge,
Iath is diadem and iath is land.*

*Mur means multitude yonder in the law,
Coph is victory, it is a full right word,
Du is a place, du means thy right,
Cail is protection and cul is chariot.”*

Other valuable references to Gaelic virtues are found in the ‘Audacht Morainn Mac Moin’ or The Testament Addressed to Feradach find Fechnach Mac Craumthann Nia Nar, and ‘The Instructions of King Cormac to his son Cairbe.’ Specific legal obligations are to be found amongst the ancient Brehon laws in the ‘Senchus Mor.’ My Lorica is directed toward the magnificent warrior god Lugh, who I see as the Lord of protection, of borders and boundaries, the archetypal hero who appears in the ‘Cath Magh Tuireadh’ or 2nd Battle of Moytura in which he joins forces with the Tuatha de Danann against the malevolent Fomhoraigh. Such are the brilliant and shining strengths of Lugh that the Gaels could never relinquish their believe in him, even after conversion to Christianity, and thereafter adopted him in the guise of St. Michael the Archangel... another formidable combatant and knight of the good against the darkest cosmic forces. I also drew guidance from the nine pagan virtues elucidated in the dedicant program of ‘Ar n’Draiocht Fein’ and then added a grounding plaint wherein the bodily existence is compared to, and woven into the essential elements of existence (as perceived within Celtic lore) and these were taken from a manuscript in the British Museum in London; BM MS 478 Folio 7a. Combined as a whole, I feel that the lorica kindles a powerful and presiding strength of purpose from which no fear could be adopted in the course of one’s daily activities:

The Lorica (Shielding) of Thiarna Lugh Lamhfhada

Rop Tu Mo Baile (Be Thou My Vision, Pron: *rop thu may valley*)

Shining Valor-God
Balm my senses, with
Sun-blessed tincture
Of visions beyond boundaries

Rop Tu Mo Baile

Bless me with Wisdom
Truth’s deepest well
Shimmering Salmon of destiny
Against slander and deceit

Rop Tu Mo Baile

Bless me with sacred thought
All encompassing piety
Immersed in Natures flow
Against invasion and chaos.

Rop Tu Mo Baile

Bless my heart with courage
Stag leaping with sure power
Swift songs through a glade
Against shadows of weakness.

Rop Tu Mo Baile

Bless my throne of integrity
A seat of high-honor, nobility
From the eternal stone of oaths
Against lips of liars.

Rop Tu Mo Baile...

Bless me with oak sturdiness
Rule of discipline and dedication
Perseverance in cross gales
Against lazy cots of sleep.

Rop Tu Mo Baile...

Bless me with a hospitable hand
Greetings generous, healing touch
Charity and purity unbound
Against gluttonous disease and famine.

Rop Tu Mo Baile...

Bless with a calm lake of moderation
Weighed on scales of harmony
A hawk balanced in flight
Against slavery and desire.

Rop Tu Mo Baile...

Bless me with fertile eloquence
Poetry of creation seeds
Woven tapestry of fine words
Against blunt tools and barren land.

Rop Tu Mo Baile...

May my face glow with the intensity of the Sun's forge, my back blossom with the strength of the tree of life, my flesh be enriched as the deep earth, my blood flow and surge like the oceans wide, my thoughts translucent and graceful as the clouds, my breath fragrant as fresh spring winds, my bones firm and sturdy as mountain stones, my mind tranquil as the phases of the moon, my head in amazement of the blanketed stars at night... and may my spirit

remain pure and truthful, within and without, as a living spark of energy in the center with all things of beauty and passion.

NEWS

First-century Lindow Man goes back to his roots

By Maev Kennedy
The Guardian, U.K.
Monday January 28 2008



Lindow Man is to return to close to the spot where he met an appalling death almost 2,000 years ago, skull smashed in, strangled, stabbed, and finally dumped face down into the bog pool which preserved the evidence of his last terrible hours.

He has been one of the star exhibits at the British Museum since his discovery in 1984 by peat cutters at Lindow Moss in Cheshire, transfixing visitors who gaze into his leathery, contorted face and startlingly preserved hair and eyelashes. The museum is now sending him on a year-long loan to Manchester Museum.

“I am delighted people in the north-west will once again have the opportunity to meet this everyman of prehistoric Britain,” said the London museum’s director, Neil MacGregor.

Lindow Man, dated to the mid-first century AD, is the best-preserved ancient body found in Britain, and one of a haunting group of scores of bodies found in bogs across northern Europe which have provoked debate among archaeologists. Like many of the others found across Europe he was a healthy man in the prime of life, although he had the beginnings of osteoporosis in his spine, and intestinal parasites. The remains of his one surviving hand have neatly trimmed nails and fingertips with no sign of the wear of hard manual labour.

“The jury really is still out on these bodies,” curator Jody Joy said, “whether they were aristocrats, priests, criminals, outsiders, whether they went willingly to their deaths or whether they were executed - but Lindow was a very remote place in those days, an unlikely place for an ambush or a murder.

“I think the fascination is that you can look into the face of a real man who may have used the implements and objects in the cases around him.”

Lindow Man was exceptional among the bodies found in bogs for his “triple death”, bludgeoned, stabbed, and garrotted by the leather cord still around his neck. However, scientists now think the tightness of the leather may have been caused by swelling in the water.

“We may never know exactly how and why he died,” Joy said, “but I believe science will have a great deal to tell us about how he lived.”

Although the bodies are tanned to leather, they are fragile and in danger of decay and mould. Lindow Man will be on display in Manchester from April.

New York City cloning historical trees for future



Tree expert David McMaster points to a 110-foot tall tulip poplar that will be cut down and may be used for cloning with some 25 'historical' trees in Central Park in New York, Wednesday, Jan. 9, 2008.

Richard Pyle
Associated Press
Jan 11, 2008

Squat, homely, dwarfed by stately oaks and poplars, and unnoticed by the tourists passing in horse-drawn carriages, it's a tree that only birds and nut-hungry squirrels could love.

But the 100-year-old European beech on Central Park's Cherry Hill was the center of attention Thursday, chosen by city officials as the first of 25 "historical" trees to be cloned as part of a plan to add a million new trees to public spaces over the next decade.

Agriculture students from a Queens high school rode hydraulic-powered tree-trimmers' buckets to upper branches of the 60-foot tree and snipped off 6- to 12-inch sections of new growth, which will be sent to a scientific tree nursery in eastern Oregon. If all goes well, the genetic-match saplings will return in two years to be replanted as part of the "Million Trees NYC" project announced last year.

"We want to break the stereotype of New York as skyscrapers and sidewalks," Parks Commissioner Adrian Benape said. "New York abounds in historical trees."

The target trees, five in each of New York's five boroughs, include nine different species. All were selected by borough foresters as historical for having existed for at least a century — either as fixtures of the urban landscape or as having special significance to local communities.

Among them is what may be the city's oldest tree, the St. Nicholas elm in upper Manhattan, which George Washington is said to have walked under 230 years ago during the American Revolution.

Partners in the cloning effort include the Central Park Conservancy, a private group that manages the 840-acre park; Bartlett Tree Experts, a Connecticut-based company that has tree care contracts in New York, 25 other states, Canada, England and Ireland; the nonprofit Tree Fund and the Coleman Co., a camping equipment maker whose coolers will be used to ship the cuttings to Oregon.

David McMaster, a Bartlett vice president, said the cloning would target several "Olmsted trees," dating from the creation of Central Park by famed architect Frederick Law Olmsted in the late 1850s.

"Our intention here is to go after significant trees that we know Olmsted planted over 150 years ago," he said.

Benape said being less than beautiful had no bearing on the European beech tree's potential contribution to a greener Gotham.

“Like the other trees to be cloned, it has withstood the test of time and the indignities of urban life,” he said. “These trees as a result tend to be hardier species, inherently disease resistant. They are a great reaffirmation of the importance of nature in New York City — trees so good that people are looking to clone them.”



McMaster holds budwood from a 100 year-old beech tree in Central Park in New York. The tree is the first of 25 ‘historical’ New York city trees to be cloned at a scientific tree nursery in eastern Oregon.

McMaster said the cloning is a two-stage process in which cuttings are grafted to roots of the same species at the Schichtel Nursery in Oregon, and the new growth is later peeled away to create a sapling with the DNA of the original tree.

The result is a genetically identical tree, although not one identical in shape to the original. Some trees — ash, oak and elm — that are particularly susceptible to disease must be certified as healthy to be cloned, he said. Each of the cuttings will produce 10 genetic copies of the original tree, allowed to grow to 2 to 3 feet before being sent back to New York for replanting.

Janet Bornancin, executive director of the Wheaton, Ill.-based Tree Fund, a research and education organization, said studies show trees live an average of 80 years in forests, 50 years in parks and about seven years on city streets.

Environmental pressures in the city include air pollution, road salt, tightly packed, nutrient-poor soil and cramped space for root growth — even wrapping holiday lights too tightly, she said.

“Every time a jet aircraft flies over the city it drops kerosene that damages trees,” McMaster added.

Celtic Land of Dead ‘lies in North Wales’

By Steve Bagnall
Daily Post, U.K.
Dec. 24, 2007

A NINETEENTH century map in a North Wales town hall could unravel one of Celtic history’s most enduring mysteries – the location of the legendary Land of the Dead.

The map at Llangollen town hall could potentially rewrite the history of one of the world’s greatest hidden landmarks, a Celtic history expert claims.

According to Welsh mythology the Land of the Dead – or Annwn: Celtic Underworld – was ruled over by Gwynn ap Nudd. He escorted the souls of the dead there, and led a pack of supernatural hounds.

For centuries this place has believed to be pure fable.

But, experts say there is a grain of truth in the story from which it developed, with the evidence now pointing to Ruabon and Halkyn Mountains.

Steve Blake, author of the Keys to Avalon, which argued the myths of King Arthur are firmly rooted in North Wales, said: “Llangollen and the Dee Valley are rich in this piece of Celtic folklore.

“Central to this is St Collen, from whom Llangollen takes its name, who in the sixth century established the church and surrounding area as his parish.

“One story has him battling Gwyn ap Nudd on a nearby hill. Glastonbury Abbey have claimed St Collen as its first Abbot, with this and many other stories being transferred there.

“This is despite him being almost exclusively mentioned in early Welsh texts, Llangollen being named after him and his actual grave being recorded in the churchyard as late as the 18th century.

“Why would someone leave their home parish, travel 200 miles over hostile enemy territory to set up an abbey in a marsh? It doesn’t make sense.”

But archaeology and a late 19th century Ordinance Survey map on the wall of Llangollen town hall could help substantiate the North Wales claim to some legends held dear by Glastonbury.

Research and surveys have high-lighted the greatest concentration of bronze and iron age burial chambers anywhere in the world on Ruabon and Halkyn mountains.

This points to the area being extremely significant with an ancient Welsh work entitled the Stanzas of the Graves giving a clue to whom is actually buried there.

“The Stanzas indicate people of nobility from all over the Celtic world were brought here for burial, making it one of their most important and sacred places.

“Indeed, the whole area is bordered by the River Dee, which is still regarded as the most sacred of Celtic rivers, which adds more fuel to the fire,” said Mr Blake.

It is believed there are in excess of 500 burial chambers on the mountain although modern maps only show those on the edges of the Eglwyseg escarpment.

This is because the vast majority were destroyed during World War II as the area was used for decoy bombing.”

EVENTS

Book Release

Dear Friends!

Please do me the honor of attending the launch of my *first novel!!!* (Yay!... It only took nine years...) There will be a short talk on Druids, questions and answers, and cake! And please bring your friends.

February 24, 2008, 3 PM

Author Reception and Book Release Party! In honor of the release of *Priestess of the Forest: A Druid Journey* by Ellen Evert Hopman.

At:

Inspirit Common
123 Russell Street

Hadley, MA 01035
p/f 413.585.1169
www.InspiritCommon.com

See the New Book section below for details about *Priestess of the Forest*.

Thirtieth Annual University of California Celtic Studies Conference

Hosted by the UCLA Celtic Colloquium, and co-sponsored by the UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (CMRS), the Department of English, the Friends of English, and the Indo-European Studies Program.

March 6 - 9, 2008, Royce Hall 314, UCLA Campus

PROGRAM

Thursday, March 6

- 1:30: Coffee, registration
- 2:00: Welcome: Brian Copenhaver, Director, CMRS
- 2:15: Geraint Jenkins (University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies), "Truffle-Hunter or Parachutist? Iolo Morganwg the Historian"
- 3:15: Rosemarie Deist (University of San Francisco), "Tristan and the Love Potion: Medieval Adaptations of a Celtic Theme"
- 3:45: Antone Minard (University of San Diego), "Peredur's Zoo: Natural and Unnatural Animals in the Welsh Triads"

- 4:15: Break

- 4:30: Amy Eichhorn-Mulligan (University of Memphis), "Playing for Power: Macha Mong-rúad's Sovereign Performance" (sponsored by the USC Institute for British and Irish Studies, and the USC Center for Feminist Research)

- 5:30: Reception
- 7:00: Patrick Geary (UCLA), "The St. Gall Monastery Plan Project"
- 7:30: Gregory Toner (University of Ulster), "eDIL (electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language)"
- 8:00: John Bollard, "Landscapes of the Mabinogi"

Friday, March 7, 2008

- 8:30: Coffee, pastries
- 9:00: Maria Teresa Agozzino (American Folklore Society/Ohio State University), "Midsummer Madness: Welsh Worldview and the Ritualesque"
- 9:30: Patrick Ford (Harvard University), "Four and Twenty Meters, Packed in a Song True?"
- 10:00: Peadar Ó Muircheartaigh (NUI Galway and University of Notre Dame), "Towards the Contextualization of Initial h- in Old-Irish"
- 10:30: Break
- 10:45: C. Jürgen Uhlich (Trinity College Dublin), "Serc do Día 'God's Love'?"
- 11:45: Lunch Break
- 1:00: Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail (University College Dublin), "Scribal Transmission in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Ireland: A Re-Appraisal"
- 2:00: Break
- 2:15: Arthur Bahr (MIT), "The Welsh Sheen of a Middle English Pearl"
- 2:45: Edyta Lehmann-Shriver (Harvard University), "The Plight of the Hero: In Defense of Bres"
- 3:15: Aled Llion Jones (Harvard University), "Two by Two: Men and Chariots"
- 3:45: Daniel Melia (UC Berkeley), "The Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative (ECAI) and Irish Studies"

- 4:15: Break
- 4:30: Róisín McLaughlin (DIAS), “Fénius Farrsaid and the Alphabets”
- 5:30: Dinner Break
- 7:00: Margaret Lloyd (Springfield College) reads from her recently published poetry collection *A Moment in the Field: Voices from Arthurian Legend* (Plinth Books, 2006).

Saturday, March 8, 2008

- 8:30: Coffee, pastries
- 9:00: Charles MacQuarrie (CSUB Antelope Valley), “What’s So Celtic About Cormac McCarthy?”
- 9:30: Calvert Watkins (UCLA), “The Milk of the Dawn Cows Revisited”
- 10:00: Sarah Zeiser (Harvard University), “Threads of Battle: Weaving and Gender Association in Old Irish Narratives”
- 10:30: Break
- 10:45: Gregory Toner (University of Ulster), “Memory, Writing, and the Preservation of Knowledge in Medieval Ireland”
- 11:45: Paper sessions conclude for the day.

Sunday, March 9, 2008

- 8:30: Coffee, pastries
- 9:00: Eve Sweetser (UC Berkeley), “Celtic Romanticism, Celtic Modernity, and Jakez Riou”
- 10:00: Maggie Harrison (Harvard University), “There and Back Again: Music, Step-Dancing, and Cultural Identity in Nova Scotia and Scotland”
- 10:30: Break
- 10:45: Caoimhín Breatnach (University College Dublin), “Conflicting Portrayals of Fionn mac Cumhaill and the Fiana: The Story of an Early Modern Irish Narrative”
- 11:45: Lunch Break
- 1:00: Matthieu Boyd (Harvard University), “Affinities of the Two Hags Trading Crooked Quatrains in Aislinge Meic Con Glinne”
- 1:30: Geraint Evans (Swansea University), “The Welsh Printer’s Device on Shakespeare Quarto Title-Pages”
- 2:00: Helen Fulton (Swansea University), “Welsh Translations of the Prophecy of the Six Kings”

General Information:

To attend the paper sessions, advance registration is not required and there is no fee. Seating is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

UCLA Campus Parking:

Parking permits may be purchased (\$8.00) from a UCLA Parking Services kiosk on the day of the event. Be sure to mention that you are here to attend the Celtic Studies Conference in Royce Hall. Please note: On Sunday morning, the only Parking Services kiosk open before 10 am is located on Westwood Blvd., just north of Le Conte Avenue on the south side of campus. For more information about campus locations, parking, and driving directions, please see www.ucla.edu

Need More Information?

For any other questions, please contact Professor Joseph Nagy of UCLA at jfnagy@humnet.ucla.edu or call the UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 310.825.1880.

Pagan Alliance Festival 2008

Greetings and Welcome to 2008

A new year brings new beginnings. This year’s Pagan Festival theme “We Are Change,” declares our commitment for positive change. The Festival ritual, altars, speakers, performances, information and activities will be designed to

be inspirational. The displays, Authors Circle and information booths will offer ideas and educational information to empower yourself to be an instrument of Personal, Spiritual, Environmental, Political and Social change.

The Pagan Alliance Presents
7th Annual Pagan Festival-Berkeley, California
Theme: We Are Change'
Saturday, May 10, 2008
10:00 am to 5:30 pm

Our Green procession this year demonstrates that we can make an impact on our community and society while not impacting Mother Earth. People (and animal) powered vehicles, sidewalk floats and spectacles only, please. The procession will be on sidewalks and streets.

Keeper of the Light- TBA
Masters of Ceremonies Shay Black and a special guest.

Join us for: Procession and Festival in a newly renovated park, Interfaith Ritual, Stage Performances, Speakers, Traditional Dance, Music, Interactive Altars, Children's Crafts Area, Authors Circle, Vendors, Information Booths, Druid Story Telling Pavilion, Green Pavilion and Voter Registration.

The Green Pavilion will display innovations and information on how you can improve and maintain your GREEN lifestyle.

Visit vendors to buy your loved ones gifts for Mother's Day and Graduation.

The Festival site is more accessible this year with a new stage complete with an accessibility ramp and all booths accessible from walkways.

Awards and Prizes for Best Girl's, Boy's, Woman's and Man's Costumes

Please bring a new, unwrapped toy for the Berkeley Fire Department's charitable toy drive. The fire department will be onsite collecting the toys and offering tours of a fire engine for most of the day. (Availability permitting)

Volunteers Wanted-- Please sign-up on our website, <http://www.thepaganalliance.org/volunteer.asp>.

Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park, Berkeley, California
(between Center and Allston next to Farmers Market)
2151 Martin Luther King Jr. Way , Berkeley CA 94704
Downtown Berkeley BART
1 ½ blocks west to Civic Center Park
Carpooling is Encouraged
Public Garage Parking Available
Limited Handicap Parking adjacent to Park

For more information- <http://www.paganfestival.org> and <http://www.thepaganalliance.org>

We provide a safe and sacred space to express your spirituality. We encourage respect of diversity and for all participants and audience members. This is a family-friendly event, and children are encouraged to participate.

Cruinneachadh nan Gàidheal & Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig (July 2008)

Mark on you calendars – the biggest gathering of the Gaels this region has seen will take place July 24-26, 2008 at the Millenium Centre in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. There will be workshops, a huge milling frolic and céilidhean gu leòr. It follows the Antigonish Highland Games (the oldest in North America - July 18-20) and Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig, a series of lectures from Gaelic scholars around the world which will be taking place here for the first time

outside of Scotland on July 21-24. Siol will be on hand with our books, etc... and Laurinda will be giving a talk on the Keppoch Bard. Hope to see you all there! For further information contact Catriona Parsons at: cparsons@stfx.ca (for the Cruinneachadh), Ken Nilsen at knilsen@stfx.ca (for the Rannsachadh) or the St. F.X. Celtic Studies Department at (902) 867-2300.

Scholarships to Study in Ireland

12 fully-funded 4-year PhD scholarships are available for Arts and Humanities research in Trinity College Dublin.

A new interdisciplinary and inter-institutional PhD pathway for research in Arts and Humanities has been launched by Trinity College Dublin in conjunction with NUI Galway and University College Cork. 12 four-year scholarships of fees plus ?16,000 per annum are available for those who wish to pursue this pathway as students of Trinity College Dublin. Other scholarships are being offered by NUI Galway and University College Cork. The scholarship competition at Trinity College Dublin is open to both EU and non-EU applicants. The closing date for entry is 1 March 2008.

Texts, Contexts, Cultures has been designed to prepare students for life in academia - and beyond. First-year students will develop their research through multi-institutional training elements in the pathway's core themes - History of the Book, Imaging Ireland and Renaissance intellectual history - much of which training will be delivered through audiovisual and online networks. Research will be supervised by multi-institutional scholarly panels. Students will also be provided with the opportunity for work placement in the knowledge economy sector.

Dr John Hegarty, Provost of Trinity College Dublin, commented that the Texts, Contexts, Cultures pathway "represents an exciting new beginning for higher education in Ireland and for higher education itself."

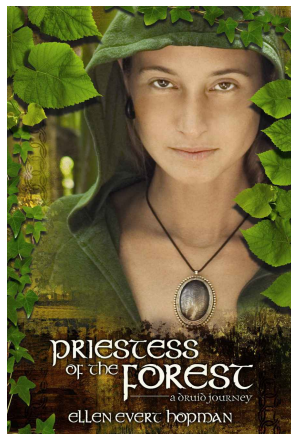
Full details can be found on www.textscontextscultures.ie. All enquiries should be directed to Dr Crawford Gribben, the Director of Texts, Contexts, Cultures at Trinity College Dublin (crawford.gribben@tcd.ie).

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Dublin 2, IRELAND

Visit www.textscontextscultures.ie for full details of the new multi-institutional and inter-disciplinary PhD in "Texts, Contexts, Cultures" and for news of the 30 fully-funded four-year scholarships that will be awarded to successful "Texts, Contexts, Cultures" students.

New Book!

Priestess of the Forest: A Druid Journey By Ellen Evert Hopman



In the tradition of Marion Zimmer Bradley's *Mists of Avalon*, Ellen Evert Hopman weaves Druid history and spirituality into an engaging love story. This Bardic teaching tale is set in a fictional third-century Ireland when Christianity is sweeping across the Celtic Isles. During this time of crisis, love blooms between Ethne, a Druid healer, and her patient, a Fennid warrior. Their passionate affair suffers a tragic blow when Ethne is called upon to become the high queen.

Told from the Druid perspective, Hopman recreates the daily life, magical practices, politics, and spiritual lives of the ancient Celts during this historic turning point. Druid holy days, rites, rituals, herbal lore, and more are brought to life in this Celtic fantasy—illuminating Druidic teachings and cultural wisdom.

A historic fantasy that weaves Druidic teachings into a Celtic tale of love . Highlights details from Druidic history—daily life, class system, torcs, triskells, and crafts. . Features a glossary of significant Celtic/Druidic terms and an interview with the author about modern Druidism. Suggested sources for further study of Druids through-out history, Druid ritual, and modern Druidism

ISBN 978-0-7387-1262-8

US \$18.95 CAN \$21.95

Trade paperback

6 x 9, 408 pp. (with glossary & epilogue)

Available in February 2008 at your favorite local bookstore and online from Amazon.com or Llewellyn Worldwide at www.llewellyn.com

Massachusetts resident Ellen Evert Hopman has been active in American Druidism since 1984. She is co-chief of the Order of the Whiteoak (Ord na Darach Gile), a popular author of Druidry-related titles, and a master herbalist. She teaches at the Grey School of Wizardry and has contributed to several Pagan journals.

CALENDAR

Oimelec, when the Sun is half way between the Winter Solstice and the Spring Equinox takes place this year on Feb. 3rd at 9:19 p.m. Pacific Standard Time when the Sun will reach 15 degrees of Aquarius, or by the alternative calculation when the Sun will reach 16 degrees 18 minutes declination on Feb. 4th at 12:19 a.m. Pacific Standard Time.

A Druid Missal-Any is published eight times a year. Post mail subscriptions are a mere \$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.