



## Samhain Y.R. XLVI

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For Submissions: Send to [mikerdna@hotmail.com](mailto:mikerdna@hotmail.com)

### Editor's Notes

I just can't help myself. I've dug up yet more articles on rocks, as I have in the previous three issues. I should be just about done with rocks now. The other theme for Samhain this year is, surprise!, DEATH. We are beginning a health corner, to avoid DEATH, and are joined by Irony Sade's column on Druidic health tips and answers to questions while he is studying in medical school. I will continue on this DEATH theme for the Yule issue also (yes, so un-warm and un-fuzzy). Oimelc will delve into the prickly issues of removing troublesome members, how to spot a bad leader and methods for responding to ultra-orthodox-Druids. Oimelc will also start a Children and Parenting Corner. Keep reading, we'll do our best to entertain you!

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## News of the Groves

Submit your RDNA grove or protogrove news 3 to 4 weeks before the eight Druid festivals to [mikerdna@hotmail.com](mailto:mikerdna@hotmail.com)

The thirty groves of the RDNA and RDG are at <http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/wheretroves.html>

### **Carleton Grove: News from Minnesota**

I received reports that recruitment at Carleton went well and several donated materials (money, shovels and musical instruments).

### **Mango Mission: News from South-East Asia**

Life is going well, my next child will be born around Yule time if all is well. The Druid Inquirer really blossomed in this issue, and I'm hoping the next two issues will be as good, I certainly will be more busy very soon.

### **White Rabbit Grove: News from Wisconsin**

While the Grove services continue to be for current members only, the Arch Druid Helgaleena Healingline remains active on the Internets via Sermons on the Blog. These are prompted by the seasons and can be accessed at <http://helgaleenas.livejournal.com> And we will NOT be giving out candy at the end of the month either, not even sugar skulls which our hispanic neighbors are so fond of!

The Healing Line (608)226-0052 USA is open for telephone advice.

### **Koad Protogrove: News from Ohio**

Innaugural Protogrove ritual held on 22 September 2008 for the Autumnal Equinox  
Plans to hold a Samhain ritual at or near Samhain

Yours in the Way,  
Jean/Phagos

### **Hemlock Splinter Grove: News from Upstate New York**

Irony is doing well at medical school and has begun a column in the Druid Inquirer called "Ask Doctor Druid" in our health section.



## **ARDA was Out of Order Temporarily (but ok Now)**

For a short time, the website at Carleton College holding A Reformed Druid Anthology files, was not accessible by people off-campus. It appears to be back online now. Please alert me if you have troubles again.

In case of temporary inaccessibility, the 2004 Edition's main files (not Green Books or Magazines) are available at <http://www.scribd.com> and search for A Reformed Druid Anthology. We are also in the process of setting up other, more detailed, back-up storage sites.





# Druid Academy Nomination Award Committee (DANAC)

## Annual Golden Oak Awards (The "Oakie" Awards)

The Druid Academy Nomination Award Committee (DANAC) consists of prominent members of the Henge of Keltria (HoK), Ar nDraiocht Fein (ADF), the Reformed Druids of North America (RDNA), Order of the White Oak (OWO), the Reformed Druids of Gaia (RDG) & Order of the Mithril Star (OMS), and the Missionary Order of the Celtic Cross (MOCC).

The DANAC members wish to learn more about happenings in their own group, and in other groups, and encourage the best of the best by acknowledging the annual accomplishments of modern Druids.

In order to provide potential nominations to the DANAC, Mike Scharding (RDNA) is soliciting submissions for the Oakies in the following 10 categories:

1. Most interesting internal grove project begun or completed in 2008. Non-exhaustive examples include: liturgical design, fund-raising, recruitment, education, development, site-planning, web-development, meeting style, festival/meeting idea, etc.
2. Inspiring external project begun in 2008 by a grove or member (s) of ADF, Keltria, RDNA, MOCC, OWO, RDG & OMS. Non-exhaustive examples include: activism, ecology, public outreach, legal moves, publishing, charity, civic involvement, interaction with other religious organization, etc.
3. Greatest hardship overcome in 2008 by a member of ADF, Keltria, RDNA, MOCC, OWO, RDG & OMS. Publicly admissible, of course, no gossip please. Non-exhaustive examples include: persecution, financial obstacles, medical impairments, isolation, time constraints, educational restraints, etc.
4. Best Poem or song released in 2008 by a member of ADF, Keltria, RDNA, MOCC, OWO, RDG & OMS.
5. Best work of Art completed or released in 2008 by a member of ADF, Keltria, RDNA, MOCC, OWO, RDG & OMS. Non exhaustive examples: painting, drawing, sculpture, digital art, clay, collage, photography, etc. Dance choreography will be considered if an internet video is provided. Collaborating artists will receive a single prize.
6. Best craftwork completed or released in 2008 by a member of ADF, Keltria, RDNA, MOCC, OWO, RDG & OMS. Non exhaustive examples: leatherwork, metalwork, clothing, needlepoint, moulding, weaving, jewelry, basketry, woodwork, stonework, etc. Food, drink, cosmetics and brewing can't be tested easily enough in disparate parts of the U.S. Collaborative craftspeople will receive a single prize.
7. Best academic book released in 2008 by a member of ADF, Keltria, RDNA, MOCC, OWO, RDG & OMS. At least 50 pages in length, can be on any subject somehow applicable to "Druidism", modern or ancient, such as history, religion, crafts, art, philosophy, spirituality, ethnicity, language, etc.
8. Best novel or short story released in 2008 by a member of ADF, Keltria, RDNA, MOCC, OWO, RDG & OMS.
9. Best "Druidical" essay or article released or printed in 2008 by a member of ADF, Keltria, RDNA, MOCC, OWO, RDG & OMS
10. Best movie or video-clip or instructional video, released or revised in 2008, that advances the positive perception of Druidism in some way produced by a member of ADF, Keltria, RDNA, MOCC, OWO, or RDG & OMS.

Candidates can be members of the RDNA (or NRDNA, etc.), but you can also pass on interesting candidates to me from ADF, Keltria, MOCC, OWO, RDG & OMS. Write-ups describing the candidate should be 50-150 words, provide a sample of the text, photo of the object, file, web links and e-mail contacts as appropriate.

Submissions must be received by [MikeScharding@hotmail.com](mailto:MikeScharding@hotmail.com) by Yule or earlier, if you can.

I will then submit up to two candidates in each category to the DANAC for further consideration.

We will publish the both the RDNA results and the DANAC results (if released in time) in the Imbolc 2009 issue of Druid Inquirer.

Winners of each the 10 DANAC awards will receive a \$33.33 prize from the Druid Academy, a blessed pretty rock, and international fame and kudos.



## How to Honor Ancestors

We all have ancestors, some living, most of them have passed on. The RDNA does not have any specific traditions on revering ancestors, although most of the other modern Druid groups have incorporated this concept, which is common among Nature and folk-based religions. In a sense, many believe ancestors are the best intermediaries of the living with the deities. Who cares about you more than those who raised you and your parents and your parents' parents?

Naturally, the farther in the past, the more descendents that ancient ancestor has to care for, so expect a slower response as you drift back 30, 50 generations.

Whether you believe in reincarnation, paradise, eventual nirvana, or whatever, if there is an afterlife, ancestral spirits tend to be part of the picture. Many researchers believe that ancestor worship is the base root of all religions, but its role has been denigrated by more “evolved” religions as too local or parochial. Perhaps the clan-religion, nation religion, world religions are methods of bringing people out of highly localized ancestral concerns and including less-related people into a great sense of community?

What do we know about our hundreds of thousands of personal ancestors? Even the most dedicated genealogist of a royal family member can generally only go back about 10 to 14 generations, and often the lesser family lines are not well covered. The average American knows his ancestors usually only as far back as their great-grandparents, and maybe the direct maternal or paternal lines a few generations further. Most of what these folks know is just the name, date of birth, where and when; only simple factual information. We have culture, some family traditions, but the rest of our ancestors hover facelessly, collective, in the past. They are in your genes and your soul. I might ponder if friends of the family might also be part of that pool. Most of us have ancestors who were adopted by someone too.

In Japan, and in other countries, usually the eldest son is entrusted with maintaining a family shrine, usually paternal line and makes offerings and prayers at regular intervals. Many American families, even Christian, will have a section of their house where family photos congregate, along with heirlooms and family items. These are pseudo altars of a sort too, just less formal. All over the world, families and clans will host reunions to re-establish and strengthen ties with distant cousins, and share family lore and forge new traditions.

There are numerous traditions that incorporate reverence for ancestors, which is indirectly a self-respecting measure too. I'll list some of the ones I like the most:

**Make Halloween More than Fear:** Traditionally Samhain was about honoring returning (good) spirits who came back for these few nights, and of course, keeping out the bad ones who also might show up. We tend to focus on the bad ones now and dwell on the frightening aspect of death. However, how often do you talk to your children about welcoming back grandpa or Aunt Myrtle? The idea that good returns too, that is can be a very comforting concept for children. Rather than horror flicks, why not watch a movie of a sad, tragic death story and talk with kids about it. Fluke, the movie of a father reincarnated as a dog, trying to rejoin the family, is very touching.

**Have a home altar:** decorate it with family photos, as many as you can dig up, some safe candles or incense (watch the smoke detector). Visit once a day or once a week. Try to visit longer on the anniversary of a loved one's demise. Come by and talk to the spirits once in a while about hard things in your life and ask for advice and meditate there. You might assign one child to maintaining the shrine and dust it, replace candles, etc.

**Empty plate:** This charming tradition is the plate for Ezekial in some Jewish traditions. The POW-MIA often hosts a missing-man service, where a table is set once a year with symbolic plates, flowers, salt, lemon, etc. At all festivals, set the table for one extra person, put some food there, and come-who-may will be able to join you.

**Live a respectable proud life:** Ancestors generally wish the best for you and your family. They take pride in your accomplishments, just as they did when they were living. Be careful of course, many traditions in the world, including



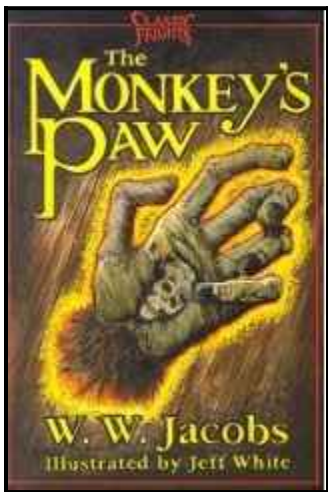
the Celts, have taken the “family honor” thing to unlawful levels. It is still you life to live, and the needs and burdens of the past cannot squelch those of the future.

**Learn about your ancestors:** Do some genealogical work, back a few generations. Make a family tree with your children. Collect interesting family stories about each person and write them down with a photo and some details. Visit their hometowns or homelands. Study the language or culture of those ethnic roots for a few weeks. Share what you learn with your children and make sure each gets a copy. You might even assign a report on one to each child to plan a research expedition.

**Visit graves:** Usually memorial and veteran’s day are the busiest. In Latin American and some parts of the United States, on *Dios de Los Muertos* (sp?) around Halloween, families will have a picnic and set up an *ofrido* (altar) at the family grave site, sometimes for a day or two. Check your local cemetery to see if this is permissible, and what the proper rules are.

**Carry a memento:** perhaps your grandfather’s cufflinks, your grandmother’s silk handkerchief. Perhaps keep in your wallet your uncle’s coin from his sailing trip to Zanzibar.

**Take care of your self:** Most of all, stay healthy, keep your body whole (it is a gift from them after all) and hearty.



## THE MONKEY'S PAW (1902)

from *The lady of the barge* (1906, 6th ed.)

London and New York

Harper & Brothers, Publishers

(A classic Halloween 6 page story, I've loved it since age 8.)

by **W.W. Jacobs**

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### *Part I.*

WITHOUT, the night was cold and wet, but in the small parlour of Laburnam Villa the blinds were drawn and the fire burned brightly. Father and son were at chess, the former, who possessed ideas about the game involving radical changes, putting his king into such sharp and unnecessary perils that it even provoked comment from the white-haired old lady knitting placidly by the fire.

"Hark at the wind," said Mr. White, who, having seen a fatal mistake after it was too late, was amiably desirous of preventing his son from seeing it.

"I'm listening," said the latter, grimly surveying the board as he stretched out his hand. "Check."

"I should hardly think that he'd come to-night," said his father, with his hand poised over the board.

"Mate," replied the son.

"That's the worst of living so far out," bawled Mr. White, with sudden and unlooked-for violence; "of all the beastly, slushy, out-of-the-way places to live in, this is the worst. Pathway's a bog, and the road's a torrent. I don't know what people are thinking about. I suppose because only two houses on the road are let, they think it doesn't matter."

"Never mind, dear," said his wife soothingly; "perhaps you'll win the next one."

Mr. White looked up sharply, just in time to intercept a knowing glance between mother and son. The words died away on his lips, and he hid a guilty grin in his thin grey beard.

"There he is," said Herbert White, as the gate banged to loudly and heavy footsteps came toward the door.

The old man rose with hospitable haste, and opening the door, was heard condoling with the new arrival. The new arrival also consoled with himself, so that Mrs. White said, "Tut, tut!" and coughed gently as her husband entered the room, followed by a tall burly man, beady of eye and rubicund of visage.

"Sergeant-Major Morris," he said, introducing him.

The sergeant-major shook hands, and taking the proffered seat by the fire, watched contentedly while his host got out whisky and tumblers and stood a small copper kettle on the fire.

At the third glass his eyes got brighter, and he began to talk, the little family circle regarding with eager interest this visitor from distant parts, as he squared his broad shoulders in the chair and spoke of strange scenes and doughty deeds; of wars and plagues and strange peoples.

"Twenty-one years of it," said Mr. White, nodding at his wife and son. "When he went away he was a slip of a youth in the warehouse. Now look at him."

"He don't look to have taken much harm," said Mrs. White, politely.

"I'd like to go to India myself," said the old man, "just to look round a bit, you know."

"Better where you are," said the sergeant-major, shaking his head. He put down the empty glass, and sighing softly, shook it again.

"I should like to see those old temples and fakirs and jugglers," said the old man. "What was that you started telling me the other day about a monkey's paw or something, Morris?"

"Nothing," said the soldier hastily. "Leastways, nothing worth hearing."

"Monkey's paw?" said Mrs. White curiously.

"Well, it's just a bit of what you might call magic, perhaps," said the sergeant-major off-handedly.

His three listeners leaned forward eagerly. The visitor absentmindedly put his empty glass to his lips and then set it down again. His host filled it for him.

"To look at," said the sergeant-major, fumbling in his pocket, "it's just an ordinary little paw, dried to a mummy."

He took something out of his pocket and proffered it. Mrs. White drew back with a grimace, but her son, taking it, examined it curiously.

"And what is there special about it?" inquired Mr. White, as he took it from his son and, having examined it, placed it upon the table.

"It had a spell put on it by an old fakir," said the sergeant-major, "a very holy man. He wanted to show that fate ruled people's lives, and that those who interfered with it did so to their sorrow. He put a spell on it so that three separate men could each have three wishes from it."

His manner was so impressive that his hearers were conscious that their light laughter jarred somewhat.

"Well, why don't you have three, sir?" said Herbert White cleverly.

The soldier regarded him in the way that middle age is wont to regard presumptuous youth. "I have," he said quietly, and his blotchy face whitened.

"And did you really have the three wishes granted?" asked Mrs. White.

"I did," said the sergeant-major, and his glass tapped against his strong teeth.

"And has anybody else wished?" inquired the old lady.

"The first man had his three wishes, yes," was the reply. "I don't know what the first two were, but the third was for death. That's how I got the paw."

His tones were so grave that a hush fell upon the group.

"If you've had your three wishes, it's no good to you now, then, Morris," said the old man at last. "What do you keep it for?"

The soldier shook his head. "Fancy, I suppose," he said slowly.

"If you could have another three wishes," said the old man, eyeing him keenly, "would you have them?"

"I don't know," said the other. "I don't know."

He took the paw, and dangling it between his front finger and thumb, suddenly threw it upon the fire. White, with a slight cry, stooped down and snatched it off.

"Better let it burn," said the soldier solemnly.

"If you don't want it, Morris," said the old man, "give it to me."

"I won't," said his friend doggedly. "I threw it on the fire. If you keep it, don't blame me for what happens. Pitch it on the fire again, like a sensible man."

The other shook his head and examined his new possession closely. "How do you do it?" he inquired.

"Hold it up in your right hand and wish aloud," said the sergeant-major, "but I warn you of the consequences."

"Sounds like the *Arabian Nights*," said Mrs. White, as she rose and began to set the supper. "Don't you think you might wish for four pairs of hands for me?"

Her husband drew the talisman from his pocket and then all three burst into laughter as the sergeant-major, with a look of alarm on his face, caught him by the arm.

"If you must wish," he said gruffly, "wish for something sensible."

Mr. White dropped it back into his pocket, and placing chairs, motioned his friend to the table. In the business of supper the talisman was partly forgotten, and afterward the three sat listening in an enthralled fashion to a second installment of the soldier's adventures in India.

"If the tale about the monkey paw is not more truthful than those he has been telling us," said Herbert, as the door closed behind their guest, just in time for him to catch the last train, "we shan't make much out of it."

"Did you give him anything for it, father?" inquired Mrs. White, regarding her husband closely.

"A trifle," said he, colouring slightly. "He didn't want it, but I made him take it. And he pressed me again to throw it away."

"Likely," said Herbert, with pretended horror. "Why, we're going to be rich, and famous, and happy. Wish to be an emperor, father, to begin with; then you can't be henpecked."

He darted round the table, pursued by the maligned Mrs. White armed with an antimacassar.

Mr. White took the paw from his pocket and eyed it dubiously. "I don't know what to wish for, and that's a fact," he said slowly. "It seems to me I've got all I want."

"If you only cleared the house, you'd be quite happy, wouldn't you?" said Herbert, with his hand on his shoulder.

"Well, wish for two hundred pounds, then; that'll just do it."

His father, smiling shamefacedly at his own credulity, held up the talisman, as his son, with a solemn face somewhat marred by a wink at his mother, sat down at the piano and struck a few impressive chords.

"I wish for two hundred pounds," said the old man distinctly.

A fine crash from the piano greeted the words, interrupted by a shuddering cry from the old man. His wife and son ran toward him.

"It moved, he cried, with a glance of disgust at the object as it lay on the floor. "As I wished it twisted in my hands like a snake."

"Well, I don't see the money," said his son, as he picked it up and placed it on the table, "and I bet I never shall."

"It must have been your fancy, father," said his wife, regarding him anxiously.

He shook his head. "Never mind, though; there's no harm done, but it gave me a shock all the same."

They sat down by the fire again while the two men finished their pipes. Outside, the wind was higher than ever, and the old man started nervously at the sound of a door banging upstairs. A silence unusual and depressing settled upon all three, which lasted until the old couple rose to retire for the night.

"I expect you'll find the cash tied up in a big bag in the middle of your bed," said Herbert, as he bade them good-night, "and something horrible squatting up on top of the wardrobe watching you as you pocket your ill-gotten gains."

He sat alone in the darkness, gazing at the dying fire, and seeing faces in it. The last face was so horrible and so simian that he gazed at it in amazement. It got so vivid that, with a little uneasy laugh, he felt on the table for a glass containing a little water to throw over it. His hand grasped the monkey's paw, and with a little shiver he wiped his hand on his coat and went up to bed.

## *Part II*

IN the brightness of the wintry sun next morning as it streamed over the breakfast table Herbert laughed at his fears. There was an air of prosaic wholesomeness about the room which it had lacked on the previous night, and the dirty, shrivelled little paw was pitched on the sideboard with a carelessness which betokened no great belief in its virtues.

"I suppose all old soldiers are the same," said Mrs. White. "The idea of our listening to such nonsense! How could wishes be granted in these days? And if they could, how could two hundred pounds hurt you, father?"

"Might drop on his head from the sky," said the frivolous Herbert.

"Morris said the things happened so naturally," said his father, "that you might if you so wished attribute it to coincidence."

"Well, don't break into the money before I come back," said Herbert, as he rose from the table. "I'm afraid it'll turn you into a mean, avaricious man, and we shall have to disown you."

His mother laughed, and following him to the door, watched him down the road, and returning to the breakfast table, was very happy at the expense of her husband's credulity. All of which did not prevent her from scurrying to the door at the postman's knock, nor prevent her from referring somewhat shortly to retired sergeant-majors of bibulous habits when she found that the post brought a tailor's bill.

"Herbert will have some more of his funny remarks, I expect, when he comes home," she said, as they sat at dinner.

"I dare say," said Mr. White, pouring himself out some beer; "but for all that, the thing moved in my hand; that I'll swear to."

"You thought it did," said the old lady soothingly.

"I say it did," replied the other. "There was no thought about it; I had just---What's the matter?"

His wife made no reply. She was watching the mysterious movements of a man outside, who, peering in an undecided fashion at the house, appeared to be trying to make up his mind to enter. In mental connection with the two hundred pounds, she noticed that the stranger was well dressed and wore a silk hat of glossy newness. Three times he paused at the gate, and then walked on again. The fourth time he stood with his hand upon it, and then with sudden resolution flung it open and walked up the path. Mrs. White at the same moment placed her hands behind her, and hurriedly unfastening the strings of her apron, put that useful article of apparel beneath the cushion of her chair.

She brought the stranger, who seemed ill at ease, into the room. He gazed at her furtively, and listened in a preoccupied fashion as the old lady apologized for the appearance of the room, and her husband's coat, a garment which he



usually reserved for the garden. She then waited as patiently as her sex would permit, for him to broach his business, but he was at first strangely silent.

"I--was asked to call," he said at last, and stooped and picked a piece of cotton from his trousers. "I come from Maw and Meggins."

The old lady started. "Is anything the matter?" she asked breathlessly. "Has anything happened to Herbert? What is it? What is it?"

Her husband interposed. "There, there, mother," he said hastily. "Sit down, and don't jump to conclusions. You've not brought bad news, I'm sure, sir" and he eyed the other wistfully.

"I'm sorry----" began the visitor.

"Is he hurt?" demanded the mother.

The visitor bowed in assent. "Badly hurt," he said quietly, "but he is not in any pain."

"Oh, thank God!" said the old woman, clasping her hands. "Thank God for that! Thank----"

She broke off suddenly as the sinister meaning of the assurance dawned upon her and she saw the awful confirmation of her fears in the other's averted face. She caught her breath, and turning to her slower-witted husband, laid her trembling old hand upon his. There was a long silence.

"He was caught in the machinery," said the visitor at length, in a low voice.

"Caught in the machinery," repeated Mr. White, in a dazed fashion, "yes."

He sat staring blankly out at the window, and taking his wife's hand between his own, pressed it as he had been wont to do in their old courting days nearly forty years before.

"He was the only one left to us," he said, turning gently to the visitor. "It is hard."

The other coughed, and rising, walked slowly to the window. "The firm wished me to convey their sincere sympathy with you in your great loss," he said, without looking round. "I beg that you will understand I am only their servant and merely obeying orders."

There was no reply; the old woman's face was white, her eyes staring, and her breath inaudible; on the husband's face was a look such as his friend the sergeant might have carried into his first action.

"I was to say that Maw and Meggins disclaim all responsibility," continued the other. "They admit no liability at all, but in consideration of your son's services they wish to present you with a certain sum as compensation."

Mr. White dropped his wife's hand, and rising to his feet, gazed with a look of horror at his visitor. His dry lips shaped the words, "How much?"

"Two hundred pounds," was the answer.

Unconscious of his wife's shriek, the old man smiled faintly, put out his hands like a sightless man, and dropped, a senseless heap, to the floor.

### *Part III*

IN the huge new cemetery, some two miles distant, the old people buried their dead, and came back to a house steeped in shadow and silence. It was all over so quickly that at first they could hardly realize it, and remained in a state of expectation as though of something else to happen--something else which was to lighten this load, too heavy for old hearts to bear.

But the days passed, and expectation gave place to resignation--the hopeless resignation of the old, sometimes miscalled, apathy. Sometimes they hardly exchanged a word, for now they had nothing to talk about, and their days were long to weariness.

It was about a week after that that the old man, waking suddenly in the night, stretched out his hand and found himself alone. The room was in darkness, and the sound of subdued weeping came from the window. He raised himself in bed and listened.

"Come back," he said tenderly. "You will be cold."

"It is colder for my son," said the old woman, and wept afresh.

The sound of her sobs died away on his ears. The bed was warm, and his eyes heavy with sleep. He dozed fitfully, and then slept until a sudden wild cry from his wife awoke him with a start.

"*The paw!*" she cried wildly. "The monkey's paw!"

He started up in alarm. "Where? Where is it? What's the matter?"

She came stumbling across the room toward him. "I want it," she said quietly. "You've not destroyed it?"

"It's in the parlour, on the bracket," he replied, marvelling. "Why?"

She cried and laughed together, and bending over, kissed his cheek.

"I only just thought of it," she said hysterically. "Why didn't I think of it before? Why didn't *you* think of it?"

"Think of what?" he questioned.

"The other two wishes," she replied rapidly. "We've only had one."

"Was not that enough?" he demanded fiercely.

"No," she cried, triumphantly; "we'll have one more. Go down and get it quickly, and wish our boy alive again."

The man sat up in bed and flung the bedclothes from his quaking limbs. "Good God, you are mad!" he cried aghast. "Get it," she panted; "get it quickly, and wish---- Oh, my boy, my boy!" Her husband struck a match and lit the candle. "Get back to bed," he said, unsteadily. "You don't know what you are saying."

"We had the first wish granted," said the old woman, feverishly; "why not the second."

"A coincidence," stammered the old man.

"Go and get it and wish," cried the old woman, quivering with excitement.

The old man turned and regarded her, and his voice shook. "He has been dead ten days, and besides he--I would not tell you else, but--I could only recognize him by his clothing. If he was too terrible for you to see then, how now?"

"Bring him back," cried the old woman, and dragged him toward the door. "Do you think I fear the child I have nursed?"

He went down in the darkness, and felt his way to the parlour, and then to the mantelpiece. The talisman was in its place, and a horrible fear that the unspoken wish might bring his mutilated son before him ere he could escape from the room seized upon him, and he caught his breath as he found that he had lost the direction of the door. His brow cold with sweat, he felt his way round the table, and groped along the wall until he found himself in the small passage with the unwholesome thing in his hand.

Even his wife's face seemed changed as he entered the room. It was white and expectant, and to his fears seemed to have an unnatural look upon it. He was afraid of her.

"*Wish!*" she cried, in a strong voice.

"It is foolish and wicked," he faltered.

"*Wish!*" repeated his wife.

He raised his hand. "I wish my son alive again."

The talisman fell to the floor, and he regarded it fearfully. Then he sank trembling into a chair as the old woman, with burning eyes, walked to the window and raised the blind.

He sat until he was chilled with the cold, glancing occasionally at the figure of the old woman peering through the window. The candle end, which had burnt below the rim of the china candlestick, was throwing pulsating shadows on the ceiling and walls, until, with a flicker larger than the rest, it expired. The old man, with an unspeakable sense of relief at the failure of the talisman, crept back to his bed, and a minute or two afterward the old woman came silently and apathetically beside him.

Neither spoke, but both lay silently listening to the ticking of the clock. A stair creaked, and a squeaky mouse scurried noisily through the wall. The darkness was oppressive, and after lying for some time screwing up his courage, the husband took the box of matches, and striking one, went downstairs for a candle.

At the foot of the stairs the match went out, and he paused to strike another, and at the same moment a knock, so quiet and stealthy as to be scarcely audible, sounded on the front door.

The matches fell from his hand. He stood motionless, his breath suspended until the knock was repeated. Then he turned and fled swiftly back to his room, and closed the door behind him. A third knock sounded through the house.

"*What's that?*" cried the old woman, starting up.

"A rat," said the old man, in shaking tones--"a rat. It passed me on the stairs."

His wife sat up in bed listening. A loud knock resounded through the house.

"It's Herbert!" she screamed. "It's Herbert!"

She ran to the door, but her husband was before her, and catching her by the arm, held her tightly.

"What are you going to do?" he whispered hoarsely.

"It's my boy; it's Herbert!" she cried, struggling mechanically. "I forgot it was two miles away. What are you holding me for? Let go. I must open the door."

"For God's sake, don't let it in," cried the old man trembling.

"You're afraid of your own son," she cried, struggling. "Let me go. I'm coming, Herbert; I'm coming."

There was another knock, and another. The old woman with a sudden wrench broke free and ran from the room. Her husband followed to the landing, and called after her appealingly as she hurried downstairs. He heard the chain rattle back and the bottom bolt drawn slowly and stiffly from the socket. Then the old woman's voice, strained and panting.

"The bolt," she cried loudly. "Come down. I can't reach it."

But her husband was on his hands and knees groping wildly on the floor in search of the paw. If he could only find it before the thing outside got in. A perfect fusillade of knocks reverberated through the house, and he heard the scraping of a chair as his wife put it down in the passage against the door. He heard the creaking of the bolt as it came slowly back, and at the same moment he found the monkey's paw, and frantically breathed his third and last wish.

The knocking ceased suddenly, although the echoes of it were still in the house. He heard the chair drawn back and the door opened. A cold wind rushed up the staircase, and a long loud wail of disappointment and misery from his wife gave him courage to run down to her side, and then to the gate beyond. The street lamp flickering opposite shone on a quiet and deserted road.



## The Allure of Ogham

by Mike the Fool

Later in this issue of the *Druid Inquirer*, I will review two books that delve into the subtleties of Ogham and the trees that are associated with each letter. However, in this essay I would like to bring up a point that was completely missed by both very academic books: "Why are people fascinated by Oghams"? What accounts for the popularity of a few scratch marks on some stones in the countryside?

Let's face it, people who become modern Druids, more often than not, are fascinated by the Celts. They are attracted to the Celts because they revered Nature, especially trees, more so than many other large religions of the world and hung around outdoors. It's a powerful image. But modern Druids also tend to love the fact that Druids and Bards were quite educated and gifted. Nowadays we simply cannot imagine a respectably educated person who can't read and write, and often dismiss the achievements of a non-literate society. Think of all the "great" civilizations, Hindu, Chinese, Egyptian, Hebrew, Roman, they all did so with ancient writing systems. But then think of other that didn't, Mayan, Incan, Aztec, Polynesia, Bantu, a few in Eastern Africa too; but there were limits there. Some had some method of recording or marking the tombs and monuments and calendars, but that was about it.

So when Modern Druids discovered that the ancient Druids could write in Ogham from about the third or fourth century, it is a big point of pride for us. Hey, these guys can write too, and they figured it out themselves! Ireland like Iceland and Scandinavia and Lithuania were located on the fringe of Europe from the perspective of Rome and Greece and Russia. Rome didn't even deign to go after Ireland while conquering Britain in the 1st century BCE. Like many empires, it was in overstretch at that point. Some of the richest folk Indo-European traditions have been preserved there until even the 20th century.

Various reports of Caesar and others claim that the Celts of France were familiar with Greek (and like Phoenician) letters from the trading posts set up since 500 BCE in the Mediterranean region, and might have used them for trade. Ogham began to appear on stone markers from about the 3rd or 4th century in Ireland and areas of the British coast where the Gaidheals were wont to invade (mostly Scotland and Isle of Man). Wales and Britain were Pagan Roman colonies at that time. Runes begin to appear in Scandinavia around that time near the Roman colonies of Germany. Likely, the Irish and the Scandinavia saw some of the possibilities of a literate culture, i.e. decorating monuments, letters, secret messages, etc. and devised a system for their language. You must remember that before the invention of paper, the materials and training for writing were prohibitively expensive for making frivolous collections. It would have been limited to law tracts, treaties, genealogies, kingdom finances, and some religious matters (most of which would be so scripted that memorization would be necessary anyway).

As we know now, the Latin alphabet is perfectly capable of representing the languages of the Irish and the Swedes, with few extra letters and aspiration marks, and would eventually do so. Latin letters are also very angular and easy to chip onto monuments and altars. Many pagan Pagan Celtic altars in France and Britain and what is now Germany are written in Latin letters listing the Celtic God's name and the Roman God's equivalent. So one must wonder, even if Ireland (4th/5th century) had put off Christianization as long as the Scandinavians (12 century), would the Irish have developed and implemented the use of Ogham into a regular form of writing books?

Probably not. It seems that it was going to remain the preserve of the elite, likely the Druids and a few nobles. After Christianization, Romanization and Anglicization, probably only 5 to 15% of Druidic lore leaked into the writings of sympathetic monks, law tracts, health works and stories by the 13th or 15th century. Like a portrait with only a few remnants of canvas still attached to the frame. This is true for a lot of the non-Roman and Greek Indo-European religions that were late in the race for a literary culture. A point of interest is that the Irish Monks, their base safe from Barbaric hordes at that time (before the Vikings), became "the lighthouse of civilization and Christianity" during the Dark Ages after the fall of the Roman Empire, sending out educating missionaries to Germany, Britain and France for centuries to come.

So what are the Pros and Cons of Ogham?

## Pros:

1. **It's bizarre.** There are no other orthographies that use 1 to 5 scratches to indicate a letter. The ancient Celts may have counted to 5 and 20 rather than in the decimal system. Remember also that the Romans didn't have the number "0" until the middle-ages. See other orthographies of the world at [this link](#).
2. **It's simple.** 20 letters, one set of scratches for 5 vowels as a category, three other sets for the 15 consonants. Latter on, extra symbols were created for new sounds, abbreviations of common words and punctuation and reading ease.
3. **It's capable of complication.** Like the book review will tout. There may have been 150 different possible variations, purposely made, to prevent the casual citizen from figuring out what a confidential message was.
4. **Can Use it as a Sign Language.** Didn't know that did you? Apparently you could use the bridge of your nose, shin forearm or blade of your hand as a line and signal a few letters across a room at someone.
5. **Easy to use.** No curves or whirlies. Extremely easy to carve on stone. On paper, just draw a line across the page (i.e. use lined paper) and make scratch marks above and below, watch the spacing between letters. Easy to carve on wooden rods, which they did, but we no longer have. Just break a branch off, take off the bark, and start cutting with your knife, and give it to someone to give to someone else. Instant letter.
6. **It can go any direction.** Roman letters usually only go left to right. A curved base-line of Ogham could snake all over the place.
7. **Inspired the barcode.** Well, there's some debate that the eggheads who designed machine readable barcode had no idea about Ogham, but surely someone might have. It remains a fun possibility. See the discussion of barcodes in the issue. If you did use a barcode on a stone, wouldn't that be confusing for another modern Druid stumbling across it in a park and wonder what variant of Ogham it might be? Let's say, the barcode inventors weren't the first to hit on the idea.
8. **Ogham fonts available:** You can type a letter in Latin letters, then highlight the text and use a downloaded Ogham font to change it into the most common form of Ogham lettering. Do note that K, Q, W, X, Y, Z are not used in the Irish language, so you'd have to substitute C, C, UU, S or C, I, S or some such system.

## Cons:

1. **Reversing:** if you start from the wrong direction or turn it upside down, the letters mean something else. This is problematic unless you indicate a starting point on the baseline and a direction to read.
2. **Spacing:** If you aren't careful about the spaces between each letter, you could put one scratch too close to two scratch and it will look like three scratch. You can bunch Latin letters close together tightly without this problem.
3. **No texts yet.** Sadly if there were ever any texts, St. Patrick burned them all at Tara. Harry Potter and the Bible have yet to be translated into Ogham script, although both are in modern Irish already.
4. **Ogham is unknown?** Sadly, few others know how to use it, so who are you going to write that carefully scratched letter to?

Please see the book reviews that follow in this issue.



# HEALTH CORNER

(From the Order of Grannos, Healing Springs)



## Top 21 Ways to Avoid Dying Soon

a.k.a. The 21 Lessons of Mike the FOol)

I want all my Druid friends to live long, happy lives, because (sniff!) I love you guys!

We all have heard tons of good advice, often several times. Yes, we tend to ignore it if it is inconvenient in the short term and repent about it when it is too late, and death is on the doorstep.

There are quantity vs. quality arguments about whether a fast short life is better than a long dull life (See Alexander the Great, James Dean, dozens of dead rockers). But if you decided a somewhat long, moderately interesting life is good enough for you, here's a handy quick list to refresh your memory. I'm as guilty as the next person here, trust me. I made the list during a long car-trip in the jungle, and didn't have time to research much more, but you'll get the idea. It is in general order of importance, starting with the most important.

1. **Choose Your Parents Well.** Of course you can't. But it is among the biggest determining factors. Wealthy, healthy, genetically robust parents give you a major head start in the quest for longevity. Cross-cultural marriages seems to have some hybrid vigor among offspring, but I read a recent study that says 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin marriages tend produce offspring that thrive more so than 1<sup>st</sup> cousins and complete strangers, on average.
2. **Location, Location, Location.** Works for real estate, same for health. Some parts of the world encourage less reliance on cars, fatty food, drugs and other negative factors due to either cultural taboos or simple inaccessibility to vice. Pollution, crime, economy, political stability, food types, etc. exert a geographical influence that overshadows personal life style choice decisions on longevity.
3. **Exercise 30 Minutes a Day.** Get off your duff and get your heart going in something brisk but not too dangerous or brutal. Park farther from store, job, or school and huff-it to the destination. Apparently, sex is ideal for this too according to CNN.com. Kind of like taking your car out on the highway at least once a week to clear out the pipes.
4. **Get Married or Partnered and Have Friends.** Apparently most studies say that if you're married, you tend to live about 4 years longer, especially sloppy men, because significant others keep you on your toes and out of trouble, plus you tend to eat better, sex again, and you tend to have happier thoughts. Apparently even a rocky marriage still has some minor longevity benefits, so I'm good to go. Wanting to see your grandkids and greatgrandkids is a powerful motivator for life-prolonging life-decisions.
5. **Avoid Dangerous Activities.** This is a Duh! factor. Maybe you need that adrenaline rush to make life worthwhile, but extreme sports, dangerous driving, slapping elephants and such is just not smart in the long term. This would include professions with higher mortality rates like lumberjack, Alaska crab fishers, policeman and sewer cleaner.
6. **Avoid Drugs, Smoking, Alcohol and Medicine Abuse.** Everyone likes to experiment, but sometimes the experiment goes bad and you can't quit. If you haven't started, find something else to occupy your time and stimulate yourself. If you can't stop, get some help quick. Use medicine only when you need to, not when you want to. Sometimes, just take on the symptoms rather than suppress them. Prevention is ten times cheaper than the cure.
7. **Eat Less.** Surprise! Tests with mice indicate that extreme low calorie balanced diets extend mouse life by about 20%. Anorexia and real starvation are not good ideas, though, especially for children and teenagers in the quest for long-life. Remember all those stories of skinny ascetic monks in the mountain with long beards, maybe there is something to that.
8. **Eat Balanced.** Same with above. Less fat, less sugar, less salt, less meat. See the FDA for recommendations. Eat only what you plan to burn off. Keep a journal. Figure out your weak points in the food pyramid (bulky, vitamin rich veggies tend to be the weak point in the U.S). More fish and poultry, less mammal. Choose healthier oils. Avoid eating fast-food and snacks. You know that, right?

9. **Become Well Off, But Not Too rich.** The rich life has its dangers too. Ennui, exotic pleasures, ability to dabble in drugs or dangerous lifestyle choices without financial risk and so on. Better than poverty for longevity, just be careful not to overdo it.
10. **Do A Job Or Volunteer Work That Engages You.** Yes, you want to work for money, in most cases, but the stress of seeing your life ebb-away while doing work that doesn't matter to the world or to you, could be de-motivating for you. Do something on the side that keeps the heart proud and the brain's motors whirling,
11. **Go To The Doctor/Dentist Regularly.** Just like taking your car for its annual tune up, most medical problems are better treated at earlier stages. You might think you know yourself pretty well, but you might not notice minor changes happening slowly, and you certainly can't do your own blood work. You'll be spending pennies on prevention rather than dollars on repair work.
12. **Get Health Insurance.** Before you need it. Even young healthy people are only a car accident away from unemployment and financial disaster. It's a good gamble in most people's lives. Harder to do nowadays, though. While you are at, check your over-all general insurance coverage for fire, renter's, mortgage, life, car, etc. When traveling, especially in 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> world, get traveler's insurance that includes emergency repatriation coverage by airplane ambulance. Many insurances, include medicare, don't work overseas.
13. **Get An Education.** Not only does it help your financial, but being a well-rounded person helps to analyze health advice, make sound life choices, take advantages of available services, and live a more moderate life. It also makes life more intriguing so you'll want to stick around longer.
14. **Have A Sense Of Humor.** Laughter heals. Seeing the lighter side of a situation can give you courage to bear the burden and seek solutions rather than do nothing from despair.
15. **Nurture A Philosophy Or Religion.** Like humor. A belief system allows you to handle what comes at you, and overcome it or attenuate the negative potential. Consolation is good, and it is usually a comfort as you approach death. The faithful tend to live longer in most studies, usually due to great restraint and more moderation, better networks, etc.
16. **Get a Hobby.** Find stimulation and joy in life that challenges and stimulates you to excel, explore and exist as much possible. This is especially important for workaholics, who find themselves retired with nothing to do suddenly, and then do just that, nothing. In Japanese men, this often leads an unexpected quicker death or psychological problems and lack of self-esteem.
17. **Find a Method to Handle Stress.** Unchecked, high levels in stress can cause lowered immune strength, ulcers, headaches, insomnia, psychosomatic illness, and psychological problems. How do you handle a problem, or does it handle you? Meditation, exercise, a circle of friends you can talk to about anything, time spent outdoors, hobbies, a pet, all these and more can take the edge off a hard day without resorting to alcohol or other damaging means.
18. **Get a 360 Degree Review.** Every couple years, get an objective, brutally honest collection of opinions from a trusted source. Which part of your long-happy-life plans seems under-developed?
19. **Have A Retirement Plan.** Why do you want to live a long life? Do you wish to travel, write a book, play with grand kids, chase pretty young things, garden or volunteer with a charity? Two or three years of "whatever" first, then a project? No point having 10-30 years of retirement if you aren't planting seeds now to harvest later.
20. **Ask For Advice.** Life is not easy. You don't know all the answers, I don't. No one can do it all. Don't let self-reliance get in the way of practicality. Accept your limits, work on improvement, and get mentoring on the bigger issues on life. People who can tell you the best ways to do what you want.
21. **Break the Rules a Little:** Hey, you don't have to be a martyr ascetic kill joy, to have a long healthy life. Let go a little here and there, but remember to get back on target as soon as you can, don't let the exceptions become the rule.

\* Last bit of advice. Be ready for death, when it must come, for it will, and you often know not when. If you've lived your life well, you'll have less regrets.





## Ask Dr. Ima Druid

A column for medical questions, concerns and confusions with answers from Dr. Ima Druid.  
Submit your questions to: [Doc.Druid \(at\) Gmail \(dot\) com](mailto:Doc.Druid@gmail.com).

*Dear Dr. Druid,*

*I have come to realize that I can no longer willingly put animal carcass or products into my mouth and still feel good about my soul. (With the possible exception of*

*locally and HUMANELY raised eggs and wild-caught fish, but I would have to be 100% sure about it). I would like your input into this matter- specifically regarding maintaining adequate nutrition, particularly protein (keeping in mind the high level of athletic training I choose to undergo,) and the best sources to get it from. I have no idea what is right and I am hoping you can help!*

*-A.D. in Florida*

Way to go, A.D.!

Congratulations on expanding your spiritual beliefs to include your diet. It is possible to be a healthy athletic vegan but you do have to be careful. There are a few vitamins and essential amino acids that are only found in animals and the consequences of not getting them can be bad. You will need to educate yourself about nutrition as you make the shift to veganism in order to stay healthy. It would take more space than I have to answer your question in full, but the short answer is:

-Do not rely on any one food too much, but eat a great variety of things.

-Start taking vitamin B-12 supplements. Plants don't make this, only animals and bacteria. Without it you will develop pernicious anemia, where your body stops making blood cells and starts breaking down your spinal column.

-Seriously consider iron, calcium, zinc, vitamin D, and folic acid supplements until you learn how to get enough of these from your food.

Almost everything you eat has protein in it. The key is to mix your food sources, because few things have all 20 of the amino acids you need, except meat. Brown rice, beans, nuts, and brewer's yeast are all good vegan protein sources to start with. Anything cultured or fermented by bacteria (NOT including alcohol) also has lots of protein; unfortunately that usually means dairy products like cheese and yogurt. Saytan (fermented tofu) might be of use.

The good news is that by cutting out red meat you are hugely reducing your risk of heart disease, stroke, and several kinds of cancer. You are also shrinking your carbon footprint, and raising awareness of our responsibility to the world. There are a number of books and websites that can help you in your quest for healthy veganism. For starters, try:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vegan>

<http://www.vrg.org/nutshell/vegan.htm>

[Becoming Vegan: The Complete Guide to Adopting a Healthy Plant-based Diet](#) By Brenda Davis and Vesanto Melina

Good Luck!  
Dr. Druid

*Dear Dr. Druid,*

*Why do humans live so darn long?*

*M.S. in Laos*

Dear M.S.

Mostly it's our own darn fault. Between vaccines, water treatment, basic hygiene, and antibiotics we have drastically increased human life expectancy. A white man born in Massachusetts in 1900, for instance, could expect to live only forty-eight years; his descendant born in 2000 can expect to live past 74. This has led us to two related problems:

- 1) People start thinking death is optional.
- 2) The body isn't built to last.

There used to be great emphasis placed on living well, and on dying well when the time came. Many cultures, from the Vikings, to the Polynesians, and even the be-knighted Brits during the middle ages had social standards of how a person should ideally die: for the Vikings, with a sword in your hand; for the British knight, in bed after giving all your money to the church. Death was not a thing to be avoided, but a natural part of life. For cultures like the Hindu and Celts, where reincarnation was practiced, death was more of a punctuation mark between lives- again, nothing to be afraid of. In today's Western society most people have lost sight of that wisdom. We have grown proud, some would say, of our ability to stave off disease in so many ways, that Death has become just another nuisance to be avoided. We forget that it is natural and necessary- to our cost.

This runs us into the second problem. A man who dies at fifty from pneumonia will die relatively healthy. The further we age, the more things break down. Our reproductive peak is between 14 and 24. Our joints start deteriorating around 30. By 50 our ears and eyesight are going, and for women, bones become rapidly weaker with age. We heal more and more slowly. By 70 the thymus is pretty much gone and we have trouble making antibodies to new exposures. Eventually everyone will develop cancer, if nothing else kills them first. It would appear that if we were designed we were not built for more than a few good decades.

Happy Samhain,

Dr. Druid

**Disclaimer:** Irony Sade or "Doctor Druid" is not a doctor- yet. He is a medical student at Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, NY. Previously he worked for five years as a nurse, and as a rural health worker before that. The medical and scientific information in this column is accurate to the best of his knowledge, and he will pester wiser minds than his if your question stumps him. Medicine is a highly individualized field. People may respond very differently to the same disease or treatment. For serious concerns, consult your own doctor.



# STORY CORNER



## **The Manor in France**

**by Mike the Fool, 2008**

I don't know what comes over me in France, but every summer I have to drive down to the Chateau De Longueduc in Provence. Perhaps it's my stress of my writing career, from writing on the front lines of the war. The shelling on our position among the doughboys had taken its toll on my soul. The drive took several days, but somehow, just going there through the rolling countryside, eased my turmoil. My editor was refusing to answer my letters recently. I didn't care about the gas shortage, I needed my vacation.

At long last, I reached the oh-so-familiar closed gate, and drove through to stop by the door of the house. The lights were out. I knew it was one in the morning, but they should be expecting me, I always arrived at this time, every year.

I got out, and picked out my luggage. I should buy some new clothes tomorrow, I thought. My style seems to have fallen out of fashion for some reason. Such are the winds of change. I knocked on the door loudly. A light turned on upstairs and I heard the tired, tentative steps trudging down the stairs.

The candle darted to the window for a second, the curtain fluttered. There was a loud jangle as the door was unlocked, and the butler stood there in his nightshirt.

"Hello, again, mademoiselle," he said gravely, swallowing hard.

"Yes, dear sir, I have indeed arrived again. I'm your guest, Mary Hart, from America. I write for the New York Times newspaper." I held out my business card.

He took my card and smiled bitterly. "I'm afraid we don't have guests anymore, you see the house is haunted, and no one will come."

My interest was piqued, "That's not a problem for me. Sounds fascinating! Perhaps I'll write an article about it. Do you know who the ghost is?"

"Yes, mademoiselle," he paused, "It is you."



## **Shortest Ghost Stories Ever**

Right, here is the text from "A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales in the English Language", Part B: Folk Legends. Volume 1. by Katharine M. Briggs. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971. (This is a four volume work). In her section on 'ghosts', Briggs states:

Some ghost stories are not to be found among the legends, as they are obviously exercises in folk fiction. Examples of the kind of thing are two terse ghost stories which are fairly widely known:

One of a nervous guest in a haunted room who locked the door, closed the shutters, looked under the bed and into the cupboards before getting into bed, and, just as he blew out the candle, heard a tiny voice coming from the curtains at the head of his bed, "Now we're shut in for the night".

The other, which is supposed to be the shortest ghost story in the world, runs:

"He woke up frightened and reached for the matches, and the matches were put into his hand." (p.416)

# Shortest Horror Story Ever

"The last man on Earth sat alone in a room. There was a knock on the door..."

This two-sentence horror tale is presented as a story within a story, right at the start of [Fredric Brown's 'Knock'](#), published in the December 1948 edition of [Thrilling Wonder Stories](#).



## An Evening with the Grim Reaper

### Opening Line for the Story Contest:

*"It was a dark and stormy night. Last night, our Druid grove had held the Samhain service.*

*Today the trick-or-treaters were scarce due to the weather. Therefore, I was delighted when there was a knock on the door.*

*I rushed over in my Druid duds and swung it open with a ready cauldron of candy, and there looming large before me was a 7 foot tall, gaunt, grim reaper with a very impressive scythe, and a skeletal horse with fiery eyes eating my shrubbery behind him....."*

Please reply in RDNAtalk conference with between 4 words and 4000 words or so by October 1st. Spend a few minutes, I'm sure some idea will pop up.

Scary, funny, sad, witty, or romantic stories. What ever route you wish

I suspect we'll slip into the humorous, knowing the RDNA.

### Destara's Ending:.

"Nice costume!" I exclaimed before retreating a couple of steps. There was no answer, only a cold chill that suddenly invaded the room. Nervously I twirled the "One Ring" replica on my finger. "Uh, I wasn't exactly expecting you, be right back with some carrots for your steed."

I put down the cauldron, exited the room and headed toward the kitchen. "Just be a moment, help yourself to the candy." I called back. I desperately flipped through my BOS looking for a spell that might bind, or protect, or re-direct. But, who was I kidding? I knew that my magical skills were no match for the reaper.

I looked around at all the unfinished projects that I would never complete. In the corner an umbrella stand held an assortment of willow branches collecting dust. A few had been transformed into wands and staffs. Piled on a corner of my desk was a disorganized stack of papers with poetry, unfinished songs, animal sketches and celtic knotwork patterns.

I picked up my favorite Tarot deck hoping I could at least take this with me on my journey. As I returned to my living room, I saw the reaper was sitting on my couch surfing the cable channels.

"Sorry, all out of carrots. If I had only known you were coming..." No response.

"Never much on TV." I said, taking a seat in a side chair by the coffee table. "I've got some great movies if you want to watch one."

The reaper switched off the TV set and said nothing, piercing me with his invisible eyes. I tried to steady my hands and look casual as I flipped through my Tarot deck until I came to the Death card. I pulled it out and tossed it on the table. "Not a very good likeness. You are much more scary in real life. Uh, I mean death."

"Would you like a reading?" I was stalling for time and we both knew it. To my surprise, he nodded affirmatively.

"OK, then. Well, I guess this will be your indicator card." I placed the death card in the middle of the table and shuffled the rest of the deck. I put the cards down near the reaper and waited for him to cut the deck. He reached out a bony finger and tapped the deck lightly one time. "Go ahead." The voice came unexpectedly, cold and raspy, full of cobwebs.

I lighted an incense stick and dealt a spread of the Celtic Cross. Flipping over the first card, I began the reading.

"Strength: You have great power over matters of the flesh. Your actions are selfless and you act with great courage.

Opposing you: III, The Empress, the power of Death is balanced by that of Life in an eternal cycle.

Crowning you: IV of Coins, You above all understand the lure of the material world as you see us clinging to life and our superficial possessions.

Below you: Ace of Wands, You are the beginning of all things new, the dark power of creation is yours.

Behind you: X of Cups, Contentment and life's joys are in the past, not to be mourned in passing, but seen as a promise in the rainbow of life. These moments of joy will come again.

Before you: V of Coins, We must all pass with you through the cold cycle of winter, past the window of life into shadow and darkness.

Yourself: V of Swords Reversed, Burial and decomposition of the flesh. I prefer cremation actually.

Environment: XX Judgment, Change and renewal.

Hopes and Fears: IX Hermit Reversed, Fear of the unknown. Hopes for rebirth, redemption, or Summerland.

Final Outcome: King of Cups, Creative intelligence, Divinity."

Stillness hung in the air as I waited for a response. The reaper rose slowly to his feet and I could see the hint of a smile. "Very enlightening. Thank you."

I felt myself falling into that space between present and future. With a sudden feeling of *deja vu*, I said. "You win. You always win."

## **Oriana's Ending:**

I yelled, "Leave off the boxwoods ya flea-bitten nag", and told the reaper at my door, "Kids over 12 dont get candy- but you can go scare the little old pink haired lady next door. Maybe she'll drop her teeth in your bag."

## **Michael's Endings:**

1. And I slammed the door, shouting, "Sorry, I don't want any."
2. "Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaagh!" Swoop, slice, thud! "Gurrrgle..."
3. "Hey, you'd be a killer member of my gyms' basketball team, whadaya think?"

4. "How's business lately?"

5. "Um, Mike's not here right now." A long bony finger points at my chest. "No, um, I'm just visiting his house." See #2.

6. "I'm glad you're both here, you see my gardener quit last month. If you could mow the grass with that scythe and have the horse finish the trimming of the hedges, that's \$5.65/hour, a free lunch, and I won't report you to the immigration authorities. "

7. "Hey, you got a permit for that deadly weapon?"

8. "Hey, you know the clothes are fine, but you have got to get over this one up-manship. A golden sickle is more than sufficient for the collecting the Samhain plant sacrifice, you don't have to mow the whole grove site. And another thing, you need to quit those fad diets, get a positive body self-image, and put on some more healthy weight..."

### **Gandalf's Ending:**

I said hello cousin Mike. How many times have I told you to keep that nag of yours away from my shrubs? When are you going to get into the twenty-first century and update your equipment? How about a nice chainsaw? A 9 millimeter? A tactical nuke? A John Deere combine? I give away the good stuff. Your choice: Snickers, Milky Way, or a Crunch? Hungry for real food? I have Chinese cooking. Something Italian? Mexican with rice and beans? I have children. Boiled or fried? Hot dogs? Cat tails?

I know why you're here. No. I don't have the money I owe you. I have a sure thing in the third race at Keeneland tomorrow and I promise, you'll be first on my list. Incidentally, the cops were here a few days ago asking if I knew anything about those crop circles on the McDonald farm. Damn near two acres of corn destroyed. I stalled them but I could tell that they knew it was you. My suggestion is that you get on Anthrax and get out of Dodge.

### **Julie's Ending:**


...and he said "McCain won by a landslide". And all the children screamed



## **Three Mini Murder Mysteries**

*By Inspector LeDruid*

April 16, 2007

 Study Carefully.....the clues are so blatant you will be kicking yourself if you miss them! Don't look at the answers until you are sure you have all three right .

### **Mystery One**

A man was found murdered Sunday morning. His wife immediately called the police. The police questioned the wife and staff and got these answers: The wife said she was sleeping. The cook was preparing breakfast. The gardener was gathering vegetables. The maid was getting the mail. The butler was polishing shoes in the pantry. The police instantly arrested the murderer. Who did it and how did they know?

### **Mystery Two**

A man walks into his bathroom and shoots himself right between the eyes using a real gun with real bullets. He walks out alive, with no blood anywhere and no, he didn't miss and he wasn't Superman or any other crusader wearing a cape. How did he do this?

### **Mystery Three**

Old Mr. Teddy was found dead in his study by Mr. Fiend. Mr. Fiend recounted his dismal discovery to the police: "I was walking by Mr. Teddy's house when I thought I would just pop in for a visit. I noticed his study light was on and I decided to peek in from the outside to see if he was in there. There was frost on the window, so I had to wipe it away to see inside. That is when I saw his body. So I kicked in the front door to confirm my suspicions of foul play. I called the police immediately afterward." The officer immediately arrested Mr. Fiend for the murder of Mr. Teddy. How did he know Mr. Fiend was lying?

Try to figure these questions before looking at the answers on the last page of the Druid Inquirer.





## Eat No Stones!

From Green Book 5

A hunter, walking through some woods, came upon a notice. He read the words: "Stone Eating is Forbidden."

His curiosity was stimulated, and he followed a track which led past the sign until he came to a cave at the entrance to which a Sufi was sitting.

The Sufi said to him: 'The answer to your question is that you have never seen a notice prohibiting the eating of stones because there is no need for one. Not to eat stones may be called a common habit. Only when the human being is able similarly to avoid other habits, even more destructive than eating stones, will he be able to get beyond his present pitiful state.'



## Pecans in the Cemetery

From Ecunet

On the outskirts of a small town, there was a big, old pecan tree just inside the cemetery fence. One day, two boys filled up a bucketful of nuts and sat down by the tree, out of sight, and began dividing the nuts.

'One for you, one for me. One for you, one for me,' said one boy.

Several pecans dropped and rolled down toward the fence.

Another boy came riding along the road on his bicycle. As he passed, he thought he heard voices from inside the cemetery. He slowed down to investigate. Sure enough, he heard, 'One for you, one for me. One for you, one for me.'

He just knew what it was. He jumped back on his bike and rode off. Just around the bend he met an old man with a cane, hobbling along.

'Come here quick,' said the boy, 'you won't believe what I heard! Satan and the Lord are down at the cemetery dividing up the souls.'

The man said, 'Beat it kid, can't you see it's hard for me to walk.' When the boy insisted though, the man hobbled slowly to the cemetery.

Standing by the fence they heard, 'One for you, one for me. One for you, one for me.'

The old man whispered, 'Boy, you've been tellin' me the truth. Let's see if we can see the Lord.'

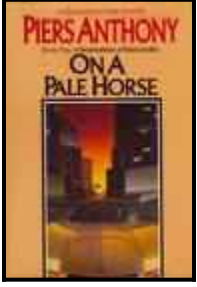
Shaking with fear, they peered through the fence, yet were still unable to see anything. The old man and the boy gripped the wrought iron bars of the fence tighter and tighter as they tried to get a glimpse of the Lord.

At last they heard, 'One for you, one for me. That's all. Now let's go get those nuts by the fence and we'll be done.'

They say the old man made it back to town a full 5 minutes ahead of the kid on the bike.



## BOOK REVIEW CORNER



### **On a Pale Horse**

By Piers Anthony

Review by C. McCallister (found on Amazon.com)

In 1983, Piers Anthony was already a fairly well-known fantasy author, and he launched this new series, The Incarnations of Immortality. This was a tricky balancing act, as the books are basically light fantasy, but they also address very serious issues. On A Pale Horse is the first book in the series, and starts off as serious as you can get, topic-wise, by addressing the issue of death. I have read it five or six times over the years, and find it a fascinating blend of the fun and the serious.

**Setting:** The fictional world for this story, and for the six sequels, is Earth. But, this is an Earth where magic holds equal sway over life as does science. If you are ill, you can seek the aid of a competent physician, or the assistance of a magician with a good reputation. If you want to travel from Chicago to New York, you can choose between an airline or a good magic flying carpet.

**Story:** Zane is a hapless, harmless, somewhat inept young man, upon whom Fate has seldom, if ever, smiled. Nothing works out well for Zane, and he always picks the wrong path to follow, even when it looks like the right path. He has no family, and no prospects for one on the horizon (or anywhere on any map). When despair approaches tragedy-inducing proportions, and Zane contemplates suicide, even that does not lead where he intends it to. Instead, Zane discovers a secret of the universe: Death is not just a concept, it is an office held by a nearly-immortal person, who can only die if he or she makes a mistake while in the act of claiming a soul about to enter the Afterlife. In Zane's case, Death makes just such a mistake, while attempting to claim Zane's soul; Zane kills Death, and Zane is forced to assume the Office of Death -- at least until he makes a mistake.

Once Zane becomes Death, he must learn all the tasks of the Office, with the main one being claiming the souls of those who are about to die, and for whom the accrued balances of good and evil are close to equal. Zane must learn how to correctly claim a soul, how to measure the nearly-equal balance of good versus evil, and what to do with those souls, depending upon the outcome of the measuring process. Zane also gets to meet the other Incarnations of Immortality: Fate, Nature, War, Time, Good, and Evil. You see, the job of being Death often requires the Office-holder to interact with his or her colleagues.

The Office of Death also comes with several neat gadgets, including a creepy costume, several magical gemstones, and then there is Mortis, who can be many things, but is always the mode of transportation for Death. Zane has to learn how to master all these nifty gadgets, but his television is very helpful, as is Mortis.

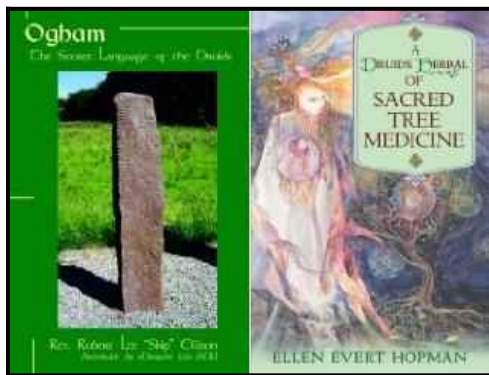
Once Zane has gotten comfortable with his new position, he has to decide what he wants to do with it. He could just stop Death from occurring, but would that be a good idea? He finds out. As Zane explores the ramifications of being Death, he also must come to terms with a secret from his own past, that has caused him years of guilt and depression. Along the way, Zane falls in love, but is that allowed? Is it wise? What will be the cost to him and to the subject of his affection? The answer might be global in scope!

From my description, you might be thinking this is a light-hearted fantasy dealing with a serious topic. On one level, it is exactly that. However, the author does a good job of dealing with the serious aspects of death in a respectful way, and with an approach that can be very thought-provoking. Zane asks many questions, dealing with death, and must think his way through to answers that make as much sense as possible to everyone involved

Piers Anthony was already an experienced author, by the time he wrote On A Pale Horse, with at least thirty-three books predating it, and it shows. The fictional world-building is comprehensive, the characters are interesting and well-developed, the action is paced well, and the imagery evoked is interesting and colorful. What impressed me most, though, was the author's ability to tastefully address a highly sensitive topic, death, in the context of a fantasy-adventured novel, that could be readily converted to a graphic novel.

One interesting aspect of this novel is that the setting, and many of the characters introduced, are present in the sequels. Even the time-frame of On A Pale Horse overlaps with some of the sequels, creating a series that features interwoven tales and character-histories.

**Editor's Note: If you like the first novel, in the series (Death), read about War, Love, Nature, etc.**



## Ogham: The Secret Language of the Druids

by Robert "Skip" Ellison of ADF, 2007

and

## A Druid's Herbal of Sacred Tree Medicine

By Ellen Evert Hopman of Order of White Oaks, 2008

### A Joint Book Review

By Mike the Fool , DAL, Be, Gr, Ta

It is a rare joy when two modern Druids write books that dwell upon the same ancient topic but then extrapolate from there into the authors' primary fields of interest. I have decided to write a joint book review, as both books are so complementary, and I simply cannot imagine you buying one and not buying the other. You or your grove should have these on your shelf, because eventually Ogham and the trees associated with them will pop up in your life and you'll need these handy reference books.

	<b>n</b> <i>nin</i> "ash"		<b>q</b> <i>ceirt</i> "apple tree"		<b>r</b> <i>ruis</i> "elder"		<b>i</b> <i>idad</i> "yew"
	<b>s</b> <i>sail</i> "willow"		<b>c</b> <i>coll</i> "hazel"		<b>z</b> <i>straif</i> "blackthorn"		<b>e</b> <i>edad</i> "aspens"
	<b>f</b> <i>fer</i> "fern"		<b>t</b> <i>tinne</i> "holly, elder"		<b>ng</b> <i>getal</i> "broom"		<b>u</b> <i>ur</i> "heath"
	<b>l</b> <i>luis</i> "rowan"		<b>d</b> <i>duir</i> "oak"		<b>g</b> <i>gort</i> "ivy"		<b>o</b> <i>onn</i> "furze"
	<b>b</b> <i>beithe</i> "birch"		<b>h</b> <i>huath</i> "whitethorn"		<b>m</b> <i>muinn</i> "vine"		<b>a</b> <i>ailm</i> "pine tree"

What is Ogham? It is a writing system, with various scratch marks, above, below or across a line going horizontal, vertical, anyway. Gaelic words are inscribed by it on stones from the 3rd to 6th century in Ireland, parts of Gaelic Scotland, the Isle of Man, and perhaps in parts of Wales. There are no surviving texts that are written in Ogham. It was used on twigs for letters. See my article on Ogham in this Samhain issue of the Druid Inquirer for more of my feelings about Ogham. It resembles no other orthographic system in the world, unmatched for its stark simplicity and mysterious origins.

Take a look at the background of these highly respected and popular authors and you will understand the theme of each book better.

- **Robert "Skip" Ellison** is the fourth and current Archdruid of ADF. His specialty is divination. He's written several manuals for ADF. This book is a revision of "A Druid's Alphabet: What Do We Know About Ogham?" in 2003, with a more snazzy title chosen by the publishers. He also wrote the very personal, "The Solitary Druid: A Practitioner's Guide" available at [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com). ADF has a pan-Indo-European focus of religion, and he writes numerous articles for ADF publications and goes on speaking tours. This is the first book by the new publishing label: ADF Publishing ([www.adf.org/publications](http://www.adf.org/publications))
- **Ellen Evert "Saille" Hopman** was a well-known past officer and author in ADF and Keltria, but is currently co-chief and co-founder founder of the Order of the White Oak, which is researching and

reconstructing Druidism from ancient source materials of the Celts (especially the Irish manuscripts). She has written numerous books and videos, primarily on herbs, trees, Celtic history and lore, the Neopagan community and healing. Some of her best known works include; *Tree Medicine-Tree Magic* 1992; *A Druid's Herbal for the Sacred Earth Year* 1994; *Walking the World in Wonder: A Children's Herbal*, 2000; *Being a Pagan: Druids, Wiccans and Witches Today*, 2001; *Priestess of the Forest: A Druid Journey (Fiction)*, 2008). She also writes for OWO's magazine, EOLAS. She is a frequent article writer for several pagan magazines.

Given that background, it is natural that Skip Ellison should tend toward the divination possibilities of Ogham and Ellen Hopman towards the tree and herbal uses of the trees associated with Ogham letters. While Skip's work is a revision, Ellen's book is a newer deeper expedition for herself into Irish tree Lore. Surprisingly, both books were written without reading each-other's books; which seems odd in a community as small as ours. Both are voting members of the Druids Academy Nomination Award Committee, to find excellence in the community, and we can hope that cross-hybridization between these gifted writers will be extraordinary in the future.

I thought that I knew a lot about Ogham from my Celtic studies at Carleton in the 1990s, but I hadn't known about Ogham sign language, non-tree associations for each letter, nor that there are 150 variant forms of Ogham recorded in some scholastic texts. Whatever you think you know about Ogham, you'll find more information, and it will be reliable and easy to reference.

Neither book addresses how, from a craft angle, one could or should decorate stone objects. What tools are necessary, which methods would they recommend? Hopefully another author will soon address how to decorate stones in a Celtic manner, also including various Celtic symbols used historically.

Often in the modern Druid community, we bemoan the fact that there are hundreds of "Druidism 101" materials out there, but little beyond that. These two books are not for beginners, they are most properly in the intermediary level, perhaps the second to fourth years of Druidic study, with Ellen's towards the beginning intermediate and Skip's toward the upper intermediate. Ellen's book would make a fine book to present to a relative when you are "coming out of the closet" about your Druidry, if that loved one happens to be a gardener.



### **Ogham: The Secret Language of Druidism.**

Don't let the flamboyant picture fool you, he's a very serious scholar.

This book has a rather short succinct introductory summary of what is known about Ogham. He is a very straight forward author, not given to speculation or fancy theories. That would be the only draw back to the book is that it might be too scholarly. His warm personality doesn't really show through in this book. Skip has made an in-depth study of the Scholar's Primer from the 15th century, in which a show-off author lists about 138 variants of Ogham writing and cyphers plus tree association, pig associations and dozen of other associations. It is an extremely difficult text to acquire a copy, and naturally it is written in mid-Irish.

The first section of the book addresses each Ogham letter that we are commonly familiar with in a very easy encyclopedic format. Symbol, common tree name and genus/species, then he describes the *Kennings* "poetic references" from six different texts with that tree or object associated with that letter and comments on the name. That is followed by some association in Indo-European mythology with that plant, usually a paragraph or two. And fourth, he lists some magical associations or interpretations of the tree.



The second section of the book has extracted images from the 138 variants of Ogham, usually a picture of the way each was written "A-Z", a translation of the explanation by that ancient author of how it was used. In particularly confusing cipher forms, Skip will throw a line or two to explain further. **You simply won't find these photos anywhere else but in this book!** It would be of great assistance in a future edition, if Skip would use a cleaner computer-drawn sample for each Ogham format in addition to the photo of that original text, plus a few samples words or sentences. You could spend hours, playing with these variants, including one that resembles "pig Latin."

Skip then turns to how to use Ogham in divination and brief overview of Celtic divinatory practices. Some well-known examples are oddly not mentioned, like the *tarbh feis* or watching the flights of birds. But this is not meant to be an exhaustive list and he seems to be focusing of methods related to working with sticks. Marking sticks can work (see the "French Fry sticks" of Phillip Carr Gomm available at [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com) or the other ones (real wood) on sale in the last article of this issue) and throw them on a skin. However, Skip's idea is for people to print out his Ogham disks or carve them onto some material, keep them close to personalize them, and draw them out to use on a design of his invention, similar to a tarot card layout. I've tried this myself, and it works relatively well as any divination system I've used before.

Finally, Skip addresses a whole chapter to the popularity and wide distribution of the Robert Graves's terribly mistranslated version of the Welsh poem Cadd Goddeau, Battle of the Trees. Skip first provides a respected translation by the great Welsh scholar D.W. Nash of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Graves's translation (not even closely similar) follows, and a third sample by Patrick Ford. It would have been quite helpful if he had also given us the Old Welsh original words too, not that we would have a shot of understanding them, but in case we wanted to try speaking them. He naturally thoroughly dismisses Graves's "tree calendar" as a modern invention, which is what most of the other scholars in the Neopagan community think likewise, even if they secretly kind of like it personally.

Not to be overlooked are the appendices. Appendix 1 is a quick reference chart to Ogham. Appendix 2 has printable Ogham Disks, he sells handmade sets too at <http://tinyurl.com/2epeggy>. Appendix 3 is quite valuable, in that he lists the primary 6 texts that an Ogham scholar should refer to. Such examples are an expensive reprint of The Scholar's Primer; another being a list of every Celtic inscription, and a couple other scholarly books on Ogham that he recommends. A few useful websites are also provided. Since you can't understand Ogham well without knowing the language it was designed for, Appendix 4 discusses Old Irish learning materials and a few illustrations of Ogham stones from the field. Being an ADF of Archdruid, he couldn't resist throwing a plug in for ADF in Appendix 5.

Overall, an excellent scholastic work and an invaluable resource for your Celtic library.



### **A Druid's Herbal for Sacred Tree Medicine.**

Ellen's book takes a wholly different tact. She is concerned with healing and herbal applications. So many Druids profess a love of trees, but have no idea what are the associations and practical usages of these trees. We tend to rely upon modern medicine and packaged cures for all our ailments, but overlook some treatments available in our own back yard. To better understand why the Celts spiritually revered these trees, you have to know why they also practically needed these trees.

Ellen knows a lot about Celtic and European mythology related to plants, but she does something a little daring in this book. She also includes herbal knowledge derived from Native American tribes with the same tree or similar members of the same genus, because in many cases we don't know exactly how the Ancient Celts were using the trees for medicine, so it was very useful to look at living indigenous cultures to see how they use the same trees. Now, of course, some modern Druids will cry foul about this not being "Celtic" enough or robbing Native American elders of their traditional knowledge.

However, if it works, why not use it? Ellen is quite careful to list the ethnic source of each piece of lore, she is quite respectful, and I believe most of these bits of lore are from published collections. Since I have some Cherokee in my family tree, I found this a very interesting possibility of fusion.

The format of the book begins with a warm welcoming discussion of modern Druidism, which was missing from Skip's book. She discusses the effect of colonization, modernization, deforestation upon Irish herb lore. While she briefly discusses various other associations with the Ogham letters (such as pigs, lakes, etc.) she makes it clear that she will only discuss the tree associations in this book, and then only the 20 original letters of the alphabet, unlike Skip who covers 25 plus some new modern devised ones.

The introduction also discusses a few Celtic mythological references to writing practices. It also lists a few basic herbal preparation definitions and discusses collection methods. One drawback in the book is the repeated injunction, on nearly every plant to avoid taking bark, girding, 360 degrees around the trunk, which would naturally kill the tree, and also to collect the leaves before summer solstice for best edibility. Druids don't want to hurt a tree, but it seemed too repetitive, although I'm sure many Druids (like most Americans) refuse to "read the instructions" at the beginning of the book. She naturally cautions people to consult a doctor before any extensive use of herbal medicine for a medical condition.

**Part One** is an in-depth discussion of each letter/tree combination. Each entry is about 4 to 6 pages, and this section comprises about 2/3 of the book. Each letter begins with a narrative reference to a few of the key kennings (not all 6 as used in Skip), followed by a linguistic note on the tree's Irish name, and how the poetic reference matches the plant. For example "most silvery of skin" from one poem, references the birch's white bark. A few craft usages follow. The second section of each letter/tree is a discussion of the herbal usage of different parts of the plant. Different qualities of American and British species are listed. Ellen relies on Native American folklore for about 70% of the information, personal experience 15% and European sources 15%. Each letter/tree usually has a few recipes and cautions on usage. The third section lists the spiritual aspects, listing more scattered mythological lore and a few magical associations with the tree for spell work. The letter/tree sections are pleasant and wandering to read, and differ from the more encyclopedic reference style of Skip Ellison's work on Ogham.

**Part Two:** Part One of the book, alone would make it a book worth buying, but there is much more packed into this 245 page book. Having talked about the herbal usages, she drifts the reader into the magic as practiced by the ancient Celts, their known magical tools (including the bell-branch), and some eight pages on Ogham methods and quick paragraphs on possible divinatory meanings also (which complements Skip's book too). Now that she has discussed Celtic trees as a species, Ellen wants you to start focusing on individual trees and meditating with a tree pattern (quite common among modern Druids and Neopagans). I quite liked the section on *buad* and *cles* principles for sacred grove site preparations. She lists several types of tree usage by the Druids in myth, legal texts, and further details on processing herbal preparations. She lovingly writes about 18 types of tree-related activities, such as the Cloutie Rag tree for wishing/healing by tying on clouts of rags to a holy tree, often by a well. Celtic festivals, I thought my eyes would glaze over on yet-another-discussion of the festivals, but her style is intriguing and she peppers it with interesting crafts, myth and recipes for over thirty four pages, about 1/3 of the book.

Finally, we get into the appendices. Honestly, most of us make a bad mish-mash of the Celtic pronunciations, so the two appendices on the pronunciation of various old-Irish terms and trees is a very helpful tool to avoid embarrassing ourselves in Druidic gatherings. As always, Ellen provides a thorough list of references for most of her statements and a nice tight bibliography to expand your readings beyond this book.

In short, a most enjoyable book, by a very experienced author, a book that will hopefully be on and off and on and off your bookshelf, because you'll constantly be pulling it out to look up a tree that you've just noticed on a recent stroll of the park.

You can visit Ellen online at <http://www.celticheritage.co.uk/EllenEvertHopman/>



# BARDIC CORNER

## Love Oghams on the Stones

By Patrick Haneke Akita Grove,

RDNA 2001

For the Public Domain.

Based upon "Love Letters In The Sand"

Words by Nick and Charles Kenny and Music by J. Fred Coots

Written in the 30's, but made famous by Patty Boone in the 50s.

Open <http://www.smickandsmodoo.com/aaa/1957/loveletters.htm> in a new web page, then click the music play. Clicking on the link here directly doesn't seem to work.

On a day like today,  
We passed the time away  
Carving love oghams on the stones

It's been some years since you died,  
Yet my thoughts gently glide  
To those love oghams on the stones.

### CHORUS

We made a vow that we'd meet in the next world  
Those dear thoughts now caught in lines straight and  
curled.

Now my lonely heart aches  
With every dawn that breaks  
Over love oghams on the stones

(whistling)

Now my lonely heart aches  
With every dawn that breaks  
Over love oghams on the stones



## Bard in Review: Gordon Bok

From [www.gordonbok.com](http://www.gordonbok.com)

*Some of his songs are in Rise Up Singing, used by Carleton Druids -Editor*

**Gordon Bok** grew up around the boatyards of Camden, Maine. In his early years, he worked on a variety of vessels - on America's Northeast coast and others - fishing boats, passenger schooners, and as deckhand, mate, and captain of various yachts. On the boats, he learned many tunes, sea songs, stories, legends and ballads from the people he worked with. After high school, he worked on the boats in the summer months while the rest of the year he worked in Philadelphia and other cities as a carpenter and teacher. It was there that he found a thriving folk music scene and began performing. Dissatisfied with the images generally portrayed of people who work on the water, he began to write songs based on the experiences of those he knew - real people whose language was honest, whose feelings were credible. These early works, songs like "Bay of Fundy", began to get attention, as did his rich voice and fluid guitar work. **Paul Stookey** of the folk trio **Peter, Paul, and Mary**, produced Gordon's first album for Verve.



At a time when folk music was experiencing a great revival, Gordon became a leader in preserving, collecting, creating and sharing a wide variety of rich and intensely beautiful songs of both land and sea. His mastery of both 6- and 12-string guitars added to his already well-developed vocal expression to create an unmistakable style that has carried him through decades of being one of our most cherished folk artists. He has made more than a score of albums, and many other musicians including **Archie Fisher**, **Liam Clancy**, and **Tommy**

**Makem** have recorded his songs. In addition, his music has been used in films and published in folk music anthologies, including *Rise Up Singing* and his own collections, *Time and The Flying Snow* and *One To Sing, One To Haul*.

In addition to performing in concert halls, coffeehouses and festivals throughout the U.S., Canada, Great Britain, Scandinavia, New Zealand and Australia, Gordon has taught choral singing and song writing at summer music camps and other gatherings. He has organized choral groups in his own community and gladly shares his knowledge with others wishing to do the same. A superb storyteller, he often introduces songs in concert with a bit of their origin and history.



Besides his countless solo appearances, Gordon toured for nearly thirty years with the trio, **Bok, Muir and Trickett**. He has also performed with his wife, harper **Carol Rohl** and with **Anne Dodson**, **Cindy Kallet**, **Bob Zentz**, **Margaret MacArthur** and other well-known folk artists. He has appeared in concert with the **Paul Winter Consort** and the **Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra**, and has been heard on NPR's **A Prairie Home Companion**. He has served both as Artist-in Residence and faculty member of the College of the Atlantic.

Although he never graduated from college, he received an honorary Doctor of Science degree from the Maine Maritime Academy in 1997.

Another aspect of the artistic talent of Gordon Bok is his woodcarving skill, which he developed quite naturally from growing up around woodworkers. Already an accomplished instrument builder and furniture maker, he took up woodcarving in the mid 70s when he inherited his mother's carving tools. Over the past 30 years, when not performing and recording, Gordon has been quietly working out his music and memories in bas-relief. The result is nearly a hundred carvings of people, boats and other images that have influenced his life. In 2002, a local gallery displayed his carvings publicly for the first time. Now, many of these unique and compelling works are available to the general public.

## TURNING TOWARD THE MORNING

(Gordon Bok)

<http://www.traditionalmusic.co.uk/song-midis/midi/TURNMORN.midi> For the tune.

When the deer has bedded down  
And the bear has gone to ground,  
And the northern goose has wandered off  
To warmer bay and sound,  
It's so easy in the cold to feel  
The darkness of the year  
And the heart is growing lonely  
For the morning

### CHORUS

Oh, my Joanie, don't you know  
That the stars are swinging slow,  
And the seas are rolling easy  
As they did so long ago?  
If I had a thing to give you,  
I would tell you one more time  
That the world is always turning  
Toward the morning.

Now October's growing thin  
And November's coming home;

You'll be thinking of the season  
And the sad things that you've seen,  
And you hear that old wind walking,  
Hear him singing high and thin,  
You could swear he's out there singing  
Of your sorrow.

When the darkness falls around you  
And the Northwind come to blow,  
And you hear him call you name out  
As he walks the brittle snow:  
That old wind don't mean you trouble,  
He don't care or even know,  
He's just walking down the darkness  
Toward the morning.

It's a pity we don't know  
What the little flowers know.  
They can't face the cold November  
They can't take the wind and snow:  
They put their glories all behind them,  
Bow their heads and let it go,  
But you know they'll be there shining  
In the morning.

Now, my Joanie, don't you know

That the days are rolling slow,  
 And the winter's walking easy,  
 As he did so long ago?  
 And, if that wind would come and ask you,  
 "Why's my Joanie weeping so?"  
 Wont you tell him that you're weeping  
 For the morning?

Recorded by Bok, Trickett and Muir on "Turning Toward the Morning", FSI-56, copyright 1975.

"One of the things that provoked this song was a letter last November from a friend who had had a very difficult year and was looking for the courage to keep on plowing into it. Those times, you lift your eyes unto the hills, as they say, but the hills of Northern New England in November can be about as much comfort as a cold crowbar. You have to look ahead a bit, then, and realize that all the hills and trees and flowers will still be there come Spring, usually more permanent than your troubles. And if your courage occasionally fails, that's okay, too: nobody expects you to be as strong (or as old) as the land." - Gordon Bok

### Brandy Tree (Otter's Song)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIIieQ-9GDg> for the music

(E) Am Em / Em Am Em / F Em / Am G Am

I go down to the brandy tree  
 Take my nose and my tail with me,  
 All for the world and the wind to see  
 And never come back no more.

Down in the meadowmarsh, deep and wide,  
 Tumble the tangle by my side,  
 All for the westing wind to run  
 And slide in the summer rain.

C G7 G / C G7 G / Am Em / Am G Am

Sun, come follow my happy way;  
 Wind, come walk beside me.  
 Moon on the mountain, go with me:  
 A wondrous way I know.

I go down to the windy sea  
 And the little grey seal will play with me;  
 Slide on the rock and dive in the bay  
 And sleep on the ledge at night.

But the seal don't try to tell me  
 How to fish in the windy blue:  
 Seals been fishing for a thousand years,  
 And he knows that I have too.

When the frog goes down to the mud to sleep  
 And the lamprey hide in the boulders deep,  
 I take my nose and my tail and go  
 A hundred thousand hills.

Someday, down by the brandy tree,  
 I'll hear the Shepherd call for me;  
 Call me to leave my happy ways  
 And the shining world I know.

Sun on the hill, come go with me,  
 My days have all been free.  
 The pipes come laughing down the wind  
 And that's the way I go, That's the way for me.

Words and music by Gordon Bok.

Recorded on "Seal Djiril's Hymn," FSI-48

"I learned this song from a small otter on Sherman's Point, Knox County, State of Maine, on a cold morning in 1966. Thinking it over, I wrote the refrain myself. A thousand years (I was told) is a long time for an otter. So should it be for us." Copyright Folk Legacy Records, Inc 1977

I go down to the Bran-dy tree. Take my nose and tail with me. All for the world and the  
 wind to see. And ne-ver come back no more. Sun come fol-low my hap-py way.  
 Wind come walk be-side me. Moon on the moun-tain go with me, the won-drous way I know.



# CRAFT CORNER

(From the Order of Lugh)



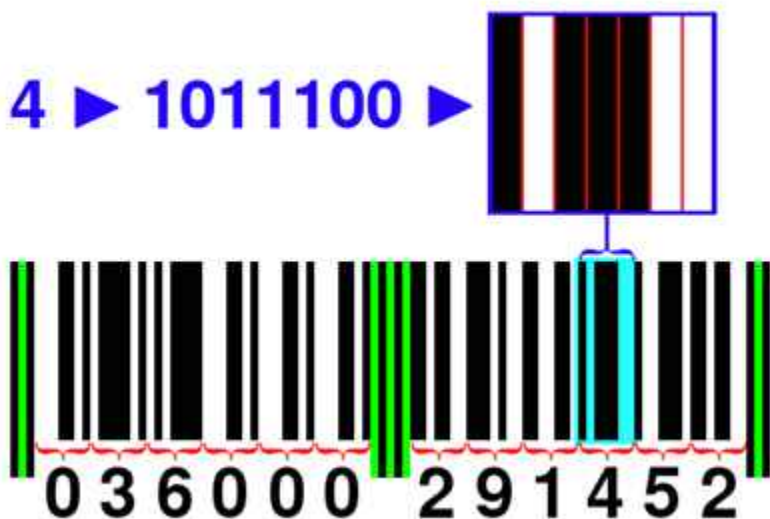
## How to Read Barcodes from Wikipedia

*Okay, so you like Ogham? How about barcodes, modern Ogham? -Editor*

Most bar codes in the US are 12-digit UPC (Universal Product Code) barcodes, with ten digits at the bottom of the code and one small number to each side. Impress your friends by asking them to select a random item from the kitchen with a removable label and cut the numbers off of the UPC barcode; you can then proceed to read the numbers encoded in the lines.

### Steps

1. Note that barcodes are made up of both black and white lines. The white spaces in between the black lines are part of the code.
2. Understand that there are four different thicknesses to the lines. Henceforth, the skinniest line will be referred to as "1," the medium-sized line as "2," the next largest line as "3." and the thickest is "4."
3. Each UPC barcode begins and ends with 101 (thin black, thin white, thin black). In the very middle of the barcode, you will notice two thin black lines sticking down between the numbers. The thin white between them, as well as the thin whites to either side, make up a 01010. Each UPC barcode has 01010 in the middle.



4. Recognize that each digit, including the small numbers that begin and end the barcode, has its own unique four-line set. 0 = 3211, 1 = 2221, 2 = 2122, 3 = 1411, 4 = 1132, 5 = 1231, 6 = 1114, 7 = 1312, 8 = 1213, 9 = 3112. (Note that the sum of bar widths numbers is 7 for all codes because each code is 7 units wide.)
5. So, the barcode above whose first two digits are 03 would start out "1013211411". Broken down this is "101-3211-1411" where 101 marks the beginning of the bar code and 3211 marks the digit 0 .

### Tips

- Barcodes from soda cans, books, video store rentals, and all the rest which are fewer than 12 digits only use the white/black/white/black scheme.
- Memorizing the thickness of each line size takes some time (as does memorizing each digit's line sequence), but it becomes easier with practice.
- Notice that the line colors are reversed after the center-line: The lines of the digits to the left are white/black/white/black whilst to the right they are black/white/black/white. This provides some error checking and allows the reader to know the direction in which it is scanning a code. It is also crucial so that the barcode ends with a bar rather than a space. So, actually, each digit has two codes.
- Recognize that each digit is made up of seven equally spaced lines. So you can see from the image above that the digit 4 is made up of the 7 black and white lines in the order of 1011100 where 1 is black and 0 is white. These seven small lines become 1132 in the simplified thick or thin line system.
- The first code is the manufacturer of the product. Many times the "Brand-X" is made by the same manufacturer (e.g., Prestone antifreeze and the Advanced Autoparts generic, 3M "Post-its" and the generic sold at OfficeMax). While there's no guarantee the quality is the same, it's probably just the same item with different coloration in a different package.
- When the numbers that the barcode represents are printed below the bars, the first and last digits are often printed outside of the bars. While the first number is part of the company number, the last number is a check digit (known as a Mod 10 check digit). This number is calculated based on the other digits in the number.
- You can use the check digit yourself, to ensure that you've figured out the other digits correctly. Add together all the digits in odd-numbered positions (there will be 6, from the 1st to the 11th) and multiply that sum by 3. Then add each digit in an even-numbered position (of which there are 5) to that sum. The check digit will be whatever number you need to add to that end result sum to make it a multiple of 10 (i.e.,  $(-sum) \bmod 10$ ).
- In the above example, you get  $3*(0+6+0+2+1+5) + (3+0+0+9+4) = 42 + 16 = 58$ . So you would need to add a 2 to 58 to get a multiple of ten.
- Note- the reason the scheme is rather complex is to allow scanning machines to detect all single-digit errors, as well as almost all swaps of two adjacent digits.
- Formerly, printed books contained a human-readable 10-digit ISBN and a 13-digit EAN on the outside and sometimes a UPC inside. Mass market paperbacks had the reverse: a UPC on the outside (to facilitate scanning in drug stores, etc.) and an EAN on the inside front cover. That is no longer the case. Books now have a human readable 10-digit and 13-digit ISBN on the outside along with a bar code that represents the 13-digit ISBN and sometimes a price extension and since this follows the 13-digit EAN standard, it has an EAN symbol. ISBNs are now only issued as 13-digits. To convert an "old" ISBN to an EAN, you add 978 (Bookland) to the front, the first 9-digits of the ISBN and recalculate the check digit. In the future, the 979 prefix will also be used.

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## Sources and Citations

- <http://www.omarabid.com/barcode> -- Free Barcode Generator
- [http://www.azalea.com/UPC/UPC\\_checkdigit.html](http://www.azalea.com/UPC/UPC_checkdigit.html) -- Calculating the UPC barcode check digit

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\*REFORMED DRUID\*

## Typing Letters with Barcodes

**Quick Way!:** To make a word into Code 39 Go to <http://www.toolbarn.com/web-tools/barcode-code39/>

**SLLOWWW WAAY:** Or read this article and figure it out yourself.

The Normal CODE 39 is a variable length symbology that can encode the following 44 characters: 1234567890ABCDEFGHIJKLMNQRSTUUVWXYZ-.\*\$/%. Code 39 is the most popular symbology in the non-retail world and is used extensively in manufacturing, military, and health applications. Each Code 39 bar code is framed by a start/stop character represented by an asterisk (\*). The Asterisk is reserved for this purpose and may not be used in the body of a message. B-Coder automatically adds the start and stop character to each bar code therefore you should not include them as part of your bar code message.

Code 39 optionally allows for a (modulo 43) check character in cases where data security is important. The health care industry has adopted the use of this check character for health care applications.

**Code 39** (also known as "USS Code 39", "Code 3/9", "Code 3 of 9", "USD-3", "Alpha39", "Type 39") is a [barcode](#) symbology that can encode uppercase letters (A through Z), digits (0 through 9) and a handful of special characters like the \$ sign. The barcode itself does not contain a check digit (in contrast to—for instance—[Code 128](#)), but it can be considered self-checking by some, on the grounds that a single erroneously interpreted bar cannot generate another valid character. Possibly the most serious drawback of Code 39 is its low data density: It requires more space to encode data in Code 39 than, for example, in Code 128. This means that very small goods cannot be labeled with a Code 39 based barcode. However, Code 39 is still widely used and can be decoded with virtually any [barcode reader](#).

The name Code 39 is derived from the fact that three of the nine elements that constitute a codeword are wide elements, the remaining six are narrow. Code 39 was developed by Dr. David Allais and Ray Stevens of [Intermec](#) in 1974. It was later standardised as [ANSI](#) MH 10.8 M-1983 and MIL-STD-1189.

The width ratio between narrow and wide can be chosen between 1:2 and 1:3.

## Encoding

The \* character presented below is not a true encodable character, but is the start and stop 'symbol' for Code 39. The asymmetry of the symbol allows the reader to determine the direction of the barcode being scanned. This code is traditionally mapped to the \* character in barcode [fonts](#) and will often appear with the human-readable representation alongside the barcode.





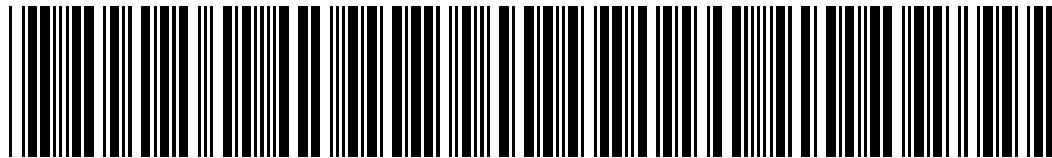


As again, there are wide and narrow black lines and white spaces. A “wide” line is actually two narrow lines stuck together. A “wide” space is actually two narrow spaces stuck together. Each character begins and ends with a line.

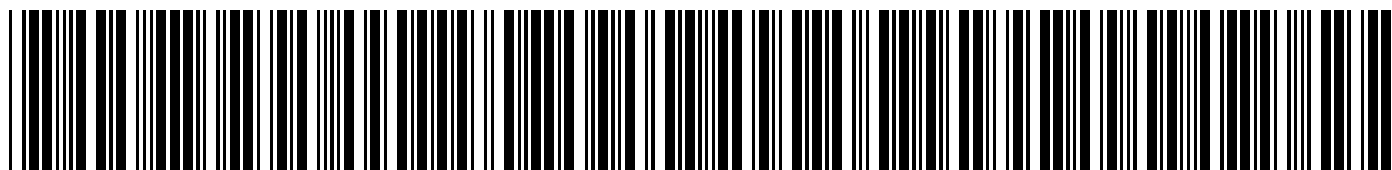
Char.	Pattern	Bars	Spaces	Char.	Pattern	Bars	Spaces
1		10001	0100	M		11000	0001
2		01001	0100	N		00101	0001
3		11000	0100	O		10100	0001
4		00101	0100	P		01100	0001
5		10100	0100	Q		00011	0001
6		01100	0100	R		10010	0001
7		00011	0100	S		01010	0001
8		10010	0100	T		00110	0001
9		01010	0100	U		10001	1000
0		00110	0100	V		01001	1000
A		10001	0010	W		11000	1000
B		01001	0010	X		00101	1000
C		11000	0010	Y		10100	1000
D		00101	0010	Z		01100	1000
E		10100	0010	-		00011	1000
F		01100	0010	.		10010	1000
G		00011	0010	Space		01010	1000
H		10010	0010	*		00110	1000
I		01010	0010	\$		00000	1110
J		00110	0010	/		00000	1101
K		10001	0001	+		00000	1011
L		01001	0001	%		00000	0111

Please Note: In between each character (the start and stop characters included) there is a thin space<sup>[citation needed]</sup> (shown as w below). For example, if you wanted a Code 39 barcode composed of the letter "A", you would need the following to be encoded: "\*A\*". [bWbwBwBwb]w[BwbwbWbwB]w[bWbwBwBwb]

The code will not be read without these spaces. Barcode fonts, however are likely to include this space within the glyph for the character.



\*THE QUICK BROWN FOX\*



\*JUMPED OVER THE LAZY DOG\*



## Fun with Rocks

by Rocky the Druid

This article sounds like a mid-summer American mother's desperate attempt to keep bored kids entertained with dirt and sticks? Okay, maybe it is.

We (humanity) have been playing with rocks since, well, the Stone Age, or since apes have been throwing bones at black stone monoliths that hum.

Think about it, what are the basic materials of the world and human tools? Dirt, bone, rocks, glass, wood, metal, horn, petroleum, etc. We use rocks to build houses, make tools, to decorate landscape. You are never very far from rocks, and if you love the Earth, remember 98% of it is rock. Rocks and coal are cheap substitutes for children's presents for Christmas.

Okay, you are saying, rocks, um, well, they rock! Good, yeah! I've got you on board. So what are you going to do with these hard, dense, (usually) unburnable pieces of matter? Well, I've spent the last three issues of the Druid Inquirer going on about the landscape and ritual possibilities already (you did read those right?) Here are some more ideas, written on a notepad while bouncing in the backseat of my car through the jungle of Laos.

1. **Pet rock.** You remember that fad in the 1960s? Pick a pretty rock, give it a name, maybe glue some googly eyes on it, and start talking to it, take it for a walk, have it roll over, you get the idea. It never runs away, always waits for you, 100% loyal,

housetrained, no fleas, no combing. Perfect pet. Basically the fad was a counter-culture reaction to mass-produced toys, and a poke at our long tradition of projecting emotion and anthropomorphic features onto dolls since the dawn of time. But you now, just

- like Reformed Druidism, some people actually got past the joke and liked the idea.
2. **Stack them.** Yes, cheaper than Legos and wooden blocks. In Japan, there is a semi-religious ritual of placing a rock on the tomb of a loved one each time you visit. In Nepal and Tibet, some tombs are buried by the little rocks by passers-by. In Japan, again, if you can stack 7 to 9 non-flat rocks upon each other, you are more likely to accomplish the goal that you are thinking of while stacking.
  3. **Make a cairn.** Similar idea, rather than digging in the dirt, just pile rocks on them. See the Egyptians. Best to consult local funeral requirements, probably won't go over well. Probably could do this for dead pets, though. You could also make a day or year marker. One for each day or year you've lived someplace.
  4. **Skip them if small.** Flat round ones about 3 to 5 ounces work the best. World record is about 15 bounces, my record is 8.
  5. Sploosh them if big. Great fun at the beach, in puddles or rivers near the house. I've spent hours smashing ice on rivers during the winter as a kid.
  6. **Shoot and hunt things.** Oops, that's not P.C. Remember David and the Goliath. Several hunting cultures still use the sling to go hunting. It requires greater amounts of skill, practice and stealth to get close enough to do it. This will likely mean less animals dying too, just make sure to put them out of their misery quickly and humanely if it's not a clean kill. Might it even become an Olympic sport someday? Dropping rocks on prey was another trapper's method. Safer to have around the house than a loaded gun in the cabinet. Not as good as tin-cans, they can be used for target practice if not too big (don't want things ricocheting).
  7. **Make tools.** Lots of books by ex-paleoanthropologists on stone tool crafting. Hammers, axes, spears, knives, drills, etc. Usually requires access to flint or obsidian for the best edges.
  8. **Make fire.** As mentioned in the last two issues. Flint and iron-bearing stone smacked together will produce sparks. Stones are excellent for firerings.
  9. **Percussion.** Use it to bang a beat.
  10. **Ballast.** Weigh down a boat or airship to give stability.
  11. **Decorate them.** My mother liked to take round black ones and paint lady bugs and dogs onto them.
  12. **Polish and shine them.** You can buy these rock-roller machines and turn any rock into a shiny smooth shape with enough time. Most rocks look nice wet or with a shiny glaze.
  13. **Store energy.** Okay if you are New Agey, you can store your karmic energy in large stones at site. Quartz bearing stone seems to be the preferred stone nowadays.
  14. **Pound things.** Relieves stress! Get some rocks and begin banging them to small rocks. Works for hard labor of prisoners, good exercise, and then you have more little rocks to play with, gravel to work with, etc.
  15. **Grind things.** Use certain stones to whet (sharpen) your blades. Use quern-type stones to grind corn, wheat, oats, etc for cooking. Use the wrong stone, and you'll have stone-grit in your food.
  16. **Landfill.**
  17. **Paper weights.** Especially if they look nice.
  18. **Souvenirs.** Keep and label one from each place that you move. Do you remember that movie about the unemployed math genius who went to Harvard, and had a rock from every hard-event in his life (played by Robin Williams)?
  19. **Drainage.** To avoid erosion in the yard, place a big pile of little stones under the spout of storm drain.
  20. **Build walls and fences.** Very useful and looks nice. Good exercise. Very practical. Use local ones in your house's hearth. Don't use riverbed stones near heat, as they tend to crack.
  21. **Gravestones.** Yes you can buy a commercial marble smooth stone. Or you can hand a very rough, odd shape and skip the markings (or inset a small bronze plaque). Likely you'll be the only one in the graveyard doing so, so you'll be easy to find. You'll be the envy of the other ghosts who admire your bold style!
  22. **Identify them.** There are a LOT of types of rocks out there. Sedimentary, gems, volcanic, metamorphic, etc. Take a night

- course in geology, get a hand guide book, join a Nature Park's field trip, visit a mine or professional quarry, note the types of rocks at park exhibits, or just go to the museums.
23. **Collect them all.** Mix and match your collection. Trade with friends!
  24. **Melt them.** Learn how to make metal from ore and beat into tools or pour into molds.
  25. **Cook with them.** See the article on Stone Soup in the Fall Equinox issue. Ever been to a steak house, where the steak is served on an iron or stone plate? Stones were sometimes heated up in old days and dropped into a pot or pouch to heat up the soup and boil meat. The roving Irish Fiana would cook a deer by digging a ditch, heating up dozens of large stones and filling the ditch with water and dropping in the stones until it boiled. Not easy, but with enough people and stones, it will work.
  26. **Look for fossils.**
  27. **Stress-box.** This is an idea that I've seen in Irish and various folk cultures. You whisper your secret or sadness into a box and lock it or throw it into the ocean, but you could easily do so with a stone too, or bury it.
  28. **Use them to exercise.** Forget those \$40 weights at the health-club store. Just get some handsize rocks and carry them around while you walk or jog, you'll be amazed after a few weeks how much stronger you are. Put a one or two pound rock in your purse or backpack to get stronger. Moving rocks around, as noted above, is good hands-dirty fun and cleans out the pipes. The one-more-a-day pebble in the backpack, slowly builds up strength.
  29. **Heat them up.** Build a Roman or Scandinavia sauna. Raise a sweatlodge or Irish sweathouse (Tigh na Alluis). <http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/newmissal15.html> Heat rocks in a fire, transfer them to a pit, throw some water on and enjoy the steambath.
  30. **Rock Garden.** What's that you're saying, that's the only thing your garden produces anyway? Better for the environment than wasting water on green lawns. See Japanese and South-western American styles.
  31. **Everybody must get stoned.** No, just kidding.
  32. **Make a monument to something great.**
  33. **Landscaping:** trails, milestones, border markers, walls, fences, bridges, stepping stones, little stairs, rocks to step on to mount horses, rocks with rings to tie animals to, stone lanterns, water basins, pond liners, docks, places to sit.
  34. **Megalithic fun.** As mentioned in the last few issues, standing stones, coronation mounts, circles, altars, tombs, sacred pathways, etc.
  35. **Art.** Okay, remember that macaroni glue art from summer camp, man, where they cheap! You can use stones to make statues, as materials to stack and build animals, as a surface decorator, mozaic, modern art thingy, etc. Your limit is your imagination. There are dozens of rock artists out there. See the picture below of the work of San Francisco, California balanced rock sculptor Bill Dan and the art, discipline and craft of rock balancing and balanced stone stacking around the world. Included are images of Bill's balanced stones and rocks, links to other rock balancers and examples of their work, with information about naturally balancing rocks and world-wide stone balancing and rock stacking traditions.
  36. **Just talk to one.** Find one that fits you. They are very attentive.
  37. **Skin care.** Pumice stones float but they also are good for sloughing off dead skin on your feet.
  38. **Sandbox.** Remember the A1 steak sauce commercial? What is sand but chopped up rocks? Sand is also great for grinding, polishing, drainage, landfill, etc. Remember those sand mandalas by the Tibetans and Indians in the Southwest?
  39. **Healing.** Okay, going New Age here again. But some people use certain stones in certain places during massage and reflexology and such. Then there are those crystals....





## COOKING CORNER:



### **What I Did On My Equinox**

**By Helgaleena Healingline, Matriarch of Lugh**

Those of us who live in the northern hemisphere are having to prepare for the dark of the year. Oz and Indonesia might be getting their spring now, Chile may be ready to send us strawberries, but for this Druid, it is Harvest Home.

So much is going on at this time and this season-- harvest winding up and fruits of the wilds and hedgerows to gather. Time to get the carrots and turnips into the cellar and the grannies into the house-- how amused I was to find this saying is used in Scotland as it is in Finland. Meteors are falling and the archangels are out slaying dragons. Mikkeli or Michaelmas is also the time for hiring fairs and matchmaking markets for the maids and lads, and back to school for the students -- which is where I got the title for this blog. 'What I did on my summer vacation', the traditional makework essay for day one in the classroom.

Helgaleena forgot to take a vacation this summer, what with the settling and unsettling and press-birthing and all. If I were a British rockstar who could fly, I'd be rescuing people stranded on vacation when the company folds, I suppose, modern day heroics instead of demon hunting. But if I take vacation now, at harvest moon, it's actually switching one work for another-- harvesting for the kitchen instead of nitpicking the latest crop of erotic fiction.

I followed my muse away from the keyboard and into the ditches behind the storage units and found Elder Mother. She even provided a leaky bucket to gather the berries the birds had left. That provided about two gallons of delicious medicine once the poisonous stems were removed. Half a turkey leftover from Easter lost its spot in the freezer to make room for the quarts of conserve that will ease my sonny's asthma all winter long in cobbler form.

An impromptu raid for windfall apples at a confidential location in the suburban vacant spaces known only to deer cost me a favorite cardigan, sacrificed to the cockleburrs. But the four pies worth of lovely pink-tinted fruit are worth it. I have other clothes.

The last of the month's food budget covered acquisition of whole wheat flour and oil which have tripled in price, thanks so much, Bush recession. But I also was early to the market for the marked down produce. Normally I cannot afford bell peppers for us, but the red and gold ones bundled into bags because they have gotten slightly wrinkled? Scored! the same went for the fresh tomatoes and wilted cilantro. There will be fresh marinara; there will be decoration of the Three Sisters in honor of autumn.

Those who don't know them as the field companions of the Americas, corn bean and squash, may have heard of succotash. My son's people prefer them as a soup with meat in it and hominy made their own special way. I don't have hominy, only parching corn and corn meal. And I'm going to go multicultural and use mung beans. The squash is a lovely golden tan butternut with a large percentage of flesh to rind, perfect for pie as well. Result? a ratatouille-like stew will be topped with cornbread. But first we have to dispose of the turkey pie that won't fit into the freezer. We are not too poor to avoid feasting when it's equinox.

Yes, I 'practice the art of pie' as Garrison Keillor put it. My pies are not great, but at least they are pies. I think I spent too much time in ceramics and think I'm supposed to be making sculptures, not food. So as not to break tooth on my crusts I have resorted to adding a mix of egg, vinegar, and milk to them instead of the traditional ice water. That insures that they are more nutritious and also can only be

leathery at worst. I suppose that eliminating hydrogenated and saturated fats on doctors orders has traumatized my crust-craft as well. When the oil is liquid, it inevitably looks like 'too much' to me.

The nice thing about pie making if you are not Sweeney Todd's girlfriend is that you can put just about anything into one. This means any sort of ingredient you have much of and can preserve, can, or freeze is potentially pie. You can barge in on people in an emergency if you have pie with you. It looks nice too. I got a very nice letter of recommendation for grad school out of a pie I baked ten years earlier out of a used jack'o'lantern. (Actually it was what happened to the pie that made the difference there, I have to admit.)

The best crusts I have managed in the past year of upheaval have not been the kind that is versatile. When we had no kitchen I developed microwave dessert crusts. Here's one now--

Granola crust: Mix equal parts oil and syrup (corn syrup, molasses, even maple syrup) to bind together instant oatmeal. It should be moldable. Pat into a heatproof glass or ceramic pie dish and microwave until it's candied. Fill with whatever you have.

Peanut Butter crust: Mix 100 percent peanut butter and blackstrap molasses to the desired sweetness, then add wholewheat flour until it is a dough. This can be rolled out to shape like a regular crust, but can be microwaved, as it's already brown. It's also made of very expensive ingredients. But you get the idea.

Harvest Home and Homecoming sports games, for the best time for making war on your neighbors is when they have stores to pillage, and these games are our war substitutes. Bock fests, football, music carnivals, and the last chance to swim outdoors. Slaughtering and sausage making so stock need not be over-wintered. Dead need not be fed. That is for Samhain ritual to remedy.



That reminds me that I can't make sauerkraut. The cabbages this year all seem tiny, mostly core and not worth their price, low as it is. I've been unable to find one the size of a football, or a rugby ball, much less a soccer ball. It ought to be bigger than a human head.

Yes, humans are killers. I have heard the scream of the pumpkin. I have chopped off the catfish's head. I have pulled the weeds. I have eaten the beef and pork and chicken and turkey. I am no Jain saint accepting only what falls from the tree. But I do get my share of the windfalls before they are lost to worm and deer, I confess.

And now is the time to hustle for them, before things shut down, since I am not planning to be one of the dead.

I did have a terrible stitch in my back from pie making, and went for a leg-stretching ramble. There I found the seed pods of Evening Primrose, an old friend. I brought them home, hoping to encourage it to stay in our yard. Its response will not be clear until next spring, for the seeds need to overwinter to germinate. Yes, I am thinking of living all the way through till then.

That is what I did for Equinox.

## NEWS CORNER



### **Near-death experiences: What really happens?**

Scientists studying the brain, consciousness of people on the verge of dying

By LiveScience staff

**LiveScience**

updated 1:02 p.m. ET Sept. 12, 2008

Many reports of near-death experiences sound the same: a welcoming white light and a replay of memories. But now scientists aim to study what really happens to the brain and consciousness when someone is on the verge of dying.

In a new study called AWARE (AWAREness during REsuscitation), doctors will examine patients in hospitals in Europe and North America who reach a state called cardiac arrest.

"Contrary to popular perception, death is not [a specific moment](#)," said leader of the study Dr. Sam Parnia of the University of Southampton in the U.K. "It is a process that begins when the heart stops beating, the lungs stop working and the brain ceases functioning — a medical condition termed

cardiac arrest, which from a biological viewpoint is synonymous with clinical death."

Science has long struggled to define death, and to determine when the precise moment of death occurs. Now though, most doctors consider death more of a process than an event. A person is thought to have died when he stops breathing, his [heart stops beating](#), and his brain activity ceases.

"During a cardiac arrest, all three criteria of death are present," Parnia said. "There then follows a period of time, which may last from a few seconds to an hour or more, in which emergency medical efforts may succeed in restarting the heart and reversing the dying process. What people experience during this period of cardiac arrest provides a unique window of understanding into what we are all likely to experience during [the dying process](#)."

Previous research suggests about 10 to 20 percent of people who live through cardiac arrest report lucid, well-structured thought processes, reasoning, memories and sometimes detailed recall of events during their encounter with death.

One study found that people who reported peaceful feelings, bright light and out-of-body experiences during a brush with death are more likely to have had difficulty separating [sleep from wakefulness](#) in their everyday lives. Both before and after their near-death experiences, these people often have symptoms of the rapid-eye movement (REM) state of sleep while awake.

The AWARE researchers want to find out what happens to the brain when a person's body has started to shut down, whether it is possible for people to see and hear during cardiac arrest, and what's going on during out of body experiences.

The launch of the AWARE study was announced at an international symposium at the United Nations Sept. 11.



# Real Native Celtic Wood Ogham Sets

<http://www.spiritofold.co.uk/ogham.htm>



## ***Corresponding Ogham set with Birch Bark Container***

This set of corresponding ogham staves are presented in a traditionally-crafted birch bark container. The set contains the original 20 ogham sticks, each one handcrafted from the traditional corresponding wood - for more details about the staves, please see below.

Birch bark has been used by many cultures throughout time to make containers. This little oval box has been crafted with all-natural ingredients including pine resin glue created using methods dating from pre-history.

Birch is considered to have very protective energies making this the perfect container for the corresponding ogham staves.

A perfect gift idea for someone special in your life - or even just to treat yourself ;)

**Size:** Ogham staves 3.75 - 4 inches/ 9.5 - 10 cm (approx.)

Birch box 6" high x 4.5" wide x 2.25" deep

15 cm high x 11.5 cm wide x 6 cm deep

**Item no:** BB001/D060

**Price:** £99.99

### **Postage and packing:**

£4.00 within UK (includes recorded delivery)

£6.50 outside UK (insurance/tracking an optional £3.50 extra)

## **Real Native Celtic Ogham woods list**

Occasionally, various traditions or paths use differing woods from the generally accepted standards. The standard woods used for the Real Ogham sets are listed below in bold with a list of available alternatives. The alternatives are only used at the specific request of the customer.

**Birch, Rowan Ash, Alder, Willow, Hawthorn, Oak, Holly, Hazel, Apple, Vine, Ivy, Reed, Blackthorn, Elder, Silver Fir, Gorse, heather, poplar, yew,**

The Ogham alphabet consists of twenty letters to which a further five were added at a late stage in its development, probably later than the 8th century. The original twenty letters each consist of from one to five straight lines or notches intersecting a stem line. There is clear evidence for the magickal and divinatory use of the Ogham alphabet from the literature of medieval Ireland. Historically the symbols were used for divination by the use of four Yew wands, although more recently, the ogham alphabet has been used for divination by inscribing it onto small wooden staves or onto discs of wood. One symbol is added to each piece and they are used in a similar way to the runes.

They are often stored in a bag and a person will randomly pick out a certain number of the ogham sticks or discs whilst focussing on an issue or question. Ogham symbols can also be used to magickally empower an object or spell, for example they can be added to talismans to draw particular energies to the carrier or engraved onto candles prior to spellworking. More information on the meanings of the ogham symbols can be found [here](#). We're also happy to provide [custom-made](#) ogham sets in your choice of available wood.





## National Geographic Finds Celtic Bog Bodies in Canada

As shown in this photo.  
They just aren't dead yet, right, eh?

-Submitted by Sebastian of Quebec

## Publishing Information

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**Editor:** Michael the Fool

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Submissions Policy: Give it to me! If you have news about your grove, written a little essay, like to write up a book or move, have a poem, saw an interesting news article in the paper, or have a cartoon, send it in to [mikerdna@hotmail.com](mailto:mikerdna@hotmail.com)

I'll try to give credit to whoever the original author is, and they retain the copyright to their works, and we'll reprint it one day in a future binding also. Nasty works will not be published. Although my standards are not sky-high, incomplete works will be nurtured towards a publish-able form. Submissions are accepted from other publications and organizations, so you need not be a formal member of the RDNA to have your items published.



### ANSWERS to the MINI MURDER MYSTERIES:

- 1. It was the Maid. She said she was getting the mail but there is no mail delivery on Sunday.**
- 2. He shot his reflection in the bathroom mirror.**
- 3. Frost forms inside of the window, not the outside. So Mr. Fiend could not have wiped it off to discover Mr. Tidy's body.**