



Spring Inquirer Issue Y.R. XLVII

March 21st, 2010 c.e.

Volume 26 Issue 2

Founded Summer Solstice, Y.R. XLVI
Formatted for double-sided printing.
Digitally stored on bio-degradable electrons!

Editor's Notes

Spring is just about here. Life is good. Mike emerges from hibernation and begins to think about Druidical things. I unpacked my last box here in Montreal, finding the books that I inherited from Norman Nelson. Isaac seems to be recovering well, but Ellen Hopmann was sick recently. It goes to show that the cycles of life aren't always kind and we must do the best we can to enjoy the ride together.

Deadline for the **Beltane issue** is April 16, 2010. For Submissions of essays, poems, cartoons, reviews, conferences, events, grove news, articles of interest, etc: Send to mikerdna@hotmail.com



Table of Contents

- News of the Groves
- Druids in the Media: MOCC has moved
- An Informal Introduction to MOCC
- Green Book Gems: Tact and Silence
- Bardic History & Lore: Part 2 Breton Bards
- Game Corner: Barrow Hill Review
- Game Corner: Barrow Hill Interview
- Book Corner: English & Scottish Ballads
- News: Why There Are No Snakes in Ireland
- Joke of the Season

News of the Groves

A fuller list of the known active Reformed Druid groves is available at www.rdna.info/wheregrove.html

Desert Willow Protogrove, Mojave Desert: News from California

Seasons greetings from the Grove,

Saher

<http://saher.cwahi.net/>

Clan of the Triple Horse: News from Oregon

Clan of the Triple Horse, Medford, Oregon, celebrated Yule in one of our favorite sacred spaces, the beautiful Labyrinth at Rogue Valley Medical Center, Medford.

Participants honored Lugh and the return of the Light during a brief Rite, then walked the ancient spiral of death and rebirth as symbolized by the Labyrinth.

Everyone then adjourned to the home of a member to relax and enjoy a delicious potluck and exchange handmade gifts.

Check out our website to find out about upcoming events!

For more information, contact: triplehorses@gmail.com

Website: <http://triplehorses.weebly.com>

Koad Protogrove, News from Toledo, Ohio:

For Oimelc/Imbolc 2010: Koad Protogrove celebrated the turning of the Wheel with a ritual honouring the Earth Mother, Dalon ap Landu, and the Goddess Brighid. Many candles were lit to commemorate the lighting of the sacred fires across Ireland. This represents the first stirrings of the Earth Mother from the Season of Sleep

Dalon ap Landu shrine at nshrines: I have created a shrine to Dalon ap Landu at http://nshrine.com/shrine/Dalon_ap_Landu. The abstract symbol for Dalon ap Landu is really a combination or "bind" ogham for Duir-Ailm-Luis. It is reminiscent of the horned Lord of this and all Groves

For Spring Equinox 2010: Koad Protogrove will celebrate the arrival of the Spring Equinox with joy and thanks at the return of the increasing light. This represents the second stirring of the Earth Mother from the Season of Sleep. There is great hope in Spring and we will try to renew ourselves in the ever-increasing light. We also celebrate our renewed communications with our friends at Blackthorn Grove

Habitat Grove: News from Quebec

With the coming of Spring, a young Druid's thoughts turn to TIKI PARTY. It's a terrible retro-affliction for the mixture of tropical items from the 1950s after South Pacific: Carribean Rum Drinks, Exotic Junglesque Music, Polynesian Idols, Aloha Clothing and South East Asian Chinese Finger Food. Add surfing, limbo, flaming juggling clubs and lots of potted ferns and flowers and you have a Tiki Party at my place. It will be an awful sight to behold, but it must be so!

Tuatha Grove: News from California

Hi, Mike! It looks like I'm a half-hour late on this, but Tuatha De Danann Grove is planning an Equinox ritual and party March 21st at East Street Park in Hayward. Just thought I'd mention it...

In the Love of the Mother,
Jeffrey Sommer, AD



Druids in the MEDIA

From the Reformed Druids of Gaia:

Regarding the 2010 Redwood Coast Druid Gathering:
From the RDG/OMS Mother Grove - this year we are

inviting 3rd Order RDNA

or NRDNA Druids and their households to attend the 2010 Redwood Coast Druid Gathering for FREE (you will still have to register of course). to get to know us up close and personal.

There have been so many misunderstandings, most brought about I believe by the impersonalness of online communications. The fact is that if they really knew us, many of the preconceived, or perhaps, misconceived notions about us would be eviscerated. "

News from Missionary Order of the Celtic Cross (aka Reformed Druidic Wicca)

Greetings Brother Mike!

It looks like there's a whole slew of changes upcoming for both the RDNA and the MOCC. I saw where you listed that geocities was going to close down and you were going to move the site for the RDNA.

Well, the MOCC, and myself, are going to go through some changes, as well. My profile on Yahoo was hacked and the security questions/answers and my password were changed, effectively locking me out of my email there and from the groups in any supervisory capacity for the MOCC.

The MOCC Grove of the Three Rays site will eventually go dormant but I'm glad that it's still good for doing some research for those who will happen upon it. I doubt current tech will keep the Calendar section as workable as long as Stonehenge and the Coligny calendar have been, but it's a shot. Please change my emails and contacts for the MOCC to this email addy.

I noted that the MOCC email is a very old addy I had on lycos--it's long since dormant--and the moccgroveofthethreerays site will now become

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/moccgroveofthethreerays_2010 .

Incidentally, in the Files section of the old MOCC Grove of the Three Rays site, there is a copy of the LM2005, and in the Database section, there are excerpts from the apocrypha used by the MOCC on rare occasion. Well, it's getting late, and I wish you and yours all the best.

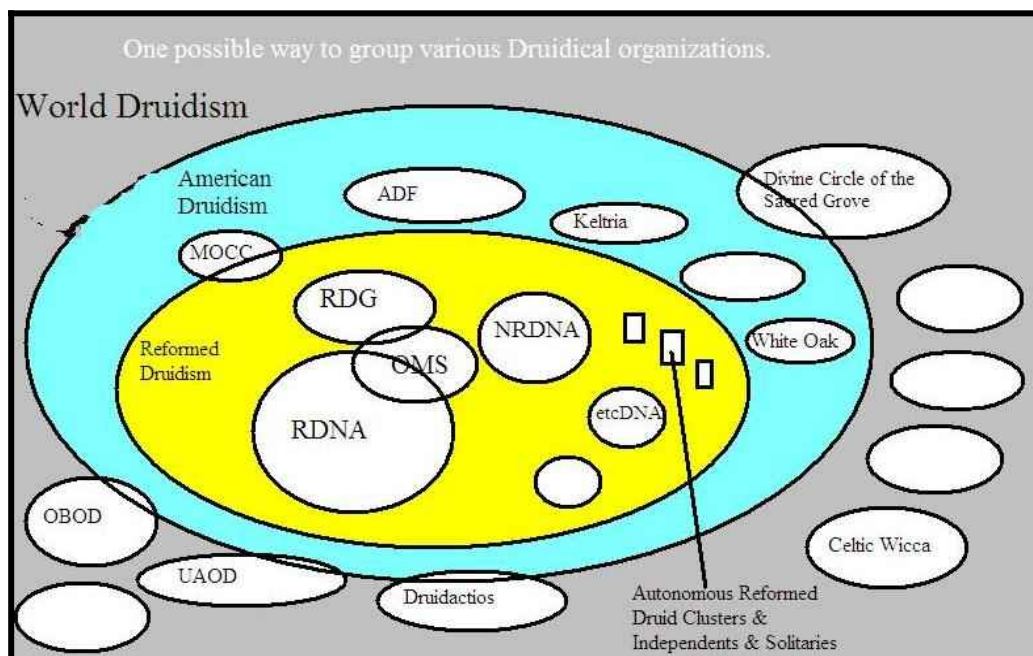
This declare above all: Healing and Light and Peace

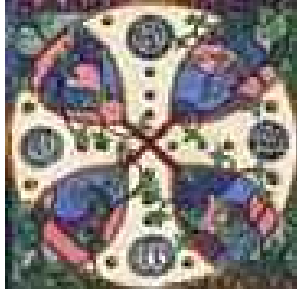
Missionary Order of the Celtic Cross (MOCC) Grove of Holy Wisdom, Bowlegs, OK

The wintertime has been long and uneventful as far as ritual is concerned, but then again ritual isn't everything about being a Druid. That which has been short on ritual has been long on the inter-workings of the Web of Life and getting back into Art. It is interesting to see a member of our group who had been inactive for quite some time raise his eyebrows in curiosity whenever matters 'arcane' raise their head in his general surroundings, and aside from the Grove I've been doing yet more and more genealogy work on both of our families. Working backward from what he knew of his family tree, he was amazed as names kept popping up, going backward in time, until now he knows of relatives going back up to the Big Blue Reservation in the 1850's. This connection with his Ancestors is serving to deepen his understanding and his spirituality. The old Druids understood this spiritual quality that is inherent in the study of our family and our past, and it is a special privilege to watch the growing understanding of this part of Druidical spirituality awaken in others.

The onslaught of Spring has meant digging up a new garden here in Bowlegs, and this year is the first time in several years that I've had the opportunity to actually plant a full scale garden. I've been enjoying looking through the catalogs and through store shelves looking for potential seeds to plant and have come up with quite a selection of heritage varieties of vegetables thanks to Seed Savers catalog. The most precious part of the garden will part of the most rare part of it though. I did some wildcrafting last year while I was taking one of my young 'students' out on a nature walk. We picked some wild sensitive plant that had gone to seed, and I managed to collect some of the seed off of it. While I was preparing some peat pots for some of the other plants, the wild sensitive plant seeds were planted as well. Out of close to forty seeds, two actually managed to germinate. They're actually a beautiful wildflower that have distinctive mimosa-like leaves and bright yellow flowers.

Even as I type this short essay, my young student (a very talkative eleven year old girl) is bursting at the seams wanting to go work in the garden, so I must cut this short, and drink my coffee. It looks like it's going to be a very busy day.





An Informal Introduction of a Grandchild (the MOCC) To It's Grandparent (the RDNA): A Curious History of the Missionary Order of the Celtic Cross (aka Reformed Druidic Wicca)

By Thomas Lee Harris, Jr.

The past is always colored by the memory of those who do the remembering. Not always by the victors, for in life, few people can truly be called victors over any other. This is true whether you are Irish looking at the British, Cherokee looking at the United States of America, or a Tibetan looking at the government in Beijing. Even so it is when it is a minority religio-philosophical body looking at it's role in the rest of the religious and philosophical bodies around it that are larger, more 'powerful', or just more noticed. The RDNA knows this feeling from being surrounded by the much larger mainstream, and there are smaller bodies that know this sense from the comparatively small stature they have when in comparison with other larger bodies such as ADF, OBOD and even the RDNA.

In the history of the Reform, the group to which I belong is one of these smaller bodies. Much like other smaller bodies, our groups tend to be smaller, and those of us who move from spot to spot tend to find ourselves sometimes a Solitary in the area they move into. Also being a smaller group, regular attendees sometimes are as few as three in groves that meet regularly. I know of several within philosophical bodies and religious bodies that are adverse to such small groups. Some of these have stopped hosting groups when they have fallen below a regular attendance of five, both within the alternative religious movement in which we find ourselves, and within more mainline denominations. I know of certain Christian churches that, when their membership began to dwindle, the clergy who had oversight of those churches closed them down and/or condensed them with other churches rather than downsize the congregation to the size of a prayer group that could meet regularly. Of course, this is more common in Christian churches than in the alternative religious movements of which we speak are somewhat more accustomed to the potential of downsizing, but that's a topic I will breach again later.

Probably I should introduce myself, since I'm not one of the more regular contributors to the publications of the RDNA, although I did at one time contribute a myth cycle that kind of followed the spirit of a Zen-Druid-y version of Dalon ap Landu through a parody of the Christian gospel with a few other zig-zags of bardic license tossed in for good measure. Mind you, much of this introduction sounds much more impressive now than it would have sounded years earlier when I was first starting my Druid journey and, since I find boisterous introductions somewhat distasteful, it somewhat violates my own personal code of ethics. I do feel that a person who is writing on a topic should know something of it, so giving my qualifications for writing this article is somewhat justified.

Ages ago, in 1981, I came into close contact with a religion that did not jibe with what I was being taught by various and sundry Sunday School teachers and ministers, and while it presented itself in the form of literature instead of religion, the true Nature of the subject matter didn't manage to escape my understanding. If you hadn't guessed, this part of my youthful curriculum was Greek Mythology, which at the time was being taught in 9th Grade English. English, as a subject, was for me a very spiritual topic. It continues to be so all these years later, and I hope it continues to be so for years. Three years later, while I was writing my Senior research paper, I was growing rather bored of Langston Hughes and started wandering off into the high school's mythology section where I read of the wonders of the Druid named Merlin. I began to read in earnest for the first time dealing with matters of the Table Round, and realized that, once again, this Ancient Religion was making it's way into my consciousness.

Not that it was displacing the Christian education I had been receiving outside the halls of academia, but by the same token, the Christian education didn't seem to be all that adverse to the new additions, either.

At this point I should inform (New Reformed Druids of North America) into the much quicker to say initials of ADF. The initials are easier to say, but the name is less pronounceable unless you've been downing a bit of Irish whiskey first. Of course, I knew nothing of this at the time, and that's an important thing to remember. You see, the Internet was not in existence, and we had to rely on an arcane method of information storage and retrieval called 'books'. That, a slew of magazines, and something that is becoming even more rare than either of these. It's called a 'vertical file'. These were the heavy handed weapons of Ogma as I began my Druid's path, which at this stage in my life were beginning to take over from the wanderings through local railroad access trails (lovingly referred to as 'hobo trails') and streams that meandered through abandoned fields and darkened culverts. Grottos had been meant for playing in, and I had been totally unaware of the spiritual lessons that I'd been taught there. Now, the answers were coming in heavy written tomes and were being transcribed on note cards. At least until I read that Druids had something called an oral tradition. At that time, I added to the oral tradition myself and said "Oh, Damn."

Before I diverge too far, I should finish the qualifications. I have, by this point in my life, led one coven, three groves, and have mentored a goodly handful of other Archdruids, both in my own Branch of Druidism and outside of her. I have also led classes in religion and spirituality in three religious bodies, have been an environmental and racial equality activist, and have written extensively on the topic. I've been published, to give a very abridged bibliography, in *Transformation Times*, *Green Egg Magazine*, and *A Druid Missal-any*. That being said, anything a Druid says about Druidism is personal opinion, and take it or leave it, one Druid never speaks for all of Druidism, not even necessarily for others in his own Branch of Druidism.

I went on to college in Warner, OK and managed to hook up with a small group. Unbeknownst to me these people were also caught up into alternative spirituality, and where my delving didn't seem to mind the syncretization of my Old Faith and my new findings, neither did theirs, and just as I remained a sincere Catholic trying to burrow my way through Southern Baptist culture, they had the same experience of their Faith not seeming to mind that they were combining alternative spirituality with staunch Catholicism or Seventh-Day Adventism.

Now, this group of alternative religionists found themselves in a rather haughty battle of wills with someone who had been part of a Druid group a year or two before in Colorado City, CO and had been given a 'charge' to begin a Druid work in Oklahoma by his Archdruid out in Colorado.ⁱ He was both the subject of intense like and dislike in the group, but they all seemed to find themselves in his charismatic presence, and he was the ersatz Archdruid of the new 'Grove', although at the time we didn't use those terms. The only thing that we new for sure was that he went around hugging trees and implied that since he was a Druid, the Circleⁱⁱ was also Druid. Not that we had any idea what being a Druid entailed, and after twenty-nine years as a practicing Druid, I'm not certain that aside from a few basics I can truly say what a Druid is, either. In fact, the older I become, the more all-encompassing the term itself becomes.

It is also at this point that I should point out a little tidbit of MOCC history. If you can consider this first Druid of our Branch of the Reform to be our first Archdruid, without the benefit of being ordained into the Third Order, then it would be the first reign in our Tradition of a gay Archdruid. These days, having one such person in the Archdruidic Chair may be unspectacular, but back then, when the Gay Rights Movement was barely fifteen years old, it was a quite startling thing. There were rumors about evangelists, of course, and things were whispered about this person and that person, but out on the Prairie such a thing as an openly gay 'minister' was an earth-shaking phenomenon. Even Episcopalians hadn't started ordaining gay clergy yet—and wouldn't for years yet to come—even though Bishop Spong had already made inroads into surveying what it meant to religion should such a thing as

ⁱ Myrddin a Maeglin, *The Coming of the Circle*, 1986

ⁱⁱ The first name of the MOCC was rather generic. We simply called it 'The Circle'. Later it would be called the 'Circle of Josue' (Joshua) and the 'Celtic College of Reformed Druidic Wicca' before we finally settled on the current name in 1996.

homosexuality come to be acceptable. Even worse, the scourge of AIDS was raising its head, causing all people around to fear the very word of 'homosexual'. Yet, there we were, and such was the situation.

Back to the battle of wills. I write this part of the story because it is important for those of you who eventually will help organize local groves to understand that when you have several strong personalities in a group, and you don't see the beauty of diverse spirituality as the center, problems can and do arise. They arise anyway, but it is so very important to keep your eye on cooperating spiritually to prevent things from falling into absolute chaos. There were problems of jealousy and intrigue. There were what are commonly called 'Witch Wars', and it nearly broke The Circle at its very inception.ⁱⁱⁱ And it would have gone into history, except for The Prophetess making two prophecies: one called *The Prophecy of the Golden One* which promised either a coming spiritual utopian existence for the group, and (for me) a much more important prophecy. It is called *The Unknown Prophecy*, although we know the basic substance of the prophecy. It was called Unknown because it was never written down, and thus very true to the olden spirit of Druidism called oral tradition. It ran basically that "The Circle would one day become philanthropic in purpose, giving charity to those in need".^{iv}

Autumn of 1984, enter 'me'. They found out that I had some studies in arcane subjects and knew relatively more about Druidism than they did, which wasn't saying much. I did what all great religious leaders do in times of great trial. I prayed. "O God, why me?" As it turned out, we wound up doing something fairly democratic. Instead of one person at the center of The Circle, we put three there. We also brought the focus back to a more spiritual base. There were a few more events, none of them actually written for organized ritual purposes other than the tree hugging and walking along trails and enjoying Nature until we went through another time of extreme spiritual activity, and then, suspiciously, activity died in 1986 for almost two years.

Now mind you, up until this point, other than a few notes and letters passed between the members, there was no organized literature. The 'Black Wizard', whose proper name you'll notice I specifically leave out of this manuscript to protect his identity since he has long left the group, moved from Warner, OK to Muskogee, just the same as I did. At this point, not much activity other than ritual and studies happened between the revival of The Circle (under the new name of the Celtic College of Reformed Druidic Wicca) in 1987 until I ran across *Llewellyn's New Worlds* magazine in 1994.

I ran into the magazine during the same year that the 100th Parliament on World Religion was going on. I noted that they posted letters and ads requesting/offering information, and I thought since the Celtic College seemed to have enough tenacity that it wasn't going to die immediately, I thought "what the hell", and decided to write my own little note. By this time we had a standardized ritual of sorts—which I'll get to in this article—and we had a somewhat formalized set of bylaws called "The Rule". We had even gone and done something stupid like elect me Archdruid of the local grove. We hadn't needed one for the first eleven years of our existence, but apparently we needed one then for some reason or another. The main problem for us at the time was that, to the best of our knowledge, all the other RDNA groves had fallen. In what we had scrounged together of the teachings of the RDNA something called Archdruidic Succession was fairly important, as was a body known as the Council of Dalon ap Landu. If it were possible, I was going to re-establish that broken line of Archdruidic Succession with the Colorado City, CO Archdruid who had given the 'mission' to my non-Archdruid-titled predecessor some years before. We never found the Colorado City Archdruid, although the little blurb in *New Worlds* did commence a campaign of correspondence that lasted from 1994 until 1997, constantly flooding my kitchen table and overflowing my mailbox. This is before the Internet had made the inroads it did, I must remind you. The flood of mail probably would have weighed a good twenty pounds if I had kept it around in its entirety.

Overall, we remained more akin to a Pagan and activist outlook that was characteristic of the Pagan Movement—if Reformed Druidism can be truly considered part of the Pagan Movement^v—that started out in St. Paul, MN. Due to our history having the fuzzy Archdruidic Succession and because of some of the 'organizational problems' in our early years, it has even been surmised that the original Archdruid who gave the first 'mission' to us was not RDNA, but part of the Divine Circle of the Sacred Grove (DcotSG), although the MOCC tends to put more stock in the idea that we were simply continuing on in the spirit of the RDNA as best as we could.

Groups of the MOCC and MOCC-influenced groups have shown up through the mailing campaign and through the Internet in such places as Kingman, AZ, Argyle, NY, Kentucky, Iowa Park, TX, Claremore, OK, Daytona Beach, FL, the Dallas-Ft. Worth area, and in Seattle. Wherever our members moved after being a part of our Branch of Druidism (and Tradition of Wicca, some would argue), they planted groups rising out of the Tradition, even if they were officially not ‘groves’. There were also MOCC solitaries in places as diverse as Puerto Rico, Chicago, Saint Louis and Utah. Except for the little bit of information we had sent these groups—which was honestly all the information we had at the time—all of these groups was home-grown just like the original group. At least that part of it stayed as a staunch part of the Tradition.

After some years of growth, the MOCC has also gone through some years of decline and has returned to its core membership, although a good number of people still consider their time in the MOCC as formative. To be honest, it also continued to be formative for us as well. In 1997, it was determined that we needed to simplify things and went through a period we called the Heresy of the Simple. We took about three handwritten pages out of the Rule and scrapped a huge section of initiations from our roster of written materials, never to be seen again. Instead, we drew closer to what Druidism entailed with the three fields of service of Bard, Ovate, and Druid as the only ‘clergy’ we would be authorizing.^{vi} As it stands today, the only groves that we are aware of formally existing in the MOCC are within the states of Oklahoma. and Texas.

While the MOCC is definitely Druid, and Reformed Druid in particular, we also have drawn from a series of wells of inspiration over the years. These sources of inspiration include Reconstructionist Druidism, Freudian Zen Druidism and the Order of the Burning Bush, Judeo-Paganism, Wicca^{vii}, the Sharayean Tradition, Mormonism^{viii}, mainline Christianity^{ix}, and from Native American spirituality—specifically Cherokee Traditionalist Religion.

Finally, in Tulsa, we syncretized officially with the Sharayean Tradition from 2002 to 2007 before going our separate ways. Then in 2008, we elected our first transgendered Archdruid, Violet Marie D., and were asked by the Oklahoma Pagan/Heathen Alliance to create the Community Altar for Tulsa’s Pagan Pride Day. Of course, in interest of space, I’ve left a lot of it out, but that’s a bit of our history. And a history of Druids alone tells a person very little about what they actually DO, so I shall return again to introduce you to yet more of the grandchild of Reformed Druidism, the Missionary Order of the Celtic Cross.

- i. Myrddin a Maeglin, The Coming of the Circle, 1986
- ii. The first name of the MOCC was rather generic. We simply called it ‘The Circle’. Later it would be called the ‘Circle of Josue’ (Joshua) and the ‘Celtic College of Reformed Druidic Wicca’ before we finally settled on the current name in 1996.
- iii. “Do you remember I told you about the crush that the Black Wizard had on D.S.? During the time the Black Wizard was helping D.S.[...]it probably hurt D.S. in some way and he talked to S.W. about it. And it [upset her] so much that she wanted revenge for what happened to D.S. so she lied to the Black Wizard and promoted the forming of The Circle. She could not form the Circle herself, so she used the Black Wizard to form it. At this time I brought Mayland into The Circle not knowing what was really going on...And ultimately that [incarnation of The] Circle ultimately destroyed itself because of the Black Wizard and S.W.’s own greed.” The Prophetess, “Letters of the Prophetess, compiled by Myrddin a Maeglin, 1985.
- iv. Again, from The Coming of the Circle, 1986.

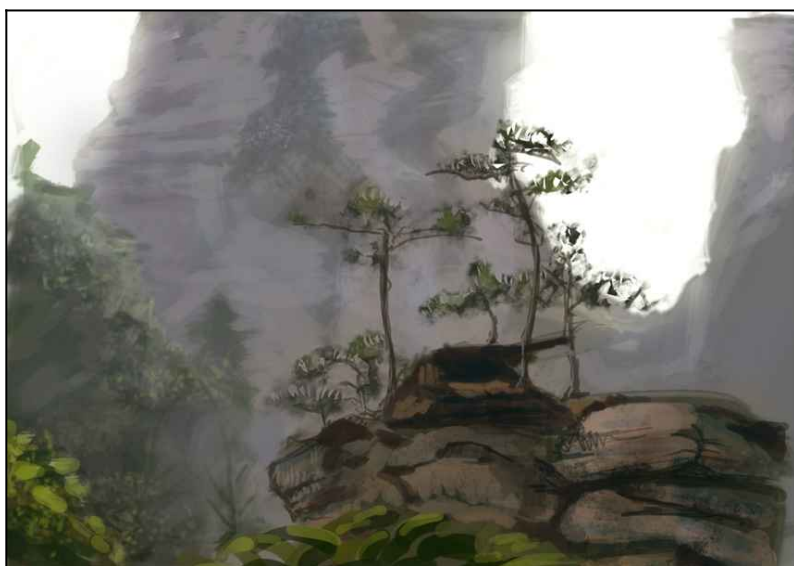
^{vi} This is in contrast to the degrees/levels of Associate, Novice, Priest/ess, High Priest/ess and THEN Ovate, Bard and Druid we had recognized from 1987 until 1997.

^{vii} People who know me say that at times I sound eerily like the writings of Scott Cunningham. It is in our observance of our Druid background that we observe a ‘sacrifice’, and in our observance of our Wiccan heritage that we observe Cakes and Ale. The result is a canon in our ritual that looks very much like the Catholic ‘Liturgy of the Table’ during their Eucharist, although the similarity was not done intentionally. It’s just the way that the ‘flow’ seemed to take it.

^{viii} Several of our members and Outer Court have come from the LDS Faith. They tend to appreciate our emphasis on community, family connectedness, sustainability, open-mindedness and our organizational tendency toward having three persons in our Archdruidic Office. These three persons are an Archdruid, a Reeve, and an Archivist. The LDS members in our group tend to look at this as parallel to the Mormon practice of having a Presidency consisting of three persons.

^{ix} One of our past Muskogee Archdruids referred to himself, at the time, as a Bapto-Christo-Pagan.

- v. For those of you who haven't slogged your way through ARDA 2, there is a section called *Words of Green* that look at the Pagan leanings of Bonewitz as being somewhat aberrant to what had been going on at Carleton College in the early years of the RDNA.
- vi. This is in contrast to the degrees/levels of Associate, Novice, Priest/ess, High Priest/ess and THEN Ovate, Bard and Druid we had recognized from 1987 until 1997.
- vii. People who know me say that at times I sound eerily like the writings of Scott Cunningham. It is in our observance of our Druid background that we observe a 'sacrifice', and in our observance of our Wiccan heritage that we observe Cakes and Ale. The result is a canon in our ritual that looks very much like the Catholic 'Liturgy of the Table' during their Eucharist, although the similarity was not done intentionally. It's just the way that the 'flow' seemed to take it.
- viii. Several of our members and Outer Court have come from the LDS Faith. They tend to appreciate our emphasis on community, family connectedness, sustainability, open-mindedness and our organizational tendency toward having three persons in our Archdruidic Office. These three persons are an Archdruid, a Reeve, and an Archivist. The LDS members in our group tend to look at this as parallel to the Mormon practice of having a Presidency consisting of three persons.
- ix. One of our past Muskogee Archdruids referred to himself, at the time, as a Bapto-Christo-Pagan.



Green Book Gems: Quotes on Tact & Silence

From the various five Green Books of the RDNA available at www.rdna.info/arda.html

Collected by Mike the Fool

Green Book 1 (Gutei's Finger)

Gutei raised his finger whenever he was asked a question about Zen. A boy attendant began to imitate him in this way. When anyone asked the boy what his master had preached about, the boy would raise his finger.

Gutei heard about the boy's mischief. He seized him and cut off his finger. The boy cried and ran away. Gutei called and stopped him. When the boy turned his head to Gutei, Gutei raised up his own finger. In that instant the boy was enlightened.

When Gutei was about to pass from this world he gathered his monks around him. "I attained my finger Zen" he said, "from my teacher Tenryu, and in my whole life I could not exhaust it." Then he passed away.

Mummon's commentary: Enlightenment, which Gutei and the boy attained, has nothing to do with a finger. If anyone clings to a finger, Tenryu will be so disappointed that he will annihilate Gutei, the boy, and the clinger all together.

Gutei cheapens the teaching of Tenryu,
Emancipating the boy with a knife.

Compared to the Chinese god who pushed aside a mountain with one hand

Old Gutei is a poor imitator.

Selections from:

Zen Buddhism. Mount Vernon, The Peter Pauper Press, 1959. pp.61, 55.

Sayings of the Zen Masters (Trading Dialogue for Lodging)

Providing he make and wins an argument about Buddhism with those who live there, any wandering monk can remain in a Zen temple. If he is defeated, he has to move on.

In a temple in the northern part of Japan two brother monks were dwelling together. The elder one was learned, but the younger one was stupid and had but one eye.

A wandering monk came and asked for lodging, properly challenging them to a debate about the sublime teaching. The elder brother, tired that day from much studying, told the younger one to take his place. "Go and request the dialogue in silence," he cautioned.

So the young monk and the stranger went to the shrine and sat down.

Shortly afterwards the traveler rose and went in to the elder brother and said: "Your young brother is a wonderful fellow. He defeated me."

"Relate the dialogue to me," said the elder one.

"Well," explained the traveler, "first I held up one finger, representing Buddha, the enlightened one. So he held up two fingers, signifying Buddha and his teaching. I held up three fingers, representing Buddha, his teaching, and his followers, living the harmonious life. Then he shook his clenched fist in my face, indicating that all three come from one realization. Thus he won and so I have no right to remain here." With this, the traveler left.

"Where is that fellow?" asked the younger one, running in to his elder brother.

"I understand you won the debate."

"Won nothing. I'm going to beat him up."

"Tell me the subject of the debate," asked the elder one.

"Why, the minute he saw me he held up one finger, insulting me by insinuating that I have only one eye. Since he was a stranger I thought I would be polite to him, so I held up two fingers, congratulating him that he has two eyes. Then the impolite wretch held up three fingers, suggesting that between us we have only three eyes. So I got mad and started to punch him, but he ran out and that ended it!"

Selections from:

Paul Reps, ed. *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*. Garden City, Doubleday Anchor (A233), 1961. pp. 92, 28.

Green Book 2: Wisdom of the Gaels

Tact and Talk

A diplomat must always think twice before he says nothing.

Never talk about a rope in the house of a hanged man.

A tactful word is better than a pound in the hand.

Never talk about the blow that's not yet struck.

Tact is clever humility.

If you say everything you want to say, you'll hear something you don't want to hear.

A kind word never got a man in trouble.

Whisper into your cup when ill is spoken.

You can easily win an argument if you start off by being right.

Leave the bad news where you found it.

Every man is wise till he speaks.

You need not praise the Irish language simply speak it. -Pearse

There are two types of theater critic. One thinks he's God Almighty, the other is sure of it.

A gossip speaks ill o' a', and a' o' her.

Green Book 2: Wisdom of the Native Americans

Silent Vigils

In my opinion, it was chiefly owing to their deep contemplation in their silent retreats in the days of youth that the old Indian orators acquired the habit of carefully arranging their thoughts.

They listened to the warbling of birds and noted the grandeur and the beauties of the forest. The majestic clouds, which appear like mountains of granite floating in the air, the golden tints of a summer evening sky, and all the changes of nature, possessed a mysterious significance.

All this combined to furnish ample matter for reflection to the contemplating youth.

-Francis Assikinack (Blackbird) Ottawa

Green Book 2: More Wisdom of the African World

God made the sea, we make the ship; He made the wind, we make the sail; He made the calm, we make oars. -Swahili

Every society is really governed by hidden laws, by unspoken but profound assumptions on the part of the people, and ours is no exception. It is up to the American writer to find out what these laws and assumptions are. -James Baldwin

As a leader... I have always endeavored to listen to what each and every person in a discussion had to say before venturing my own opinion. Oftentimes, my own opinion will simply represent a consensus of what I heard in the discussion. I always remember the axiom: a leader is like a shepherd. He stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realizing that all along they are being directed from behind. -Nelson Mandela

Green Book 3: Wit and Wisdom of the Islamic World

The Wisdom of Silence

Some hunters were in the woods looking for game. They discovered a group of three orangutans and managed to catch one of them. The other two orangutans escaped and hid behind some nearby bushes and trees.

As the hunters were dressing the corpse of the first orangutan, a stream of blood issued forth. "How red the blood is!" cried a hunter.

The second orangutan called out, "It's red from eating so many raspberries."

Hearing the second orangutan, the hunters discovered its hiding place and began to beat it with sticks. As they were killing it, the second orangutan mourned out loud, "Now I know the wisdom of silence. If I had held my tongue, I wouldn't have gotten killed."

Hearing his companion's dying words, the third orangutan said, "Thank God I was wise enough to keep silent."

He was killed.

Green Book 3: Other Various Quotes

Silence

The silent man is often worth listening to. -Japanese

A listener needs more intelligence than a speaker. -Turkish

Give every man your ear but give few your voice. -William Shakespeare

Silence is the best answer to the stupid. -Arabic

Silence is not only golden, it's seldom misquoted. -American

Example is a mute admonition. -German

Those who know don't talk. Those who talk don't know. -Lao Tzu

Tact is the art of making a point without making an enemy. -Wilson Mizner

Zen is not letting yourself be horsewhipped into words about it, so as you read these words just unfocus your eyes and stare at the blurry page. -Jack Kerouac

Never answer a critic, unless he's right. -Bernard Baruch

You have not converted a man because you have silenced him. -John, Viscount Morley

As I grow older, I pay less attention to what men say. I just watch what they do. -Andrew Carnegie

He who silently reforms himself has done more towards reforming the public than a crowd of noisy, impotent patriots. -J. Lavater

My father gave me these hints on speech-making: "Be sincere, be brief, and be seated." -James Roosevelt

The quieter you become the more you can hear. -Baba Ram Dass

When Abbot Pambo was asked to say a few words to the very important Bishop of Alexandria, who was visiting some of the Desert Fathers, the elder Abbot replied: "If he is not edified by my silence, then there is no hope that he will be edified by my words." -Thomas Merton.

Green Book 4: Native American Quotes

Silence

When a favor is shown to a white man, he feels it in his head and the tongue speaks out; when a kindness is shown to an Indian, he feels it in his heart and the heart has no tongue. -Shoshone

When an elder speaks, be silent and listen.

Even your silence holds a sort of prayer. -Apache

When there is true hospitality, not many words are needed. -Arapaho

The more you ask how far you have to go, the longer your journey seems. -Seneca

Beware of the man who does not talk and the dog that does not bark. -Cheyenne

No answer is also an answer. -Hopi

Every bird loves to hear himself sing. -Arapaho

The man who freely gives his opinion should be ready to fight fiercely. -Iowa

Eating little and speaking little can hurt no man. -Hopi

When the wisdom keepers speak, all should listen. -Seneca

The moon is not shamed by the barking of dogs. -Southwest.

Green Book 4: African Stories

The Skull

A Tale from West Africa

A hunter came upon a huge tree with a whitened skull at its base. The skull spoke and said, "Beyond a certain hill is a field of calabashes. Take them to your hungry village, but do not tell anyone how you obtained them."

"How did you come to be here?" asked the hunter.

"My mouth killed me," said the skull.

The hunter returned to the village with the calabashes and immediately told everyone, "A talking skull showed me a field of food!" The Chief called him a liar.

"Then come with me! I'll prove what I say is true. When they arrived at the tree, the hunter spoke to the skull but it remained silent. The hunter was put to death on the spot for lying.

In time, two whitened skulls sat beneath the tree. The first turned to the second and said, "See, in death we meet again, my kin. It's true a mouth can do you in

Green Book 4: Aphoristic Advice

Real books should be offspring not of daylight and casual talk but of darkness and silence. -Marcel Proust

What do I believe? I am accused of not making it explicit. How to be explicit about a grandeur too overwhelming to express, a daily wrestling match with an opponent whose limbs never become material, a struggle from which the sweat and blood are scattered on the pages of anything the serious writer writes? A belief

contained less in what is said than in the silences. IN patterns on water. A gust of wind. A flower opening. -Patrick White

Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt. -Abraham Lincoln

There are things which it is not only impossible to discuss intelligently, but which it is not even intelligent to discuss. - Feodor Dostoevsky

A diplomat is a man who always remembers a woman's birthday but never remembers her age. -Robert Frost

There is a point when patience ceases to be a virtue. -Thomas Morton

A gossip is one who talks to you about others: a bore is one who talks to you about himself: a brilliant conversationalist is one who talks to you about yourself. -Lisa Kirk

Lord, grant me patience, and I want it right now. -Anon

Quiet minds cannot be perplexed or frightened but go on in fortune or misfortune at their own private pace like a clock in a thunderstorm. -Robert Louis Stevenson

"Speech is silvery, Silence is golden"; or as I might rather express it, speech is of time, silence is of eternity. -Thomas Carlyle

Man cannot long survive without air, water, and sleep. Next in importance comes food. And close on its heels, solitude. - Thomas Szasz

Solitude: a good place to visit, but a poor place to stay. -Josh Billings

Solitude: a luxury of the rich. -Albert Camus

Green Book 4: The Way of the Sufis

When to Teach?

Beshr possessed seven book cases of volumes on Traditions. He buried them all in the ground, and did not transmit them.

"The reason I do not transmit Traditions," he explained, "is that I perceive in myself a lust to do so. If I perceive in my heart a lust to keep silence, then I will transmit." -Beshr Ibn Al-Hareth

Green Book 4: Japanese Proverbs

It is better to be ignorant than to be mistaken.

Silence is part of consent.

Speech is silver, silence is gold.

The flower does not talk.

Green Book 5: Monk-y Business

Two Words

There once was a monastery that was very strict. Following a vow of silence, no one was allowed to speak at all. But there was one exception to this rule. Every ten years, the monks were permitted to speak just two words. After spending his first ten years at the monastery, one monk went to the head monk. "It has been ten years," said the head monk. "What are the two words you would like to speak?"

"Bed... hard..." said the monk.

"I see," replied the head monk.

Ten years later, the monk returned to the head monk's office. "It has been ten more years," said the head monk. "What are the two words you would like to speak?"

"Food... stinks..." said the monk.

"I see," replied the head monk.

Yet another ten years passed and the monk once again met with the head monk who asked, "What are your two words now, after these ten years?"

"I... quit!" said the monk.

"Well, I can see why," replied the head monk. "All you ever do is complain."

Transmission of the Book

In modern times a great deal of nonsense is talked about masters and disciples, and about the inheritance of a master's teaching by favorite pupils, entitling them to pass the truth on to their adherents. Of course Zen should be imparted in this way, from heart to heart, and in the past it was really accomplished. Silence and humility reigned rather than profession and assertion. The one who received such a teaching kept the matter hidden even after twenty years. Not until another discovered through his own need, that a real master was at hand was it learned that the teaching had been imparted, and even then the occasion arose quite naturally and the teaching made its way in its own right. Under no circumstance did the teacher even claim, "I am the successor of So-and-so." Such a claim would prove quite the contrary.

The Zen master Mu-nan had only one successor. His name was Shoju. After Shoju had completed his study of Zen, Mu-nan called him into his room. "I am getting old," he said, "and as far as I know, Shoju, you are the only one who will carry on this teaching. Here is a book. It has been passed down from master to master for seven generations. I have also added many points according to my understanding. The book is very valuable, and I am giving it to you to represent your successorship."

"If the book is such an important thing, you had better keep it," Shoju replied. "I received your Zen without writing and am satisfied with it as it is."

"I know that," said Mu-nan. "Even so, this work has been carried from master to master for seven generations, so you may keep it as a symbol of having received the teaching. Here."

They happened to be talking before a brazier. The instant Shoju felt the book in his hands he thrust it into the flaming coals. He had no lust for possessions.

Mu-nan, who never had been angry before, yelled: "What are you doing!"

Shoju shouted back: "What are you saying!"

Most Valuable Thing

A student asked Sozan, a Chinese Zen master, "What is the most valuable thing in the world?"

The master replied: "The head of a dead cat."

"Why is the head of a dead cat the most valuable thing in the world?" inquired the student.

Sozan replied: "Because no one can name its price."

Green Book 5; Wisdom of the Internet

The Desiderata

Go placidly amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story. Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexatious to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery.

A Big Quiet House

A Yiddish Folktale from Eastern Europe

There was once a man who wished his small, noisy house was larger and quieter. He went to the wise old woman of the town and explained his need. She said, "I can solve your problem. Just do as I say." The man agreed.

"If you have a chicken, some sheep, a horse, and a cow," she said, "bring them into the house with you."

"That's a silly thing to do," thought the old man. But he did it anyway. Now his house was already small, and with all those animals in it, there was no room at all. He returned to the old woman and cried, "I need more room! The animals are so noisy I can't think!"

"Take all those animals out of your dwelling," she replied.

When he had put all the animals comfortably back in the barn, the man went into his house. To his amazement, it suddenly looked remarkably bigger! Without the animals inside, his house was now quiet too!

Green Book 6: Book of Bards

Silence

By Fer Horn on 10-22-91 Tuesday Silverton, New South Wales

I never realize how unusual
Silence is until I hear it.
Everywhere you go now,
There are birds, or planes
Or the hum of a distant highway
Or the murmur of the people you are with.
Today, for just a moment, I heard the silence of the Outback,

Where, as hard as you listen,
The only thing to hear
Is the wind flowing through the bush.
And I felt like I was standing
On the edge of eternity.
Looking out over the plain
Imagining what it looked like
To the first person to stand here.
Probably very much the same.
And it will probably be the same
For a long time to come.
This is a place that is hard to live in.
What truly belongs is not much;
Just the wind and the bush
And the eternal silence.
May there always be places like this.

Sounds of Silence

Hello darkness my old friend
I've come to talk to you again
Because a vision softly creeping
Left its seeds while I was sleeping
And the vision that was planted in my brain
Still remains- within the sounds of silence
(Am-), G---/Am---/FC--/ /F----C-/Am-C G --Am---

In restless dreams I walk alone
Narrow streets of cobblestone
'Neath the halo of a street lamp
I turned my collar to the cold & damp
When my eyes were stabbed by the flash of a neon light
That split the night - & touched the sound of silence

And in the naked light I saw
10,000 people maybe more
People talking without speaking
People hearing without listening
People writing songs that voices never shared
No one dared disturb the sound of silence

"Fools" said I "You do not know
Silence like a cancer grows
Hear my words that I might teach you
Take my arms that I might reach you."
But my words like silent raindrops fell
And echoed in the well of silence

And the people bowed & prayed
To the neon god they'd made
And the sign flashed out its warning
In the words that it was forming
And the sign said "The words of the prophets are written on
subway walls
And tenement halls - & whisper in the sounds of silence.

Bardic History and Lore (Pt 2 of 3): Breton Bards

By Daniel Hansen



. BARDS OF BRETON

Though the Breton tongue is closely related to Welsh, the history of Breton is far more meager than that of Wales. The reason for this is that in Brittany the ruling classes and those sections of the community that had literary interests turned, even in the Middle Ages, to the French tongue for the satisfaction of their literary wants. The result was that in the medieval times there appears to have been in Brittany no clearly established literary tradition, carried on by professional or semi-professional bards, as there was in Wales. In later times, there was no popular demand for native poetry except when it was of a purely popular kind such as ballads called Gwerizou and Soniou), or took the form of religious drama. Count Hersart de la Villemarque, in his zeal for his native land, imagined that in medieval Brittany a body of heroic poetry had flourished, but there are, unfortunately, nowhere to be found any traces of such poetry. Nor have we in the case of Brittany, as we have in the case of Wales, marked evidences of the linguistic conservatism, which tends to keep the literary tongue distinct from the spoken language of a people. Breton has far more characteristic of a colloquial language than Welsh, and it approaches nearer in many respects to some of the southern Welsh dialects than to the Welsh literary tongues. One of the great obstacles to the view that Chretien de Troyes derived his Arthurian materials and nomenclature from Brittany is that, apart from popular folklore, there is no evidence of any Arthurian literary cycles in medieval Brittany at all; and the other British heroes, who are associated with Arthur, do not appear even to have been known in Brittany, while in Wales, on the other hand, they were leading heroes both of prose and verse narrative. In Wales the centers of the Bardic system were the courts of princes, but in Brittany there is no evidence whatsoever of any systematic princely patronage given to Breton poetry. There seems to have been no continuous Breton text of any kind before the end of the 15th century. The language certainly was written before then, since we have Breton glosses and Breton proper names in writing, so that it is all the more strange, if Brittany had a flourishing literature in Breton, that there should be in existence no single fragment of it. In his "Chrestomathie bretonne" M. Loth says: "After having invaded all the coasts of the Armorican peninsulas from the Couesnon to the Loire, after having had the upper hand in the old dioceses of Dol, Saint Malo, Saint-Brieuc, Treguier, Leon, Cornouailles, and Vannes on the Nantes coast, and in the interior having commenced to cross, from the 8th to 9th centuries, even the Vilaine to the neighborhood of Redon, Breton is found, after the 11-12th centuries, suddenly thrust back toward the west, and from this period it occupies

almost the same area as it does today. The alliance of Breton chiefs with French families, whether French Brittany or of France itself, or of the Anglo-Norman zones, were not slow to make French the language of the aristocracy and the instrument of intellectual culture, even in the Breton-speaking zone. The most ancient texts in medieval Breton bare witness to this: they are almost all translations of limitations from the French, they are entirely penetrated with French words."

It has been shown how Breton was, even in medieval times, relegated to a lower plane. Yet, it is also pointed out, we should not be justified in thinking that there had never been in Brittany such a thing as Breton culture or Breton language. One can argue quite justly that the very existence up to the 16th century of the complicated Breton system of versification implies a literary period during which that system was evolved; such a system, which, he says, has features in common with the versification of Wales and Cornwall, implies the existence at one point in time of a school of Bards or wandering Breton poets (*trouveres bretons*). It is significant, however, that the Breton meters bear far fewer traces of professional elaboration than do those of Wales. In this case we can be inclined to explain the complete disappearance of the older body of poetry by the very limited circle to which it appealed or the oral character of its transmission. The significant fact for all students of Celtic influences on French medieval literature is that not a line of Breton medieval literature exists before the 15th century. How meager the remnants of Breton poetry are, as compared with those of Wales, will be seen from the following list of the fragments and portions of Middle Breton poetry from the 15th and subsequent centuries that have come down to us:

- 1) A 'Breton fragment in the farce of M. Pathelin.
- 2) A score of quite mutilated verses, probably in the Vannes dialect from the end of the 15th century.
- 3) A metrical life of St. Nonn, the mother of St. David, in the form of a Mystery play (published in 1837 by the Abbe Sionnet, with a translation by the Breton grammarian and lexicoroqrapher, Le Gonidec, and by M. Ernault).



The only source of this mystery is a manuscript in the Bibliotheque Nationale of the 15th century. The story is that of the Latin "Life of St. David" dramatized. The scene is made to 'Localize some features of the story in Brittany, such as the burial of St. Nonn at Dirinon.

From the 16th century onwards the chief compositions written in Breton have been Mystery plays, which show unmistakably the influence of French models. In 1530 there was published "Le Grand Mystere de

Jesus" of which a copy exists in the Bibliotheque Nationale. From the evidence of language, it is believed that this mystery was written about the date of its publication. Georges Allienne published a second edition at Morlaix in 1622. When pointed out that the edition follows the Breton translator is that of Arnoul Gresban, or rather that of Jean Michel, played at Angers in 1486 and soon afterwards printed by Verdard. The same book also contains a Breton version of the "Transitus Beatae Mariae" (Tremenvan an ytron querches Maria), "The 15 Joys of Mary" (Penzec leuenez Maria), and the "Life of Man" (Buhez Mabden). For the two latter there are no known French originals. Another Breton Mystery, which was published in the 16th century and afterwards in the 17th century, was "Le 'Mystere de Sainte Barbe." The first edition was published in 1557, and the second in 1647. The former was printed at Paris for Bernard de Leau, printer of Morlaix. This mystery has been reprinted after the 1557 edition, with the variant readings of the 1647 edition, by a distinguished Breton scholar M.E. Ernault, professor at the Faculty of Letters of Poitiers. This drama is substantially the same as the French drama of the same name, but it shows that there are differences between the two plays sufficiently marked to justify the supposition that the Breton drama is an adaptation of the French version. Another Breton Mystery is "The Mirror of Death," composed in 1571 and printed in 1575, at the Convent of St. Fransis of Cuburien. The Mystery is in private hands and a copy of a portion was obtainable through the good offices of the Abbe Corre of Lesneven, who translated it.

In the 17th century we find also some Breton hymns published by Tanguy Gueguen in 1650, but there has been no development of hymnology in Breton comparable for a moment with that of Wales. In the 18th century the work of adapting and copying Mystery plays was carried on vigorously, and we have the following among other compositions of this type:

1) "Robert le Diable, a mystery in six acts and two days." This bears the date 30th November 1741. This shows it to be of French origin but, it is different from the play of Robert le Diable in the "Miracles of de Notre-Dame," and also from, the "Mystere du xive siecle," published at Rouen in 1836.

2) "The creation of the World." The oldest known manuscript of this play was written in 1760, and is, like the Cornish "Gwreans an bys" (The Creation of the World"), an imitation of the French.

3) "The Tragedy of St. Alexis." This was represented in 1799, and is a translation into Breton from the French, though its precise French source is not known. It is pointed out that it's very different from the miracle play of St. Aexis in the "Miracles de Notre-Dame."

The leading Breton poet of the 19th century is Luzel (Francois-Marie), who was born on 6th June 1821 at Plouaret, Cotes-du-Nord, on the boundary of Lannion and Guinqamp. Breton literature and the revival of Breton life in the 19th century probably owe more to the work of Luzel than to that of any other man. The Vicomte Hersart de la Villemarque (first half of the 19th century) undoubtedly did much to call attention to the history and literature of Brittany, but this uncritical attitude towards popular Breton poetry, which he imagined to be of remote antiquity and his readiness even to alter, in accordance with his preconceived ideas, the text of the popular poems which he

published led to a reaction. Luzel, on the other hand, possessed the true scientific as well as the poetic spirit of his age, and was alive to the importance of basing theory on ascertained concrete facts. It is to his zeal that we owe the collection of numerous copies of Mystery plays that were scattered over Brittany. Nor did he confine his researches to plays; he also gathered together a considerable body of popular Breton ballad poetry, the "Gwerziou Breiz-Izel" and the "Soniou Breiz-Izel." It is in these simple popular poems that we see the true reflection of the poetic spirit of Brittany. Wales has, indeed, in her "Penillion telyn" a certain body of popular poetry, but it consists, for the most part, of isolated verse, and by the side of earlier and later traditions of that poetry which is the fruit of conscious personal skill, the popular poetry of Wales has perhaps not been adequately prized. In Wales, too, there is a considerable ballad literature, which has characteristics that are very similar to those of the popular poems of Brittany.

Breton popular poetry has a simple and artless character, but its very simplicity gives it a charm of its own. It is fond of those narrative and dramatic incidents, which often occur even in the graver and sadder strain of a life of toil predominates. This poetry is especially interesting as the expression of a radical psychology, that has been in close touch with Nature through hard toil on land and sea, and which has had, moreover, a life far away from that of the great centers of the wider world. In spite of the close kinship of the Welsh and Breton tongues, the Welsh and Breton types of mind are at the present day in many respects very different. The Breton mind is conservative; the Welsh mind is progressive. Brittany is a great Roman Catholic stronghold of France. Wales is a great Nonconformist stronghold of southern Britain. The individualistic as well as the collective movements of the 19th century have met with a hearty response in Wales and the industrial problems of the age are nowhere more keenly felt than in some of the populous centers of Wales. The spirit of competition has pervaded even her literary sphere. Yet it is pleasing to see the growth at the present day of a certain rapprochement between Wales and Brittany, which literature and to Breton institution rapprochement has been the exchange of National Eisteddfod of Wales and the Celtic delegates from the two countries. In these visits the Marquis de l'Estourbeillon and the ablest living poets of Brittany have taken an active part. Poets of Brittany gratitude for the active part, which have led to the publishing of Breton ballads, and the stimulus that further compositions of those simple poems mind delights.



While it is true that the Celtic Bards disappeared in Gaul, a form of bards emerged in the Middle Ages. The best known of the poet-composers was the *troubadours* of southern France. They flourished in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and helped popularize composing in the vernacular rather than in Latin.

The troubadours' counterparts in northern France were known as *trouveres*, in Germany they were known as minnesingers. Today the terms troubadours and minstrel are often used interchangeably, but there were differences. In general, troubadours composed music and wrote poems, but did not usually perform; minstrels were professional performers who may or may not have written their own material. (Minstrels who traveled from town to town were known as jongleurs.) Most troubadours composed for the upper classes; many, in fact, were themselves of noble lineage.

Most troubadour poems were short, with several eight-line rhyming stanzas and one or two shorter stanzas. Rarely was a troubadour poem more than 60 lines long (although many troubadours did compose longer poetic works as well). The subjects of troubadour works were secular rather than religious, a point made perhaps strongly by the fact that they were written in vernacular French. By far the most popular theme was courtly love – the poet would celebrate the beauty and virtue of the woman he loved, and tell of his success (or lack thereof) in winning her heart. Courtly love was a highly idealized form of romance, which the lover would offer his complete devotion and loyalty to the object of his affection. Often, poets would compare this devotion and loyalty to a vassal's loyalty to his lord. In addition to describing the poet's love for his lady, the composition would also describe the lady's control over the poet's life and happiness.

Romance was not the only subject covered by troubadours. Many of their songs dealt with political and moral themes. Furthermore, not all performances consisted of song; dance was common as well.

Troubadours received the patronage of nobles, not only in France, but Italy and Spain. Not surprisingly, many troubadours wrote songs of praise to these nobles.

The trouveres of northern France covered many of the same topics as the troubadours in their poetry. They wrote in the northern French dialect, or *langue d'oïl*, while the troubadours wrote in the southern French dialect, or *langue d'oc*. Both spread their themes across the rest of Europe.



"The graphics are lovely. Barrow Hill has a wonderful creepy feel to it. The plants and trees are perfect. Moss and lichen grow on weather stained brick walls. The sound effects are spot-on from the chirping of an authentic cricket to the rustling in the bushes.
Review - justadventure.com

"A fascinating interactive screenplay, which poses thematic questions of what and where, while allowing the gamer to formulate their theories as to why. Game play that is eighty percent nonlinear. Puzzles and conundrums, which are organic and integrated within the plot."
Review - gameboomers.com

"An atmospheric Cornish tale of supernatural intrigue. Excellent sound and music. A spooky ambience fills Barrow Hill. Meticulously designed, Barrow Hill delivers a Cornish sojourn definitely worth taking.
Review - quandaryland.com

"The game loads easily and plays flawlessly, contains gorgeous graphics, and a pleasantly unpleasant musical score. A chilly, eerie sense of foreboding that develops and builds exactly as a quality plot should."
Review - mrbillsadventureland.com



ARCHAEOLOGY MEETS ADVENTURE

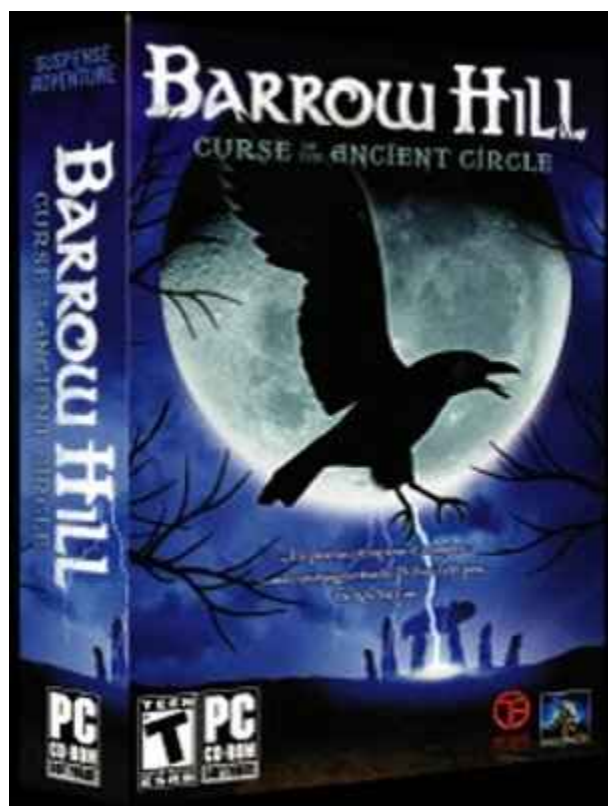
BARROW HILL

EXPLORE THE ANCIENT WORLD OF CORNWALL IN THIS NEW INTERACTIVE THRILLER FOR THE HOME COMPUTER OR PC. SOLVE A LEGENDARY MYSTERY SET AROUND THE STONE CIRCLE KNOWN AS BARROW HILL.

(Based on areas around the Looe Valley and beyond).

www.barrow-hill.co.uk

GAME REVIEW



MIKE THE FOOL'S NOTE:

I simply loved this game, so I'm giving it a big splashy 5 page spread with a full page ad, a review and an exclusive interview that I made with the designer. Simply put, a Druid will find this game quite congenial and intriguing. More fun and less controversial than "Curse of the Druids". Perhaps 20 hours of fun, a few chills and good-natured thinking, fun lore, lovely landscapes, and that haunting feeling that encourages one to perhaps make a trip to Cornwall to see for oneself, the truth. **Five acorns out of five!** -Mike the Fool

REVIEW: Barrow Hill

Written by [Tom King](#) — May 22, 2006

Don't let the word "independent" concern you; this game is an excellent adventure that everyone should give a chance, especially those who like their horror mixed seamlessly with science and history.

The Autumn Equinox, archeology, technology, ancient standing stones, and the Cornish countryside... add these together, throw in a well-paced story and let sit until tension is built, and you have the successful recipe for *Barrow Hill*.

In the best vein of "what if", Matt Clark and his small team at Shadow Tor manage to get under the often blasé skin of geographical historicity and turn it into a fear-inducing, riveting experience. How did they accomplish this? Let's take a closer look at this independent production, and see exactly what it serves up.

The game begins with you driving your car through the Cornish countryside, the radio your only companion — more specifically, Emma Harry, Barrow Hill's lone radio diva, who bids you to stay with her until the witching hour. It is the evening of the Autumn Equinox, and suddenly your car stalls, leaving you stranded by the side of the road. Don't bother turning around and trying to go back for help, as some strange warp barrier prevents you. You are here to stay, and you're on your own. Though you'll soon find out that you are not quite alone, as someone or something is watching... waiting.

Following in the footsteps of the well-known archaeologist, Conrad Morse, who is suddenly missing (along with his team), you are tasked to discover the mystery behind the ancient Barrow Hill standing stones, the abandoned burial ground dig site, and the rooms of a motel littered with personal effects as though the occupants left in a hurry, or didn't know they would never return.

Along the way, you will make use of a GPS device, a metal detector, a cell phone, and a PDA (Personal Digital Assistant), each of which becomes part of your inventory once discovered, and a few other technological items that are permanent fixtures of the environment. This lends what I call techno-credulity to the game, offering a layer of realism, and some nifty modern amenities that are more than just nice props; they are *necessary*.

Shadow Tor has certainly served up some impressive production values in this game. They are right up there with the big studios, with few exceptions. My first impression upon loading the DVD and seeing the foreboding fade-in of the start menu, with the wick of a candle burning, the options script, the filtered ambience of a heartbeat followed by low bell tones and subtle soundtrack, created just the right anticipation. And that is the best portent of the kind of journey you're about to embark on when selecting "New Game" in *Barrow Hill*.

I didn't really care for the black and white FMV introducing the game, however. It uses a dropped frame-rate (film stutter) for effect, but it ends up being annoying, and too close to the boundaries of poor quality than the body of the game deserved. Yet the intro is fairly short and sweet, and the actual content of the video is well edited and appropriately ominous.

Barrow Hill is played in a first-person perspective, similar to another recent indie horror, *Scratches*. The cursor is a simple directional one, that transports you by nodes in the direction you indicate, slide-show style. There is no 360-degree panning, and movement is only marked by the varied sound of the footfalls of your character. I prefer this, as you can cover ground much more quickly, and there is no waiting for a video sequence to end or your arrow to change direction as is sometimes the case in games with rotational movement.



Graphically, *BH* offers an attractive game environment, where palm fronds look real, and textures are rich and varied, from the rocky yet lush, green Cornish landscape to the incongruity of a gas station/motel plopped in the middle of this tract of mysterious, hallowed ground. You traverse paths and roads where a narrow beam of light illumines a phone booth, where the moon floats atop lapping water in a swamp, filters through cracks in the boards of a shed, and alights upon the tents of the archeological dig site, to name a few. The gas station/motel (which also functions as a small diner) is the main attraction, and you will spend some time moving about and returning there.

Barrow Hill is nothing if not atmospheric. Each scene is structured and supported by the next in varied ways, so that you're constantly on edge as you move around, whether from the subtle music that seems

to swell from a mist or the lonely sound of the crickets as you move further away from your single point of civilization. Or from the car with the engine still running and the doors ajar, sitting crooked by the gas pumps, to the small BHR (Barrow Hill Radio) trailer whose lone occupant must surely be afraid...

The soundtrack itself is very organic, and among the most crisp and artifact-free I've ever heard. There are the aforementioned footfalls, which vary according to the terrain you are moving on, there are night sounds, and wind – but most importantly, and this is so key — there is the *absence* of sound where it elicits the most effect. The music itself knows when to fade away and return, and is very well done, lending a film-like aspect to gameplay.

The inventory system is one of the simplest I've seen in a game; that is to say, no frills, no red herrings. You won't hear, "I can't do that here," or "This won't work," or some such comment. There is no trial and error. If something doesn't work, it just doesn't, and your character isn't left pondering the metaphysical meaning behind his inability to fuse mercury to plywood. If you can use an inventory item (and it is usually obvious when/where you can), you are rewarded by some sort of organic action.

Barrow Hill incorporates inventory puzzles whose solutions are right there in your environment, behind a layer or two, and sometimes three, and the end result of finding the right solution is always logical and satisfying, always moves the story ahead, and never feels like a cheap shot to stall the player with a poorly designed conundrum. It is a testament to the game that it allows the story to dictate the puzzles, and not the other way around; the story motivates, the puzzles move. That's just good game synergy. There is reading in *BH*, and quite a bit of it. Yet the way the game incorporates it is very natural and I didn't feel as if I'd just sat down to an assignment.

Along with the pleasing pre-rendered graphics, of which there are plenty, Shadow Tor has incorporated well-crafted bits and pieces of historical fact with legend factoids. They also managed to weave in scientific proofs along the way, so that in the end, it is the story that is the real dark horse of this game. Sure, moving about and seeing what's next is fun and intriguing, but you'll also find your mind mapping the story as well as your current location, and this really heightens the intensity of the gaming experience. There is always that great question mark dangling like a carrot in front of you, promoting continued gameplay to see what can be discovered or unveiled next.

Voice work is limited to Emma Harry as the radio DJ, plus an assortment of amusing radio commercials, and Ben, the attendant of the gas station/motel, who has freaked out over something that's happened there and confines himself to the motel office, yet often gives you clues within his lunatic ranting. A cell phone and radios are also used to apply tension and music to certain scenes, as well as tuning in to Emma, who helps you in her own way. While there is nothing outstanding about the voice work, the direction is noteworthy, as the cadence and evocation of each of the actors fits well within the context of any given scene.

Technically the game performed fine on my PC, but there were two consistent bugs that would crash me to desktop each time. I emailed Matt Clark, who responded immediately, and it was discovered that turning sound acceleration off fixed the issue, and didn't affect the game at all.

The game boasts around 20-22 hours of game play, and since it is so non-linear (there are multiple ways of resolving each conflict — even though the primary puzzles have a single solution), it can even be replayed to see what was missed the first time around.

Barrow Hill is a solid adventure that takes actual fact and blends and warps it to its own blend of reality through a haunting landscape and highly mysterious circumstance. I recommend it to any adventure gamer, and more so to those interested in ancient standing stones and Celtic legend.



Exclusive Interview with Barrow Hill's Designer

Interview - Matt Clark - Shadow Tor Studios

With - Mike - Druid Inquirer magazine -
www.rdna.info/news.html

1. What percentage of the game's story do you contribute to? Did you have a "resident expert on all things" to rely upon?

2.

Barrow Hill features a story influenced from many experiences and tales encountered throughout my life. It's based on several real megalithic sites, here in Cornwall, which has acquired many of its own myths, legends and interpretations. I was lucky enough to spend most of my childhood holidays, in the landscape, accompanying my father to stone circles, barrows and quoits. He is still travelling to new, and lesser known places, and contributes to the Megalithic portal. So, I know my childhood experience is a huge contributing factor, when thinking and writing about those mysterious places.

I wrote and produced the game, almost single handed, but did pick the brains of a few colleagues, for specific details (ancient food stuffs for example). I wasn't in contact with any 'experts', as all academics seem to have wildly differing views on all things megalithic. It was surprising to learn, after the games release, how much of the story seemed relevant to different interpretations, and what people believe happened in those mysterious, unrecorded times. I guess an appealing interpretation is just as good as any other, on an entertainment level, but I wouldn't say the 'truth' was a dominant aspect of the screenplay, given that it seems so unknowable. If I had to condense the plot, I would say that Barrow Hill explores how stone circles are viewed and used by a variety of groups, from academics, locals, white wiccans and anti-archaeologists.

2. You obviously have some connection to Cornwall, being nearby must be a great deal for inspiring, and you made several field trips to get photos and sound-effects. Was most of the lore stuff that you just came across, or did it require research or reading?

Most of the myths and lore were created for the game, based upon local stories and folk tales. It is easy to spot the unlikely stories, when reading literature regarding ancient sites, as there are often Christian metaphors and moral judgements. For example, The Hurlers, on Bodmin Moor, are imagined as petrified people, cast into stone by God, punishing those who misbehaved on the Sabbath. That's rather odd, given that the stones pre-date Christian belief by thousands of years. Stories such as that are easy to come across, down here in Cornwall, as they are often printed on the site information boards. Whereas the older, more mysterious stories tend to be played down; partly because no-one has any definite proof, and partly because the modern preservation groups fear invasions from Satanists and, what they would call 'hippies' or New Age groups. I tried to include as many contrasts as possible, rather than reveal any beliefs of my own, which makes Barrow Hill an unusual, and I hope refreshing, piece of stone circle literature.

3. I simply love the multi-media mix of materials that feed into to the story (newsclippings, pamphlets, diaries, tapes, videoclips, radio,etc), and some stuff that's fun and just atmospheric. What was your pre-game background, college/major?

I studied, and still work, in theatre. My academic background is in lighting and theatre design, which comes in surprisingly handy when designing games. The setting is very much like an empty stage, with elaborate dressing, waiting for the players to arrive, and the story to begin. It was my intention, with Barrow Hill, to make a puzzle/adventure game about an ancient site, but place it within a modern corner of the English landscape. The ancient spring of Saint Anneka nestles along a lane which is also known for it's petrol service station, phone box and 2000 year old 'stone row', all vying for attention. In trying to be as realistic as possible, I realized the 'ancient' Cornish landscape is nothing of the sort; instead, it is a land scarred/decorated with elements placed there by man, for many, many reasons. Of course, not all of those elements are aesthetically pleasing, but they are there. Mixing the modern and the ancient is part of your mission, as the gamer, in Barrow Hill, so it was a pleasure to dream up appropriate, and sometimes inappropriate, comparisons.



4. Is this your first game? What were the definitive computer games that you help up as models to emulate- and possibly led to Barrow Hill?

I was lucky and delighted to help with another adventure game, in 2004, called Dark Fall – Lights Out. I was invited to exhibit some of my paintings in a virtual gallery, based within the game setting itself. Lights Out was set in and around an isolated Cornish lighthouse, with elements from The Ballad of Flannan Isle, and it really piqued (or I should say refreshed!) my interest in adventure games, after becoming very tired on them in the late 90's. After providing the virtual art, I was invited to take part in the production, and had a wonderful experience. I think working on a game set in England, and exploring local myths really drew me back into the industry of interactive fiction. I learnt many of the skills I would later use when writing, creating and programming Barrow Hill at that time. Since then, I've got into landscape games such as the huge RPG, Morrowind, and console titles (Wii, Playstation and Xbox) such as Tombraider. It seems gamers are very interested in exploring big, mysterious landscapes, which is great news.

5. Are the square wall-ish (although well-disguised) point and clicks the easiest type of 3-D game to start with? Do you intend after establishment, to do something with visible-mobile 3D characters?

It would depend on the story, and motivations for making the game. I like all sorts of genres, and play several different games a week. Adventure titles, in general, tend to be in an older, classic style, emulating the well-known 'Myst' look and tone. The fan base for those titles is still strong, even though the interest from multinational publishers has waned, as console titles become increasingly more generic and 'safe'. People tend to know, with an adventure game, that they will get a dense, narrative experience from a 'point and click', with less (or none at all) reliance on shooting, stabbing and action puzzles. Adventure game fans tend to be more patient and willing to suspend belief, which is great for a small, lovingly created, independent title like Barrow Hill.

The first person perspective, (seeing through your own eyes), was chosen as I believe it heightens the personal experience. It can be very frustrating, and even annoying, to live a game through the eyes of another. This is something I am continuing with my next game, the sequel to Barrow Hill, known as Bracken Tor. Perhaps I am being too harsh on 3rd person games, as I have played lots of good ones (such as The Lost Crown, from fellow Cornwall developer Darkling Room), but I wanted to allow people into the world, to explore those dark woods, and leafy lanes themselves. I am planning to include 'characters', or NPC's (non-player characters) in the sequel, so expect to see some innovations from the first title.

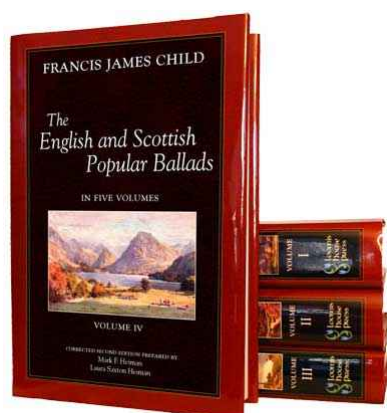
6. You have received a great number of awards and congratulations from locals and such. Have any loonies complained about it much?

Loads! It has been really good to see people are still interested in these, sometimes forgotten, ancient places. Duloe Stone Circle, for example, has seen a bit of a renaissance in interest, following publication of the game. Creating a thriller about the site seems to have generated this new interest, not just in new arrivals and the younger generation, but also in older locals who had, perhaps, become a bit blasé. But, for every pat on the back, there is an angry email claiming to be from someone who 'knows' the site better than anyone else. I tend to take most interpretations with a pinch of salt, as most are harmless individuals spurred into action through belief, but some can be quite alarming. A recent mail threatened violence, while Barrow Hill 'star', Emma Harry, has been told she will be sacrificed at the stone circle. (You have to laugh, really). Less alarming, and frightening, are the recent arrivals at the site, in the form of new stones! Someone, locally based, in transporting White Quartz chunks into the circle, in the belief they are returning the 'children' to the 'mother'. Now, I don't know what drives that sort of thinking, and would never want to judge, but some interest can be quite detrimental. But, having said that, any interest in the site is better than none, especially when some landowners view the stones with disdain, and would love nothing more than to destroy them as soon as they think no-one is looking.

7. Is Bracken Tor really a sequel, or a game in a similar format?

Bracken Tor continues many of the themes from Barrow Hill, but is a full stand-alone horror-adventure story. Expect some gory goings on! You will not need to have played Barrow Hill, to enjoy Bracken Tor, but there are recurring characters, to learn more about, and further explorations of our deep, dark past. You should also expect plenty of new sites, ancient temples, shrines and faiths to encounter. I like to think of it as a natural progression, both in terms of story telling and technology, but know those who enjoyed by first effort, will appreciate this sequel. It's a darker, creepier title, with a twisty, turning, story about who, or what, drove the darker elements seen in Bronze Age Britain. I know academics and believers will have plenty to chew on, and think about. www.brackentor.com

BOOK REVIEWS



English and Scottish Popular Ballads

Francis James Child

Corrected edition prepared by Mark Heiman and Laura Saxton Heiman; in five volumes

<http://www.loomishousepress.com/>

Mike the Fool's Notes: As some of you may know, Mark Heiman was and is the Bard of Carleton College, graduating there in 1991, but staying to work in the Computer Department, and running the various folk music groups on campus every since. A wealth of talent and witty, he has inspired Carleton students, including several Druids. A good friend of mine, he helped me to put together the first 500 page edition of ARDA. Apparently, that didn't scare him, and he went on to put together this five volume collection, scanning and typing in thousands of pages of the most emblematic book of the English folk-ballad scene in the 19th century. A massive and intricate work. Any decent bard who wants the background on these priceless songs, will want to dig deep. I have the collection on my shelves, and whenever I learn one of the 305 ballads (2 a month is a goal), I love the assorted lore. Here's the rest of the information from his web-page. These works can be ordered from Amazon.com also, if you search carefully.

First published 1883-1898, Professor Child's monumental work on the ballad tradition of England and Scotland stands as a foundation document for all subsequent ballad scholarship and for trends such as the twentieth century folk revival.

The English and Scottish Popular Ballads presents 305 distinct ballads, most with multiple variants, with commentary that traces the origins of the ballad stories through the literature and traditions of much of the western world. Professor Child's painstaking research ranges from ancient Greece to medieval Norway, with translations and detailed citations for all of the sources on which he draws.

Out of print for decades, editions of this seminal work have become scarce. Loomis House Press is pleased to present the first new (non-facsimile) edition of the Child collection, completely re-set and edited to include all of Professor Child's post-publication corrections and additions, as well as ballad tunes drawn from Child's original sources.

Volume IV was released in Fall 2008, and the final volume is in preparation.

If you would like to be notified when future volumes are available for purchase, please [subscribe to our newsletter](#) (in the left column).

Looking for more information? We've prepared a list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Ready to order your copy? [Visit our catalog](#).

1. What is *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*?

The English and Scottish Popular Ballads was Harvard professor Francis James Child's attempt to publish every known variant text from the ballad tradition of England and Scotland. Working nearly entirely from manuscripts, he compiled 305 ballads, most with multiple variants. Professor Child also attempted to trace the historic and literary roots of the ballads he assembled, making use of his extensive knowledge of history and folklore to place each ballad in its larger historical and cultural context. More than a century later, the term "Child ballad" is still used to refer to any of the ballads included in this collection.

The first edition was published over the course of 1883-1898, the five volumes of the work spanning ten physical volumes, printed in a limited edition of 1000. The design of our new edition is inspired by the binding of this first edition.

2. How does this edition differ from the previous editions?

Since the original publication at the end of the nineteenth century, two facsimile editions have been released, one in 1956, and another in 1965. This new edition is *not* a facsimile. The more than 2500 pages of the original edition have been painstakingly converted to digital form, newly typeset, and corrected according to Professor Child's own notes. All cross-references and index entries have been updated to reflect the new pagination, and the original page numbers are noted in the margins as a reference aid.

3. What do you mean by "Corrected Edition"?

Professor Child's research continued during the fifteen years over which his work was published, and he frequently received new material or discovered errors or oversights in the volumes that had already been issued. As a result, each original volume contains an appendix of "Additions and Corrections" which he wished to apply to the preceding material. These include more than one hundred new ballad variants and hundreds of corrections, revisions, and expansions to the historical analyses. We have carefully applied all of the corrections and inserted the new material at the appropriate locations, making it readily accessible for the first time, and producing an edition in accordance with Professor Child's original intent.

4. Will an "uncorrected" edition also be available?

No such edition is currently planned, but since the correction process involved creating a full reference text of the original edition, this material may be made available, most probably in digital form (see below).

5. Have any other changes been made to the text?

No changes have been made that are not included in the corrections discussed above. Page layout and typography have been updated to improve legibility, but the text stands as originally printed.

6. What about a searchable electronic version for scholarly use?

Once publication of the five-volume set is complete, we plan to export the contents into a structured database to allow for complex searches and comparisons, and make this information freely available to the Internet community.

7. What about a smaller, abridged edition?

After Professor Child's death, Helen Sargent and George Kittredge, who had worked closely with Child, edited a single volume compilation of material from the full edition, omitting most of the commentary and including only the most complete ballad texts. We are considering publishing a new edition of this work, if interest warrants.

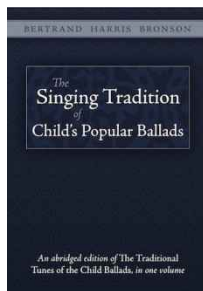
In 1972, Bertrand Bronson published the fourth and final volume of *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads*, the culmination of decades of work gathering and organizing all of the available tunes for Child's ballad texts.

The collection, nearly 2,200 pages of tunes and texts with notation for 4,120 tunes, was hailed as a milestone in ballad scholarship and has never been surpassed.

Loomis House Press, in collaboration with CAMSCO Music and Princeton University Press, is pleased to make Bronson's masterwork available to a new generation of scholars and musicians, and at 1970's prices. The original volumes sold for \$40 each; our facsimile edition is \$40 per volume for paperback, and only \$50 each for a durable library/textbook binding (pictured).

[Order now!](#)

Never been fortunate enough to browse a copy of Bronson? Check out a [sample chapter](#).



Not able to invest in the full set? You can still enjoy the fruit of Bronson's labors:

The Singing Tradition of Child's Popular Ballads is a single-volume, abridged edition of Bronson's four volume *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads*. To create this edition, Bronson selected from the larger work those tunes and texts which had the strongest representation in the oral tradition, excluding those from the original collection which only existed in print. Most of Child's 305 ballads are represented.

[Order now!](#)



St. Patrick driving the snakes out of Ireland.

Why Ireland Has No Snakes

Why Ireland Has No Snakes

Legend has it that St. Patrick drove all the snakes from Ireland. Sometime back in the fifth century he stood on a hill, the story goes, and used a staff to herd the slithering creatures into the sea, banishing them for eternity. It's true, aside from zoos and pets, there are no snakes on the emerald isle. In fact, there never were any snakes in Ireland. This state of affairs probably has more to do with the vagaries of geography than any neat tricks performed by St. Patty.

Snakes first evolved from their lizard forebears about 100 million years ago during the late Cretaceous period, about the same time that *Tyrannosaurus rex* first appeared. Early snakes were small and wormy, resembling modern blindsnakes (suborder Scolecophidia). Ancient snake fossils are found only on southern continents, suggesting that snakes first radiated from Gondwanaland—a former supercontinent comprised of modern-day Antarctica, South America, Africa, India, and Australia. Migrating to Ireland wasn't an option at this time, as the area was completely underwater. The chalky sediments that would eventually become the 700-foot Cliffs of Moher on Ireland's west coast were being laid down at the bottom of the sea.

During the Cenozoic era, beginning 65 million years ago, the world's climate gradually began to dry out, and vast tracts of grasslands and other open habitats came to dominate much of the northern hemisphere. Large dinosaurs went extinct, opening the door to new groups of animals. By the Eocene epoch, 50 to 35 million years ago, the predecessors of boas and pythons (called the basal Macrostromatans) were widespread throughout the northern hemisphere. Explosive radiation of snakes in the suborder Colubroidae, including vipers and cobras, occurred during the Miocene epoch, 25 million years ago. Now snakes are found in deserts, grasslands, forests, mountains, and even oceans virtually everywhere around the world. Everywhere except Ireland, New Zealand, Iceland, Greenland, and Antarctica, that is.



One thing these few snake-less parts of the world have in common is that they are surrounded by water. New Zealand, for instance, split off from Australia and Asia before snakes ever evolved. So far, no serpent has successfully migrated across the open ocean to a new terrestrial home. As the world's oceans have risen and fallen over the millennia, land bridges have come and gone between Ireland, other parts of Great Britain, and the European mainland, allowing animals and early humans to cross. However, any snake that may have slithered it's way to Ireland would have turned into a popsicle when the ice ages hit.

The most recent ice age began about three million years ago and continues into the present. Between warm periods like the current climate, glaciers have advanced and retreated more than 20 times, often completely blanketing Ireland with ice. Snakes, being cold-blooded animals, simply aren't able to survive in areas where the ground is frozen year round. Ireland thawed out for the last time only 15,000 years ago. Since then, 12 miles of icy-cold water in the Northern Channel have separated Ireland from neighboring Scotland, which does harbor a few species of snakes. There are no snakes in Ireland for the simple reason that they can't get there.

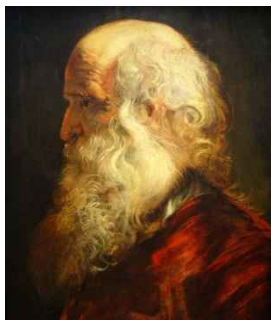
Snakes and Myths

So where did the myth of St. Patrick and the snakes come from? Most scholars agree that snakes symbolize paganism, which St. Patrick is also credited for banishing from Ireland. Snakes as symbols of evil are prevalent throughout Judeo-Christian mythology, most notoriously in the Garden of Eden as a tempter of Eve. Other societies have viewed snakes with more favor. Snakes were venerated in ancient Egypt, and many gods were represented by snakes, such as the cobra goddess Neith, founder of the universe. More recently, Ben Franklin advocated making a rattlesnake the symbol of the United States.

Mythology aside, herpetologists (scientists who study snakes and other reptiles and amphibians) like to point out that snakes play an important role in many ecosystems throughout the world. Snakes benefit humans by controlling rodent populations, and snake venom has been used to treat various diseases, including cancer, heart disease, and hemophilia. Unfortunately, some 200 species of snakes are considered threatened or endangered, the biggest threat being habitat loss resulting from human activities. Unless humans start taking more of an interest in their survival, real-life snakes may find themselves banished from more places than just Ireland.

—Jill Locantore

Joke of the Season:



A pious man, who had reached the age of 105, suddenly stopped going to church. Alarmed by the old fellow's absence after so many years of faithful attendance, the pastor went to see him. He found him in excellent health, so the pastor asked, "Why after all these years don't we see you at services anymore?"

The old man lowered his voice. "I'll tell you, reverend," he whispered. "When I got to be 90, I expected God to take me any day. But then I got to be 95, then 100, then 105. So, I figured that God is very busy and must've forgotten about me, and I don't want to remind Him!"

Publishing Information

Title: Druid Inquirer: A Scrapbook of the Reformed Druid Communities

Editor: Michael the Fool

Published: 8 times a year. No mailed copies, just free on the internet, print your own.

Submissions Policy: Give it to me! If you have news about your grove, written a little essay, like to write up a book or movie, have a poem, saw an interesting news article in the paper, or have a cartoon, send it in to 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.

ⁱⁱⁱ "Do you remember I told you about the crush that the Black Wizard had on D.S.? During the time the Black Wizard was helping D.S.[...]it probably hurt D.S. in some way and he talked to S.W. about it. And it [upset her] so much that she wanted revenge for what happened to D.S. so she lied to the Black Wizard and promoted the forming of The Circle. She could not form the Circle herself, so she used the Black Wizard to form it. At this time I brought Mayland into The Circle not knowing what was really going on...And ultimately that [incarnation of The] Circle ultimately destroyed itself because of the Black Wizard and S.W.'s own greed." The Prophetess, "Letters of the Prophetess, compiled by Myrddin a Maeglin, 1985.

^{iv} Again, from The Coming of the Circle, 1986.

^v For those of you who haven't slogged your way through ARDA 2, there is a section called *Words of Green* that look at the Pagan leanings of Bonewitz as being somewhat aberrant to what had been going on at Carleton College in the early years of the RDNA.