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Oimehc Essay: Brigit and the Flocks

By Stacey Weinberger



Oimehc, one of the major High Days in the Druid calendar, is the Festival of Bride, Brigit, Brid, Dawn Maiden, Patroness of Poets, Bards, and Smiths, Celtic Goddess of the hearth, healing, inspiration, childbirth, cattle, and crops. Oimehc marks the end of the dark days of winter and the

beginning of spring. Noticeable is the increasing length of the daylight hours.

Originally a pastoral festival, Oimehc was associated with fertility. The Irish word for Oimehc, Imbolc, is derived from the root word m(b)olg meaning lactation. Oimehc stems from the Old Celtic Oimehclo "ewe's milk." This was the time of year in agricultural societies when the ewes were first coming into milk and the beginning of the lambing season. This was important, as milk was the first fresh food since the end of the harvest at Samhain. Sheep and Cattle were valued possessions both in human and underworldly society, and this is especially true of herding societies, such as early Celtic societies. The classical writers such as Pliny and Strabo comment on the use of milk and milk-products in Gaul, Germania, and Britain, showing its importance in those cultures.



That Oimehc is also known as Bride's Feast Day (La Fheill Brighde in Scotland) shows Bride's association with the fertility festival. Though little of the goddess Bride is known in detail, many of her associations were carried over into early Christian accounts of the saint. Anne Ross writes in her *Everyday Life of the Pagan Celts* that in the later Christian tradition, St. Bride's association with sheep and pastoral economy and fertility in general would seem to be carry-overs from her pagan predecessor's role. In the *Life of St. Brigid* there are also various pagan attributes. She was said to be fed from the milk of a white red-eared cow, which was her totem animal as a pagan goddess. In Irish mythology white animals with red ears were considered supernatural or otherworldly. She was protectress of the flocks and harm would come to any that harmed her cattle. She had the power to increase milk production. In artwork, she was often shown to be accompanied by a cow, which Miranda Green writes is a manifestation of her mother Bofhionn, the White Cow who is the goddess of the sacred river Boyne. She is associated with the dandelion, though it quite possibly could have been coltsfoot, a plant with similar attributes, which flowers closer to Oimehc. It is said that the milky white juice in the stems fed the young lambs.

Bride's association with the flocks is still evident in modern times. In the *Carmina Gadelica*, a collection of hymns and incantations by Alexander Carmichael records a charm for stock as recited by Archibald Currie, shoemaker. Charms are a poetic form dating back to Indo-European times used for protection.

The charm placed of Brigit
 About her neat, about her kine,
 About her horses, about her goats,
 About her sheep, about her lambs;

Each day and night,
 In heat and in cold,
 Each early and late,
 Each darkness and light;

To keep them from marsh,
 To keep them from rock,
 To keep them from pit,
 To keep them from bank;

To keep them from eye,
 To keep them from omen,
 To keep them from spell,
 South and north;

To keep them from venom,
 East and west,
 To keep them from envy,
 And from wiles of the wicked;

To keep them from hound,
 And keep them from each other's horns,
 From the birds of the high moors,
 From the beasts of the hills;

To keep them from wolf,
 From ravaging dog,
 To keep them from fox,
 From the swiftness of the Fiann.*

*Fiann were hired warriors.

News of the Groves

Carleton

All is going well here. The Circle is happily slumbering and the weather is cold. We plan to try out the new, more aerodynamic trays¹ on Evans Hill this term. Hopefully we all survive the encounter. I'm looking at a long, hard, but hopefully educational term. And most of us that you know are working on comps² now. We'll have to rely on the young druidlings to keep us entertained, I think.

¹Mike Scharding, graduate of Carleton College explains: "Carleton's winter tradition is to steal lunch trays and go sledding on the nearby suicidally steep hill; 70 yard drop in 20 yards and a nice flat riding plain of 100 meters. If you 'pike position' in the center grabbing the edges you get an extra 30 and glide. They are also excellent squarish enough that you can spin if you keep your weight centered and avoid letting a corner dig in and flip you. I was three-time distance champion from 1990-93, and have the t-shirt to prove it from the nude Winter Olympics of 92!"

²Mike further explains: "Comps are the 'Senior Year Comprehensive Exercise' that displays mastery of your major. It consumes about 50% of the time of a Carleton student's senior year (and sometimes junior year) and is roughly equivalent of a Master's Degree research paper in complexity, plus a grueling two-hour oral examination by the department. It severely limits the Druidism of most senior Druids at Carleton, leading to many cases of Senioritis burn-out and grove near-collapses.

Many seniors only resurface in late May, after being in an 'undisclosed safe location' for several months. History papers tend to be about 50 pages, hundreds of hours of lab work for Bio/Chem students, entire choreographies for dance students, etc. As an example; "A Reformed Druid Anthology" was the result of my research, i.e. 'General History of Reformed Druidism' and its supplementary appendixes of primary resource materials. It took 14 redrafts, two years and over a 1,000 hours for me to get a history paper barely acceptable to them. ARDA took another two years to polish up."

Emerald Grove

Seattle's Greenwood Grove STILL exists. It has been renamed EMERALD Grove and is now under the leadership of grove ArchDruidess, Priya Kendrick. She can be reached at: silk999@juno.com or silk@blarg.net and her current Grove calendar website is <http://www.scn.org/~emerald>.

Volcano Grove: News from Tonga

I applaud the goal of doing twenty hours of druidic work a week from here on out. I have been considering something similar--starting with a physical tour of the groves beginning sometime next fall. It would be highly educational, not to mention fun, to actually visit all the RDNA and related groves I could find contacts for. I am curious how many different directions folks have taken, how many different responses they have developed to the problems of being a druid...Also, I intend to be traveling within the states for a longish period, visiting all my scattered friends and relatives. How odd is it to come this far around the globe while knowing so little about one's own country?

Lower Order of Pele

Representatives of the Volcano Grove recently undertook a pilgrimage to the island of Tofua. There they were witness to no fewer than five simultaneous thunderstorms, spied several rare species of birds, bathed in a pool sheltered in the rainforest, and were blessed with the opportunity to behold real live lava. The Archfool himself undertook to climb over the lip of the cinder-cone to get a better look at the fire. (Tied to a firmly anchored rope--he is learning a few things!) Others were then able to scramble up the same rope and hold onto him while gazing a hundred meters straight down to the place where rocks are melted up and born again. Some days later he made a solo trip back up the cone without the rope (Goddess watching is dangerously addictive) and was blessed with a double lung-full of sulfuric acid and a badly lacerated leg while fleeing the cloud of vapors that emerged to punish his precocious-ness.

Bridgit is known in these parts as "Pele." Tongan being what it is, the word has several other meanings too--Dolphins, card playing, and Spinach-like trees all share the name of the Goddess of Fire. In such a heavily contextual language invocation becomes a dangerous and haphazard art.

If all goes well I should escape in March or April and be home for April or May. I have not seen New York in springtime for seven years. It is about time to get home.

Monument Grove: News from D.C.

Well, D.C. is without snow and mid-30s as of January 10th, which means winter is slow out here. The birds and the squirrels don't seem to mind since feeding them fistfuls of seeds, although the cherry trees accidentally bloomed last month. Mairi and Sine went on a trip to Alabama (don't ask me why) for New Year and tramped about in some swampland. I'm currently working with Nozomi on researching Celtic Women and giving her some leads. I'm also researching the attitudes of different religions towards animal sacrifice and/or laboratory testing. The article should be ready by the equinox.

Thoughts About Anarchy

Many religions, when organized to fit one select group's goals and aspirations, do tend to make it harder for other's to appreciate that religion's teachings. Groups, by their definition, tend to be excluding as well as including. I think it's possible to be a dissenter within a group and provide a valuable service, not unlike the fool/trickster in many mythologies.

The RDNA does have a thick anarchistic streak in it, but not as much as the Discordian church or the Church of Bob. We're more on the disorganized, lazy and incoherent end of the spectrum rather than on bringing down the governments.

Mother Nature, herself, has her rules, with winners and losers; as do most anarchists. She is indifferent to whether the rabbit escapes or the bobcat catches the rabbit. For many, this seems chaotic, not caring if the innocent or the bloodthirsty win, but rather it is neutral. In the biggest sense, Nature tends to lean to the "increasive" side, with life prevailing despite heavy casualties of death. Evil and good only apply to the actions of men outside this system.

Ancient Circle Grove MOCC: News from NY

Here's all the news that fit to print:

Brother Evan Gort received his Naming Rite and also was welcomed into the first circle of study as Druid. He celebrated his Rite of Apprenticeship and received his silver oak tree

pendant. It was a very emotional and moving ritual. We celebrated this important step with Br. Evan Gort, offering our support and freely giving him honour and encouragement.

Brother Aiden has taken a sabbatical from the Grove. He remains in our thoughts and prayers and stands firmly amidst us and is never without our support and encouragement. He will be welcomed back enthusiastically when he chooses to return to us. His skills as Grove Bard are sorely missed. Sister Lily Wolf will soon be celebrating a birthday! She holds a place of great honour in our Grove. She is the embodiment of the wisdom of the Crone. She is a unique and insightful member of the Grove, gifted in shamanic technique and drumming.

Ancient Circle has concluded for the year our upkeep of the Old Bramer cemetery in Hebron, New York. We still have a great deal of work awaiting us next year, but we are confident that we will not be defeated by the ever-persistent grapevines. A special thank you goes out to Argyle Central School Sophomore student, Amanda Spear for her assistance in keeping up the cemetery. She was a tireless worker, full of good humor and such a blessing to us!

We also were successful in adopting a needy family for Christmas. The generosity of the Grove members was a great joy! Preparing the box, wrapping the gifts and then shopping for a holiday food basket was a delight to my spirit! The box was delivered on December 20th. Happy Holidays!

Ancient Circle gathered at the home of Sister Lily for our Yule get together. This was a family event. A Yuletide altar was set up and individuals were able to go at their leisure and make their devotions and offerings there. The food was simple but festive, the company delightful, and there was great happiness and love. Gifts were exchanged in the glow of 27 candles and Sister Lily's eight-foot tree! It was simply breathtaking! Truly the return of the Sun was not felt more strongly than by those who joined together to share its return and felt its life giving warmth deep in their spirits. What a wonderful time! Many thanks to Sister Lily for her hospitality.

We have heard many good things coming from our sister Grove in Kentucky, called Oaken Circle Grove. I believe that they will soon be posting their activities on this page as well.

—Inion

Oaken Circle Grove MOCC: News from KY

Sherry in northern Kentucky has started a new grove in November 2001, which is an independent affiliate of the Missionary Order of the Celtic Grove. A web address will be soon listed on the RDNA billboard, but e-mail is at oakencirclegrove@hotmail.com

Creeks Called Rivers Grove: News from Ohio

Song writing (or at least melody writing) is something I've been kind of toying with. I recently took up Appalachian dulcimer (because any idiot can play one), and have been having a lot of fun with it. I'm even slowly beginning to understand the whole key/notes/octave thing. An engineer by training, though, I'm not sure why things aren't simply expressed in hertz. My playing with the diatonic fret board has also led me to a bit of blowing on the tin whistle and pan flute. I'm doing all right on the tin whistle, but I'm not ready to do a Waterboys album, or anything. Meanwhile, Zamfir sleeps easy.

Big Ash Grove: News from Michigan

The Fire Ceremony

First you walk through the jungle looking for sticks. Gather as many as possible. When you get back to your village hut begin stacking them in a square (leave out like ten or so for later) so that it looks like a squished box with no top. Remember fire safety rules; like building a pit outside and doing it there, and have a bucket of water ready, just in case. Ok so now you set the pile on fire. Now you have to make friends with the fire; this consists of talking to it, sharing concerns and problems, and also feeding it a few drops of oil. I find patchouli or moldavite oil works good. Now that you have a new best friend you begin taking the other sticks, one by one, and put your problems into the stick. Such as financial problems, love problems, a healing need, a fear, etc. Feed the problems to the fire watching them being transformed

Then take some of the energy out of the fire with your hands...don't worry it's a friendly fire. And put the energy into your stomach, heart and brain; so that you make the right actions, have the right emotions and the right mental abilities to take care of the problem. After you've done this with all but one of your sticks, place the final stick into the fire with the prayer that the Earth Mother is healed. Don't take that energy out of the fire, let Momma E take that energy. Let the fire die out, while vigiling and meditating.

Akita Grove: News from Japan

Our winter solstice ritual drama (Sun Goddess in the Cave) went quite well and the guests liked it. I worked on the dance until end and was nervous! The text is on <http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/akitanews.html>. We sang by a huge log fire until morning and welcomed the new sun. It was fun.

We plan for a big outdoor festival on Akanidai Mountain with Big Cailleach Search. Peter is in charge because he likes running in woods, being cold and wrestling! The Search text will be in the Oimelc Druid Missal-Any and then everyone in America can prepare for their own fun on Vernal Equinox, but we will do it on Feb 1st. On Feb 2nd, Pat will wear the Demon Mask, and everyone will throw beans at him. He will take bad luck out of the house.

Feb 13th is the fourth anniversary of Beth Harlow's death. We will have a small rite for her memory. Pat will publish a eulogy next issue.

<http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/memorial.com>

Brother Eric will visit us in May, from America, so we will have special welcome at Akita Airport. He will bring presents to give to Mike (the post office is expensive). Unfortunately, his room at the shrine is unheated, so he will have to be drunk the whole time to live the visit.

Only 10 weeks left for bardic contest. www.geocities.com/mikerdna/bard.html. Keep writing to me at nozomikibou@hotmail.com. That's all. Thank you.

Ice Floe Grove: News from Antarctica

I'm doing fine. I'm wrapping up my research here, and guess what? I am moving to Bolivia in June to join a friend in doing anthropological research in their portion of the Amazon jungle. I'm going to mostly be studying the researchers and seeing how they act as a group in a foreign landscape. The grove

here will naturally cease soon, although I'm sure the penguins will continue the faith for many generations to come.

Speaking of beasties, I just heard the Pauxatawny Phil over in Pennsylvania will be receiving an armed guard for the Ground Hog's Day festival! I guess that's reasonable, considering that 6 more weeks of winter could hurt the U.S. economy. National interest is involved. Uh, huh?

Yours in the Freezer,

Ian

Order of the Mithril Star

"Butterflye Grove" is gone. The leader has moved to the Seattle area and the remaining members have gone on a more Wiccan path.

The contact for Cylch Sequoia Semperviron is now Angie Druid Fulmer, magickwomyn@yahoo.com

There is an OMS/RDNA protogrove forming in Eugene OR. The contact would be me. We haven't decided on a name as yet.

There is also a protogrove forming in Bremington (sp?) WA. For now the contact is:

butterflye@roguedelts.com

In the Mother,

Stephen Druid Gabriel-MacMullen
Instructor, OMS-RDNA
<http://mithrilstar.50megs.com>

Silent Grove: New Grove!

I guess since this is our first contribution to a "Druid Missal-Any," a brief introduction of our Grove would be in order. We currently have four members (yes...living, breathing entities). Our focus of course is a lot of things Druidic (and a lot of stuff that isn't) without any real focus on any particular area. We are a rather eclectic group, taking certain aspects from Taoism, Celtic/Scandinavian/Germanic druidism, Native Americana, a general spiritual connection with Nature, and hopefully combining this to create something new and fresh...at least to us. Our focus is mostly on having fun, though seriousness won't escape us either.

Over the past week, our Grove has worked feverishly (gotta keep warm somehow in the winter) designing, developing and publishing our web presence (<http://www.silentgrove.org>). Glen managed to secure us a domain name and has done most of the work getting the web page up and out there. The rest of us are busy little contributors. We hope to keep the website very active with fresh, new content on our on-line newsletter and events schedule. We're not going to take ourselves too seriously, so the web page is more of a fun place. If you're looking for serious historical druid stuff...well...that won't be the place to get it. You can also find a lot of general information about our Grove there.

We are all preparing for Imbolc but haven't decided where to hold our festivities as yet. It will probably be just the four of us, but nonetheless, it should be fun.

As the year goes forward, we have a lot of ambitious things to do at our Grove. I just hope we haven't bit off more than we can chew! But the journey will of course be all the fun.

Flatulent Waters Grove: News from NY

This Grove, on the Niagara Falls, has disbanded and gone on to a more natural way of worship; long walks in the woods and casual contemplation by transcendental meditation.

Golden Oak Grove: News from Minnesota

All's well here, just a bit crazed right now due to the holiday goings on, seems like no matter how well you plan things there will be a multitude of things that just all go wrong and suddenly all well laid plans are thrown into chaos, but that's life I suppose...

The first thing to hit was the fact that some designer home decorator person of the year has declared that the only twinkly lights to be had for under \$8.00 a pop are clear, I looked high and low only to find every style of clear lights imaginable, a few strands of outdoor blue lights, The only indoor ones I could find were red, green, and one strand of frosted gold, other than that it was clear, OiY!!!

Our tree this year is huge and perfect, but it took an entire afternoon to locate all the green and red lights in the Minneapolis St. Paul area and of course that one lone strand of frosted gold...

Not exactly what I had in mind for the tree but it did turn out very pretty--I put the greens inside to make it glow and the reds on the outside--it's lit and looks gorgeous but it isn't a bright beaming spectacle either which is good...

I wound the gold lights with the silk oak leaf garland and will light that up Solstice Morning...My tree topper was crushed beyond repair during our move last spring and I couldn't find anything to replace it that I liked, this year is a horrible year for holiday decorations, I looked again today for something to top the tree with and found the local K-Mart only had red/white/blue and clear stars, "no thanks," so I think tomorrow I'm going to put my daughters piñata up there, it's a sunshine so I suppose it's as appropriate as anything...

It's better than the other thought I had of dressing one of her baby dolls up as the baby sun god and tying to the top of the tree, hehehe...

I've just got done making cookies and have more to bake in the morning but right now I've got some where around 500 mini sugar cookies that need decorating...So far I've made candles, trees in two sizes, and stars...I've still got Moose, Suns, Holly leaves, Oak Leaves, Acorns, Stockings, and Angels to finish up...I got some new gel-food colors today in blue, purple, deep red, deep orange, black, deep green, so they ought to be very vivid once decorated with the colored frostings...I also got some bronze and gold dust to paint them with. It's really cool stuff, edible metallic dust, really makes the suns light up!

Mojo Protogrove

"Mojo" protogrove gathered at a local theatre to watch Harry Potter for pointers on magical thinking for our Winter Solstice. We later convened at a local (Irish) Pub to compare notes.

Amon Sul Grove

Greetings from Amon Sul Grove,

Amon Sul Grove celebrates Yule as the rebirth of the sun, and as such, the beginning of the new year. While the worst of winter's weather is still ahead, the lengthening days are our promise that the cycle of seasons will once again be repeated. Yule also basically coincides with the arrival of our seed

catalogues. Much of January is spent planning the coming year's garden. By Oimelc, the cycle of life has already been jump-started by starting some of the earliest seedlings indoors under full spectrum lights. As I write this, we already have tomatoes, pansies, and valerian that are up. The black cohosh and hawthorn are slow, difficult germinators and it is with both anticipation and trepidation that their containers are being watched. This year we are planning a major expansion of our varieties of medicinal herbs. Our winter has been mild, to date, and some of the irises are already beginning to come up.

Druid Spirit Grove: News from Chico, CA

Alban Gwyddion or winter solstice was wonderful. It was raining out so we ended up doing ritual indoors which made for a closer sharing when passing the triad bowls around we each took turns anointing each other with the awen on the forehead. Our sweat lodge is coming along slowly, I've leveled the ground and am getting ready to dig the surface of the inside of the lodge down a couple of feet. We are doing our regular new moon rites as we do every month here soon. For Canol Gaoaf (Imbolc) we are going to gather on the night of the Feb. 2nd and have another indoors ritual if the weather is too cold. I hope it will be nice so we can feel the energy of the stone circle again in ritual.

New homepage:

<http://www.geocities.com/sailletree/homepage.html>

Baccharis Grove: News from the East Bay

Rain, rain, rain. It seems like it rained the entire months of November and December. We were only able to hold two services during that time. (We usually meet every two weeks on the Sundays closest to the new and full moons in addition to the High Days.) We weren't able to hold our Yule service due to rain. The morning was so overcast and misty that I was not able to welcome the Sun at sunrise at the Grove site on the day of the Winter Solstice, which I have been doing the mornings of every major and minor High Day since Spring Equinox of last year. When you are used to holding regular services you really begin to feel the lack of that spiritual "fix" that comes with doing rituals regularly.

The first rains in November brought an early spring to Baccharis Grove with shoots of the Pacific Snake Root appearing in sunny spots and Golden Back Fern along the steps and path up to the Grove site. We are currently in a cold snap (lows in the 20s and 30s with snow predicted which is unusual for the Bay Area). I wonder how the cold will affect the vegetation, whether it will survive or die back to begin again when the weather warms up.

One of the benefits of the rain is that it has made putting in steps up to the Grove site much easier; it's been easier to pound in the stakes that hold up the wood plank reinforcements and easier to control where the steps so the placement makes sense. The lower steps had just about totally worn away; now the "fall on butt" factor has been greatly reduced.

It was very quiet this past service up at the grove. Gentlest of stirrings of the trees at the Calling of the Winds. All in all it was a quiet day at Grove Woebegon.

Corn Grove: News from Iowa

We are going into abeyance for a while. We'll be back in touch perhaps within the year.

Wind in the Oaks Grove: New Grove!

Merry meet and all that. Hi, my name is Mark. Me and some of my friends have started a grove. I'm the Arch-Druid or what ever you want to call it. It basically started when me and a couple of my friends started reading about Druids, and decided to become one (or some), and the grove is named "The Wind In the Oaks Grove." There are five of us, but we don't have any duties, and the only reason I'm the Arch-Druid is because I'm good with knowledge and computers (high-tech druids LOL).

No, we don't really have any purpose or focus, other than cherishing the Mother together. The Grove is in Norman, Oklahoma. As for being able to get a hold of other groves, I am the only one who can do that now. As for why I was picked to be AD, I don't have any real idea why, except that perhaps I knew more about being a Druid than the rest.



The Great Cailleach Search

Devised by Patrick Haneke, Akita Grove
Collaborated with Brother Alex on his "Great Snogle Beast Hunt"

Plentiful Advice from Brother Mike
Researched and Transcribed by Sister Nozomi

A few years ago, when Brother Mike was in Japan, we went with him to a lot of the local pagan festivals. Mike suggested that we start our own, blending Irish and Shinto traditions. Like our Winter-Solstice service, here is our version of an Oimelc festival, with more focus on activity than liturgy; which the Japanese are famous for. Neo-Pagan rituals can be so dull, whereas the Celtic commoner was likewise more interested in the associated activities of the season. We'll still have an Oimelc service, but it will pale next to the Great Cailleach Search. Please enjoy.

The Straight Dope on the Cailleach Bhuer, the primary figure in this action-drama.

Cailleach (Call y'ach) is the common Gaelic word for old woman, "carlin" in the Lowlands, "Black Annis" in England (Annis being a Celtic Water Goddess), "Cailleach ny Groamch" on the Isle of Man, Cailleach Bhuer (Blue Women), or Hag of Beare is her name in the Highlands. Interestingly enough, an owl is called Cailleach n'Oidhche (very difficult to pronounce) meaning "old woman of the night".

I slapped a few half-remembered legends together and divined the rest. In the old days, old women were respected for the life-power and wisdom that naturally should accrue to the elderly. This particular old lady was a giant in Scottish tales who also represented winter. She could shape shift, either to a serpent or a comely lass and was considered quite wise. She could also become stone at will, indeed, remaining as a stone throughout the Time of Life (May 1st to Nov. 1st). Thus, she is a natural choice for residing in a stone circle, I think, especially in a stone used for judging the Winter Solstice alignment.

She is reborn on Samhain and reigns throughout the Time of Sleep (Nov 1st to May 1st). After reviving, she washes her tattered plaid in the famous whirlpool off the coast of Jura, "Corryvreckan" ("Coire Bhreacain" is the cauldron of the plaid), and the plaid emerges repaired and pure-white and she drapes it over the land. She bore a staff that could kill any plant and would freeze the ground if tapped. The young God of Spring, born on the Winter Solstice, (no name as yet) wanted to play with his forest friends, but they were too tired, and the Goddess refused to end the winter so early. She recommended that he should be in Galicia or Galetia, not the Gaeltacht, if he wanted some warmth. She complained that she wasn't finished freezing Loch Ness and was still perfecting her snowcap on Ben Mor and Mt. Snowdon, and the skiers would be most unhappy if she didn't finish that job. If she had time, she'd get around to freezing the Irish Sea too.

Undeterred, he asked Cailleach Bhuer if she was tired, and she admitted that she was getting a bit of a tension headache from concentrating so much on her work. She agreed to take a short break and play a short game of stickball. Spring God tossed stones and nuts, and she batted first. Many valleys and lakes were created by the impact from the stones she hit. She played a marvelous first round and then he asked to have a turn at bat. The staff was thus captured by the young God of Spring, who flung it into the holly bushes, because the staff would kill any other plant, and the holly would prevent her from retrieving it by guarding it with its fierce thorns.



He then ran off, unpenned, and gleaned a few of her seven Arkan Sonney (red, lucky, hairy pigs), whose hot little footsteps melted the snow. The Cailleach dispatched a squadron of her

ravens to retrieve the piggies, but the Spring God eluded most of them. The little piggies ran all over the place with the young God, ruining her white blanket of snow. She forgave him later, after he explained the animals were getting thin and needed to eat new plants, but she required him to bring her a flower wreath at Beltane and return her staff next fall.

Not being able to freeze things anymore, she started her new job on Feb 1st. She went to the deep forest of the Isle of Youth and drinks a cup to return her to a more vigorous appearance. Then she works on weaving a new plaid for the next year's vegetation, which she will hand over to her sister at Beltane before transforming into stone for a long rest in the shape of a rock, under a flower wreath, who takes a pause in his morning activities that day to payback the old lady. He, of course, returned the staff at Samhain.

She was the patroness of deer and boar, protecting animals during the winter. She is sometimes depicted as riding a gray stallion with ravens and crows. The Book of Lecan, says she has been through seven life cycles, deaths and rebirth, and has had seven mates. Thus seven is a sacred number of perfection. There are numerous hills named after her, such as Ben Nevis and Schiehallon.

For More on Her See:

<http://www.paganvillages.com/Magick/archivesev/NovGoddess.html>



The Fun Part: The Great Hunt

Now that you know the background, here is the activity we're planning. A similar one can be done for Beltane, which much nicer reward...

Location:

A forest with lots of trees or places to hide things. It should be smaller than one square mile, and with definable boundaries (roads, fire breaks, fences) to keep members from really getting lost. The smaller the vegetation cover, the smaller the Cailleach will be naturally. Distributing maps and cell-phones and GPS equipment is standard for the over-anxious. A finish line with an evergreen tree, a box, a campfire and a long rope is chosen. Games start and end there.

Number of Participants:

As many as feasible.

Duration:

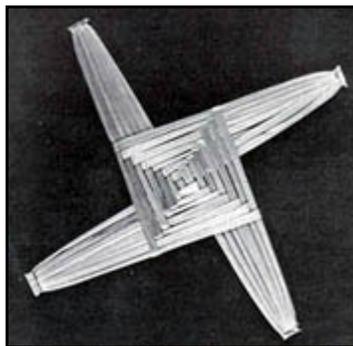
The hunt should last about an hour or two. Older members will wait at the finish line in a suitably warm place (like a van).

Overview:

1. At winter solstice, the AD tells the tale of Cailleach Bheur, to burrow it into their psyches. Then the AD begins preparations for making a hunting package (whistle, secret envelope, hunting stick, tennis ball, piece of elastic, protection amulet, blindfolds, search flares) for each future participant. Train your bagpiper, get a bullhorn or air horn, or super whistle, etc.

Prepare major amounts of hot chocolate and a feast for the returning hunters, preferably at the nearby onsen/hot spa! One long rope is also necessary and a campfire.

2. The Archdruid, or her accomplice, hides a statue or mannequin or doll with a three-foot long stick and hangs a piggy in the nearby area before the first snowfall, or before a predicted great snowfall, thereby covering the tracks and adding a sense of mystery. Caution should be made whereby, notable features are noted down, and the statue will not be completely covered by snowfall (tying it at chest height to a tree is a good idea).
3. A few weeks or months later, the hunters (who've been hopefully training) gather at the starting point, in their best outdoors gear. The rules are explained and the hunting packets are distributed. The player's duty to bring winter to a quick end should be stressed, if the Gods will help. Players are crowned with short antlers, [temporarily] blindfolded and spun around. Bagpipes sound and they rush off into the woods to find the Cailleach Bheur and her little piggy (Arkan Sonney).
4. The first person that finds her statue/manikin places his amulet around the neck of the statue; he or she will grab her staff and use it to knock down the piggy from his cage (always set a few inches out of reach of the stick, to tease them into clever ploys to reach it.)
5. The lucky fellow now grabs the piggy and immediately sounds her/his hunting horn (a shrill whistle) 7 times. The pig rustler will get seven blessings if he can make it back to the finish line and toss the stick into the holly/evergreen tree and put the piggy in a box filled with straw and carrots.
6. After hearing the whistle, everyone tries to tag the pig rustler. If they tag the person, they take away one of the blessings for themselves, and the rustler will get symbolically spanked for each time they are tagged by the officiant. (If you like playing rough, you can have them try to take away the piggy and finish it themselves, but avoid bloody noses.)
7. The winner gets a kiss from the AD, and will hide the piggy for the next year and oversee the preparations and is publicly blessed 7 times (her choice of which blessings to grant) with the staff. All the players are recalled. Players who tagged him/her (in order) may deduct one of the blessings as they see fit for their own use.
8. The piggy is then tied to the middle of a long rope and placed over a fire (or a cauldron in non-fire-possible zones) and the grove splits into two sides (perhaps by Nov 1st to May 1st birthdays and May 1st to Nov 1st birthdays) to divine, by a "tug of war," whether winter or summer is stronger. The side to pull, the (quite possibly burning) piggy over 15 feet from the fire is declared the winner and all its teammates get three blessings, losers get one blessing each.
9. After one hour, if no one has returned, sound the bagpipes' "Warning song" (or sound the siren in 2 blasts) and the players can open the sealed envelope with a description of the location of the statue. However, they lose 4 of the blessings if they do so. They can choose to not open the envelope and keep searching and thus lose only 2 of the blessings.
10. If they haven't returned in 2 hours, play the bagpipes' "retreat song," shoot the flares into the skies and call out the National Guard to return the players. Winter will be longer than usual this year!



Some Optional Things for Oimele

By Alex Strongbow, ex-Carleton

Well, here's my list of things to do for Oimele, Imbolg, Candlemas, Ostara or whatever you wish to call it. It's a multi-faceted festival reflecting Bridget's diverse talents. If you were to combine them all you'd be "writing poems by candlelight about flaming metallic sheep." Sounds strange, but where do you think "steel wool" is from? Do not put it in the microwave, though, unless you want to see visions of Pikachu!

- Banana-Split candles (Cherry, banana, pineapple ring; possible imagery...)
- Make decorated candlestick holders.
- Try to predict (e.g. candle divining) whether winter will end soon and what day the last snow will be gone in the grove or some other spot.
- Start planting seeds in little pots.
- Get a candle-making kit at an art store.
- Spring Cleaning Party
- Make homemade butter or ice-cream (try goat's milk)
- Fireworks (if legal, secretly if illegal...)
- Make a contest to find first flowers or awakened hibernators
- Decorate the house: Bridget's Straw Crosses, ironwork, stained glass, candelabras, lava lamps, anything that's bright,
- Melt lead and pour into molds to make items.
- Sharpen knife, repair or replace tool collection
- Rent "Lambchop's Funniest Songs"
- Write poems together (perhaps within 5 minutes on a theme)
- Rent "Babe" or "Ground Hog Day" with Bill Murray
- Rent "Bell, Book, Candle" with James Stewart or "Silence of the Lambs"...
- Rent "Wallace and Grommit" (Perhaps "A Close Shave" is the best episode)
- Decorate chair by fireplace.
- Burn the dried up Christmas tree (watch it go fuuumph!)
- Have a sheep day
- <http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Hills/9609/sheeptxt.html>
- Call up a farmer and have the kids come down for a sheep birthing.
- Do some knitting with wool.

Also see:

<http://pages.ivillage.com/paganparent/imbolic.html>

Packed with stuff

<http://www.web-holidays.com/candle/fun>

<http://www.circlesanctuary.org/pholidays/CandlemasCustomsLo re.html> Overview
<http://www.partytown.com/menus/imbolc.htm> for a meal
http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/lesson048.shtml
 About Groundhog Day
<http://orderofthecauldron.homestead.com/cadlemas.html>
 Nice discussion on Candlemas
<http://www.ghostdragon.net/sabbats/imbolcactivities.html>
 More activities.
<http://members.tripod.com/acorns3/archives.html>
 Pagan kids activities back issues (look also under Ostara)



Life is a Birch, Whose Bark is Appealing!

By Sam Peebles, 1st Order, Ex-Stanford Grove

Birch is derived from "Bright" in Indo-European and related to Sanskrit "bhurga," "Birkana" in German, "Beorc" in Saxon, "Bedwen" in Welsh, "Bjarkan" in Norse. "Beith" in Gaelic is the first month of a lunar calendar and as the start of the Ogham alphabet; it is appropriate for beginnings and entry into Druidism. S.T. Coleridge named it "Lady of the Woods." As birch is one of the first trees to come into leaf it would be an obvious choice as representation of the emergence of spring. Often it is the wood of choice for the Maypoles, Yule Log of last season, anytime, really! But, because of its associations with spring-cleaning and babies, it is appropriate for Oimeic or Spring Equinox. Its wood is good for starting fires for any season.

Birch trees are one of the most recognizable trees in the forest, with its slender trunk, banded bark, light branches, alternating serrated leaves and thin peeling bark. It usually grows in copses with multiple shoots in the same spot. They grow to 50-70 feet and are common to Europe and America. They tend to live 60 years. Birches are wind pollinated with little "catkins" in April, appearing with their leaves. Male catkins release pollen and fall apart while female catkins catch the pollen and release the winged seeds in mid-Autumn. The seeds are "pioneers" and tend to like bare sunny patches. Fallen Birch twigs from the parent tree have the capability of rooting and beginning a sapling. Never take a complete ring from around the trunk as this would halt the flow of nutrients and would kill the tree and only prune in late spring after leaves are out and past the "collar." A healthy Birch's thirsty roots will spread twice as wide as the height of the tree. The Birch populations are currently being pestered by "Bronze Birch Borers," "Birch Leaf Miner" worms, and the Birch Canker fungus.

In Britain there are three varieties:

- 1) The Dwarf Birch (*Betula nana*), a Scottish Highland shrub that grows even on tundra.
- 2) Silver (warty) Birch (*Betula pendula*) whose twigs are hairless and droopy but bear tiny warts and found on well-drained ground. It grows quite tall.
- 3) Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*), like the name, this smaller tree has peach fuzz, found on moors and swamps.

In addition to the Silver Birch, America's major varieties are:

- 1) Paper Birch (*Betula papyrifera*), famed for its peely white bark and black stripes. Popular with children who pull off its bark. A quick growing tree, it is often sought by timber companies.
- 2) River Birch (*Betula nigra*) is less common. Naturally found near rivers.

Associations:

Birth, pioneering, fresh endeavor, purity, one of the three pillars of wisdom (Oak, Yew, Birch), exorcism.



Folk and Magic Use:

(As always consult your Doctor)

- Brooms handles and sweeps made of wood and twigs especially for New Year cleaning.
- Russians attached a red ribbon to a branch to fight the evil-eye.
- Norse Farmers connected it to Thor and attached it to a house to avoid lightning.
- Scandinavians flail themselves in saunas with birch twigs.
- Scandinavians wrapped the bark around their legs to keep out the wet--gaiters.
- Siberian shamans used Magic Mushrooms (*Amanita muscaria*) to climb the skies.
- Dutch boys lashed young women to make them fertile. (eh?)
- Anglo-Saxons beat criminals and children with switches of it.
- Irish often used it for making doo-dads and writing Ogham.
- In Pembrokeshire (now Dyfed) girls would give their lovers a twig of birch as a sign of encouragement; if they were not so lucky they often got a hazel twig.
- The Celts made cradles of Birch for protecting the babies.
- Native Americans used the bark, which was used for buckets, canoes, and as a sugary drink.
- The pitch was made into a glue for fixing flint arrow and spear heads onto shafts.

- Parchment or rune sticks of a Birch struck by lightning can be gathered during the moon.
- The inner bark contains methyl salicylate, which is a counter-irritant and analgesic.
- Bark infusions for rheumatism.
- Poultices of leave, catkins for skin problems.
- Lotions from bark's oil.
- Tea for mouth sores, kidney stones and provide a diuretic
- Young leaves and shoots for laxatives
- Small amulets of Birch will protect you from Faery and lunatics (useful!)
- Wine can be made from the rising sap in March.
- Birch beer brewed from the branches.
- Thatchers and wattlers used its branches.
- Birch charcoal often used for gunpowder and indigestion.
- The timber is tough, stiff and fairly easily worked and is used in joinery, carving, cabinet and furniture making, clogs, spools and bobbins, plywood and flooring.
- The bark, when dried and twisted into a rope, is used for candles.

Winter Birch Tree Cookies

Christmas Baking (1997 Pillsbury Classic Cookbook)

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 3/4 cup of sugar (possibly birch sap sugar?)
- 1 tablespoon milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 egg
- 2 cups Pillsbury BEST All Purpose Flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 package (12 oz) vanilla-flavored candy coating or almond bark, melted
- 2 ounces bittersweet chocolate, melted
-

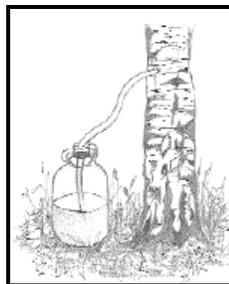
Heat oven to 400 degrees. Grease cookie sheets. In large bowl, combine sugar and butter; beat until well blended. Add milk, vanilla and egg; beat well. Lightly spoon flour into measuring cup; level off. Add flour, baking powder and cinnamon; mix well. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. On lightly floured surface, roll balls into logs, 6 inches long. Place on greased cookie sheets. Bake at 400 degrees F. for 5 to 8 minutes or until light golden brown. Immediately remove from cookie sheets. Cool completely. Place melted candy coating in pie pan. Dip logs into candy coating; place on waxed paper to cool. Drizzle melted bittersweet chocolate over logs to resemble birch trees. 3 1/2 dozen cookies.

Highland Birch Sap Wine

- 8 pints sap
- 1lb chopped raisins or dried fruit
- 2lb sugar
- Juice of 2 lemons
- General purpose yeast

Collect the sap from a number of trees so as not to overtap an individual tree, which could kill it. The sap should be collected in early March whilst it is still rising. Select larger trees, bore a hole about 1"-2" deep, around 4ft off the ground, place a tube or something similar in the hole and allow the sap to run down. Then put a suitable container underneath and allow to fill. The hole will heal naturally, but it wouldn't hurt to wedge a piece of birch bark over the hole to aid it. Boil the sap as soon

as collected, add the sugar and simmer for 10 minutes. Place the raisins in a suitable bucket, pour in the boiling liquid and add the yeast and lemon juice when it has cooled to blood temperature. Cover the bucket and leave to ferment for three days before straining off into a demi-john and sealing with an air lock. Let stand until fermentation finishes, then rack off into a clean jar and let the sediment settle. Bottle the wine and store in a cool place for at least a month. Good for Vernal Equinox.



Birch Tea

This is an old and effective remedy to combat cystitis, urinary problems, gout, rheumatism and arthritis and to remove excess water from the body. To make the tea, collect the birch leaves (the best time is in the spring when the leaves are fresh) and dry them out of direct sunlight. Put 2-3 teaspoonfuls in a cup and pour on boiling water, then cover and allow to stand for 10 minutes. Take the tea 3-4 times daily or just occasionally if you need a mouthwash. Fresh leaves can also be used but as the months progress the leaves deteriorate.

Further Links on Birches:

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/9344/birch.html>
<http://druidry.org/obod/text/trees/birch.html>
<http://hometown.aol.com/birchfire/page18.html>
<http://www.whitedragon.org.uk/articles/lady.htm>
<http://www.treesforlife.org.uk/tfl.mythbirch.html>

Handicrafts

(www.paulbunyan.net/users/bjosephc/bark.htm)

Baskets (www.teelfamily.com/activities/basket/)

Canoes (www.birchbarkcanoe.net/default.htm)

Making Your Own Cheese

A Druid Missal-Any presents a recipe for making your own cheese for Oimele! This recipe is for Queso Blanco, a South American cheese that is similar to the Indian cheese, Panir. It makes a great cooking cheese because it does not melt. The recipe is very simple and makes 1.5 pounds of cheese. I am certain goat's or sheep's milk could be substituted for cow's milk.

1 gallon organic milk (whole, reduced fat or nonfat)

1/3 cup vinegar (cider, grain or herb vinegar)

Warm the milk to 195 degrees F. You should have a cooking thermometer. Stir the milk to keep it from scorching. When the milk is at 195 degrees F., stir in the vinegar. Turn the heat off and let the hot milk set for 10 minutes. The milk will quickly coagulate into solid white curd particles and a clear greenish liquid whey.

Line a colander with fine cheesecloth and pour the curds and whey into the colander. Hang the bag of curd to drain for one hour or until the curd has stopped dripping whey. Remove the cheese from the cloth. It will be a solid mass of curd and may be wrapped in plastic wrap and stored in the refrigerator until ready for use.

Queso Blanco can be cut into half-inch cubes and used in a variety of dishes. Because it doesn't melt, it works wonderfully in all types of recipes, and can even be deep-fried. You can add it to soups, stir-fried vegetables or pastas; the cheese will take on the flavor of the surrounding food and spices. By itself, the cheese has a very distinct sweet taste.

Thanks to the Straus Family Organic Creamery for this recipe from their newsletter. For more recipes, check out their Recipe Page at:

<http://www.strausmilk.com/strecipe.htm>. You can also email them at family@strausmilk.com.



Fertility Cycle of the Druid Year

By Nozomi Kibou, Archdruidess of Akita Grove

I apologize for the poor quality of this essay, but I hope you'll like it. You know my father's grove is a fertility shrine (people, plants, animals too) so it is an important subject for me. I have thought about Paganism and the big four holidays and I think they are fertility holidays. Here are the reasons.

Beltane: It is warm. Young people date and have sex (Pat says "It's a festival of muddy knees and grass-stained dresses.") Planting season.

Lughnasadh: We know if we have a baby. People marry. Family starts.

Samhain: Baby gets big. Spirits move in baby. Baby kicks. Hard to work in fields, but okay, that work is done, we can relax, start new plans of life.

Oimelc: Baby is born. Sheep are born. Not much food, which is hard for mothers. Use sheep milk for babies? By equinox, can work in fields again. Grow baby plants!

Beltane: Ready again for more babies? Maybe wait one more year, no?

Sister Tegwedd says we don't need more babies now, "Zero Growth Population," so instead we are mind-creative. Yes, but there is no cycle for that. Most Japanese babies are also born in spring around Feb 1st. April's when school and government and business start a new year in Japan. Very convenient. Birth time of the year, April is. Old Europe started the New Year around Easter, but then changed to the Roman Julian calendar. But now most people are not farmers in Wales or Ireland now, so the baby-schedule doesn't work well. Probably more babies in late summer with constant year-round food, long winters, and in fall school starts.

In modern Ireland there are good luck rules for the wedding, which was often before baby-making. A good wedding will help fertility. See <http://www.irelandinformation.com/irishweddingtraditions.htm> for many fertility rites of "The Traditional Irish Wedding" by Brian Haggerty.

Old Ireland has no records of "before-birth" advice for women. There were warnings in 11th century that women should have purity of heart and mind and not "heat the womb" during sex; but church didn't like recreational sex back then. Saints took over from Druids in blessing women with fertility, in many unusual ways, including potions. Some babies were born from swallowing live bugs, worms or fish, unusual water plants, sex with giant otters or bird-monsters or night-dreams. There was mystery in how it happened. The best modern advice for all (including men) is to exercise and eat only health food for six months before starting baby/getting married. No drugs, tobacco, alcohol, fatty foods, chocolates, coffee, allergenic foods, meat, gambling and horse racing, avoid rabbits, and corpses. Choose foods with special traits to direct babies' personality. In Japan we were special belly-belt to keep belly warm. Stay that way until milking is done. Of course this is not easy. Other tips on diet to make strong babies at:

<http://www.paganparenting.net/information/pregnancy/>

Once with baby, a blessing from the priest and the soon-to-be grandparents is good. Some make a special bow/knot for the house. When birth comes, untie it and open all windows, doors, cabinets, knots in house and clothes. The baby comes quicker this way. Sometimes a special bird or animal will visit the house during pregnancy, give it honor, and a name to baby. Going to a forge and pushing the bellows would help the birthing later and make a strong baby. But the most important thing is of course strong love from both parents, no fighting and excitement in the house, peace and tranquility. With this, baby will grow well. If the baby did not go well, abortion by potion and self-abuse was also known. There is evidence of infanticide, too. Unfortunately, modern Ireland has worst rate for "caesarian" births (near 25% for first time), a weak midwife system, and no birth-centers as yet. (<http://www.iol.ie/~hba/historyaims.html>) Yet, this is because of the modern medical monopoly. In the past midwives were common. This describes a 19th century Co. Mayo birth:

After she went into labour, the woman was transferred from her usual bed, which was in the kitchen by the fire, to the floor, which was covered with straw. She put on her husband's jacket, an outsize flannel garment with sleeves, made of homespun wool, or bainin. 'As the great event drew near, the husband stood at his wife's back, and placed his hands on her shoulders while she was in a kneeling position on the floor. With words of faith, hope, and encouragement, he supported her morally and physically in her trial, while the midwife got on with the great task of bringing a new human life into the world.'

Celtic sources have much more on the raising of children after birth than before birth. The most important fear was ban-sid (faery women) stealing the children and leaving a "changeling," an old faery who never got bigger and shrank. Sometimes the mother would be took and go to fairy hill to raise fairy-babies. This may have been due to emotional stress and mother running away or hurting the child (like that Texas case) in tight society with small support for mother's need. In famous case of Ard Macha, treating pregnant wife rude like the animal (making her race the horses) caused a weak-body curse on all men of North Ireland for many generations. The point is, let pregnant women do what they want!

More Good Sites:

- <http://pregnancy.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=htp%3A%2F%2Fwww.iol.ie%2F%7Ehba%2Fceltic.html> for Celtic birth customs.
- <http://www.celticsilverspiral.org/History/Myths/superstitions.htm> Celtic birth customs.
- <http://pregnancy.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=htp%3A%2F%2Fwww.iol.ie%2F%7Ehba%2Fceltic.html> Home Birth Society of Ireland.
- <http://www2.vhihealth.com/topic/7061> How to predict the baby at, but I think it is a 51-49 percent chance so don't worry.



Sudden Oak Death Found in Redwoods

Peter Fimrite, San Francisco Chronicle Staff Writer
Tuesday, January 8, 2002

California's magnificent redwoods appear to be susceptible to the same deadly disease that has infected oak woodlands along the Central Coast, preliminary testing shows.

The test results, if confirmed in laboratory experiments, could prove economically, environmentally and spiritually ruinous for a state that is linked in the minds of people throughout the world with the giant trees.

According to plant experts, DNA extracted from redwood sprouts on trees in Big Sur and on the University of California at Berkeley campus proved positive for *Phytophthora ramorum* spores.

Scientists studying the disease were quick to point out yesterday that the data have not yet been conclusively confirmed in laboratory experiments on seedlings, as is standard before redwood can be officially designated a host.

But the data are frightening nevertheless, given how important the timber industry is to the state's economy and the significance environmentalists place on the state's dwindling old-growth redwood forests.

"We don't know what the ramifications are or whether the disease is killing redwoods, but, if so, imagine California without redwoods," said Matteo Garbelotto, a forest pathologist at the University of California at Berkeley. "I don't think that will happen, but it's something that makes me worry. It's a serious issue that is of great importance for everybody in the state."

Threat Confirmed

While the scientists seek confirmation, a San Rafael arborist, Ken Bovero, has told researchers he has confirmed through an independent laboratory what he has suspected for some time: that the pathogen is killing redwoods.

It was not clear yesterday what scientific steps the independent lab used and Bovero could not be reached for comment.

The disease, also known as sudden oak death, has killed tens of thousands of black oak, coast live oak and tan oak trees from Monterey County to southern Oregon.

The disease-causing organism, which is commonly referred to as a fungus but is more closely related to brown algae, is the same type of organism that caused the Irish potato famine in the mid-1800s.

Although some chemicals have been shown to reduce infectious lesions, scientists have not found a cure.

First detected in Marin County in 1995, it has spread like a plague through 10 California counties, infecting many other species of trees and plants along the way.

Some areas, like China Camp State Park in San Rafael, have been so ravaged by the disease that campgrounds had to be closed, and dozens of trees had to be chopped down so they wouldn't fall on hikers.

Dead Sprouts Found

The concern about redwood trees began in earnest in September, when forest pathologists attending a conference in Carmel noticed a lot of dead sprouts coming out of redwood tree trunks at Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park.

The sprouts on redwood trees are important for regeneration. When a redwood tree dies, Garbelotto said, one of the ever-present sprouts grows and takes its place.

Plant pathologist David Rizzo of the University of California at Davis took a sample, and laboratory tests performed by Garbelotto detected spores from the deadly pathogen. The discovery was a jolt to scientists because a redwood is a conifer, unlike any of the other hosts for the disease.

Tests were then done on sprouts from several redwoods on the UC Berkeley campus, which also showed *ramorum* spores.

"Because it was so serious, we didn't release the information publicly," said Garbelotto, adding that he had come forward now after it became clear the information was about to get out through another source.

Garbelotto said researchers still had not determined whether the spores were actually infecting the trees or were simply present by coincidence. Studies also must determine how prevalent the pathogen is, whether it kills the trees or whether redwoods simply act as a host, like several other kinds of trees.

Studies on redwood seedlings inoculated with the disease are expected to be completed this month and will probably answer those questions, he said.

"Preliminarily, we did see from our samples in nature that the phytophthora was colonizing the tissue, but we have to confirm that," Garbelotto said.

One need not be an economist or environmentalist to understand the seriousness of the potential problem.

If the deadly microbe is, in fact, present in redwoods, it could be catastrophic, even if the mighty trees do not die from the disease.

A statewide quarantine of wood products that currently limits the movement of wood products containing the pathogen would create a bureaucratic nightmare for timber companies. Just getting wood to the mill could become nearly impossible, especially if the wood has to cross county lines.

Tourists who want to visit redwood country might also face restrictions because of fears that they would spread the spores on their shoes.

E-mail Peter Fimrite at pfimrite@sfnchronicle.com.



A Miner's Lettuce Leaf Grows in San Francisco

I walk through downtown San Francisco and the Financial District every day to and from work. There is a row of Sycamore trees along Battery Street that last year had the square patch of ground around them covered over with pebbles and grates. Up until then small clusters of Miners Lettuce would sprout after the first winter's rain. I thought how odd yet how tenacious these little plants must be to survive in such a place, mere inches from the exhaust of cars and the soot of the city.

Last year at this time I was sad because I knew that the so-called beautification of the ground around the trees destroyed the habitat of this seemingly out of place native plant. Some grasses sprung up in their place and perhaps what looked like chickweed. But my favorite, the Miner's Lettuce was gone, casualties in the name of civilization, though I still glance down to where they grew as if to eulogize them with that gesture.

Today, as most days that I take that path, I looked down to where the Miner's Lettuce once grew. What was this that I saw? That familiar succulent bowl with the tiny white flower that grew up from its center! Did I believe what I saw? Yes, the Miner's Lettuce had returned! I don't know how or what, but somehow the seeds had managed to survive being dug up and covered with rocks. I learned two things this day. Nature can persevere even amidst concrete and steel, and that you don't have to be in the middle of the forest to experience Her joy.

PantheaCon 2002

Double Tree Inn in San Jose, CA
February 15-18, 2002

Join the largest indoor gathering of tribes and traditions in the country for a 4-day extravaganza of workshops, rituals, events, networking and fun.

Presentations, rituals and panels from a wide variety of guests including: Robert Anton Wilson, Diana Paxson, R.J. Stewart, Raven Grimassi, Lon Du Quette, Rachel Pollack, Mary Greer, Z Budapest, Mara Freeman, Chicago Steve Barkeley aka Stefn Thorsman, M.Macha Nightmare, Darryl Cherney, Amber K., Donald Kraig.

Musical performances, Ritual Theater, Variety Show, and a Masque Ball: Gaia's Voice, Pombagira, Reclaiming, Bast Ritual, Magical Acts Theatre

Workshops, scholarly papers, author readings and slideshows by special guests and local favorites

Over 60 vendor booths featuring pagan, magical and earth-oriented products.

Convention Programming starts on Friday afternoon 3:30 pm, with presentations beginning at 9 am and ending with the last slot starting at 11pm on Sat. and Sun. Monday will start at 9 am and end in the late afternoon with Iron Priest: The Unfairer Sex.

Friday evening will feature a Variety Show*, with a performance by Magical Acts Ritual Theatre, having the Costume Contest (there are rumors of hall costume prizes) on Friday night as well as our regularly featured Pombagira ritual.

Our regular Saturday night event will now be a Masque Ball. And Monday will feature our regular event, slightly tweaked for your enjoyment: Iron Priest: the Unfairer sex

Admission fee: \$50.00 (till Sept 15), \$60 (till Jan 15) and \$70 at the door (includes all events for the entire conference) \$30 for a full day, \$15 for evenings only.

Parking is free for hotel guests with validations for conference goers. The hotel has agreed to run four daily shuttles for pick ups at the light rail station, times to be determined.

Don't forget that you can sign up to work the Con as a volunteer! Email volunteer@ancientways.com or see <http://www.ancientways.com/html/gofer.html> for more details.

Mistletoe Confirmed as a Herbal Remedy

I was recently going through a bout of daily headaches. The usual over-the-counter remedies, prescription migraine medicine, and herbal remedies were not working. While shopping at the local natural foods after my Gaelic class I was in the herbal medicines section looking for something else and there was Crystal Star Relax Caps, a "popular and effective formula to ease stress and nervous tension. Helps reduce anxiety and stress to produce a feeling of calm."

I had tried other herbal formulas but nothing specific for stress and tension, and this sounded promising! The next morning there was a slight headache but it went away. Same results the next day, and the next until no more headaches! What is in this stuff? The label read:

Ashwagandha (Withania s.) (Root) 109 mg. Scullcap (Scutellaria l.) (Root) 72 mg. Kava Kava (Piper m.) (Root) 72 mg. Valerian (Valeriana o.) (Root) 36 mg. Black Cohosh (Cimicifuga r.) (Root) 72 mg. Black Haw (Viburnum p.) (Bark) 54 mg. Hops (Humulus l.) (Flower) 36 mg. Mistletoe

(Phoradendron l.) (Herb) 36 mg. Lobelia (Lobelia i.) (Aerial) 36 mg. Wood Betony (Stachys o.) (Aerial) 36 mg. Oatstraw (Avena s.) (Aerial) 18 mg.

Mistletoe? In the Yule 2000 Missal-Any I wrote about its medicinal properties and noted that it has been used to reduce blood pressure. How satisfying that I was able to stumble across a remedy that used it and worked!



Resources

Mike Scharding (Monument Grove) was helping Nozomi Kibou (Akita Grove) with her research on women and came across three books that are not in most lists of “must-reads” on ancient Celtic society. Here are his brief reviews:

Women in Celtic Myth:

Moyra Caldecott. *Tales of Extraordinary Women from the Ancient Celtic Tradition*. Rochester: Destiny Books, 1988, 1992. ISBN:0-89281-357-1. \$13.00. 203 pages.

A nicely compact collection of lightly-adapted stories that feature or focus on 11 different heroines who are prominent in Celtic stories. Ms. Caldecott is obviously in love with mythology, but avoids stuffy literal reading and sensationalist readings. It’s plain good reading and will memorably fill a weekend and make a nice starting point for a deeper foray into the subject matter after familiarizing yourself with these key stories.



Celtic Women:

Peter Berresford Ellis. *Women in Celtic Society and Literature*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995. ISBN: 0-8028-3808-1. \$20.00. 277 pages.

We all know that Peter Ellis loves to crank out books on the Celts, no matter what the specialty (over ten in the last 15 years I believe). This volume is typical of his well-known intensive research orientation. He stacks information willy-nilly about your ears while trying to purvey his findings to you. Unless you have a relatively good backing in Celtic studies (and even if you do) it is a bit of a daunting work from the sheer number of references to a myriad of historical and literary

heroines that he makes. It’s easy to lose the thread sometimes due to his exuberance.

This is also its strong point, since he digs up material (especially from the Cornish, Manx, and Breton regions) that is often rarely listed in the popular Llewellyn publishing house and even serious studies. It’s a good book to use when you want to find more sources, names, or tie-ins. You’ll finish the book, feeling like you just took the first step on a longer journey than you reckoned upon.

As for his style, he is definitely a bit of a romanticist and tends to see the brighter side of the evidence, leaving us with a bit of the bias that the Celts--while not flawless--were definitely a lot more respectful of the females in their native society (unlike the barbaric Anglo-Saxons and prudish Roman Catholic priests, which he deprecates throughout).



Land of Women:

Professor Lisa M. Bitel. *Tales of Sex and Gender from Early Ireland*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996. ISBN: 0-8014-85440-4. \$12.00. 234 pages.

Well, this was a bucket of cold water on the face after reading the preceding rather pleasant books. Prof. Bitel has used equally academic quality as Mr. Ellis, but is an Associate Professor of History and Women’s Studies at the University of Kansas. Naturally, her orientation is a bit different, and not having had any coursework in women’s studies, I am hesitant to expose my gross ignorance on this academic tradition. She also backs up her statements with 70 extensive pages of endnotes.

She begins by focusing more on legal dimensions of surviving late medieval legal and clerical texts and feels that these reflected a conscious attempt of men to wrench control of the reproductive process away from women in an ancient society that never really respect women properly enough, despite the Romanticism of nineteenth and twentieth century folk-revivalists. She shows us the negative interpretation of all aspects of less legal representation, uncertain recognition by patrilinear families obsessed with heirs, weak bargaining position in divorce, inability to hold property on the same level as men, etc.

This left my Celtic daydreams a little deflated, but she then went on to show the various strategies that the same women to avoid the laws and church to reach higher positions of power and status. She illuminates the daily functionings of the domestic economy of the family, priests’ wives, polyandry, the fostering system, child-rearing to a much deeper degree than Ellis did; drawing upon a greater diversity of disciplines. You finish the book with a more mortal-sense of familiarity with the plights and travails of these women and their children and the attitudes and stratagems of their male relatives. A worthy addition to any Celtic library. If a student were to just butt Ellis

and Bitel against each other, you'd have years of fun comparing the conclusions from similar evidence.

Calendar

Astronomical Oimele, when the Sun is at the half way point between the Winter Solstice and the Spring Equinox, will occur on Feb 3 at 4:25:39 p.m. PST when the Sun will reach 15 degrees of Aquarius (or by the alternative calculation when the Sun will reach 16 degrees 18 minutes declination on Feb 3 at 6:40:00 p.m. PST). Oimele services will be held on Sunday, Feb. 3 at Solar Noon. Please call for carpool arrangements (510) 654-6896. For the social observance of Oimele we will be going immediately after the service to AD's house.

Regular Druid services will be held at Solar Noon on February 9, 24, and March 10. Please call the above number to confirm.

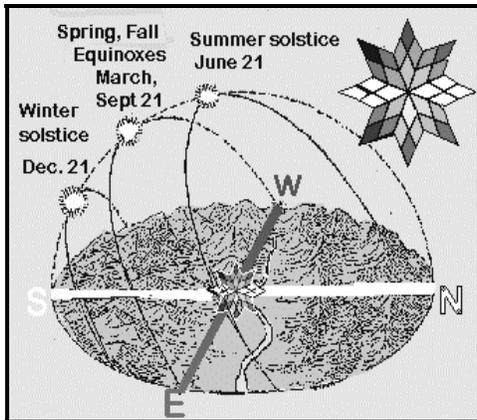
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A Druid Missal-Any

Spring Equinox Y.R. XXXIX

Vol. 18 Number 2

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Spring Equinox Essay: Plowing Charm and New Year

Reprinted from A Druid Missal-Any,
Spring Equinox 1984
By Emmon Bodfish

Equinox, the beginning of spring, which is marked by the Sun's crossing of the Celestial Equator, the first point of Aries. For a diurnal cycle, the day and night are of equal length. The emphasis of the holiday is on renewal, active preparation for the summer to come. The stones of some of the Megaliths mark this sunrise, by this point the plowing and seeding must be done. In numerous cultures these were sacred activities, from the Charming of the Plow in pagan Germany, a celebration which the Anglo-Saxons brought with them to England, to the ritual plowing of the first furrow in a special sacred field by the reigning Chinese Emperor. Our word for acre, 43,560 sq. ft. of land, comes from the Gaelic word "acadh" meaning a field.

Erec, Erec, Erec,
Mother of Earth
Hail to thee, Earth,
Mother of Men

Be fruitful in
God's embrace
Filled with food
For the use of men.

This was written down in the Leechbook circa 950 AD in England. It is the ancient Indo-European Earth Mother and Sky Father, despite five hundred years of Christian influence.

In England, Spring Equinox was celebrated as Lady Day, now fixed at March 25, to make it a dependable legal holiday while the Equinox shifts yearly between the 20th and the 22nd. Before the adoption of the Gregorian calendar in England in

1752, this holiday was the beginning of the New Year, legal and fiscal. In the Gaelic world, the new season, Samhain, wouldn't begin until Bealtaine, but the New Year had commenced on Samhain on November 5th or 6th. Between Samhain and Bealtaine is the "Season of Sleep" and May Day begins the new "Season of Life."

In modern Reform Druidism there is no whiskey, or intoxicant, in the chalice at services all through this Season of Sleep, only distilled water, the Waters-of-Sleep. Only water is poured out in the Offerings to the trees. It is the season of the Pine and the Birch. The latter, Bride's tree, begins her season at Equinox. It has been a time of rest and in-drawing, the re-couping of our energies. Now life starts to re-awaken and we begin preparations for the major celebration of the Druid year, Bealtaine, the full-blown Rose.

News of the Groves

Carleton

So, we had a Druid Art Day! This Sunday at tea, we crammed all the druids, art supplies, and creativity we could find into Nourse main lounge until art came out! We used crayons, markers, construction paper, play dough, and anything else we could think of. Tea and conversation were provided.

Also, of note is that Carleton College has a new 55 year old president (#10), Dr. Robert A. Oden Jr. Unlike past presidents, his academic focus is Near Eastern Languages and Literatures with a Th. M. in Near-Eastern religions. He was president of Kenyon College in OH since 1995 and taught religion in Dartmouth from 1979-1989. He is definitely going to contribute to the religious scene of Carleton, "But is it good for the Druids?"

Akita Grove: News from Japan

All is well here and we had great fun here. Of course, Naomi won the Great Cailleach Search (see the last Missal-Any, you try it too!), but she fought with Satoko to cross the goal. We celebrated the farmer new year in late January. We carried decorations all over the village.

We are having plans for an Equinox Egg festival, like Easter. Whoever finds the most will be the winner. Doing it in a forest makes more fun. The Shrine is very busy with students needing good luck for exams. After April, Pat (he is a fool) will walk across Japan (the short way from ocean to ocean).

Monument Grove: News from D.C.

Well, I was witness to two crimes within one hour. First somebody robbed a Popeye's Chicken store in front of my very eyes. I didn't realize it till after it was over. Then someone kicked in my front door for fun and ran away laughing. We've since had iron bars installed, ugly as they are.

Mairi is leaving after the Equinox to pursue a solitary path, and taking Sine with her of course. (How can you be solitary with some one else?) It's all in good friendship, and I expect her back on the winter Solstice for goodies.

My wife and I have begun a one-year commitment to raising a seeing-eye puppy. His name is Earl and he's a Labrador Retriever, so he balances Mairi's departure along with my new cat. We all four go out for nature walks daily.

The Encyclopedia of American Religions by Gordon Melton is updating their 1979 article on the Reform Druids provided by Isaac. The article became the template for further encyclopedias on American religious activities. I submitted an

amended copy after having others make their comments and historical notes.

I also investigated the myth of the balancing of eggs on their ends during the equinox. I found a wonderful site on the topic at www.badastronomy.com/bad/misc/egg_spin.html that I recommend you investigate.

Volcano Grove: News from Tonga

Dec 19, 2001. Rain. Thought we might be in for a hurricane last night. We had to seal all the windows of the town hall and to keep the water out. Now the wind has left for somewhere cooler and we retain only a solid perpendicular drizzle.

I can't recall if I mentioned my chickens. For the longest time, I held off adopting any, figuring I could have either them or a garden. With zero local vegetables, the latter was more important. One day, I came home to find two young hens hiding under my bed. I took the hind, tied them up and built a large cage to keep them in. One puzzling fact about chickens is that after a week or two in a new environment, they forget having lived anywhere else. Once these two were thoroughly brainwashed I let them roam free. First thing they did was devour my cabbages and tear up the onions. They haven't even produced any eggs yet! Still, they are adorable—and I can always eat them if they bug me too much.

Time flies like a hummingbird. Magically still while sucking life's nectar, then gone too fast to follow. My time approaches the latter phase. Twelve weeks till escape from paradise. With luck I will be home for Beltaine. Send nothing to Tonga after March 16. Till then, I remain your sunburnt emissary.

The following account is perfectly true and factual. The events happened last Friday. Makes you wonder just how thorough the missionaries were:

Hard Core Pagans in Tonga

After being assured by the Doctors that there was nothing wrong with him, Siona Piko (false name) visited a good Christian card reader to diagnose ongoing pains in his abdomen. The reader examined his playing cards and announced that two of Siona's deceased in-laws were trying to take the family with them. Siona's wife had died just before his pains started, her brother only months before. Unless the spirits were stopped they would haul off the whole family. Siona returned to his island and tearfully related the story to the surviving relatives. "I know I'm going to die," he told them.

Two of Siona's good Wesleyan cousins decided enough was enough. They stole into the graveyard in the early morning and dug up the bones of the two offenders. Carrying as many parts as they could, they snuck to the lava field, doused the bodies in kerosene and burned them in the night. The skulls they carried to the wharf and then threw them into the sea, which promptly spat them back out.

"We are Christians!" the local priest bellowed at Mass the next Sunday. "Stop doing this! Haven't I taught you anything?" Villagers were somewhat sympathetic, "Sure, we dig up our families graves...to clean and oil the bones sometimes." Said one woman who spoke to me on conditions of anonymity. "The Spirits occasionally make us sick then show up to complain about tree roots prying their ribs apart. Once we clean the grave they always leave us alone." Others were merely terrified of ghostly reprisals because the bones had not been completely destroyed. According to the police officer who recovered the

ashes, the deceased were still alive and well and prevented his car from starting when he tried to leave for work. "Go away and let me do my job!" he cried. Under Tonga's very Christian law such acts carry a ten-year sentence.

The local Druid when pressed for comment, smiled quietly behind his teacup and simply asked if Siona Piko had recovered.

Fresh off the coconut wireless report
Irony Sade Reporting

P.S. Still digesting Marcus Aurelius' "Meditations." Very good. Definitely high-class paganism.

Ice Floe Grove: News from Antarctica

Thanks so much for conveying the news from my lonely outpost. Fortunately for me, I'm soon going to Manaus and working on the Madiera River on April 1st (coincidence?).

Computers don't do well in water, so I'll be out of touches. I'll still write letters occasionally to Mike and Derrick, just like Brother Irony, and do my best to find Dalon Ap Landu hiding amongst the trees of the tropical jungle.

Wish me luck. Enjoy the summer folks.
—Ian

White Rabbit Grove: News from Wisconsin

Having lost her Internet connection, things have been dull lately in WI. Katya says she sprained her ankle on the way to the woods, worsening the boredom. She notes that there has been unusually little snow due to the high temperatures. There are some worries about the water table.

Mojo Protogrove

Mojo protogrove has taken a recess due to unforeseen circumstances.

Oaken Circle Grove: News from Kentucky

Greetings we are the Oaken Circle Grove from Northern Ky. area, our grove is coming along nicely we have five active members and three perspective members in our new grove which was established in Nov.2001. I would like to give special thanks to my husband Mike (Myrid) and my sister and brother-in-law Tara and Brandon for their support. I would also like to welcome Teresa (Oceanna) to our grove. We are still working on pulling our grove ideas together as well as a youth grove.

Our plans for Ostara right now are a get together for the grove and perspective grove members, we are going to do some egg coloring for the children and have them decorate our tree with Easter eggs, (we have one we have had up since Samhain and the decorations change to reflect the holiday). Some natural dyes that can be used are, beet juice for a pink or reddish color, boiled onion skins for a pale yellow, you can also use plum juice or grape juice to make a nice purple, I have heard you can use cooked spinach juice to make a green shade but have not tried that one yet. If any one is interested in learning more about us please go to our website at:

http://oaken_circle_grove.tripod.com/oakencirclegroveky/ We have many pages we hope you will enjoy and we have a guest book on our member's artwork page you can sign. Have a safe and Happy Ostara.

Many Blessings,

Sherry

Silent Grove: News from Hamilton, Ontario

Just thought I'd update you on a new Grove that was started December 21, 2001. We had actually wanted to start the Grove in November of 2001, but decided that our annual celebrations should coincide with the winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere. Our initial ceremonies included viewing the planet Jupiter in all its splendor, as well as a candlelight vigil for the protection of natural areas that are increasingly coming under attack in our area.

Our next meeting will be March 20th, 2002 and so far we are planning on working with local groups (after our own service which will commence at 2pm EST at a location not yet specified) in conjunction with Earth Day 2002 to hopefully give more understanding to the Druidic interpretation and role of nature, and of its importance within a historical context as well as today and into the future.

Our current group of four has a well-rounded cornucopia of skills and interests, and with alacrity we are all willing to learn more as we expand beyond our knowledge-base and flourish into a wisdom-based group (whatever that means). And, of course, we are always looking for others who wish to join us in their own spiritual journey.

My personal forte is outdoor survival training, Taoist tai-chi, and TM all culminating in a strong, unbreakable bond with nature. My wife's strength revolves in her training in the art of homeopathy, organic gardening as well as natural crafting (soaps, candles, incense etc.). Our other two members have interests in anthropology, geo-caching, divination, poetry and song-writing.

All quite a mouthful (and a delicious one at that)! Of course we all share a deep love of our Mother, and just as she gives, all of us in Silent Grove volunteer our services to charitable organizations (esp. those related to the preservation of the environment from ongoing degradation) when we have time. With warm and brotherly regards.

Emerald Grove: News from Washington State

Back in contact with the Washington Grove! Questions and answers from the second oldest Grove in the Reform.

1) How is your group organized?

Cyndie Sallee-Brown lead our Grove for about 17 years. When she left the area, she elevated me to third. My understanding is that we only elevate someone to third if they are leaving the area. In my case, I had to alter that. I have had problems with my health from time to time and needed a back-up in case I couldn't lead a Grove. JoAnna Schoettler is the other third in our group.

2) What is your grove like, how big is it?

Our Grove, now called the Emerald Grove instead of the Greenwood Grove, has any where from 26 to 55 people showing up on any given time. Usually, it is some where in between, maybe around 40. Since we use my house and back garden, invitation to the Grove is through a friend. As far as specialties, I certainly promote entertainment. My dance troupe has done ritual dances, sometimes people read poetry, share songs, that sort of thing. Otherwise, it is fairly basic because it is an open

group. We get a lot of newbies that flow through here. I like to keep things simple.

3) Is it actively working with other local groups or isolated?

I have communication with Leon Reed's group and a group called CUUPS that is connected with the Unitarians in our area. There is certainly a flow of people that come to our Grove as well as the other groups. I have shown up to some of these other rituals on occasion, but actively working with them? Not really.

4) Have you made any publications, poetry, songbooks, and constitutions?

Not since I have been Arch Druid. Cyndie created a songbook with her ex-husband, Dwane Worthington, although I don't think she handed that out much. She also lead a Greenwood Grove choir and they did a few tapes. I was a part of a group called "Laughter and Love" which included Cyndie, Dwane and myself. We did a cassette of music that was pagan related. We used to do concerts at various pagan events in the Northwest area. That was back in 1984, I believe.

5) As the 2nd oldest grove in the Reform, what's been going on since the 70s in your grove? We really lost track of you in 1981 (we lost track of everyone, actually).

I can't even begin to cover what has happened, even since I first came to Cyndie's Grove in 1983. We continue to celebrate the seasons and my focus is to create community.

6) What happened to Cyndie Sallee, the Founder, after Tom Schuler and Dennis Merrill left?

Cyndie lead the Grove up until 1997. She decided to move to Hawaii where she lives today. I took over at Lammas in 1997.

I'm still in wonderful spirits after a delightful Candlemas celebration that we had on Saturday evening. It has been a real trip seeing the how the flavor of the group changes as time goes on.

My dance troupe did a Candle dance that went over really well. We are starting a Grove dance troupe so that we might do more ritual dance prior to circle. In the past it was just women from my belly dance troupe that I have been a part of for years. About 12 people signed up and it will be interesting how this comes together.

These days we are drawing more poly folks into the fold, which adds a nice zesty flavor to the group. We had 47 people show up for the ritual and my little house was truly packed! There were a lot of new people this time, maybe about 10 or so. After ritual, most people hung around and talked, danced, and hot tubbed. My hot tub holds 10 people, and we have had up to 15 some nights. It's a friendly group, what can I say?

Druid Heart Spirit Grove: News from California

We're going to be having a few new guests from Calon Eile (spring equinox) from a local group called NorCal Pagans. Some of the great people I met at a recent meeting are really interested in attending a Grove ritual, and I brought my harp, they loved it! We're planning on having rituals outside in the stone circle, with a Grove blessing for the new stones I've added over the last few months, one of them is four and a half feet tall, one foot wide and five inches thick, now stands in the North and casts a beautiful shadow! Recently, I've come across some interesting

studies in my dowsing practices in the Nemeton site, I'd like to share.

I've been having a great time with my dad, and he's learning more about geomancy and we're practicing it together now. He's always known how to dowse with L-rods for water, he's now getting into dowsing for ley lines and came over last weekend to make himself a pendulum and dowse the stone circle. That's the main reason I'm writing is to tell you what happened from our testing the energy lines there.

Nine months ago after our Beltain rites I dowsed the stone circle. Every time I went towards the central fire pit the rods would start to open, but not all the way. Then as I walked around the circle when I got to the area between the altar and the fire pit they opened where the crossover pathway is for the spirits to enter. Two weeks ago I went out and did the same testing and got the same results, except that the rods flew wide open and hit the outside of my arm at the fire pit and altar pathway, and not only that but, as I walked around the circle, in front of the space of every stone the rods parted. My father's testing got the same results.

Now I've always known that the rituals create an energy pattern that follows the shape of the ritual, and the rituals we do are shaped from the way the energy flows in the Celtic world tree. I'm also aware that we create the pathway for the spirits to cross over. Now looking at the energy patterns we've found present with dowsing, I also found a symbol that's been speculated about by the Celtic scholars for years. The symbol was carved in stone in Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Brython, and France, dates back to about 500 BC. It's a circle, with a skeleton keyhole inside. The keyhole is in the center of the circle, with a pathway where we call in the spirits, is the pathway coming off to the side of the keyhole that opens to the outside circle. Some of these symbols are carved so that the opening in the keyhole points south, our altar also faces south! Anyway I think that's more than a theory.

Baccharis Grove: News from California

It has been an usually cold winter in the bay area. A dead mole was found at the edge of the Grove site, perhaps due to the weather. (We buried it on a frond of fern, with a sprig of pine and sticky monkey flower to escort it to Apple Isle.) In agricultural communities Oimeic marked the beginning of spring. As if ordained by the High Day the weather changed overnight at the Baccharis Grove site. On Oimeic proper when we held our service, in contrast to the previous day, the sun shone and the weather was warm. There was a definite change from the winter! I love it when marking the seasons of the year clicks. For the second year in a row we enacted the Scottish Bride-og ceremony and recited the Genealogy of Bride. This year's Bride-og was made from the wheat that sprang up from last year's Bride-og that we cut down at last Lughnasadh.

New Groves!

Nomadic Grove: News from Ontario

Our Grove is called the Nomadic Grove we are located in and around Roseneath Ontario Canada we are currently three sentient members strong with more interested. We are a new and developing Grove we are very committed to the Druid fundamentals with strong Christian undertones, our constitution basically reaffirms a blend of Druidism and Christianity.

Kitsap Peninsula Grove: News from Washington

I am indeed attempting to put together a protogrove, but at present it consists of my family (me and my two teenage boys and 11-year-old daughter).

I've been an initiate of Order of the Mithril Star since its inception as a druid organization, and before that when it was still thinking of itself as Wiccan. Anyway, when a name is chosen, it will be something reflecting our Northwest location. For now let's call it Kitsap Peninsula Grove.

The town in Bremerton, WA

Protogrove July 2001

My email is aspensbutterfly@yahoo.com

previous: aspensbutterfly@home.com

Moved from Colorado in October, 2001



Why Are We Called Reformed?

Reflections on Judaism and Calvinism

By Mairi Ceolmhor, ODAL, DC Grove

Ogmios, and other gods interested in elegant speech, please guide my words to present my own personal views and reach the hearts of my readers; who will not mistake my views for those of the RDNA in general. I'm sorry it's so long, so perhaps it should be read in two parts if you have a short attention. Enough said, let's roll

What's in a name? Depends on the person, I guess. Many people take great pride and derive much support by the names and associations, which they adopt. Labels, much as we hate pigeonholing, provide a reference point for understanding someone. How about members of the Reformed Druids of North America? We've certainly spent a lot of time researching, defending, deprecating and defining the term "Druid," because in the RDNA, we call ourselves "Druids." It is natural to understand the background and implications of that term. But why are we also called "Reformed?" What are we referring to "Year XXII of the Reform" or when we speak of our movement as "The Reform?" Where exactly does the word "Reformed" come from?

The word "*reform*" first appears in surviving English literature as "*reformen*" in 1340, derived from French "*reformer*" or Latin "*reformare*" with a meaning of "make again" or "restoration." After 1440 it added the nuance, "to improve"; and in 1563 "changed for the better" was added. Around 1663, it was used popularly to denote "improvement by removal of some abuse or wrong," due to its use in describing the 16th century religious movement of the "Reformation." "Reformatory Schools" began in 16th century to "reform" juvenile offenders (did the Founders believe they were in a prison-like school?). In days of Prohibition, it was also used to refer to drunkards who have given up the habit. Today, the Oxford English Dictionary describes it as:

1 a. to put or change into an improved form or condition.

1 b. to amend or improve by change of form or removal of faults or abuses.

2. To put an end to evil by enforcing or introducing a better method or course of action.

3. To subject hydrocarbons (gasoline) to cracking to produce new products. (And most Druids like hydrocarbons and they are “crackers”)

Some members of the RDNA understand it in the “recasting” or “re-creation” or “re-constructing” modes with moderation. But, it is primarily under the religious and moral meaning that the term is now used in our general society. So in order to appreciate this term, I looked at two churches (I’m not sure if we really are a church) that use “Reformed” in their title; Reformed Judaism and Reformed Christianity (there’s no Reformed Islam, I think.) Let’s hypothesize how their traditions may (or may not) have affected our own self-identity in the early 60s. If nothing else, when discussing your “reform” during inter-faith dialogue, we should understand what their “reform” means.

We know that a movement, known as “Reformed Judaism,” solidified around 1810, see: www.ccarnet.org/platforms/principles.html. It is described on several sites on the Internet as:

“Judaism marked by a liberal approach in nonobservance of much legal tradition regarded as irrelevant to the present and in shortening and simplification of traditional ritual.”--Anonymous

We Reform Jews are heirs to a vast body of beliefs and practices embodied in TORAH and the other Jewish sacred writings. We differ from more ritually observant Jews because we recognize that our sacred heritage has evolved and adapted over the centuries and that it must continue to do so. And we also recognize that if Judaism were not capable of evolution, of REFORM, it could not survive. Reform Judaism accepts and encourages pluralism. Judaism has never demanded uniformity of belief or practice. But we must never forget that whether we are Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, or Orthodox, we are all an essential part of K'lal Yisrael—the worldwide community of Jewry. <http://rj.org/index.html>

The vernacular language is used in most services. Judaism is adapted to contemporary conditions. The spirit of the law, rather than the letter of the law, is observed. Revelation is seen as coming through the human spirit and nature, as well as sacred text. Traditional home rituals are not as highly valued as in other traditions of Judaism.

<http://www.interfaithcalendar.org/ReformedJudaism.htm>

Reform Jewish services allow for women cantors, choirs, organs and pianos as well as other instruments, and “music” as well as

chanting. Women are also allowed to read from and chant the Torah, as well as pray aloud. The worship service involves the congregation much more than Orthodox and Conservative counterparts. This allows for quite a bit of variety in worship, especially with regards to the musical language used in worship.

<http://simplechemistry.w00tcentral.com/Kyles/rejud.htm>

Gosh, that sounds quite a bit like us! I believe there were at least a few members with a Jewish background in the Founding Days of the Carleton Grove, such as Howard Cherniack and Deborah Frangquist. Throughout our history, some members have knowingly called ourselves “Drues,” and cracked jokes like “That’s funny, you don’t look Druish” in Berkeley. We also had our very own Hassidic Druids of North America branch in St. Louis Missouri during the mid-70s (for more info see, ARDA part 5 at:

<http://www.student.carleton.edu/orgs/Druids/ARDA/ARDA05.pdf>).



Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, Founder of Reformed Judaism.

This belief seems also to niche in with the neo-old-testament style of the early Druid Chronicles of the 60s; e.g. rebuilding the altar, the psalm-like meditations of “David” Frangquist, lonely hermits seeking god in the wilderness, invocation of weather, prophetic ranting at authorities, and images of a persecuted people seeking release (“let my people go” by Cherniack). The prevalent “Cult of Carleton” has an apparent belief that Northfield is a special holy-land (let’s see, that makes Israel in the Middle East and Carleton in the Mid-West...) That, plus an innate desire for academic excellence, love of dancing and song, self-deprecating humor, a world-wide Diaspora, a tendency to delve into anti-defamation and fight persecution, adaptation to various cultures, and inveterate kibitzing, plus being human beings is as far as the resemblance seems to extend.

Of course, there are points of difference. We look to the possibility of more than one divinity. Most of the Druids aren’t obsessed with returning to Ireland. We don’t have sacred scriptures, and don’t read what few words we do have recorded. The ancient Celts were illiterate, and we proudly continue that tradition by not “liter”-ing indiscriminately. We also try to not blow our own horn, “sho far” as I can tell. Nor do we have no dietary customs, except to eat enough to live and limit whiskey during the winter season (which sounds backwards in practicality to me), although the vegetarians amongst us are rather noisy and self-righteous. (I’m a Texan; we worship cows

best when they're inside our bellies and on our feet.) There is a definite lack of a sense of racial separatism (i.e. "us vs. the gentiles") among Druids (with the Celtophiles excepted), and we have no objections to marriage with members of other religions (in fact we seem to practice a bit of all of faiths) as long as they are civil. And, we don't require members to cut off pieces of their bodies (either gender), although the Orthodox Druids have this thing about lopping off the heads of their enemies...Finally, except for Brother Peter, most Druids don't seem to wear strange headgear.



Calvin, founder of Reformed Christianity

We also know that many of the Founders were also members of the Protestant branch of Christianity, such as Fisher, Nelson and David Frangquist, and so the term "Reform" must have had several inescapable meanings that were attractive to them (although the first image of Presbyterian-style Druidism is a bit comical at first.) "Reformed" often indicates a Protestant church that is related to the Calvinist branch, as formed in various continental European countries. Calvinism had a "strong emphasis on the sovereignty of God and especially by the doctrine of predestination." At first, this seemed like a strong mis-match for the RDNA, so I further investigated a lengthy sermon at a "Reformed" site at <http://www.graceonlinelibrary.org/theology/full.asp?ID=625> This is when I discovered other meanings latent in the term. The lecture taught that

"This position commits us to a high view of Scripture. We receive it as the infallible and fully inspired Word of God. **We will bow to no higher authority.** Historically this has meant that we do not elevate church tradition to the level of Scripture--as the Roman Catholic Church has done. But neither do we canonize our own experience, no matter how spectacular or supernatural it may be. Church tradition and personal experience have no independent status and are always subservient to the teaching of the Bible." (My emphasis.)

Again, much of that does not mesh well with most Reformed Druids' beliefs (or, at least the Druids I know). However, the revolt against the original Roman Church (the history of Catholicism is about warring factional beliefs) by a strong-willed minority of the oppressed is quite heroic (despite what many of them would later do to other minorities) and well paralleled by the early Grove at Carleton. The Founders of the RDNA revolted against the Deans of Men and Women for the imposition of mandatory religious attendance, but perhaps not to the extent of nailing 95 complaints onto their office doors. (I'm sure they would have used thumbtacks.) The distrust of "experience" part written above doesn't jive that well with us either. Again, the RDNA apparently does not look highly upon its own literature. Attempts were made to stop publishing the 1976 *Druid Chronicles (Evolved)* and that 1996 *A Reformed*

Druid Anthology, because the works were seen as encouraging dogmatism by providing too much material in a portable format that could encourage spiritual dependency on others' past experiences in written form (i.e. Bible hugging). Brother Mike, an assistant editor of ARDA, recommended the book as a doorstopper or paperweight on a desk; rather than as a 'brain-stopper' or 'dead-weight on the soul'. He is pleased to report that, "very few people have read it." Indeed, the RDNA seems to lean more toward the individual's experiences as having greater spiritual power, rather than asserting the institutionalized fossilized customs of past members. Reading further, I noted:

Because God is sovereign, He is Lord of all of life. Hence, we seek to live all of life to the glory of God. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Lo, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (I Cor.10:31). This is a far-reaching command, which Reformed people have generally taken quite seriously.

Hey, I'm not a Christian myself; but, change that deity to "Earth-Mother," remember that every sovereign has court officials, and add a flavor of Zennish "Everyday life as religion" with unexpected moments of enlightenment, and I can swallow that pretty well. A bit further:

Hand in hand with this missions emphasis goes a concern for revival. Although this word has suffered abuse in recent years, there is nothing unreformed about revival! Again and again throughout the history of the church God has poured out His Spirit to bring times of refreshing.



The Hill of Three Oaks at Carleton, c.1998

In my humble opinion, my own Reformed Druidism believes in the cycle of revivals of Nature and the pressing need for a continual discovery of Awareness and Wisdom through introspection and revelation from the gods. And Gods know!, how the Groves crash and need a good rejuvenating jolt every few years. The coming and going of members, or a change of focus, often breathes new life. So I can parallel with this thinking again. As for missionary activity, I am rather neutral. Make your presence findable and those who come will come. Don't be a public nuisance (unless it's necessary). That's my system. I'm not a missionary of Druidism or grove-oriented like Brothers Isaac, Larson or Mike. I think a well-balanced RDNA Druid can enjoy fulfilling participation in any religion's congregation, without forming their own "druid" grove. This is what I plan to do. It's called "Guerilla Druidism," but I'm not into aping those around me (that would "Gorilla Druidism," something I'm not bananas over.) I'm definitely a "Solitary Druid," see my song in (Bardic Salvo #5); <http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/bard.html>

“To the Reformers the Roman Catholic sacramental system seemed to be part of a transaction that was always going on between man and God. In it, people made sacrifices designed to appease and please God. They would attend the mass, bring offerings, show sorrow, do penance--which might involve self-punishment or compensatory good works--until God would be gracious. The leaders of the church, from priests through bishops and popes, mediated the transaction. The Reformers believed that such an arrangement could easily be misused as a political instrument for forcing rulers to comply with the church's wishes and as a personal instrument for keeping people in uncertainty or terror. It was this vision of Catholicism that helped inspire the Protestant leadership to rebel and to define justification in other terms.”

The RDNA doesn't fit in with this, as we definitely are into pleasing the Gods, sacrificing, and seeking their wishes. I think, if you're going to live somewhere, you should ask those in the neighborhood what the rules are (including Nature, the first resident) and follow them. The Brothers David (Fisher and Frangquist) say much on this subject of sacrifice;

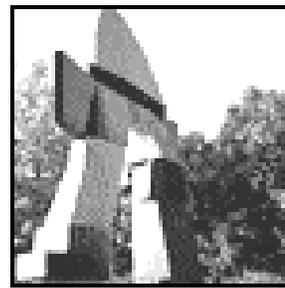
For one man, the sacrifice of life is the offering up of himself to a god or gods. To another, it is an offering up of his mind to a search for truth. As a priest, I repeat the great Answer to calm men's hearts and minds, not as a magical formula of absolution; but some the Answer is an absolution, washing away the distractions of a week of worry, and reaffirming confidence in the idea of a purpose in life. Book of Faith, V.9. The Apocrypha. <http://www.student.carleton.edu/orgs/Druids/ARDA/ARDA-02.pdf>



I feel, that if the Gods don't like us at all, then they shouldn't have made us (or we shouldn't have made them). We all have our good days and bad days, and any omniscient deity should realize that and take it into consideration on what to dish out to us. I also believe that a mother knows what her child needs, no matter whether it gurgles, coos or grimaces; so we should remember that when the debate on "proper" ritual is brought up. Brother MaDagda and Sister Tegwedd claim that the "Reformed" refers to some ancient practices which we have "reformed;" notably, our decision in 1963 to end the sacrifice of animals for religious purposes (including humans--and arguably--even politicians) or the offering of blood. Sister Tegwedd recommends getting consent from the plant sacrifice by some means. "The Book of Customs in the *Druid Chronicles (Reformed)* recommends several Celtic customs and practices, but does not require their mandatory obeisance. Now, I'm not a bible-stroking, verse quoting, steely-tongued debater; but Cherniack once said,

“Have ye not forgotten that we are reformed, yea, we do even call ourselves by the name of Reformed, wherefore we must put behind us those things which do bring offense to our senses;” --Book of Latter Chronicles, Ch 5 Vs 9

The RDNA has been firmly silent on issues of an afterlife (and strangely reticent on a "before-life," by the way!). I think most people to concentrate on this existence, or basically to "get a life." Some members use the RDNA as a garnish or decoration attached to other religions that provide full-service after-life systems; other members treat the RDNA as the main-course and consider it to provide for all their needs. Call me a Humanist, but I think there are enough good reasons to be gentle, responsible and caring member of a community or have a religious life without an "afterlife bribe/threat." I believe that Confucius said, "How can a virtuous man understand the world of ghosts and spirits when they can't even program a VCR to stop blinking 12:00 on its clock?! Oy vey!" or thereabouts.



The mysterious arch made of 10 types of stone, made by a Japanese artist, outside the library at Carleton College, which houses the Druid Archives.

The Protestant "priesthood of believers" revived an ancient concept of a direct link to God(s) without the mediation of professional priests (who still have a role). Members of the RDNA appear to be very careful not to vaunt the offices of the three orders; and we certainly don't get paid well enough to make a living off it. I, personally, see them more as undertaking extra responsibilities rather than as an achievement of "perfection" or "completion" of Druid-ity. In other words, a life-long First Order might just as speedily reach enlightenment or Awareness as a high muckety-muck 9th Order Patriarch, without vigiling or drinking the Waters of Life every weekend. Surely, the Earth-Mother knows her own, and all our fancy titles won't bias her relationship with us. More than likely, according to the ARDA history, these orders were both an attempt to overthrow Fisher's control of the Carleton Grove, plus a carry-over from the Fraternal groups that David Fisher wanted to simulate at Carleton. Yet, I believe they still have proponents who've found a use for them. Going back to the "Reform Sermon";

“In theory, Protestantism has stood throughout its history for a principle of protest that calls under judgment not only the beliefs and institutions of others but also one's own movements and causes. On those grounds, however, most students of Protestantism would recognize that the Protestant tradition has not been substantially more successful than have other faiths at remaining self-critical or at rising above institutional self-defensiveness.”

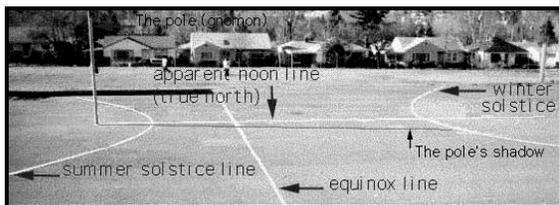
This last aspect seems the firmest legacy of Protestantism for the RDNA. I have heard, "Show me two Druids and I'll give you at least three opinions on any topic." Well, in my opinion, we are a rather argumentative, critical bunch of curmudgeons, who take matters into our hands, and are fiercely suspicious of hierarchy and the institutionalization and fossilization of religion. (And some aren't.) Our name does have a potentially empowering meaning that could encourage activism and rebellion, without demanding it. Yet, like the last part, we also sometimes slip into ruts, avoid hard choices, resist natural adaptations and don't seek to know or correct our errors. Remember the expression that, "It is easier to see smoke coming from a neighbor's kitchen window than to notice the burning roof on top of our own house?" At the end of the ritual, we have to go home, sweep our corners, air the linens, and wash the dishes like our other fellow mortals.

I would add one last shade to the word "Reform" as in OED's 1A definition; its first meaning. That is to change into a new form. As Nature breaks down and rebuilds all things (vegetable, animal or mineral), there is no "eternal," only change and adaptation. Again, in my opinion and twelve years of experience, the RDNA's greatest power has been the power to take older diverse creeds, traditions, rules, and faiths and transform them into a product (perhaps even "improved") by using our humor, reflection and piercing inspection such that could meet the current needs of our grove members. As Brother MaDagda states, "As reformed druid, I take what I can from our ancestor s of the Oaken Brotherhood and reshape, reform it to fit within this time, this age."

Until now, the usual response to "Why are you called Reformed?" has always been (and Brother Mike just loves this joke), is "Because we also worship bushes...except elected ones..." I hope that this essay will help you to go beyond that sort of reply in some way and start a good dialogue with other faiths.

Peace!
Mairi Ceolmhor

P.S. Proudly call yourself Reformed Druids when the Celtophiles criticize you. We can stand up to them also. Perhaps you can console them that without a "Reformed Druid" you can't have an "Orthodox Druid"?



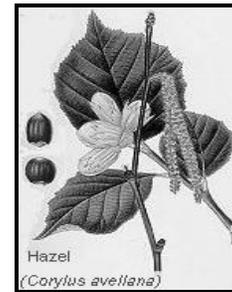
Things to Do for Spring Equinox

By Alex Strongbow

Well, that's a really hard question. We know that most sowing in the fields would be done by now and it was time to change to spring clothes and spend more time outdoors. When it comes down to, we're talking about eggs and sunlight, right?

1. Break down, and enjoy the Easter egg decoration party. Especially the Ukrainian style wax and decoration. If you're an overachiever, go into Faberge.
2. Have half an omelet, sunny side up, of course.

3. Hide treasures in the forest or park. Tall grasses equal stepped-on eggs.
4. Be early for April Fool's day.
5. Go out to the pub for Saint Patrick's Day and live it up.
6. Spend the whole day with a watch and see if day REALLY equals night.
7. Set up and synchronize your solar-calendar (that rock-henge in your back yard. A great site, for setting up your stones in a parking lot or a field is www.efn.org/~jack_v/AstronomicalCalendar.html Strangely, the design looks like a basketball courts lines! Could there be a connection?!
8. Get your garden planted, if you haven't started. Try old-fashioned "heirloom seeds" at www.seedsavers.org or Seed Savers Exchange (SSE) at 3076 North Winn Road, Decorah Iowa 52101 at 319-382-5990.
9. Make waffles. Write "Clinton" with maple syrup. Hee. Hee. Enjoy taking halfway opinions on important subjects and carefully study both sides of issues.
10. Change your wardrobe to summer-style suits, sandals and wear a flower. I've been thinking. Many religions have strange headgear or hairstyles, and we haven't since that weird "bald-forehead" style in the 450s AD, so let's go out for straw hats?!



The Hazel Tree

By Sam Peeples, Free-roaming Druid

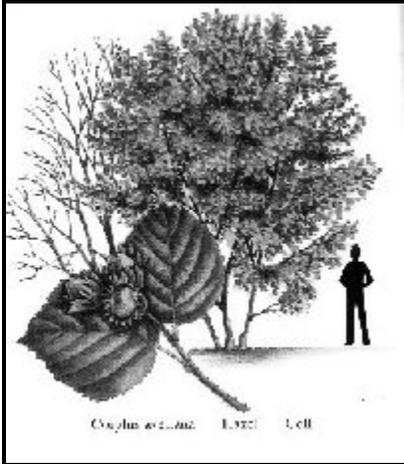
Greetings everyone, due to the thunderous applause (i.e. three people) on my birch article, I've been requested to write an article on the Hazel Tree. Its natural side topics of Salmon and Wells (in a Celtic context) will be discussed by Mike and Naomi. I can't attest to all the following information 's validity, but it will provide a good overview of its associations.

Etymology

The European Hazel tree's scientific name is *corylus avellana* and America's Filbert tree is named *corylus americana*. (Witch Hazel, although externally resembling Hazel, is actually *hamamelis virginiana*, with exploding seedpods, but it is apparently native only to New England.) The genus' name *Corylus* comes from the Greek *korys* meaning helmet, a reference to the calyx covering the nut; *avellana* commemorating the small town of Avella in Italy where the nuts were famously cultivated. The English name for the tree and its nut is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word *haesel knut*, *haesel* meaning cap or hat, thus referring to the cap of leaves on the nut on the tree (or *haesl* possibly signified a baton of authority.) The Gaelic word for hazel is *Coll*, pronounced "cull," and it was popular in men's names. See also: German *Haselnuss*, French *Noisette*, Dutch *Hazelnoot*. Its nickname is "Lamb's Tail." There is often a resident spirit.

Hazel appears frequently in place names in the western Scotland, such as the Isle of Coll and Bar Calltwin in Appin,

both in Argyll-shire where the tree and its place names are the most common. Perhaps even Caledonia (Hill of Hazels) is a derivative. In Gaelic, a hazel grove was calltuin, (modern Scots Gaelic calltainn) and various places called Calton are associated with entrances to the Otherworld, one being the famous Calton Hill between Leith and Edinburgh. It also appears in the name of Clan Colquhoun whose clan badge is the hazel. Tara, the chief seat of the kingship of Ireland was possibly built near a hazel wood, and the great monastery of Clonord was build over a sacred pagan place known as The Wood of the White Hazel: Ross-Finnchuill.



Physical Characteristics

The Hazel has quite the reputation in European lore as a potent source of magical might (the other two being Oak and Hawthorne), probably due to its ability to coppice into dozen young trees. Hazel is considered a small deciduous tree, usually with multiple stems and a spreading habit of its roots. It is actually an enormous shrub that can grow into a tree (but is usually coppiced), which may reach a height of 20-60 feet. It is hardy, moderately shade-tolerant and grows best on heavy but well-drained soil. Hazel, rather like Alder, prefers to be near water but is very accommodating as long as it is not too dry. Its narrow-pointed, toothed leaves are about 5-12 cm and are alternating. As a tree, its maximum life span is about 60 years, but when coppiced back it can survive up to 600 years and still produce a good crop of poles. Their wood is white to reddish, tough and flexible

It is naturally an under-story plant, particularly in oak and ash woods. Hazel trees grow as a clump of slender trunks. When they do adopt a one-trunk-and-canopy tree shape, they readily respond to coppicing, practices which can actually extend and even double the lifespan of a hazel. Either way, people have put the young shoots or whips and the thin trunks to a variety of uses. The management of hazel coppice and "coppice with standards" is a precise and ancient craft. Traditionally, a coppice would be cut on a 7-15 year rotation and the woodland divided into the same number of sections as years in the rotation so one part of the wood was harvested every year.



The hazel would be identified in the late winter by its branchy, hairy twigs carrying greenish buds. The opening of the leaves in April are large and rounded, and double teeth on its edges. The bark of the hazel tree is very smooth, with shades of brown and grey. Male and female flowers grow on the same plant--the male catkins open as the first warm days of spring arrive into bunches of bright yellow, drooping "lamb tails;" female flowers on the same branches appear as tiny pink tufts on plump buds.

The fertilized flowers develop into the well-known clusters of nuts, which turn brown in October.

I hate to imply that trees are only good when we can use them for some purpose. Trees have certain rights to unfettered existence, as do all living creatures. That said, this is how you could utilize their bounty.

Practical Uses for the Tree's Wood

- The interior of the walls of many ancient homes was "wattle and daub," using coppiced hazel branches, woven into a lattice, and mud or clay daubed onto it. Some consider this the origin of Celtic art interlacing. The Glastonbury Abbey is rumored to have been built on a Druidic "hedge school" built of wattle. Daub is made of wet clay, dung, chopped straw and lime powder. When this dried, a thin wall could last hundreds of year if not dampened.
- Coppicing is a skilled job that requires practice and only minimal hand tools; usually, just a billhook, axe, and mallet, as well as a drawknife for stripping the trees of their bark.
- Hazel stems split lengthwise and twist easily to make hurdles, thatching, liggers, spars, sways, and pegs. Hazel is or was used for fencing (which blessed a home), hurdles, barrel hoops, walking sticks, fishing rods, fish weirs, whip handles, ties for fastening thatch, pegs, fuel for ovens, torches, and charcoal for gunpowder, domestic fires, and ovens.
- Woodland crafts using hazel are also enjoying a resurgence, and hazel wattle hurdles have even been used as sound screens along motorways.
- Like willow, young coppiced hazel shoots were used to weave a variety of baskets and other container www4.hmc.edu:8001/humanities/beckman/baskets.htm
- Hazel has long been a favorite wood from which to make staffs, whether for ritual Druidic use, for medieval self-defense, as staffs favored by pilgrims, or to make shepherds crooks, bishop's crosiers and everyday walking sticks. In the case of the latter two, the pliancy of the hazel's wood was used to bend the stems into the required shape, though it was also customary to bend the hazel shoots when still on the tree to "grow" the bend into a crook or walking stick.
- Hazel leaves are usually the earliest native ones to appear in spring and often the last to fall in autumn, and were fed to cattle as fodder.
- Hazel nuts (see article below) were a popular source of food.

Other Links on Hazel Trees

Lots of trivia on the Hazel:

<http://www.treesforlife.org.uk/tfl.mythhazel.html>.

A Robert Graves point of view:

<http://webpages.charter.net/orrin8/hazel.htm>.

Many associations:

<http://www.dutchie.org/Tracy/saherb.html#hazel>.

To order a tree.:

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

Oodles of information on Hazel from OBOD:

<http://druidry.org/obod/trees/hazel.html>.

Useful information on all animals and plants:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/>.

Growing a hazel tree:

<http://www.growingnative.org.uk/hazel.htm>.

A nice summary of this page:

Magical and Medical Uses for the Hazel

- Hazel indicates intuition to lead to the source, poetry, divination and meditation.
- It is said the Hazel tree takes nine years to bear fruit from the time of planting; nine years of experience before it will imbue its fruit (or offspring) with its essence. A Hindu teaching says, "keep to yourself what you have been taught until it is yours to share," for only then can it truly be taught again. Hazel asks us to learn the values of time, patience, and experience, and allows us to express ourselves in art, poetry and music.
- Hazel represents letter "C" in the "ogham alphabet ("C" is for Coll), and often used for constructing Ogham wands. The wands of the Druids were made from hazel branches and even the staffs of the Celtic Christian Bishops were made from hazel to this day. Hermes' magic rod may have been made from hazel.
- Midir--An Irish god, lord of the wondrous land of Mag Mor, the tutor of the god Oengus, was struck by a stake cut from a hazel tree. Midir loses an eye that is replaced for him by the god of healing Dian-Cecht. Aonghus Og also carried one such wand. Sabd, mother of Oisin (son of Fionn), is turned into a deer by such a wand of a Druid.
- It is one of the nine woods of a Beltaine Fire (Birch, Oak, Rowan, Willow, Hawthorn, Hazel, Apple, Vine, Fir) www.iit.edu/~phillips/personal/lore/belfire.html
- Until the seventeenth century, a forked Hazel stick was used to divine the guilt of persons in cases of murder and theft. Forked twigs of hazel were also favored by diviners, especially for finding water or treasure.
- Rain-bringing methods included sprinkling water on stones whilst reciting a charm, or tossing a little flour into a spring and stirring with a hazel-rod.
- Diarrhea and menstrual bleeding can be aided by mixing the dried husks and shells with red wine. Hamamelis virginiana in "Witch Hazel" oil is an outstanding treatment for hemorrhoids.
- Newfoundland: An old custom to cure a child of hernia was to split a green witch hazel tree and pass the child through it.
- Russia: Sometimes the cowherds symbolically beat the cattle three times with a willow or hazel branch to make the animals grow well
- Yorkshire: Soil taken from under a hazel bush was fed to Nidderdale cows that had lost their cud, while the earth underneath a freshly cut turf was reckoned good for scour in Swaledale calves. Hazel lambs-tail catkins were placed around the hearth to help the ewes at lambing time and rowan collars were put around lambs' necks; while if a lamb died unexpectedly, its corpse would be hung in a thorn or rowan tree, a custom found elsewhere not restricted to sheep.
- Hazel also has protective uses as anti-lightning charms. Gather hazel tree branches on Palm Sunday and keep them in water. Possibly a continuation of a Norse association of Hazel with Thor.
- A sprig of Hazel or a talisman of two Hazel twigs tied together with red or gold thread to make a solar cross can be carried as a protective good luck charm.
- A cap of Hazel leaves and twigs ensures good luck and safety at sea, and protects against shipwrecks.
- Finland: The stripped hazel stick was a sacred symbol. If there was struggle about a sown field they just set up a stripped stick until the matter was solved

- The week called Karwoche in German, or week of mourning or sorrow, begins with Palm Sunday. In lieu of palms, in Bad Kohlgrub and Mittenwald, the pussy-willow branches are bundled, tied with ribbons and attached to the end of a much longer hazel branch. Parishioners parade their creations as they proceed to church to have the bushels blessed. A good-natured competition usually arises as to whose branches are the longest, especially among the young boys.
- Earlier, in the fifteenth century, a recipe for summoning a fairy involves burying hazel wands "under some hill whereas you suppose fayries haunt."
- If you sleep under a Hazel bush you will have vivid dreams.
- Hazel trees were often planted near holy wells and strips of cloth were hung on them to remove illness of the supplicant.
- In English villages, country-dwellers associate a prolific show of hazel catkins with the advent of lots of babies, and late as the 1950s, the saying, "Plenty of catkins, plenty of prams" was taken quite seriously.
- Any Hazel twigs, wood or nuts should be gathered after sundown on Samhain since it will be at the peak of its magickal energy. On the waning moon, hazel and willow were not cut for baskets, nor was wood cut for boats. Hazel for magickal purposes must not be cut with a knife, but with a flint.



The Hazel Nut Itself

In days gone by, hazelnuts would have provided a source of protein since Neolithic times in England (South Cadbury and Avebury digs), and they were often ground up and mixed with flour to be made into nourishing breads. Hazelnuts, of course, can be eaten, and are a good source of phosphorus, magnesium, potassium, copper, protein and fatty acids. The Gaelic word for hazelnuts is cno, and wisdom is cnocach. From the hazelnut we find the phrase "in a nut shell," because all wisdom and knowledge was compacted and contained within the nut. There are many stories of salmon eating hazelnuts, which then gained one speckled spot per hazelnut. Eating of hazelnuts would bestow wisdom on the recipient (such as bears or humans) and would then bestow gray hairs or freckles. Cultivated hazelnuts, called filberts, take their name from St. Philibert's Day on August 20th, the date by which hazelnuts were supposed to start ripening. They should be sown immediately after gathering, to keep them moist.

- Holy Cross Day on 14 September was traditionally given as a school holiday for children to go nutting, a custom that persisted in England until the First World War. An old saw proclaims that a girl who goes nutting on Sunday will meet the Devil and have a baby before she can wed.
- Various places celebrated Nutcrack Night sometime during November, when the stored nuts were opened, though apparently some parishioners were in the habit of taking hazelnuts to church on the following Sunday to be cracked noisily during the sermon. These people were called "crackers."
- On Halloween (also known as "Nut-Crack Night") The custom of "burning nuts" involves two nuts being placed in the fire, one is to bear your own name, the other that of the person you love. If the nuts burn quietly side-by-side then the relationship will be prosperous.

- Girls were told to place hazelnuts along the front of the fire grate, each one to symbolize one of her suitors. She could then divine her future husband by chanting, "If you love me, pop and fly; if you hate me, burn and die."
- Assign the name of your passion to a nut and throw it in the fire while saying:

"A Hazelnut I throw in the flame, to this nut
I give my sweetheart's name, If blazes the
nut, so may thy passion grow, For 'twas my
nut that did so brightly glow."

- In England, the Hazelnut is a symbol of fertility--a bag of nuts bestowed upon a bride will ensure a fruitful marriage, often by an older woman in the village at her threshold or thrown like rice at the wedding.
- Greek: After an arrangement was made, the matchmaker would return to the house of the bride where the announcement that the "Scartsofoli" was accepted without a problem. There was a custom and "Andeti" of the bridegroom to send hazelnuts and walnuts with the matchmaker so that the bride would treat relatives and friends who would visit her to express their felicitations.
- Children born in the autumn could have the "milk of the nut," said to be of great benefit in their future health.
- There was also a belief that hazelnut feed could increase a cow's milk yield.
- The milk taken from the nuts can be used to treat a chronic cough (add honey and water), and when mixed with pepper helps stop runny eyes and noses.
- Finn as a youth ate a salmon, which was fed on hazelnuts of knowledge. Finn's mighty shield was of hazel wood. An old Fenian story tells how Maer, the wife of one Bersa of Berramain, fell in love with Finn and tried to seduce him with hazelnuts from the Well of Segais bound with love charms. Finn refused to eat them, pronounced them "nuts of ignorance" rather than nuts of knowledge and buried them a foot deep in the earth.
- Today hazelnuts continue to be eaten, though more frequently in luxury foods such as chocolate and as hazelnut butter, and as a Christmas delicacy.
- Hazelnuts were carried as charms in pockets to ward off rheumatism, lumbago ("elfshot"), and toothache in some parts of England and Ireland
- "Hazel Rings"--make a string of nine hazelnuts and tie the ends to form a circle. Bless the ring in the smoke of the Samhain fire. You can hang the ring in your home for protection in the coming year

Recipes galore.

<http://www.nwhazelnut.com/recipes.html>.

More Hazelnut recipes.

<http://www.hazelnutcouncil.org/winning.htm>.

The edible Hazel catalog.

<http://www.hazelnut.com/cgi-bin/hgo/recipes.cgi>.



The Salmon of Knowledge

By Mike Scharding, D.C. Grove

The Salmon have been migrating from the Atlantic to the headwaters of British and Irish streams since the retreat of the glaciers of the Ice Age 20,000 years ago. In doing so, they have captured the imagination of many a Celt in the Islands and Continent with their ability to transcend boundaries and their heroic struggles.

The Salmon is a fish that has adapted to both fresh and salt water. They spawn in freshwater and as tiny fish enter the great ocean. The Salmon of the British Isles travel to the area of Baffin Island and Greenland to grow up. After three or four years, they return in the spring to their native stream head. They stop eating for the duration of the trip, relying on body fat during the journey. They will brave dams and leap up over nine feet into the air to surmount any barriers in their quest, or die of exhaustion, and do not turn back. Strangely, the female always dies after spawning, but those returning for a second spawning are called a "celt."

Plentiful details on their ecology can be found on the Internet, especially these two sites.

Pacific Salmon details

<http://www.hitime.com/sdscptn.htm#Chinook>

Atlantic Salmon details

<http://www.asf.ca/Overall/atlsalm.html>



Mythology of the Salmon

Of all the fish in Celtic legends, the Salmon is the mostly popular. There are reportedly many Pictish stones bearing Salmon inscriptions preceding the Gaelic take-over of Scotland. The oldest story is from the Book of Invasions (Leabhar Gabhala) that tells of successive waves of colonization of Ireland. Tuan mac Carell describes the primeval invasions of Ireland, which he witnessed, to Saint Finnen. He also claims to have been reincarnated successively as a stag, boar, eagle, and salmon. During his various shape-shiftings he witnessed all the great events that took place in Ireland and he passed on this knowledge to the historians before he eventually died. In this last form he was caught and eaten by an Irish queen, who conceived him as a human child. Similarly, the legendary Welsh poet Taliesin claims:

I have been a blue salmon
 I have been a dog
 I have been a stag
 I have been a roebuck on the mountain
 I have been a grain discovered...\
 I rested nine nights in her womb, a child
 I have been dead, I have been alive.
 I am Taliesin.
 [Matthews 1991]

The Salmon is mythically famous for its association with Hazelnuts. The primary story is that of young Fionn (nicknamed Demne) who as a boy was learning bardic skills from Finegas on the rivers of Boyne. Finegas had been patiently fishing for seven years for the Salmon of Knowledge, which had fed on fallen hazelnuts from nine magical (non-descript) hazel trees. The Salmon gained a spot for every hazelnut that it ate. Soon after Fionn's arrival, the fish was caught. Fionn was frying the fish for Finegas, who was off on a trip, and a boil rose on the fish, he pushed it down with his thumb and burned himself. When he put the thumb in his mouth, the knowledge had all transferred to him. Finegas was, of course, a little disappointed, but Fionn shared the remainder with him and promised another Salmon would come along soon.

Fionn's way of discovering whatever was happening and hidden was always the same. A shallow, oblong dish of pure, pale gold was brought to him. This dish was filled with clear water. Then Fionn would bend his head and stare into the water, and as he stared he would place his thumb in his mouth under his "Tooth of Knowledge," his "wisdom tooth."

Great Story on salmon and Fionn.

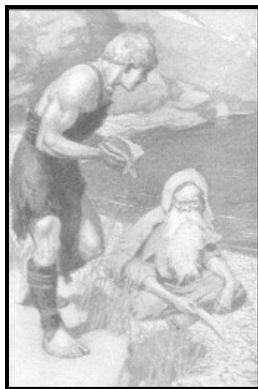
<http://members.aol.com/guenhumara/fionn.html>

Other boyhood tales of Fionn.

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/celt/ift/ift02.htm>

More on Fionn.

http://www.ealaghol.demon.co.uk/celtenc/celt_f2b.htm

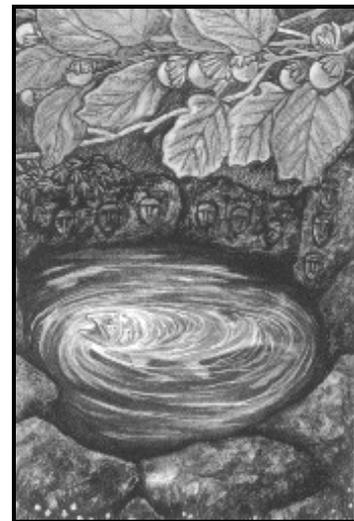


The ancient Fianna warband had many special fighting techniques that would be the envy of any martial art movie. One of the most famous besides Caber tossing (to throw bridges for chariots over rivers) was the "Hero's Salmon Leap," which

consisted of leaping on top of a standing shield and leaping high up for a "smackdown" on your opponent.

There are also references in Goidelic lore to Salmon being kept in wells (near Hazel tree orchards) for oracular consultation. In the ancient text "Cormac's Vision" the hero sees a royal fortress with four houses in it, and a "bright well" surrounded by ancient hazels. In the well were five salmon, which ate the nuts as they dropped. In the palace, Cormac meets Manannan the sea-god who reveals the Land of Promise to him and presents him with a magic cup and branch. www.enya.org/stories/story06.htm.

Later on, Cormac MacArt, king of Ireland in 266 AD, died at Cleiteach, the bone of a salmon sticking in his throat, on account of the siabhradh genii which Maelgenn, the Druid, incited at him, after Cormac had turned against the Druids, on account of his adoration of God in preference to them. So beware Druids bearing dinner. In Christian monastic communities, there were often salmon ponds for eating. In May 11, 1113AD; "A salmon was caught at Cluain-mic-Nois this year, which was twelve feet in length, twelve hands in breadth without being split, and three hands and two fingers was the length of the fin of its neck." (This is the site of the ruins of the monastery of Clonmacnoise in County Offaly on the River Shannon below Lough Ree and above Portumna, which is in County Roscommon. The arms of Co. Meath incorporate the salmon also.) Christ is also known as in t-eo sénta cas corcra, "The Blessed Curled Purple Salmon." This seems strange, considering that grown salmon prefer salt-water, but I suppose they can remain in fresh-water if not given a choice;



Virtually all salmon live in the ocean, and return to streams to spawn (or are farmed in net pens along the coastline) but Atlantic salmon have been experimented on in terms of stocking in lakes, and they seem to do well, but still won't self-propagate. In other words, they have to be re-stocked to remain as a stable population. There are now some types of Atlantic Salmon called "freshwater salmon." Apparently, they have been farmed and adapted to freshwater by people. This, in fact, makes them much more like trout than salmon.

Water spirits are plentiful in Celtic countries as quoted below

"the spirit of the waters was often embodied in an animal, usually a fish. Even now in Brittany the fairy dweller in a has the form of an eel, while in the seventeenth century Highland wells contained spring fish so sacred that no-one dared to catch them. In Wales Saint Cybi's well contained a huge eel in whose virtues the villagers believed, and terror prevailed when any one dared to take it from the water. Two sacred fish still exist in a holy well at Nant Peris, and are replaced by others when they die, the dead fish being buried. This latter act, solemnly performed, is a true sign of the divine or sacred character of the animal. Many wells with sacred fish exist in Ireland, and the fish have usually some supernatural quality, they never alter in size, they become invisible, or they take the form of beautiful women." [MacCullach]

Salmon, like the proverbial "Frog in the Well" can plum the depths of the unconsciousness for lost treasures and truths. Gantz's Early Irish Myths and Sagas has the story of Froech and Findabair. Findabair loses her ring and her father accuses her of lying to him in order to date Froech. Findabair later prepares a salmon for him that had swallowed it. Saint Kentigern is similarly associated with the Salmon. The story of St. Kentigern is similar. He was the patron saint of Glasgow, from which he proselytized in Cumbria. Folklore makes him the grandson of Urien of Rheged. He and his mother were set adrift in a coracle but were miraculously saved. He vindicated the virtue of a queen who had given her ring to her lover: when the king demanded to see it, it was discovered in a salmon's belly. The salmon is Kentigern's device. During a time of drought St Kevin fed his community with salmon brought to him by an otter. He was reputed to have baptized Merlin before his death. This last story is borrowed from the legend of SUIBHNE GELT, who was confessed by Saint Moling after a life of paganism and madness.

There are many legends of holy wells that held salmon in them and suddenly became great rivers due to an accident. One legend tells of the origin of the river Shannon in Ireland. The Boyne and well of Segais has a very similar story with a young lady named Bóann whose curiosity was too great. Latis was a Lake Goddess who later became a Goddess of ale and mead. Evidence of her worship still remains at Birdsowald, England. Latis fell in love with a salmon, which represents knowledge, and out of pity for her, the other deities turned him into a warrior. However, each winter he must submit to becoming a salmon again until spring.



In Brythonic Lore (i.e. Welsh), the Mighty Salmon of Llyn Llyw (The Lake of the Leader) was so ancient and powerful that he gained a truce with the Eagle of Gwern Abwy, who agreed to take 50 fish-spears out of the venerable Salmon's back for him. In the Arthurian tale of Culhwch and Olwen, it is the salmon--and only the salmon--which carried Kai and Gwrhyr Gwalstawd Ieithoe on its shoulders to find the Mabon, the Divine Child of Celtic tradition, the being who brings eternal

life and vigor. Indeed, fairies are known to wear stylish salmon-skin caps, showing a link to the afterworld.

The Well Rite (slow load)

<http://www.conjure.com/wisdom.html>

Salmon Chalice

<http://www.sourceworksceramics.com/salmon%20large.asp>

Christian Salmon?

<http://www.monasticdialog.com/bulletins/64/CelticSpirituality.htm>

Magical Lore of the Salmon

The salmon was revered by the Celts. It was from eating the Salmon of Knowledge that Fionn mac Cumhal gained his wisdom. The salmon has been substituted by the herring in modern Scottish Samhain customs. You must eat a raw or roasted salt herring, in silence, just before going to bed. You will dream of your future partner offering you a drink of water with which to quench your thirst. A similar version is found in the Isle of Man:

- "A Manx girl should eat a salt herring, bones and all, without drinking or speaking; she must then retire to bed backwards; in her dreams she will see her future spouse coming to bring her a drink." [Hull, p. 237]
- In the Hebrides, the salt herring may be substituted with the Bonnach Salainn (salt bannock)--a cake made from meal, with a substantial amount of salt added.
- Traditionally, Salmon was presented at royal banquets with honey and butter.
- Among commoners, salmon was popular during Lent and on days of fast and abstinence. In folk medicine, Salmon gall was used as a remedy for blindness or to correct poor vision.
- The Salmon is referred to as the "King of Fish," and is never spoken of directly while fishing or in a boat; being referred to as "The Red Fish" or "The Spotted One." To this day, in some parts of Ireland, the Salmon is invoked for curses and blessings:

• The treatment of the boiled broken little fish to you
The Roasting of the salmon to the very end on you
Slainte an Bhradain Chugat: The health of the salmon to you.

Recipe of the Salmon

Grilled Salmon with Lemon Hazelnut Sauce

By Angela Major

MARINADE

- The juice of 1 large lemon
- 2 Tbsp grated lemon rind
- 1/3 cup Frangelico (Hazelnut Liqueur)
- 1/4 cup coarsely chopped shallots (scallions-mild/sweet onion OK)
- 2/3 cup white wine or dry sherry
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

MAIN INGREDIENTS

- 4 to 6 4-oz King or Chinook Salmon steaks
- 3/4 cup (1/2 lb whole or 1/3 lb shelled) chopped roasted hazelnuts (Filberts)

1/3 cup canola or peanut oil or clarified butter

- Combine all of the marinade ingredients (i.e. not the nuts and Lemon Zest) in a zipper bag. Do not use a metal container; it'll change the taste.
- Marinate the salmon in this mixture 4 hours or overnight.
- To roast hazelnuts, spread shelled nuts in a shallow pan and roast
- In a 275 degree oven for 20 to 30 minutes, until skins crack. To remove skins, rub warm hazelnuts with a rough washcloth. Chop relatively finely - to the consistence of Grape Nuts. DO not put them into a food processor—you'll get Hazelnut butter.
- Combine the roasted hazelnuts and last 2 tablespoons freshly grated lemon zest. Set aside
- Grill 6-8 minutes per side per one inch of thickness of fish. Baste with marinate during cooking.
- Garnish with the lemon-hazelnut mixture.
- Serves 4 people.



Figure 1 A tree by a well bestrewn with ribbons.

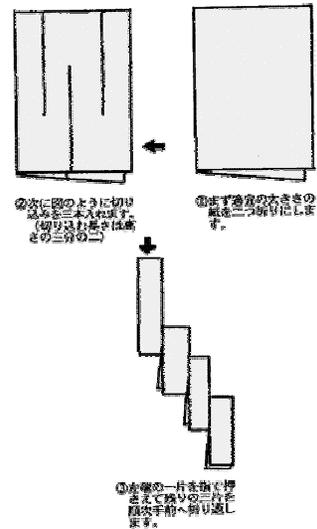
All's Well That's Dug Well

By Nozomi Kibou, Akita Grove

Wells are holes in the ground with water. Water is life. Water moves below our feet in aquifers and over our head in clouds. It is in our bodies of all creatures and in the Earth-Mother. Hazel is used in dowsing to find water and salmon live always in water.

Holy Wells in Celtic countries are often dug holes in hills or valleys. Water falls on hill, goes in earth, is cleaned, and pops out in well. Many legends say that wells were the start of rivers, and are sacred; you must not make them angry. Never do laundry in them. Like caves, men can't resist going into holes, and see them as entering the Earth-Mother, to the wet inside where life starts. In England, many dry wells are filled with bones (pig, dog, horse, sheep, taxmen), coins, tree trunks, grain. Like the RDNA, they gave a part of the harvest to gods of the Earth and hoped for a big reward the next year.

■紙垂の作り方(例)

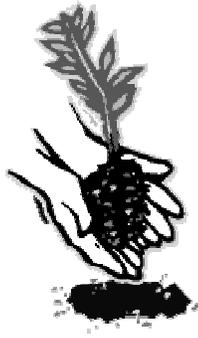


The Hazel grows near wells in Europe and famous saints (i.e. gods with new name) planted them. Many wells' water will heal blindness, childlessness, or pain (like Onsens in Japan). Sometimes fish (salmon) or snakes live in the well, and people talk to them after giving a penny. This is a famous wishing-well custom. If people are sick, they will tie a strip of clothing on the hazel tree. The tree will wash the sick out of the clothes and person. The Irish have a story of a hazel nut falling in water, eaten by fish, and fish eaten by man, who is wiser.

In Japan, wells are also the doors to underworld. In the now popular "Inu yasha" by Mrs. Rumiko Takahashi (she wrote "Ranma 1/2") a young girl falls in a well and goes to 1135 AD Japan, and fights demons like St. Patrick. Mike Scharding says the English version is in comic book stores now. The town wells are now covered or locked. Too many people committed suicide in wells during WWII from poverty. (Akita is number one in Japan for suicides and alcoholism.) Japan is a wet country, with many people walking into the ocean or dying at fishing. That is why I started the Order of Llyr here.

There are positive things about wells too. Every shrine (Jinja) has a spring or well or river for washing of hands and face and mouth (like Muslims). In the old days, you took a whole bath and changed clothes there. People are too busy, now. Japanese shrines often have very old trees next to the well. When people buy a fortune at a shrine, they tie it onto the tree and hope it comes true. They also write wishes on wood and hang them on the tree.

This is where Japanese custom of making holy paper comes from. In Japanese, "Kami" means paper, gods, and hair. All shrines have special papers called "O-Shide" or "go-hei" that are blessed by priests. O-Shide are attached to strings to protect or show that a place is holy. Hazel trees are protection too, so maybe you'll tie a string of O-Shide around your grove's hazel tree?



Winter Tree Care and Planting Tips

From the February edition of Leaf Lines, Newsletter of The National Arbor Day Foundation. Though spring officially begins on March 20 this year, in many places it is still cold and there is still snow on the ground. These are excellent recommendations until the weather warms.

1. Watching Your Trees In Winter

Take a walk outside to observe the buds and stems of your trees. Look at your mature trees and any new plantings from last fall or spring. What will you find?

Carefully remove a sealed bud and gently open it. Inside you will find tiny immature leaves and perhaps the beginnings of a flower. The buds are triggered to life each spring by day length. Temperature changes hasten or slow down the development of the buds.

Select several trees in your yard and tie a piece of string to their branches. Take just a moment each day, or once a week, to carefully inspect the tightly closed buds on the branches. Plant breeders use this very technique to search for ways to develop cold-hardy trees, particularly for the fruit industry.

Watching the buds awake and noting the date of the event is called phenology* an ancient forerunner of ecology. Mark on your calendar the exact dates the buds actually emerge on each tree. You can also record when your trees blossom and leaf out. Each year you will begin to learn more about the characteristics of your trees. This process of keeping yearly records will prove to be very useful--especially if you are raising fruit trees.

2. Wabbits and Other Wascals in Winter

While you are on your winter walks you may encounter other signs of life in your orchards or gardens besides simple bud development. Check your trees for signs of rodent damage. It is common for mice or rabbits to chew the tender bark of a young tree right down to the heartwood. Don't worry...if you find a girdled tree, the damage can usually be repaired by a technique known as "bridge grafting." Bridge grafting literally bridges the gap in the living tissues so they can continue the tree's growth as well as transport needed nutrients to and from the leaves and roots.

Mark the site of the damaged tree and return with a sharp knife. Remove all frayed or loose bark from around the wound. Next, remove a sucker or a slender, long, branchlet from the tree and cut it into lengths just a little bit longer than the wound, measured from top to bottom. Sharpen these sticks into wedges at both ends and insert them under the bark at the top and bottom of the wound. Several of these "bridges" will be needed, spaced at intervals around the tree.

Finally, protect the wound by covering the entire area with grafting wax. In a few years, the wound will be healed and the tree will grow normally. If you can't find grafting wax at your local nursery, try searching for it on the web.

How to do Bridge Grafting



1.

Remove dead or damaged bark from the trunk, using a sharp knife, creating a notched pattern as shown.



2.

Cut a slender branch into segments just longer than the wound, with wedge-like points on each end.



3.

Wedge the segments beneath bark to facilitate new growth over the wound. Cover twigs and entire wound with grafting wax.

3. Consider Your Planting Site

While the act of planting a tree may only involve a few hours, proper care and maintenance may last a lifetime. This winter, care for your new trees by simply taking the time to study the future site upon which they will be planted. Consider the environment in which you'll be working--whether you are planting on your property or planning an Arbor Day tree-planting event at a local park.

In selecting a tree, your first consideration must be what the tree needs. In other words, what environmental factors limit the ability of a particular species to live a healthy life? One indication is to look at the native species in your area. Some non-native species and horticulturally-developed cultivars may also do well on your site. Remember to always select the right tree for the right place.

4. Buy Your Trees Now for Spring Planting

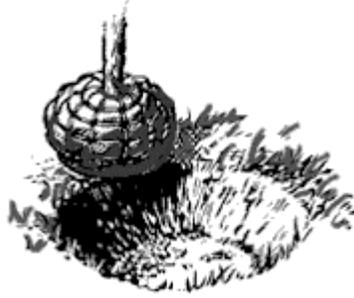
While you are on those winter walks, consider how your trees define the scenery. Now is the time to create plans for your desired landscape. What would you like to see when you take this same walk in future years? Imagine planting trees and shrubs to create a beautiful, productive, "edible landscape" surrounding your home with delicious fruits and nuts to benefit your family and the wildlife outside your back door.

Consider planting some of our fruit trees...a Stayman Winesap Apple, an Early Richmond Cherry, or perhaps a delicious Belle Of Georgia Peach. If you like nut trees, you might choose the beautiful Hall's Hardy Almond, American Hazelnut, Shellbark Hickory, or Black Walnut. The Sourwood is an excellent honey tree for beekeepers.

To brighten up future winter scenes around your home, select trees for their bright colorful fruit, unique branch structure, or peeling bark. Our online Tree Store offers many possibilities. Some of our favorites are the Prairiefire Flowering Crab, River Birch, Lacebark Elm, Northern Catalpa, or the Kousa Dogwood.

Make a large photocopy of your property plat. Here you can create an inventory of all the trees on your property and position them on the map. Include the botanical names of the trees for your reference. As you select trees for later plantings, you can share this map with friends, nursery growers, or use it to consult with your local County Cooperative Extension Agent.

As you plant trees, work to shape your landscape with a diverse selection of strategically placed plantings to create a landscape of beautiful, useful, edible trees for all four seasons.



5. Forcing Spring To Arrive

Now that the coldest days of winter are behind us, you can slip outside on a mild day to take care of some dormant winter pruning. Remove any crossing limbs that might rub together, sucker shoots, and any broken or dead branches. From the cuttings you remove, save a few heavily budded branches for forcing indoors to brighten up your home with colorful blooms and leaves. Good candidates for successful forcing are hazelnuts, redbuds, willows, forsythias, apple and crabapples, magnolias, and red maples.

Bring your cuttings (up to 1/2 inch diameter or smaller) inside and place them in a bucket of tepid water (about 100 degrees) with a floral preservative. The preservative will increase hydration and control any bacterial growth. Fill up a vase with warm water and preservative as well. The water in your vase will need to be changed in your container about once a week too.

Now, fill up your sink with very warm water and place the ends of the branches into the sink. Cut the stems of the branches off under the warm water. Size the branches so they fit into your vase and then proceed to create an arrangement. When you are finished, set the vase away from bright sunlight in a cool location. It will take anywhere from 1 to 6 weeks for the blooms and/or leaves to burst from their buds.

We encourage you to forward these Winter Tree Care and Planting Tips on to your friends and family around the country.

Thank you for planting and caring for America's Trees!

*Phenology looks at the relationship between climate or seasons and periods of biological activity. Phenologists study and record the changes and movements of animals and plants in relation to weather and seasonal changes taking place in their surrounding environment.

Upcoming Events

Scottish Gaelic Workshops in Seattle

Slighe nan Gaidheal presents Féis Shiàtail (pronounced FAYSH hee-AT-ul) from May 28 through June 2, 2002 at Fort Worden State Park and Conference Center, Port Townsend, WA. This Scottish Gaelic cultural festival features workshops and performances from renowned scholars and musicians from North America and Scotland.

Féis Shiàtail provides a rare opportunity for North American audiences to learn about the Scottish Gaelic language, music and culture. While many Gaelic speakers and scholars reside in Canada and the U.S., seldom do they come together on the West Coast. This year's Féis builds on the momentum of the

1998 and 2000 festivals; once again uniting scholars, students and enthusiasts.

Class topics will include Gaelic language, Gaelic song, Gaelic poetry and literature, harp, fiddle, Cape Breton step dance, and bagpipes.

A concert on Friday, May 31 will be one of the festival's highlights. Faculty and local performers will delight audiences with traditional and modern Gaelic music, dance and poetry.

"One of the unique aspects of the Féis is the quality of instruction that we have arranged," said Pandora Fitzpatrick, Féis organizer. "We believe that the study of the language, music, dance and literature of the Gaels happens best within the context of the culture as a whole, and luckily, we have been able to attract instructors who share that view."

Instructors are:

Catherine-Ann MacPhee: A fluent Gaelic speaker from the Isle of Barra, highly successful Gaelic recording artist, and actor, Catherine-Ann will teach Gaelic songs from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. She and her family have recently immigrated to Canada and are living in Ottawa.

Wendy MacIsaac: Well known for performing both as a soloist and with Nova Scotian Gaelic singer Mary Jane Lamond, Wendy will be teaching Cape Breton step dance. She is also an accomplished fiddle and piano player.

Rona MacDonald Lightfoot: A fluent Gaelic speaker from North Uist, Rona will teach Highland bagpipe, drawing on her rich knowledge of song and oral-piping tradition. Rona will also share stories from her experiences as a woman competing in the traditionally male-dominated piping competitions.

Judith Peacock Cummings: A fluent Gaelic speaker and recent transplant to Seattle, Judith will teach the Scottish harp classes. She is formerly of the Scottish folk band "The Whistlebinkies," and because she can teach in Gaelic as well as English, she is in great demand in Scotland at educational festivals.

Aonghas Dubh MacNeacail: A fluent Gaelic speaker from the Isle of Skye and award-winning poet, Aonghas will lead workshops on Gaelic literature, poetry, and Gaelic media. He has published his works in print and on the Internet, performed them live worldwide, and recorded them for broadcast.

Catriona Parsons: A fluent Gaelic speaker from the Isle of Lewis, Catriona joins us to teach Gaelic language and song. She is Associate Professor in the Celtic Department of St. Francis Xavier University, an award-winning singer, and author of *Gàidhlig Troimh Chòmhradh*.

Calum MacKinnon: Native of the island of Tiree in the Hebrides and long-time resident of Western Washington, Calum's energetic and sensitive Scottish fiddle playing make him highly sought after as a performer, competition judge, and teacher. Calum is studying Gaelic in Seattle.

Maureen Lyon: A fluent Gaelic speaker from the Isle of Lewis, Maureen has been the language tutor for the Vancouver and District Gaelic Choir since 1985. She has taught Gaelic privately in Vancouver, at the Celtic Arts programs in Coeur d'Alene and Winnipeg, and many Slighe nan Gaidheal events.

Participants may register for all four days at a cost of \$395 or for Friday and Saturday at a cost of \$245. Registration includes tuition, meals and accommodation. A late fee of \$50 will be charged for registrations received after March 1, 2002.

Féis Shiàtail is funded in part by the Washington State Arts Commission, SAFECO, the Clan MacLeod Society, USA and The Dunvegan Foundation.

About Slighe nan Gaidheal (pronounced "shlee-uh nun GAY-ul") Slighe nan Gaidheal is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation based in Seattle, Washington. The organization's mission is to teach and disseminate to the general public the Scottish Gaelic language in its contemporary and historical context through classes, performances, the encouragement of its routine use, and otherwise. Seirm, the Gaelic choir of Slighe nan Gaidheal, performs regularly in the Seattle area. Slighe nan Gaidheal produces classes and workshops throughout the year in Gaelic language, song and more. For more information about Gaelic activities or becoming a member, please visit www.slighe.com.



About Scottish Gaelic

Scottish Gaelic, one of six modern Celtic languages in danger of becoming extinct, is primarily spoken in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. However, many fluent speakers reside all over the world, due in part to mass emigrations to the U.S., Canada and Australia in the 18th and 19th centuries.

For more information:

Pandora Fitzpatrick, 206-789-2522, pandora@slighe.com

Seumas Gagné, 206-297-8398, seumas@slighe.com

Kathryn Cole, 206-340-1623, kathryn@slighe.com

Time: Classes: 8:45 am-5:45 PM, May 29 through June 1, 2002 (register by March 1, 2002 to save \$50) Concert: 8 PM, Friday, May 31, 2002 concert (tickets on sale April 1, 2002)

Witness the Vernal Equinox Sunrise and Sunset at the UMass Sunwheel!

Members of the University community and the general public are invited to witness the passing of the seasons by joining Prof. Judith Young of the U. Mass. Dept. of Astronomy to watch the Sun rise and set over the tall standing stones in the U. Mass. Sunwheel for the upcoming VERNAL EQUINOX.

Visitors for the sunrise viewing should arrive at 5:45 a.m., and visitors for the sunset viewing should arrive at 5:00 p.m. The sunrise and sunset events will be held on both Wednesday and Thursday March 20 and 21, 2002. For those interested in learning about the sky, there will be a presentation which will include the cause of the seasons, the Sun's path in the sky, the phases of the Moon, and the story of building the Sunwheel. Bring your questions, your curiosity, and DRESS VERY WARMLY; a \$3 donation is requested. Sunwheel T-shirts and sweatshirts will be available for purchase to help cover the cost of future stone paths at the site.

The exact instant of equinox is 2:16 p.m. EST on March 20. On the equinox, any observer located on the Earth's equator will see the Sun pass directly overhead at local noon and that person will cast no shadow at noon. For observers not located on the equator and not at the poles, the Sun on the equinox is up for 12 hours and down for 12 hours, illuminating all latitudes on Earth! From the Sunwheel here in Amherst, the equinox Sun will be seen to rise and set through the stone portals in the East and West, a very beautiful sight as we experienced last year. This year, the sky will be particularly beautiful at sunset with the first quarter Moon also visible.



The U. Mass. Sunwheel is located south of Alumni Stadium, just off Rocky Hill Road. It can be easily reached from the center of Amherst, following Amity St. to the west, on the right hand side of the road about 1/4 mile after crossing University Drive. ALL VISITORS SHOULD WEAR WARM CLOTHING, SUITABLE FOR STANDING STILL ON FROZEN OR SOGGY GROUND. In the event of rain, the events will be cancelled, and visitors are encouraged to visit the Sunwheel on their own.

For more information on the U. Mass. Sunwheel, check out the web site at: <http://www.umass.edu/sunwheel/index2.html> or call Dr. Judy Young at 413-545-4311. To arrange a Sunwheel visit for your class or group, call or e-mail young@astro.umass.edu

Resources

Celtic Curse Generator

For those with net access, there is the Celtic Curse Generator at:

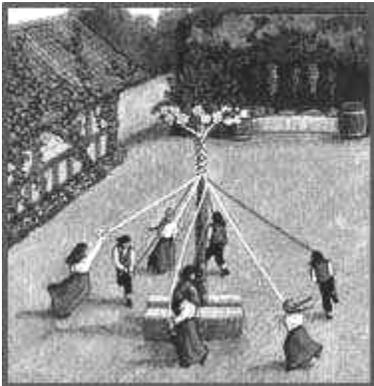
<http://hermes.lincolnu.edu/~focal/scripts/mallacht.htm> recommended by Sam Adams. Impress your friends, coworkers, and enemies with curses they won't be able to understand and will frighten them all the more!

Calendar

Spring Equinox, when the Sun crosses the Equator, will occur on March 20, 2002 at 11:16 a.m. PST. Spring Equinox services will be held on Wednesday, March 20 at sundown when the Sun sets due west. Please call for carpool arrangements (510) 654-6896. For the social observance of Spring Equinox we will be going immediately after the service to Sushi Afloat on Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. Regular Druid services will be held at Solar Noon on March 31, April 14, and April 28. Please call the above number to confirm.

The Missal-Any is published eight times a year. Post mail subscriptions are \$6.00 and online subscriptions are free, but might not include everything that is in the post mail edition. Or write an article or send us a cartoon and receive a year's subscription free. Write The Missal-Any, c/o Weinberger, 309 63rd St, Apt. C, Oakland, CA 94618.

A Druid Missal-Any Beltane Y.R. XL Vol. 18, Number 3 April 28th, 2002 c.e.



Beltane Essay: Fire and Water

By Stacey Weinberger

Beltaine, May Day, the first day of summer and the beginning of the Season of Life. In the RDNA tradition the Waters-of-Life are returned to the Grove chalice and all Third Order Druids exchange their white ceremonial ribbons to red. At Baccharis Grove we add a natural fertilizer to the tree chalice as part of our offering to the Grove trees. Now is a good time for those who own bronze sickles to sharpen them for the coming season.



Beltaine is a pastoral festival. It is associated with fertility, the return and renewal of life to the face of the earth. It was also a period of purification for the animals of the as well as people. Fire and water seem to be the principle methods used for purification and to insure fertility of the coming year.

At sundown on Beltaine eve, the Druids kindled need fires or *teine eigin* from oak and other sacred wood. Household fires that were normally never allowed to go out were extinguished and relit from the need fire. At Uisnech, a ritual center in Ireland, this fire was kindled by the king's druid and the people would bring a brand with which to relight their hearths. The Lebor Gabala, the Book of Invasions, contains a story about the Druid Mide, for whom Meath is named, who was the first Druid to light a Beltaine fire at Uisnech for the clans of Nemed. This custom is also documented as being practiced in Scotland in the Highlands and Islands as late as the first quarter of the 20th century.



In ancient times, cattle signified the wealth of the Celtic tribes as well as their continuation and survival. Thus it was importance to insure their fertility and health. To this end, bonfires were lit on hills and mountaintops and the cattle that had been sheltered and stall-fed all winter were driven between the flames before being sent out to summer pasturelands. In his glossary, Cormac, the ninth century Irish writer, Beltaine comes from *Bel-tene*, a goodly fire. According to Cormac the Druids kindled two great bonfires between which cattle were driven. There is some thought that in earlier times that the cattle were sacrificed to the deities in exchange for protection against disease, fertility, a good growing season, and a good harvest in the fall, and later evolved into symbolically passing the cattle between the fires.

Though people also passed between the Beltaine bonfires, their purification and fertility practices seem to be more centered around water than fire.

To the Druids, the most sacred of all water forms was dew (found at dawn, the liminal, "otherworldly" period between night and day), especially the dew of Beltaine morning. The washing of the face in the dew of Beltaine morning and drinking from the well before sunrise was common practice. It was well known that holy wells were considered to bestow fertility upon women. The tradition of dew's potency has come down through the centuries and in Scotland and Ireland young women still rise before dawn on the first of May to wash their faces in the morning dew and let it dry in the air. The dew of Beltaine morning was often gathered and kept as a medicinal or beauty aid. It was said to bring a good complexion, cure sore eyes, prevent or cure headaches, skin ailments, and freckles.

Men who washed their hands in the May Dew were said to gain skill in opening lock and knots, in mending nets and untangling ropes. Women who did the same would be able to untangle threads. Walking barefoot in the dew cured soreness and insured healthy feet during the year.

Also common was the scattering of water to with which to bring fertility upon those whom it falls. On Beltaine in Padstow, Cornwall the dancing 'Obby 'Oss was known for bringing the promise of a husband or child to the young women it covered with its skirts. But in pastimes the prancing and twirling about also including water in this fertility ritual. The 'Oss would wade in Treater Pool near the town, "drink" from the water, and sprinkle those assembled for good luck. Early May festivities in Southern Ireland included a procession of Mummerys, one of whom dressed as a clown and carried a long pole with shreds of cloth like a mop at the top. He would dip this into a pool of water or puddle and liberally sprinkle it on the crowds about him, another symbolic gesture of distributing the fertilizing properties of the water.

News of the Groves

Carleton

Mysteries at the Arb!

On a spot not that far from the circle a tree's been found with three trunks, two fallen and dead, the third still possibly living and standing up, so that the two dead trunks come out and encircle a fairly large area. There were three very large handfuls of nails all in about a two-foot radius here, and the mystery is how they could've gotten there. There seems to be a fair amount of trash at this site, more than pretty much anywhere else in the Arb not far from the remnants of a small shack. There's some barbed wire fencing caught under one of the fallen trunks, but there are no posts for it anywhere around. (The stuff is about a foot wide, and it's on the ground for a ways in this vicinity.)

The only answer thus far is there are some kids from town that sometimes come down to that little fort back behind the circle and they are not always as neat as they should be. Has anyone considered fairy folk?

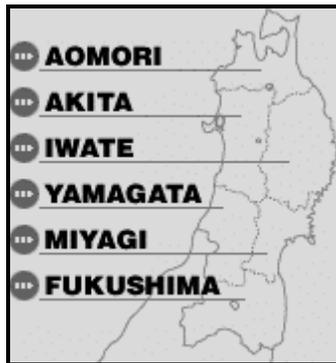
There has been an appearance of paved trails and some concern whether they will be expanded? One of the paths seems to have been carved out though the northeast section.

Sister Merri Webster provides the answer: "I know about the paved trails. Whether I know what you want to know is questionable. I don't think they are going to be expanded, at least not any time soon. There is a new trail that the Arb workers put it in this past summer. I think it is going to be made nicer (i.e. not a mud pit) but I don't think it's going to be paved.

Akita Grove: News from Japan

Equinox was fun, and Nozomi won the egg hunt with 23 eggs. Pat had five and stepped on two. Cherry blossoms are almost ready!

Pat's leaving tomorrow for his trip across Japan from Akita to Iwate. He took three weeks vacation. It is about 200 miles by bird, with big mountains. I'm worried about him, but I gave him a good amulet, so he will be okay. He plans to stop at every shrine on the way and camp nearby. I'm not a good walker, but I will walk with him on some of the return trip.



Monument Grove: News from DC, Now the Digitalis Grove

Well, Mairi has left our grove, taking Sine with her, of course. There is no specific knowledge of where she moved to, except that it is "in the vicinity of the Pacific Ocean," but she left the airport with a floral print shirt, so I have my suspicions it ain't Chile. We'll miss her and her musical talents. But our paths

crossed before at Carleton, so I'm sure they'll cross again (three's the charm).

That leaves the DC grove a rather sparse membership, with only me, Earl, Sheeba, Eric, and Shane as the only Reformed Druids that I know are here. Eric and I are so busy with school and work that we can't plan schedules too well, so we've decided to pursue parallel services (i.e. we're breaking up.)

Because of the rigors of preparing the next edition of "A Reformed Druid Anthology" (see the article below) for publishing in Beltane 2003, organizing the 40th anniversary next year, updating the Druid Archives (six years behind schedule), and running the websites, including the new mailing service for newcomer and old-timer interaction to which you're all invited, just send me e-mail at mikerdna@hotmail.com or go to:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RDNAtalk/>

I've decided my grove is in cyberspace and have renamed it "Digitalis Grove" with the foxglove plant (natural choice, eh?) for our emblem. The fox, by the way, appears in about 50% of Japanese Shrines as the primary spiritual resident and are associated as the gods' messengers and bring fertility to rice.

Tonga Grove: News from the Pacific

As you read this, the Tonga Grove is closed. Irony should have returned to Britain or New York and is probably having a good time.

Amazon Grove: News from Brazil

Things are going fine. Should reach Maxto base camp by April 12th. Take care everybody.

—Ian

Silent Grove: News from Hamilton, Ontario

Our Grove has decided, not in haste, that we share no connection with the RDNA, and since our actions will be fairly robust in the weeks, months and years ahead that we should singly represent ourselves as the Canadian Druid and Bardic Society. We initially toyed with the idea back in January, prior to Imbolc, but recent events leave us little doubt that this is in the best interests of our Grove.

In the Mother, please notify all that we are leaving the Reform, and wish to have little to no contact with your organization up and beyond the people we have met on a one-to-one email basis.

Best of Luck!

Birch Grove, NRDNA: News from New Hampshire

Since Yule, we have been in the process of buying, with my brother and sister in law, 104 acres in central New Hampshire. It has a large manmade pond, about 20 acres of pasture, and the rest in woodlot rising up a ridge. There are many beautiful white birches on the land. We [my sister, who is Second Order], and I will not be able to move up onto it for another year, as we have much work down here to get ready for the move. But when we do, we have a dear friend nearby who is First Order, and several more interested people, and Birch Grove will be a much more active and regular thingy.

Right now we get together on an irregular basis. But we have a lot of fun when we do, and much interesting Hairpull.

love-Joan

Dravidia Grove: News from Maryland

Have spent a great amount of time in research this month and have also acquired four new books, my favorite of which is a Celtic History book, and my Complete Guide to Herbal Medicines. Have spent almost as much time this week watching nature and learning more of the fascinating things that are always happening. The best was that my Parrotlet went outside on porch to get some air the other day. She was only out there about half an hour and when I looked out the window to make sure no cats had pried her cage door open I was amazed to find about ten birds of different species sitting on the railing as if to be having a conversation with her. It does amaze me about the nature of communication between animals and the fact that a house pet could arouse so much curiosity in so short a time.

Also have started planting the herb garden again and getting ready for beautiful cycle of life that flows about us in the spring.

Silver Oak Grove: News from North Carolina

We would like to be affiliated with your group if it's not too much trouble for you, and we're named the Grove of the Silver Oak. We are located in Wilkesboro, NC (West of Winston-Salem), with a current membership of seven. We are neo-pagan and have a love for nature.

Our E-mail address is
thebrotherhoodofthesilveroak@hotmail.com.

Yours in the Mother,
Byddin, AD

Swamp Grove: News from Florida

It has been quiet down here in the Swamplands, we are gearing up for the rainy season and enjoying all of the greenery that comes with an early spring. We still follow the way of nature, even though we feel the pavement coming closer with every year. The Grove is made up of a few acres of land that we have tried to preserve and keep healthy and free from the developers who seem to multiply like rabbits down here, paradise isn't what it used to be. Wishing a good rain for all the folks along the east coast dealing with the draught.

Oaken Circle Grove: News from Kentucky

Greetings from the Oaken Circle Grove of Kentucky, our grove has begun to grow in leaps and bounds. We are having a meeting April 12th for five new potential members. Our Beltane plans are set for May 4, 2002. We plan to erect a Maypole and bake tiny fairy cookies for the kids to hang in the trees and bushes as a fairy snack. We will have a nice fire in our fire circle and give thanks to the Mother for all her gifts, the gifts of new friendships as well as old. I want to give thanks to all the people that have emailed me about the grove and have tried to make it something special; I also want to thank our current grove members for all they have done. Love and Hope are the keys to the success of our grove and we already have an abundance of those. If you would like to learn more about us, please go to
http://oaken_circle_grove.tripod.com/oakencirclegroveky/

Many Blessings
Sherry of the Oaken Circle Grove

Amon Sul Grove: News from Kentucky

Amon Sul Grove will be attending Beltane Kentucky April 26-28. The festival is held on private land in Menifee Co., an area that is known for its fundamentalist religiosity. Once when I was there on business, one of the little Pentecostal churches actually had a sign out front that said, "We do not handle snakes." I have a Darwin fish on my truck and a "The Goddess is alive and magic is afoot" bumper sticker on the tent camper. As the saying goes, getting there is half the fun. Last year there were over two hundred Pagans in attendance and there was much merrymaking.

Work schedules have put the spring gardening efforts behind schedule but we do have a few things started including a variety of medicinal herbs. We had a warm winter and then a really bad cold spell just when the daffodils were getting ready to bloom so that was a disappointment. The new tulips are doing well and are in full bloom at the time of this writing. The roses are budding up nicely but it looks like we lost the Monet that never recovered from being stripped almost bare during last spring's tent worm epidemic. This year's major project is to clear a large enough area to add a second row of grape vines. We lost several of the wine grapes that we started from cuttings that we purchased last year, but some of the survivors are doing well enough that we should be able to start taking our own cuttings.

—Gandalf, Amon Sul Grove Scribe

Big Ash Grove: News from Michigan

Well the BAG (Big Ash Grove) has once again been put into temporary hibernation. It seems that every year around this time that happens, but hey without change there is no life...so I see it as a blessing in a way.

Good blessings to you and the Reform in all its branches.

Cat-in-the-Corner Grove: News from Colorado

The Cat-In-The-Corner Grove (formerly Piñata Grove) is based in Denver, CO. The official membership is currently one human, two Northern Red Oak trees (represented by proxy), and a varying number of potted plants; the two feline members couldn't be bothered with actually joining.

Due to the "Semi-Official Season of Sleep Period of Introspection" that the AD found herself rather reluctantly undergoing shortly after Samhain, the Grove has been in a state of semi-hibernation. Also, the Grove worship site turned out to be a bit too public to be practical, so outdoor services were temporarily suspended (which wasn't too bad, considering that it was rather cold outside anyway). However, with Beltaine rapidly approaching, the AD plans to awaken the Grove once again; this also seems to be an appropriate way to herald the Awakening of the Earth-Mother and the beginning of the Season of Life.

Of course, the Grove still needs to find an appropriate Grove Site in which to HOLD said Beltaine services. So any petitions to your Druidical Deity-of-choice that an appropriate and at least semi-permanent site be located in time for Beltaine would be much appreciated...

Fairy Spell Grove: News from California

We at the Faerie Spell Grove are happy to announce that as of TODAY we are unveiling our NEW free email service--FOR THE PAGAN COMMUNITY!

Faeriespell.net is (as I type) being converted to a druidic-based free email service. We are using cutting edge software and over the next few months we will be building the best email service on the planet!--and it's FREE! We feel the pagan community can use a central meeting place (we happily volunteer) and a forum to exchange ideas, get news (hmm...we are looking for a news service by the way)

The dedicated server package was bought today (multiple T-3 connection--so no more slow mail for us!) and the software is being configured--so maybe it will not be "pleasing to the eye" for a week or two. But we will be improving the look and feel of the site over time. We are also offering FREE WEB HOSTING to all friendly druids (no gimmicks--just don't hog up a ton of bandwidth that we have to pay for). We are doing this as part of our goal of building a business network of eco-friendly capitalists. If you want to make some money in a project outside of your day job--and want to work with crazy, creative druidic types, feel free to email us at:

Ohmygodiam@aol.com.

I want to end this now--as this is not the time or place for a business pitch. But to all we wish the best of fortunes. And to the Silent Grove--three caps please--maybe a few more in a week or two. But we will say--get OUT--do something that is good for the environment around you--and if you can make some money doing it--all the better! We need more druids at the wheel--and less Cheney's and Bush's and Enron cronies. Think about this!

Druid Heart Spirited Grove: News from California

Druid Heart Spirit Grove's spring equinox went really well this year, even though we had to do it indoors. We had a guest from a Gwyddonic order called Nemeton Gwynvyd, and she brought some of their orders wonderful poetic verses for the celebration that we added to the ritual during our devotionals. For Calon Mai/Beltain this year we are having a campout and going to erect a tall Mai pole to dance after the ritual, followed by a bardic circle and cook fire outdoors and potluck dinner. The next morning we will do a sunrise ritual and meditation followed by teas and coffee and cakes. Some members from my band "Beltain" will be her for playing the music for the Mai pole and helping in the Bardic circle where we will share some of our bands traditional arrangements on fiddle, harp, octave mando, and bodhran. All who come are encouraged to bring musical instruments and drums. I have made an online flyer that can be viewed at:

http://www.geocities.com/sailletree/calon_mai.html

Baccharis Grove: News from California

Chop wood, carry water. For being perhaps one of the smallest Groves in the Reform Baccharis seems to be one of the busiest. The Preceptor attended the sunrise on the morning of the Spring Equinox. As the sun rises over the hills in Orinda about a half an hour after the actual sunrise, it gave her some time to wander about the area. Usually some sort of critter wanders by. In the past it has included a skunk, a grey fox, and a doe and stag. This time there was no sign of any animals. At just about the time of the sunrise she scattered the Bride-og from

Oimeic as is customary on the morning of the Equinox. There are a few deer bones around that particular area. On this morning the Preceptor noticed a larger one. It was a skull! Not only that, it was the skull of a stag! She carried the skull to the center of the Grove site to get a better look and noticed the time on her watch. It was 6:15 a.m. That means it was found precisely when the sun rose at 6:14! This gift of a stag skull was a reminder to have no expectations and to be grateful for the surprises Dalon ap Landu and the Mother bring.

On March 24 the Grove attended the very first Interfaith Pagan Pride "Return of the Snakes" parade in Berkeley. There were over 20 groups including Berkeley Morris and OBOD Groves from Walnut Creek and Sacramento. It was very well organized and had quite a good turnout for the first year.

After the past two services, as well as on the weekends in between, we have had work parties to dig up the holly and birches that didn't make it through the dry summer and fall of last year. We even put a potential new member who made it past the interview stage to work, hopefully not frightening him away. Water was brought up the hill for the newly planted trees and to refill the bowl set out for the wild animals. On the non-service weekends the Preceptor sawed the birches into manageable size to fit into the trunk of her car. With the assistance of a woodworker friend she plans to make a set of Ogham staves out of them. Another project was cutting down a branch of a Live Oak tree to let the Grove Pine Giuthas and the new Holly Cuileann receive more light.

You make Third Order, nothing really changes, externally. You work just as hard if not harder, for there is a calling, a sense of responsibility to something greater than oneself, a dedication. There are still the tasks at hand to do, tending the Grove site, the paths, making sure the trees get enough water, and that there is fresh water for the local animals. With increased humility it is still chop wood, carry water.



Why We are Reformed, Revisited

Sister Mairi Ceolmhor's article from the Oimeic 2002 issue of A Druid Missal-Any spurred quite a discussion on what Reformed Druidism means and its relationship to other Reform movements. We present the correspondence here in full.



Dear Druids,

In the Vernal Equinox edition of the Druid Missal-Any, Mairi Ceolmhor speculates that Reformed Judaism "sounds quite a bit like us!" (in reference to the RDNA). Though this may be only one perspective on the historical similarities between the RDNA and other "religious movements" throughout history, and not to reflect on other Groves beyond an historical anecdote, Silent Grove does not in any way, past or present, draw parallels to any aspect of Judaism, whether Reformed or not, or its natural extension--Zionism. Indeed, Silent Grove strongly disengages itself from the current atrocities committed by the Zionist regime, and does not wish to

have its Grove sullied by any suggestions of connections, associations or similarities with historical or contemporary Judaism/Zionism in part or as a whole.

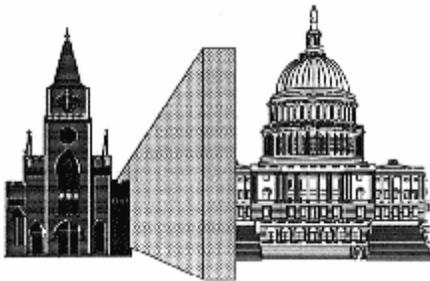
Glen
Silent Grove
April 16, 2002



Dear Glen,

I'm glad you've broken your silence to speak out on issues that matter to you. The following is, of course, my personal opinion in reply to your personal opinion for the possible benefit of the readers' opinions.

Each grove in the Reform is naturally free to choose its sources of inspiration, and equally free to choose which one's not to be inspired by (if it is possible to ignore a "purple rhino" once the idea is mentioned to you.) I believe what you most object to here is the collaboration between politics and religion. Any religion, once it has a desire to achieve and keep political or military power, will then proceed to protect that power, usually against rival religions. This is the sad fact of Northern Ireland, Cyprus, Sri Lanka, Israel/Palestine, Timor, the Wild West, and numerous other locales.



I understand the dilemma that possible association or resemblance to any group can bring about unfavorable comparisons. I'm still proud to have German ancestry, although I disdain the Nazism of the 20th century. I'm proud to be part Irish, but deplore the violence of North Ireland. I speak English, despite the millions of Celts killed, disenfranchised or enslaved (etc.) by Anglo-Saxon and French descendents. I doubt that any western institution (especially a religious one) or academic environment that hasn't been affected, influenced or involved with Judaism or Christianity (which is Judaism blended with Mithraic and Greek Mystery cults) or Islam for that matter, which was Mairi's argument.

While I'm sure some Reformed Judaics support Zionism, I believe the underlying purpose of that movement is to adjust Judaism to the realities of modern life, rather than to adjust the world to Judaism, which is more Zionistic to me. If there is one

lesson I've learned in Reformed Druidism, is that there are allies and good lessons in nearly every religion, if you know where to look (the opposite also holds true) and search well.

But I will agree with you, that the current situation in the Middle East, with its messy blend of racism/politics/religion/class/lunacy is just plain discouraging. I hope that America doesn't go any further down a similar road of its own to extremism or preferential treatment for a population based on religion. But, I do not know enough the details and history behind these religious conflagrations which touch so many related topics. But I am applying myself to a growing understanding. After all, the last reason why we're "reformed" is that we're trying to fix our mistakes, and we can learn much by relating to and engaging ourselves in the dilemmas of others.

This reminds me of what Isaac told Carleton-graduates in the 70s about "throwing the baby out with the bath water" (2nd Epistle of Isaac, pg. 30 of Apocrypha) when it comes to magic and associations with neo-paganism. Interestingly, Isaac (of all people) was accused by several people of being Jewish because of his name (which resembles the founder of Reformed Judaism), involvement with founding the Hassidic Druids of North America, and a few other reasons. I believe his reaction was "Charmed, but you're very mistaken."

On a final thought, I'm reminded that poem by Issho (Zen Harvest #19):

Over the pond
Every night
casts its light
But the water won't be soiled
The moon won't be either.

But, I hope you at the very least found Mairi's article to be thought provoking? I welcome other input on dealing with PR issues of association with other groups and movements by the readers.

Yours moderately,
Mike
April 16, 2002



Dear Mike,

Actually, Brother Mike, all I am saying is that Silent Grove does not consider itself, in any way, influenced by historical or modern Zionism. We despise the situation in the Middle East, as provoked by war criminal Ariel Sharon in 1999 by his visit to a Palestinian holy location. We also despise the fact that your nation continues to fuel Zionist arrogance by providing \$3B/annum in aid to a bellicose nation whose hegemonistic aspirations in the region are a detriment to world prosperity.

Any Druid would plainly see that the balance is completely torn asunder by misguided foreign policy that funds "war brokers" to pad their corporate coffers.

This is not the wish of the Mother. As such, and I am sure you feel it as well, things will be corrected in the near future. Divination would tell you as much.

With warm regards,

Glen
April 16, 2002



Dear Glen,

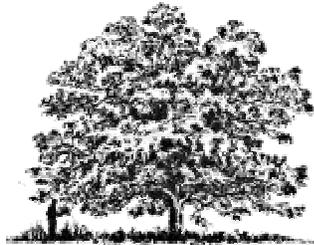
It was a poor choice on his part, wasn't it? Canada is a wonderful country, after all, I've thought of moving there. In a way, your grove appears to be negatively influenced by Zionism, as is shown by your outrage.

Doesn't take a Druid to realize such matters of the world exist. But it would take a Druid to know how to respond wisely. Without time travel, what would be a good course to take?

Most of my divination is about the Earth-Mother's acceptance of my sacrifices, not those of others.' I'm sure the gods hear those.

With warm regards,

Mike
April 16, 2002



All in the Mother,

It is in the spirit of good ale, good music, and a good heart, that I need to rectify Brother Mike in his assumptions as to my sunrise message.

Indeed, the message is that each Grove delivers unto themselves the deeds they see as fit.

It is simple to be an editorial proxy, however to be representative has been 'the downfall of all political/ religious movements.

I welcome, each and everyone of you, to visit our website in the weeks to come, as we begin to practice "Druidism" without getting lost on provocations such as, "What is Reformed?" and glorify far more important trivial frivolities from days a' yore! Indeed, you may find our catalogue will soon surpass the "un-official website" of the RDNA.

Tsk! Such a shame that your arrogance exudes in statements that extol the self, rather than the Grace of the Mother. An old Taoist once proclaimed, "visit the river and sit there until you forget yourself. Only then can you become selfless."

As far as the Zionist regime is concerned, our Grove feels no bitter hatred, only a sullen remorse that such a wondrous group of people could degrade themselves to the pit of hate once again, such that many societies will reward them with violence as they have done throughout history.

BTW, I'm glad you left in question marks.

A Zen Buddhist once dropped by a pizza parlor called "Zen Pizza." He ordered one with everything. The pizza came, and he paid, but he complained when the clerk didn't give him any change. The clerk quickly pointed out that, "change comes from within."

Therein lacks the wisdom.
With the Mother in our hearts,

Silent Grove
April 16, 2002



Wow!

All of this spirited thought has caught my eye. It is good to see some serious and intelligent exchanges of thought in neo/pagan (pick-your-favorite term and leave me alone!) circles--as it has been a bit dry around here locally.

I most highly agree with "Brother Glen" (hmm...Can I be different and call him "Unca Glen?") in philosophy and perceived fact. (I was not there; therefore I must assume what is reported is somewhat factual.) But there is so much more to this. I just wanted to put that in first!

In as short of a statement of my view as I can squeeze this:

hmm..."Reformed." I will avoid whipping out the dictionary and will just go straight into my personal diatribe here. The druids of old are dead. (Or they are rrrrrreally old and hiding with the faeries under the cairns!) They were hunted down like so many other wonderful indigenous civilizations of the earth by the "conquering empires" (I blame the xians mostly--but that is entirely personal) and most of the records we could hope to have to trace a solid lineage or collection of rituals and purposes are lost. This means that we in a very real sense are indeed practicing one of the most mysterious of all religions of the world in this day. Because no one alive (except for the afore mentioned rrrrrreally old druids) knows exactly what they did and how they did it and why...We have only our best guesses. I hope I do not need to point out the fallacy of "modern science" over the past few millennia to show how mistaken we may be on them.



But I like to think we have a pretty good idea of "what drooids did." They like trees. Hey! I like trees! And there we have a start. This reaches into the shadowy realms of Celtic-recreationism and I am bound to (hopefully) offend some here with my line of thought. Anything we do today is nothing more than an educated guess of those who walked before us. But this can be quite liberating!

With all due respect to my Wiccan(tm) friends--including those I have to meet--Wicca (tm--Gerald Gardner circa 1964?) is a "re-formation" of a collection of beliefs from all over Europe. Pre-1960 there was no "Wicca." There were a variety of indigenous beliefs on every spot of dry land where people resided and the gods there reflected the environment of that locale. Now we have a hundred different official sects and a million different interpretations, blending Egyptian, Assyrian, Celtic, Hindu and other beliefs and calling it "Wicca(tm)." Hence it is an amalgamation of beliefs. Okay--that's cool as

long as we can see it for what it is. Today's Wiccans(tm) are as eclectic as today's fast food establishments. A burger at McDonald's is vastly different from one at Burger King ("they use microwaves!") but they are both lumped into the category of burgers or the larger grab-bag term of American "fast food." So my mini-point here is that the systems of beliefs are varied even under the umbrella title of the predominant defacto "pagan" line of thought.

So--to bring this all together; "if" the druids are dead and gone (not to worry--we ALL die someday) and most of the records we could hope to enjoy have been destroyed then what we really have is a base of ideas and a completely new era. The planet is the same, but the world has changed. Some of us may choose to be "guardians of history" and keep to what little we do know--calling ourselves purists (I like that term btw) and that is all good.

But...

Isn't the very essence of life--of nature herself the ability to adapt and survive? As druids we (should) all look around to the grand old lady herself and seek guidance by example. What does nature do? Nature adapts. The lion eats the zebra (yum!). If there are not enough zebras the lion eats something else or starves. Nature allows the cycle to evolve. Where there are fewer zebras and giraffes (for example) the trees grow more plentiful and the grass grows taller. Humans punch giant holes in the ozone and nature says--okay kids; playtime is over--you die now. "Next!" All in all nature just adapts and keeps going on.

So if the world is a different world than it was back in the days of our fun-loving, golden-sickle wielding forbearers, then "could" (note: I did NOT say "should"--do NOT flame me for implying "should") our beliefs not adapt also? Would not those who went before us be disappointed if we did not see the world and create new songs and rituals to honor and bond with nature that are contemporary to our times and world around us? This is not to imply abandoning old beliefs at all--but more that the term "re-formed" could well be taken as: solid ideas based on a sound premise ("nature is good") and applied to the world around us in a contemporary style that has the maximum impact of intended purpose ("nature is cool").

I mean we could all build a house using only an axe. We "could" make a "Lincoln Log" cabin of sorts (note that I expressly do NOT condone the abuse, murder or butchering of trees or any plant-life--EVER!!!) but we have air-hammers now that shoot these really cool nails into (ahem) wood and build solid, well insulated houses--in a fraction of the time--it took our grandfathers and even more so those before to build homes for their families.

Should our personal spiritual beliefs remain in the Stone Age while all of our realities and perceptions advance forward at blisteringly divine speeds? Is this not the very reason that x-ianity has suffered such an attrition of real followers over the past 600 years and more so in the now deceased "2nd millennia?" The Renaissance came about as the "common man" (a sexist term I know) had more free time from labor and thus better health, more time to learn and thus a chance to look above the rantings of the Church and local nobility and say something to the effect of "screw this! This makes no sense at all!" Europe's collective eyes were opened and the world started a change that has led us to this very moment of Internet debates.

None of this discounts any basic precepts ("nature is good") but it DID invalidate the forced dogma of the previous generations as they had infected current religious thought of that time. ("Nature is good because God is better than thou and so is the Earl and therefore thou musts toil in the fields of thine Earl in service to him in all of his holiness so thou mayest achieve a

servile position in his garden in paradise.") I realize this is a lot to chew on--but it is blissfully simple.

If we strip away all but the premise of what those who came before us held true then we have a tree (no?). Okay--so let's consider decorating that tree one belief at a time. Add the ornaments of old by examining them to see if they are kept because of their timeless truth--or simple nostalgia. Can some broken and soiled ornaments not be placed in a jeweled box on display at the base of the tree in an honored position while new ornaments that reflect the time and the base notion ("nature is cool") be placed on the tree in their stead?

This is how I see us as reformed druids. I believe we laugh at nothing our forbearers did. If they thought the sun rose every day and not that the earth revolved around the sun--cool! But we know differently now; our understanding of that fact may negate a certain ritual that is focused on making the sun rise (I am being whimsically hypothetical here for example only)--but our songs of love of the sun rising are an extremely personal expression as we know that it is to our eyes that the sun rises and that is how we romanticize the moment and draw power from it.

The eternal flame has long-been extinguished. Okay--we still know how to make fire. Drop the torch--light a new one. Hell! Use "Hazel" or "Birch cut under the light of the first smiling crescent when Venus and the moon make a one-eyed smiley face just after sundown" if you like--but the fact that the torch is lit and carried and protected from harsh winds seems more important to me than trying to use the same old charred stump soaked in gasoline. I think that we all have our own interpretations of druidism--just as we all have our own beliefs on sex and monogamy/polygamy and polyandry. But one thing I do know for a fact is that whether we choose to like it or not - we all are products of this world as it is--not as it was "back when" and those beliefs are inherent in us. We can no more reject the world as it is today in our spiritual belief systems than we can live without the wonder of toilet paper, washing machines, refrigeration, toothbrushes or readily available soap and hot water.

So we are "21st century druids." Cool! I still like trees. But I also like my computer.

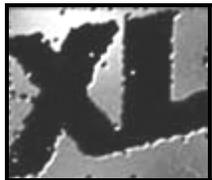
Okay--enough of my prosthetyzing! Thank you for reading--please feel free to write and tell me how sacrilegious I am.

Dusty the passing druid
April 16, 2002



Actually, in the case of the Druids, I think it was the Romans under Julius Caesar and succeeding emperors that were mostly responsible for eliminating them, at least in Gaul (i.e. France-ish area) and all of Britain except for Ireland. In Ireland it was probably still the Roman Empire, but yeah in its later guise of the Roman Catholic Church. (I think Ireland was the only land to escape being conquered by the "Classical" Romans.)

Alyx
The Cat-In-The-Corner Grove
April 16, 2002



Year XL of the Reform

By Mike Scharding, Digitalis Grove

It is the beginning of the Summer Half of the Year, when Druids break the seal on their whiskey bottles and secretly replace their red ribbons from the box of last-year's Maypole decorations. We love this time of year and look forward to sweaty days in our groves.

Beltane 2002 marks the beginning of Year 40 of the Reform, or XL as we like to write it. Because there is no year Zero in our timeline, the 40th anniversary will actually be at the end of year 40 on Beltane 2003, with a possible celebration at Carleton and at other groves. But let's not belittle this year. Because it is year XL, it may be our biggest year ever. Let's all try to "excel"!

Druidism is about:
Experimentation, Exploration, and Exemplary service
And
Life, Love and Laughter

You might wonder why I persist in using Roman Numerals, when the Celts were not particularly fond of the Romans? Roman numerals are rather nice for many things: inscribing in stone, enumerating outlines, labeling Monarchs and Popes, encrypting the copyright dates of movies, and they're just anachronistically fun things to play with.

Origin of Arabic Numerals, with graphics
<http://islamicity.com/mosque/ihame/Ref6.htm>
Extensive site on Roman Numerals
<http://www.deadline.demon.co.uk/roman/front.htm>
The SCA also enjoys this practice
http://www.sca.org.au/lochac/scribes/hb_app3.html

What else happened 40 years ago:
1962, France performs first underground nuclear test at Ecker Algeria
1962, JFK authorizes Area Redevelopment Act (ARA)

May 1st in History
<http://www.thisdaythatyear.com/May/events1.htm>
<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/aol/onthisday/010501onthisday.html>



Ancient Gaulish Calendar



Ten Things to Do for Beltane

By Alex Strongbow

1. Sex. Of course!
2. Wake up early, greet the sun, and wash your face in the morning dew. Collect flowers and make garlands for those you care about.
3. An Oak King can be selected by various athletic competitions such as: races, wrestling, archery, stone tossing, sit-ups in one minute, fire kindling contest (first to boil cup of water), greased pole climbing, rodeo riding, or a combination of foolish macho things.
4. A maypole dance for the women (men too if not enough people). Last woman holding the ribbon will become the May Queen. The May Queen and Oak King should symbolically (or actually) consummate their "marriage" in a symbolic gesture.
altreligion.about.com/library/howto/htmaypole.htm
5. Picnic, leaving a symbolic offering of one piece of everything. Possibly foods are oatmeal, diary, berries, greens, wine, barley, honey, eggs, sweets.
<http://ww.keirle.freemove.co.uk/page18.htm>
6. Drama or play of Persephone returning from the underworld or a story of a woman returning from the fairy lands. Divination is a possibility.
7. Enjoy the Waters of Life (i.e. whiskey). If you're solitary, do some self-nurturing type of activity, like a walk in the woods of a state park and camp out or vigil.
8. Raise stones. Its always a good time to bring the community together to haul rocks around and make a memorial of some type to the event. I recommend using car hoods from a junkyard, long levers, and 15 ropes and a pulley.
9. Build a Bonfire. This might be hard for those of you in fire-prone areas like California, but a cauldron fire might be possible, or just use a barbeque/hibachi for the job. Some of you are girl-scouts, but here's some advice for the rest of you.

Apparently, the traditional wood to burn is oak, ash, thorn, rowan, apple, birch, alder, maple, elm, gorse, holly, hawthorn, and others from a story about the Battle of the Trees. I'd add a piece from any other tree in your forest. Collecting the woods and maypole would be a nice combination activity, and give time for certain members to "dally".

Ivy and the Vine

By Sam Peebles, free-roaming Druid



Be sure to remove all the dry materials in the vicinity and dampen the area. Now you can just pile a lot of logs if you'd like, or you can stack them. A pyramid shape or tepee shape is considered ideal, as boxy shapes tend to fall to the side rather than collapse inward (1999 Texas A&M disaster, anyone?). I recommend that you don't get too close to the fire, just in case a log rolls out. Leave spaces between the logs to allow air to circulate. Old Christmas trees make great center pieces (whoom!). Put the kindling and ever-larger pieces in the center.

There are many ways to make the initial flame. Magnifying glass, parabolic mirror, iron and flint, rubbing two sticks (use a bow to spin faster), magma, lightning, natural forest fires, and matches. As always, the key is to start small with shaved wood, dried grass, lint, cotton (yes, toilet paper is good) and add that to small sticks than keep adding bigger stick until the logs reach the magic temperature of 451F. If all else fails, CAREFULLY throw a cup of gasoline onto it.

Dance around it, watch it, and talk to your friends. Throw negativity away into the fire. Or send up prayers with the fire. Young couples may wish to jump over the fire together after it burns down.

As always, stay with the fire until you are able to handle all the ashes with your bare hand. If you can, you take a candle home and relight your furnace, like the ancient Celts did:

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Oracle/6992/bonfires.html>

10. Or you can do something no one else has thought that you really like! See these sites for ideas:

http://altreligion.about.com/c/ht/00/07/How_Celebrate_Beltane0962933966.htm Fun.

<http://www.circlesanctuary.org/pholidays/Beltane.html>

Good customs.

<http://www.witchvox.com/holidays/beltaine/beltainehistory.html>

A lot of info.

<http://paganwiccan.about.com/cs/beltanemaydayb/>
www.cyberwitch.com/wychwood/Temple/beltane.htm

Good history

Why do modern Druids go gaga over trees? Well trees are really cool if you look at them, I mean REALLY look at them. They also tend to stay in one place, which makes it hard for them to avoid our affections. But some plants have the itch to roam, such as the vines, sometimes even abandoning their roots for sunnier destinies, as do some Reformed Druids.

In the famous Battle of Cad Goddeau, finally written down in the 9th century, the writer describes a huge army composed of plants going off to war. Privet and woodbine and ivy on its front. Celtophiles, naturally enjoy guessing at the hidden meanings in the epithets given to each plant. The modern neo-pagans also like to associate these trees with ogham, planets, emotions, colors, shoe-sizes and months of the year. Two of the listed trees, aren't trees at all, they're creepers, which is vine with me.

In these exceptional plants is a lesson. We've all heard the expression "standing on the shoulders of giants?" Nobody makes up a culture in a vacuum; we build on the work of our ancestors, occasionally throwing out a new leaf. Not everybody can be the stout tree in our society; some of us must attach ourselves to giants and build on their achievements to reach the same heights. However, left untamed, they tend to obliterate the intent of the original, leaving a monotonous conformity.

Ivy

Gort was the Irish word for ivy, *Hedera helix* L., and it should be planted in the fall, with greenish flowers also blooming around Samhain. It is an evergreen plant like holly, and is actually part of the Ginseng family (araliaceae). It is native to Europe and not to America. Its berries are poisonous in large amounts to blood cells, but used to be considered a cure for hangovers. The leaves were brothed and places on wounds and sores. The ancient Greeks used it to garland poets and heroes and counteract the effects of wine. Romans fed it to cattle and gave it to newlyweds. Interestingly, Gort is also the name of the giant robot in the Day the Earth Stood Still.

Unfortunately, Ivy has a dark side. Its tendrils can push through bricks and stones, destroying a wall slowly. It can also run rampant in forests, cloaking and choking the trees and darkening the forest floor so that other plants cannot grow. It has all the characteristics of a weed: rapid, widespread dispersal, very tolerant of a variety of ecosystems, rapid reproduction, opportunistic, quickly dominating ecological disturbed areas, resistant to eradication. A friend of mine says this sounds like most missionaries he knows.

Modern people associate Ivy with traditions and old-age. Many old mansions, colleges and castles are covered with ivy, softening the sharper details of a building. In the use of the term Ivy League, the word Ivy implies those pretentious snots and the parasitic upper class feeding off the common folk. Whoops, sorry about that rant.

Poison Ivy, Poison Oak, and Poison Sumac are relatives of the Cashew family (*Rhus*) and not related to English ivy. However their three-some nature shows that not all good things come in three and that only through experience can fakes be recognized.

Vine

Muin was the Irish name for the grapevine (*Vitis vinifera* L.) and it grows about 110 feet. Grapes rarely grow wild anymore and are culturally being replaced by blackberries. Grape cultivation was widely-known in pre-Roman Celtic

regions, even remote areas like ancient Slovenia, since the 6th Century B.C. Gaulish wine became indispensable in later Roman times especially since the Christian churches had such a fondness for their drug of choice.

The boiled leaves can be used for skin inflammations and grapes are good for coughs and ingestion. We all know the side-effects of grape-wine by intoxication. However, we have heard about the benefits of a glass or two of wine every day. It is a pity that Americans can't follow the French in drinking wine from youth at meals, as I believe it would result in more responsibility in drinking under the guidance of their parents rather than frat-brothers. Perhaps the greatest lesson of wine is that even rotting (i.e. fermenting) can be a beneficial process to us.

Both vines grow spirally, which some modern pagans associate with reincarnation or the ever-returning nature of search for self. Some postulate the two as enemies since Ivy prefers wet climates, and the vine prefers dry. Ivy also counteracts intoxication, supposedly, although also being linked with the fairy world's altered state.

Other Materials of Interest

About poison ivy:

<http://poisonivy.aesir.com/>

Dangers of English Ivy:

http://www.noivyleague.com/Pages/english_ivy.html

Biology of Ivy:

<http://www.hort.agri.umn.edu/h5015/00papers/okerman.htm>

History of British wine:

<http://www.english-wine.com/history.html>

Overview of world wine history:

<http://www.wineeducation.org/text/history.html>

About Labyrinth making, often using Ivy:

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

About those ivy-league colleges; Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, University of Penn., Princeton, and Yale:

<http://ask.yahoo.com/ask/19991110.html>

Ivy league jokes:

<http://www.newman.upenn.edu/ivy.html>

What do you get when you cross poison ivy with a four-leaf clover? A rash of good luck.

Tina: I just touched some poison ivy.

Nina: That was a rash thing to do.

What is a magician with poison ivy called? An itchy witchy.

The Japan-British Isles Comparison

By Patrick Haneke Akita Grove

Transcribed by Nozomi Kibou, Akita Grove

With the Advice and Assistance of

Larry Press, Baccharis Grove

Boring Intro and Disclaimer

What I am about to discuss, if of course, only personal beliefs, and should never be construed as reflecting those of other RDNA members, although there are some who might go with me a little ways into the deep-end of the pool of philosophy on the following subject. All of this is with tongue planted

firmly in cheek, but some poor bastard will fall for it completely, I suspect!

As you know, the Akita Grove was founded by Brother Mike, and we've vastly improved it since then, and we have been focusing on a Shinto-strain of Reformed Druidism. Past RDNA groves have done other strains: Hassidic, Norse, Germanic, Orthodox Celtic, Humanist and other ethnic focuses; so this is nothing out of the ordinary. I'd like to give you a quick intro into Japanese similarities to the British Isles.

What is unusual is our vision that we received at this grove, that is shamefully messianic (and definitely messy). But, we'd like to share it with you for contemplation, with no expectation that you'll agree with it. It is, after all, just our personal views. One way among many



Interesting Part Starts

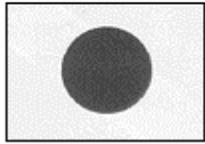
Akita Grove members generally believe that Japan and the British Isles (especially Ireland) are the two most powerful spiritual nodal points on the Eurasian Continent. In fact, if you map all the mounds and rock piles that prehistoric people produced, you have a giant snake whose tail is in Japan and whose head is a heavy concentration in the British Isles. To use a Japanese analogy, imagine two large flagpoles (one from Mount Fuji in Japan and one from Ben Mor in Scotland) between them is draped a long sacred rope (shimenawa) with holy folded-paper pendants hanging over the Eurasian continent. Now imagine one over the North American continent from NYC to SF. The lowest point of these two ropes is of course the Middle East and the Mid West. Can that be a coincidence?

Both of the two "low-point" locations were the meeting points of Oriental and Occidental beliefs forming new religions (Judeo/Christo/Islam and Reformed Druidism/Certain Plains Indians revivals respectively). Both had founders (Jesus and David Fisher) who were rather unwilling dupes who disappeared soon thereafter and whose teachings were sidetracked and redirected by their followers; much to their perturbation. Both started with a simple message that became complicated. Fortunately the RDNA hasn't become as politicized as Christianity so far in our first 40 years, and thankfully we didn't go in for that Martyrdom and Jihad thing.

We long for the day when Ireland will return to her polytheistic past, or just recognize that Roman Catholicism is polytheistic and be open to the undisguised return of older gods too. A friend suggested that perhaps we could start by bringing back the snakes? No, I replied, that would be bio-terrorism in the modern legal sense. We hope that Japan (through J.E.T. program, Martial arts and Anime), and America (through Neo-Paganism, Hollywood and Disney) will play a prominent role on re-erecting the pole in the British Isles.

We hope that you can learn a little about Ireland by studying its parallels in Shinto and Hinduism. Don't forget Japanese Zen Buddhism came from India, which are Indo-Europeans like the Druids! Irish Christianity? Well, in neighboring Iwate prefecture, there is a place where Jesus was supposed to have studied in his youth and later came and raised

a family after his brother was crucified in his place (now, there's an X-File.) It is all related. Glad I could share that with you. The following comparison chart was inspired by Brother Larry over in California.



British Isles

NW Tip of Europe
 Few big islands, lots of tiny ones
 Destination of the Setting Sun
 Lovingly warmed by the Gulf Stream
 Medieval repository of Western Learning.
 Modern educational powerhouse.
 2000 Shades of Green
 2nd Oldest Royal Family
 Monarch head of Anglican faith
 Blend of Druidism and Christianity
 Fierce, proud tribal warfare
 Endemic Terrorism from Messianic Imported religions.
 Fishing, Maritime culture
 Fairies, Ghosts and Monsters
 Powerful Germanic and French Neighbours who sent culture and invasions.
 Source of a world empire, including current financial one.
 Predominant difficult language with strong dialects and surviving indigenous languages (Celts).
 Tradition-bound culture
 Rainy and wet.
 Sci-Fi and Folk Culture

Japanese Isles

NE tip of Asia
 Few big islands, lots of tiny ones
 Source of the Rising Sun
 Lovingly warmed by the Kuro Stream.
 Repository of Chinese Culture and Learning
 Modern educational powerhouse
 1500 Shades of Green/Blue
 Oldest Royal Family
 Emperor head of Shinto faith
 Blend of Shintoism and Buddhism
 Samurai
 Endemic Terrorism from Messianic Imported religions.
 Fishing, Maritime Culture
 Deities, Ghosts and Monsters
 Powerful Chinese and Korean neighbours who sent culture and invasions.
 Source of a world empire, including current financial one.
 Predominant difficult language with strong dialects and surviving indigenous languages (Ainu).
 Tradition-bound culture
 Rainy and very wet.
 Anime and Folk Culture

There are some differences also.

British Isles

Dry farm and animal husbandry
 Gentle hills and rolling plains
 Fractionalized regional power
 Weak culinary tradition
 Few forests
 Stable ancient ground

Japanese Isles

Rice paddies and fish husbandry
 Steep mountains and valleys
 Strong centralization
 Strong culinary tradition
 Lots of forests
 Volcanic, restless, new ground.



The Breakfast of Champions

An Investigation into Lucky Charms
 By Eric Powers, Digitalis Grove of DC

Let's name the first brands that come to mind when we think of Ireland; Guinness, Irish Spring soap, and Lucky Charms. Mike Scharding glommed onto Lucky Charms for St. Patrick's Day, knowing full well they had little to do with Ireland. But they're so "magically delicious" that he's been raving about them, but my idea of Irish Breakfast is bacon, poached eggs, blood sausage, boiled tomato, cheese, and lard on a bagel, and a little hair of the dog that bit me;

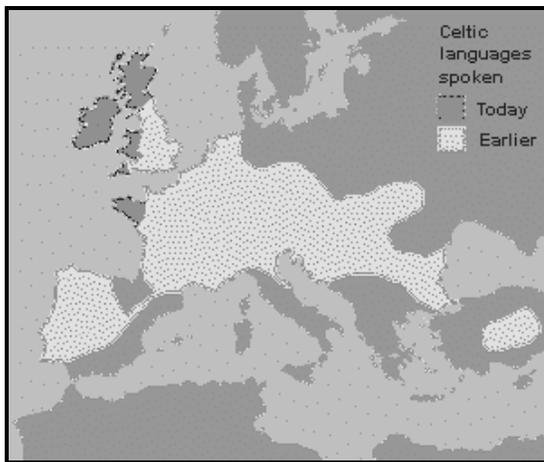
<http://www.irishfestivals.net/irishbreakfast.htm> Well, I'm no Third-Order guru, but I did some of my own research into the "Celticity" of Lucky Charms. You are what you eat, so what DID the Celts eat for breakfast?

Lucky charms were invented in 1963 by General Mills's worker John Holahan (an Irish immigrant who died in an unlucky car accident in April 2000) as the first cereal with marshmallow bits, or "marbits". Lucky Charms were created in Minneapolis Minnesota, not far from Carleton College. Is there a connection? Lucky's (his full name is L.C. Leprechaun) magic ability was changing the white marshmallows into colorful shapes (i.e. his treasure) with a license from the Leprechaun council. The original four "marbits" were pink hearts, yellow moons, orange stars, and green clovers. An amazing diversity of shapes has been added for special occasions. The current shapes are red balloons, blue moons, pink hearts, multi-colored rainbows, yellow and white shooting stars, Lucky's green hat with a green clover, orange and yellow pot of gold, and purple horseshoes.

As a breakfast of champions, there is some doubt. According to one study, (<http://www.gwally.com/tests/>) those "who prefer the cereal usually become accountants, Internal Revenue Service auditors, librarians who work at the reference desk, or low level government bureaucrats that stagnate in a dead-end position."

The question does remain, would the ancient Druids and magicians of the Celts have eaten Lucky Charms if they had the opportunity? Everybody loved milk. The main ingredients are oats and marshmallows, (plus sugar and vitamins) both of which may have been known to the ancient Celts, who inhabited lands from Denmark to Florence and Turkey to Portugal along the Mediterranean Sea in 200 B.C.

Oats were farmed in Germany as far back as 2500 B.C in Asia Minor and brought to Northern Europe around 1100 BC by the Scythians, about the time of the domestication of the horses as draft animals. Because of their non-glutinous nature, oats are not useful for bread, and have been used primarily for soups or feeding livestock. In ancient Ireland (i.e. Pre-Christian), oats (along with barley, wheat, rye, kale, turnips, beans, cherries and apples) were a staple of the Irish diet found mostly in porridge, and also in black pudding. Oats have an unusually heavy amount of proteins, fats and vitamins, plus it counteracts the high cholesterol in the Celtic diets. Oats were also especially resistant to climatic variations and austere conditions. Carried in times of war, oatcakes were roasted on swords over the fire.



Introduced by Sir Walter Raleigh, the potatoes prospered in Irish damp conditions and became appreciated in the 18th century. Oats soon were grown only as a cash crop while the family ate potatoes. Irish oats are prepared a little differently than American oats (which are mostly rolled); see "before the potato" for details. Some oats companies in Ireland still operate like they did in the 17th century, such as Flavahan. Oats remain the sixth most cultivated cereal in the world (after wheat, maize, rice, barley, sorghum) and have recently become popular as a health food; however, 93 percent of oats produced are still used for animal food. Russia produces 45 percent of the world's supply followed by US 12% and Canada 8%.



As for the marshmallows, they've been around since 2000BC and were a mixture of sap from the mallow plant (found in marshes) and honey. It was so good that it was reserved only for gods and royalty. Now you don't have to be a "Veil of Isis" initiate to postulate a connection with Egypt.

According to the famed Book of Invasions, Ireland was colonized by the Milesians. The Catholic Encyclopedia says:

"The Milesians came from Scythia; and from that country to Egypt, from Egypt to Spain, from Spain to Ireland their adventures are recorded in detail. The name Scot which they bore was derived from Scota, daughter of Pharaoh of Egypt, the wife of one of their chiefs; from their chief Miledh they got the name Milesians, and from another chief Goidel they were sometimes called Gadelians, or Gaels."

Probably fictional, Scota was such a popular character it influenced the naming of both Scotland and Ireland:

"In ancient times it was known by the various names of Ierna, Juverna, Hibernia, Ogygia, and Inisfail or the Isle of Destiny. It was also called Banba and Erin, and lastly Scotia, or the country of the Scots. From the eleventh century, however, the name Scotia was exclusively applied to Caledonia, the latter country having been peopled in the sixth century by a Scottish colony from Ireland. Henceforth Ireland was often called Scotia Major and sometimes Ireland, until, after the eleventh century, the name Scotia was dropped and Ireland alone remained. Even yet it is sometimes called Erin-chiefly by orators and poets."

So it is conceivable that Scota was some sort of unnamed historical figure. Perhaps she was an Egyptian trade merchant's daughter from the coast of the Mediterranean? Whoever the influence, they would have been familiar with the Marshmallow recipe and passed that tradition onto the new land. The marsh mallow plant is native to all of Europe, so herbalists in ancient Ireland probably knew it.

So yes, marshmallows could be considered a possibly ancient Celtic treat or medicine in some format. The recipe used in the US until 1890 was mallow sap plus egg whites and sugar, whipped into a meringue. It was a rather goeey thing, which was often prescribed by doctors for sore throats with immune system booster and sold in little tins. However the substitution of gelatin and corn syrup and tube puffing have given them a dryer more stable form that can be mass-produced without the health benefits of the original.

The cereal is rich in symbolism for me. Its overall taste is sweet, reflecting a positive view of life. The oaten shapes are a fish for the Salmon of Knowledge, the clover for divine "three-ness," flowers for herbs and beauty, and the "x" piece for crossed swords of the conflict in life. The current marshmallows invoke; pink hearts for love and society, green hat for those humble times when we must eat our hat, blue moon for those sadder times when life is changing in unexpected ways, shooting stars for those pyrrhic moments in life's accomplishments, red balloon for the desire to grow and move up in life, purple horseshoes for our interaction with the animal and mineral kingdoms, rainbows for the diversity in society, the pot of gold for the goals and dreams in our lives. I haven't tried diving with my cereal yet, but it would be an interesting task.

So, we have the combination of Celtic and Egyptian's culinary traditions, plus American marketing genius. The conclusion is that you can eat Lucky Charms with a clear conscience, knowing that everything in the cereal (with the exception of the corn-syrup, food colors and the tri-sodium phosphate) is a Celtic food substance. I'd still recommend a

shank of lamb, some porridge, beer and banger, but enjoy them if you dare!

Other Links:

Essay of Pagan/Christian unity through LC:
www.angelfire.com/fl/Wealthew/humor.htm
Unofficial lucky charms site:
<http://web.syr.edu/~ajhampso/lcharms.html>
Court case against Lucky over false advertising as “magically” delicious:
http://www.riversidelife.com/story/story_10000000220.html
Various TV leprechauns:
http://www.tvacres.com/enchanted_leprechauns.htm

Before the potato:
<http://allaboutirish.com/library/foodbev/oats.htm>
Irish diet:
<http://www.celticmist.freemove.co.uk/dailylife.htm>
Irish diet:
<http://allaboutirish.com/library/foodbev/food.htm>

History of marshmallows:
<http://inventors.about.com/library/inventors/blmarshmallows.htm>
Marshmallow recipe:
<http://www.howstuffworks.com/question128.htm>
Science and marshmallows:
<http://newton.dep.anl.gov/askasci/gen99/gen99440.htm>



The Druidic Candidate

Victor D. Infante
Fri, 22 Mar 2002, Orange County Weekly, California

Can California Deal With A Druid For Governor?

In a country just now coming to grips with its millions of Muslim residents, and in a county that not long ago freaked out about the construction of a Hindu temple in Buena Park, a Druid running for governor is bound to raise eyebrows. But Libertarian gubernatorial candidate and Druid Gary Copeland doesn't just tolerate the flak: he welcomes it, like a guy who wrote the kick-

me note he stuck on his own back--even when the flak is fired by fellow Libertarians.

“It doesn't bother me at all,” says Copeland. “It's not an issue with me. It's their issue, not mine. When people speak, they speak for who they are...It's my path to serve, and I'm doing that. I know not everyone's going to agree, but that's okay.”

But everything's not entirely okay. Copeland doesn't mask his annoyance at a Newsweek article that dismissed him as a “whacko” or with postings on a Libertarian e-mail list that chastised him for noting that he's a Druid in the California voter's guide, although he didn't note that he once advocated the use of LSD for spiritual purposes.

Indeed, it seems there's unease within the party over Copeland's unconventional religious beliefs--a “culture of peer pressure,” Copeland calls it--that one wouldn't expect from the liberty-loving Libs. It's as if it's all right for Copeland to harbor unusual religious beliefs so long as he doesn't talk much about them.

“Since Libertarians are a third party, we find it difficult to be taken seriously or to be considered by voters,” says Mark Murphy, director of a group called Libertarian Activists and a former member of the Orange County Libertarian Party Central Committee. “Obviously, we want voters to see we aren't any different from many of them. So, when Gary--who's a friend of mine, by the way--declares himself a Druid, there's a concern that trying to be taken seriously just went out the window.”

Doug Scribner disagrees. “I'm upset that people would find his beliefs a setback to his candidacy. After all, how many Christian politicians openly proclaim their beliefs in ballot guides?” says Scribner, vice chairman of the county's Libertarian Party.

Copeland remains philosophical about the criticism; indeed, he remains philosophical about everything. When you talk to him, he's philosophical at a hundred miles per hour and will frequently answer questions as if he's reading from a Celtic I Ching. Why is he running for governor, for instance? “Because the path brought me here,” he says.

It can be kind of frustrating. But beneath it, there's a refreshing sense that Copeland is deeply invested in his beliefs, both as a Druid and a Libertarian.

“It's an asset,” he says. “I love my Druidry as much as I love my Libertarianism. I describe myself as an existentialist libertarian Druid. If I can't find an answer from one philosophy, I go to another. Anything that's indefinable, I go to Druidry.”

Copeland says Druidry is a Celtic philosophy of magic, similar to the more popular Wicca. It's a circle of logic and spirituality based on the ideal of service to others--like The Lion King minus the cheesy soundtrack. One of the central tenets of Druidry is that no one should have authority over anyone but himself or herself--a point Copeland illustrates with a reference to The Lord of the Rings, noting that the ring Frodo carries has “so much power that, even if you did good things with it, it would pervert, subvert and seduce you.”

“That is the basis of all Celtic philosophy: that absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

That idea led Copeland to the steadfastly secular Libertarian Party. Around 1980, Copeland was working with Timothy Leary's Brotherhood of Eternal Love to spread the gospel of LSD and enlightenment when he got busted. Fortunately for him, he says, he was screwing the narcotics agent. Not wanting to deal with that, he says, the cops charged him only with low-level possession.

“I was using LSD to be spiritually enlightened,” he says. “I was one of those peyote people who for thousands of years

had been using hallucinogens to connect to the spiritual world. Who were the cops to tell me I couldn't?"

Soon after, he began running the Orange County branch of NORML, the marijuana-legalization folks, and soon after that, he fell in with the anti-prohibitionist Libertarians. In 1992, he ran for Congress against Dana Rohrabacher--himself a former Libertarian--and got killed, garnering just 7.7 percent of the vote. In '96, he ran for county supervisor, beating the Democrat in the race--which tells you something about the state of the Democratic Party in Orange County. He has worked in computers and recently founded his own company, NextCure, which will distribute information on drugs under FDA review.

None of this really gives him a leg up in the gubernatorial race against uberbland rivals Davis and Simon, but Copeland would rather run as he is than tailor his biography and message for the mainstream.

"The problem with most politicians is that they're pretending to be something they're not," he says. "They're trying to be something outside their natures." They think people won't like them if they're different. But people like to go to a taco stand and try different tacos. I'm not stupid; when I put the Druid thing in, I knew it would be a hook. If I hadn't done it, I wouldn't be talking to you right now."

Members of Baccharis Grove who attended the Interfaith Pagan Pride Parade in Berkeley got the chance to meet Mr. Copeland and wish him well in his campaign. We didn't get much of a chance to talk to him but did notice he wore quite a nice linen robe.



Bard of the Year Contest Winner Announced!

The long winter is finished and summer is now. The contest of song is over. You may send songs, but I will keep them, and not use them until November.

Thank you for the 40 songs and poems! I did not understand all of them, but I enjoyed them. Like Brother Donald said, it is hard to choose the losers and winners. The real winners are the readers; they were good songs. But I had to pick someone.

The winner of the 2001/2002 is Sister Tegwedd for "Celtic Goddess Chant."

Brigid, Cerrydwen, Morrigan, Arianrhod

Macha Bloudewedd, Rhiannon

And here are my reasons:

It was easy for my understanding.

It was short and simple, which is in the Druidic spirit.

It uses only nouns, which shows a love of things, which is very Druidic.

It calls my favorite goddesses.

It is useful in liturgy

I cannot vote for Pat, despite his hard work, because his ego is too big already!

As prize, everyone should call Tegwedd, Bard of the Reform, XL, until May 2003.

-Yours in the Mother
Nozomi

A Reformed Druid Anthology Update

By Mike Scharding, Digitalis Grove

Building on the work of my Sisters and Brother, I'm putting out another edition of ARDA next Beltane 2003 to mark our 40th anniversary. The Final-I-Mean-It deadline is March 21st 2003. The final version may reach 800 pages (It's 500 pages now). Because it's such a massive job, the sooner you can send in those materials, the more likely they'll be included. I'll be posting further updates at Lughnasadh and Samhain and Oimeic and listing new additions at <http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/update.html>.

ARDA is a collection of various articles, trivia, documents and essays about the Reform. Being the pack-rat that I am, I'm not too choosy. ARDA has a bit more of an enduring feeling to contributions than A Druid Missal-Any, which is more topical to the coming and goings of the Reform. If you haven't seen ARDA yet, go to <http://www.student.carleton.edu/orgs/Druids/ARDA/> We're looking for the following types of materials:

Part Zero, One, Five and Seven

Will NOT change much, except for corrections.

Part Two: Apocrypha

We're looking for introspective essays, usually revolving on the theme "What is Reformed Druidism?" or "How should one go about Druidism?" One short paragraph to ten long pages of simple or complex arguments are acceptable. You do not have to write in biblical format.

Part Three: Liturgies

If you've done an unusual twist on a liturgy, have unusual invocations, ordination customs, new Orders, solitary or protogrove services; send them in.

Part Four: Trivia

Tell us about your constitutions, folklore, unusual customs or activities, voting rules, pamphlets, lists of accomplishments by members, new words, different holidays or regalia.

Part Six: Green Books.

This is a collection of stories of a multi-faith nature than contain lessons applicable to anyone. They can be copyright, self-made, public domain, anonymous stories that empower and wizen you. This is the one section of the ARDA 2 that we won't make available to "print on demand," due to the copyright reasons. Most of these have been going into my Hazelnut

column, but I plan to add another 200 pages of stories and jokes myself over the last six years.

Part Eight: General History

If you've found an article about the RDNA, written one or would like to write an essay, DO!

Part Nine: New books of the Reform

We're adding more vigil stories, songs, music, and poetry from the Bardic Contest, and other sources. Preferably these would belong to the public domain. Also needed are grove histories, simple or complex.

Part Ten: Interviews

No promises yet, but I intend to get a few more interviews from Fisher, Nelson, Bonewits, A few more recent Carleton ADs, Joan, and any others who'd like to step in. These take a lot of time to type up, so please try to finish by Samhain.

Part Eleven: Magazines of the Reform

A possible reprinting of all past RDNA magazines and newsletters.



Mysterious Gold Cones “Hats of Ancient Wizards”

By Tony Paterson in Berlin
telegraph.uk.co, filed: 17/03/2002

WIZARDS really did wear tall pointed hats - but not the crumpled cloth kind donned by such fictional characters as Harry Potter, Gandalf and Merlin.

The wizards of early Europe wore hats of gold intricately embellished with astrological symbols that helped them to predict the movement of the sun and stars.

This is the conclusion of German archaeologists and historians who claim to have solved the mystery behind a series of strange yet beautiful golden cone-shaped objects discovered at Bronze Age sites across Europe.

Four of the elaborately decorated cones have been uncovered at sites in Switzerland, Germany and France over the past 167 years. Their original purpose has baffled archaeologists for decades.

Some concluded that they were parts of Bronze Age suits of armour; others assumed that they served as ceremonial vases.

A third theory, which had gained widespread acceptance until now, was that the cones functioned as decorative caps that were placed on top of wooden stakes that surrounded Bronze Age sites of worship.

Historians at Berlin's Museum for Pre- and Early History, however, claim to have established with near certainty that the mysterious cones were originally worn as ceremonial hats by Bronze Age oracles.

Such figures, referred to as “king-priests,” were held to have supernatural powers because of their ability to predict accurately the correct time for sowing, planting and harvesting crops.

“They would have been regarded as Lords of Time who had access to a divine knowledge that enabled them to look into the future,” said Wilfried Menghin, the director of the Berlin Museum which has been carrying out detailed research on a 3,000-year-old 30in high Bronze Age cone of beaten gold that was discovered in Switzerland in 1995 and purchased by the museum the following year.

Mr. Menghin and his researchers discovered that the 1,739 sun and half-moon symbols decorating the Berlin cone's surface make up a scientific code which corresponds almost exactly to the “Metonic cycle” discovered by the Greek astronomer Meton in 432bc--about 500 years after the cone was made--which explains the relationship between moon and sun years.

“The symbols on the hat are a logarithmic table which enables the movements of the sun and the moon to be calculated in advance,” Mr. Menghin said. “They suggest that Bronze Age man would have been able to make long-term, empirical astrological observations,” he added.

The findings radically alter the standard image of the European Bronze Age as an era in which a society of primitive farmers lived in smoke-filled wooden huts eking out an existence from the land with the most basic of tools.

“Our findings suggest that the Bronze Age was a far more sophisticated period in Europe than has hitherto been thought,” Mr. Menghin said.

Another cone, found near the German town of Schifferstadt in 1835, had a chinstrap attached to it. The cone, which is also studded with sun and moon symbols, is the earliest example found and dates back to 1,300bc.

Other German archaeologists have suggested that the gold-hatted king-priests were to be found across much of prehistoric Europe. Prof. Sabine Gerloff, a German archaeologist from Erlangen University, has found evidence that five similar golden cones were exhumed by peat diggers in Ireland during the 17th and 18th centuries.

These objects, described at the time as “vases,” have disappeared. Prof Gerloff says, however, that her research suggests almost conclusively that they were hats worn by Bronze Age king-priests.

She is also convinced that a Bronze Age cape of beaten gold--the “Gold Cape of Mold” discovered in Wales in 1831--was part of a king-priest's ceremonial dress.

Prof. Gerloff has used computers to create an impression of a Bronze Age oracle wearing a golden hat and with an elaborately decorated golden cape wrapped tightly around the shoulders.

Resources

Basketmaking in Ireland by Joe Hogan

(Paperback; 25.00 Euro / 22.50 USD / 15.00 UK; Wordwell, 300 pages)

The main purpose of this book is to record the techniques used in making Irish traditional baskets, a task that became more urgent as indigenous baskets, such as creels and lobster pots, began to go out of use. The history of the baskets and their uses are included because, in order to understand or even make these baskets, the author feels strongly that some knowledge of, and respect for, the people who made and used them is required. The book is structured so that each chapter contains information for the reader who has a general interest in traditional craft; each chapter also has a technique section giving details of how to make many of the baskets described. Contains numerous b/w photos and drawings.

From the Read Ireland Book Review

Read Ireland @ Phibsboro Bookshop,

342 North Circular Road, Phibsboro, Dublin 7, Ireland

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Fax: +353-1-830-2997

<http://www.readireland.com>

Calendar

Astronomical Beltaine, when the Sun is half way between the Spring Equinox and the Summer Solstice, will occur as 15 degrees of Taurus on May 5 at 9:38:40 a.m. PDT or as 16 degrees 18 minutes decl. on May 5 at 6:27:16 a.m. PDT. Beltaine services will be held on Sunday, May 5, at Solar Noon which is now 1 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time. Please call for carpool arrangements (510) 654-6896. For the social observance of Beltaine we will be going immediately after the service to AD's house. As we have no cattle to drive between the Beltaine fires we will be having a barbeque instead. Regular Druid services will be held at Solar Noon, 1 p.m. on May 26, and June 9. Please call the above number to confirm.

The Missal-Any is published eight times a year. Post mail subscriptions are \$6.00 and online subscriptions are free, but might not include everything that is in the post mail edition. Or write an article or send us a cartoon and receive a year's subscription free. Write The Missal-Any, c/o Weinberger, 309 63rd St, Apt. C, Oakland, CA 94618.

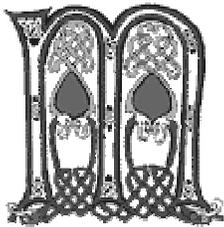
A Druid Missal-Any
Summer Solstice Y.R. XL
Vol. 18, Number 4
Jun. 17th, 2002 c.e.



Summer Solstice Essay:

Anu and Danu

By Stacey Weinberger

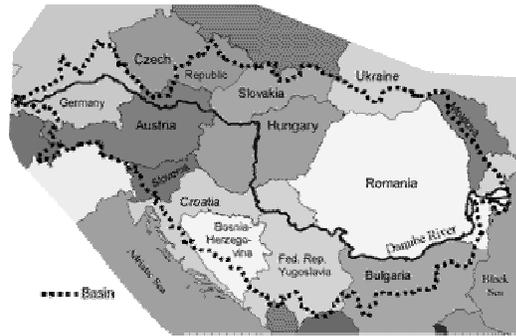


Midsummer, Summer Solstice, the longest day of the year, one of the minor High Day of the Reformed Druid calendar, is associated with the goddess Danu. There has been much discussion in the scholarly community on whether Danu and Anu are cognates of one another or separate goddesses entirely.

Anu and Danu were both fertility goddesses and Mother Goddesses in early Irish mythology. Anu is described in Cormac's Glossary (*Sanas Cormaic*, 10th century) as the mother of the Irish gods, and in the *Coir Anmann* (Fitness of Names) as the goddess of prosperity to whom the province of Munster owed its wealth and fertility. Danu is associated with the divine race of people, the Tuatha De Danann, the People of the Goddess Danu, who are recorded in the *Leabhar Gebhála* (Book of Invasions) having arrived in a cloud from the North, invading Ireland, and defeating the Fir Bolgs and later the Fomorians.

Anu is identified with the earth and fertility of Ireland. She gives her name to the two rounded hills in County Kerry, called *Dá Chich Anann* or the Paps of Anu. In Ireland today she is still talked about from Cork up into South County Tipperary and is considered the earth goddess of Ireland. A distinction is made between her and Danu. Anu is considered to be pre Tuatha and possibly the Sheela na Gig.

Anu is also identified with Aine, another goddess associated with the land. Her cult was localized to County Limerick, Munster, where she was still worshipped up until the 19th century. She was said to live in the hill Cnoc Aine. On St. John's Eve, Midsummer's Eve, the local people carried torches of hay and straw around the hill that were then taken to the fields to bless cattle (another instance of fire being used to insure the health and fertility of the flocks for the coming year).



Danu, according to MacKillop, is the speculative name for the mother goddess of the Continental Celts, based on the evidence of place names, for example the Danube river (*die Donau*). He writes that "a prosthetic D-changes Ana, Anu to Dana, Danu; some commentators advise that these forms are later scholarly inventions, while others point out that the name Dana has discrete associations and parallels." But if you look at the types of places Danu is associated with, a pattern begins to form. Derivations of her name being rivers show strong evidence that she is a river goddess, as opposed to Anu who is a land goddess. Rivers all over the Indo-European lands were named for her: the Danube in Austria (the Greek author Herodotus commented on the Keltai residing in the area of the Danube valley in the fifth century B.C.), the Don in southwest Russia (where an inscription referring to an attack on the kingdom of Bosphoros and a scattering of La Tene objects across the southern steppes in indicates that some Celts might have reached), Dneipr in the Ukraine (where the Celts settled around 300 BC), Dniestr in Moldavia, and even the Don and Dee in Scotland are all cognates of her name.

Other linguistic evidence exists showing Danu's position as a Pan-Indo-European river Goddess. Her name is Sanskrit and in India's Rig-Veda signifies "stream" and "the waters of heaven."

News of the Groves

Carleton, News from Minnesota

We had a full week for Beltane! There was a sweatlodge on Friday, tea on Sunday, and Beltain on Wednesday! First off, there was a sweatlodge Friday night in the Small Grove. For those who don't know, the sweatlodge is a tool for physical and spiritual cleansing as well as an excellent place for reflection and meditation. There was some cooking over in Greenhouse during the day on Friday (Thanks Liz!). There's was so much that needed to be done outside--chopping wood, carrying rocks, bringing water and setting up the lodge, for starters.

Our rules are simple: 1) Try to eat as little as possible. Many people fast for the day and eat in the evening after the lodge has ended. 2) Don't consume any meat, dairy products, caffeine, or alcohol for at least 24 hours before the sweat. 3) Drink water, and lots of it! 4) Drink more water! (I'm not kidding!) 5) Be in the Small Grove on Friday at 8. That about covers it.

Now, on to the tea. This was Sunday at 3 in Nourse Main Lounge, and we made dreamcatchers. Craft-oriented-types displayed their creativity and make something useful at the same time. For those of you lacking the craft-gene, don't worry! Making dreamcatchers is so simple; a blind monkey could do it one-handed!

BELTAIN! Wednesday, May 1st was Beltain, the biggest event of the Druid year. We marked it by celebrating Spring with music, dancing, singing, storytelling, food, masks, plays,

tarot readings, fishing for people, tree-climbing, Druid weddings, donut trees, revelry, merriment, general frolicking, and much more! Festivities were at the Stone Circle in the upper arboretum. The celebration lasted all day. Weddings and a ritual began at 6pm.

Akita Grove: News from Japan

Pat is back from his trip!

<http://www.mythinglinks.org/ct~water.html> is interesting. It's about water, wells and healing. Please enjoy.

I've finished the trans-Japan hike from the Sea of Japan beach to the beautiful Matsu-jima islands near Sendai

No matter where you go in Japan, you're hardly going to find a virgin forest. Not just because virginity is a short-lived state in nature, which loves to proliferate at the slightest chance, but because men have been molding this island for so many hundreds of generations. Where tourists see forested mountain sides and winding rivers, the locals see carefully planted rows of Cedars, tended "wild plants," stocks of deer and bear, carefully engineered irrigation systems, and channeled river flowage. The absence of concrete is not necessarily an absence of the hand of man.

There is a spine on mountains running north-south through the center of Japan, so any east-west crossing involves a lot of steep hikes. In particular, I loved the panoramic vista of a reaching the break in a range;

Mountain pass at night

Moonlit, chilly, very quiet.

Roads slope down both ways.

I'll write more when I feel inspired in a writing way and review my notes.

—Pat

Digitalis Grove: News from DC

Eric is doing well, but can't write an article for this issue, too busy. He says that he'll write something about Irish cleaning habits for Lughnasadh. No news from Mairi and Sine in the Pacific Ocean someplace.

No big change in my personal life, but I'm glad to see the RDNA Talk Circle conference is assisting other Druids to get in contact with each-other, freeing up my hands to do more research and work on ARDA II.

Well, actually, I am just having a good time in DC with all the Memorial Day events and getting ready for this summer. I'll be in Northfield MN, at Carleton College from June 21 to July 7, finishing the editing of the epic sci-fi series, "Drake's 17" filmed mostly with Druid recruits back in 1996. I also hope to meet several old time folk-dancing Druids, who should be there for the Carleton Reunion. It will be a good time to start planning the 40th anniversary for RDNA in 2003. By the way, keep your eye for a possible credit for me in Austin Powers III this summer; I helped them research Japanese navy outfits for one seen in their trip through time.

I'm thinking about assisting ex-Carleton professor, now Senator Paul Wellstone, in his campaign for a third term this fall. As a sidelight, check out Celtic Clothing at <http://www.reconstructinghistory.com/celtic/intro.html>

Life Garden Grove: News from Long Island, New York

Hello there. I have started a new grove and would like to inform you of our existence. Here is my information

We don't have any leaders because we are all equals but here is a list of members and their roles in our grove:

Andy "Silent Dragon of Spring" Costantino:
Bard, musician, artist.

Kimberly Salinas: lover of all living creatures, writer, poet.

ZuZu: she just kind of sits around and looks for love as most dogs do.

Here are our tenets (taken from the Native American 10 Commandments. We discarded a few like that do not pertain).

TREAT THE EARTH AND ALL THAT
DWELL THEREON WITH RESPECT

SHOW GREAT RESPECT FOR YOUR
FELLOW BEINGS

LOOK AFTER THE WELL-BEING OF
MIND AND BODY

DEDICATE A SHORE OF YOUR
EFFORTS TO THE GREATER GOOD

BE TRUTHFUL AND HONEST AT ALL
TIMES

TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR
YOUR ACTIONS

Our website is still under construction but a temp shall be up and running within a few days at:

<http://www.access-solutions.com/LGgrove.html> ?

Our contact information is this e-mail address:
fistfulofdust@angelfire.com

Swamp Grove: News from Florida

Greetings from the sunny south. All is well with the Swamp Grove, our rainy season is just starting and the fruit trees around the grove are doing just fine. This will be the first year that our banana trees should produce, loads of wild grapes, papaya and citrus are getting ready for the coming season, there are certainly worse places to be than south Florida in spring. Our rituals are very laid back and unorthodox because of the odd growing season down here, we figure that it is more important to worship nature than to worry about when we do it.

Oaken Circle Grove: News from Kentucky

Our grove is continuing to grow, we recently met with two more ladies and if they decide to join the grove, our grove will be up to 12 adult members. We are currently working on the youth grove and setting up our classes. We are also planning a paganing for one of our grove couple's daughter on the summer solstice; she is going on three months old. We have a lovely newborn ritual that was forwarded to us by our dear friend in New York, Inion_an_Daghdha!!! Thank you Inion!!!!!!

The very same couple is also currently planning a handfasting that will take place in mid July, we want to congratulate them and offer them our best wishes as well!!!!!!!!!! Also I would like to mention our Beltane celebration was a great success and there are a few pictures of our festivities on the web

page http://oaken_circle_grove.tripod.com/oakencirclegroveky/
We have added some new things to our site, it is constantly under construction. Please check it out and sign our guest books with your thoughts.

Thank you,
Sherry of the Oaken Circle Grove

Cattle Grove: News from Texas

Hey, I just want to announce the opening of the Cattle Grove in Dallas Texas. And as of now we have a rough web page up at <http://www.evilsmile.com/druid> so check it out, and if you live in the Dallas area by chance, email me and we can work something out.

—Joss

Mojo Protogrove

Mojo protogrove is now down to one human member, but holds steady with four canine members.

We will hold a Summer Solstice ritual at astronomical solstice instead of calendar solstice unless the two coincide. It is up for debate at this time whether to go to the mountains or to the sea. There is also a possibility that we may be able to have a combined ceremony with nearby American Indian tribal members who will be observing Summer Solstice in their own time honored way.

Cylch Cerddwyr Rhwng y Bydoedd Grove: News from Grants Pass, Oregon

OR has had a year of both transformation and growth. Sadly, we had a member relocate to another part of the Pacific Northwest and we have few candidates to replace him, making our numbers a small, but compatible, three.

On the positive side, our Grove is also the Mother Grove of the Order of the Mithril Star. The Order has seen growth this year on both national and international fronts. We currently have solitary members in seven countries, and Groves or ProtoGroves in Washington, Oregon and California. Our Cybernest email list has 65 members, and our current Druidcraft 101 course (taught three times a year via email) has an enrollment of 80.

We will soon be offering a more advanced course-- Druidcraft 201. Also, our Clerk, Ceridwen, will be offering an online Astrology for Beginners course as well.

The Order of the Mithril Star was founded in 1996 by Elrond Pendderwydd and the late Adam Walks Between Worlds. The OMS tradition is an eclectic assemblage of various western magickal traditions, including Faery Wicca, Thelema, Discordianism, Hedonism, the Church of All Worlds Tradition, and Celtic spirituality and shamanism. Unlike traditional Druids, OMS Druids revere the Coastal Redwood (Sequoia Sempervivens) rather than the Oak. The email Druidcraft 101 course has been taught more or less continuously since 1997 with an average enrollment of 75, with an average of 20 finishing the course. It is estimated that there are approximately 150 members +/- worldwide.

In July of 2001, the Order joined the Reformed Druids of North America, becoming the only multi-Grove body within the Reform. Since then we have adapted some RDNA traditions to our use, and ?Druidified? (or ?reformicated?) some of our own traditions to ?sort of conform? with RDNA practice.

More information on the OMS-RDNA can be found on our website: www.mithrilstar.org

Druid Heart Spirit Grove/Nemeton Awenyddion: News from Cohasset

Well, things have been very busy here. Calon Mai/Beltain campout was a success! Only about half the people showed up who said they'd be here but this didn't hinder our fun at all. The ritual went great and our Gwyddoniad kindred brought song and dance to share during our ritual's devotionals. We actually got all the food cooked before it got dark out; we ate a wonderful feast and played music. We also had a guest from a Celtic band called "The Pub Scouts." Her name is Jewel and she brought her mandolin, she and I played quite a few songs for everyone with her on mandolin and I on Celtic harp.

A lot of major changes are taking place in the order of our Grove. We have combined forces with a Welsh Gwyddoniad order called Nemeton Gwynfyd, we have become one. Three of Nemeton Gwynfyd's members/elders will be tying their ribbon of dedication to our Nemeton's tree on the next sixth night of the new moon ritual, and this last weekend I was gifted a torc of elder membership into their order by their High Priestess. We have thus in our new kindredship with the Gwyddoniad named our Nemeton, Nemeton Awenyddion, which means: sacred grove of oracles/seers.

For Alban Hefin/summer solstice we will have our regular gathering and mistletoe gathering ritual on June 22nd. I have made special arrangements with some neighbors of mine who have a beautiful pond on their land surrounded by oak trees, one of which has a large bunch of mistletoe hanging within reach from the ground. This is where we will be doing our mistletoe gathering ritual. Then we will head back to Nemeton Awenyddion for our ritual and feast.

We are also planning on having a campout for Gwyl Ifan/Lughnasadh. There is an online flyer at: http://www.geocities.com/sailletree/calon_mai.html

Another big happening at Druid Heart Spirit Grove is that we have our plans and proposal together for non-profit status. Our plans are for buying a large piece of land for Nemeton Awenyddion, Cottage Industries, a nature preserve, and classes and nature walks we will offer to local schools. A Gwyddoniad Druid retreat center will also be our major aim in our plans, with building another stone circle Nemeton, a Celtic sweat lodge, and small tree cabins for our campouts and retreats. Our organization will be accepting board members from Druid Groves, as Groves, not individuals. I will let you all know when more progress is made.

—Rhiannon Hawk

Duir de Danu Grove: News from California

We are having Celtic Nights, the second Saturday of the month. One of the projects we've been talking about doing is making Ogham fews for divination.

Baccharis Grove: News from California

The Season of Life began in full force, as May proved to be a very busy month for us.

We had the distinct pleasure and privilege of having Brother Bob Larson come to our Beltaine service.

In the middle of the month we drove to Mt. Shasta to bring Emmon's headstone to his grave at the Buddhist Abbey. We held a small service also attended by a few of the monks and buried some items of importance to us and to Emmon under the headstone (at his funeral we put some things in his casket in typical early Celtic fashion that he might need in the Other-

world or next life), and each said a few words. I read the Zen Master Ryokan poem, "To My Teacher" and a dirge from the Carmina Gadelica in the original Gàidhlig.

I decided to stay longer at the "philosophical hermitage" and attended an introductory meditation lesson given by one of the monks and two sitting and one walking meditations. The half-hour sitting meditations seemed daunting at first, but I compared them to my Third Order vigil, and didn't look at them in terms of minutes ticking by but as a block of time. The sitting still and clear head practice is much the same as my daily Salutations to the Three Ways of day and One of Night so it was familiar and I found I could achieve that state. After the meditation there was a dharma talk given by one of the senior monks, which seemed very appropriate for this Druid's training.

Monday morning I awoke to snow!! It was snowing! The white was very striking on the bright green of the oak, pine, and redwood trees. Snow is very unusual for Shasta at this time of year and it was like a blessing.

I visited Sister Rhiannon of the Druid Heart Spirit Grove on the way home. Her Grove site sits in the middle of a forest and has standing stones. It is truly wonderful.

Rather than consigning the Grove Birches that died last year to the firewood pile, I thought what more fitting a tribute than to make Ogham staves out of them. A friend with a serious woodworking shop graciously agreed to cut the wood to my specifications (based on the measurements of my index finger). They turned out beautifully. The next step is to purchase a woodcarving set to carve the lines. After Gàidhlig class this past Tuesday I got into a discussion with a fellow student at the Irish music session we go to afterwards about the tree alphabet that the Oghams are based on. Each Ogham begins with a letter of one of the trees sacred to the ancient Druids. It suddenly made sense! By each Ogham beginning with the first letter of one of the trees, probably common in Ireland and the Celtic lands at the time, the trees were probably a way of memorizing the alphabet! Look up, see a tree, it stands for this letter. We know that the Druids committed their learning to memory rather than writing it down. This seemingly little exercise filled in another piece of the puzzle to understanding and learning what the Druids did.



Summer Solstice Activities

By Alex Strongbow, ex-Carleton Grove

It is not a major holiday, but here are some activities to surround the holiday.

Short and simple, the list looks like this:

- Picnics, beach parties, and fireworks
- Bonfire (It's always a good time)
- Firefly searching, bug collecting (and release?)
- College or family reunions
- Charging magical tools
- Hardest work on a long-term project or making a journey
- Eating a super-big sundae

- Hauling rocks and attuning your megalithic calendar
- Baseball, soccer, hurley, outdoor games.
- Searching for St. John's Wort
- Backyard volcano building (see familyeducation.com site)

Other Links

Kids activities that teach:

<http://family.go.com/raisingkids/learn/activities/feature/dony67summsolstice/dony67summsolstice.html>

Megalithic family fun!

<http://www.familyeducation.com/article/0,1120,22-4200,00.html>

Family projects:

<http://www.care2.com/channels/solutions/home/196>

Interesting base for studies:

<http://www.mythinglinks.org/summersolstice2000.html>

The Creation of a Druid's Nemeton

By Rhiannon Hawk Fugatt, Druid Heart Spirit Grove/Nemeton Awenyddion

(Editor's note: While Sister Rhiannon uses Welsh deities, the deities invoked can be adapted to the Celtic pantheon of your affinity and their attributes and roles.)

Nemeton means "Sacred Space." The Druids of old and Druids of today prefer our sacred space outdoors in a place where we feel or sense Nature Spirit activity. Many Nemetons are located in a grove of trees. Natural places can add a lot to a ritual, especially if you can find a spot that exists along a ley-line or high-energy center along the Earth's magnetic grid. Our Druid Grove's Nemeton is in the middle of a forest of silver-firs, oaks, pines, cedars, and dogwoods, twenty to thirty feet behind our home. Before we created the standing stones Nemeton I searched the property by spending time in different locations attuning to Earth's energy there and paid special care of natural vibrational frequencies.

The circle of our Grove is about twenty-five feet across, and around the edges stand twelve stones in the eight directions of the wheel of the year. We spent considerable time creating this sacred space, but it is nothing compared to the hard work that went into the Ancients' creation of Stonehenge or other ancient sacred places. These stone monuments, or circles, express the way Druids perceive the universe and we connect with the universe in this circle that has no beginning and no end. These standing stones will stay here to remind future people of our existence and sacred connection with the land.

I found most of the stones in our stone circle by digging them out of the ground near the Nemeton's location. Some of them were very large, weighing up to two thousand pounds. For the larger and heaviest stones we used a come-along, a hand operated wench for pulling them. The largest stone that now stands in the East was the heaviest. I dug it out of the hard clay soil just fifteen feet away from the Nemeton in the ground. After three days of cranking the come-along we finally had him close enough to the East so we started to prepare his spot in the Grove, next we stood him up and lodged him into the dig out. Now I'm sure it would have taken a lot less time if we had a tractor to move it, but we decided to do it by hand. The rest of the stones in our Nemeton weighed less than a thousand pounds. I moved them by myself with a refrigerator dolly.

If you were to put as much effort into your sacred space, it might be good to get a work party together to help. While not all

of us are blessed to have land, sometimes it is necessary to seek out Pagan friendly landowners. Druids who live in cities can create sacred space in your homes but please be sure you have a fire source such as a candle, for that is where the spirits dance.



The Nemeton is circular, but Druids stand or sit in a horseshoe pattern during ritual. The opening in the horseshoe is where the spirits enter our Nemeton that is in the South. The South is also where we have our altar. The altar is used to create an open doorway for the kindred spirits to enter during ritual. The reason for the altar's location being in the South is that the South side of any clearing has the most sun through out the day. The altar I created in our Nemeton is a trithilian--three standing stones in close proximity capped with a flat sandstone. The altar is a bridge between the worlds. The layout of the ritual tools on our altar is symbolic. How they are placed on top of the altar stone reflects how we relate those symbols with our own inner spirit, and our connection with the world tree cosmology. On our altar we place the symbols of Land, Sea, and Sky, and of the balance between the moon and sun. During ritual we do not step behind the altar out of our deep respect for the Shining Ones or good spirits who may be passing through the opening into the Grove.

A Grove is what Druids call their act of gathering for rituals, magic and meditation. We are the Druid's Grove. We join with others and do the tree meditation at the beginning of our ritual to feel that the peace within trees also exists within us, and to experience the interconnectedness of our roots growing together. The rituals take place in the Nemeton.



These rituals are celebrated during the solstices, the equinoxes, the four fire festivals, and the healing rites we do every month. The Nemeton has a fire pit dug out of its center. Before all rituals we prepare for the spirit fire by placing oak twigs and logs in a cone shape. Oak represents durability and strength and is associated with the Welsh sun God Llew. We light the spirit fire in ritual during the moment the God and Goddess who preside over the ritual are arriving. When we are

in the Nemeton all is quiet except for the sounds of nature, the four winds in the trees, and our voices raised in song. We keep a peace around us that allows our senses to awaken and our minds to be open for contact with the invisible world. The invisible world exists all through out this middle earthly plane.

When we had finished building our stone circle I did a ritual to welcome the new stones. This is done by consecrating the stones with offerings that have been blessed by the spirits. First we invite a patron God and matron Goddess from the Welsh pantheon into our Nemeton. We call on the Goddess Bríd. She brings with her the flame of inspiration and the creation of fiery spirit energy that dances in the center fire. We call on the God Manawyddan; he is the voyager who sails on the ocean, and over the land. He goes between our world and the other worlds and assists us to lift the veils between the worlds. I invoke Brúg and Manawyddan into two white candles. These represent the brightness of the God and Goddess and reminds us to keep alive our own inner spark of the divine. The invocation is done with songs and poetry. Then we take the candles and we light the center fire to connect the spirits and us with the Celtic world tree.

The center fire of our Nemeton represents the center of the world tree and the center of the world tree is the Middleworld or Earth. We invite the God and Goddess of the rite to dance there in the spirit fires. Then we call the Celtic triad spirits to bless us with their presence. The triad spirits are our Ancestors of the sea, the Nature Spirits of the earth, and the Shining Ones of the sky. The triad spirits we invite into the Grove each have an earthen bowl that contains an element that is attributed to the realm they come from. A bowl of water is placed to the left on the altar for the Underworld and the Ancestors. A bowl of earth for the Middleworld and the Nature Spirits is placed in the center. The Shining Ones have a feather and an incense bowl on the right side. We invoke these spirits with poetic verse to imbue their spirit into the water, the earth, and the incense.



The poetry we use is written by our Grove's Bard. Then we take the two candles around to each stone and pour a small amount of melted wax onto the ground in front of each stone. This is done to awaken each stone to the spirits of the God and Goddess we have invoked into the candles, so that their energy may vibrate from the Earth that is within the newly created Nemeton. A Druid then takes each bowl starting with the water of the Ancestors, and pours a small amount on top of each stone while invoking the energy of the Ancestor's realm of the Underworld to pulsate through all of the stones in the circle. The Underworld is more distant from our world than the Otherworld, and is usually found through water. The world tree's roots are in the Underworld, so are the past, our ancestors, and our minds. This the Druid says during invocation to each stone while pouring the waters, "May the vibrations of the Underworld, through this stone, pulsate with the luminous light of the Anwyn." The name for the Underworld in the Welsh lore is Anwyn. Then the Druid goes to each new stone member repeating this same process then returns the bowl to the altar giving thanks by words of prayer.

The same process is done to awaken the stones to the energetic activity of Nature Spirits, whose world comes next on the way up the world tree. Nature spirits are part of the creative energy flow in nature, they exist in plants, streams, mountains,

trees, animals, and in this Middleworld earthly plane. They can be any size. They work together in a synchronized harmonious flow to keep balance present in the Nemeton. The trunk of the world tree exists on Earth. It is the Middleworld, it is our nature and earthly relations, our physical body's connection to Earth. The spirit fire in the center of our Nemeton is the very center of the world tree and is also in the trunk. To synchronize the stones with nature's energy a Druid takes the bowl of Earth and walks towards the first stone to the right of the altar and says,

"May the rhythmic vibrations of our Earth Mother pulsate with you, and through you, as it does in us. Help us amplify the healing powers of Abred in our Nemeton. Make this a place that will awaken our ability to be more attentive to the forces of Abred."

Abred is the Welsh name for this Middleworld. The Druid then pours a small amount of earth from the bowl over the stone, and repeats the same process with the other stones. The bowl then gets returned to the altar.



Next, we bring to the circle of stones the presence of the Otherworld. We do this by asking assistance from the Shining Ones who have come to us from the Otherworld. In the world tree cosmology, the Otherworld and the Underworld are not the same. The Otherworld is above and more celestial. It is the canopy of branches and leaves on the world tree. Access to the Otherworld is usually through portals on Middleworld (Earth) in areas where there is energy concentrated, such as ley-lines and power spots, sacred hills, stone circles and the like. The Shining Ones that live in the Otherworld are the Gods and Goddesses from old Celtic lore and legends. We honor them in our rituals with offerings of herbs, songs, and prayers. To merge the light energy of the Shining Ones with the stones, an active Druid takes the bowl of incense and feather and approaches the stone starting with the one to the right of the altar. Sain is the Gaelic term we use for wafting the smoke. The Druid starts to Sain the stone while saying,

"Oh Shining Ones, hear our prayers and accept our offerings. For today with your help, we consecrate our new stone members to make them wholly in the realms of Anwyn, Abred, and Gwynvyd at the edges of our Nemeton!

"May the higher frequencies of Gwynvyd illuminate through you, within and without, let the messages of the Gods and Goddesses speak through you to us clearly, that we may hear the truth and feel their hearts nobility brought to this Nemeton."

The Welsh name for the Otherworld is Gwynvyd. When the Druid returns the bowl of Gwynvyd to the altar all raise their hands to the South, above the altar and say,

"Let the powers of Land, Sea, and Sky live within and on the edge of this Nemeton. Let the spirit fire and world tree connect the stones to the center of our Nemeton."

To end this rite a Druid approaches the fire and takes some ashes from the spirit fire and first enters the South saying,

"Voices from the ocean of the four winds! Come! Rush through the stones and spiral into the center of the world tree."

The Druid then sprinkles some ash on the ground in front of the stone, and on the stone, and does this for each of the stones in every direction. The Druid does this while chanting,

"Let the spirit fire and world tree connect the stone people to the center of our Nemeton. By the blessing of all spirits, dance together our ancestors, our nature spirits, and the Shining Ones, we welcome these new stone members into our Nemeton."

All say, "Gadael hi bhod!" Rituals are always followed by a song of peace, and a fellowship feast.



The Ash Tree

By Sam Peebles, Free-roaming Druid

One of the easier trees to spot, this sturdy and reliable tree naturally features prominently in Celtic Lore and in the customs of various Indo-European peoples. Modern pagans are well familiar with the phrase "by oak, ash, and thorn," which is used as a blessing during ritual or to affirm a charge of power in spellcraft.

There are about fifty species of the genus *Fraxinus*, and cultivation has produced and perpetuated a large number of varieties. The Common Ash and the Privet are the only representatives in England and Ireland of the Olive family Oleaceae, of which it is the furthest northern species. It is the fourth most common tree in the British Isles, and traces of pollen date back 7000 years. Other species include White Ash--*fraxinus americana*; European Ash--*fraxinus excelsior* (Including British Isles); Flowering Ash--*fraxinus ornus*. Rowan (or "Mountain Ash") is from a different family. The ash tree is known by several folk names: Nion, Askroed, Jansen Bell, and Freixo. The word 'ash' derives from the Icelandic *aske*, which means "great fire blaze," or from the Anglo-Saxon word *Asech* a poetic word for spear, while the botanical name *Fraxinus* means "great fire-light" due to its high flammability.

It grows 40' to 70' tall (some as great as 40 meters) with a potential canopy of 20' to 50' in width. Unless cut back, it will have a long straight trunk. They take 45 years to mature, with a

life span of 200 years, and longer if coppiced every 12 to 20 years. It likes rich, well-drain soil, with ample moisture, like the olive family. It is often found near limestone, but is adaptable to a wide range of pH. It can tolerate salt. Extreme cold and winter contraction can damage rapidly growing young trees.

Leaf: Opposite, pinnately compound, 7 to 11 sessile, serrated leaflets, total leaf 10 to 14 inches long, dark green above, lighter below with tufts of brown hair. Normally very late coming into leaf, it can then be one of the earliest to lose its leaves.

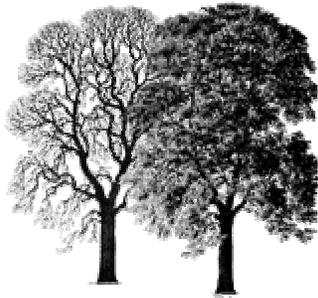
If the oak come out before the ash

There's sure to be a splash

If the ash be out before the oak

Why, then you're sure to get a soak.

Feathery foliage allows many shrubs and plants to grow beneath it. Yellow in the fall. A wind pollinated species, the ash is generally a bisexual tree but you do get male and female trees but these can change sex! Some ash trees have flowers with both male and female parts; some have only male or only female flowers, and some produce separate male and female flowers on different branches. Some branches that produce only female flowers one year may produce all male flowers the following year. The fruit of the ash are the ash-keys: an oblong seed chamber with long strap wings. The keys hang from branches in little bunches and turn from green to brown. The seeds, or keys, stay on the trees through the winter, and only fall in spring. They can be carried quite long distances by the wind, and spring up quickly in almost any type of soil



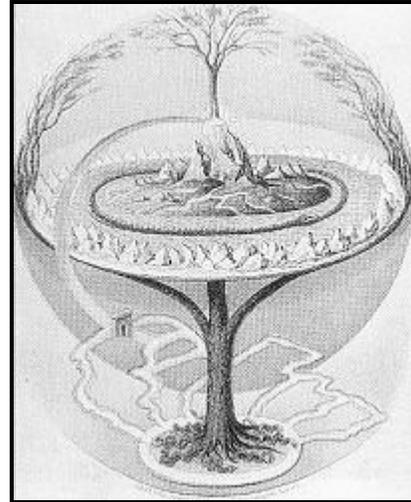
Physical Uses of the Wood

- Laboratory tests show that ash has the greatest "impact strength" of all native hardwoods in the Isles. It will also bear more weight than any other tree when used for joists. It grows very quickly and has great elasticity. The wood is best used for interior purposes, works well, is subject to insect damages, polishes well, shrinks little in seasoning, and is excellent for steam-bending.
- The Anglo-Saxons used the fine-grained and springy Ash wood for making spears, shields, baskets, baseball bats, tool handles, arrow shafts, cricket bats, hop poles, hockey sticks, snooker cues, hurley ("The clash of the ash") and Shillelaghs. Before the development of light alloys ash wood was used for the construction of carts, boat frames, furniture (such as thrones), joists, carriages, coaches, wagons, aircraft wings. It dents easily, but rarely warps with age, but achieves a smooth polish and molding to the hands with usage.
- It rots easily when wet, so it should be kept away from the ground

- The longs burn well, even when freshly cut, but gives no smoke and its ashes are good for potash. It also makes good charcoal. There is a traditional poem various woods and the ash is considered good for royalty; "...but ash new, or ash old is fit for Queen with crown of gold"

Herbal and Magical Uses

(Consult a doctor or herbalist, of course)



Nordic Customs

Ash is well known to be sacred to Odin since the Ash is often known as the Yggdrassil (or the "Ash Yggdrassil") amongst the Scandinavian nations. In Norse mythology, the Yggdrassil supports the Universe, has three main branches and is believed to have sprung from the beginning of time out of primordial slime and ashes. The world tree extends throughout all the worlds from the gods home in Asgard, the mortal realms of Midgard, to the dark underworld of Nifelheim. The sacred waters of the Well of the Wyrð were used by the Norns to water its branches, and the Norns were associated with fate. Any site of great significance within the Norse cosmology usually is placed by a root of the tree. The leaves fed Odin's goat, Heidrun, which supplied the mead for the gods. The leaves also fed four stags (Dain, Dvalin, Duneyr and Durathor) whose horns' dew fed the rivers of the world.

Odin is especially associated with the spear, for which the ash was often chosen, as he owns the mythological Gungnir. The Northern races often employed cremation of the dead, for which Ash is unrivaled. Men were created from Ash by the Norse gods ash and the first woman from rowan. Odin hung himself from Yggdrassil to obtain the runes, of which it is the 26th (Anglo-Saxon version) and resembles a barbed spear.



Ansuz Rune and the Nuinn Ogham

The rune-poem says, "The ash is precious to men and very tall. Firm on its base it keeps its place securely though many men attack it." Northumbrian runes refer to "Gar" meaning spear. Some Norse used the Nidding Pole to pester foes; which was a 9-foot ash pole, surmounted by a horse skull facing an enemy's home.



- Red ash buds were eaten at midsummer to protect from enchantment.
- Ash divination wand was cut at mid-summer to attract.
- One version of the Yule log was a bundle of ash faggots burned at the midwinter solstice and the wassail bowl was carved from ash wood.
- In Northern England, it was once believed that if a woman placed an Ash leaf in her left shoe, then she would be fortunate enough to immediately meet her future spouse.
- Locally there were traditions associated with the ash. In Yorkshire it was said to be a sign of disaster if the ash did not produce keys in a year.
- Another old belief, recorded at least in the nineteenth century, was recorded in Lincolnshire and Frankish law codes. In the north of England, until the 19th century, the ash used to be known as esh and men believed that if they freshly cut an "esh-plant," no thicker than their thumb, they had the right to beat their wife with it. (Some customs are best forgotten.)
- The Ash tree gave warriors silent warnings about war. To die under an Ash tree while in battle, was a guarantee to be selected by Odin to go to Valhalla.
- Also in German forests Christian folk, in previous centuries, feared "demons" in the trees. They told tales of the Askafroa (Eschenfrau) who was the wife of Ash and did much damage. So people would sacrifice to her on Ash Wednesday (despite this being a Christian festival in origin).

Greek Customs

The Greek goddess Nemesis carried an ash branch as the symbol the divine instrument of the justice of the gods, the scourge. In iconology she is also depicted with an eight-spoke wheel symbolic of the solar year. The wheel is also a symbol of the Fates who dispensed her justice under and through the ash tree, metering out happiness or misery and ensuring that fortune was shared and not cosseted by the few. If anyone hoarded the favors she had given or didn't sacrifice some or part of it to the gods, or didn't try to alleviate the poverty and misery of fellow man, Nemesis would step in and withdraw what was given dispensing justice through humiliation with a scourge made of ash.

In later Greek myths Nemesis was identified as Andrasteia, daughter of the sea god Oceanus and goddess of the "rain making ash tree." In this aspect her scourge was used for ritual flogging to bring fruitfulness and productivity to the trees and crops. This association with Oceanus the god of the sea through his daughter Andrasteia, connects the ash tree with thunderstorms, which waters the earth and fertilizes the land. The ash tree is said to attract lightning. As well as the ash branch, wheel and scourge Nemesis also carried an apple branch as a reward for heroes.



Celtic Customs

- Wood being taken without touching the ground would cleave to the element of air, flying straight and true. One of the most famous spears in Celtic mythology was the Spear of Lugh, one of the four treasures brought to Ireland by the Tuatha De Danann from the city of Gorias. This was a spear of power and direction, which would not miss its target. So keen was it that it was kept hooded when not in use.
- In Ancient Wales and Ireland, oars were made of this wood. Ash protects against drowning and oars and coracle slats were often made of ash.
- Gwydion, the Celtic equivalent of this Norse God, was known to choose the thick, strong twigs of the Ash for his wands and was renowned for his magical abilities.
- The staff of the good god and chief of the Tuatha De Danann, the Dagda, is believed to be made of ash wood.
- The staff planted by Fintan the Ancient was an ash.
- Of old, a staff of ash was hung over doorframes to ward off malign influences, or ash leaves were scattered in the four directions to protect a house or area, or a garter made from its green bark was worn as protection against sorcerers and physic attacks.
- Of old, a staff of ash was hung over doorframes to ward off malign influences, or ash leaves were scattered in the four directions to protect a house or area, or a garter made from its green bark was worn as protection against sorcerers and physic attacks.
- Carve a piece of ash wood into the shape of a solar cross (an equal-armed cross) and carry it with you when traveling across sea or water for protection against drowning. Healing wands are also carved out of ash wood and healing poppets can be carved from its roots.
- It is the second most common tree found near Holy Wells in Ireland, the first being Hazel. The Ash was often the selected tree for Maypoles.
- Ash is one of the trees were protected by Brehon Law of Ireland. Cutting down one of these trees was a fine of one cow. These Trees are Oak, Hazel, Apple, Holly, Yew, Ash and Pine. The Ash was a sacred chieftain tree, believed to "court the flash" since it was prone to be struck by lightning. The ash tree has a particular affinity with lightning, which it attracts. Under an ash tree is not the place to be during an electrical storm.

Several Famous Ashes:

- Tree of Creevna-Ireland-emigrants to America carried pieces of this ash tree before they left. This tree was considered a charm against drowning.
- Tree of Uisnech. Standing upon the mythological fifth province of Ireland, it was the centre point of Ireland, performing in wood what the Umbilicus Hiberniae; the centre stone of Ireland did as it also lay upon the Hill of Uisnech.
- Tree of Totu, Dathi, and Uisnech-Ireland-these Ash trees were some of the five magic trees cut down in 655 AD as a sign of Christianity conquest over paganism. The other two were an oak and an elm.

Generic Lore

- In folklore it was believed that the fairies could be seen and conversed with by mortals wherever the three trees grew together.
- As a cure for rickets the baby was passed widdershins through a cleft made in an ash sapling. The tree was then tied-up and sealed with clay, and afterwards a bond grew between the child and the tree, any later damage to the tree also happened in the health of the child and vice versa, therefore the ash tree could never be cut down as this would result in the disease. If you want your newborn child to be a good singer bury its first nail parings under an ash tree.
- The ceremonial Yule log is often made of Ash--this huge log is kindled each Yule with a piece from last years fire and allowed to smolder for 12 days before it is ceremonially put out.
- Ash is often used for making both mundane and magical tools-it's said that tools with handles of Ash are more productive than tools with handles of other wood.
- The flowering Ash has sap that contains a sugary exudate called "manna," which can be used as a laxative.
- The leaves have diuretic, diaphoretic and purgative properties and are employed in modern herbal medicine for their laxative action, especially in the treatment of gouty and rheumatic complaints proving a useful substitute for Sienna, having a less griping effect. The infusion of the leaves (1 oz to the pint of water) may be given in frequent doses during any 24-hour period. The distilled water of the leaves can be taken every morning and was considered good for dropsy and obesity, and a decoction of the leaves in white wine had the reputation of dissolving stones and curing jaundice. The leaves should be gathered in June, well dried and powdered and kept in well-corked bottles
- Ash leaves and the tender tops can be used in the spring to make a fasting tea that is a diuretic and can be used as a help for weight loss. Put fresh ash leaves under your pillow to stimulate psychic dreams.
- Scatter some ash leaves in a bowl of water and place it under a bed over night to prevent and heal illness. The next morning the water and leaves should be discarded outside on open ground then repeat the procedure each evening until well. Leaves can also be sewn into small sachets and worn as health or protection charms. To gain the love of the opposite sex, carry some loose ash leaves in your pockets.
- Ash bark is known as a liver and spleen cleanser and can make the immune system stronger
- The ash was said traditionally to combat viper bites and boiled leaves were given to afflicted animals and laid on as a poultice.

- Ash talismans can be worn as protective amulets. Ash is known to keep away serpents and to protect against their bite. If there are no snakes to be found, Ash can be used instead to keep away nasty people who are bitchy, quick to criticize, impatient, or psychic vampires.
- Ash can be used in medicine pouches or can be used in magick for wart remover: the wart is stuck with a pin that has first been thrust into an Ash, while these words are said: "Ashen tree, Ashen tree, pray these warts off of me." The pins are then stuck back in the tree and left.
- "Beware the ash, it courts a flash, beware the oak, it courts a stroke" says the old rhyme, meaning that these two trees, above all others, attract lightning.



Songs about Ash Trees

"The Ash Tree" is a poem that was given a Welsh melody, and has become extremely well known in American folklore with dozens of versions. I've always found it a bit creepy, seeing the images of the dead in the branches. But, in a way, I've found that it is a pleasant Druidical song. The second song uses the same music and is a whimsical parody poking fun at those factious Celts.

The Ash Grove

By John Oxenford /ashgrv2.html

The ash grove, how graceful, how plainly 'tis speaking,
The wind [harp] through it playing has language for me.
Whenever the light through its branches is breaking
A host of kind faces is gazing on me.
The friends of my childhood again are before me,
Each step wakes a memory as freely I roam.
With soft whispers laden its leaves rustle o'er me,

The ash grove, the ash grove again [alone] is my home.
My laughter is over, my step loses lightness,
Old countryside measures steal soft on my ear;
I only remember the past and its brightness,
The dear ones I mourn [long] for again gather here.
From out of the shadows their loving looks greet me
And wistfully searching the leafy green dome,
I find other faces fond bending to greet me,

The ash grove, the ash grove alone is my home.
My lips smile no more, my heart loses its lightness
No dream of my future my spirit can cheer;
I only can brood on the past and its brightness,
The dead I have mourned are again living here.
From ev'ry dark nook they press forward to meet me;
I lift up my eyes to the broad leafy dome,
And others are there looking downward to greet me;
The ash grove, the ash grove alone is my home.

Welsh History 101

Words by Heather Rose Jones.

Music: <http://www.contemplator.com/folk/ashgrv2.html>

If ever you wander out by the Welsh border
Come stop by and see me and all of my kin
I'm Morgan ap Daffyd ap Gwion ap Hywell
Ap Ifor ap Madoc ap Rhodri ap Gwyn
We'll feast you on mutton and harp for your pleasure
And give you a place to sleep out of the cold
Or maybe we'll meet you out on the dark roadway
And rob you of horses and weapons and gold

My neighbor from England has come across raiding
Slain six of my kinsmen and burned down my hall
It cannot be borne this offense and injustice
I've only killed four of his, last I recall
I'll send for my neighbors, Llewellyn and Owain
We'll cut him down as for the border he rides
But yesterday Owain stole three of my cattle
And first I'll retake them and three more besides

We need a strong prince to direct our resistance
Heroic, impartial, of noble degree
My brother's wife's fourth cousin's foster-son, Gruffydd
Is best for the job as I'm sure you'll agree
What matter that Rhys is the old prince's nephew
He's exiled to Ireland and will not return
I know this for every time boats he is building
I send my spies money to see that they burn

Last evening my brother and I were at war
Over two feet of land on a boundary we share
But early this morning, I hear he's been murdered
I'll not rest until I avenge him, I swear
Yes, we are just plain folk who mind our own business
Honest and loyal and full of good cheer
So if you should wander out by the Welsh border
Come stop by and meet all the friendly folk here



Further Links

Interesting little encyclopedia article:

<http://www.earthcalendar.net/2002/maps2002.html>

Weapon handles:

<http://www.aikiweb.com/weapons/goedkoop1.html>

Fun page on history of wood:

<http://www.fpl.fs.fed.us/documnts/FPLGTR/fplgr113/CH01.pdf>

Making Tool Handles:

<http://members.lycos.co.uk/handforged/handles.html>

General Ash Lore

<http://www.british-trees.com/guide/ash.htm>

<http://www.rfs.org.uk/totm/Ash.htm>

<http://www.systbot.gu.se/staff/evawal/fraxinus/excelsior.html>

<http://www.botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/a/ash--073.html> use of Ash

<http://www.novareinna.com/constellation/ash.html> for more on "ash people"

<http://www.wicca.com/celtic/celtic/sactrees.htm>

<http://www.dutchie.org/Tracy/tree.html>

<http://www.iol.ie/~sinann/grove/trees1.html>

<http://www.celticconnection.com/myth/trees.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/alabaster/A616259>

http://www.owlsdottir.com/elements/trees/celtic_trees.html

Additional Notes on Ash

By Mike Scharding, Digitalis Grove:

It is widely known that Ash was the preferred wood for making spears and the handles of weapons and tools. As such, the name is associated with war and craftsmanship. It is also a popular name in Anglophonic regions. In America, Ash is not in the top 50 for men, but Ashley is the top ten for women with such varieties as"

ASHLEE: English (Modern) Strictly feminine variant of ASHLEY

ASHLEIGH: English (Modern) Strictly feminine variant of ASHLEY

ASHLEY: English From a surname that was originally derived from a place name that meant "ash tree clearing" (Old English).

ASHLIE: English (Modern) Strictly feminine variant of ASHLEY

ASHLING: Irish Anglicized form of AISLING

ASHLYN: English Combination of ASHLEY and the popular name suffix -lyn

For me, the hero in society is someone who puts aside personal considerations to undertake a dangerous mission for the benefit of the community to which he belongs. A hero is different from a mere adventurer. When a society has a warrior band, certain rules of etiquettes, honor codes and initiations develop to regulate their deployment and support them in trying times. This is seen in the Code of Bushido for Samurai, Code of Chivalry, Navy Seals boot camp indoctrination, and children playing Aliens vs. Astronauts in their backyard.

The first hero is Ash Ketchum of Pokemon fame (Satoshi in Japanese) who is the caretaker of Pika-chu, the high-voltage rodent. As many of you unfortunate parents know, Ash has a gear to collect as many pocket monsters as possible, and train them to fight in bloodless combat. This is the child's "General fantasy" in which they stand back and let armies fight their war at a safe distance. The inventor of Pokemon wished to share the wonder of his own childhood explorations of various insects and wildlife in the suburbs of Tokyo, before the rapid growth of concrete and buildings isolated millions of sub-urban children from Nature in the 1960s both in America and Japan.

However, Ash's wilderness adventures, with his fellow band of poke-masters, have antecedents in most literatures of a young warrior (Ash is between 10 and 12) leaving home and experiencing strange adventures which teach him wisdom, restraint, courage, etc. CuChulainn was only eight when he left and was apprenticed to a blacksmith, after killing and taking the role of the guardian dog. Finn (see Hazel article a few issues back) studied at a young age with various teachers and ate the Salmon of knowledge. Finn was later accompanied by heroic falcons, dogs and other magical critters, not unlike the young Ash.

The second hero is Ash, played by Bruce Campbell, of the wild and wacky cult-favorite *Evil Dead*, *Evil-Dead 2*, and *Army of Darkness* that had moderate success in the 80s. Ash is a man cursed with hideously bad luck, and a penchant for returning to dangerous places, when he should know better. We also saw incidents of the Red Branch literature king and warriors knowing what to avoid in Ireland, and yet being harmless to avoid fulfilling their fate. The *Evil Dead* series revolves around Ash maintaining the boundaries (quite violently) between the world of the living and the dead, which has parallels with several Celtic heroes journeying into the fantastic Otherworld of the faeries and sidhe-mounds. Ash amateurishly summons and banishes demons, travels in time, practices alchemy, divination, necromancy, and a host of other magics, with rather disastrously amusing results. We witness the transformation from unimposing shopping clerk into a confident, untiring, sarcastic one-liner spitting, full-scale, zombie-busting warrior with one hand replaced by a chainsaw (any parallels with Nuada's Silver Hand and the fight with the Fomorians?) Although humor is strangely lacking in many Celtic sagas (except for grim irony), there is a most delicious mix of cynicism, sarcasm, spoofery and dark humor heavily poured over the second and third films of this series. Not for those with weak stomachs, but neither is being a hero; whose role is often forced upon them.

Further Links

On Fionn and CuChulainn:

<http://www.oxenby.se/emma/pagan/heroes/fionn.htm>

Scholastic essay on Heroes, *Evil-Dead* movies and feminism:

<http://www.bruce-campbell.com/babble/guest/ed-essay.html>

The cool factor:

<http://centerstage.net/stumped/articles/brucecampbell.shtml>

The *Evil Dead* computer game:

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



Druidess: An Overview

By Daniel Hansen, Msc.D., Olympia Grove

The question is often asked, where there female Druids? This article, the first part of a series by Brother Daniel, hopes to shed some light and give us some answers and evidence.

In our modern world of non-racist, non-sexist egalitarian society, and in particular the neo-Druid movement, we often attribute these modern values on our views or interpretation of history. Now after saying that, I'd like to address the subject of

Druidesses. In all neo-Druid branches, men and women play roles of equal importance. A group can be lead by a Druid who is either a man or woman, and it doesn't make the slightest difference which. In ancient times, or in the time of the paleo-Druids, there was a clear division of duties between men and women in all aspects of Celtic society. It is true that in Celtic society, women had a great deal of flexibility and social latitude not shared by women of other cultures of the period, but it was still a more or less male dominated society.

All of the early references to the Druids indicated that they were men. It wasn't until around the third century CE that Druidesses are first mentioned. However, there is evidence that a female priesthood existed side-by-side with the Druids and in some cases long before the paleo-Druids. Keep in mind that the question of the existence of the Druidess is a highly controversial topic, one with experts arguing for and against the existence of Druidesses.

After reading over a considerable amount on information on the subject, I have come to the conclusion that there was indeed a Celtic female priesthood of some kind and from our modern perspective, they were in all probability what we call Druidesses.

What are the facts to support such a wild claim?

Actually there is quite a bit, some of it is highly questionable and therefore subject to various interpretations by various authorities. I think it is best to examine the evidence piece by piece rather than throw it all out at once in order to sort things out. I'll start from a rather simplistic overview then I will go into greater detail on each subject.

In the beginning, most experts speculate, the concept of the Divine was that of the Magna Matre or the Great Mother. It is easy to understand how early mankind perceived of God as a woman. In the cycle of the year, particularly in the spring, the Earth literally burst into life. The Earth Mother could be seen in the contour of the land where mountains were her breasts and caves as her womb. This is called *dinnshenchas*, "The lore of prominent places." It is not surprising that in Europe we should find cave paintings of magical significance, which seemed to ask for abundant animals to hunt and food to eat deep in these caves. Other relics from the past to confirm in the belief in the Earth Mother are the so-called "Venus" figurines. These are small clay or stone models of pregnant women with large breasts and buttocks. What their actual function was is still a mystery to us today, but their relevance as a cult object is obvious.

Is this early reverence for an Earth Mother evidence for a female priesthood? The obvious answer is... "no." We have to look at other early evidence. In some of the more primitive peoples who survived into the era of recorded history, such as the Picts in Scotland, we find a strong tradition of matrilineal succession, which is where your lineage or heritage is traced through your mother rather than through your father. Matrilineal succession is traced to a period before a connection between mating and birth were recognized. This is, after all, a more reliable system than that of patrilineal succession, after all you always know who your mother is while a father can never really be absolutely sure he is the father.

Paleolithic to Neolithic man knew that women could work great magic in their bodies such as the producing of life. Thus women were assumed to be able to use the magic of their bodies for other purposes. Through time it is highly possible that women became clan or tribal leaders of magical rites and the priestesses of the early Earth Mother religion.

Into the hands of the most powerful women magic-welders were kept the rites of fertility, both plant and animal, as well as the possession of much of the primitive tribal lore. These women must have been regarded as magicians par excellence in

the times before the Indo-European invasions. Were these women Druidesses? No, but they can be considered their predecessors.

The Indo-European invasions that swept across Europe were patriarchal in nature with their Sky Father God worship and their male priesthood. It took hundreds of years for the invasions to "sweep" across Europe until it finally reached Ireland around 350 BCE. After conquering a people, the invaders attempted to either oust the local goddess by killing her or they used her for their own purposes. By the latter, the local Goddess was made into the mother, sister, spouse, or daughter of their male God. How is this possible? Keep in mind that the Celtic gods and goddesses were never believed to be inviolable. These local goddesses never really conflicted with the Celtic nature-gods and so the two worships could exist side-by-side.

There is a practical side to this limited toleration of the conquered religions. The conqueror assumed his gods were stronger, but it couldn't be denied the conquered people and their gods were on their home ground. The local gods might have some unguessed powers to do evil such as making the land barren and useless to the conquerors. Over time, the conquering people had taken over the land, the people, and the gods. In primitive societies where the church and state were very close (in some cases one and the same), it was important to break the religion as well as the government of the conquered people. If the old religion were left intact it would be a rallying point for revolt. The strategies for the take-over are simple, yet effective. The first step is to adopt as much of the native religion and practices into the new religion as possible. The second step is where it is impossible to incorporate any major part of the native religion, such as a god or ritual, then that god or ritual must be stigmatized as evil. These two tactics tend to force the native religion "underground" and become what the Romans called a mystery cult or religion. On the surface it seems that one Pagan tradition stretches out the hand of welcome to another Pagan tradition and even admits them into their pantheon.



Taking into account the conservative nature of primitive people and their resistance to change or new ideas, there are always pockets of resistance with the ancient Earth Mother cult; it can be seen in the persistence of the Celtic Matres that survived well into the Roman period. The Matre or Mother Goddess was usually found in threes and they had fertility symbols such as fruit, flowers, a cornucopia, or an infant. This fertility cult was served by a powerful female priesthood, who possessed the tribal lore, what we would call "folk wisdom." The Celts regarded the number three to be magical and powerful so they gave their deities the attributes or characteristics, such as three heads, or like the Matre, three sisters. It is possible that this is a literary attempt to explain the Celtic Pagan idea of a single god or goddess shown in triple form in order to emphasize their divine powers.

In other places of Europe, such as the isle of Sena and Loire off the coast of Armorica (France), conservation left these ancient rituals, site, and their priestesses intact. Wondrous powers were attributed to these women such as shape-changing into animals, raising storms and tempests by songs, curing all

diseases, and predicting the future. Were these women Druidesses? If they weren't, then they were as close as you can come without being one. The powers listed are almost identical to powers attributed to the Druids by the Greek and Roman historians. Our prime source on the Druids is Caesar. He speaks of priestesses among the Germans, but he makes no mention of a female Druid caste. Of course we cannot assume that Caesar gives us a full account of the Celtic religion and this must be set against his silence on the subject. It is possible that the Druidesses may have been a very specialized priestess who had some particular purpose, such as diviners. This could explain why they were over looked.

We also know that women were definitely set apart as the priestesses of the Moon Goddess. Everywhere that the Moon was worshiped as a Goddess, it was served almost exclusively by women, although in many areas men also played a part in the Moon Goddess service, but in a very different capacity Women were in charge of the magical practices intended to encourage the fertilizing power of the Moon Goddess.

The first woman to be called Druidesses are found in the third century of the Common Era. However the term used for them is not Druidess, but Dryads, which means "Nymph of the woods." one train of thought is that Druidism and Dryadism were two phases of the same religion. Dryadism was restricted to females in the early matriarchal stage, but it was later opened up to males as well. It then outlasted the male phase and reverted back to a female cult. Some experts say that these women were not actually Druidesses at all, but that they were wise-women in the same genre of being soothsayers who read palms or tea leaves to divine the future for a price. If these Dryads were indeed the descendants of the Druidic tradition, then by third century CE Druidism was in a sad state of retreat.



In Ireland up to the fifth and sixth centuries C.E. there were still Druids who were both male and female, because in the literature that have survived there are references of Ban-Drui or Bean-Draoi female Druids. We know this from the chronicles of early Christian missionaries who came to Ireland to spread the new faith. It is well documented that the Christian Church attacked the Druids for their Paganism, but especially for the Druids' propensity to include sacred women to their ranks. The Christians used the same tactics to takeover Druidism that the Indo-Europeans used on the pre-Indo-Europeans, specifically adaptation and stigmatization. In Ireland the power of women was reaffirmed by St. Patrick's prayer asking for protection from "women, smiths, and Druids."

In Ireland, one of the best examples of the survival of women's power is found in the secluded sisterhood of Druidesses in the cloister-like enclosure of Cill-Dara (Kildare) also known as the "Church of the Sacred Oak" where the goddess Brighidh or Brigid was worshipped. This sisterhood managed to survive a thousand years under a thin veil of Christian trappings before it was finally crushed under the religious persecutions in the Protestant Reformation. It is recorded that the women of around 450 C.E. had organized games or their own at the fairs. They kept a special place or

section at the public assemblies and they even had special enclosures reserved for them which men were not allowed in.

So much for the simplistic overview, now it is time to look at each of these aspects of the Druidesses in some detail. The following sections are intended to highlight the various functions and duties of Druidesses at the various stages in history. These are not intended as absolute statements, but my presentation of a wide spectrum of related and interrelated subjects which set the groundwork for the rise of Druidesses, their reign as it were, and their various survivals.

Summary

In these sections of the various phases and aspects of the Druidess, I hope to have shown the remarkable durability and longevity of this often-neglected side of Druidism. Their lineage extends far beyond recorded history back to the dawn of religious thought and the rise of the cult of the Earth Mother and the Moon Goddess. These early female shaman eventually evolved as their society evolved and they changed as their culture changed.



Whether they acted alone as the village wise-woman or they clustered together in a secluded sanctuary, they had an amazing conservation of their traditions, knowledge, and belief system. Many of these institutions, to varying degrees, exist today as either folklore, bits of "sage advice," or in our veneration for the Earth Mother.

While these sections may have shown the existence of Druidesses in the distant past, what does all this have to offer Druids and Druidesses today? The neo-Druid movement by and large does not have an unbroken link to the past. Druids today, male and female, are products or re-creations or anachronism. What I am aiming at in this series of articles was as far as the Druidesses were concerned to show what I call "Arrival-Survival-Revival." In my articles I have shown the "Arrival" of the Druidess from her origins with the Matre, Moon worship, and Corn-Spirit cults. I have shown their "Survival" after the Roman and Christian persecution began with the references Dryads and witches. The neo-Druid movement, as was the Meso-Druidic movement, is in part of the "Revival" stage. In the neo-Druid movement women play a key role in the evolution of modern Druidic thought, but with the revival it is important that we not forget the ancient roots of the Druidess, even if the term no longer applies to our modern concept of Druidism.

The Most Famous Reformed Druids

By Mike, Digitalis Grove

I'm sure you've heard these jokes:

"I'm a Reformed Druid, I worship bushes, except the elected kind."

"I'm a Reformed Druid; Pacific Chapter, I only worship Douglas Firs"

"I'm a Reformed Druid; I don't hug trees and sacrifice virgins, I sacrifice trees and hug virgins..."

"I'm a Reformed Zen Druid; I worship trees AND bushes that aren't there."

Who started this infamous series of jokes? Apparently a very famous Reformed Druid is at the origin. Strangely enough, it isn't Isaac Bonewits, but a man who never actually existed. For most Americans, Captain Jonathan S. Tuttle, is the most recognized Reformed Druid that they will likely know.

Background on Tuttle

On January 14th, 1973 the 15th episode of the first season of M*A*S*H was written by Bruce Shelly, David Ketchum and directed by William Wiard and was simply titled "Tuttle". The episode opens with Hawkeye Pierce and Trapper McIntyre stealing camp supplies to give to Sister Teresa and her nearby orphanage during the Korean War. They say the goods are delivered on orders from Capt. Jonathan S. Tuttle. Of course, Capt. Tuttle doesn't exist; he was Hawkeye's imaginary friend as a kid. Tuttle always took the rap for Hawkeye's misdeeds. He's described as "George Washington, with John Wayne's agent," "Mister Humility," "an inspiration to us all," and one who "brings out the best in me." Col. Blake wants Tuttle to be "officer of the day," so Hawkeye cleverly creates a personnel file:

Hawkeye: "Religion..."

Trapper: "Atheist?"

Hawkeye: "I don't believe in Atheism. Let's make him a Druid."

Radar: "What's that?"

Hawkeye: "They worship trees."

Radar: "Ah, tree surgeon."

Hawkeye: "Druid, Reformed. They're allowed to pray at bushes."

Other Purported Vitals:

Full Name: Captain Jonathan S. Tuttle

Serial number: 39729966.

Born: Battle Creek, MI in 1924.

Religion: Druid, Reformed.

Medical school: Berlinisches Politechnicum.

Parents: Harry and Frieda Tuttle

Height: 6'4"

Weight: 195lbs

Hair Color: Auburn

Eye Color: Hazel



Tuttle soon gives all 14 months of neglected back pay to the orphanage. When Tuttle was going to be decorated for this gesture by Gen. Clayton, Hawkeye runs into camp saying how Tuttle was volunteering to do field surgery and jumped out of a helicopter without his parachute. "No sacrifice was too great." Of course, Trapper's new imaginary friend, Captain Murdoch, obtained the fake dog tags and parachute! Hawkeye even delivers a eulogy for Tuttle:

"We can all be comforted that he's not really gone. There's a little Tuttle left in all of us. You might say, that all of us made up Tuttle. Our grief will pass, and it's already hard to remember exactly how Johnny looked, how he talked, his little laugh. Thankfully, he's left behind a memorial. I've been informed by Radar, he's named Sister Teresa's orphanage as the sole beneficiary of his GI insurance. How typical. We salute you, Captain Tuttle. Humanitarian and healer. Good luck, Doctor, in that big waiting room in the sky..."

What an amazing fellow Druid! But the mystery doesn't end there. Perhaps a cover-up is involved since he didn't apparently die. At an official air force base, I found:

Captain Tuttle

Assistant Professor of Political Science,
Surgeon HQ USAFA/DFPS--M4 2354
Fairchild Dr. USAF Academy, Colorado
80840-6258 (719) 333-2270
Tuttle.dfps@usafa.af.mil

Captain Tuttle is a bit of a mystery man, often seen only late at night by a few lucky souls. His degree area is scholarly, and his teaching talents are legendary. His degree is from the Berlinisches Politechnicum. His studies focused on urban legends and 1970s TV shows. He is 6'3", 195 lbs, born in Battle Creek, Michigan. He is the best darn OD we have ever had. On 24 August 2000, there was a sighting of the elusive Capt Tuttle, however, after analysis of the photographic evidence it was determined the sighting was a mere false alarm.

This evidence is available at:
<http://www.usafa.af.mil/dfps/faculty.htm#tuttle> It's comforting to know that you can't keep a good Druid down, right?

More About Those Tuttles

This episode is interesting, because it shows how a story can take a life of its own. Most people acknowledge that the myths that surround most heroes are fictitious, but that does nothing to cease inspiring us. Tuttle is a model for us all. I noted his 20 years of schooling, international experience, medical knowledge, and love of homemade liquor.

An interesting point is that nearly all of the major characters in M*A*S*H have Celtic or Border names: Pierce (York.), McIntyre (Scot), Maj Burns (Scot), Maj Houlihan (Irish), Col. Blake (Welsh), Corporal Riley (Scot), Father Mulcahy (Irish); with Klinger (Lebanese) as the exception. Is there some kind of implied rejection of the Anglo-American desire for exporting war being symbolized by a Celtic crew trying to clean up the mess of the aftermath? For me, Pierce and McIntyre are two crafty Druids trapped in the madness of war, trying to remain free by using wit, humor and satire to escape the insanity and dismality imposed by the dull uptight Burns and other various commanding buffoonish officers. For more on M*A*S*H characters see: www.mash4077.co.uk/ TV tapes are available at Amazon.com.



Interestingly, the mythical rebellious Reformer, "Tuttle," also appears in the 1985 movie "Brazil" (by Terry Gilliam of Monty Python). Brazil is born out of doom-based fiction such as George Orwell's 1984; Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World"; and Franz Kafka's "The Trial," chronicling a story where a reluctant bureaucrat is dragged into a web of conspiracy in a society of automatons. A printing error for the arrest of Archibald Tuttle, leads to the mistaken imprisonment of Mr. Buttle. Ironically, as Sam goes about his business to clear Buttle's name, he aids and is aided by Archibald "Harry" Tuttle (played by Robert De Niro), a renegade heating engineer who is sought after by the Ministry of Information for "Freelance Subversion." Tuttle allies with Sam after fixing Sam's heating system. Tuttle is bent on destroying the bureaucratic state. When asked his motives:

"Why? I came into this game for the action, the excitement. Go anywhere, travel light, get in, get out, wherever there's trouble, a man alone. Now they've got the whole country sectioned off - can't make a move without a form."

Indeed, this Tuttle is described as:

Tuttle is a far cry from the slick, self-assured conspirator imagined by polite society; he is simply a human being seeking liberation from paperwork and social regulations. In

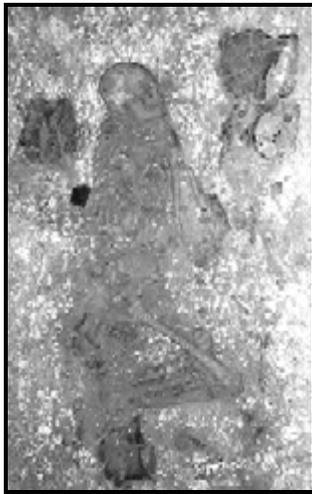
his denial of society, Tuttle proves that humanity is not entirely lost. Tuttle provides one of the rare occurrences of true humanity in Brazil's dispassionate society, proclaiming, "We're all in it together," when in fact the majority of society seems to believe that every man must fend for himself.

Origin and Further News on Tuttle

So where did they learn about "Reformed Druidism" for the M*A*S*H script? Now, Isaac Bonewits was born in 1949 in Royal Oak, Michigan; so is there a connection with Battle Creek Michigan? Bruce Shelly, the prolific writer, lived in California: (<http://us.imdb.com/Name?Shelly,+Bruce>).

Unfortunately, I've been unable to make contact with him, and he's at least in his late 60's, so perhaps we'll never know. Perhaps a relative or friend of his was a neo-pagan? Most likely, Shelley heard of Isaac's infamous "Degree in Magic" from UC Berkeley in a 1971 newspaper article and remembered it for the episode 15 months later. Interestingly enough, the Charles E. Tuttle Publishing house has been releasing a line of "linking East and West spirituality" since the 50s, winning Publisher of the Year in 1971, with many titles on Celtic Monasticism, Japan and of course, Korea. Perhaps we have a blending of two figures? Unfortunately, Mr. Shelley did not know that the RDNA was founded in 1963, so Tuttle actually predates the RDNA (being 1951 when he died), unless of course, Tuttle is related to David Fisher...

So to wrap it up, Tuttle is still out there on "Nick at Night" and various re-run channels doing his best to present a noble image of the self-sacrificing hero that we all hope is in us too. Bring him up in a conversation or utilize him in your daily deeds.



The Aristocratic Warrior as Old as Stonehenge

Times Online, May 16, 2002
By Mark Henderson, Science Correspondent

The most significant Bronze Age burial site found in Britain, containing the body of an aristocratic warrior who dies 4,300 years ago, has been unearthed three miles from Stonehenge.

The Amesbury Archer, named after the Wiltshire village where he was discovered and the stone arrowheads buried around his body, was interred with an unprecedented array of weapons, jewelry and pottery for the period, during which the first bluestones were set up at Stonehenge.

His trappings of power, including three copper knives, a pair of gold earrings, five pottery beakers and two sets of flint tools, mark him out as a member of a warrior elite, perhaps even as a tribal chieftain or king.

Archaeologists said that the discovery has the potential to transform understanding of the early Bronze Age and could prove as significant to the period as Sutton Hoo is to Anglo-Saxon England. "This is of the utmost significance," Gillian Varndell, Curator of Prehistory at the British Museum, said. "It is the richest find that we know of from the period."

The body of the man, who was aged between 35 and 50, was found over the May Bank Holiday weekend in a routine dig at the site of a proposed school development. His grave contains about 100 artifacts, ten times as many as similar sites elsewhere in Britain.

"It is far, far richer than any individual burial from the British Isles at this date," said Andrew Fitzpatrick, of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury, who led the team that made the find. "It includes some of the earliest metal objects in Britain, perhaps even the first copper and gold objects. This is clearly an elder in the community, perhaps who wielded military authority, and may be a king, a tribal leader or a chieftain of his area."

He said that during the Stone Age individual burial sites belonging to high status individuals were very rare, hinting at a relatively egalitarian society. Such ceremonial burials were more common in the early Bronze Age, but the grandeur of the Amesbury site is unprecedented. Graves discovered at Chilbolton, in Hampshire, and Radley, in Oxfordshire, from about the same time hold single copper knives and beakers, along with a scattering of stone tools and arrowheads.

"We usually consider a find to be major if there are seven or eight objects," he said. "This one has 100."

The Amesbury Archer's death has been dated to about 2300BC from the style of the pottery and other artifacts he was buried with. The first earthworks at Stonehenge would have been complete; the monument's inner circle of bluestones was hauled from the Preseli Mountains in South Wales at about the same time.

The cause of death has yet to be determined, but the skeleton shows no signs of a violent end. He was probably in pain, however, from a gammy left leg and a very bad tooth.

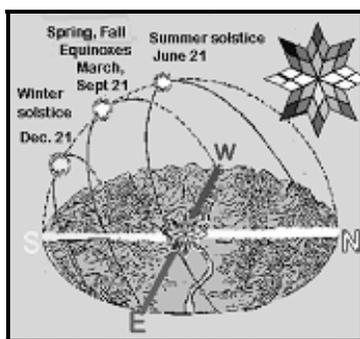
All that remains of the man's clothing are two sets of stone wristguards, worn to protect his forearm against the string of his bow, and a bone pin that probably held a cloak around his shoulders. A shale ring may also be a kind of buckle for securing a tunic.

The site will offer important insights into the culture and society of the Beaker people, who populated southern England in the early Bronze Age, and who take their name from the distinctive drinking vessels found in many of their graves.

Mrs Varndell said: "This time, around 2300BC, was a period when new ideas, technologies and ideologies were having their effect and being expressed in burial customs in Britain. This says something about the status of the person buried, and suggests he is part of some kind of warrior or archer elite. It should tell us a lot about the culture that created the ceremonial landscape of the area around Stonehenge."

Ros Cleal, curator of the Alexander Keiller Museum in Avebury, said: "This is certainly one of the richest sites in the British Isles, if not the richest. Metal analysis should tell us all

sorts about trade routes and that sort of thing, and it is, of course, contemporaneous with the beginnings of the stone phases of Stonehenge. It's clearly a very major find and the full implications haven't even sunk in yet."



Miscellany

Witness the Summer Solstice at the UMass Sunwheel!

Members of the University community and the general public are invited to witness the passing of the seasons by joining Prof. Judith Young of the University of Massachusetts Dept. of Astronomy to watch the sunrise and sunset over the tall standing stones in the UMass Sunwheel for the upcoming SUMMER SOLSTICE. Visitors for the sunrise viewing should arrive at 5:00 a.m., and visitors for the sunset viewing should arrive at 7:30 p.m. The sunrise and sunset events will be held on both and Friday and Saturday, June 21 and 22, 2002.

On the summer solstice, the longest day and shortest night of the year, the Sun will be seen to rise and set at its most northerly location, over the tallest stones in the Sunwheel. The sky will be particularly beautiful each evening, since the almost-full Moon will rise a few hours before sunset. For those interested in learning about the sky, there will be a presentation that will include the cause of the seasons, the Sun's path in the sky, the phases of the Moon, and the story of building the Sunwheel. Bring your questions, your curiosity, and be prepared for cool temperatures when the Sun is down. A \$3 donation is requested to help with the cost of stone pathworks and exhibit expansion that are planned for the Sunwheel. Sunwheel T-shirts and sweatshirts will be available for purchase.

The UMass Sunwheel is located south of Alumni Stadium, just off Rocky Hill Road and across from the maze. The Sunwheel can be easily reached from the center of Amherst, following Amity St. to the west, on the right hand side of the road about 1/4 mile after crossing University Drive. In the event of rain, the events will be cancelled, and visitors are encouraged to visit the Sunwheel on their own.

For more information on the UMass Sunwheel, check out the web site at:

<http://www.umass.edu/sunwheel/index2.html> or call 413-545-4311. To arrange a Sunwheel visit for your class or group, call or e-mail young@astro.umass.edu.



Hi, you know me as Bridget. I may be a beautiful Sun Goddess now, but I used to be a puff of smoke! But I drink milk. In fact,... all I EVER drink is MILK. You'd think a RED-EARED COW would give strawberry milk once in a while—wouldn't ya???

Calle Berre's Kids

Introducing a new feature to A Druid Missal-Any, a cartoon called Calle Berre's Kids, drawn by Anna Dryw. It is a spoof on Celtic myths and other like topics.

Anna is a member of Druid Heart Spirit Grove and has been a Gwyddon Elder since the early 1980's and leader of her Order Trefn Gwyddoniad. Currently she is the High Priestess of the College of the Silvering Wheel in Oroville California. She is also the Uchel Gwyddon (High Gwyddon) of the Druidic Priesthood School maintained by the Order and as such, the Ard Druid (same as Arch Druid) at the local Nemeton, Gwynvyd. They are listed on the RDNA links page, but the info is a little dated and is in the process of being updated.

Book Signing

Ellen Evert Hopman, M.Ed., herbalist, Druid Priestess, and author of *Tree Medicine--Tree Magic* (Phoenix publishers, Custer, WA), *A Druid's Herbal For the Sacred Earth Year* (Inner Traditions/Destiny Books, Rochester, VT), *Being A Pagan* (with Lawrence Bond) (Inner Traditions/Destiny Books, Rochester, VT), and *Walking The World In Wonder--A Children's Herbal* (Inner Traditions, Rochester, VT), will be giving a book signing and talk Saturday June 22 at 2 pm, Kingdom of the Wizard Book and Gift Shop, 275 New State Highway (Rt. 44) Raynham, MA 02767 (near Taunton). Call for details 508 822 0111. www.wizardkingdom.com



Book Review

From the Read Ireland Book Review--Issue 202
Petrie Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland by George Petrie and edited by David Cooper (Hardback; 60.00 Euro / 50.00 USD / 40.00 UK; Cork University Press, 280 pages).

This book is a revised edition of the classic work, featuring a new biographical essay on Petrie. Melodies are returned to the form that Petrie originally notated them and are cross-referenced with other major collections. First published in 1855, this book is widely regarded as one of the most important nineteenth-century collections of traditional Irish music. It contains nearly two hundred melodies collected by Petrie as well as song texts in Irish and English and detailed notes by Petrie about their sources.

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Calendar

Summer Solstice, when the Sun enters Cancer, will occur on June 21, at 6:24 a.m. PDT. Solstice services will be held on Saturday, June. 22 at Solar Noon. Please call for carpool arrangements (510) 654-6896. For the social observance of the Solstice we will be going immediately after the service to AD's house. Regular Druid services will be held at Solar Noon on July 7 and 21. Please call the above number to confirm.

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