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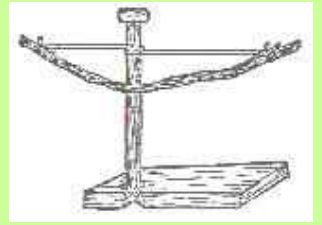


eltaine, May Day, festival of bonfires, greeting to Belenos, the returning Sun. It is the beginning of summer, Season of Life. In old "Celtidom" cattle were moved to the highland pastures; modern Third Order R.D.N.A. Druids exchange their white ceremonial ribbons for red ones.

In ancient Britain, Ireland and Gaul, according to the witness of the Classical writers and to numerous folk traditions, all fires were extinguished on Beltaine Eve, and a "new, clean fire" kindled by the Druids, "through means of friction, from logs of Oak." In G?dhlig this process is called "tog an teine," lifting fire out of the wood.

Making fire by friction is a ceremonial skill that one or a few members of each Grove might want to try.

The bow and drill method is the easiest.



Make a fire-board of Oak, well seasoned, very dry. With a knife or a pointed stone, make a shallow hole, a cup, near the edge of the board. Whittle a "V" notch in from the edge of the board, with the "V's" point at the cup. Don't cut through into the cup/hole. Making the notch, which is undercut, wider on the bottom side of the board, helps. Place your tinder in the notch. (More about tinder later.) With the board on a firm, dry surface, hold it steady by kneeling on it, or holding it down with your foot as you drill. Put the drilling stick in the cup and hold down on it with the "fire hold" block. Then with the bow, spin it as fast as you can. Persistence and consistent speed pay. Use a "fire-stick," i.e. a drill, of at least 3/8 inch diameter. Thinner sticks dissipate heat and cool off too quickly. And, as our Humboldt County "Third" says, it also helps to have someone else to push down on the top of the "fire-hold." "As we work a bow back and forth like that, our arms automatically tend to rise." If no one else is around, hold down on it with your chin. (Paleolithic fire-holds are the joy of Old World archeologists.)

The fire-stick can also be turned by hand. I have not done this and I don't know anyone who has been able to get this way to work. It may have to be a group endeavor, with a number of people spelling each other in relay. But, so I'm told; "Use a longer drill than you would with the bowed method and roll it between your palms. When your hands reach the bottom, quickly let go and return them to the top of the stick and keep it spinning." With either of these methods, it is easier and surer if you have a group of people. With the right choreography, this could be worked into the Beltaine Ceremonies as an effective part of co-operative ritual.

After a while, you will see smoke waver up from the cup-hole then hot black powder will well up and out into the notch; keep turning, faster. Press down harder. Press the tinder into the notch and against the red hot glowing firestick. If you turn the drill fast enough, sparks may jump out and catch the tinder. When you see a red, glowing area in the cup or on the notch, gently remove the fire-stick, and breath on the glow till it becomes a bright gleam. Then pick up the fireboard and tinder together and press the tinder around the incandescence. Carefully breath it into life. This part takes practice and finesse, minute attention, and great awareness of the right moment. In other words it is a meditation. Mastery over fire, like playing the violin, is not learned easily. In many pre-agricultural societies it is considered one of the marks of the Shaman or Adept.



For tinder, I use the feather "wolf-lichen," *Letharia vulpine*, that grows on *Orinda* coyote bushes, with lots of fine, dry splinters of resinous pine or juniper, and thinly shredded paper at the center of the bundle. Bradford, in his survival books, recommends lint, from your pocket, and very dry pine needles or shredded bark. ("finely shredded pieces of the "Wall Street Journal" soaked in lighter fluid is great." Good-Gulf the Wizard) When the tinder begins to flame, gently set it to the kindling under your previous readied altar fire. Continue breathing on it auspiciously, coaxing it into a blaze. From this "new clean fire" re-kindle all your fires. By now you know why pre-industrial people kept fire burning, and never let it go completely out.

An Aside:

"Match" is from "ma Ee" meaning "little stick" in G?dhlig. The match was invented by a Scotsman. Be grateful.

By Emmon Bodfish, reprinted from *A Druid Missal-Any*, Beltaine 1986.



News of the Groves



For the [Full Grove Directory](#)



Mango Mission: News from Southeast Asia

A.K.A. The Digitalis Grove in Exile

Been out of touch with folks for a long time, but I'm slowly coming out again. All settled into this country, and enjoyed the New Year party in April where the primary goal is to pour as much water on as many strangers and loved ones as you can for four days and nights.

Since it is pretty warm and muggy, it feels pretty nice, just don't carry anything important. I think it would be a great activity for Lughnasadh or Summer Solstice, water fights on a big scale. Other big developments in the works, but you'll hear about those in August if all goes to plan.



Rose and Thorn Proto-Grove: News from Canada

New Reformed Druids Proto Grove: The Rose & Thorn signing on!

Members: Nicole The "Arch-Druidess" (Rose) - Not the Grand Poobah Peter: The "Arch-Druid" (Thorn) Not the Grand Poobah either. Iggy: Druid of Scales and Crickets. (He thinks he's the grand Poobah)

There are only the three of us, and that's our tiny family. We spent years simply calling ourselves Pagan until the trees caught our attention (Falling in our paths and smacking us up the face as we walked past them)- it wasn't until this and a few other events took place in serendipity which lead us to actually investigate the Druidic paths and conclude that this was essentially what we'd been "practicing" (read: LIVING) for the better part of a decade.

We take our name from both ourselves (personal significance)- but also from a deep spiritual lesson we have taken many bruises to learn and hopefully can pass on or help others survive: The Roses may have Thorns, but the Thorns also have Roses.

I am a first generation Canadian myself, the rest of the family is overseas, scattered around the Belfast area. "Thorn" comes from a long line of Germanic peoples and connects best to the German and Norse cultures. Iggy, our third member is our cold-blooded son that we have raised on crickets and bananas. His cultural heritage can be traced through a long line of crested basilisks, probably scattered around South America, enjoying much better temperatures than us.

We are located in Calgary, Alberta and have little to no connection to any Neo-Pagans or Wiccans in the region (we came, we saw, we left) however have begun to bravely poke our noses out of our hole of isolated reflection and try to make friends with the small but active local Druidic community. However, being computer literate, it only makes sense to reach out to fellow Druids via electronic means. I suppose after many years of developing ourselves, we are finally ready to announce our presence to the world and say "We're here! We're (probably) Druids, and we CAN bring the dip!

Rose (& Thorn)



Dogwood Proto-Grove: News from Virginia

Second Orders Tony and Ellen are recognized pagan ministers in the Virginia, North Carolina, Washington DC, and Kansas areas. Ellen was recently invited to officiate a wedding in the Washington DC area and that wedding was held April 14th at the National Democratic Women's Club. Ellen was surprised to find Tony had flown in to attend the wedding (and critique her LOL). We made quite a few contacts and had a grand time.

As Beltaine approaches, we are continuing the lessons on herbs and animal medicines at the Proto-grove's yahoo group.

May you all find your cups overflowing with spring blossoms and blessings!

Ellen and Tony, ADs



Palm Grove: News From Florida

Hello again from the Palm *Grove of Florida!

Well many things are on the stovetop this year. The grove has had new members right along, and most are happy with what they get from it.

The Palm*Grove has a brand new website up. Check it out at <http://palmgrove.bravehost.com>. Also, the priesthood of the grove is looking into Starting a tv show segment.

WE do need ideas, sponsorship, tools, supplies etc. if you would like to help or have ideas, please submit them to darmock@earthlink.net--the head eldarr of the grove (especially ideas on where to get sponsorship).

The herbs are doing much better this year and we are working on creating a safe haven for the fay folk to come and play.

The weather is nice now and the world is greenign up here in florida. WE wish you all the best for the year,

Darmock

and the Palm*Grove of Florida

Swamp Grove: News from South Florida



An awakening, slow but sure for our little grove. It has been a while, but we are ready to merge with the Earth once again. Our debate is whether or not to attend one of the big festivals for Beltaine or round up some of the local Pagans and get something motivated in the area. There will be a large Earth Day happening at a local historic site and there will be plenty of hippies and Pagans from the area, so that will be the time for a discussion. Check out our new website if you feel so inclined. swampgrove.org.

Finn



White Rabbit Grove: News from Wisconsin

White Rabbit Grove has relocated by about five miles, from a riverbank to the crest of a hill. This will have repercussions on the non-physical level most likely. Eostur was marked by confusion and chaos until the new destination was revealed by serendipity at the last possible moment. Beltane will be marked by new beginnings including a new contact telephone number for The Healing Line. The original email, healingline@ferretlovers.com, continues to function.

Peace peace peace.



Moose Breechcloth Proto-Grove: News From Minnesota

Seasonal Salutations Siblings!

If anyone has any insight on what's going on with the weather, please e-mail me off-list. Aside from the obvious, of course. I already have a copy of "An Inconvenient Truth," so you don't have to burn a copy for me or anything like that.

News....hmmm. Took the cats in for their yearly booster shots. Oh, the drama. You'd think we were beating our cats. I'm sure our cats have the PETA Animal Abuse Hotline on their speed dial. Zoe also had to get her yearly allergy shot. Yes...she has allergies...poor baby girl. Needle to the scruff of her neck...you can imagine that went over well. Zeus has some on-going virus thing going on that makes him sound like he's breathing through a snorkel mask. Or Darth Kitty...which ever you prefer. So we got him some...well...goo, for lack of a better word...from the vet. He gets that twice a day. The vet assured me that cats just love the flavor. Yeah. Vet...meet Zeus. We've been reduced to mushing the goo into the fur on the top of his paw, which forces him to lick it off. The good news is, the goo is working.

Ok...goofy news. I'm getting braces. Yes, at my age (we'll take a break here so you all can get a good chuckle in). Ok, they aren't train track braces like folks get in High School, they're the Invisalign braces. Clear plastic forms you slide in over your teeth. I felt better when my dentist told me the average age of people getting Invisalign is about 40. Today I went in to get the molds made of my mouth. What they don't tell you is once they mush all that goo in your mouth, it has to sit in there for four minutes to cure. Meanwhile, this stuff is sliding down your throat, and you're drooling uncontrollably. I baptized at least four hygienists with slobber.

After the molds, they have to take pictures. Ok...pictures sounded easier...WRONG! They pried my mouth open and rammed these boingy spreader thingies into my mouth that spread my jaw and mouth into impossible contortions. "OK, for this next picture I need you to keep your teeth together." Uhhhh....how? Keep in mind, if you can't close your mouth, you can't really effectively swallow...so you're drooling again. (I have a feeling these photos are going to surface again someday with really unfortunate timing) Then they needed pictures of the INSIDE of my mouth...still with the spreader thingies in. So they rammed a mirror in my mouth in between the boingy spreaders. 'Could you tip your head back for me?' Ok. "A little further?" Ok. "A little more?" Ok. THUD! My head hit the wall behind me. Owie. "Yeah, that's good. Hold it there." My head is now at an angle where the drool is now seeping into my ears, and a goose egg on the back of my head is forming. FLASH! Oooh...that one is sure to land me on the cover of Cosmo.

When all was said and done, I finally got out of there and headed to work. I was at work for at least half an hour before I made a trip to the ladies room where I noticed I had bright purple goo smeared all over my neck from where the polymer they use in the molds had dripped onto my neck courtesy of the drooling. I'm at work for half an hour and no one bothers to tell me? No one at my dentist bothered to tell me either. Lovely...thank you. The goo, now dried and hardened, was painfully peeled off my neck leaving lovely hickie-like marks on my neck.

Another fine day in my world.

In other news, Lou and I start home brewing sarsaparilla and spruce beer this weekend. We've been looking forward to this. So far I've spent \$40 just in clover honey for this endeavor. It had better work.

The first Pow Wow of the year is this weekend. I'm chomping at the bit for that one. Lordy, I need a Pow Wow. Last year I made buddies with a newly transplanted Native American from Oklahoma. He's an Okie Cree. He's felt a little displaced since his move, so he was grateful to get an invite to a Pow Wow last year. I think he's going to be a fixture with us going to Pow Wows this year. It's hard to explain, and perhaps hard to understand if you aren't a Native American...but we really need Pow Wows just to keep our sanity. It's medicine for your spirit. It's the fellowship, the coming together of the tribes, and it's just being an Indian. Too often we have to set our culture aside because we have to get to work, we have to get the oil changed on the car, we have to get our taxes in before the 15th, we have to get braces, we have to smear goo on our cats. And we forget to just hang it all up and just be an Indian for a while.

Ok, and I'm not going to lie to you...we also need to eat frybread...LOTS of frybread. Frybread smeared with chokecherry honey-butter.

So...anyways...this weekend marks the start of Pow Wow season in Minnesota. Bring it on.

Until the next installment...hope the season finds all of you in the best of health, and the brightest of spirits.

Gigawabamin nagutch,
and yours in the Mother,

Julie Ann and Lou E



Clan of the Triple horses: News from Oregon

Clan of the Triplehorses Grove will be holding a joyous outdoor Beltane celebration on Saturday, May 5 in the Williams, Oregon area on private property. Our ritual will be immediately followed by a potluck and a free, detailed workshop on Ayurveda (East Indian teachings) Herbal Healing which includes many Oregon native plants.

For more information, please contact triplehorses@gmail.com OR see our website at <http://home.earthlink.net/~triplehorses/>



Sierra madrone grove: News from California

Things are cruising right along for us here at the Sierra Madrone Grove. We are preparing for Beltainne in our river side Nemeton and it will be big this year. We generally draw around 35 people at Beltainne, which makes for big energy! We will actually be honoring Gwyn ap Nudd (King of Underworld), Gwythyr (King of the Otherworld), and Creiddylad (Goddess of Sovereignty), and their fight every

May Day over her love.

I went and visited Aigeann with the Clan of the Triple Horses up in Oregon, and we discussed among other things the upcoming Eight Winds Mountain Earth Festival. The event will be held September 29th at Diamond Lake, OR. We will be holding workshops, rituals, a Bardic sound off. I will also be ordaining Aigeann a Third Order at that time. For more information visit www.freewebs.com/sierramadronegrove.

Nine Blessings!

Sean Harbaugh

AD-Sierra Madrone Grove



Poison Oak Grove: News from California

Publisher of "A Druid Missal-Any"

Well, other groves' news is not the only news I forget. In the last issue of A Druid Missal-Any I left out news from my own grove E

In the beginning of March I met our own Mike Scharding, historian of the RDNA, for lunch during his stop over in San Francisco on his way to Laos. Alas we only had an hour but discussed many things in a pub in the historic Barbary Coast area that dated back to 1854 and had originally been a grounded ship.

At PantheaCon in February I attended workshop a by Erynn Rowan Laurie on the Ogham ("Not Your Mama's Tree Ogam"). According to her Ogam is the Old Irish spelling as the g was not lenited at that time. I also attended a workshop by Isaac on initiation. He discussed three major approaches to initiation: 1) initiation as recognition of a status already gained. Here community is gathered, the ceremony is announced, it is time bound, such as a rite of passage when you reach a certain age. Think graduation or a bar or bat mitzah; 2) Initiation as an ordeal of transformation. This can be like learning how to swim, a vigil, a vision quest, and all have a transformation in common regardless of the specific method. In this type of initiation you confront the self. There is a common theme of death and rebirth, and has an emphasis on difficulty. It is a growing out of old ways and acts as a "screening" mechanism; and 3) Initiation as a method of transferring knowledge. This type of initiation is a transmission of gnosis, an apostolic succession, and its purposes are to

open up to and become better connected with Deity. One thing I found very refreshing was that Isaac said he had a jaundiced eye towards self initiation. He felt that self dedication was alright, but calling oneself initiated to be a druid or whatever he didn't agree with. He also didn't agree with a recent phenomenon since the advent of the internet and emails, the online initiation. He said that they didn't feel initiated just that the person had bragging rights. Here is a link to an article he wrote and on which his talk was based: <http://www.adf.org/rituals/explanations/initnote.html>.

After the workshops I hung out for a while at the ADF hospitality suite to get to know some of our siblings better. I thank these ADF members for making me feel welcome: Meredith McDonald, Kirk Thomas, Sean of the Sierra Madrone Grove, and Anne Lenzi whose first druid service was the Proto-Grove service lead by me at our old grove site when I was still Second Order. Thanks also to Isaac for what is becoming our once-a-year catch up on mutual friends in the RDNA.

Poison Oak Grove is one of the most active groves in the RDNA, yet sometimes I feel as if we work in a vacuum. After attending now two ADF rituals and getting the chance to chat with our siblings in person makes me realize perhaps we are not alone in our own amount of dedication, pursuit of Celtic and Indo-European studies, folklore, language, and commitment. Sharing information and watching what they do inspires me to keep on doing what I'm doing as AD, to try new things, learn new things, and get excited all over again with this practice we call druidism. Yes, why not excellence indeed?



Missionary Impossible File 3: Diplomat and Druid?

by Mike the Fool

Long, boring sermon now follows, beware! I feel like a pep talk, and the beatings will continue until morale improves! It is merely my opinion, as always.

Each of us have significant activities and responsibilities that mostly define who we are. We rarely try to categorize and list them about ourselves except when writing resumes, college applications, eulogies or perhaps on-line dating profiles. You know what some of them are: place you grew up, partners, children, friends, enemies, charities, social "class", hobbies, studies, languages, ethnicity, religion and of course, your jobs. I list jobs last, but for many of us, we spend the bulk of our time (like it or not) during our waking hours at our job. Often sadly, circumstances encourage us to take the most convenient or well-paying job, rather than the one we truly would love or which make us "grow". For many in the world, a choice of job is a dreamy luxury; but do you treasure what you have chosen? The best job for us is not always glamorous or enjoyable, it is a matter of "fit". How wonderful those rare occasions, when whichever job you wish, is the one that fits you, you can attain it, and can keep your budget floating! When the stars align and the gods smile so, have the courage to take and run with it beyond the horizon of what you can see and know now.

All of us, I believe, in the Reform, have had a day dream or two of what it would be like to have been a Druid in ancient days in Europe. Many of us sadly shake our heads and complain that it is impossible to be that Druidic Enowadays, because we can't be full-time EDruids, and there's no way we'd ever have a congregation or patron rich enough to support the amount of study and activity we'd like to do. Congregations around the world have a reputation of being cheapskates, and we're



no different, we all have grand ideals, but our pocketbooks are only so big. In all parts of our lives, we have to scale down our ambitions to the practicalities. But, just because you don't have time to be a rockstar doesn't mean you can't play the guitar for your friends. For every historical tale of a well-ensconced fat-cat Druid/nobleman like Diviticus in Julius Caesar's Gaul, there are numerous ancient tales of itinerant Druids, Brehons or Bards going from one patron or locality to another, trying to find a better deal or get fresh support, as often one community alone could not support them for too long. Or perhaps one side merely bored of the other's company after a while? Some folks are like rooted trees, others migrate.



That being said, I think a lot of Druids, let's be real honest here, have a bit of a chip on our collective shoulders, delusions of self-grandeur, have some airs of superiority (or perhaps its just me). Perhaps because the folks we are trying to emulate were the cream of society in education and training. And, you know, gosh darn it, we're going to be spiffy-cool too! We've read it a dozen or more times in Druidry 101 books; they were the judges, the orators, the advisors of kings, the artists, the recounters of length poems, the historians, the healers, the magicians, the astrologers, etc. Yada, yada, yada. But did each of those elite mega-gifted folks do everything, perfectly well? No, I don't believe so, they had limits of time or training opportunities for perhaps a general education, but they too had specialization even way back then. What I guess I'm trying to get around to saying is, if you are good at one area, that's fine, so be good at that area, and know just enough about the others to recognize and pay respect to the real masters of those crafts. Know and play to your

strengths and try to patch up the most embarrassing weaknesses. That might be my liberal arts background, but I think its a wider lesson worth hearing.

We tend to equate Druidism with attendance of services, or time with other "Druids". Like it or not, most of the people in our lives aren't Druids, so is that time worthless? In a way, each of us does a little of each of these

Druidic skills every week in our hum-drum daily lives, but we probably just discount them. Getting two children to make-up and play nicely is letting out your inner-Brehon, advising a friend to take their diabetes more seriously is your inner-healer at work, singing in the shower or howling at a rock concert is your inner-bard, and the list goes on. No, you are not going to get paid for any of these things, but you are making a difference in the world around you by just being, well, Druidic. If you can make a big splash in the pond, do so, otherwise, work on the ripples you can do. If you can polish up your presentation, throw in a blessing or two while doing it, so much the better. So give yourself a little pat on your own shoulder once in a while. Release the impossibilities of past exemplars, smell the whiskey and realize the remaining potentials in your present. You are more of a Druid than you realize, and accepting that might encourage you to improve one step at a time, and start to integrate these previously separate skills. Every pile of dirt on the mound makes a bigger hill.



The Mediator



Take me for example, up until 2004, I was a bit heavy on my historian aspect, writing ARDA and what not. Fine and dandy, been there, done that, time to move on, new challenges. One other area I've been good at since childhood was moving to new places and meeting new people; not that they always liked me (because they didn't!), but I survived a childhood with the military. I've always been kind of good with languages, at least starting them, I am too lazy to master them. Since 1995, I've been taking the Foreign Service exam, (and annually failing one step or the other) so I could make a living out of moving to new places, on someone else's dime. It's only since 2002, that I

realized, that a life of being constantly confused and out of touch, actually held the promise of being

Druidically rewarding too. Then I studied in a smarter way, rather than studying harder, and it worked.

How, is being a Diplomat at all Druidic? Besides drinking lots of alcohol with strange people in funny clothes? Isn't work for the government inherently stultifying? Of course it is, if you let it! All jobs come with drawbacks, so I don't focus on the bad-aspects, I just deal with them, and move one as fast as I can, and it is always easy or fun to make that adaption. A vocation is accepting the drudgery of work that others won't do, an ability and patience to treasure the tiny diamond hidden in a 100 tons of rock. Every Archdruid will quickly regale you with tales of their woe and back-breaking effort just to keep a tiny congregation going, but more often than not, it's just enough fun and rewarding for them to keep going. Or, perhaps, we've just have an incurable obsessive-compulsive disorder, who knows?

I started nine months of training for my current job a full year ago on May 1st 2006, quite a Druidic way to start, and arrived at my first post in South-East Asia on March 10th 2007 just in time for the Equinox. If there is an elite in the circles of government work today, it is probably the Department of State, as only 1 out of 150 applicants passes all the hurdles; I still wonder how I got in some days. Like the Fiana of Ireland or the Druids, they are a select bunch, and they know it, and have to live up to that level. High standards tend to bring about high results, I believe. Half of the 6000 officers in the U.S. foreign service is composed of narrow-specialists (computer technicians, nurses, bean-counters, security, office management specialists, etc.), but the other half are the generalists who fill and rotate roles during their career in the political, economic, management, public diplomacy and consular sections. Yes Virginia, there is still a place for the generalist left in the world, even if we have to focus on one field at each post.



My chosen specialty this time is in the consular realm, although I'll likely also have a post or two in political or economic sections over the next 20 years (another Druidic number). Every generalist has their first or second post in consular work before focusing on another area a little more. Most generalists will then try to avoid more consular work like the plague, possibly because we have the most contact with ordinary people; our beloved applicants. The visa line requires you to sift massive quantities of laws and decide whether a person is qualified, and look into their heart and try to guess if they'll come back. That's hard work, 50 to 70 times a day with only a few minutes to size up a person and make a decision that might change their life. You hear stories of sick relatives, dreams of study, upcoming marriages, and the excitement of touring a new country; and half of these are lies at my post. You are in touch with the pulse and throbbing of the country. You also get a lot of negative energy, sometimes you even think shields up, full evasive maneuvers Scotty! When a repeat applicant gives you an earful of abuse for just doing your job. Next time you go to the DMV to get your driver's license, think what that their work would be like in a foreign language! Naturally, we learn to speak the street talk better than the high-flying political officers who whisper into the ears of kings and presidents.

But consular work is at its most Druidic for me on Mondays and Fridays, when I'm in the American Citizen Services unit assisting tourists and long-term residents in this country. It reminds me of the cradle-to-grave responsibilities that most pastors do, and I get well paid for it. I meet babies and issue consular reports of birth abroad. I go to hotels and morgue and see corpses and issue consular reports of death abroad. I console victims of crime, get Americans to go back on their psychiatric medications (and stop clucking like a chicken in the nude outside), slip into prisons, pay visits to hospitals, direct them to legal and medical services, I give them magic books that allow them to pass effortlessly across guarded-borders (passports), and when all trace of them is gone I have to try my best at divining where they are. And I always throw in a quiet little secular blessing and a wish of good luck to them on their travels. And like those folks in the DMV, it's often a thankless job, but you just pat yourself on the shoulder when they don't.





Naturally, in a government role, I can't be too overtly religious, but for a Reformed Druid, what a feast of comparative religious possibilities to observe! You just wouldn't believe the wild and crazy things people believe and do in the name of the divine; what's whacky one place is acceptable in the next district. Of course, there are weekends and private devotional time for personal Druid services, since proselytization is officially banned here. (Don't want to become Druidica Non Grata.) Sadly, there are very few State positions available in Celtic regions, and the customs restrictions on pets and dogs makes them nearly unworkable for my family. Mind you, with greater responsibilities come the perks, too. We have a luscious garden and a luxurious villa, free of rent, fit for

even a story-book Druid, with a guard, gardener and a maid; so yes, I am getting a taste of the good life of my Druidic forebears. I counted 21 types of flowers in my garden, and I can walk down the street and watch farmers with oxen working the rice fields. These people like the Irish of the pre-20th century, are painfully in touch with the land and all its whims and idiosyncrasies that make nature worship so intriguing. And in the evening I go home and watch international cable TV. After a few years here, I'll likely move to another third world country and watch another group of people struggling likewise. The precious few well-educated people of this country are either well-rooted and staying or have fled for better prospects overseas (i.e. brain-drain). Could it have been the same for the Druids and Bards long ago, who drifted towards the courts of English and French with tales of chivalry and medicine and magic?

So every day, either on the visa line or with an American needing assistance, I say a little prayer of thanks, that I'm finally in a well-paying career that can enhance some of my personal Druidic goals, use some of those skills, and be itinerant in a constructive way. I hope that you will now examine your job, career and life and see if you have "Druidicized" any similar potentialities. I still wish I could be the ideal "full-time" Druid, but hey, this is working for me, and shouldn't complain much with my lot in life. Now if I just had more hours in the day, yet alas, not even a Druid has that kind of magic.



The Vigil

By Norm Nelson, Patriarch of the Fifth Order, Braciaca

THE VIGIL is an overnight session, by you alone, outdoors someplace. It is, of course, preferable that it be in a woods or on the open prairie or a piece of undisturbed sea coast, not your backyard. You want to be away from "the works of mankind".

Perhaps a nearby National Forest, if you can have a fire, would be good, or a State or National Park if you can find a place where you won't be disturbed by other campers. You're there to be alone and to spend the night thinking, not being interrupted by physical discomforts or mental distractions. [Hence, here in the northern states, the usual preference has been summertime vigils, since a night in the woods in a Minnesota winter is a greater test of endurance than RDNA requires.] You should be able to have a fire, for comfort and light, and, although you're supposed to stay awake, some protection from weather or a chilly night such as a sleeping bag. Bring reading material -some of the meditation stuff from various places in ARDA2 would be excellent, but whatever makes you think is completely acceptable. Anything that speaks deeply to you somehow is what you want. Read and ponder, ponder and reread or read further, and ponder some more. (Don't bring the latest novel or best seller; you're there for concentration, not escape.)

The purpose of the Vigil is to spend the night discovering the "internal" you: what is your philosophy of life? What role does Nature play in your life and your thinking? Do you really want or need to be a Third Order, and why?

Don't just read and ponder. Lie back and look at the stars for a while. What are they telling you about yourself and your place in the world? If it's cloudy, what are the clouds saying to you? Be still and listen: what is Nature trying to tell you with that gentle breeze, or that thunderstorm? What are the little critters of the night doing, and why, and what can you learn from them? [An owl can ask you the most important question you'll ever answer about yourself - Who?] Many have returned from a vigil convinced that the trees spoke to them, too. Don't reject any input to your self-discovery. Ponder again.



In other words, your Vigil is your attempt to look inside yourself, as perhaps you never have before, and find the real you that's at the basis of all your being. No two people have had the same Vigil, nor can they, since they are not the same person. Indeed, if you were to have a second Vigil a couple years from now, it wouldn't be the same either, since you won't be the same person you are now.

I'm sure that many others here will have things to add to this, and I welcome that. As I said, a Vigil can only be personal, and although anyone who has done it can describe the mechanics of it, no one can tell you what it will really be like for you, what will happen to you, or what your personal results will be.



The Celts

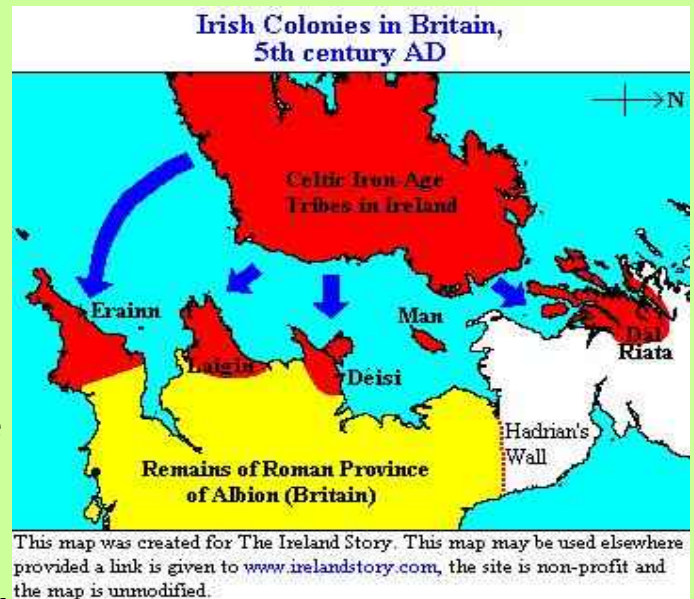
Edition 5.0,
By Cromm mac Nessa
Part Three

Goidelic-Speaking Picto-Iverno-Briton Alba

The Ivernian tribe of the D? Riata had been migrating to the area in the west of Alba (called "Scotland" by English speakers) and colonising the same for 10 generations before the death of Erc, King of D? Riata (in the Province of Ulster in modern Northern Ireland; the primary territory of the D? Riata was located in what is now County Antrim), who passed away in AD 498. Three of his sons (or was it six? see the *Senchus Fer nAlbann* and struggle with its interpretation and comparison with other works on the matter; make sure you have a look at the *Annals of Ulster* while you're at it, which should add to the confusion.), Fergus M? mac Eirc, ?ngus mac Eirc, and Loarn mac Eirc, were dissatisfied with the decision by Tanistry that resulted in their uncle inheriting the office of King of D? Riata. They therefore carried a *Lia F?l*, a Stone of Destiny, from Ireland to Alba (Scotland) shortly after the death of Erc, and established their dynasty there in *circa* AD 500, with Fergus having his seat at Dunadd (*D? Att* in Old Irish) and Loarn's seat at Dunollie (*D? Ollaigh* in modern Gaelic, and probably *D? Ollaig* in Old Irish, on a hill north of the present-day town Oban). I have no record of Aonghas' seat of power other than that it was on *Ile* ("Islay" in English). Each of these brothers set up his own *T?th* ("tribe" or "kingdom," more or less), but Fergus apparently outlived the other two and became the *Ri* (usually translated "king") of all three groups. This new realm came to be called "D? Riada" (or "D?riada"), and the D?riadan *Lia F?l* eventually became known as "the Stone of Scone" (after the union

of the D?riadan and Pictish kingdoms, when the Stone was taken to the ancient Pictish capitol of Scone).

It is interesting that the *Tripartite Life of P?raic* refers to Fergus as not only "mac Eirc," or "son of Erc" (and even this name of Erc is highly suggestive for several reasons, both linguistic and historical, but that's a matter for another time), but also as "mac Nissi," the second element of which some have supposed to be a variant genitive (possessive) form of a woman's name, Ness (the ordinary genitive would be "Nessa"). However, his son, Domangart, also a King of D? Riata, was also known as "mac Nissi" in the *Annals of Ulster*, just as Conchobhar had been known as "mac Nessa" in the Ulster Cycle (and which Conchobhar is said to have been granted the office of R? i through his mother Ness). Noteworthy in this context also is the story that Conchobhar, who already had 21 children, had intercourse with his Mother while he was intoxicated, and the monks record that he was punished for this deed



by the fact that only three of his children survived into adulthood (See Geoffrey Keating, *Forus Feasa ar ? rinn*, pp. 214-216). What the monks failed to grasp or purposely obscured is the fact that "Kingship" Rites apparently involved symbolic marriage to (and allegedly symbolic mating with) the Goddess of Sovereignty, and this story would certainly be more evidence for my understanding of Who Ness was and is. See further Appendix 1 on the ?ainn and their Dvinities, as I contend on these and other literary bases (as well as what I have received from the still-living Tradition in Northern Ireland) that Ness is a Goddess of Sovereignty of the *Ulaid* and the *D? Riata* (and perhaps of all the northern Ivernian and Pretanic peoples): (Ivernian Heritage).

Fergus was supposedly the first king of *D? Riata* to rule both a part of Scotland and a part of Ireland, but of course there were "High Kings" of Ireland before that who had, according to legend, ruled at least parts of both Ireland and Scotland (for example, Niall of the Nine Hostages). In time, the two groups of *D? Riata* separated, and those in Ireland remained *D? Riata*, while those in Scotland became *D? Riada*. The throne was passed between the three dynasties the descendants of Fergus, Aonghas, and Loarn. This form of inheritance, by which the crown passed between the three different families instead of going from father to firstborn son, was an aspect of the ancient political system of the Celts, based on the idea of the *T?aise* (later *T?aiste*, modern Gaelic *T?aiste*; literally "Second," this could be translated as "Heir Apparent" or "Chosen Successor," but is often rendered simply as "tanist"). This practice continued (with the descendants of Aonghas eventually somehow losing out) till the late 800s AD, when the Wars of the MacAlpine Succession began, after which wars, in about AD 1000, Malcolm Ceann M? became King of Scots, introducing Roman Catholicism and persecuting the D? Riadan Church in favour of the Pictish Church, which led in time to Roman Catholic domination of the Kingdom of Scots. Malcolm also introduced feudalism, which began to erode the Clann system.

The so-called Wars of the MacAlpine Succession seem to have resulted from at least two disaffected dynastic elements. In AD 844, Cin?d mac Alp?(Kenneth mac Alpin) inherited both the D?riadan Scottish Royal Office from his father, and the Pictish Royal Office from his mother, becoming the first R? E of both Scots and Picts. The Gaelic language was more or less officialised, and the capitol moved from Dunadd to Scone. Following the death of Cin?d, the Cineal Loairn and apparently some of the Pictish dynastic elements became dissatisfied with how they were being pushed out of the contest for the office of R? Eand so the Wars of the MacAlpine Succession came about, in which some sought to restore that right to these dynastic families. One of the persons involved was both a member of the Cineal Loairn (the dynasty descended from Loarn mac Erc) and of Pictish Royal Blood, and Shakespeare did him a great disservice by writing a play full of lies about him. His name was Mac Beatha, anglicised as "Mac Beth," and he was neither murderer nor tyrant. One should read the History, rather than sensationalised fictional tales involving historical characters

(even the movie *Braveheart*, though certainly inspiring and a good film, is not historically accurate). Alas, Malcolm Ceann M? did eventually come to the Scottish throne, and I have alluded to some of the results above (which, it should be pointed out in fairness to Malcolm, were more due to the influence of his English wife than of himself).

The focus of the **CEN?E D?RI** (E Ivernian Heathen Revivalist T?th is generally on the Traditions of Ireland and Scotland, in part because they maintain the most unalloyed Celtic traditions, and particularly on the Tradition of the Northern Ivernians. The overwhelming majority of our information about Celtic Heathen Sacred Tradition, as I have noted above, comes from Wales, Ireland, and Scotland. Wales was conquered and its Druids were (at least mostly) slaughtered. Wales has been also under the influence of Christianity longer. This conquest also produced a difference in the Welsh and Irish views of reality. The Welsh had by the time of the Roman invasion begun to learn the value of banding together in larger groups for defensive purposes, and so, for example, their view of the Otherworld is of a more or less united realm or a small number of realms, whereas the Irish, still preserving the focus on individual tribalism and an ?ite libertarianism that had characterised the Celtic privileged classes from earliest times, have a multitude of realms within their Otherworld, though the differences between one realm and another are not usually clearly defined, their borders normally being extremely hazy. The Scots brought the Irish traditions with them to Scotland and learned the traditions of the Picts and Britons, and their Highlands and Islands, being remote and wild, were strongholds of the Celtic Heathen Sacred Tradition even into the 1800s (by which time the "Celtic Diaspora" was well underway).

There are, however, certain features common to the Celtic tribes, whether Goidelic or Brythonic, such as the centrality of the hearth in the home and the centrality of the Bile-tree (by the F?i) or Crom-stone (by the ?ainn and Pretani) in the *Fintiu* (Tribal Land).

Worth noting in connection with the founding of the D? Riata dynasties in Scotland is the fact that the three sons of Erc being dissatisfied with the decision of Tanistry in the inheritance of their father's royal office was not a unique event, but that nobles could have (and occasionally *did so*, though probably not often due to the importance of the ideal of Tribe) gathered a group of followers and left a tribe when they were dissatisfied (for whatever reasons), and could have taken these people to a new area to form a new tribe, in which cases, they might have been given something akin to "political asylum" by the older tribes in the new area, and become a "client" of one of the older tribes. Perhaps some petty chieftain leading a small group away from the lands of one tribe to those of another and becoming a sept of that tribe was not unheard of. Of course, the Celts were a warrior culture, but a streak of independence lives in every Celtic soul, which might have led to such voluntary expatriation (and thus more peaceful resolutions) at times. That spirit of independence can certainly lead to less peaceful resolutions at times! By no means should this suggest that our Ancestors either loved or hated war; war happened, often. How our Ancestors felt about it is open to interpretation, but Iron Age Ireland was still in the Iron Age, and there was war and bloodshed and most if not all the other challenges of today, in one form or another. Violence is not the answer to every question, but there are some questions to which violence is the only possible answer if one is to remain human. Much has changed since the Iron Age. Even at that time, dispute resolution was supposed to be in the hands of the Druids, who also were able to attempt to stop or prevent battles. This should not suggest that the Druidic Priesthood was opposed to war absolutely. Apparently, the Druids of old also believed in the possibility of a "just war," as there were even Druids who went into battle to fight. Caesar tells us that Druids in Gaul were exempt from military service, but he does not say that Druids were forbidden to engage in battle (he also claims that they encouraged Gallic resistance to the Roman invasion and that they sometimes fought amongst themselves using weapons for the office of High Druid), and the record of Irish literature certainly shows Druids in battle. Nevertheless, not every tribal relocation among warrior cultures need be accompanied by violence, even in the Iron Age. Perhaps some Pretanic tribe even invited an Ivernian tribe to dwell in their midst, seeing superior technology, which might even be a source of some of the motifs found in tales of the *T?tha de Danand* and/or *Aes S?*. At any rate, the behaviour of Fergus, Loarn, and ?ngus in rejecting the decision by tanistry, leaving the Irish territory of the D? Riata, and establishing themselves in Scotland is a legal and historical precedent ("Brehon" Law requires a precedent or a maxim for a judgement to be pronounced; this

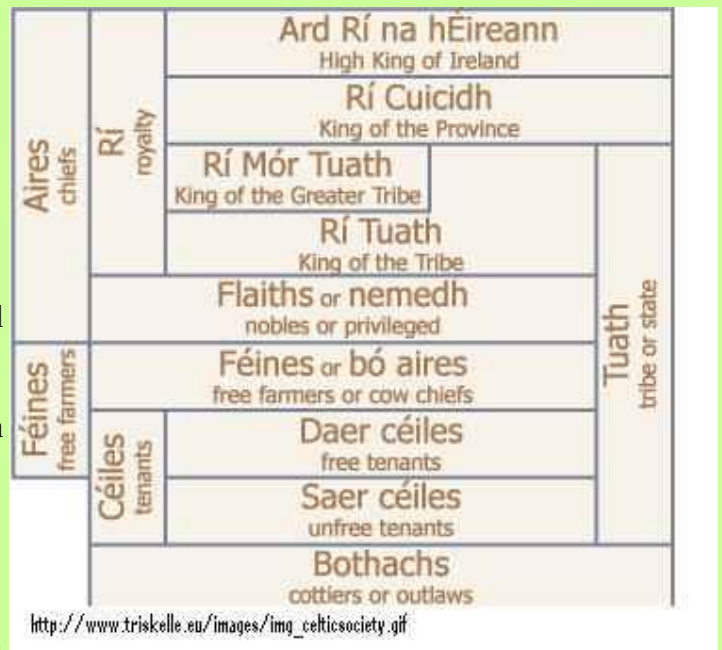
then establishes the precedent) for other similar acts later in the history of the Scottish clans; for example, claims by Clan Campbell to be the overlords of Clan MacTavish or assertions that the Chief of the MacLeans of Duart should also be the Chief of the MacLaines of Lochbuie must be seen in this light, and rejected on the basis of this legal precedent and the obvious desire of Clan MacTavish and Clan MacLaine of Lochbuie to be independent clans in their own right, as well as due to other historical considerations (this also has implications in favour of the "Devolution" movements in the UK and in favour of the individual States' Rights of Secession from the US Union).

Celtic Tribes, Then and Now

The "Celts" of the Iron Age were a Tribal people. That is, they had certain characteristics which may be described as "Tribal," in some sense. Because the terms "Tribe," "Tribal," and "Tribalism" are subject to many interpretations, they are not the most accurate terms we could use in this discussion, though they seem to be the best options available in English. However, if I define the terms for the purposes of the discussion at the outset, my use of the terms should be clear enough. I should state up front that "tribal" does not mean "primitive," nor does it imply a rejection of technological advances (though because of other considerations found in the cultures in question, we do strive to use environmentally-friendly technology).

In saying that the Iron Age Celts were "Tribal," I mean to refer to several characteristics.

One of those characteristics was social. The basic social structure was an extended Family (the *Derbfine*), a family of four generations and those who married into the family in those generations. A *T?th* or "Tribe" was an even more extended "Family." Whether or not all of the members of the *T?th* were related to one another by blood was irrelevant; it was the Tribe's culture which was important the customs and traditions, the mores and the ethos, the law and the ethics --- these are what truly matter, when it comes to decisions about who is an *Aurrad* (a member of a specific *T?th*) and who is a *Deorad* (an "outsider," someone not a member of the particular *T?th*). Genealogies were often invented in an effort to establish a connection of the *T?th* with some ideal Ancestor-God or Ancestress-Goddess. In this way, Ancestors of Spirit were of equal import with Ancestors of Body, and perhaps even more so in some cases. As I have noted above, "blood" is not the issue, culture is. The ideology of racism is a very strange one from this perspective. If my own brother by blood lives like a *Deorad*, he is a *Deorad*. If a German, or an Italian, or a Cherokee, or a Laotian, or a Maasai, or anyone else lives like a Celt, then he/she is a Celt, regardless of his or her ethnic heritage, skin colour, or any other superficialities. But part of what "living like a Celt" means has to do with the importance accorded to the *T?th* by the individual, rather than the typical "modern" and "Western" emphasis on individualism in isolation (which is not a privilege, but rather an impediment, and which benefits the greedy corporatists alone, even as it leads to further exploitation and marginalisation of those already made largely impotent in legal, political, and economic matters).



Another of the characteristics to which I refer by saying that the Iron Age Celts were "Tribal" is economic. The Celtic *T?th* is one in which the people cooperate for the good of the *T?th* as a whole and the good of each member of the *T?th*. For this reason, the term "Cooperative" is often used to describe the native Celtic economic philosophy, but without some experience of rural life, the meaning I intend to convey by that term

may be difficult to grasp. The point here is related to the emphasis on Tribe discussed in the previous paragraph: by banding together for the common good, the people of a *T?th* are stronger, more self-reliant, more independent, and more resilient, than they would be as individuals (or even "nuclear families") in societies whose economies are based on feudalist, mercantilist, capitalist, fascist, socialist, and/or communist ideologies.

A third characteristic to which I refer in using the term "Tribal" of the Iron Age Celts is political. The individual *T?th* was originally an autonomous polity (though some might become "clients" of others). There was no strong central government imposing royal aspirations or popular fads on the various *T?tha* ("Tribes"). Because of this, the native Celtic political philosophy has been characterised as favouring confederation, rather than federation, and has also been said to be somewhat "libertarian" (in the Iron Age, this might not have been the most accurate description, but as the Celtic Tradition still lives, this view has been through many permutations to arrive at a point where individual decisions are viewed as best left up to the individuals concerned, and only when such choices have unwanted impact on the *Tuath* will the *Tuath* presume to interfere in those choices which have had the unwanted impact; some aspects of "Brehon" Law suggest strongly that this was characteristic of Irish attitudes even in the early mediaeval period and is thus not only a feature of Celtic cultures in the present day, though it has become much more pronounced). As such, there are many issues facing today's governments which would not be issues in the government of a sovereign and independent Celtic Heathen Revivalist *Tuath* (nor any other sort of Celtic Heathen Revivalist *Tuath*), as they would not be within the authority of the government of such a *Tuath*. Although it is not out of bounds to characterise the political views of Celtic cultures as "libertarian," we must be very clear that this term cannot be taken at face value, but must be explained. Within the context of an Iron Age *T?th*, there were expectations and responsibilities. There were customs and laws. There was hierarchy and protocol/formalities. There was an Heroic Ethic. It was not an "anything goes" situation. When we refer to a "libertarian" element in Celtic culture, it must be made plain that this can be true of Iron Age Celts only within the context of a *T?th* or *Teut e* (and should ideally be so today). Some might argue that this "libertarian" tendency is today greater in the Diaspora than in the Celtic Homelands. That may be true; there has certainly been a great deal of dictatorial busybody-ism (and other manifestations of statism) involved in the governments of those Celtic and Ex-Celtic regions. However, the Devolution and Independence movements in Celtic nations in the UK, the already-successful Independence movement in the Republic of Ireland, and similar sentiments in Brittany all suggest that Independence and Sovereignty are important to modern Celts, and the political discussion and journalism about government activities in those areas also suggests that big centralised government (characteristic of both France and England, and increasingly evident in the EU) is not appreciated by many modern Celts, nor are attempts to make people's personal decisions for them (generally characteristic of the same folk who manifest the "cringe" with regard to their own Celtic cultural heritage and would far rather be "simply British" instead of any sort of Celt).

We also must be clear that in using the term "libertarian," we are not comparing Celtic political philosophy with that of the Libertarian Party (one of the political parties in the USA). Although there are some common views between the two, the economic views of the Libertarian Party are considerably different from those of the Celtic cultures. While modern Celts do not like big government, nevertheless, there was a form of redistribution of wealth in Iron Age Celtic *T?tha*, "Brehon" Law required certain provisions to be made for the disabled and the elderly, and modern Celts are likely to favour government interference in business to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and that industry does not contribute further to damage of the environment (like it or not, there should be safeguards in place to protect the people and the environment from exploitation by whatever the current incarnation of "the landlord" may be). Some of these policies would in modern times be characterised as "socialist," and many folk would be opposed on the grounds that Socialism is allegedly dictatorial. However, Socialism is an economic system, not a political system; that is, it is not about order versus chaos, or tyranny versus freedom; Socialism can function as part of any modern political system. However, Socialism is also a *modern* economic system, like all other economic systems that deal with the false commodity of capital as the basis of trade; Tribalism is not based on capital, and so Tribal provisions for the poor and elderly and disabled cannot be accurately characterised as "socialist."



They are simply examples of the Tribe taking care of its own. It should also be noted, however, that slackers are not tolerated in Tribal societies and there is no free ride to be had at others' expense; those who are provided for are simply incapable of contributing, whereas those who are able to contribute but unwilling to do so deserve, at best, exile from the *Tuath* and excommunication from the Sacred Rites. Where it comes to an individual's personal choices, however, such as regarding how one deals with his/her sexual orientation, whether or not one consumes alcohol, whether or not one smokes, what one smokes, whether or not to terminate a pregnancy, etc, it is generally our (very libertarian) opinion that these decisions should be left up to those involved, and not made for people by a "nanny state." This attitude appears in "Brehon" Law as well, and so is not simply a modern Celtic viewpoint, but apparently has its roots in much older Celtic views (and nor can it be justifiably attributed to "enlightened" thought brought to the Celts by Christianity, which has a very poor track record with regard to such matters).

As I wrote earlier, within the context of an Iron Age *T?th*, there were expectations and responsibilities, customs and laws, hierarchy and protocol/formalities, and there was an Heroic Ethic. These things also survive to a great extent in modern Celtic Heathen *T?tha*. Protocol has been in some cases restricted to formal occasions, allowing for more casual and relaxed situations outside of those formal occasions. Customs have of course changed with the times in some cases. The Laws are currently being addressed with the goal of updating and Heathenizing, so that they can be revived in our own lives and remain essentially consistent across Tribal lines. There are still expectations and responsibilities. By no means should our "libertarian" attitude suggest that we favour disorganisation and/or anarchy, nor should it suggest that we will tolerate slackers or people who are otherwise unreliable and/or irresponsible, but neither should it be taken to suggest that we support laissez-faire capitalism (or any other modern economic system).

We still have an Heroic Ethic, too. While we do not believe in government interference in "lifestyle choices" and so on, we are also not advocates of hedonism; our Ethic encourages heroic behaviour, not gluttony and unbridled consumerism leading to decadence and bloated uselessness. Our Ethic is Heroic; we do not advocate slave morality and its simpering masochism (asceticism and self-abnegation), masquerading as a form of Mysticism. We are human beings, not beasts of burden, and we will not be exploited or enslaved or cowed or terrorised, not by the Landlord, not by the mine owner, not by the corporate boss, not by any government or terrorist group. We will stand up for ourselves (and even in solidarity with other Celtic peoples), rather than "turning the other cheek" to encourage further attempts at exploitation and enslavement. The Heroic Ethic also is not foolhardiness or stupidity; it does not require us to always be "ready for a fight" (being bellicose, or "ready for a fight," is not the same thing as being always prepared to defend oneself, which is something we favour). It advises choosing one's battles, and diverting battles which are unnecessary.

This "Chapter 1" article on "The Celts" grew out of a pair of lectures I delivered on AOL in the Summer of 2000. (Anyone have any more specific info on the Nova episode or the newspaper article related to the "Beaker People" & the "North Atlantic culture"? I'm still looking for that one.)

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<http://groups.msn.com/CromansGrove/whatsnew.msnw> and (eventually) in Cromm?'s forthcoming book.

Divinity and Duality:



The God/Goddess Within and Without

By Celdwyn ©2007

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Now it is time that gods came walking out of lived-in Things..... Time that they came and knocked down every wall inside my house. EOnly the wind from such a turning could be strong enough to toss the air as a shovel tosses dirt: a fresh-turned field of breath. O gods, gods! who used to come so often and are still asleep in the Things around us, who serenely rise and at wells that we can only guess at splash icy water on your necks and faces, and lightly add your restedness to what seems already filled to bursting: our full lives. Once again let it be your morning, gods. We keep repeating. You alone are source. With you the world arises, and your dawn gleams on each crack and crevice of our failure.....

RAINER MARIA RILKE.

Divinity

Druids have always recognized and praised the existence of an ultimate *Higher Consciousness* of a Supreme Being. As they have always directed Light by their practices, they also recognized the God/dess consciousness within the natural order. The four elements, the presence of plants and trees, rocks and minerals, the sky/sun/moon, and all living things were a part of the four magical and earthly kingdoms that the Druids protected and prayed for not to. They knew that all of these manifested pleasures, such as the presence of growing trees and nascent gemstones, bird song and sunlight, were not in themselves Divinity, but rather directed by the hand of that which they named *The Uncreated One (or First Cause)*.

Duality

Likewise the early Druids had a prevailing belief in the reincarnation and the immortality of the human soul, much as we view the scientific evolution of the body today. Just as the Sufi mystics in the East, Druids believed that all things were evolving back to Unitive Consciousness. Thus, the developing soul was in essence, being perfected for a higher or ascended stage of existence. Death was thus considered as but an interlude in a succession of existences (incarnations), each lifetime being an opportunity for the soul in a new envelope or body to come to realize Gwynvyd (*The White Life*), the Realm of Illumination, Lugh, Light or Joy of human transcendence.* It was left then, to the beings on the human plane of existence to manifest that conscious awareness, overcome the duality of their natures (good/bad karma), and affect a life aimed at evolving towards that higher state.



Beltane Exhortation

Pick a pair. Any two that match for you. God. Goddess. Then bring them forth through manifestation and inward awareness. Who are your gods within; goddesses within? Who are the archetypal diviners of Divinity for you?

In the Celtic sense of Gods and Goddesses this represents the duality of Divinity that radiates from the Great Unknown, source or, as the Druids like to frame it, the Uncreated One. Out of the three circles of soul-self evolution (Annwn, Abred, and Gwynvyd) that form congruity with sun and Self, planet and sun, Self and planet, we most strongly feel our inward and outward convergence during the times of the eight Seasonal

Festivals. It is then that our Wisdom Self, our soul-self, our inner knowing most correspond to this external alignment. How best to bring out the deepest Knowing of Being but to evoke the personal powers and grace of the ancient ones, the Gods and Goddesses who streamed Divine energy long before creation came to streams and valleys, mountains and rivers, oceans and deserts, flowers and trees, sacred wells and the deep secret refuges of the earth

The Tradition

Within the coordinates of these four fire festivals and four druid equinoxes we celebrate the convergence of time and space; the interception of self and nature within the larger cycle of life. But at the center of our work, the heart of every circle is the connection with that which transcends as well as contains the outer circles of Sun and Self; moon and the Divine essence. Thus, at one and the same time we are the center and we are the circumference. We are the bell and we are the ringing. We are the song and we are the tune. We are the fire and we are the flame. That is, in a larger sense, we are nature and nature is us, as we are the gods and they us. It is that fragile inward connection, a bridge to that delicate inner knowing, which longs for the Divine Realm, Ceugant ('kygant'), one often glimpsed within ritual or ceremony, but less frequently vouchsafed beyond these heightened moments. Thus the gods and goddesses represent for us an ongoing sacredness, and enduring sense of awe because they dwell within our imagination at this eternal edge of Divinity.

So, as I invited before: pick two of your favorite and bring them deeply into your awareness, always knowing, of course, that each of their aspects can manifest profoundly in our lives and we need remember to approach their evocation with reverence and a healthy dollop of respect. Since, for me the best of the choices our the Welsh and Irish pantheon, let me offer these two pairings for your delectation:

Ceridwen & Cernunnos

1. Ceridwen is the Welsh Mother Goddess of dark, prophetic powers; she is the keeper of the cauldron of Annwn (*the Cauldron of Rebirth*), where inspiration and divine knowledge are brewed. Her name means *Cauldron of Wisdom*, and she represents the fecundity of the Underworld and the terrible strength of the Mother Destroyer.

2. Cernunnos was the hunter god, one of the more famous Celtic deities. He was the son of the Mother Goddess and, at another time, her consort. Best known as the god of prosperity and wealth, he was considered to be the lord of animals. He was closely associated with the deer totem and was responsible for the well being of all animals. Although he was sometimes depicted with animals in his Horn or antlered form, at other times, he was the dark king of the Underworld, guardian of the paths to that world, where all potential forces and events originate. In his dark aspect, he ruled over the active forces of life and death with the power to give and take in nature. He was feared by many and called the *Black Giant*; however, his roll as hunter-guardian and animal lord was carefully cultivated in Celtic folklore, so that he never actually became a negative entity but, rather, one of fair judgment.



Note: The story of Ceridwen is well known among the Welsh Druids. Her role as the Keeper of the Cauldron of life and death, as well as her subsequent birth of the *Son of Light* (Taliesin), bequeathing him her powers of Inspiration and Divine knowledge is also a wonderful energy to work with at any season. Cernunnos is a wonderful male complement to bring into your circle as he represents those paths to the underworld, prosperity and abundance all foregrounds to enlightenment, working with individual aspects of shadow and positivity (just as Ceridwen does in her female aspect). I have often paired these two together with respect for their formidable powers and awareness of their ability to loose the snares of karmic attachments.

Danu and Dagda

1. Danu, or *Danu na*, is the Irish Mother Goddess of Creation, considered to be the very womb of the earth who, at the beginning of time, gave birth through her Great Womb to every thing that concerns the earth. Danu (Dana) shares her name with other Earth Mother Goddesses around the world. The Russians named her *Dennitsa*; the classical Greeks called her *Danae*; the Hebrews *Dinah*; while the Babylonians see her as her *Dann* or *Dunnu*. Japan names her *Amatarasu*, and her cult is still associated with their emperor who is said to be descended from the Mother Goddess. In Denmark and in Old Testament references, *Danites* were called serpents. The Irish gods, the T?tha De Danaan, named her their Earth Goddess and looked to her as the fundamental source of their lives, along with their Sun God, Dagda or Dagdu.

2. The Good God *Dagda* of the T?tha de Danaan was known as *The Old Cunning One* or *The Red One of Perfect Knowledge*. He was the king of the T?tha de Danaan, known as *Eochaid Ollathair*, or *father of all*. It is said that his crudity masked a wealth of knowledge. His name *Dagda*, or *Good God* Erefers to his propensity for enacting miracles, having done himself what many men together would have found it hard to do. He controlled the weather and saw to the harvests, thus seeing to the common good of all. He had knowledge of science and was credited with the druid's form of multiform triads, and thus he was also known as the god of *draidecht* (druidry).

Note: Carolyn Edwards (1991), *God/dess weaver*, sees Danu as the Mother Goddess whose consort was the Sun God Dagdu (Dagda) and that her womb can still be found at Newgrange in Ireland, where their intercourse still takes place for a brief few minutes annually at the winter solstice. In her book Edwards weaves a wonderful tale of how the Mother of Creation and the Father of Sky and Sun come together to procreate all that lives upon the earthplane. As the mountains and rivers are formed through the expansion of Dana's enormous and beautiful body, she comes to know herself, and in the hidden places of her realm, Dagda finds her, his piercing ray finding her secret forests and bringing her to great joy. When the children of Danu and Dagda are at last upon the earth, the Sun God gives her a final caress as he once again reclaims dominion in the skies. EThis is a wonderful reenactment for Beltane. Working with these two loving and gentle Divine energies can only enrich one's own journey towards self-awareness and unity with Source. Giving them dominion in your own life at this season may enrich your relationships, bring healing and fortitude to difficult areas within those relationships and give one an incredible glimpse into the Divine nature of everything that is.



Such are my offerings. And I wish you well of these and any you may find within and without. May the blessing of the Uncreated one, His/her son/daughter and the inspiration of the Light be always with you.

Celdwyn (member OBOD)

*Inspiration for this essay was drawn from the Writings of Philip Carr-Gomm, CC of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids in the UK and from my own informally published paper: *Divinity in the Celtic World: An Examination of the Mythos of Celtic Gods and Goddesses and How they Complement Celtic Cosmology* by Lyn A. Saunders, PhD. ©2002 for the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, Palo Alto, California. All Rights Reserved.

EVENTS



The 6th Annual Pagan Festival

Berkeley, California

Presented by Pagan Alliance

Saturday, May 12, 2007-10:00 am to 5:30 pm

FREE-All Are Welcome!!!

Theme: Magical Journeys

This year, our festival focuses on Children and Young Adults. Our theme represents the many paths we take and the lessons we learn on the way to finding our spirituality. This promises to be an entertaining and exciting event for the whole family, for young people as well as the young at heart!

The Pagan Alliance is currently still accepting applications for local and regional groups to participate in the festival: in the procession, at info tables, and vendors. If you would like your nonprofit organization, coven, circle, or group to march in the procession and receive mention in the program (free), or to host an information table (\$30 fee), please contact Rabbit by May 2 at divarabbit@gmail.com. If you would like to be a vendor at this event, please sign up at our website- www.thepaganalliance.org. Fill out the vendor application and pay the fee through PayPal.

Our 2007 Honored Keeper of the Light is Patrick McCollum, Statewide Wiccan Chaplain for the California Department of Corrections, Author of "A Wiccan Journey," "Courting The Lady," and Teacher of Witchcraft, Magic, Herb Lore, Pagan history and Pagan Spirituality (www.courtingthelady.com).

Our fabulous Stage MC is Angelique Heddings, of Limerent Arts Theater Company, and Postulant with the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence

Bring the whole family to our fun, safe child-sized procession and Interfaith Ritual, designed and led by Children & Young Adults, and a festival with Vendors, Performances, Speakers, Traditional Dance, Music, Altars, Children's Crafts, Druid Story Telling Pavilion, Authors Circle, and Info Booths.

Relax and enjoy our amazing line-up of Stage Performances:

Anne Hill- www.gnosiscafe.com www.gnosiscafe.com

Women and Song featuring DJ Hamouris - www.ninshibar.com

Ariellah - Goth/Tribal Fusion Belly Dance www.ariellah.com

Fontain's M.U.S.E. www.beatmagic.org

Lunatique Belly Dance Company- Goddess Dance- www.lunabelly.com

Mahal with Evelie Delfino S?es - www.gypsyspiritmission.com/html/evelie_posch.htm

Walter Thompson III- www.walterthompson3.com

Spiral Dance Chorus and Band directed by Evelie S Posch

Celia Farran- www.celiaonline.com

WOW Besom Brigade-Ritual- www.machanightmare.com

Sit for a bit in the Druid Storytelling Pavilion and let your imagination roam with the twisting yarns of some of our community's beloved Bards and Storytellers.

Make sure to wear your most creative, witchiest or fabulous child-friendly garb and participate in our Costume Contest. Prizes will be given for Best Girl's, Boy's, Woman's and Man's Costumes.

Volunteers SOUGHT and WELCOME for pre- Festival and Festival Day for set-up, take-down, security, information booth, and more. Share your talents with your community by being a volunteer!

Remember, to please join us in offering support for our local community by bringing non-perishable food donations for the Alameda County Community Food Bank (www.accfb.org). We will have bags and collection barrels available on-site the day of the Festival on May 12, and invite you to bring donations of non-perishable foods to the event to donate.

DON'T MISS OUT ON THE FUN!

2007 Pagan Festival: Magical Journeys

May 12, 10-5

Civic Center Park -2151 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley CA 94704

Downtown Berkeley BART - 1 ½ blocks west to Civic Center Park

Carpooling is Encouraged - Limited Handicap Parking adjacent to Park

Info:www.paganfestival.org & www.thepaganalliance.org (510) 872-1188

Support Our Community!

Once again this year, the Pagan Alliance has teamed up with the Alameda County Community Food Bank to collect food donations. (www.accfb.org). We will have bags and collection barrels available on-site the day of the Festival on May 12, and invite you to bring donations of non-perishable foods to the event to donate. The food bank has a list of most needed foods and culturally specific foods on their website at:

http://www.accfb.org/pdfs/Shopping_List.pdf.

The most needed foods list includes:

1. Canned vegetables and fruit
2. Canned meats and fish
3. Pasta and tomato sauce
4. Beans
5. Rice
6. Peanut butter
7. Cereal/oatmeal
8. Powdered milk
9. Nutritional beverages
10. And of course, cash donations are accepted-Checks Payable to Alameda County Community Food Bank

Parental Stress Service

The Pagan Alliance will be accepting monetary donations for the Parental Stress Services, A Family Support Agency (www.familypaths.org). FamilyPaths promotes the development of nurturing, responsible and resilient families within our diverse communities by providing comprehensive services that foster positive

change, empowering parents and children. FamilyPaths continues to be a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) community service organization.

A donation receptacle will be at the Information Booth at the Pagan Festival on May 12th. Please make Checks Payable to "Parental Stress Service." Blessings.

Authors Circle

Authors featured at the Pagan Festival Authors Circle include:

EKeeper of the Light Patrick McCollum, Wiccan Chaplain and author of "Courting the Lady, A Wiccan Journey"; "Book One: The Sacred Path," 2:00 p.m. E4:00 p.m.

EAnne Hill, author of "Circle Round", 2:00 p.m. E4:00 p.m.

EM. Macha Nightmare, author of "Pagan Pride", 1:00 p.m. E3:00 p.m.

ECynthia Sue Larson, author of "Karen Kimball & the Dream Weaver's Web", 12:00 p.m. -2:00 p.m.

ETrina Robbins, author of "Wild Irish Roses", 12:00 p.m. E2:00 p.m.

EV. Vale and John Sulak, authors of "Modern Pagans", 10:00 a.m. E4:00 p.m.

EDawn Fry, author of "DawnTalk/Childcare Handbook"



Milwaukee Irish Fest August 16 - 19, 2007

Milwaukee Irish Fest truly is a taste of Ireland featuring music, dance, song, sports, genealogy, poetry, and culture. But while the festival lasts only four days each year, the commitment to promote and preserve Irish culture throughout the year has earned Milwaukee Irish Fest national and worldwide acclaim.

Music and dance comprise a main element of Irish Fest. Top Irish and Irish American entertainers from around the world, as well as numerous regional groups perform on the festival's 15 stages. In addition, roaming performers dressed in traditional costumes entertain guests as they stroll the grounds.

With the recent surge of interest in Irish dance, stages featuring step dancing have become a popular attraction for festival-goers. Guests can also learn Ceili and Set dancing at workshops held daily. The Dance Pavilion is open during all hours of the festival. Here people can dance to the music of world-famous bands.

Cultural exhibits, displays, theater, poetry readings and demonstrations bring alive the spirit of Old Ireland's folklore and charm, while contests, raffles, sporting events and comedy shows add to the levity.

Our Grafton Street and Lilliput Marketplaces offer shoppers every delight from--or about--the Emerald Isle. Visit the extensive marketplaces for everything from musical selections and books to Irish fisherman's sweaters, jewelry, crafts, collectibles and artwork.

To promote traditional Irish culture, many groups and organizations from Ireland assist with the festival's exhibits. Among them are the National Gallery of Ireland, the National Museum of Ireland, Arts Council, local government, businesses, media, and the Irish Tourist Boards including Galway, Sligo and Lisburn, the Shannon Development Corporation, RTE and Aer Lingus.



To help families trace their Irish heritage, genealogical resources and organizations are on-site, including the Wisconsin Irish Genealogical Society. In addition, each year Irish Fest honors one of the Irish family groups.

For those with a competitive nature, Irish Fest offers plenty of contests. Sports such as rugby, hurling, currach racing and Gaelic football are played throughout the festival. Competitions, such as internationally sanctioned tug-of-war, children's red hair and freckle contests, bingo, treasure hunts and a baking contest are also held. Additionally, the "Run/Walk to Irish Fest" is held during the weekend of Irish Fest.

Productions from noted Irish playwrights, as well as rising talent are performed continuously at the festival by groups from around the U.S., Canada and Ireland. Each year, a children's drama is produced for the younger festival guests.

Some of the entertainers include: The Barra MacNeils, Blackthorn, Cherish the Ladies, Aoife Clancy, Liz Carroll, John Doyle, David Munnely Band, Dave Rowe Trio, Enter the Haggis , Gaelic Storm, Ladies of Longford, Liadan, Denis Liddy Ceili Band, Leahy, Millish, Seanchai & the Unity Squad, and Seven Nations (Saturday Only)

Thursday, August 16 Grand Hooley

* 5:00 to 10:00 p.m. Admission \$5.00

* Sneak a peek at the entertainers new to Irish Fest at four of the 16 stages. Get a head start on shopping, and dance the night away. [Not all areas will be open.]

Friday, August 17

4:00 p.m. to midnight - Admission \$15 Adults; \$10 seniors 60+ [gate only] Children 12 and under, free.

Free Admission at all gates between 4:00 and 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, August 18

Noon to midnight - Admission \$15 Adults; \$10 seniors 60+ [gate only] Children 12 and under, free

Sunday, August 19

11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. - Admission \$15 Adults; \$10 seniors 60+ [gate only] Children 12 and under, free

Free Admission with food donation before 9:30 a.m. Mass for Peace and Justice

Free Admission with Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Press Card, 2-4 p.m. Main Gate only

The Henry W. Maier Festival (Summerfest) Grounds
200 North Harbor Drive

Milwaukee, WI 53202

For more information go to <http://www.irishfest.com/festivalinfo/index.htm> or call (414) 476-3378



Astronomical Beltaine, will occur as 15 degrees of Taurus on May 5th, 2007 at 2:22 p.m., or as 16 degrees 18 minutes declination on May 5th at 11:14 a.m., both Pacific Daylight Time.

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This is the end of the Beltane issue



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Webmastered by Mike Scharding

