



## Beltane Issue Y.R. XLVII

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### Editor's Notes

This is our eighth issue. One complete cycle of the year. It is still a temporary publication, but it has no current end date planned, and will continue as long as I can scrape together the time from my pressing work overseas, and as long as you folks continue to send me all kinds of great materials! We'll be publishing more articles about the RDNA and RDG over the next few issues, so don't get impatient, more will come out.



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## News of the Groves

### Carleton Grove: News from Minnesota

One member recently posted a page on the RDNA, [http://shii.org/knows/Reformed\\_Druids\\_of\\_North\\_America](http://shii.org/knows/Reformed_Druids_of_North_America), but he or she seems to know only a little about the other groves, as is normal at Carleton.

Another e-mail from the grove:

Hey Mike,

Archdruidess pro tempore Kaitlin doesn't read the mailing list so I thought I'd send you a quick update for the Beltane newsletter. I noticed Daniel was cc'ing you on some of his e-mails but he's not actually on campus this term. As spring came to Minnesota the Carleton Druids blossomed into full form. We've already founded a mystic order and we've begun to compile a spring-book full of drawings and intuitions. Future plans include planting trees, holding a picnic on the prairie, and attending the UU spring service for Beltane. Depending on circumstances we may also compile the Council-mandated report on the state of Druidry in North America, the first in however many years. So far we only have a few active members, but recruitment on campus brings little successes.

Avery

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

The Mango mission in Laos is now officially closed. I am now moving to Canada.

### **Sierra Madrone Grove: News from California**

Mike, Stacey,

In order to cease the confusion with our ADF affiliated Grove, Sierra Madrone, I am spinning our NRDNA Grove into its own name--the Grove of the Golden Valley. We currently have 4 members--me as AD, Stephen Abbott, Tezra Reitan, and Lindsay Weaver. The Sierra Madrone Grove, ADF is remaining as that, an ADF Grove and I am its Senior Druid.

BB

Sean W. Harbaugh  
Arch-Druid/Grove of the Golden Valley



## **Dr. Druid**

A column for medical questions, concerns and confusions  
with answers from Dr. Druid.

Submit your questions to:  
Doc.Druid (at) Gmail (dot) com.

Beltain, 2009,

Greetings all,

Zero letters from sick druids continue to bombard me. Please! Share your secrets for staying so healthy so that others can benefit from your wisdom!

We have moved into the final weeks of pathology in medical school, and are studying all the horrible things that happen in a person's brain. Strokes, bleeds, strange cancers... And headaches of course. Did you know the pain of cluster headaches is said to be the worst pain known to human beings? Congratulations, if you have them.

Since none of you have written to me I will share with you some of the things I have learned as a heathen in medicine. These are not a physician's clinical pearls, but life lessons about how to relate to life and death as a person or healer of any description.

*Since no one asked a question he wrote the following advice:*

## Ten Truths From a Heathen Healer

1. Listen.
2. Act bravely. Honor the Gods. Do no evil.
3. When action is futile, gather information; when information is futile, sleep.
4. Too much knowledge is paralytic. We are afflicted by what we can prove; we are distracted by all that we know.
5. What I don't know could kill you.
6. Remember Odin's Rune: Some things are unknowable.
7. Everything has side effects.
8. Every body is different.
9. Every body dies.
10. Death is no one's enemy.

Be well.

-Dr. Druid.

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

## Druid's Prayer

Submitted by Daniel Hansen

The Druid's prayer (Welsh: *Gweddi'r Derwydd*) or "Gorsedd Prayer" (*Gweddi'r Orsedd*) is a prayer composed by Iolo Morganwg which is still a staple in the ritual of both gorseddau and Neo-Druids. Neo-Druids sometimes substitute the words *y Dduwes* ("the Goddess") for the original *Dduw* ("God").

ORIGINAL WELSH

Dyros, Ddyw (y Dduwes), dy nawdd;  
Ac yn nawdd, nerth;  
Ac yn nerth, ddeall;  
Ac yn neall, gwybod;  
Ac o wybod, gwybod yn gyfiawn;  
Ac o wybod yn gyfiawn ei garu;  
Ac o garu, caru Duw (y Dduwes).  
Duw (y Dduwes) a phob daioni.

## ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Grant, God (Goddess), thy refuge;  
And in refuge, strength;  
And in strength, understanding;  
And in understanding, knowledge;  
And in knowledge, the knowledge of what is right;  
And from knowledge of what is right, the love of it;  
And from loving, the love of God (Goddess).  
God (Goddess) and all goodness.

## ANOTHER ENGLISH TRANSLATION

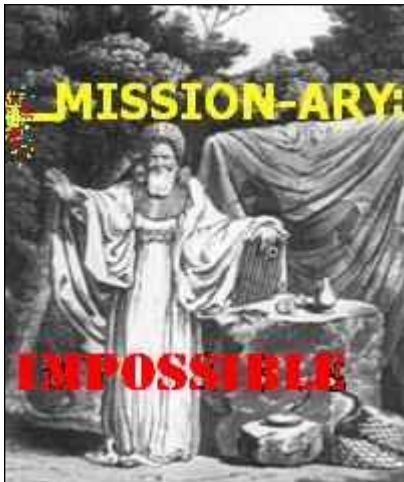
Grant, O god/dess, the protection

***And in protection, strength***

And in strength, understanding  
And in understanding, knowledge

**And in knowledge, the knowledge of justice**

And in the knowledge of justice, the love of it  
And in that love, the love of all existence's  
And in the love of all existence's,  
The love of the god/dess and all goodness.



## Missionary Impossible: File 10 2 Years of Memories

My two years working in Laos has been the strangest of sabbaticals for me. As with Brother Irony, who toiled for two years in the Kingdom of Tonga in the 1990s, working in a tropical climate of constant 90+ temperatures, with wet and dry halves to the year, has been tiresome to me, for I love the four seasons. My next post is in Montreal, Canada, where I will have those joys returned to me.

I previously lived in Japan 1996-2000 and learned deeply from the fusion of Shinto, Animism and Buddhism; mostly wildly participating in dozens of varied macho-crazy bizarre farmer festivals. Ah the memories there (hitting people with bamboo poles, running about 95% naked in the freezing snow, dressed as a demon scaring children, fisticuffs with rival gangs for giving the best decorated tube to the gods, river rapids races, waterfall prayers, mountain pilgrimages, building snow igloos for the gods, throwing whirling bales of fiery hay at friends, etc.). That and a few hundred temple, shrine visits built up a good store of blessings for the next ten years.

My garden was a delightful explosion of twenty types of flowers, palm trees, banana trees, bushes and rocks and I helped grow some rice and had two children at this posting. I haven't gone to more than two dozen temples during my 2 years, but I did have that spirit shrine in my garden that every one has. I also never shaved my head to join a monastery as I hoped for a 2 week vacation. I did participate in 25 funerals and cremations for Americans who died, nursed a dozen Americans to health, and saw five or six die after weeks in the hospital. That was immensely saddening and rewarding.

I talked to 13,000+ people during my interviews, about 3% of the country's population, and said "No" to a lot of people, a thing I wasn't used to doing. My inner Brehon got a heavy workout. I also wrestled with hundreds of fraud cases and learned a lot about nice people doing the wrong things with often good intentions. I look at people differently now and make quicker decisions.

I missed all of you, since I couldn't visit the US during those two years. I am hoping that I will be more available to visit you, and hope that you will visit me in Montreal Canada. Sebastien is running a lovely little grove there and I hope to help him with my artistic pursuits, and you'd be surprised how easy it is to visit Montreal by plane. They say when you learn another language, you gain another soul, just in case you have hocked the old one! I will be going back to French, which I studied as a young man from 1983-1990, five languages ago. I guess I'm like a cat, with 7 lives. No doubt, I'll get two more before I finish my career.

May the blessings of the Earth Mother be ever apparent unto you!  
-Mike the Fool



## **RDNA and RDG: Who is a Reformed Druid?**

**By Mike the Fool**

*Also, just his own opinion.*

Dear Brother Daniel,

Blessing of the Earth Mother upon you. I quite enjoyed talking with you on April 21, Earth Day. You asked me on the phone, what is a Reformed Druid? I like to write and talk a lot, so here is the gist of what I told you. I'll eventually stop after a few pages or so, but you can stop when you feel like it.

A Reformed Druid is somebody who believes in the two Basic Tenets of Reformed Druidism. Please refer to my lengthy boring article on the Basic Tenets in the Yule Issue of the *Druid Inquirer* (<http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/druidinquirer05.doc>) along with Brother El's lovely article on Reformed Druidism in the same issue. Yes, there are a couple of variants of the Basic Tenets, just to confuse things, but let's assume for the remainder of this letter that all the variants are about the same (which they aren't) otherwise it'll take a lot longer to reach a very valuable insight.

Reformed Druids come in different strains. Let me start with the example of Christianity. There are thousands of different sects that call themselves Christian, although they don't all acknowledge each other. All these groups have one thing in common, they all call themselves, "Christian", that's it, and that usually means they have some type of inspiration with a man named Jesus. A "Druid" is also a person who calls themselves a Druid, even if others aren't impressed with each-other's credentials, and each Druid has a varying opinion on why what they believe they are a Druid, usually having something to do with inspiration (to varying degrees) with an aspect or another of the Ancient Druids.

Christianity can be broken down into about five or so major splits; Catholic, Various Ancient Groups, Orthodox, Protestant and Mormon varieties. They all claim to be Christian, but argue over politics, theology, structure and historical divides that have slowly created “differences” over the years. There are also hundreds of Druidic organizations out there. In Druidism, you have Reconstructionists, Fraternal Groups, Neopagan groups, Eclectic Groups, and some Indecipherably Confusing Groups. Reformed Druids are just one more type of Druid. Theoretically, any person or group that affirms the two Basic Tenets could conceivably call themselves a “Reformed Druid” in the most primordial sense, no matter whatever else they espouse. There are some nice and some nasty folk who use the name Reformed Druid or just “Druid”, just like there are nice and nasty folk who call themselves Christian. Can’t help that, most specific groups don’t have control over the larger general group from which they descend. Catholics can’t do much about the Mormons calling themselves Christian too.

In Protestantism there was originally only one type of Lutheranism (or maybe I’m wrong), now there are dozens of Lutheran styles, in addition to varieties of Methodists, Episcopalians, Pentecostals, Baptists, etc. Originally in Reformed Druidism there was only one type, the RDNA in 1963. Like it not (and some don’t), the RDNA is not the only type of Reformed Druid anymore, nor was it ever possible to be the only type in such an un-controlling type group. By 1975, there were three types of Reformed Druid; RDNA, New RDNA and Schismatic Druids of North America. They all believed in the basic tenets, followed a similar grove pattern, held mostly identical 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Ordinations, and recognized each other as Reformed Druids. RDNA was open to all religions and philosophies and not too interested in new national rules or more restrictive identities. NRDNA was open for more higher associations with a preference for Neopaganism. SDNA was for a functional, active national model, and a mandatory Neopagan identity. They were quite vociferous for a while, but remarkably cordial compared to the “wiccan wars” I have read about. The split into three hurt for awhile, nowadays most don’t hurt so much anymore.

SDNA eventually became Ar nDraiocht Fein (ADF) in 1983, which later schismed to produce the Henge of Keltria in 1986, and a dozen other offshoots. ADF and Keltria hurt for awhile, now not so much. ADF and Keltria don’t espouse the Basic Tenets at any group-wide level, so they are not Reformed Druids as a group, although some members might individually affirm them.

The Order of the Mithril Star (OMS) came around in the late 1990s as a group incorporating some RDNA ideas and Church of All Worlds ideas and some other stuff. It was a group with feet in two different groups, but a highly internally organized order, beyond anything seen in any of the Higher or Side Orders of Reformed Druidism. Eventually around 2006, many members of OMS decided to form the Reformed Druids of Gaia (RDG) and there are many new members of RDG who were never members of OMS. OMS has a third tenet, Thou art God/ess, but RDG doesn’t espouse that officially.

As I mentioned above, the RDG Druids believe in the same two basic tenets as an RDNA Druid, so that makes the RDG Druids a Reformed Druid, just like SDNA Druids were Reformed Druids too. You don’t have to like someone just because he or she is a Reformed Druid. However, belief in the two basic tenets does not make a RDG Reformed Druid into an RDNA Reformed Druid or a SDNA Reformed Druid. An RDG Reformed Druid is a RDG Reformed Druid.

There are a lot of varieties within RDNA Reformed Druidism and many of its local groves have “in house” rules within the RDNA. Same is true with NRDNA. You have RDNA groves with Celtic tendencies, college groves, rural groves, Christian tendencies, etc. but generally they are open to some degree to members of all religions and philosophy, and I would hope they’d teach any differing type just enough to start their own grove type, if that Druid didn’t fit in, or recommend him to a more accommodating fit at another grove. RDNA groves generally follow the three orders and rules laid down by the Council of Dalon Ap Landu, of which the sitting Archdruid of Carleton is the chairperson, even if very little ever got done. RDNA will no doubt spin off more groups, as will NRDNA and RDG.

RDNA, NRDNA and RDG all have some interest, but not much, in the Druid Chronicles and other writings, but they are not dogmatic about them, and there is no official collection of writings. Just like Protestants and Catholics have different versions of the bible and newsletters, RDNA, NRDNA and RDG have different reading habits. The Druid Missalany and Druid Inquirer were open to all Reformed Druids, but mostly RDNA and NRDNA folks read them. Similarly the RDNAtalk conference was open to all Reformed Druids, but mostly RDNA and NRDNA folks read it. The RDG mother grove has a magazine, the Druid's Egg, which is open to all types of Reformed Druids, but mostly RDG folk read it. They run conferences open to all types of Reformed Druids, but mostly RDG folk read them. Both sides have something called "the Waters of Life" (so does ADF), call themselves "Reformed Druids", use the Druid sigil (ADF, Keltria and other do too), and may (or may not) study writings found in the ARDA collections.

The Reformed Druids of Gaia have a "mother grove" in California/Oregon (I forget where, it moves a bit), just like the NRDNA and SDNA once had a "mother grove" at Berkeley. ADF has a mother grove too. The RDNA doesn't have a titled "mother grove", but Carleton comes close. A "mother grove" is usually a bunch of very active Druids who spawn and foster lots of new groves, publish stuff and "get things done" in an organized fashion.

In order to keep things clear, the RDG has "degrees" rather than "orders", with different requirements, rituals, and many can be done online or by phone. The RDNA and NRDNA experiment occasionally with on-line and phone ordinations, but they are uncommon (and I don't like them much). Currently very few RDNA/NRDNA folks have undergone RDG degree initiation, and vice a versa. The RDG doesn't appear to feel restricted to big-rules by the Council of Dalon Ap Landu process, they make rules of the level that the Council of DAL used to make. It is true that several groves in the RDNA and NRDNA forget or don't know about the Council of DAL. I forget about the Council sometimes too. These differences seem quite significant to me, but other might not think so. Some people think Wicca and Druidism is more or less identical. Any randomly picked two groupings will have at least one similarity and at least one difference, and if that one similarity is very important to a person, that person will say they are the same group. While some overlap certainly exists, the RDNA, NRDNA and the RDG are, to me, more or less three segregated branches of the same Reformed Druid tree; and each has lots of blue sky to grow towards.

Will it take some time for most people to acknowledge that there the RDNA, NRDNA and RDG are different branches? Sure it will, I think.

Will it hurt for a while? Sure it will.

Will a few folks bounce between or straddle the branches. Sure they will.

But each branch is a potentially viable separate entity with a foreseeable future ahead of it.

As much as the Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches dream of re-uniting, neither wants to submerge their developing identities. Hierarchies rarely want to have "a merger" voluntarily. Businesses and religions historically have had violent takeover bids, but usually the "took over" group will have a long-living "heretical" core that won't accede to the "taking over" faction. The Unitarian/Universalist church is a rare exception that proves the general rule. Can you imagine ADF rejoining RDNA or RDNA joining ADF? A few might, but most will not. ADF has a clear vision of growth that folks in the RDNA aren't really interested in going down. Trying to blur ADF's vision so that RDNA can fit inside, would be a disservice to ADF and confusing to its recruitment/self-definitional strength. I think RDG has a very powerful and successful organizational model that will attract structure-friendly people who like Reformed Druidism, but need more services and defined ordered frameworks to wrap their heads and groves around. ADF grew big, and I hope RDG will grow as big or bigger than ADF. I don't believe the RDNA cares how big it grows, and likes mucking about doing its own thing.

With each year, a group passes more rules that are different from the other groups' rules, percolates new ideas amongst its own ever-more-different membership and members get used to following different leaders and reading different materials. Alliances may tie two groups together like a rope between two barges, but once they reach a determined destination, one or the other will unmoor the rope and they'll drift apart again. Let's not stretch the analogy too far.

So Daniel, love the RDG folks, learn about them, but feel free to follow your RDNA ways too, which are also good. If you go off towards Christian, Athiest, or Humanist regions too, I hope they will be rewarding too. The Earth Mother will always be there to teach you a lesson, regardless of the label you hold closest to your identity.

May there always be many varieties of Reformed Druidism to pick from.

May each variety try to be clear about what they offer and don't offer, so that it will be easier for the searcher to find the best fit.

May I always admit when I've put my foot in my mouth too far, for I am a fool who does not have sufficient time as he wishes to study the ways of all the varieties of Reformed Druidism, and yet I share what I think I know.

May you do what you will and think what you will think.

Even if what I said is not helpful to you, just saying it has been helpful for me.

Yours in the Earth Mother,  
Mike the Fool



## Mom, Dad.... I'm a Druid....

I thought it might be a bit interesting, if you are willing, to talk about those "coming out of the closet/forest" stories regarding your Druidism and how you related it to your family and friends (if you have, that is).

I wonder if the stories are similiar to coming out about other rather divisive sensitive matters (sexuality, religion, politics, Red Sox vs. Yankees, etc)

If you are too shy/worried, but still want to post them, you can e-mail them directly to me at [mikerdna@hotmail.com](mailto:mikerdna@hotmail.com) and I'll anonymously post them to the conference (usually withing 3-5 business days).

How and when did you tell someone, what did you think they would do, what did they do, how did it turn out? Were some people better able to handle it than others?

Sincerely,  
Mike the Fool



## RESPONSE #1

I'm a member of an ADF grove. My family knows and feels that I am confused and will someday realize that Jesus is lord. When I first told my parents (they are fundy christians) that I was Pagan, many years ago, my mom asked me if I kill things. Ummmmmm, no. When I told my dad that I was in a grove, he asked how many people were in it. I told him, 12. he then tried to tell me that the reason our grove is small is because Christianity is the correct way and people know that. (Actually, we have a huge Wiccan population here.) To this day he occasionally throws in things to try and "save" me. It is my hope that someday my parents might be able to understand that their way is not for me.

|  
This past November, I got married, in a druid ceremony. My parents, after much discussion, debate and fretting finally agreed to attend. The ceremony was written according to ADF core order, but was written carefully so as not to scare the muggles. A few weeks later my mom called to tell me how lovely the ceremony was and how much they enjoyed it and weren't bothered at all. I hope it can be the beginnings of enlightenment.

|  
By the way, my grandmother's response was, "Ok. If it works for you." :)

|  
Luna

## RESPONSE #2

I have a similar situation. My family's not very accepting, and so I try not to bring it up. My mother is a very strict Catholic, so she's always trying to find ways for me to come back to her church. What makes it difficult is that my cousin married a Wiccan, and then went crazy and cut off contact with her family--which has nothing to do with his religion and probably everything to do with her mental illness, but my family doesn't entirely see it that way.

So I keep it quiet. I never really "came out"--my family, it turns out, found my livejournal and were all reading it for months without telling me.

And yet we still talk. Amazing. \*sigh\*

Mary

## RESPONSE #3

Yeah. It's made even harder when people blame things on the belief instead of on the person. No matter what the belief is, people make dumb choices.

|  
Luna

## RESPONSE #4

I never bothered "coming out" to anyone in my life. I simply discuss whatever it is I need to discuss as if they already knew. Most of the time, it's not even an issue. I'll be having a conversation with someone and I'll mention having cast a spell to get something done, and they'll say "Wait, what? You cast ... spells?" and I'll say "Well, yeah. I cast spells."

That's usually the end of it. I've found that if \*I\* don't make a big deal out of what I am, neither will they. And it's not really a big deal anyway. We all do what we do, and be what we be. There are good and bad witches for the same reason there are good and bad drivers, because there are good and bad people. Cars don't make people into killing machines - they just do what they're told because they're nothing more than technology. Just like magic - it does what it's told and any fault or blame for the results rests squarely on the person using the magic - not the magic itself.

-Wade

# Coming out of the Woods,

Telling your loved ones and enemies that you are a Druid.

By Mike the Fool, Mango Mission

Many of us are Druids and the people around us don't know. Come to think of it, do you really know the denomination of most of your co-workers and friends. Bob's Jewish, Sam's Christian, Alice is an anthiest, etc. is about all you know. We don't know much about our neighbors and relatives like we used to when they were vital to our survival in previous centuries, we're kind of anonymously floating about in our current society, changing location, affiliation, employment and such.

Why "come out"? Because in many cases, there may seem no other option. Just like a chick coming out of an egg, if it keeps growing, eventually the shell cannot contain it any longer.

No two "outing" stories will be the same. There are too many variables and possible outcomes. You'll have to think carefully about how it will unwind and whether you want to do it.

Druidism is simply not as popular as Wicca, there aren't dozens of Hollywood movies & TV characters (pro or anti) about it every year. Most modern Druids seems to come from well educated stock, it seems, not to get big-headed or anything. So most likely, the parents/family of the new Druid have probably heard of "Druids" either historical or those guys mucking about Stonehenge recently. More than likely we'd still get lumped together with the Wiccans during an explanatory phase.

This is natural, if I were in Japan and became Christian, most likely my parents would confuse Catholicism and Protestantism, since to an outsider, the differences seem small compared to the differences between Shinto/Buddhism and Christianity.

The stages, I suspect are:

1. Deciding who to tell. Probably a friend first, to test the waters.
2. When and where to tell. Perhaps on a hike or on a lazy sunset on a porch drinking mint-juleps, but not in the middle of a Thanksgiving dinner. Often, though, it just happens, when you're parents stumble across your altar or they see a book on your shelf, and a panicky "what's this?" moment occurs.
3. How to tell. Either pick a day on the calendar and screw one's courage to the sticking point or waiting for that conversational "sweet point". Or dropping hints in advance. Perhaps, when your mother is talking about putting some rocks in the garden, you could mention that it would be nice to align them, or leave an offering to little faeries to help the plants to grow.
4. Tell them.

## Telling them:

I think the big points I'd want to get out in advance are somewhat similar to coming out of the closet for homosexuality (except that is more genetically determined):

0. I'm not stupid or weak-willed enough to join a "cult", so don't worry about brain-washing. I can explain to you this difference between a small controlling strange religious movement and a small strange religious movement, i.e. the word "controlling" .
1. This is nobody's "fault" in raising me. You all did a fine job of educating me.
2. I'm still a kind and gentle person, and have no intention of hurting anybody, including you.
3. This is a permanent thing, probably.
4. It "fits" me, and I like it and it makes me a stronger, better person.
5. Yes, it is not a "popular", and so I'll face discrimination from bigots, so I'll need your support and love to carry through.
6. I have no intention of "converting" you or my relatives, we're not into proselytizing.
7. What I learned in my previous religious phase will continue to influence me and help me, but some aspects/tenets cannot be followed any more, so I am making an official break with, or "bending" them to remain in loose association. I don't "hate" that religion, more like a divorce for unreconcilable reasons, we can still be friends.
8. I'll eventually tell most folks, when I feel its right, probably gradually.
9. I love you, that's why I'm telling you about a new aspect of what defines me.
10. I'm no super-theological expert, but I can explain the basic tenets and structure of the group/beliefs to you when you're curious, but I don't expect you to believe all of them yourself.

## The aftermath

No telling where this may go. You may lose friends. One person may blather the story to all and sundry, against your wishes and desire for timing. You might be ganged up upon, or shunned. Who knows? I suppose everyone responds differently.

1. Supporting love and kisses and curiosity and well-wishing, well, that's the ideal.
2. Tears and wailing for a while, self-blaming for your "decision"
3. Indifference. "Whatever"
4. Anger and attempts to "fix you". Perhaps seeking professional help.
5. Something completely unexpected (positive or negative).
6. A combination of these, one after the other, not unlike the cycles of grief after a death (denial, anger, negotiation, sadness, adaptation, etc.)

#### **The questions:**

Hopefully they'll get around to asking some of the contents of your religion. Think carefully, when your friend told you they are now a born-again baptist, how much did you really want to know about being a Baptist?

0. Earth centered, affirming of life and celebration of changing seasons. No animal/human sacrifices. Yuck.
1. Modern interpretation of the ancient practices of Celtic/Indo- European people, adapted for modern times.
2. Not a very strict hierarchy, no one tells me what to do. I could change religions tomorrow and there would be no obstacle to that, but I think I'm here for awhile.
3. Lots of research and putting pieces to gether.
4. Lots of materials, some quite inspiring, some I don't agree with.
5. Not a lot of people in the group, but most are quite interesting, and the exchanges have helped me.
6. I can interact with any religion, borrow even, and not get "in trouble". So, I'll still be studying some aspects of Christianity that blend well.
7. Interpretation of the "gods" can be philosophical or religious.
8. Not buying a lot of stuff, just books at Amazon for research.
9. Meet each season, sometimes monthly, when I feel like it.
10. Not doing sex, drugs or crime. It's not dangerous.
11. Pretty folky-stuff mostly.
12. Spending a lot of time outside, thinking, asking questions.
13. This is something like what my ancient ancestors once did, and those millenia of beliefs and wisdom are important to me. I revere my recent Christian ones too.

When you have time, after each occurence, think about your "presentation" and how to "tune" it appropriately to the next likely person. Perhaps it might be a year or two until the stars align, or it might be the next day.

There will be certain relatives "Fundy uncle John" that you'll never directly address, or perhaps your boss. But one by one, everyone will know that you've got some unusual ideas, but most will probably know that you've always been unusual and add this to the list. The ones who know you're a good person, should continue to beleive so, since your actions and words will reflect this.

What is most amazing is that, it feels good to be honest about who you are, the double-act is gone, the pretense and shame of not telling those who should know is gone. It won't be easy, it won't be painless, but down the road, it will be right.

What do you think? Miss something?

Sincerely,  
Michael the FoOI

#### **RESPONSE #5**

I think it's a wonderful prep for people considering "coming out." I wish I had something like that when I was younger to help me find the right words to tell some of my relatives.

[  
]

Luna

## RESPONSE #6

I think, "Just keep loving me, like before, regardless of my affiliation." sums it all up. I might have lost some beliefs, but I don't want to lose you.

-Mike

## RESPONSE #7

Golly Mike,

The idea of one's family not accepting one's Druidism never crossed my mind! I guess it's because my own family was the generation discarding religiosity for tolerant agnosticism. I got baptized because that what you did with babies, and sent to Sunday school so my folks could be alone in the house, mwuahaha. They most certainly did not attend church themselves! And if I cut up too much at the Lutherans, they were glad to send me to the Methodists or the Baptists.

It was me who needed to make sense of my spirituality as it presented itself to me in the natural world, aware from all this at an early age that organized religious beurocracies hadn't got a clue. Druidism's great appeal is its lack of imposed dogma and structure. My gods choose me, much as in Santeria or some of this new agey mix-n-match shamanism.

My ex husband came from a much more religious background than I did, but it was Native American Church, which barred me from membership even as it accepted my offspring willingly. Now wasn't that a kick in the self-importance, even as I saw them touching truth with their practices and letting me sit in as a fellow human being! Nope, If I wanted any official membership in anything, Druid was going to have to be it. As for sharing with the inlaws, I had two strikes against me for being blond so anything I might say about religion was likely to be nonsense, even if I was agreeing with them. Catholic or Shinto to them would have been equally foreign and screwy.

Even the Wiccans I have fraternized with have a lot of trouble 'seeing' me as anything other than a fellow pagan. I ain't a Pagan either, compadres! I'm a Hindu and a Buddhist and a Sufi and a Christian as much as I am a Wiccan! The trees I hug don't check my credentials. No, I'm pretty used to being a Druid in plain sight and still misperceived.

helgaleena healingline, DAL since '78

## Druid Media



### Finding Nemo & Male Bonding Rites

By Mike the Fool

Oh my god, why is Mike writing about Finding Nemo?

Because it's all about initiation and male bonding, which I think is kind of interesting to Reformed Druids. And my son and I watched it together (French, English and Japanese versions) about 85 times in 2 months, so I've been chewing on some ideas for a while.

Some of you don't like cartoons. Okay. Please watch this one, anyway. If you don't like it, I'll sit and watch something you like in exchange for the lost two hours of your life that you'll never get back.

I love this movie, it comes closer than anything I've seen to a "Really Well Done Movie" that a child will ever watch with you, without one of you falling asleep.

### SPOILER ALERT

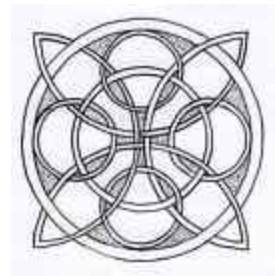
Basic story, little clownfish is kidnapped. Father goes and look for him. Both have adventures.

Nemo is slightly handicapped both in body and soul, like the Fisher King in British folklore. The father is deeply psychically scarred too. The father is protective of Nemo, too much so. Nemo tests that authority and gets kidnapped by a Dentist. The other fish in the fish-tank take Nemo under their fin and introduce him to The Order of Tankhood, which is most obviously a light-hearted spoof of Masonry. Their goal is to free Nemo by various means, during which the wise Gill, scarred from battles.

Marlin, Nemo's father runs into Dory while looking for Nemo. Dory has an amazing short term memory (see "Momento" and "50 First Dates" for other good movies about memory loss). They run into a group of sharks who don't eat fish, modeled on Alcoholics Anonymous. They also visit the oh-so-cool brotherhood of turtles, the idiotic brainless seagulls, the apathetic pelicans, the charades playing fish, and the fish-net fish who fight together to survive. It is a microcosm of various types of social groups.

Go and see it, with your son or daughter.

## Book Review



### 24 Pages of Really Old Celtic Book Reviews, Part One.

By Daniel Hansen of Washington State

#### ANCIENT CELTIC BOOKS

More than 2,000 years ago the Celts inhabited much of northern Europe. A succession of invasions, first by the Romans and later by the Germanic tribes, had pushed the Celts to remotest reaches of western Europe by the Middle Ages. Notwithstanding their hardships, the Celtic peoples managed to retain their language and develop a literary and oral tradition that flourished for several centuries.

Because of the scarcity of surviving materials bearing written Gaulish, it is surmised that the Pagan Celts were not widely literate – although a written form of Gaulish using the Greek alphabet was used (as evidenced by votive items bearing inscriptions in Gaulish and the Calendar of Coligny). Furthermore, Caesar attests to the literacy of the Gauls, but also wrote that their priests, the Druids, forbade using writing to record anything of religious significance.

Early Celtic societies entered the literate world with the coming of Christianity during the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. Nevertheless, the majority of the population were non-literate, to include the aristocracy, resulting in a distinctive blending of literacy with a vibrant oral culture. This took two forms. Written texts, such as sermons and the lives of saints could be read aloud to a non-literate audience; and professional performers entertained social gatherings with recitations, music, and gestures. The most

prominent of these professionals were the Filidh or poets. Often literate, they bridged the gap between literacy and orality. They underwent an intensive course of study, after which they were expected to compose independently as well as know the contents of sagas. The filidh had an important social function, particularly during the storytelling season, which was bracketed by Samhain (November 1<sup>st</sup>) and Beltane (May 1<sup>st</sup>). They performed in the aristocratic hall, where the chief was surrounded by his fellows, and were rewarded by their patrons; indeed they used the threat of satire to enforce generous payments. Performers of lower status catered for the needs of ordinary people. Unfortunately very little is known of them, and their traditions are mediated to us through the eyes of a literate elite.

Rome introduced more widespread literacy and broke the power of the Druids in the areas it conquered; in fact, most inscriptions to deities discovered in Gaul (modern France), Britannia, and other formerly (or presently) Celtic speaking areas post-date the Roman conquest. Although early Gaels in Ireland and parts of Wales used limited Ogham script to record short inscriptions (largely personal names), more sophisticated literacy was not introduced to Celtic areas not conquered by Rome until the advent of Christianity; indeed, many Gaelic myths were first recorded by Christian monks, albeit without most of their original religious meaning.

The language of the Celts can be divided into two broad groups: the Brythonic (which includes Welsh, Cornish, and Breton) and the Goidelic or Gaelic (which includes Manx, Irish, and Scottish Gaelic). Brythonic and Goidelic are known as P-Celtic and Q-Celtic, respectively, because of a curious trait. Words derived from other languages would be spelled with a “p” in Brythonic and a “q” in Goidelic. The Indo-European word for horse, *epvos*, becomes *epos* in Brythonic, while to the Goidelic Celts the word was *eqous* (closer to the Latin *equus*).

Many Celts adopted Latin as a second language after the Roman invasions and especially after adopting Christianity as their religion. Even after the Germanic tribes crossed the North Sea in the 5<sup>th</sup> century and pushed the British Celts to Ireland, Scotland and Wales, many refused to abandon their native tongue. To this day, many people, particularly in Wales, are bilingual; speakers of Welsh can converse comfortably with speakers of Breton in the French region of Brittany.

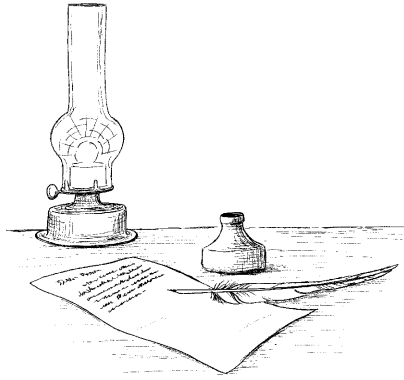
Both Brythonic and Goidelic literature exists from the Middle Ages, most of it from the latter part of the period. This is not because the Celts lacked a literary tradition. Rather, it is because of their strong oral tradition of storytelling – particularly as practiced by the poets known as Bards – that little appears to have been written down before the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The bards were much more than mere wandering poets. They were specially trained in schools where they learned hundreds of poems and many styles of verse. In the Welsh bardic tradition their bards trained for seven years. In the Irish bardic schools they were trained for up to twelve years. They would sing the poems they had learned, composing their own songs and verses to celebrate important events or to pay tribute to fallen leaders. Scholars believe that it is thanks to the bards of Wales and Brittany that the legendary stories of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table survived into the Middle Ages.

The earliest written works in both Brythonic and Goidelic are Celtic names that appear in Latin inscriptions from the very early Middle Ages. Early Brythonic works from Wales date to the 6<sup>th</sup> century; the Welsh wrote in praise of their leader’s bravery in the face of the Anglo-Saxon invasions. One of the best known of these books is the Book of Aneirin by the poet of the same name.

By the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Welsh had formed an independent nation, providing their bards with material and prestige. An outpouring of literature from this period includes the Mabinogion, a prose work that contains some material about King Arthur. The literary golden age ended when Wales became part of England in 1282. Meanwhile, Brythonic survived in France (where it became Breton) and in England (where it became Cornish). Brittany’s oral tradition helped spread the stories of King Arthur around Europe.

In Ireland, Goidelic tales were spread by oral tradition, though Irish monks maintained the practice of committing religious and secular tales and traditions to writing through the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Goidelic also flourished in Scotland where bards became hereditary poets for noble families, while others became historians and chroniclers. Toward the end of the Middle Ages, many of their poems were put to music.



## Handwriting, Calligraphy, and Writing Tools

During the Middle Ages, any written work, from the simplest letter to most lavishly decorated Bible, was done by hand. The art of decorative handwriting, or calligraphy, flourished, and everyday script underwent many changes as more people became literate.

Most writing in the early Middle Ages was done by scholars (usually clergy). Writing materials were generally in short supply and paper made from the papyrus plant, became less readily available as Islamic conquests affected Mediterranean trade. Parchment, made from animal skins, became the most common writing surface in Europe, but it is not easy to find. Often scholars would erase these pages of entire books to retrieve the parchment for new writing. Faint remnants of the erased writings, known as palimpsest, have become important historical sources. Partly to save parchment, European handwriting underwent a major change with the development of lower-case letters, or miniscules. (Upper-case letters were known as majuscules.) Smaller letters meant that more words could fit on a page. Use of majuscules was reserved for ceremonial books.

Scribes practiced intricate handwriting for works requiring special decorations. Calligraphy was particularly important to Muslims, because Islam forbade the depictions of humans or animal forms in religious works.

The increasing availability of paper made an enormous difference in the development of writing. The Chinese had long known how to make paper, and the skill was introduced into the Islamic world in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Bagdad and Damascus became major manufacturing centers; later, Egypt and Spain produced paper. Europeans relied less on parchment and more on paper, imported from the Arab world. Later, Europeans began to make their own paper.

As vernacular tongues replaced Latin in Europe, and as paper became readily available, more people began to write in everyday cursive rather than careful script. These early attempts at cursive writing planted the early seeds of modern handwriting.

Writing implements were made from quills or reeds, and ink was made from Lampblack, soot, tannin, and other naturally available materials. Lead was also used (much as is used today in pencils). Calligraphers' pens were themselves works of art, valued and cherished by their owners.

When the printing press was invented in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, typefaces were designed on decorated handwriting styles. In time, the styles once painstakingly crafted by calligraphers became standard typefaces, making them more readily available, but also spelling the end of calligraphy as a major art form.

## Illuminated Manuscripts

Books, it could be argued, attained their supreme beauty and physical works of art during the Middle Ages. Books were made entirely by hand – every binding stitch, every drawing, indeed every letter. The craft of bookmaking required great skill and painstaking accuracy. Books were valued as much for their appearance as for their content. The illuminated manuscripts were handwritten on vellum and produced during the Middle Ages. Insular manuscripts (those made in Ireland and Britannia before the 9<sup>th</sup> century) combine Celtic, Germanic, Pictish, and late Antique elements.

**Origins.** The first bound books were produced in Rome. By the early Middle Ages all books were bound except for ceremonial manuscripts (such as sacred scrolls). Books had to be produced one at a time, and the process for doing so was a long one, requiring the work of several different craftsmen.

Early monasteries maintained active book production in rooms known as the scriptorium, in which monks would spend part of each day copying pages.

**The Process.** First, the pages needed to be measured and cut. Most books were made of parchment (paper, a Chinese invention, was not widely used in the West until the 13<sup>th</sup> century). Pieces of parchment were stretched, smoothed, and then cut into sheets. The sheets would then be folded; each of which was called a *bifolium* to signify two leaves, or four pages. The word folio is now used in book publishing to signify page numbering. Each one would be numbered, and each page would be marked with ruled lines, which were used to guide the scribes doing the actual lettering. Sometimes teams of scribes would work on one book. They would do the lettering in dark ink, and the finished pages would be proofread. Then decorative opening letters would be added, or perhaps illustrations. Usually specially trained artists would do these embellishments.

For special illustrations known as illuminations, a special artist would be called in. The artist would hand paint each page and sketch the design. Then the sketch would be filled in with different colored paints, and possibly gold leaf. Illumination was a particularly exacting process; for a large work, the process of illuminating a number of pages could take several years.

These decorated manuscripts constituted one of the most important branches of the visual arts in Ireland in the Middle Ages. As many more manuscripts have been lost than survive, the development of decoration can be traced only sketchily. The earliest Irish manuscripts introduce simple Mediterranean motifs of a fish and cross. In the late 6<sup>th</sup> century Gospel book 'Usserianus Primus' (Codex Usserianus), decoration is confined to a framed chi-rho monogram the first two letters of the Greek Khristos = Christ, are chi 'x' and rho 'p' – and surrounded by red dots. The 'Cathach' Psalter, traditionally attributed to Colum Cille (d. 59), but probably written earlier in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, employs spiral and trumpet devices, fish and cross symbols, as well as the calligraphic technique of 'diminuendo' (diminishing letter size). In the Book of Durrow, usually dated to the 7<sup>th</sup> century, and later in the Book of Kells, presents decorative Gospel front pieces that in different variants appear in later insular books. Such devices are integrated with motifs borrowed from metalwork, and with animal and figure drawings derived from Mediterranean prototypes. Fine decoration was practiced at other centers, notably Armagh, where the earliest extant New Testament copied in Ireland, along with a dossier of texts relating to St. Patrick (the Book of Armagh) was produced around 807 CE by Ferdornach and other talented artist-scribes. The late 8<sup>th</sup> century Book of Mullins from St. Mullins, County Carlow, contains striking portraits of the evangelists. The contemporary Book of Dimma from Roscrea, County Tipperary, contains less naturalistic images. The early 9<sup>th</sup> century MacBegel Gospels from Birr, County Offaly, employs strong coloristic effects. Manuscripts brought from Ireland to centers such as Bobbio and St. Gallen reflect the impact of the Irish missionary settlement, while Irish styles exerted enormous influence on Northumbria. Insular styles persisted into the later medieval period, executed with considerable skill in volumes such as the 11<sup>th</sup> century Liber Hymnorum and the late 12<sup>th</sup> century Cormac Psalter. Styles from England imported following the Anglo-Norman invasion, are reflected in the Christ Church, Dublin, psalter of 1397 and an illustrated early 15<sup>th</sup> century missal, both probably originating in England. In the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, the charter roll of the city of Waterford was decorated in a lively manner perhaps locally, while in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century a decorated copy of Ranulf Higden's chronicles was probably made in Dublin. From the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the book of the mayo de Burgo family contains portraits and illustrations drawn with remarkable vigor.

Illumination is the art of ornamenting a book's page with pictures and designs. Books from the Middle Ages are more correctly called manuscripts (from the Latin for "writing by hand") because, until the invention of the printing press in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, all books were created entirely by hand. Each book was a work of art and each person involved in the process of creating a book had to possess not only skill, but also enormous patience.

**Illumination process.** Basic design elements, such as providing different colored inks for different letters, were handled by scribes. More elaborate details and illustrations require the service of a professional illuminator.

Although the illustrations would vary depending on the subject matter and the illuminator's skill, the mechanics of the process were straightforward. The illuminator would first apply a coat of paint to



the area that was to be illustrated. The next step was to sketch in the outlines for illustrations; the outlines for other decorations and embellishments on the page would be sketched in as well. For the actual painting, the colors were added layer by layer until the desired effect had been obtained. White paint or gold leaf might be added to give the picture special highlights. Depending on the detail of the illustration, it could take months or even years to complete an illumination.

**Christian Illuminations.** The earliest illuminated manuscripts date from the early Christian and Byzantine periods (4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> centuries) and include Homer's Iliad, works by Virgil and Terence, and scientific texts. These texts were decorated with miniatures including a number of human and animal figures. Both the illustrations and the writing were carefully executed, but these early manuscripts were somewhat less sophisticated in style than later examples.

By the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the art of illumination began to come into its own. Byzantine manuscripts focus primarily on religious themes (although during the iconoclastic Controversy in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, no illuminated Byzantine books were believed to have been produced, and many were destroyed). Hundreds of motifs or artistic formulations in Byzantine manuscripts before 1100 were adopted into Latin (western European) illuminated manuscripts well into the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In the British Isles, and in particular Ireland, monks were turning out magnificently designed and illustrated copies of the Gospels. These books, of which the most famous is the Book of Kells from the 8<sup>th</sup> century, had paintings of religious figures and also a fair number of abstract human and animal forms. The intricacy of the decorative work and the remarkable geometric patterns created by the monks (especially on the 'carpet' pages, so called because they bear a close resemblance to the patterns found in oriental rugs) are especially impressive.

By the 8<sup>th</sup> century, French and German books were being illuminated in the style known as the Carolingian for the royal French family who were patrons of artists), which drew on earlier styles, but also produced art that in some cases looked more like 19<sup>th</sup> century impressionism than conventional medieval paintings. The Ottonian style of illumination, popular in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, elaborated on Carolingian artistry and was known for its lavish use of gold leaf in illuminations.

The Romanesque style, which flourished in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, again focused on religious works, although by now the scope of those works was expanding. More people were able to read, and popular books included lives of the saints, missals, and psalters. Illumination of Romanesque books is characterized by two interesting embellishments. Grotesques – fanciful creatures such as dragons, half-human half-animal figures, dwarfs, and giants – were represented in illuminations. Opening initials of a chapter, some of which extended the entire length of the page adorned by portraits and other figures, were subject to particular elaborate treatment.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the gothic style became prominent. Religious texts were still popular, but more secular works were being produced and illuminated. Depictions of the human face and figure became more naturalistic. Illuminations showing the lives of nobility also became popular; private prayer books, known as Books of hours, often featured portraits of the patron and his family.

**Decline of Illumination.** By the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, the printing press was making it possible to mass-produce books for the first time. Handwritten and hand illustrated books had always been a luxury, but now books could be acquired by almost anyone.

However, the printing press did not immediately sound the death knell for illuminated manuscripts, though it significantly cut back the number produced. Because the printing press could not print in color, wealthy bibliophiles still sought hand painted books well into the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Medieval illuminated manuscripts are now regarded among the greatest works of world art and fetch enormous prices on the art market. The majority are not in private hands but are in museums, particularly the British Library in London, the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, the Morgan Library of Art in New York, and the Getty Museum in Los Angeles. Possibly the majority of Celtic illuminated manuscripts that can be found are the Royal Irish Academy and Trinity College in Dublin.

## **Bookbinding**

The craft and art of bookbinding dates from ancient times, when it became necessary to protect manuscripts with covers. Though none of the original bindings of early Irish manuscripts have survived, they must have been provided with covers to match the beauty of the manuscripts. While there are some examples of the 17<sup>th</sup> century gold-tooled presentation bindings from Dublin (now in the Gilbert Library, Dublin, the British Library, London, and the Pierpoint Morgan Library, New York).

Though these bindings are excellent, however, it is not until the 18<sup>th</sup> century that the greatest period of Irish bookbinding arrived, with the splendid series of 149 volumes of the journals of both houses of the Irish parliament, 1613-1899. Magnificently bound in full crimson leather and lavishly tooled in gold, these volumes were destroyed in the fire of the Public Record Office, Dublin 1922.

With the exception of the work of a few individuals, little fine binding is carried on in Ireland today. The demand for fine bindings requires patronage, and few book collectors are prepared to commission special bindings for their books. Hand binding also takes time, and the fine leathers and gold required for special bindings have to be imported and are expensive. There is the additional problem of training bookbinders. Today there is so little demand for this type of work that no firm or individuals can exist on this very specialized work alone.

A feature of the bookbinder's craft that has been important for libraries with collections of rare books and manuscripts is the specialized work of the book conservator, a craft for which a high understanding of ancient methods of bookbinding and a knowledge of the chemistry of leather, vellum, and paper. This work is carried out in the Conservation Laboratory of Trinity College library, Dublin, and the Delmas Conservation Bindery in Marshal Library.

## **Book Shrine**

[Cumhdach]

Book shrines were box-like containers made to protect important manuscripts. They are to be distinguished from book covers. A book shrine, typically takes the form of a rectangular box composed of metal sheets, often (but not always) fastened to a wooden core, its dimensions dictated by the manuscript it was designed to carry. It is not clear whether such book shrines are uniquely Irish, or whether book covers were known in the early Irish church. The later 7<sup>th</sup> century *Ordo Romanus Primus* notes that in Rome, Gospel books were carried in a capsula (case). The Irish term *cumhdach* is often translated as 'book shrine', though it carries more general meaning of cover or shrine; it is not certain, therefore, whether the cumhdach of the Book of Kells recorded stolen in 1007 CE was an ornate book cover or a book shrine. Adomnan, writing at the close of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, was familiar with the concept of book shrines or cases, referring to the miraculous preservation of books recovered from water as being kept *in scinio* or *in scriniolo* (in a case of cover). This suggests that the primary function of book shrines was to protect the contents.

The earliest surviving example, found in Lough Kinale, County Longford, dates from the 8<sup>th</sup> century. This is also the largest known. It bears on its front face an elaborate cross with raised cast-metal bosses and is fitted with straps at each end to enable it to be carried about – features that are found on most of the surviving examples. Book shrines continued to be made until at least the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, though many were repaired and re-decorated well into the later medieval period. Inscriptions and historical association show that the book shrines were commissioned by the most important lay and ecclesiastical patrons of their day. The lost cover of the book of Durrow recorded that it was ordered by Flann Sinna, King of Ireland (879-916), while his son Donnchad was responsible for enshrining the Book of Armagh in 937. In the later Middle Ages, book shrines were redecorated by the most powerful chieftains including Philip O'Kennedy, King of Ormond, 1366-77, Tadhg O'Carroll, King of Eile, 1377-1407, and Art MacMurrough Kavanagh, King of Leinster (in 1403). Many of these manuscripts were believed to have been written by the saints of the early Irish church. Four are associated with the cult of Colum Cille (the Cathach of the Misach, and the lost cover of the Book of Kells and Durrow). Of the nine surviving book shrines, four were certainly made for Gospel books; the presence of a cross on most surviving book shrines shows that gospel books were most commonly enshrined.

A surviving example of a book shrine is the Cathach, “The Battler”, so called because the book it contained was carried into battle by the O’Donnells to bring victory. It enclosed a copy of the Latin Psalter long believed to have been written by Colum Cille, founder of the monastery of Iona, who was remembered as a famous scribe and who was said to have been transcribing the Psalter on the day of his death in 597 CE. Generally accepted as the oldest surviving example of the newly invented insular majuscule script, the Psalter was written rapidly, suggesting an easy familiarity with the already established style. Each psalm opens with elaborate pen-work initial in revolutionary new designs. Certain elements of the decoration, such as the dolphin and the little cross on a stand, may indicate recent continental contacts. The Emperor Tiberius II (578-82) used this type of cross (☩) on his coins. The 11<sup>th</sup> century shrine was repaired and added to in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **“Book of...”**

“Book of...” refers to the pre-Gutenberg sources of much of Celtic tradition are found in great collections of manuscripts compiled in monasteries and castles between 800 and 1500 CE. Each collection or codex bore a title in Latin or one of the Celtic vernaculars. Most learned commentators today refer to these collections by an English title, often employing the place-name where it was either compiled or found; an exception is the Book of the Dun Cow, which is often referred to by the Irish title *Lebor na hUidre*. The following is a list of Books is limited to sources of mythology, legend, and lore; many more texts exist, often detailing with genealogy, laws, and ecclesiastical matter.

The following are a brief description of several of the Celtic Illuminated manuscripts that have survived the ravages of time.

**ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLES.** The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles is the name given to the collection of seven interrelated surviving English manuscripts, created and copied by Anglo-Saxon monks. It is the first great work of English prose in Old English and the most important source of English history from about 800 to 1066. It is a history of England from the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE down to 1154 CE, the first prose work. No other European land has a history in its own language as old as the Chronicle. The Chronicle originated as part of a cultural renewal following the destructive raids by Danish invaders in the late 800s from the compilation of annals and tables of England to the year 892 CE was collected from different sources by order of King Alfred the Great (849-99), who himself may have dictated the parts relating to his own time. It was he who made the decision to keep a continuous record to be updated on an annual basis.

The first part of the Chronicle deals with some epitome of universal history of events up to 891 CE and was adapted from earlier historical sources, now lost to us. After 892 CE, a number of writers contributed to the Chronicle in copies circulated among several English monasteries. The work was continued under Edward; and there is a full account of the Danish wars up to 924 CE. The Chronicle consists of short yearly descriptions of major events, especially warfare, and the activities of kings and bishops. The fullness and quality of these entries vary at different periods. The Chronicle is a rather barren document for the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century and for the reign of Canute or Cnut (c. 994-1035 CE), for example, but it is an excellent authority for the reign of Ethelred the Unready (c. 966-1016 CE) and from the reign of Edward the Confessor (c. 1005-66) until the version that was kept the longest. Many of the entries consist of only one line. The longest runs over 100 lines and deals with William the Conqueror’s death in 1087. Many years have no entries. The earliest important entry refers to events in 449 CE. The sections dealing with the years 925-75 contains the famous lay on such as the Battle of Brunanburh and several other poems, but the main narrative consists of simple prose narrative are also included. The final entry was made in 1154 CE. Unraveling the relationship of the separate texts is a complex scholarly operation.

This great literary work was thought to have been commissioned by King Alfred the Great, however there is no evidence that he was directly involved, but only encouraged its creation. After the original compilation of the chronicle, which begins with the start of the Christian era, monks in various

monasteries added, subtracted, and continued to document, keeping it up to date. Much of the early material comes from Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, genealogies, regal and Episcopal lists, a few northern annals, and probably some sets of earlier Saxon annals. The compilers had access to Frankish annals as late as the 9<sup>th</sup> century. From the wars between the Danes and the Saxons onward, most of the material is original and our sole sources of information about the events described. The information it supplies is uneven in quality. It is, for example, particularly expansive on the triumphs of Alfred the Great's reign and on the disasters of Ethelred the Unready's.

Soon after the year 890 several manuscripts were being circulated; one was available to the Welsh monk Asser (c. ? – 909) in 893 CE who wrote the *Life of Alfred*, another, which appears to have gone no further than that year to the 10<sup>th</sup> century chronicler Aethelweard (c. ? – 902), while one version, which eventually reached the north and which is best represented in the surviving E version, stopped in 893 CE. Some of the manuscripts circulated at this time were continued in various religious houses, sometimes with annals that occur in more than one manuscript, sometimes with local material, confined to one version. The chronicle, which was kept up to date at the monastery of Peterborough until 1154, provides important information about the Norman Conquest and its effect on Anglo-Saxon England. The chronicle's vivid account of the troubled reign of king Stephen is written in language that is clearly in the process of making the transition from Anglo-Saxon (Old English) to Middle English.

The original manuscript and copies of it are lost. Altered versions survive to the modern period in seven manuscripts that were continued in chronicle form and amplified from other sources for as long as 250 years after the date of the original. The surviving manuscripts are generally designated with letters of the alphabet. The oldest and best manuscript, A, is at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. It was written by one hand, possibly at Winchester, up to 891, and was later taken to Canterbury, where little was added to this manuscript after 975 CE until it was altered with various interpolations in the 11<sup>th</sup> century by some of the scribes of the F version. This manuscript continued in various hands that were approximately contemporary with the entries. It was at Winchester in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century and may have been written there. It is the only source for the account of the later campaigns of King Edward the Elder (c. 870-924). A copy of it was transcribed before the alterations were made and it survived until 1731, when it was totally destroyed by fire. A 16<sup>th</sup> century copy of it still survives.

Two Anglo-Saxon manuscripts based on a lost archetype copy kept at Abingdon are preserved in the B and C versions. B was continued up to the late 10<sup>th</sup> century (977 CE) at Abingdon and then sent to Canterbury. C was transcribed about 1050 and sent to Canterbury, where it was continued until 1066 when the end was mutilated. The lost original material that was incorporated into the text is in a block after annal 915 CE has become part of a set of annals (902-924) known as the *Mercia Register*. Both copies of the Chronicles are now in the British Museum.

A northern copy, now lost, was made in Ripon or possibly York. It was expanded with local materials from the *Mercian Register*, Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, and the *Northumbrian Gesta*. The D manuscript, at the British Museum, is a copy of this made about 1050 and continued until 1079. D has dovetailed into its text the Mercian Register and contains a fair amount of northern material found in no other version. It is quite detailed in the English descent of Queen Margaret of Scotland. D, which was kept up until 1079 probably, remained in the north. Another lost copy, less full than the one the D is based on, was sent to Canterbury.

The extent version E version, now kept at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, was copied from the lost northern copy about 1122 in the north and continued at Peterborough until 1154. It was written in one stretch until 1121, and kept up there until the early part of 1155. It shared many features, including the interpolation of much of the material of northern interest taken from Bede and from the annals also used by Simon of Durham; hence it is known as the "northern recension". It is the version that continued the longest, and it includes a famous account of the anarchy of Stephen's reign (c. 1096-1154). It was taken south and continued at St. Augustine's in Canterbury, and was used by Scribes of manuscript F.

The F is an abridgement, in both English and Latin Summary made in Canterbury in the late 11<sup>th</sup> or early 12<sup>th</sup> century, based on the archetype E but with some entries from A. It extends to the year 1058. It is now housed at the British Museum.

The manuscript G, formerly known as Cotton Otho B xi (from the fact that it forms part of the Cotton collection at the British Museum) was almost completely destroyed by fire in 1731, contained an 11<sup>th</sup> century copy of A, before this was tampered with at Canterbury. Its text is known from a 16<sup>th</sup> century transcript by L Nowell and from Abraham Wheloc's edition (1644).

Finally, the fragment of version H deals with 1113-14 and is independent of version E, the only other version to continue so late.

To Be Continued

## NEWS



# Large Oak Trees Play a Crucial Role in the Willamette Valley Ecosystem

By Joe Rojas-Burke, *The Oregonian*  
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**Recommend to the Druid Inquirer by Ellen Hopman, Druid Extraordinaire.**

In a landscape dominated by grass-seed fields and pastures, an aged oak tree's spreading dome of gnarled branches commands attention.

Generations of farmers have plowed carefully around the really big ones. Some have stood for more than 300 years, a time when native white oak trees and grasses covered half a million acres across the Willamette Valley.

Less than 2 percent of that oak savanna remains. But research by Oregon State University scientists suggests the scattered giants standing alone in farm fields continue to play a pivotal role in the Willamette Valley ecosystem.

Although the old oaks cover only a tiny fraction of the landscape, they may be changing how the whole ecosystem functions, to the benefit of many other species, including people.

Large, old trees improve nutrients and water retention in soils. They provide places for livestock to seek shade, for wild animals to nest and feed, and for native plants to grow. They become islands of refuge that allow animals to move around a landscape.

"Their influence on wildlife may be disproportionately large, relative to their actual physical footprint," said researcher Craig DeMars.

Last spring, DeMars began tracking the variety and number of bird species foraging, nesting or singing in 35 large oak trees at various sites across the valley. DeMars compared trees growing in crop fields and pastures with similar-size trees growing in oak savanna preserves at the Finley National Wildlife Refuge and the Mount Pisgah Arboretum.

White-breasted nuthatches, chipping sparrows, lazuli buntings, Bullock's orioles, and dozens more were attracted to the oaks. And as DeMars expected, bigger trees proved more attractive to birds.

But the isolated farm trees also drew more birds and a larger variety of species than their counterparts in reserves.

DeMars and his adviser Dan Rosenberg, an associate professor of wildlife biology at Oregon State University, say the explanation is that the more isolated a tree, the more important a habitat feature it becomes.

"A single isolated tree is a habitat magnet," DeMars said. "It allows birds to persist in that field that otherwise wouldn't be able to." In the reserves with more oaks growing in close proximity, he said, "no single tree becomes an absolute focal point."

The findings fit with an emerging body of evidence on the far-reaching effects of old trees in farmlands, said Adrian Manning, a scientist at the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies at Australian National University in Canberra.

"Even a few big, old, remnant trees can have huge value for biodiversity, and they can allow some species to actually live out there in the wider landscape," Manning said.

In natural savanna ecosystems, ecologists have long understood that scattered trees act as keystone structures. But they have only recently begun to appreciate how big, old native trees in human-disturbed landscapes can serve the same role, Manning said. With the onset of climate change, he said, these legacy trees may be important for helping some animals migrate to new, more suitable, places to live.

"Unfortunately, scattered trees are declining in many places and it takes a long time to replace those grand old granny trees," Manning said. "So it is important that we urgently find ways to protect the scattered trees that we have, and at the same time ensure that we replant or regenerate new trees to replace them."

In the 40 years that Bob Henderson has worked his farmlands south of Philomath, he's seen many of the legacy oaks succumb to old age, disease and windstorms.

"I can remember a lot more big old oaks when I was growing up," Henderson said. The largest of the 25 remaining oaks on his land spreads its branches in a dome more than 100 feet in diameter. Henderson said it was a giant when his family began farming the land 150 years ago. He said he plants hay in the fields with standing oaks, rather than growing grass seed.

"That way I don't have to plow around them, because it is a nuisance to plow around them each year," he said. "I'm not going to go out of my way to take them down."

Although he's not especially sentimental about the trees, Henderson said, they have provided places to relax in the shade, to hang swings, and to watch birds.

"I enjoy them for what they are -- part of the landscape. You don't just take them down to be getting rid of them," he said. "And they are not the easiest things to get rid of if you're going to."

Preserving Oregon's savanna oaks will depend largely on private landowners such as Henderson, said Jonathan Soll, Willamette Basin conservation director for the Nature Conservancy. "Only about 5 percent of the land is in public ownership," Soll said. "Private landowners hold 95 percent of the landscape. The choices they make are going to be important."

Farms, urban development and spreading conifer forests have pushed aside the oak savannas that used to cover the valley. In pre-settlement times, wildfires and fires intentionally set by Native American tribes kept the Douglas fir forests at bay, allowing native grasses and oak seedlings to grow.

Ecologists don't yet know the optimum number of oak trees per acre to provide something close to the role of the historic oak savanna. Soll said the findings by DeMars and Rosenberg highlight the ability for small actions to make a difference.

"We don't all have to turn our property into a nature preserve to contribute," he said. "A small thing you do can contribute in a meaningful way."

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