



# Spring Equinox Issue Y.R. XLVIII

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#### **Editor's Introduction:**

I hope it was a satisfying spring equinox to you, may you be balanced in all ways, I certainly haven't but more on that in Beltane issue. I am not including any articles on the holiday itself, so if you'd like a little background, please see <http://orgs.carleton.edu/Druids/ARDA2/doc/2part6-7.doc>

By this point in the winter (in the north perhaps), you probably have cabin fever, and can't wait for spring to arrive so that you can travel about outdoors again more comfortably. The theme for this issue is pilgrimage, the practice of going somewhere with the intention of a spiritual experience or to gain strength or pay off a debt or promise to the gods. I hope it might re-orient your view of the secular tourism model.

The submissions deadline for the Beltane Issue is April 20. Believe me, I know you are busy on the internet too and see all kinds of strange stories and essays, so share them with me, maybe you could expand something a bit from a Druid perspective? [mikerdna@hotmail.com](mailto:mikerdna@hotmail.com)

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## Sacred Groves

# News of the Groves

A full listing of Grove can be found at [www.rdna.info/wheregroves.html](http://www.rdna.info/wheregroves.html)

I've recently updated the list of groves. As usual, many e-mails contact addresses have gone dead, so I assume that that person has lost interest and that the grove is closed, perhaps only temporarily.

### Habitat Grove: News from Quebec

Habitat Grove is closing on April 20<sup>th</sup>, and moving to Washington DC again, and get this, I might be living in "Oakton". Looking forward to a more permanent location and new work there. Did you notice that Prince William and Kate Middleton are having a royal wedding on April 29, right before Beltane?

### Blackthorn Grove: News from Kentucky

I'm writing to update a change in Blackthorn Grove Protogrove. We have moved! Our new location is now Louisville, Kentucky. No other changes have occurred other than our residence. When you are able, please update our listing on your website.

Hope everything is going well for you.

Yours in the Mother,

Christopher

## Clan of the Triple Horses: News from Oregon

Clan of the Triple Horses, Medford Oregon, invites the community to our outdoor **Ostara** Rite at 4 p.m. Sunday, March 21 at TouVelle State Recreation Site. This is a beautiful day-use park located on the bank of the Rogue River and at the foot of the geologically prominent Table Rocks. Here is a link to information about the site:

[http://www.oregonstateparks.org/park\\_106.php](http://www.oregonstateparks.org/park_106.php)

We will provide and bbq, both beef and veggie burgers as well as provide buns and the usual toppings.

We ask others to bring a side or a dessert.

Blessings!

## **News of the Groves**

### **Missionary Order of the Celtic Cross (MOCC)**

#### **Our Lady of the Oaks, Tulsa Grove**

There has been a lot in process with the MOCC, and with the Tulsa Grove in particular. The three members of the Archdruidic Office are Violet, our Archdruid; April, our Reeve, and Jaci our Archivist. Overall, due to scheduling, there hasn't been a lot of activity ritual-wise for the last couple of years, even though we have been doing fairly well at networking and building community. It is perhaps indicative of the times, but just as the world is busy, busy, busy, so are the lives of those who have been involved in the Tulsa Grove.

The Tulsa Grove has been very involved in attending gatherings of the Oklahoma Pagan/Heathen Association (OPHA), and doing some limited volunteer work with them. Sometimes, granted, it has been at the expense of holding classes and ritual, but sometimes that is how it goes. We have noted I the years that the MOCC has been in existence that there are waxings and wanings in the history of our group, and this is no exception.

We recently had an online MOCC All-Officer Business Meeting, and we got a chance to discuss a few of the issues that had arisen over the years. We even were able to bring in a couple of other groups and begin formal discussions with them. One of the groups, the Orthodox Order of Sharaye, we were combined with between 2001 and 2007, so it was a good family reunion there.

Our Archdruid, Violet, is planning on putting forth a effort in the months to come of performing ritual several times a month in Tulsa in several locations. It promises to be interesting, but I'm concerned about her doing so. From experience, trying to do it all one's self is asking for burnout. April, our Reeve, tried putting on a ritual in Veteran's Park, Tulsa, but it was misting and not a lot other than her were showing up.

The lesson of here a little, there a little is a big lesson, and hopefully that lesson will allow us all to grow in grace, patience and understanding. This declare above all: healing and light and peace.

## **News of the Groves**

### **Missionary Order of the Celtic Cross**

#### **MOCC—Grove of Holy Wisdom, Fallon, Nevada**

The Grove of Holy Wisdom started out in Bowlegs, Oklahoma back in 2009 as an herbalism and artistic exploration to kids, then slowly began, in 2010 to have publicly accessible rites. The Samhain ritual in Bowlegs, OK was attended by 4 persons and a dog. There wasn't a lot of talking at the rite, but there was considerable respect shown for the Ancestors, and a recognition that kids who never have had a lot of exposure to Druidism can sure as heck intuit a lot about the rite and how the altars get set up.

The Grove of Holy Wisdom, although it may as yet still come to life in Bowlegs if there begin to be more people who get interested in the group, actually moved the majority of it here to Fallon, NV on January 7 of this year. We moved out here to take care of my friend's wife's stepmom and it's turned

out to be quite the adventure. The focus of the Grove of Holy Wisdom out here is not so much ritual—although that’s been fairly active—but more along the lines of being a Druid’s Ovate Clinic in addition to an alternative school, not because that is what it is changing to, but rather because that is where the demand is placed.

Those of you who pay close attention to environmental and legal news may have heard of Fallon in your comings and goings. It received attention from national press back in the 1990’s and 2000’s when Fallon was identified as a hotspot for leukemia, with even the likes of Hillary Clinton coming here to highlight the problem that was present. There are substantial levels of manganese, arsenic, tungsten and uranium in the water, and there is purported to be an airplane burial that has leaked benzene and a goodly handful of other ‘zene’s’ into the ground water around here. I’m not sure how long this has been going on, but when I’ve questioned the people around here about what kind of medical issues have been going on, they indicate that the burial of the airplane(s) came, in theory, quite some time after the early reports of birth defects in the area, and substantially before the city converted over to a better-filtered ground water dispersal system. Of particular interest is the history in certain few families of twinning and birth defects which would logically predate the Naval Air Station (predating the days of Orville and Wilbur Wright, truth be known) that are long term residents of the area in Fallon specifically and the Pyramid Lake/Lahontan Reservoir groundwater system in general.

Even though all these things can be found in the water, the extant reports on water quality as it might relate to the health of the citizens around here is spotty at best, with the persons performing the study eventually—in the literature—throwing their hands into the air and saying “gee, we just don’t know why this is happening”. It is happening, however, and there is considerable help for anyone seeking to research this problem in local facilities. Well, I’ve been researching it, because two of the grove’s clients were raised in the area and both suffer from chronic problems possibly due to the groundwater issue. One certainly has a history of cancer and such that one would expect from the purported effects of manganese poisoning alone, or from arsenic poisoning and uranium poisoning together. Throw lupus into the mix, and you get a pretty accurate picture of what’s going on.

Of course, nothing is going on that would put an allopathic doctor out of work, or even out of the loop, but rather the research is going on here in our Grove as to what can act as a safe herbal supplement to counteract the lupus, the cancer and the strokes that are going on (the leukemia and the cancer, so often related, were a red flag to me) while allopathic treatment was being pursued. It is also being used as a training ground for persons pursuing training in reiki and pranic healing, and ovates and other traditional healers are working together on the test cases here from states as varied as Oklahoma, New Mexico, Louisiana and Nevada.

As Reformed Druids, we have had a great bit of culture shock here. As Reformed Druids, we have come to be accustomed to somewhat public rites on a regular basis. Here in Fallon, the feeling of the Second Great Depression our nation is going through is felt, and there is an accompanying feeling of religious intolerance. Perhaps they think that God created the problem, I do not know. But when the MOCC suggested that we hold a public get-together at Ostara, it was almost like dropping a bomb into the middle of a herd of cattle. Moo, you say?

That someone wanted to use a park (not rent the gazebo in the park) was odd. They didn’t have a plan of action for it at either the Convention Center, or the police station, or the county clerk’s office, or anywhere. The park was reserved in the name of the MOCC and Fallon Wiccans. The first organizational meeting was held in the local Scottish Pub named McDonalds because of the great badge which they display: On a sign, gules, arches, or, overall. For those of you unfamiliar with the jargon of

the Heraldic Colleges, that's the Golden Arches. It didn't take long to get a game plan going, and then we sallied forth into the world to do the deeds of networking.

Tonight, the MOCC had a group ritual online, combining the Tulsa and Fallon Groves to a good degree, and we marked a fairly non-Celtic holiday, the Navigation of Isis. Now, however, the night is progressing, and my eyes are growing tired. I must excuse myself from this writing, to go where dreams may speak to me in peace.

## Druidism in the Media and the World

The Thor Movie. Okay, that's Norse mythology, and they are going to be more superhero than reverent homage to a great god, but you should see it this summer, just so you can join the internet debates.



Easter Chocolates in Montreal. Which to choose as a young Canadian ice-blooded male??



## Basic Pilgrimage 101

By Mike the Fool, 2011

So you want to be a pilgrim?

No, we're not talking about Pilgrims, the religious migrants on the Mayflower.

Just a pilgrim.

Okay, laying aside visualization, re-envisioning your current daily life and astral travel, that means you have a basic outline:

- A) Have a goal
- B) Have to a destination or open-ended journey
- C) You go
- D) You do/see/learn something
- E) Optional – you come back.
- F) Optional – you do it again

That's really all there is to it.

### A) Have a Goal

What's the purpose? Great wisdom? Greater awareness of your own blessings, potential? Acquire powerful connections that you can't do so in a regular day's activities? Fulfill a promise to the gods to do something in return for a blessing or cure? To visit a certain place or person that you have heard about? Think outside yourself, maybe you are doing it on behalf of a friend, world peace, or some other issue/person/people.

All this is good. You might only have a vague itching now, listen to it and see where it leads to.

You need a place to go.

### B) Have a Destination

Where have you been? Where are you now? What is your status on your life journey?

Do some research. Sleep on it. Do more research and meditation. Go to Wikipedia. Google a bit. Talk to people. Pull out a map of your city or state and kind of see if you gravitate towards a point. Sleep on it some more. Eventually, it will become clear.

As you know, the biggest limitations on our pilgrimage are obvious; will power, time, money, health, fear of the unknown. These are all surmountable, and surmounting them is perhaps one of the lessons of the pilgrimage, that great things are possible with proper preparation and determination.

Think Nature, mountains, rivers, springs and sources, valleys, unusual rocks, forests, beaches, islands, lakes, wildlife reserves, parks, and unusual plants (tallest tree, oldest mushroom, etc.) Try to locate the farthest point from a road in your county.

Think about secular touristic sites. People travel quite a bit; Las Vegas, Graceland, Yellowstone, Disney Land, Washington DC, Civil War sites, waterfalls. We go there because they are “pretty”, “educational”, “fun”, etc. Modern Americans are a bit hesitant to say “because they fill me with spiritual awareness and greater wisdom”. Many of these can be re-adapted from tours to pilgrimage. Las Vegas becomes a chance to practice divination and meet Lady Luck. Graceland a bardic journey and a chance to commune with Elvis. Yellowstone a visit to a geothermic hotspot and nature refuge with buffalo and wolves. Disney Land to re-experience the “child within” and mythology of modern America. Washington DC to examine the philosophic underpinnings of equality, courage, justice, balance, human rights, separation of church and state, what makes us American, your tribal identity. Civil War – consider communing with the ghosts, what would they like to say?

Re-envision the landscape of your part of the world.

Got one yet? Now write it down. Pick a month or year to do it and get ready.

In fact, you might end up with a few dozen interesting pilgrimages. You might want to start with some nearby ones, relatively easy. One can go on pilgrimages regularly, or incorporate a pilgrimage onto an otherwise secular touristic trip, on the sly.

C) Go

We’re a bunch of lazy-butt procrastinators, okay, maybe just me. Once you screw up the courage to do one, tell a friend or two to needle you until you do it. In fact, why don’t you invite them to go with you? Historically, most pilgrimages were done in groups, partly for safety, but as with all long journeys, a little company helps the passage of time.

Nowadays we don’t have to walk everywhere, but a goodly portion of a pilgrimage should be under your own power, whether it be bicycling, rowing, walking or climbing. Consider trains or buses to driving, as they give you more time to think and enjoy the scenery and talk with other people. Get off the transport a little sooner, and make the final trek under your own steam.

Sometimes the journey is the purpose, more than the destination. Don’t shortchange it. Take time for interesting side roads that call out to you. Maybe the destination was a lure for something lesser-known nearby.

D) Do/see/learn something

While traveling you may wish to practice a bit of ascetism (or hedonism), anything to break the normal routine for you. Perhaps institute a regular schedule of prayers, songs, meditations or readings. Perhaps you need to greet every third person you pass? Tap on every tree within reach? Toss a coin in every river you cross? Stop at every pub for a drink? You get the idea, these kind of rhythms might draw your attention to something you might walk by, and like breadcrumbs in the forest, they leave a trail of touchpoints as you mark your trail.

When you ask for directions, consider asking if there is something else nearby that they recommend while you are in the area. Is there something the tourists generally miss? Who's the most interesting person in town? Who has the best cooking? Who has the most amazing garden? Who's the outdoor enthusiast? Is the town famous for anything? Where's the best spot for a little picnic?

Guides. Well perhaps you might want to visit the local palm reader, occult bookstore, bead store, art store, antique store, apothecary, church, history museum, etc. These usually have odd folks who have a different view on their area. Invite someone to join you for a bit could be fun.

When you get to the spot you declared you were going to visit, take some time to look around. Perhaps if you are visiting a famous spot, do a 360 walk around and spiral out from the site for a mile or so and then come back. There's probably something else nearby, if nothing else, perhaps the spirits don't like all the attention and have a quieter place nearby during the "business hours". If you can visit the site during different parts of the day, that might find "the golden moment". Don't be a one-night stand sort of visitor. Perhaps if you tell the site that you'll be visiting more regularly, it will be more responsive. If you promised to do something there, then do it. Leave a little gift there in return for anything you take, and certainly don't damage the site.

#### E) Optional – You Come Back

It would be the rare pilgrim who decides to throw off the world and stay at a site due to the amazing power of a vision gathered there, but it does happen. If it was a transformative experience, one must ask, "Am I really coming back, or is this a new me?" What am I bringing back, and is the message/gift/blessing for me, or is for another person? If you have made a link to a place, you also have an obligation to nurture it, protect it, share it. It might "come to you" after you return, what you were really doing, and you might have new ideas of how to improve or expand your pilgrimages. After a few trips, and some introspection, you'll have an idea of what needs to be changed too, what works.

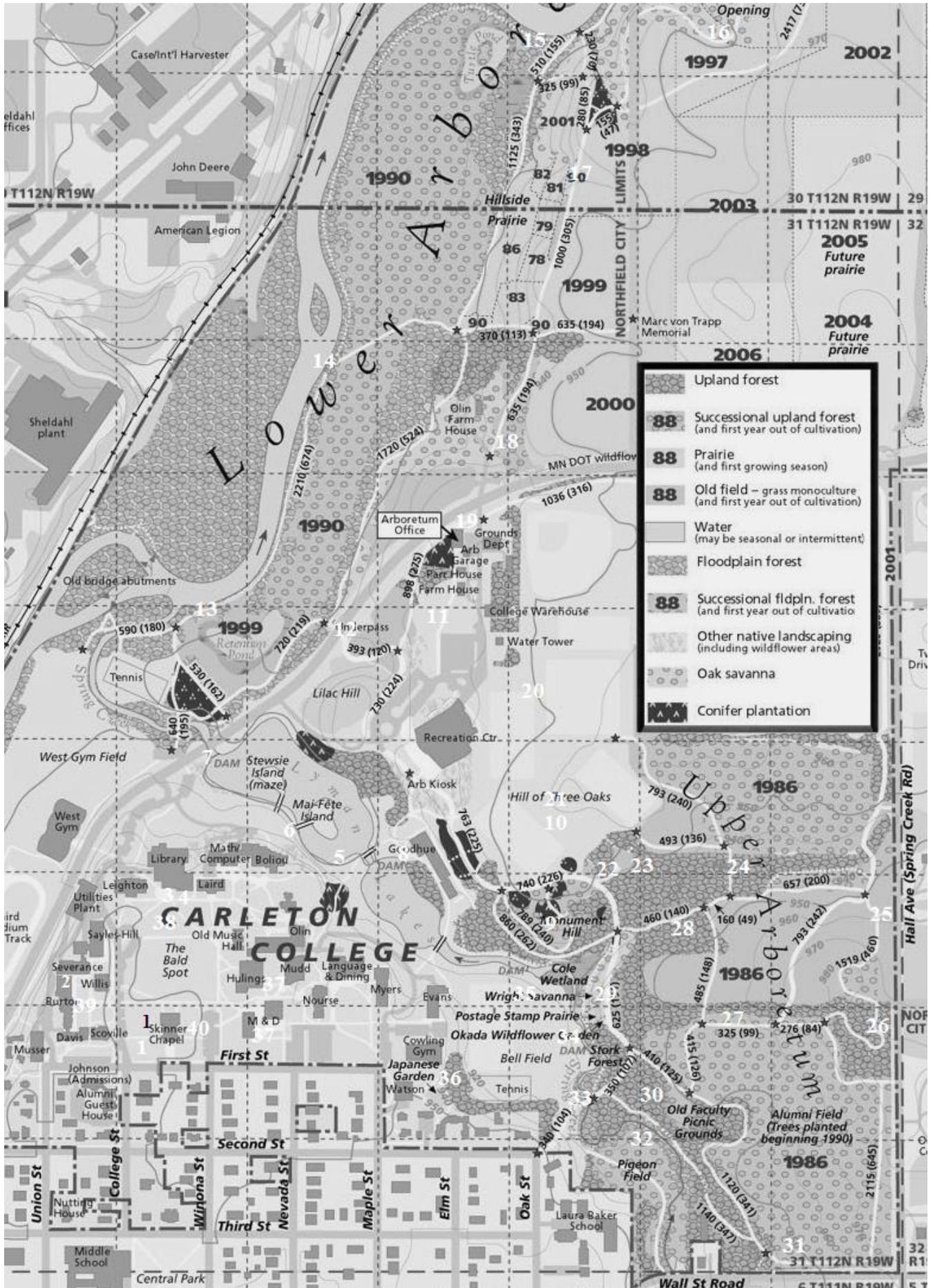
#### F) You Do It Again

Perhaps not the same destination, or the same manner, or the same route, but don't let a single pilgrimage end the practice for you. One doesn't always hit the target with the first arrow. Keep a journal or a little notebook and figure out how your goals are changing and being met. Study, research and talk about the process to refine it. If you promised to go back, then do so.

#### Some More Resources:

- Wikipedia on "pilgrim" and "pilgrimage"
- This issue.
- Your friends.
- Nearby religious associations.
- Book stores.
- An open ear to what passes around you.
- Time and reflection.

If you have a story on a pilgrimage, send it to [mikerdna@hotmail.com](mailto:mikerdna@hotmail.com)



	Upland forest
	88 Successional upland forest (and first year out of cultivation)
	88 Prairie (and first growing season)
	88 Old field – grass monoculture (and first year out of cultivation)
	Water (may be seasonal or intermittent)
	Floodplain forest
	88 Successional fldpln. forest (and first year out of cultivation)
	Other native landscaping (including wildflower areas)
	Oak savanna
	Conifer plantation



# Ye Lengthy Venerable Carleton Pilgrimage

Est. 1995.

By Mike the Fool

Version 3.0 July 2010

Full Color Upper & Lower Arboretum map  
available at

<http://webapps.acs.carleton.edu/campus/arb/location/>

## A How-To-Guide for Eager Druids

### What is a pilgrimage?

A pilgrimage is an outer journey to simulate and parallel an inner journey to understand the soul and commune with the gods or ancestors or spirits. It is putting the concerns of the world behind you for a short while and undertaking a focused period of hardship and introspection. A pilgrimage is trying to find a perceived missing linkage to the world of the divine in the midst of an often crass world. Most often, a pilgrimage is systemized in a way so that visitors at different times will repeat certain actions, visit the same locations, and hopefully take back similar experiences. In some ways they are like a moving ritual.

Most religions and societies have special places that they make occasional visits, called pilgrimages. Usually they are sites of origin or headquarters of their beliefs, inspiring sites of natural beauty or associated with the life events of a revered person. Muslims go to Medina and Mecca, Catholics go to Rome, and most of the big-three monotheists go to Jerusalem (along with the Ba'hais). Hindus flock to the Ganges River. Japanese make a circuit of the 88 Buddhist temples on the periphery of Shikoku island. The ancient Irish went to Tara for the festival of Lughnasadh.

The list of smaller sites is nearly endless, and localized and globe-spanning religious pilgrimages (and commerce and conquest) laid the groundwork for the secular tourist industry of modern times that dominates modern travel. Sadly, purely religious migrations are often misunderstood or ridiculed by the surrounding culture nowadays. Many of us, laughingly discount the mystical aspects, and try to pass them off as tourism or sight-seeing, but a gnawing hunger for the transmutive spiritual journey remains.

The commonly cited reasons of pilgrims is to increase faith, assiduously practice prayer, fasting, learning to relinquish pain, healing, inspiration, self-control, seeking forgiveness, to acquire a cure for an ill person, to repay a blessing, or to acquire wisdom. All these are indeed noble goals. Most Druids have their local groves and nearby favorite forests. Unfortunately, in America, there are relatively few well-known sites of spiritual pilgrimage (such as Mount Shasta or Sedona AZ), although many Druids may be attracted to National Parks and sites of ancient reverence of Native Americans. Thus I have begun to crystallize a plan for a pilgrimage-system for Reformed Druids (as well as our offshoots like ADF, Keltria, RDG etc.) to visit Carleton College in Northfield MN, where modern Druidism in America began. It is quite possible the most complicated pilgrimage, but you are welcome to modify it or devise a simplified version for your needs and send a copy of the variant to me to share with others. Generally, you should make changes to the "rules" before you start, so read through carefully. If your local grove has a pilgrimage, tell me about it at [mikerdna@hotmail.com](mailto:mikerdna@hotmail.com)

## Summary of the Carleton Pilgrimage

Is Carleton somehow better endowed mystically than all other spots? Perhaps, but it is certainly special. Anyone can do this pilgrimage. Pilgrims will journey to a small liberal arts college and make a simple straight-line version or a full version that is vaguely bridget's-cross-shaped (or shamrock) journey through the landscape of the campus building and a varied 800 acre arboretum of riverine oak-savannah forests, prairie, farmland and lakes. I'll explain the full version, and describe a simple version at the end. The peregrination has four parts and in total would take between three to six hours, with the option of an overnight vigil. The journey replicates the history of the Carleton Grove (since 1963) and also parallels the geography of the soul.

## Preparation Basics

The most comfortable time to do it is between May 1st and November 1st, because the winters in Minnesota are harsh and freezing; although the trails are still passable with snowboots, snowshoes or cross-country skis.

It is advisable if you are not familiar with Carleton's topography, to inquire with the current Archdruid (write to: Archdruid, Carleton College, Northfield, MN 55057) or check [www.rdna.info/wheretrove.html](http://www.rdna.info/wheretrove.html) for an up-to-date email. In return for a gift to the Grove, she or he may be able to accompany you or find an escort; although it is generally entirely possible to do a pilgrimage on your own with only this guide by yourself. Crime is very uncommon in rural Minnesota and the campus and arb are generally open to the public.

If you do encounter campus security while wandering the arb, simply explain that you are a visiting Druid and visiting the campus on a pilgrimage, and that you do not intend to start any fires, camp or destroy anything.

You should plan to stay at a hotel in town, furtively camp in the arb or you might be able to

convince a Druid to share their room with you as a guest. It is possible to leave the Twin Cities and complete a pilgrimage and return in one day, but why not spend the night and deepen the experience?

## Recommended Materials

**Clothing:** Although plain clothes are possible, wearing a special garb on the journey may help you achieve a special mood. Traditionally, metal is frowned upon, as are man-made fabrics. A nice pilgrimage garb, if you'd like, is a tartan length of cloth (roughly 3-5' x 18-24') or two white bedsheets, knotted and draped as you wish. Cloaks are also acceptable. Sandals or Birkenstocks are de rigeur, and barefoot is not recommended due to the rocky and thorny nature of the trails and woods, but if you like pain, go ahead. A bathing suit for the aquatic portions is recommended if you have concerns of modesty. The last element of clothing is a pilgrim's staff. If you already have one, fine, otherwise make one before you arrive, or look for a fallen branch. It should be about 4-6' long. A belt, waist sash or rope around the waist may be useful. The SCA and Carleton Druids have been dressing weirdly for decades, so you won't attract too much attention on campus, but then again, maybe you do want to attract attention to Druidism?

**Gray Ribbon:** Borrowed from the Japanese Henro pilgrimage. At the beginning determine how many phases of the pilgrimage you will do. For every completed segment of the four-part pilgrimage, the pilgrim should add one foot to a silver/gray ribbon that they will attach firmly to either their staff or collar before the start of the pilgrimage (e.g. three phases=three feet), and write the date on it that you will start. Thus, after every successful pilgrimage, they will have another varying length of ribbon as a souvenir. Ribbons can later be used as healing gifts or as sacrificial offerings. On successful completion, you tie a knot in the dangling end, to keep in the magic. However if you do not complete a promised length of pilgrimage, you must relinquish any and all gray ribbons at that point and tie them to the nearest tree branch, as a

warning of the difficulty of a certain spot for future pilgrims.

**Gifts, Whiskey and Water:** If you are compensating a Druid for journeying with you on this pilgrimage, a fifth of whisky for every phase or a pound of organic fertilizer may be appropriate. You should also bring a small bottle of whiskey as an offering, along with some water to drink.

**Two Rocks:** Two fist-sized rocks are necessary to have ready in advance for Phase 1 of the Pilgrimage.

- Printout of the Pilgrimage Guide.
- Pencil or crayon
- Matches
- A flute or small drum might be nice.
- A small burnable offering; like sage or tobacco.
- A small purse or simple backpack to carry your minimal supplies with you.
- 4 medium garbage bags for water-proofing materials when fording, and making primitive water-wings.
- Sense of wonder, humor and humility.

### **Basic Rules for Full Version**

1. Never let your tracks cross over the previous trail of your journey during the pilgrimage. This can be quite difficult, if you aren't concentrating on your route.
2. Decide how many and which phases you intend to do, and complete them as promised. If you quit, you must tie your gray ribbon to the nearest tree branch and start over on a different day.
3. Whenever safely possible, all streams, creeks, lakes and rivers should be forded on foot rather than crossed by bridge.
4. Avoid bringing metal (including coins, watches, knives) on the journey. Removing those bits if possible. No watches, cellphones, and non-necessary medicines. Any metal borne, should be compensated by an extra blessing in apologies.

5. If you encounter a bird or animal you should clap your hands three times, hail them, stop for at least forty heart-beats and listen.
6. If you encounter a tree that is wider than you can embrace with two arms or a rock that is heavier than your weight (but not part of a building), within a kicked-off sandal's distance from the path, you should greet it as a companion on your journey. Go to it, knock three times on it with your fist or staff, and say "Hello", and listen quietly for at least forty heartbeats. Knock three more times and say "Goodbye." This may actually happen about a hundred times on the trip, and is a good chance to catch your breath and slow you down so that you notice the scenery.
7. If the sun or moon goes behind a cloud and emerges, you should stop and spin three times, clockwise and continue.
8. If an unusual blast of wind blows past you, turn in the direction the wind has gone and watch for forty heart-beats.
9. If you see a person bearing a heavy burden or doing hard labour, you should offer to take a break from your pilgrimage and help them, then return and continue.
10. If you meet a person in the arb, going in your direction, tell them you are on a pilgrimage and invite them to accompany you for part of the trip.
11. Do not make fires in non-designated fire-pits.
12. Do not bring or remove living plant or animal to/from the arb.
13. Fasting before or during the pilgrimage is optional.



### **1. Prayer at chapel**

The Skinner Memorial Chapel was the site of the convocations and mandatory weekly religious services for students at Carleton College until 1964. In March or April 1963, some students in these pews became uncomfortable with this aspect of forced attendance, even if they didn't mind attending, so they left the confines of this building to make cause with the religious requirement. You are also in some way unsatisfied with something that has brought you to Carleton for a pilgrimage. Sit down for a while and contemplate the difficulties that lie ahead of you on this journey, and note whether you have the courage or not to complete it. If you'd like to chat with the college chaplain before departing, you will find her office on the first floor or the basement, appointments are recommended.

### **2. Dean of Students**

Knock loudly on the Dean of Students' door or the closest door that is accessible to this area if off-season. If anyone is there, enigmatically ask if "Ms. Liberty" is there, and abruptly leave. In the first month of Reformed Druidism, Howard Cherniack (the original Preceptor, author of the Tenets & writer of the Constitution) went to the Dean of Men in Severance "Sevy" Hall (now Dean of Students) and asked him to grant equal status to RDNA services for the purpose of the requirement. Howard was spurned, and the Druids continued in protest.

### **3. The Hadzi Arch by the Library**

Standing inside the semi-circle, under the Hadzi, follow this ceremony. This would be a good spot for the current Archdruid or designated guide to bless the pilgrim's journey and materials. If no Druid can be found, humbly ask any passerby to give you a blessing on your journey, even "good luck" will suffice.

The pilgrim boldly proclaims:

**I (insert name) do hereby undertake this pilgrimage**

**I will journey through phases (X, X & X) and I will not falter.**

**I will sincerely seek my liberty and throw off this halter.**

**I will overcome all obstacles, barriers and tests.**

**I will humble myself before the earth-mother and the rest**

**Blessings of Awareness upon the Druids of Carleton**

**May their Archdruids never lack good counsel.**

The Archdruid, if present, may produce any blessing they wish, or give the following with generous sigils inscribed in the air:

**This is good, pilgrim!**

**Blessed be thy staff that protects and supports thee.**

**Blessed be thy scrip (i.e. bag) that bears thy basic tools.**

**Blessed be thy garb that shelters thee from the weather**

**Blessed be thy shoes that they may find secure purchase.**

**I wish thee good weather.  
I wish thee good discovery.  
I wish thee good companions.  
I wish thee good journey.  
Go and come in peace, pilgrim.**

The pilgrim then may give any goods or donations to the Archdruid to hold onto during the journey, or leave proscribed items there. With a large exaggerated right-left-right step, they walk through the arch and begin the journey. The Archdruid will accompany them at least these three steps. If the pilgrim is not doing phase 1 (such as starting with phase 3, they should go straight as possible to the starting point), otherwise begin to follow the basic rules and go to part 4, first stop on Phase 1.

### **PHASE ONE: The Lakes = Tenets**

#### **4. Inscribed Turtle by Laird.**

Tap your staff three times on the turtle. No matter how slow, the pilgrim will reach his goal if he resolutely continues. For a space of forty heartbeats, reflect on the need for patience and perseverance. Absorb these attributes. Reflect on the armor that a turtle bears, and may your faith be as strong and portable no matter where you journey.



#### **5. Dam 1 at base of Upper Lyman.**

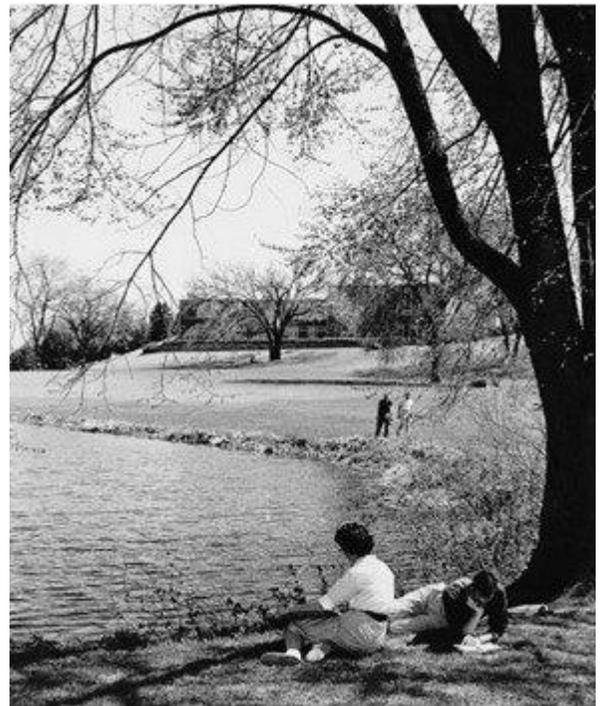
The two lakes symbolize the two tenets, the one with islands are the literal meaning and the one without islands are the spirit of the words. Go way down to the wooden bridge on Upper Lyman lake and then follow it all the way to the dam between Upper and Lower Lyman. Stand on the dam and tap it three times with your staff three times. Recite first Tenet, "**The object of the search for religious truth, which is a universal and a neverending search, may be**

**found through the Earth Mother, which is Nature; but this is one way, yea, one way among many."**

Hurl one of the two fist-sized rocks at the dam and then splash water over the top.

Reflect for 40 breaths that these man-made lakes were dammed up a century before, storing the waters and creating depth where a trickle once flowed. Consider how various powers, emotions and urges, in your body are built up over time for careful application, and how deep they have become, and yet they forever overflow their container.

Proceed around the side of Lower Lyman to the Islands, careful not to cross over your path.



#### **6. The Islands of Lyman**

The two islands symbolize the two tenets. Progress from the first dam around Lower Lyman to the heart-shaped island called Mai Fete (shaped like a heart). Until the 1960s, Mai Fete island was the home to a custom where local college women would put on a play to celebrate spring, and the May Queen was chosen. Strolling counterclockwise around the island's shoreline (e.g. taking one step every nine heartbeats or three breaths), reflect on past lovers and friends, and what they meant to you.



This part of the journey is tricky because of the rule against crossing your previous path. Ideally, the pilgrim should bundle their goods into a bag and ford across to the island and then ford over to the next island and then back to the shore. However, if they are clever, they may devise an alternate path to avoid overlapping paths and minimize fording (such as bridge to Mai Fete, swim to Stewsie, bridge to shore, which symbolizes the attempt to directly link the heart and mind). Work it out.



At Stewsie Island is a Stone Maze that was built in 1999 to replace the lost Lilac Maze on the hill on the opposite side of Lyman Lakes (mostly razed to make more room for parking lots). Take three breaths or nine heartbeats between each step. The maze reflects the twists and turns of our lives, getting closer to our goal only to go away again and return agonizingly close, again and again. Consider your educational history and studies up to this point. When you reach the center, sit down and meditate for 40 breaths and try to clear your head of all thoughts. Repeating the reflection, you reverse your course (this is one of three places where you cross your paths in the pilgrimage) back to the beginning and return to the mainland.



### 7. Dam 2 at base of Lower Lyman

Tap your staff three times on the Dam. Recite the second Basic Tenet: "**And great is the importance, which is of a spiritual importance, of Nature, which is the Earth Mother; for in it is one of the objects of Creation, and with it we do live, yea, even as we do struggle through life and we come face to face with it.**" Hurl the second rock at the dam, then splash some water over the top of it. Now you must go face-to-face with Creation on the other side of the water. Ford to the other side, over the top of the dam, over the rocks at the base, or via the highway bridge. If the water is flowing over strongly, you may wish to meditate in the waterfall, or not.



### 8. Goodhue.

Remember that over lunch, this was where the idea for the Carleton Druids was born, and this building was the headquarters for the Druids for many years. At the big balcony of the old dining hall, tap your staff three times and shout "**Peace! Peace! Peace!**". At each of the three smaller balcony columns on the side facing the

lake, tap your staff once and say "**May the students here always be drawn to the woods.**" Continue down to the wooden bridge and say, "**I have seen and encompassed the Basic Tenets, and now I go to put them in practice.**" then turn around and go up behind Goodhue where two different stone staircases lead up the hill to a road. Take three breaths for each step, saying, "**I rise up to the challenges**" with each step.



### 9. Monument Hill

Being careful to choose the correct of the concentric loops, go to the stone stele. If it fits, plant your staff in the hole on the top, or balance it on top. Three of the sides are in use, but one side is blank, which tells of the protean nature of Druidism, ready for carving. Announce your arrival and humble mission in what way seems comfortable to you. Then trace a large sigil on the blank face. This is the site where the first RDNA service was held of the Druidic revolution. Proceed to revolve clockwise around the monument one complete time for every Druidic year (before May 1st 2005 it is year XLII, after May 1st 2005 it is year XLIII).

This was also the site of the actions of the Early Chronicles, which you might review here. All traces of the altar stones are gone, but you will re-enact the destruction of the altar in step 23. At this point we re-enact the three sorrows. Take your staff and close your eyes and open them (to simulate the passing of day and night) and cry, "**Alas and alack!**" (do this eye closing and cry three times) and fly forth through the pine trees into the great field towards the hill of three oaks, and resume a leisurely pace on your pilgrimage.



### 10. Hill of Three Oaks.

This site has been in near constant use from 1963 to the present, although the center of highest activity moved to Farmhouse in the 1980s, and then to the Druid's Den in the early 90s, and the Stone Circle in the late 90s. The Hill of Three Oaks is traditionally the most common site for ordination and is excellent for watching sunrise and sunsets and observing the full moon and approaching thunder storms.

Please beware of broken glass and nails from sacrificially burnt couches, offered by drunken students.

Greet each oak (are there three or four?) with a kiss, spilling a drop of whiskey on each tree, announcing your name, and wishing them strength. Be careful not to cross your own path. Go to the altar stone there and trace your finger over the sigil permanently inscribed on the stone.



The altar stone was the fourth altar of the Reformed Druids at one of the highest points in the campus. Stand on the altar and feel the breeze for forty-breaths, write the two basic tenets onto a piece of paper. Step off and burn

the paper and scorch a plant sacrifice on the altar. If you know how to hold an RDNA service, this is a proper place to incorporate the sacrifice into a service.



### 11. Farm House

As you go to Farm House, notice how the new recreation center is a blot on the beautiful view from the Hill of Three Oaks. As you pass by the building, throw your sandals at the walls, and make this prayer;

**"Blot of a building hear me, please  
Huge and square on this lawn so green  
We wish you hidden by some trees  
So your bulk will no longer be seen.**

Farmhouse was the site of the re-birth of the Carleton Druids in 1985, and the HQ of events until 1991. It was also the home of the folk music society. It would be appropriate to sing a folk song here under the large tree. Some pilgrims (if they do not swim in the river in step 13) may wish to carry a glass of water, unspilt to Step 16, and share the water there. If so, go to farmhouse, knock on the door, and ask for a glass of water, if building is open, or take it from an exterior faucet. You'll return the glass in step 19.

Go back into the field in front of Farmhouse Go towards Goodhue parking lot. You should see a trail leading behind the Lilac Hill that leads to the Tunnel. If you are skipping Phase 2, then you should instead go from Farmhouse to step 20 on the way back to the Hill of Three Oaks, being careful not to cross your path.

## Phase Two: The Wilderness

### 12. Tunnel

Before entering the tunnel, recite a poem of praise for completing Phase One of the pilgrimage, then shout **"I leave the realms of the Upper Arb, thank you for the wisdom of your ways."** Walking one step for each three breaths, slowly walk through the tunnel. In the middle stop and sit (if possible) and meditate for 40 breaths, at the last breath, gather your strength and give three loud yells, "I will finish strong!" listening to the echoes. If you have a musical instrument, you may wish to play a tune. Afterwards, continue the slow walk to the other side. As you exit the tunnel shout out **"I enter the realms of the Lower Arb, teach me you're the wisdom of your wild ways."**



### 13. Cannon River

Follow the trail, by the fairy mounds towards the river. If you do not intend to float down the river, you will want to go near the tennis court and hunt for a stray tennis ball or block of wood to take your place, careful not to cross your path.

This is the most hazardous step of the pilgrimage, so consider it very carefully. The Cannon River's safety depends on how high the water is, and some spots are over 10 feet deep, and while it is not too fast, it is impossible to swim upstream against the current, only slowly from one side to the other. Some pilgrims will collect driftwood for a raft, other will inflate some garbage bags to make water-wings or bring other safety equipment. If you go out, try to float close to the shore. Again, you can substitute the tennis ball in your place, pushing it out from the shore you're your staff if it snags.

Before you (or the tennis ball) go into the water, wade out to your knees and reflect for 40 breaths on how a river is never the same from one moment to the next; and how the waters of Lyman Lake are filled with rain, that leads to the Cannon River, that leads to the Mississippi River that leads to the ocean, that leads to the clouds again.

Then rhythmically chant the following song to Sirona, patron of rivers.

Waters over.  
Waters under.  
Waters around.  
Waters through me.

**O** si-ro-na!  
o **SI**-ro-na!  
o si **RO** na!  
o si ro **NA**!

Waters cleanse me.  
Waters love me.  
Waters guide me.  
Waters bless me.

**O** si-ro-na!  
o **SI**-ro-na!  
o si **RO** na!  
o si ro **NA**!

Change in motion.  
Adaptation.  
Down to ocean.  
My salvation.

**O** si-ro-na!  
o **SI**-ro-na!  
o si **RO** na!  
o si ro **NA**!

Waters cleanse me.  
Waters love me.  
Waters guide me.  
Waters bless me.

**O** si-ro-na!  
o **SI**-ro-na!  
o si **RO** na!

o si ro **NA**!

Waters over.  
Waters under.  
Waters around.  
Waters through me.

The goal of the drifting is to reach 14 (or 15 if you are ambitious) Feel the inexorable strength of the river. It is up to you if you want to land on the island downstream for further meditation or a rest. If you do land on the island, a dance would be appropriate, plus throwing three large rocks over your head behind you into the water.

#### **14. Trail End**

The pilgrimage trail officially disappears here going underground to spot 15, and none are sure how it gets there, just as there are guideposts on the road of life, but not always a clear trail. Therefore, it is up to you to determine where the trail goes (in the river, by the un-maintained river trail, through the fields, or on the trail that skirts the bottom of the prairie) and proceed carefully. Reflect on these two large fields (nearly the same size as Lyman Lakes) were last cultivated in 1990 and during floods, become marshes. Apparently, wet and dry land depends on the level of the river that drains it. It is an excellent location to spot deer.

#### **15. Earth Day Field.**

Enter the Field for a while and find the largest tree. If possible, sit at its feet and meditate for at least 40 breaths on reclamation. Back in the 1960s, most of the arb was cultivated farmland with but a very thin ridge of trees lining the river. In 1970, inspired by the Earth Day movement, the first of the fields was set aside to return to forest, in the space of 40 odd years, this is the power of nature to reclaim its land and fills the holes of modernization. Consider what feasible ecological activity you would like to undertake, and ask the woods what they recommend.

After step 15 you choose whether to bushwhack up hill to 16 or continue on the trail as far as you wish and then catch a switchback trail to 16. As

always, greet all large trees and rocks and avoid crossing your path.

### **16. Ubanhower Oak Opening.**

This was the site of many Druid activities in the 1980s, and once had a fire circle. Yet that came to an end, when the Arb management crew decided to return it to Oak Savannah. See if you can find the fire ring, or not, about 60 feet from the edge of the hill. No fires have been performed here since 1992, as the place is now a protected zone. If you have a carefully guarded cup of water, pour it into the fire ring, as some ends are final, and what has been returned to nature, should not be taken again.

If a tree in this area is easily climbable, climb and meditate 40 breaths in it, or find a pile of thorns and sit amongst them, considering relinquishment. Not just farmers, but also Druids, may have to give up their use of special areas for them to become a truly natural state. The needs of the community sometimes win out over the artistic needs of a handful.

### **17. Hillside Prairie**

Near the pine-tree intersection in the lot reclaimed in 1981, there is a stone. Go to it and sit down. Once, there was a great plain of unbroken prairie, six to twelve feet tall, stretching from Ohio to Montana to Texas. Less than 1% of the prairie remains today, but it fed the mighty herds of buffalo. This field was within 20 miles of the northern edge of that vast expanse. Taking the seeds from isolated patches of remaining virgin prairie in Minnesota, this hill was re-seeded in the 1970s and has been steadily expanded to cover more than 80 acres, with a few hundred acres more to be converted from farm land nearby before 2012. Reflect at least 40 breaths on this power of life, and how even modern Druidism can be rebuilt with careful nurturing of ways from sheltered niches of modernity. This would be an excellent place to sing a song of Nature. When you return to the trail, take your shoes off and feel the sand under your feet as you walk to 18, feel the Earth-Mother's ancient power in your soles, as your hands brush the prairie grasses.

### **18. Gate by Olin Farm House.**

As you leave the prairie and pass by Olin Farm House where the Arb Manager lives, make a prayer for his continued wise guidance. As you pass around the heavy gate, recite a song or poem of praise as you end Phase Two. You are leaving the Lower Arboretum shout "**I leave the realms of the Lower Arb, I thank you for the wisdom of your wild ways!**" and climbing back into the Upper Arb as you cross the highway.



### **19. Arb Manager Office –**

As you step from the highway to the Upper Arb, cry out "**I return to the Upper Arb.**" Pray for their continued efforts. Return any borrowed cup to Farm House, passing by the backside of the building. If you can reach the water tower's base though the fence with your staff, tap it three times, shouting, "**May your waters flow through the campus, calling the students to the woods.**"

### **Phase Three: The Other World**

### **20. Goal Posts of Fate**

There are two large sets of goal posts between you and the Hill of Three Oaks. Go to the first one invoke an association with the Other World, such as, "I leave the rough wilds and enter another realm of the unknown, the otherworld, that I may be wiser," and close eyes, make a request, and try to walk steady through one goalpost and down the field through the other without the aid of your eyes, do not raise your hands for the first 100 strides, but do open your eyes at 150 and look around. If you drifted to the right, it means one thing, if you drifted to the left it means another. It is quite fortuitous if you make it through the gates.



### 21. Hill of Three Oaks

Good spot to rest or watch a sunset. Walk over to the star on the map, northeast of the Hill of Three Oaks, and there below an enormous oak tree, is where there once was a repository of rocks, from which the original stone circle was built on the Hill of Three Oaks in the 1997. The stones mysteriously moved from the site and were re-arranged halfway to the hill, and yet, the grass was found undamaged the next morning, as if the stones leapt to this location.



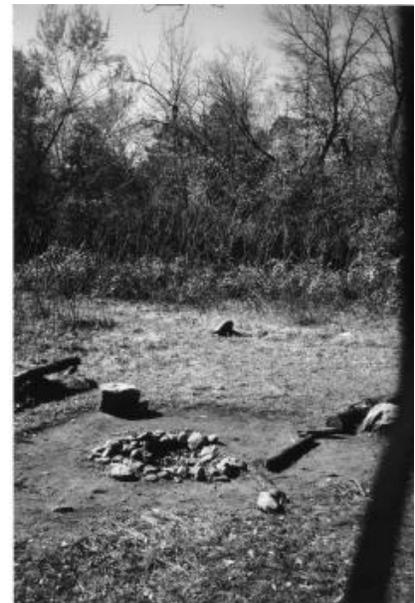
In 1999, the stone circle was relocated to its current location, deep in the hearth of the Upper Arb at Step 30. However, under this Oak, another semi-circle has been built after 2003. In this half-circle, reflect for 40 breaths on how things are seemingly born from nothing, and so quickly disappear at death, leaving us bewildered. Imagine what the non-existent half of the circle might be.

Afterwards walk along the edge of the forest that surrounds the Hill of Three Oaks, back towards the path that exited from the Monument Hill. You will see a path going into the woods with a wooden gate.



### 22. Gate to Druid Den.

Leave an offering here on the post., the gate is no longer there.



### 23. Druid Den and Dragon's Nest

You may choose to vigil here with a fire, but the main purpose is to go to the corner where a small path leads to a cache of dragon stones. Stack three stones on top of each other and then knock them over with your foot saying "bah!". Repeat four times for the original altar of the Carleton Grove. For the fifth time, hold them to your chest and put them down reverently.

### 24. Valley of Despair

Reflect in here about the hardest times you have faced for 40 heartbeats.

## 25. Entrance to Cemetery

You may or may not wish to take a detour into the cemetery for reflection. Given the large number of rocks here, you might have to do a lot of greeting.



## 26. Hill of the Dead

This is an excellent place to vigil or watch the sunset or listen to the voice of spirits.

## 27. Trail of Fairies

While traveling on the edge of this field, you may play a tune or sing a song, but you must NOT look over your shoulder, at your feet, or behind you. You may hear them call to you or echo your music.

## 28. Slope of Decrepance

Run down this hill as fast as you can to the road. This hill symbolizes how the body, in its last days quickly falls apart when balance is lost. It is also rumored to be the site where Fisher was nearly struck by lightning for brazenly abusing his powers. Fall from grace is often quick and sure.



## 29. Postage Stamp Prairie

A glimpse of the campus, a quiet place to compose your thoughts at the end of Phase 3, and perhaps write a poem. A microcosm of the large Hill Side Prairie.



## End of Phase Three – Start of Phase Four

### 30. The Stone Circle

End of Phase 3 where you enter and crawl under the center stone as much as you can, and then talk from your heart about your hopes and aspirations. Your words will remain there to be heard by the spirits of the arb.

Phase 4 begins after you emerge and circle the stones, each side of the stones clockwise is bestowed a polarity of virtue/vice of concern by the pilgrim (humility and pride, greed and generosity, etc), and naturally is greeted, and the middle path is sought by leaping/climbing directly over the rock. Excellent place to vigil.

### 31. Southern Edge

Nearby is the entrance to golf course. You may wish to walk further into the golf course, if you'd like. You might appreciate the barn in the woods that is slowly falling apart from neglect.

**32. Rock Face** - bedrock below, stone circle above, and a ever so-thin veil of life in between. Take two fist size rocks.

**33. Crossing Lyman Creek**, on foot if possible, leaving the Upper Arb, and beginning the return to the world of man.

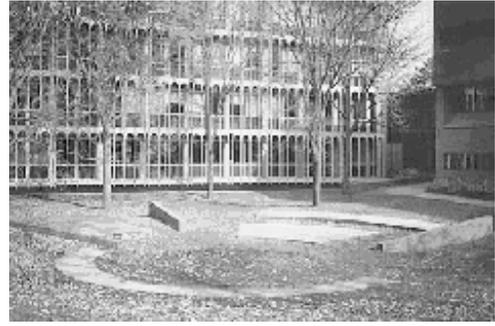


34. Dam 3: This spot marks the pools of creativity, produced by a wall of symbols to collect ideas. Hit the dam and splash water over the edge and pray to tap into your gathered inspirations of this journey.

35. Dam 4: This marks the reservations of emotional energy dammed up by the societal inhibitions and taboos and protocol. Hit the dam and splash the water over the edge. Optional bathing in the waterfall, below the willow tree as you try to connect with the deepness of your emotional past. Follow down to the bridge.



36. Japanese Garden - the building is half inside/half outside. A good place to reflect on how man has taken inspiration from Nature and applied it to the affairs of civilization.



37. Passing between Music and Drama center - look at the mirrors and yourself. Go to the amphitheater of Mudd and read aloud any poem you have written at the Postage Stamp.



38. Hadzi Arch. End of pilgrimage phase Four. Prayer of gratitude to all who have maintained the campus and arb and for the good continuance of Druidism at Carleton. Pick up any items you left here.

39. Dean of Students. Knock loudly - loudly proclaim one word or sentence of your choice.

40. Chapel - Consider your feelings of outdoor revelation to those that come from an indoor sanctuary. What has been learned?

## Post Pilgrimage

1. You have completed the journey, tie a knot in your gray ribbon.
2. Shake all your collected items, sit down and thank each item for your journey.
3. If you have any remaining whiskey, pour it out at this point on the nearest patch of land.
4. Ground yourself for 40 heartbeats and 9 breaths.
5. Change back into your regular clothes.
6. Proceed with your life, and write down in your journal any strange dreams that you have later in the night.





CELTIC STUDIES CENTER  
PRESENTS

## CELTIC FAIRY FAITH TRADITION

Part 1 of 2  
Compiled by Daniel Hansen, Msc.D.

### The Faerie Queene

Def na Sidhe Bab-righ

*The Faerie Queene* is an epic poem in verse written between 1590-6 by the Englishman Edmund Spenser (1552-1599). It was written in County Cork of Ireland during Spenser's residence as a Munster planter and administrative official. Queen Elizabeth I's favorable reception of *The Faerie Queene* brought Spenser recognition as the age's finest poet. Ostensibly set in 'fairyland' and influenced by classical literature, medieval romance, and Italian Renaissance epic, it is also an assertion of English power and self-confidence in the period. Scholars suggest that the design may have been patterned after the *Orlando Furioso* by the Italian poet Ludovico Ariosto. Permeated with Irish material (landscapes, violent conflict, and fantasy images of the 'salvage' Irish), the poem vividly reveals its colonialist-author's interior struggles, fears, and desires during the attempt to reduce Ireland to compliance with the English government.

*The Faerie Queene* is made up of six books. It traces the 'fashioning' of a noble character by way of knightly adventures of six heroes, representing the virtues. Although the entire composition as planned was never achieved, Spenser stated in his introduction that the work when completed was to consist of 121 poems, each telling an adventure of one of the Faerie Queene's knights. Each knight would symbolize a virtue that would reflect in the moral of his quest. Just as the knights in the story were allegorical figures, so too were all of the other characters in the stories. An example is the Faerie Queene Gloriana (who represented both Glory and Queen Elizabeth I) and Prince Arthur (Magnificence, meaning magnanimity and chivalry). Several of the most virtuous women in the poem, such as Britomart and Belphoebe, also probably refer to the queen.

In Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, the realm in which the adventures took place was called Fairyland. The poem is allegorical, with Fairyland standing for the England of Spenser's day. The inhabitants claim descent from Elf (who was created by Prometheus) and a fey from the garden of Adonis. Early kings included Elfin, son of Elf, who ruled England and America; Elfinan, who founded the city of Cleoplis; Elfiline, who built the golden wall around it; Elfinell, who defeated the Goblins in battle; Elfant; Elfar, who killed two giants, one with two heads, the other with three; and Elfinor, who built a brazen bridge upon the sea. Then there is Gloriana the daughter of Oberon, queen of fairyland, with whom Prince Arthur became enamored with. Arthur saw her in a dream and fell in love with her. In Spenser's allegorical language, she stands for Queen Elizabeth I of England.

The six existing odes are laced with mythical creatures and references to wizards and sorcery:

Book One. The Redcrosse Knight of Holiness (i.e. Anglican Church) protects Una (true faith) from Archimago (hypocrisy) and Duessa (Dishonesty; the Catholic Church; Mary, Queen of Scots). Archimago, a powerful wizard, fools Una by transforming himself to resemble the Redcrosse Knight (representing St. George, the patron saint of England). Just as Una and the Knight are metaphors for Truth and the Anglican Church respectively. Archimago symbolizes Hypocrisy. The True knight defeats the magician and places him in a dungeon. The use of enchantment continues as the knight is led astray by Duessa (the Roman Catholic Church). He loses his power when he drinks from a bewitched stream and is made a prisoner of the giant Orgoglio (Pride). Eventually he is rescued by the then Prince Arthur, who kills the ogre, and the knight is cleansed and reunited with Una.

Book Two. Archimago escaped from his imprisonment. Seeking revenge, with the help of Braggadochoi, he sets out to attack Sir Guyon, the Knight of Temperance. When Sir Guyon battles Pryochles (Flames of Rage) and defeats him, the latter attempts suicide by drowning. Pryochles is saved and nursed to health by the wizard Archimago, only to be later slain by Prince Arthur.

Cymochles (Loose Living), the husband of the sorceress Acrasia (Intemperance) who lives in the forested Bower of Bliss, thinking his brother Pyrochles dead, sets out to attack Sir Guyon, but Phaedria (Frivolity) stops him. Cymochles is later killed by Prince Arthur.

In this book (viii 20-21), the name of the sword that Merlin has forged for Arthur is given as *Morddure* rather than the more commonly used *Excalibur*.

After discovering but passing without plunder the treasure cave of Mammon (Wealth), Sir Guyon defeats and captures Acrasia who is revealed to be an enchantress. She has powers similar to Circe in Homer's *Odyssey*, including the ability to turn men into swine. In the process, Gryll is transformed back into a man, having been enchanted, changed into a hog and set to roam in her Bower. Gryll's name has Plutarch (c. 50-125 CE) as a source: the Greek philosopher and biographer identified Gryllus as one of Odysseus's men who was changed into a swine by the sorceress Circe, as recounted in Homer's the *Odyssey*. Circe was a sorceress in classical mythology. She is also found in Apollonius Rhodius's *Argonautica*. In *Perceforest* she married the unfortunate Bethides, the son of Perceforest, and brought the Romans to Britannia.

Also in Book Two, a fraudulent and egotistic knight named Braggadochio (Boasting) is attended by his squire Trophee. Trophee, a trickster, is described as "wylie witted, and growne old in cunning sleights and practick knavery."

They are both unmasked and are thrown out of the castle.

Book Three. Britomart, the female knight of Chastity, sees the reflection of Sir Artegall (Justice) in a magic mirror. She instantly falls in love with him and they marry following her search for him.

Belpheobe, a female hunter also embodying Chastity, exiles Braggadochio. With an understanding of herbal folk medicine, she nurses Timias, Prince Arthur's page, back to health. To thank her, Timias helps Belpheobe save her twin sister Amoret (Noble Grace) from Corlambo (Lust). Corlambo is later killed by Prince Arthur.

Book Four. Amoret marries Sir Scudamour, but on their wedding day she is stolen and jailed by the sorcerer Busirane. Belpheobe, however, is able to rescue her sister. Timiao falls in love with

Amoret, but Belpheobe unbridles him – purportedly a thinly veiled reference to Queen Elizabeth’s irritation over Sir Walter Raleigh’s attentions to Elizabeth Throchmorton.

True Friendship is displayed by Cambell (also seen as Cambello) and Sir Triamond. Cambell offers to joist three brothers who are suitors for his sister Canacee. Only Triamond is undefeated, although he is wounded. Triamond’s sister Cambrina intervenes, the men become best friends, Cambell marries Cambrina and Triamond (healed by Canacee’s magic ring) marries Canscee.

Book Five. The adventures of Artegall, highly metamorphical of contemporary political and military events in the times of Spenser are told.

Book Six. Sir Calidore, personifying Courtesy, travels the realm of the Faerie Queene. Included in the tale is his captured of the Blatant Beast. The monster, representing Envy and Denigration, eventually breaks its chains and is still on the loose in the world.

Two surviving sketches for Book Seven, known as the Mutabilitie Cantos, suggest that the section was to have concerned the orderly procession of the seasons and of nature, including such allegorical characters as Jove, Titaness Mutabilitie and Constancie.



## FAIRY ORIGINS

Fairy legends are universal and show many similarities. There are numerous ideas about how they originated. One is that they are the descendants of the children of Eve (the biblical first woman made from the rib of Adam the first man). Another is that they are fallen angels, not evil enough to be

dismissed from heaven but not good enough to stay in heaven. A third idea is that stories about fairies arose to explain the misfortunes and disasters of others. Another theory suggests that they are spirits of the restless dead. Yet another theory is that they are simply small human beings.

One of the origin stories of fairies is told in a Christian folktale from the Western Highlands of Scotland:

“At the creation of the world, God made many beings before mankind. Some of them like the angels who followed Lucifer; wanted to make their own abode and burst out of heaven leaving the gates ajar. The rush of their going caused many other beings to be sucked out of heaven. God became aware of what was happening and pronounced, ‘Let those who are out stay out, and those who are in stay in,’ and sealed the gates once more. All the rebellious angels made their home in hell, but all the beings who had been involuntarily locked out had to remain on Earth and become fairies.”

Learned speculation on the origin of the fairies and the fairy faith has centered on four theories.

- 1.) Fairies embody a folk memory of a region’s original inhabitants. When a new people seized a territory through force of arms or technological superiority, remnants of the conquered or displaced people would linger in cave or remote areas, preying upon their conquerors in the

night. The survival in all Celtic countries of prehistoric monuments, apparently built by people of smaller stature, would support this perception.

2.)

2.) Fairies are composed of the discarded Pagan gods and goddesses and diminished heroes of the old native religion of France (Gaul), Germany, and the British Isles. While this thesis may explain the existence of fairies and fairy-like creatures in other traditions, its applications to Celtic instances require several qualifications. The full nature of Celtic religion is not known. Characters in the oldest Celtic literature, e.g. Lugh Lamfhota, Cuchulainn, and the Tuatha de Danann, are now thought to be derived from the older faith, yet they are by no means fairies. When characters from the oldest literature reappear in fairy lore, specifically Medb and Midir, they are greatly transformed. In addition, many characters in fairy lore, such as the merrow or the pooka, have no antecedents in the oldest Celtic literature but have many counterparts in international folklore.

Although these creatures are properly classified under folklore, they sometimes appear in mythological tales. The Pagan after-world was a golden “dream time” of long ago, when heroes were deified by sacred marriage with the Goddess. The Great God Lugh, father of Ireland’s dying savior Cuchulainn, came “out of the chambered undergrounds of Tara where dwell the fourth race of gods to settle Ireland. They were the glorious and golden giants, the Tuatha de Danann. These people of the goddess Danu first used gold and silver in an Age of Bronze. They first cleared the land, first drained the swamps. They built the great temples of stone like the one they sent to Britain – Stonehenge. When conquered, they retired to their underground barrows or Sidhe where they live today”.

3.) Fairies are personifications of primitive spirits of nature. Fairies are among the many spirits that populate all things and places on the planet. Earlier Celtic people, like pre-technological societies studied by modern anthropologists, may have endowed every object with a spiritual nature that was anthropomorphized over the centuries, especially after the arrival of Christianity.

4.) Fairies embody the spirits of the Pagan dead, tribal ancestors, and those who worshipped them all became “fairies”. Being unbaptized, the shades or souls are caught in a netherworld and are not bad enough to descend into neither hell nor good enough to rise into heaven. This view accommodates well the fearsome aspect of many solitary fairies and also explains the danger to mortals of eating any fairy food, i.e. that they would be prevented from returning to the realm of the living.

5.) Another view is held by the Norwegian, Scottish, and Irish Christians claimed the fairies were the offspring of fallen angels. Like the non-fallen angels, they carried off souls of the dead. Any who happened to die at twilight, the fairy hour between day and night, would find themselves in fairyland between life and death, or between heaven and hell. Such legends reflect ancient views of the after-world as without either punishment or reward but only a way station in the karmic cycle, which is why the fairies were like the undead – able to emerge from their tomb at will. As psychopomps, they were the same as Valkyries.

## SOLITARY FAIRY



Great distinction is made between the solitary and social fairies, although the first commentators to note it were W.B. Yeats (1888) and James MacDougall (1910). The solitary fairy may elect to wear red, brown, or gray instead of the customary green. He or she avoids large gatherings and prefers to be left to himself or herself, disdaining the unbridled gaiety of the social or trooping fairies. The solitary fairy is often associated with a specific household, place, or occupation, notably the she-making leprechaun of Ireland. According to many stories the solitary fairy appears ominous to mortal and easily irritated. Nonetheless, such a fairy is not indifferent to human kind, and is more likely to interact with the lives of men, women, or children. Solitary

fairies generously lavish gifts upon mortals, but the consequences of accepting them may be dire. Faithful but suspicious Christians have accused solitary fairies of being in league with the devil, a perception not widely shared; such fairies however may be on close terms with death. Among those fairies classed solitary are the *banshee*, *baodhan sith*, *brownie*, *bwci*, *cadineag*, *caoineag*, *caointeag*, *clurcaune*, *doinney marrey*, *doinney oie*, *dullahan*, *ellyll*, fairy lover [Irish, *leannan sidhe/si*], *fenodyree*, *fride/fridean*, *glaistig*, *gruagach*, *leprechaun*, *piskie*, *pooka*, *pwca*, *siabraid*, *sithich*.



## TROOPING FAIRIES

In defining the two divisions W.B. Yeats (1888) introduced the term 'trooping fairies' for those perceived to be in a group; they may also be known as social fairies, the sociable fairies, the fairy nation, or the fairy race. Although they may be friendly or sinister to humans, they are described as dancing and singing while in each other's company. Mortals may eavesdrop upon this celebration by entering a fairy mound [Irish, *sidhe*, *sidh*, *si*] or may find the evidence from fairy rings, e.g. circular tracks left in grass or flowerbeds. Trooping fairies prefer green or other

colors and may range more widely in size than solitary fairies; some may be so tiny as to have caps the size of heather bells while other may be large enough to have intercourse with humans. Although they may have higher spirits than the solitary fairies, they may still present a threat to mortals; especially to be feared are the fearsome Scottish Gaelic *sluagh*, the host of the living dead.



## FAIRY LOVERS

The concept is commonly indicated in English by an Anglicization of the Modern Irish phrase *Leannan sidhe* [fairy lover]. This most dramatic and poetic of all fairy stories concerns the doomed love between a mortal (usually male) and an immortal (usually female). The many Celtic instances of the story follow a fixed pattern found in international folklore. 1. The mortal loves the supernatural being. 2. The

supernatural being consents to marry or to make love to the mortal subject to a certain condition, such as his not seeing her a specific time. 3. He breaks the taboo and loses her. 4. He then tries to recover her and sometime succeeds, usually with great difficulty. In one familiar variation on the pattern, the fairy lover entices or seduces the mortal and pines for him when they are separated; she loves him deeply (though he may not have admitted it) and is parted from him only by the conventions of her status. A second variation depicts a woman of dreadful power who seeks both love of and dominion over mortal men. Male fairy lovers also exist in stories, characteristically well mannered and talkative, but imperious.

Lady Wilde (1887) said that the ‘leanan-sidhe’ was a spirit of life, and inspirer of the singer and poet, and thus the opposite of the banshee. W.B. Yeats (1888) thought the ‘leanhaun shee’ would inspire a poet or singer so intensely that its earthly life would necessarily be brief. The Manx *lhiannan-shee* is distinguishable from its Irish counterpart in two aspects: 1. She haunts wells and springs like Melusine. 2. She attaches herself to one man, to whom she appears irresistibly beautiful while remaining invisible to everyone else; if he yields to her seduction, she will drain him body and soul, like a vampire. Among the notable fairy lovers are *Cred*, *Etain of Inis Greccraige*, *Niam*, the unnamed lover of Connla in *Echtrae Conli* [The Adventure of Connla], and *Sin*, the fairy lover of Muirchertach mac Erca.

## FAIRY GOLD

A legend repeated by the gypsies said is a man found the statute of a naked fate (fairy) in the ruins of a Pagan temple or tomb; he should embrace it with love and eject semen on it. Then, like Pygmalion’s Galatia, the fate would come to life in his dreams and tell her lover where to find buried treasure, and she would become his “fortune”. He would be happy with her forevermore, provided he agreed to never set foot in a Christian church again as long as he lived.

This idea of the fairy-fortune might be traced way back to ancient customs of matrilineal inheritance and matrilineal marriage, characteristic of the Bronze Age myths and of fairy tales. The fairy tale hero rarely brought a bride to his own house; instead, he left home to seek his “fortune”, which usually turned out to be a foreign princess won by trial and wedded in her own country, which the hero afterward helped rule. As in the pre-patriarchal system, a woman was the “fortune” or “fate” of the young man, words which also meant “fairy”, through such intermediaries as Fata, Fay, La Fee, or the “fey” one. Fairy and Fate were further related through fear and fair: Medieval Latin *fatare*, “to enchant”, became French *faer* or *feer*.

Cornish miners refused to make the sign of the cross when down in the mine, for fear of offending the fairies in their own subterranean territory by making a gesture that invoked their enemy.

The most valuable of the metals known to the ancients, gold is usually assigned to the sun and put to use in solar talismans and other magical devices. Gold mining in Ireland is much less prevalent than the working of alluvial deposits, particularly in Avoca, County Wicklow. Indeed, the 12<sup>th</sup> century Book of Leinster describes the Leinster men as ‘Lagenians of the Gold’. The goldmine rivers of Avoca were the scene of the ‘gold rush’ of September 1798, which was abandoned because of the insurrection of 1789. Subsequently unsuccessful attempts were made to locate the ‘mother-lode’ by mining in the area. Gold has also been found in the Sperrins in County Tyrone, though recent prospecting in the area has so far been without success.



## FAIRY RING

A fairy ring (sidhe ring) is a dark circle found in a lawn or pastureland that is thought to have been caused by dancing fairies. The scientific explanation for the widespread phenomenon are less poetic; the most usual it that it is caused by the spreading of mycelia of the fungus (*Marasmius oreades*). They are inedible and animals tend to shun it. The fairy ring may appear only as a depression in the grass but may also include sprouting mushrooms. The mushroom has a reddish, buff or tawny cap. It is common in Europe, the British Isles and North America and often they appear after a heavy rain. In Britain the fairy rings are also known as *hag tracks*, in the belief that the dancing of witches creates them.

Because fairies are associated with magic, fairy rings have magical superstitions attached to them. According to folklore, fairy rings are circles of inedible mushrooms or differently colored grass, thought to be magical circles where witches and fairies meet to sing and dance at night. One tradition says that if you stand in the center of fairy ring under the full moon and make a wish, that wish will come true. Another tradition says that if you want to see and hear fairies, who often are beyond the five senses, one can run around the outside of a fairy ring nine times on a full moon to see the fairies. However, superstition holds, it is dangerous to do so on Samhain (all Hallow’s Eve) or Beltane (May Eve), two major festivals of fairies (and neo-Pagans), as the fairies may take offense and carry the mortal off the Fairyland. It is also unwise to interfere with the fairy ring ritual because if a human is lured inside he or she is compelled to join the fairies in their wild dancing. The unfortunate mortal dancer can’t escape unless rescued by someone on the outside of the fairy ring who will grab hold of his or her coat-tails and pulled out the circle by a human chain. Inside the

ring time is thought to be different, and what seems like a couple of minutes could actually be several days, month, or even seven years or more. Fairies are also said to dance around stone circles. This dark grass can also take the shape of a fairy path, and often leads to a fairy mound wherein some of the fairy race dwells. I was once believed that to be caught inside the fairy ring after dark meant that the fairies would whisk you off to their kingdom.

Fairy rings are still associated with natural magic and used by contemporary Wiccans and other neopagans as sites for meetings and seasonal festivals. The concept is widely discussed in Celtic languages, usually by translations of the ‘fairy ring’: Irish *fainne sidhe/si*; Scottish Gaelic *fianne sith*; Manx *fainey shee*; Welsh *cylch y tylwyth teg, twmpath chwarae*.



## FAIRYLAND

Many believe fairies lived in the deep woods where their sacred groves had been hidden from priestly interference. Romanians still speak of the *Fata Padourii*, Girl of the Woods, a fairy similar to the Irish banshee. At night she makes eerie sounds that portend death to the hearer. In Brittany, where there are many groves dedicated to the Moon-goddess throughout the Middle Ages, fairies were sometimes called man-devent, “Moon-goddess”.

The Irish still say fairies live in the Pagan sidhe (burial mounds and barrow graves), several hundred of which still stand in the Irish countryside. In the nineteenth century roads of Ireland were rerouted to avoid disturbing fairy mounds. Fairy mounds were entrances to the Pagan paradise, which might be located underground, or under water, or under hill on distant islands across the sea where the sun died. The Irish called the fairies’ land *Tir-nan-og*, Land of Ever Youthful Ones; or *Tir-nam-beo*, Land of the Ever Living Ones; *Tir-Tairngiri*, Land of Promise; or *Tir-na-Sorcha*, Land of Light; *Magh Mell*, plain of Pleasure; or *Magh Mon*, the Plain of Sports; or *I-Bresail*, the Land of Bresail, which gave rise to the name Brazil. Fairyland was also the magic “apple-land” of Avalon, or the Fortunate Isles, or Elf-land, Elphame, *Alfheim*, or Elvenhome. Sometimes it was “never-never” land, perhaps after the Egyptian word for paradise, *nefernefer*, and “doubly beautiful”. The Faroe Islands were once Fairyland (medieval Norse Faeroisland) because the original explorers reached them sailing west and believed them to be the isles of the dead.

Fairies are said to come out of their fairy hills at Halloween, Celtic folklore said, because the hills themselves were tomb-wombs of rebirth according to ancient belief, and Halloween was only a new name for Samhain [summer’s end], when the dead returned to earth with the help of the priestesses – who, under Christianity, were newly described as witches. Respect for the Pagan dead endured to a remarkable late date, even among Christians whose church taught them that the old deities were devils.

Fairyland was always perceived to embrace an enormous host of fey beings. It is always a monarchy with queens ruling appearing more often than the male less kings who seem little more than consorts. Among the fairy queens are Aibell, Aine, Clinda, and Grian; Queen Medb or Mab of the *Tain bo Cuailnge* [Cattle Raid of Cooley] who becomes a fairy queen in the later oral tradition. Leading fairy kings include Cuilenn and Gwen ap Nudd; Midir the Proud, a character from old Irish

literature, becomes a fairy king in later oral tradition. Some fairy monarchs are married couples, such as King Finnbheara and Queen Una, and King Iubdan and Queen Bebo. In many respects the realm of the fairy seems heavenly or Elysian.

Throughout the Celtic world, people are warned to be respectful of fairy beings, especially of their queens. Fairies, like bees, are generally ruled over by queens. Remnants of these powerful figures are found in the Italian Befana, the Gaelic Cailleach Beare and the German Percht, all of whom have become attached to midwinter festivities.

Also like bees, fairies can swarm in beneficent or malign ways, which we see in the Scandinavian Alfar who were divided into two tribes: the Svartalfar (dark elves) and the Liosalfar (light elves), as well the Scottish Court and Unseelie Court (the Blessed Court and the Unholy Court).

The fairy queen was obviously the ancient fertility mother, like Demeter or Ceres. William of Auvergne said in the 13<sup>th</sup> century she was called Abundia, or Dame Abonde: “Abundance”. She was also called Diana, Venus, Hecate, Sybil, or Titania – a title of Cretan Rhea as ruler of the earth spirits called Titans, predecessors of the Olympian gods. She had all three personae of the Triple Goddess, including the death-dealing Crone – which is why an Irish Bean-Sidhe, “Woman of the Fairy Mound”, was corrupted into banshee, the shrieking demoness whose voice brought death. In the form of the triple Morrigan, she sang of blood sacrifices related to springtime renewal of vegetation. A variation on her title was the notorious Morgan le Fay or Morgan the Fairy, also known as the death goddess, “Morgue la Faye”.

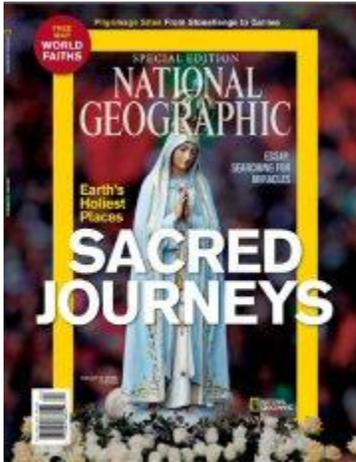
The Romance of Lancelot du Lac spoke of the fairy queen in another incarnation as the Lady of the Lake: “The damsel who carried Lancelot to the lake was a fay, and in those times all those women were called fays who had to do with enchantments and charms – and there were many of them, particularly in Britannia – and knew the powers and virtues of words, of stones, and of herbs.” Their knights were forbidden to speak their names, for fear of betraying them to Christian persecution.

In the Book of the Dun Cow, the fairy queen described her realm as “the land of ever-living, a place where there is neither death, nor sin, nor transgression. We dwell in a large Shee (sidhe); and hence we are called the people of the Fairy-Mound.” The Book of the Dun Cow (Lebar-na-heera), so called because the original manuscript was written in vellum made from the skin of a prized cow: a collection of 11<sup>th</sup> century Irish tales and poems, compiled by Mailmuri Mac Kelleher.

Toward this paradise the Fairy Queen led her lovers on a “broad, broad road across the lily lea,” as Thomas Rhymer’s ballad said, which some called the road to heaven, and others the road to hell: a prototype of the famous Primrose Path. The Queen herself was addressed as the Queen of Heaven. Sometimes her earthly angels were more spirit than mortal, like the fairies called Little Wood Women (wudu-maer) in Bavaria, to whom dumplings and other foodstuff were offered. Yet most sources admitted that the fairies were real live women. R. C. Alexander Prior, the author of a three-volume work on Ancient Danish Ballads (1860) wrote, “In Danish ballads fairies was full grown women and not diminutive beings of our English tales.” The Scottish folklorist Andrew Lang (1844-1912) said “There seems little in the characteristics of these fairies of romance to distinguish them from human beings, except their supernatural knowledge and power. They are... usually of ordinary stature, indeed not to be recognized as varying from mankind except by their proceeding.” In other words, they were women practicing heathen rites.

Time appears not to exist in Fairyland, and neither is there ugliness, sickness, age, or death. Mortals taken to fairyland may pass as much as 900 years there while thinking it was only one night. Although no one dies in fairyland there appears to be a fairy birth, as there are many stories of fairy

infants and children who require no mortal mothers to nurse them. Fairy palaces are thought to be so lavishly decorated in gold and silver, where the residents and guests spend much of their time consuming immense banquets of the richest, most delicious food. Much of time is given to dancing and music. Fairies favor two domestic animals, the dog and the horse, although fearful dogs and cats are sometimes ascribed to them. Fairies ride in procession on their white horses, their manes braided and decorated with tinkling silver bells.



## NEWS: National Geographic Issue, “Sacred Journeys” & “Sacred Places”

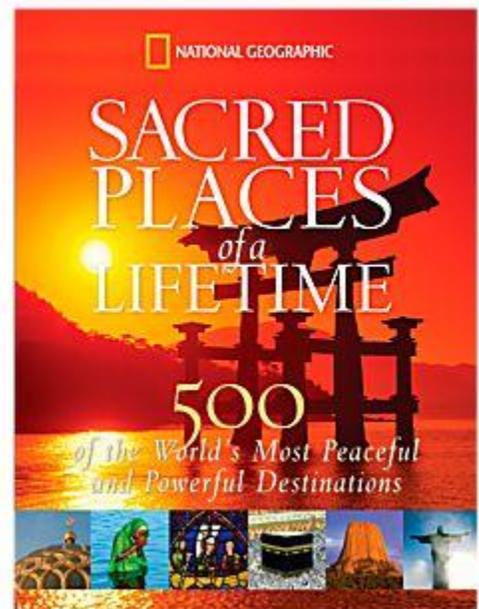
While it is not encyclopedic of all the amazing places, NG offers a breathtaking special issue with a lovely display of photos from about 30 pilgrimages of most of the larger faiths across the religious spectrum. It is available for about \$20 at <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/sacred-journeys>.

An even larger compendium of 500 sacred places at \$40. This inspirational book

showcases 500 of the world's most powerful and spiritual places—and guides modern-day travelers to and around them. From prehistoric burial chambers to modern monuments and sanctuaries, each site's history, lore, and appeal is evocatively detailed.

Nearly 300 locator maps point out pilgrimage routes, temples, mountains, churches, and holy places. This beautiful book answers the call of the spiritual traveler while also appealing to the many readers interested in sites of unique cultural heritage.

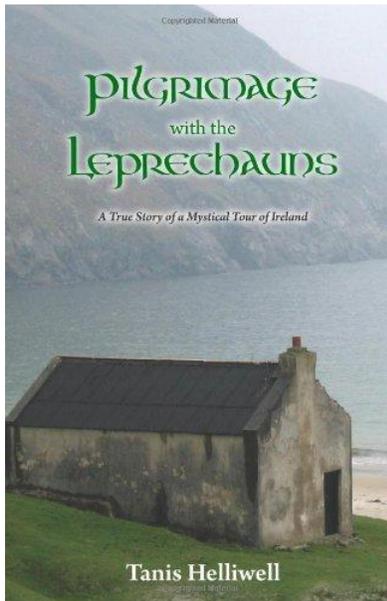
<http://shop.nationalgeographic.com/ngs/browse/productDetail.jsp?productId=6200336&code=NG25029>





## BOOK REVIEWS

(Note: These selections are based on an hour of browsing for materials in theme with this issue. I have not read any of them, but I'd love a chance to go through them. All were taken from Amazon.com and if you don't like one, give the used book to me and I'll promise to actually read it and retract my review.)



### **Pilgrimage with the Leprechauns: A true story of a mystical tour of Ireland**

**Tanis Helliwell**

#### **Product Description**

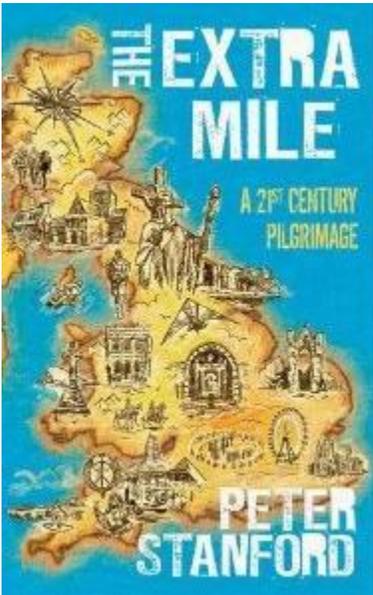
Tanis Helliwell's newest book *Pilgrimage with the Leprechauns*: a true story of a mystical tour of Ireland is a romp to the sacred sites of Ireland accompanied by a leprechaun who is helping her and her thirty fellow pilgrims face their blind spots. They have a topsy-turvy encounter with the mischievous, wise humour that the Irish call "The Craic." "The Craic cannot be pinned down and, when you try to do so, it joggles you out of your comfort zone and laughs at you. It is both the great cosmic joke and cosmic joker. The Craic is magic. The Craic comes, whenever it wants, and does, whatever it can, to move us into deeper knowing and truth. The only approach a sane person can take towards the Craic is to

surrender to it, as any resistance is futile." from the Preface In addition to being an amusing story, Helliwell's book is chock fun of information about nature spirits or elementals, as they like to call themselves. The trolls, elves, goblins, and brownies are as real for the reader as the various humans whom they partner. For anyone planning a trip to the sacred sites of Ireland, or to Ireland itself for that matter, this book abounds in nuggets as precious as the pot of gold that the Leprechaun holds at the end of the rainbow. "

As a master storyteller of today, Tanis brings her characters to life on a truly remarkable journey with a leprechaun as a tour guide." Jeff Frank, founder Nature Lyceum of New York Tanis Helliwell is the founder of the International Institute for Transformation and author of the classic *Summer with the Leprechauns*, best-seller *Take Your Soul to Work*, and poetry collection *Embraced by Love*. She has led tours to sacred sites of the world for over 20 years. Visit her website [www.tanishelliwell.com](http://www.tanishelliwell.com)

#### **About the Author**

Tanis Helliwell is the founder of the International Institute for Transformation and author of the classic *Summer with the Leprechauns*, best-seller *Take Your Soul to Work*, and poetry collection *Embraced by Love*. She has led tours to sacred sites of the world for over 20 years. Visit her website [www.tanishelliwell.com](http://www.tanishelliwell.com) or [www.iitransform.com](http://www.iitransform.com)



## The Extra Mile: A 21st Century Pilgrimage 2010 [Peter Stanford](#)

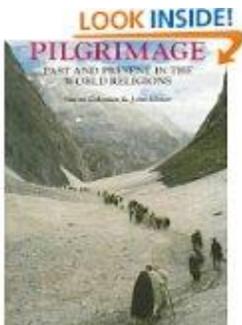
### Product Description

Peter Stanford makes a modern-day pilgrimage around some of the most ancient religious sites in Britain, to take the spiritual temperature of an age often described as secular and sceptical. Do the present-day pilgrims he meets en route go simply in search of history, or does their journey have another significance rooted in the unholy times in which we live now? Are their numbers growing as more conventional church-going declines? "The Extra Mile" is the evocative, sometimes humorous, sometimes challenging story of one individual's pilgrimage in search of faith in Britain today. As he walks between Neolithic

stones, ruined abbeys and miracle wells, Stanford explores the link between past and present belief and reflects on the spiritual state we are in.

### About the Author

Peter Stanford is a writer, journalist and broadcaster. A former editor of the Catholic Herald, his books include *Heaven: A Traveller's Guide to the Undiscovered Country*; *The Devil: A Biography*, and the polemical *Catholics and Sex* which became an award-winning TV series. He has written biographies of Bronwen Astor, Lord Longford, Cardinal Basil Hume and the acclaimed C Day-Lewis: *A Life* (Continuum, 2007). *The She Pope*, his historical investigation of the Pope Joan legend, was televised. He contributed to and edited *Why I am still a Catholic* (Continuum, 2004). His books are available worldwide in nine foreign language editions. He writes and reviews regularly on religion and other subjects in the *Independent*, *Independent on Sunday*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *Observer* and *Daily Mail* and is a columnist in *The Tablet*. He is a panellist and occasional presenter on BBC TV and radio. He is chair of the national spinal injuries charity, *Aspire*, and director of the Longford Trust. He lives in London and Norfolk.



## Pilgrimage: Past and Present in the World Religions by [Simon Coleman](#) and John Elsner (- Sep 1, 1997)

### Product Description

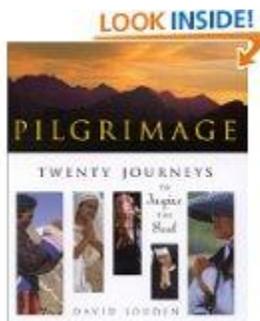
From the Great Panatheneaea of ancient Greece to the *hajj* of today, people of all religions and cultures have made sacred journeys to confirm their faith and their part in a larger identity. This book is a fascinating guide through the vast and varied cultural territory such pilgrimages have covered across the ages.

The first book to look at the phenomenon and experience of pilgrimage through the multiple lenses of history, religion, sociology, anthropology, and art history, this sumptuously illustrated volume explores the full richness and range of sacred travel as it maps the cultural imagination.

The authors consider pilgrimage as a physical journey through time and space, but also as a metaphorical passage resonant with meaning on many levels. It may entail a ritual transformation of the pilgrim's inner state or outer status; it may be a quest for a transcendent goal; it may involve the healing of a physical or spiritual ailment. Through folktales, narratives of the crusades, and the firsthand accounts of those who have made these journeys; through descriptions and pictures of the rituals, holy objects, and sacred architecture they have encountered, as well as the relics and talismans they have carried home, *Pilgrimage* evokes the physical and spiritual landscape these seekers have traveled. In its structure, the book broadly moves from those religions--Judaism, Christianity, and Islam--that cohere around a single canonical text to those with a multiplicity of sacred scriptures, like Hinduism and Buddhism. Juxtaposing the different practices and experiences of pilgrimage in these contexts, this book reveals the common structures and singular features of sacred travel from ancient times to our own.

About the Author

Simon Coleman is Lecturer in Anthropology, University of Durham.

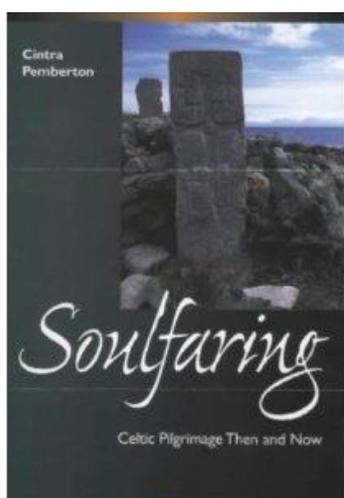


## **Pilgrimage: Twenty Journeys to Inspire the Soul**

**David Souden**

### **Product Description**

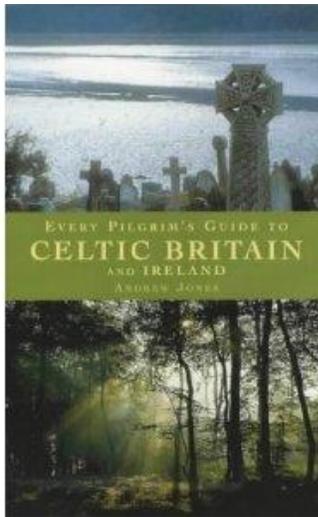
Following ancient footsteps, today's pilgrims travel, not as tourists, but as spiritual seekers with a sense that their destination has sacred meaning far beyond its literal surroundings. *Pilgrimage* traces twenty great, age-old journeys to sites all over the world. It evokes the aspirations of pilgrims past and present and describes the beauty and strangeness of the roads they travel. Some journeys are arduous---the long trek to Mount Khailasa in Tibet, for instance, or the one to Mecca every devout Muslim dreams of making. Others are poignant, such as the one the dwindling number of Native American Zuni people make to Corn Mountain, New Mexico, in the tradition of their once flourishing civilization. But all such journeys---whether to Jewish/Muslim/Christian Jerusalem or to Hindu Pandharpur; whether to the Black Madonna in Czestochowa, Poland, or to the Buddhist shrines in Kyoto, Japan; whether to the healing waters of Lourdes, France, or to the Mormon Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah--are enacted in dramatic affirmation to achieve transformation. Illustrated in full color, this book is a stunning celebration of those journeys.



## **SOULFARING: Celtic pilgrimage then and now**

By Cintra Pemberton

- **Paperback:** 240 pages
- **Publisher:** SPCK (1999)
- **Language:** English
- **ISBN-10:** 028105276X
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0281052769



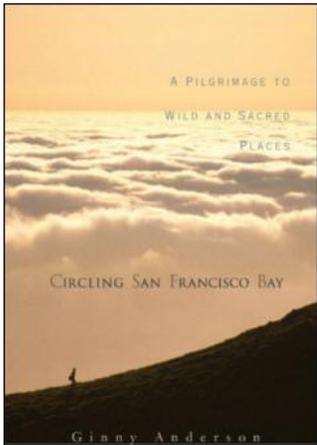
## Every Pilgrim's Guide to Celtic Britain and Ireland

By Andrew Jones, 2002

### Product Description

This pocket-sized informative travel guide is a companion to the principal Celtic sites in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Comprehensive both in content and detail, the places featured include: Scotland - Iona, Whithorn, Melrose; England - Lindisfarne, Whitby, Jarrow, Ripon, Lichfield, Old Sarum, Glastonbury, Tintagel, Canterbury, Lullingstone; Wales - Bardsey and the Llyn Peninsula, St Winifred's Well, St David's, Lantwit Major; and Ireland - Skellig Michael,

Glendalough, Kells, Kildare, Slane Hill and Tara. The stories of the saints associated with these and other places are retold for today's visitors and pilgrims, along with quotations, prayers and readings from the Celtic era. Practical information is also given, plus maps, illustrations and suggestions of other places to visit nearby. An introduction explains the significance of pilgrimage to these places both in Celtic times and in the present day.



## Circling San Francisco Bay: A Pilgrimage to Wild and Sacred Places [Paperback]

Ginny Anderson, iUniverse, New York, 2006

*Inquirer Editor Note: Given the number of Druids in San Francisco, I thought this book might provoke some thought that you don't have to go very far in order to be a pilgrim.*

### Book Review by David B. Sutton

The message of this wonderfully written book is "We live in paradise."

Nature's gifts are all around us for our infinite pleasure and to teach us -- to remind us of our place in the miraculous unfolding of the universe. It is in the wild and sacred places surrounding us that we can learn the most according to this gifted teacher of many earth traditions.

The focus of the book is the San Francisco Bay Area where the author currently lives, but these insights apply to where ever one might live. Our own paradise only awaits our recognition which can be given to us by learning from the Nature around us. We only need to listen -- listen to our inner stirrings as they respond to a myriad of Nature's voices.

While this book is a celebration of a particular piece of planet called, San Francisco Bay (a magnificent piece at that), the exercises provided would open the doors of communication anywhere. Indeed, to me, this is a major value of the book. It is a virtual goldmine of consciousness elevating, "enlightenment"

exercises, practices, ritual and ceremony.

You are asked to identify your breath with the rhythmic pulse of the Earth, to invite the fragrance of wide coastal sage to clear your mind of thoughts and to become fully present in the moment, to communicate with the ancient cypress trees, to learn to shed what you have outgrown and want to let go from the eucalyptus, to seek peace (personal and planetary) in the stars. You are taught to recognize many of Nature's portals and given the means to learn from, honor and celebrate the web of life that sustains us.

Anderson weaves a wonderfully rich tapestry of transformation and regeneration through the loom of a number of earth traditions (i.e. Andean Shamanism, Geomancy, Celtic Druid, Native American, Norse, and Indian Traditions) exposing connections between the elements of nature and the pilgrim's own consciousness.

This book speaks, in more ways than I can list here, to the value of ritual in our everyday lives. It is a delightful excursion into the bigger meaning of small things, the illuminating insights of dark times and the utter joy of fully experiencing the moment.

I was profoundly reminded of the importance of ritual to a meaningful life in the high Andes of Peru. I was with my brothers, the Q'ero who, through daily ritual, honor their connections to nature with daily greetings to the sun, offerings to Mother Earth, the mountains, sky and stars. As Pachamama's children, they playfully and lovingly acknowledge their intimate connection with the natural world. All of my book learning was mere verification of what these very wise "illiterate" brothers and sisters already knew. It was then that I realized that I needed to re-enchant my life with the meaning that this mystical child-like playfulness brings.

This present volume is the best guidebook to this re-discovery that I have ever seen.

It will always occupy a very special place on my reference shelf.

While extolling the universal applicability of this amazing little book, I do not want to neglect its primary intention which is to celebrate the sacred places circling San Francisco Bay. I, too have lived many years in this area and while I have loved it, nothing has given me the appreciation for this paradise more than this compendium of shamanistic insight with Western scholarship. Did I mention that this "enlightenment workbook" is complete with references and citations? -- a legacy to the author's previous Stanford University affiliation, no doubt.

To the author, the magic of the San Francisco Bay Area is sustained by the mountainous terrain that surrounds it. It is the powers of the land and sea that provide "the chalice and the mead for our changing consciousness." Mount Tamalpais, Ring Mountain, Mount Diablo, Mount Hamilton, Mount Umunhum and San Bruno Mountain together create a tangible circle around the communities of the Bay Area, "holding us, lovingly cupped in the hands of Mother Nature," she praises. And, as she continues, "they shape our weather, create a geographical enclosure with permeable boundaries, and hold secrets about life-sustaining processes that continue to function whether or not we pay attention."

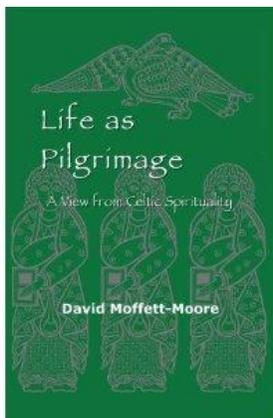
This magnificent volume is a plea for us all to pay attention and through the exercises and ceremonies mentioned above (and many others) to relearn what we have forgotten about being part of our earthly paradise.

I can't do better than conclude with the author's own concluding paragraph:

"We live in Paradise. As we walk its sacred space, we open ourselves to deeper relationships with all the beings who share it. In the audible silence of nature, we risk exposing our deepest fears, hopes, and feelings to the trees, to the wind, to the waters. In the canyons and on the peaks, we hear what we must do in order to live harmoniously with other beings of the natural world. We discover new capabilities and approaches from the natural world itself. Here in the mountains, we surrender to the pleasure of being fully alive in the moment and know that what we receive creates the power to sustain that which gives us life. The sacred space within these mountains becomes a powerful container of inspiration and vision for the future."

In short, "Circling San Francisco Bay" is a wonderful reminder of Nature's gifts and the need for the solemnity, playfulness and joy of spirit in our lives to recognize them. The Q'ero would love it.

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## **Life as Pilgrimage: A View from Celtic Spirituality**

### **Dr. Moffett-Moore**

He reminds us that our materialistically-oriented culture is suppressing our innate desire to seek meaning and purpose in our lives, as pilgrims who are on both a physical and a spiritual adventure. With the Peregrine falcon as a symbol and the Celtic tradition for inspiration, he provides us wonderful guidance for our pilgrimage. -- Dr. Douglas E. Busby, Author of "Coming Together for Spiritual Healing"

Drawing from the ancient wisdom of the Celtic Christian tradition, Moffett-Moore offers the image of pilgrimage as a resource for spiritual health. He shows how reverent attentiveness to the simple events and encounters of daily life and to the mystery at the heart of reality can make the journey both vibrant and significant. --Dr. Marlene Kropf, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

In a wide ranging philosophical exploration, Moffett-Moore invites us to approach pilgrimage as the essence of existence rather than a religious event. We could all benefit from this perspective. --James Mulholland, Author of "If Grace is True" and "Praying like Jesus"

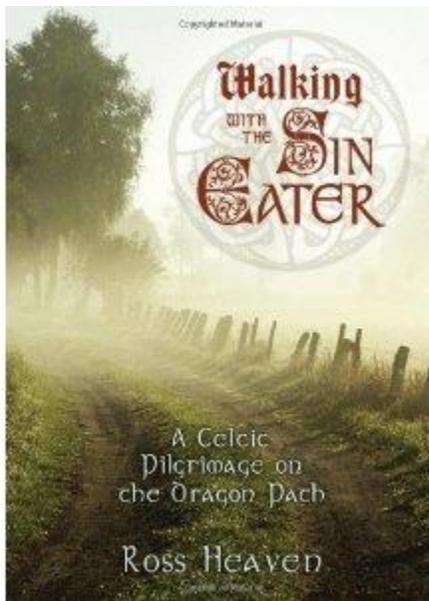
### **Product Description**

Using the Peregrine falcon as an archetype for pilgrimage, this volume explores the roots of our ancient past to discover meaning for our modern lives. From the wanderings of the hunter-gatherers through the pilgrimages of the medieval world, a sense of wanderlust and quest continues to be part of our soul.

Examining the theme of pilgrimage across cultures and traditions, it claims Celtic pilgrimage as a model for our benefit. Pilgrimage is an outward journey with inner meaning. Celtic pilgrimage is about the journey rather than the destination: life is a pilgrimage from the place of our birthing to the place of our rising. The book concludes with several practical suggestions to incorporate this Celtic pilgrimage into our daily lives.

### About the Author

In true Celtic fashion, Rev. Dr. David Moffett-Moore views life as a celebration to be shared and a pilgrimage to be explored, tracing his roots to the O'Mordha clan of ancient Ireland and the McQueen s and MacLean s of the Scottish highlands. Dr. Moffett-Moore received his Doctor of Philosophy in Theological Studies from the Graduate Theological Foundation, his Doctor of Ministry from Chicago Theological Seminary, and his Master of Divinity from United Theological Seminary. He enjoyed pilgrimages to Scotland and Ireland in preparation for this work.



## Walking with the Sin Eater: A Celtic Pilgrimage on the Dragon Path

By Ross Heaven

- *I returned to the village after a time away at university and, seeking out my old friend, I came instead upon a mystery: Adam's cottage, his garden, and Adam himself were nowhere to be found.*
- *The author and minister Frederick Buechner wrote that "in one way or another, man comes upon mystery as a summons to pilgrimage." And so it was for me. To find my friend, or at least solve the riddle of what had become of him, I embarked on a new journey of discovery.*
- Filled with shamanistic insights and magical experiences, this spiritual memoir tells the true story of

Ross Heaven's search for Adam Dilwyn Vaughan. The enigmatic Adam, who introduced Heaven to the lost art of sin eating and other Celtic traditions, left him a gift—his journal.

- As Heaven travels on the dragon path, he explores the mysteries of the Holy Grail, encounters spirit healers, and experiences an incredible vision of the earth oracle. His fascinating journey ultimately leads to powerful revelations of his life purpose and the fate of humankind.

- **This guide includes a sin eater's workbook of simple Celtic divination, dreamwork, and intuitive practices.**

- "The story is beautifully told, characters vividly described, and for anyone vaguely interested in the way that dimensions intertwine, this book is fascinating." —KINDRED SPIRIT

### About the Author



Ross Heaven (United Kingdom) is the founder and director of the Four Gates Foundation, one of Europe's leading organizations that offers courses and workshops in spiritual wisdom and Freedom Psychology. Heaven has worked and trained extensively in the

shamanic, transpersonal, and psycho-spiritual traditions. An award-winning author, he and his work have been featured in national newspapers and on radio and television.

- The Sin Eater's Last Confessions: Lost Traditions of Celtic Shamanism by Ross Heaven
- Plant Spirit Wisdom: Celtic Healing and the Power of Nature by Ross Heaven
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### **'How can I escape the insanity of my life?'**

Three recent books tackle the spiritual and emotional challenges of pilgrimages

by Jane Christmas on Tuesday, December 14, 2010 1:00pm - (From MacLean's magazine)

For many, walking Spain's hilly 800-km pilgrim's route is a life-altering experience that resonates long after the blisters are gone | Alvaro Barrientos/AP

Recent research from the University of Innsbruck in Austria revealed that Westerners no longer give a fig about whether their lives have meaning. Tell that to the more than 400,000 people who trod the Camino de Santiago de Compostela (literally, the Way of St. James in the Field of Stars) in the last few years.

Modern-day quests usually begin with the universal complaint: "How can I escape the insanity of my life?" Before you know it you're trolling the aisles of Mountain Equipment Co-op convincing yourself you'll be perfectly comfortable hiking through a country you've never visited and whose language you don't speak.

Walking Spain's ancient 800-km pilgrim's route with the barest of necessities has become a popular New Year's resolution. It's not for wimps, but many a wimp (I am one of them) has been known to hike the entire thing. There are steep hills aplenty—more than you can shake a walking stick at. The trail ends at the Catedral de Santiago de Compostela, where it is said that the bones of Christ's apostle James (a.k.a. Santiago) are buried. As legions of pilgrims will attest, the Camino is a life-altering experience that resonates years and decades after you've pried your hiking boots from your hot, blistered feet.

Three recent books tackle the spiritual and emotional challenges that accompany a journey of some consequence.

An unlikely Australian duo—a man in his fifties and a woman in her twenties—take on the Camino in *The Year We Seized the Day*. They aren't romantically involved; in fact they barely know one another, having met briefly at a writers' festival. He's a travel writer looking for a book subject; she's a confidence-lacking writer trying to improve her literary prospects by riding on his coattails. Beneath the intense glare of the Spanish sun in July (an utterly mad time to do the pilgrimage, by the way), each begins to come clean about the reasons that have brought them to the Camino. Wavering between the visceral ("I am hit by a wave of loneliness so intense, I almost double over as if kicked in the balls") and the humorous ("We are edging along a cliff face, there is a sheer drop on one side, a stumble will see her over the edge and my workload for the book immediately double"), we gradually discover a truism of Camino pilgrims: the person you perceived to be the strongest turns out to be weighted down with weakness, while the one you thought was a lightweight shows surprising strength and resilience.

Julie Kirkpatrick discovers her own truth in a much different way in *The Camino Letters*. Before setting out with her 17-year-old daughter, Kirkpatrick asked 26 friends to give her a task a day (she figures the Camino will take 26 days to walk). She receives orders that range from the tough love (to ask herself why she continually falls for people she knows will hurt her) to the banal (to list five things for which she's grateful). Kirkpatrick's introspective responses, delivered in the form of letters to the day's taskmaster, are personal and raw as she ruminates on family, bereavement, and the stress of the elusive work-life balance.

*The Miracle Chase* has nothing to do with the Camino but everything to do with miracles, which, incidentally, abound on the Camino. In this case, three American women, each of whom has experienced a miracle, decide to launch a collective quest into miracles. These are smart, ordinary gals—they could be your neighbours—armed with not much beyond a healthy dose of skepticism and a ton of curiosity. Over a 10-year span, they research the history of miracles, interview miracle recipients, debate the validity of miracles, review the scientific evidence, and try to come up with a modern definition. Their own miracles are vastly different but equally harrowing: one of the women recounts her escape from serial killer Ted Bundy; another is diagnosed with breast cancer in the midst of the trio's miracle chase; the third one's life changes when her infant daughter is abused by a babysitter. Told with wisdom and humour, *The Miracle Chase* is as much about miracles as it is about the power of friendship and of once-in-a-lifetime journeys, minus the steep hills.



## Teaching Spirituality to Kids

Learn how to teach kids about spirituality, faith, hope, and morality, even if you're a religious free agent

By Teri Cettina

Andrew Park is the son of academic parents who were disillusioned by formal religion. Although Park briefly attended a Presbyterian church as a teen, he freely admits it was more for the social opportunities than for spiritual guidance. His wife, Cristina Smith, was raised Catholic but left that church as a young adult. Their shift in thinking began when their son started attending preschool in a Methodist church and the curriculum included a half hour each week of child-friendly religious discussions and activities.

"We were slightly uncomfortable with that, but we loved the preschool and didn't want to switch," says Park. Then when their son started babbling happily at home about God and asking spiritual questions, Park and Smith panicked--and not because they worried about him being exposed to religious beliefs. "Instead, we felt kind of bad that we, his own parents, had been ignoring this obviously important part of his personal development," says Park, who went on to write a memoir, *Between a Church and a Hard Place*, about his personal struggle to remain "church-free" yet still share spiritual values with his two kids, now 8 and 6.

Park has hit on a hot-button issue for many parents. For a significant number of Americans, "spirituality" and "religion" are synonymous; if you believe in one, you're automatically committed to the other and define yourself as a Catholic, Jew, Muslim, Protestant, or member of another denomination. But the fact is, almost one in six Americans today is unaffiliated with any particular religion. Indeed, young adults under age 30--today's and tomorrow's parents, essentially--are the most likely to be living religion-free lives.

So if you or your spouse is sitting squarely on the spiritual fence--unsure of what the heck you believe in--or if you've already opted out of formal Sunday church services, can you still nurture some sort of spiritual development in your kids? Absolutely, says Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso of the Congregation Beth-El Zedeck, in Indianapolis. "You're not teaching math," she says. "You don't actually have to have the answer key on this one."

### **The Fair factor**

Of course, that also doesn't mean you have to be prepared to spout wise words to your kids about God, creation, and the afterlife (unless you want to). Rabbi Sasso defines spirituality broadly as "an inner belief system that the universe and all people are connected in ways we can't see; that life is about more than just 'me, me, me.'" In other words, it's not only "Is there a God?" What Rabbi Sasso says is key: that you actively listen to your kids' guesses and musings about things like whether their hamster, Fluffy, has a soul or if there's such a thing as angels, and that you explore spiritual concepts together--however your family is comfortable. Lisa Miller, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology and education at Columbia University's Teachers College, in New York City, heartily agrees: "When it comes to spirituality, we parents are just our kids' ambassadors. We can show them around, but we don't need to know everything."

And that exploration is well worth the effort. Miller's research indicates that personal spirituality results in much more than just a nice warm, fuzzy feeling. She says kids who develop a sense of a loving higher power or a guiding force--whether they call it God, creator, Allah, or simply "loving universe"--are 80 percent less likely to suffer major depression and 50 percent less likely to suffer from substance abuse as teens.

Similarly, a study from the University of British Columbia, in Canada, found that children who are spiritual (and researchers clearly separated "spirituality" from "attending church services" or "belonging to a church") tend to be significantly happier individuals overall. Having an understanding of something greater than themselves seems to enhance children's sense of personal meaning and purpose, and to reinforce their connections to their community and to other people. The big question, then, is how to do it? Some ways to give your children the gifts of faith and hope:

### **Define "spirituality" versus religion**

If you don't belong to an organized religion, your children will likely ask why their friends attend church or temple services and they don't. "I've told my kids that churches, synagogues, and mosques are places where you can worship formally, with other members of a community," says Lisa Braun Dubbels, a mom of two in Minneapolis. "I've also impressed upon them that you can find God anywhere--outside in nature, at a museum, at school, or in your bedroom." You could also remind your kids that every family does things differently: "Your friends might speak a different language, observe unique cultural traditions, or attend a church. Our family might make another choice, but all are equally valid."

### **Admit that sometimes you just don't know**

This one scares many "on the fence" parents. Your kid asks you a big question, like "Where will Grandma go when she dies?" and you freeze. Or, to avoid sounding like a fraud, you sidestep tough questions altogether. Mimi Doe, a mom of two and coauthor of *10 Principles for Spiritual Parenting*, likes to tackle tricky questions with the phrase "I'm just not sure. Life is full of so many mysteries!" Then she suggests sharing any information you can, such as "Some people believe XYZ and some people believe ABC. I was brought up to believe JKL. But what do you think?" Having this kind of chat takes a little more time, but it's more authentic. And that's important: If you fake your answer, your kids will know.

### **Credit habits of reverence**

Yep, these sound strikingly similar to prayers and rituals. But, hey, they've been effective for millennia as a way to show thanks or concern. Feel free to borrow prayers or poems from different cultures, or to encourage family members to write their own. Elise Rebmann of Edwardsville, IL, encourages her two children to "do their gratefuls" in lieu of a prayer before dinner. "Sometimes my five-year-old is grateful for candy or his toy airplane, while my ten-year-old daughter talks about what was good in her day," she says. Other options:

- Say aloud "Good thoughts to anyone sick or hurt" when an ambulance or fire truck roars by.
- Light a candle and hold hands for a minute at night before bed. Have a moment of quiet or share something nice that happened that day.

- Come up with a thankful song for teeth-brushing time, like "I'm grateful for my healthy teeth. I'm grateful for my face that holds my teeth. I'm grateful for my body that holds my face. I'm grateful for my family that holds my body close!"

### **Read together often**

Many good children's books hit on topics related to kindness, justice, tolerance, fairness--all issues that could be considered "spiritual" in that they address the connectedness of all people and of living life with purpose. Just don't get too heavy-handed during your reading sessions, notes Rabbi Sasso, herself an author of several children's books, including *God's Paintbrush*. "Instead of 'See how this story teaches us not to be selfish?' ask your child open-ended questions like 'What did you think was the most important part of this story?'" or "What would you have done?" Sasso suggests

### **Create a family mission statement**

Many spiritual traditions provide a framework of values or principles to follow. Try creating something similar for your family. "Even kids as young as three or four understand something like 'Our family believes in kindness, helping other people, caring for pets, and reaching out to people who are alone,'" says Doe. You can get formal and post your mission statement in your kitchen, or simply use it when you're making choices about how to spend your time or resolve conflicts.

### **Open up about your own inner life**

"Kids benefit greatly from hearing out loud how we handle life's ups and downs," says Doe. "It could be as simple as saying to your child 'I'm really worried about Poppy today and my stomach hurts. I'm going to take a moment to do some breathing.' Then 'Oh, I'm starting to feel better. I'm going to send Poppy some good thoughts, too.'" Miller's research indicates that kids who have at least one parent who is openly spiritually inclined--again, formal religious beliefs not required--tend to continue exploring spiritual issues on their own in adolescence and adulthood.

### **Delve into spiritual traditions**

Consider it a way to offer your children a global education. Dubbels and her husband were raised within--and subsequently left--Catholic, Jewish, and Lutheran traditions but feel strongly about introducing their kids to a wide variety of spiritual approaches. "Art is a great way to show kids how spirituality is part of history. We live a few blocks from the Minneapolis Institute of the Arts and visit at least once a month," she says. "My son always wants to visit one of the Buddhas, and my daughter enjoys the Egyptian and Judaica collections."

### **Schedule in downtime**

"One thing religions have done well for centuries is to offer people time to pause in their week, check in, and reflect about bigger issues," says Doe. You can do the same for your own family. Go for a walk. Try yoga together. Have your kids draw or write in a journal about a spiritual topic like "What do you

wish you could ask God/creator/higher power?" Or designate an hour a week as unplugged (no electronics) family time.

### **Teach by example**

Tiffany Dodson and her husband, Tom, of Lancaster, PA, focus on teaching their daughter, Mallory, 4, about the Golden Rule: "Treat others as you would like to be treated." So last Christmas, they "adopted" a needy family with a 1-year-old girl. Dodson helped Mallory pick out some of her own clothes and toys to give to the family to remind her of the need to help others who are less fortunate, she says.

### **Lean on your spiritual beliefs in hard times**

When a grandparent or a pet dies, when a natural disaster hits, when your child encounters something unfair--all of these are opportunities for your child to turn to a higher power or connected universe for comfort. "In our family, we talk to our angels when we are upset," says Rebmann. "I've taught my kids to ask their angels about problems they have and to trust their own 'inner ears' when the angels talk to them."

As for Andrew Park, the religion-free dad living in the middle of the Bible Belt, he and his wife are still struggling with how to approach their kids' spiritual education. The parents talk with their children about issues of faith when they come up in stories and movies; they broached the topics of heaven and an afterlife when the kids' grandparents died; and they attend Christmas Eve church services every year as a family holiday tradition. "We've also visited a couple of different churches and taken the kids along. But as for actually joining a church--that's way too hard for us," says Park. "We're still sort of fumbling around in the dark, like many parents we know."

And as with all aspects of parenting, fumbling is perfectly okay and expected, says Rabbi Sasso. Teaching kids about spirituality isn't about doing it perfectly or finding the "right" church. "It's more about asking deeper questions with your children and letting them see people living out their lives with meaning," says Rabbi Sasso. "All parents can do that."