



Summer Solstice Issue
Year of the Reform “LII”
June 28, 2014 c.e.
Volume 31, Issue 4

Editor’s Note: My studies of Arabic have been very intensive, but I have a lot of time this summer and fall to work on some Druidic projects, like perhaps putting out a new Magazine Volume for ARDA2 (2004-2014). I also hope that Druids will visit me in Washington DC this summer, as I have a spare guest room.

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NEWS OF THE GROVES

CARLETON GROVE: News from Minnesota

(Two further articles from Carleton “Demystifying Druids” “Most likely to be Archdruid” further down in this issue)

BELTANE 2014 Celebration by John M & Anna at Carleton

At this time we left two to tend the flame for the Rugby players while two of us did venture forth to place some things back into the car. We had want to travel lightly, as we would no doubt head to an inn of comfy-ness later so I might rest while Earl was tested by the all-night vigil. When we were returning unto the hill we saw the two we left with the great Druid who graced us with her presence coming towards us. Fore it was I and John where the two who departed to the car and thus returned to our journey.

We thus headed toward the monument which upon carved is the history of the first mission, the first cabin/church and first wedding to be held upon the sacred lands of Carleton. There we conversed and then continued on towards the Den of Druids.

In the Den we found no wood for the vigil and Earl sayeth he was filled with desire to do his vigil and the Den would suit his needs. The Hill of Three Oaks had wood upon it for a fire but we would need to see if we could liberate some for our needs. But our journey did not rest here for terribly long. And we thus continued on our way.

Accompanied by the gracious Druid, we four made our way unto the place of the last known altar, the Stone Circle. Here we did once again celebrate the season; here we did hear the Druid’s tales more fully. John did offer of her and she accepted to bless us by joining with us in the order of the first. I call her Druid as she has tended many dogs and she has great love for the land. She has nursed the sick animals and even saved a few from death. Out of love and compassion she maintains nine dogs because they would not do well with others because of past treatment. And I had noticed that her companion, a very faithful dog was well behaved and love the attention we lavished upon him. We came to find out that Fergus was part herding dog which may have explained his loyalty to Nancy, but whatever the reason I’m certain her kindness and love had something to do with it.



We thus returned to the Hill of Three Oaks and bade Nancy a safe return from when she came and our blessing upon Fergus for the same. Here was approached the Rugby players and again

spake with their leader of greatness. And we were assured that they would depart at the hour of 7 and any wood left would be ours to raid as we needed.

Verily, we four left for the inn of comfy-ness and to find our supper. Here we reclined upon lush beds while Ross did walk about until the hour of 6. In the Inn did John research more for the vigil that was to come. At the hour of 6 we ate supper and then headed back to the sacred Carleton sites.

Now was the time we gathered wood and prepped the den. I was asked this second time, for the first time upon the Hill between our visitors I had stated my intent to go the third order, upon the sacred land. Does one count the question being asked at the Inn as part of this, for it was part of the journey but not upon the land of Carleton. We thus made our way to Mai Fete Island to being the final stages of our purpose.



Visitation by a satyr of some type?

Now, upon the hill, ready to begin we say a maiden who approached us. She was clad in sandals, and wore clothing of one who attends the school, about her neck was a pendant of wood upon ascribed is the symbol of Awen. Her hair was the color of strawberries and she greeted John when she had reached us. This was Anna, current student at Carleton.

We set about our rite in the name of Be'al. We gave sacrifice to the Earth Mother and it was accepted and it was good. We called upon the mighty Dalon Ap Landu that the waters might be hallowed and we were blessed with the Waters of Life.



Anna was asked and she did assent to it, so we did welcome unto her the order of first. For it was by John's hand that the Waters were blest and by his hand she was so sealed up onto the first order, thus it is by John that it was so granted. Then I was asked, and knowing of myself my own heart, I did commend myself unto the order of the second. And the Waters I drank were full of

life and did burn with the spirit of Dalon Ap Landu, the strength of Be'al and the blessing of the All Changing Earth Mother. When it came time we completed our rite.



Anna had obligations and bid us a safe stay at Carleton and Earl with luck for his test to come and then she went the way she came. It was in peace we parted for it is in peace we meet as well. For that is how the Druids should be, at least in my mind. Even as we quarrel, let peace come to us, each in his/her own way that we should part in peace from one another. It was now that I began to ponder the great mystery of attaining the third order but not wanting to eclipse Earl's preparations I did think to hold off for my own testing at a time later in the year.

It was at this time, before we separated that another maiden full of wisdom and with a masterful companion was headed towards us. And she did come with staff in hand and spaketh in eloquence of whence she came, from a place called Spring Valley. She did regale us with tales of great deeds and of places like Arizona and New York. But most of her tales would have to wait. We did find she called herself Nancy and her companion Fergus.

For thus, we were approached by a great leader from the field of battle which being below us. This man was indeed great for he spoke and seemed of an intellect that spoke diplomacy rather than brute force like many others of the teams of Rugby. For on this day the team of Carleton was pitted against the team Olaf, the sainted. While the bitter rivals waged their war below us, we had gathered in peace, so it was in this regard the great leader approached us.



He had given notice to those that are the law keepers of the land, who being officials of the college could grant the use of various spaces to those who ask of them. And being one who is of the college, he hath more say than we of our four who not being students have only set foot up these sacred spaces merely as guests and followers of the Founders' ideals and never having enrolled in the college of Carleton ourselves. We could not fight them, we had no weapons and were sorely outnumbered. The law was on their side and he could have taken the hill by force. But he spoke with us and in politeness asked if we were going to remain at the sacred hill. We

were not going to stay there all day for the test was to be administered elsewhere on that sacred land.

OAKDALE GROVE: News from Minnesota

Oakdale Grove visits Carleton College for the Midsummer Solstice celebration. Howard Cherniak, one of the original founders of the RDNA, honored us with his presence as an observer, and partook of the Waters-of-Life with us in Fellowship.



Paul photographed Howard as he returns to the Alumni Reunion events. We all forgot to request a group photo with him. We told him it was an honor to have him present, and congratulated him on his 50 year reunion.

— at Carleton College Cowling Arboretum.

10 were there in attendance including Howard Cherniak (Order of Dalon Ap Landu Emeritus), and another Carleton alumnus from the 1970s whose name I forget (Raymond? Randal? [definitely not Richard]). Also among the 10 was Dakota the Dog, who we did not Ordain to the First Order, neither did she partake of the Waters-of-Life... not this time, at least.

— at Carleton College Cowling Arboretum.



Congratulations to Jeffrey on passing the Ordeal, and was ordained as a Reformed Druid of the Second Order on the Solstice!



Upon the appointed hour, the horn did sound. The dog lead forth and the druids and others approached. Once upon The Hill of the Three Oaks the Waters of Life were mixed. Among those present was Howard Cherniak, the Apostate.

Then Earl the Seeker spoke and the ritual began. John the Verbose did serve. Hail Belenos! Now came the time the Waters of Life were blessed and it was offered for those who sought to be 2nd Order to step forward. Jeff and man of Gunder (Jeff Gunderman) did step forth.

I was given the task to grant the Order of 2nd. And thus I spoke of service to the Earth Mother and her followers. And being fully sealed unto Her service Jeff was consecrated a 2nd Order of the RDNA

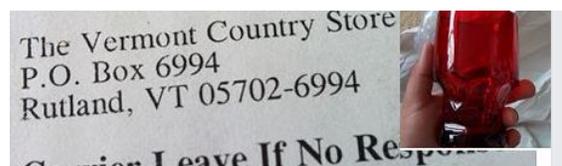
Earl and I were quite blessed from Belenos while others were more smart and wore hats. Upon ending our rite we did speak with Howard Cherniak. He told us that the RDNA was founded to poke the eye of the admin. And it worked but then it took on a life of it's own. It came time for him to return to the Alumni reunion and we sought out food at a Contented Cow.

A short version of Carleton College, Mid-Summer by Paul the Bard.

Congratulations Earl and Paul, for successfully completing the All-Night Vigil and entering the Order of Dalon Ap Landu!



unboxing photo set of a ruby Mosser Georgia pattern glass tumbler which arrived a few weeks ago. Oakdale Grove will use it for ordination services to the Third Order. So shiny! Eventually I'd like to collect a cobalt blue one and a green one like Norm Nelson's.



Monument Grove: News from Washington DC

I remember that weary moment well -- on a foggy chilly morning back in 1993, over half-a-life ago, as I strode forth into my vocation.

Today, I walked around my grove this afternoon and asked the trees for their opinion to keep proceeding. They waved their limbs enthusiastic in blasts of strong winds. "Alrighty, then, I'll keep going."

We'll see what comes next.
-Mike the Fool



Sherman Grove : News from Michigan

The Sherman Grove was declared once again on 25 May and Leesa and Seamus were inducted as Druids of the 1st Order in RDNA/NRDNA and given Earth Mother necklaces to commemorate the event. Jon Drum and Sean Harbaugh presiding. In a separate Canadian version of the ritual, Julie and Stacie were in attendance and one joined the 1st Order and one renewed their vows to the Earth Mother. Medallions were also distributed to both
Yours in the Mother,
Jon Drum

Ravens Call Grove: News from Quebec

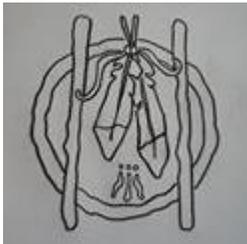
We are having a special Goblet on Wednesday night, the eve of Beltane. Penny will give a presentation at the Goblet on her journey to her priesthood and will talk and share about her assignments. Penny will be ordained on the 10th of May 2014.

Ordination is the process by which individuals are consecrated, that is, set apart as clergy to perform various rites and ceremonies. One who is in preparation for, or who is undergoing the process of ordination are ask to do assignments. These assignments are to able the ordinand to undertake a crucial self-examination and self-assessment task. It is a difficult period. One has to be ready to offer one's own life to serve and to teach and devote our life to druidry, to the Earth Mother and to the quest of life's mysteries.





Penny's ordination album available at https://www.facebook.com/PenLaYou/media_set?set=a.10153093171830260&type=1



Druid Sigil by Sebastien

It is with great pride and honour that I will be ordaning Penny to the fellowhip of the 3rd Order and as priest within the RDNA tradition.



Rhiannon Hawk shares a recent Grove Photo



See her previous essay on this project in the Fall Equinox Issue 2008, "How To BUild a Nemeton"
["http://www.rdna.info/druidinquirer03.doc"](http://www.rdna.info/druidinquirer03.doc)

Tuatha De Danaan Grove: News

Mark Boyd's RDG grove released it's Druid Salmon Grove Newsletter Issue 1:
<https://app.box.com/s/f65kj0ik9b4qkgq3o878>



Happy 50th Anniversary to OBOD



DRUID BLOGS



A Pedagogy of Gaia, by Bart Everson: “Flowers to Flame”
By Eric Steinhart (recommended by Bart Everson and Helga)
<http://humanisticpaganism.com/2014/06/18/a-pedagogy-of-gaia-by-bart-everson-flowers-to-flame/>



Rua Lupa on Summer Solstice
<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/pathsthroughtheforests/2014/06/12/saegoah-celebrations-lux-summer-solstice/>



SEBASTIEN BEAUDOIN (of Raven’s Call Grove)
Over 150 people visiting my blog all ready !!! Thank you!
<http://druidaefigulus.weebly.com/>

DRUID POETRY

on my shoulder there's a spirit
whispering tales of semi-truth
he's a smart little being
knows how to catch my attention
bringing me a lullaby
between afternoon-naps
whatever happened to daydreaming
it seems we can't take time
to loosen burdens and reasoning
and rat-racing agendas
I think I'll sleep a bit
and when I am back
he'll be on my shoulder
wondering why I didn't hear on his songs
-Hennie

but never let me forget
the dance on the plain
the walk in the wood
the swim in the sea
let me go
but never let me forget
but never let me forget
the laughter of love
the tears of love
the being of love
let me go
but never let me forget
but never let me forget
the hands stroking
the mouths kissing
the sweat all over
let me go
but never let me forget
please, never let me forget
-Hennie

Death doesn't fight
She knows the outcome
Death doesn't lament
Her boon is only natural
Death doesn't plead
She knows She's not guilty
Death feels no pain
-Hennie

the question
where is Heaven?
where are the Gods?
where do the dead go?
the Earth, the Earth, the Earth
who makes us grow?
who makes us love?
who makes us believe?
the Earth, the Earth, the Earth
who scares us to pieces?
who lets our dreams flourish?
who should we thank?
the Earth. the Earth, the Earth
Oh, and our fellow men, if possible...
-Hennie

the Queen of Elfland
who might She be
but a dream on the Edge?
the King of Faerie
what will he tend
but the surrounding Entities?
they reign like Thoughts
of dread and hope
can you feel their urge to Wonder?
Faery tale is the One tale between the Worlds
-Hennie

My dream

May 3, 2014 at 12:02am

It started with a rhythm of a soft beating drum
Then came the image of a church parking lot
It starts weird, I know.

It appeared to be a time of tribulation.
It seemed to be a sad gathering.
I seemed to be someone's funeral.
I saw many relatives standing in front of me.
So, I thought it was someone I knew.
Cause everyone there, I recognized.

My first thought was that it might be an aunt or
an uncle,
A cousin, a close friend of the family.
But it was not a funeral,
It was an important gathering,
Some type of a remembering.

Then the drumming became stronger
Then dancers appeared,
Men in beautiful traditional clothing
With beautiful feathered headdress.
Both dancing in synchronized rhythm
To an ancient sacred beat.
These men were not like everyone there.
They were ghost, they were spirits.
Then they pointed,
For me to look at street.
Where a great precession was taking place,
What appeared to be a great walk ,
It was my ancestors.

First came the Children.
Then Maidens,
Mothers with babies,
And Grand-mothers.
Then came the young men,
The Fathers,
And Grand-fathers.

The precession was getting bigger and bigger.
The drumming got louder and louder,
Stronger.
Then everyone faced me
With their beautiful eyes and with their serious
gaze.
Inviting me to join,
To take part in this great walk,
A Beautiful passing.

So I ran to meet them.
Took my place amongst the fathers.
I followed them, I walk with them.
All heading into a church.
Then when walking into the church they
vanished.
None of them were to be found.

Then the priest looked up at me and people in
the church stared,
Standing in the middle of the church,
I felt not accepted.
As if I did not fit in no more.
I was now a stranger in the church of my
childhood.

Then I turned and ran out.
Not looking back.
No frightened,
But immensely relieved,
As the sun gleamed in my face,
Its warmth greeted me back.
That place was not mine,
I knew, I never belonged.

Then the dream was all over.
I had woken up happy,
Then sadden.
That I could not lay my eyes on
My ancestors again.

This dream still haunts my memory.
Like it was a moment ago.
I feel honored.
But yet feel lost without them.
Today I seek my people.
But knowing soon that I will rekindle,
My native spirit
With my relations once more.

Personal note: This was a real dream I had a year ago. I still remember it like it was yesterday. I have told it many times to my wife and to my closest friends. Now I share it with you. Some may say that it was just a dream. But I'm convince that it was something else. Much bigger, because in fact it has awakened something deep within me. It has given me a strong sense of pride and connection. -
Sébastien Beaudoin (2/5/2014)



Mists of Time

Footfalls, on a wending path we go, torches lit in dark, do flow, spirals round the earthen mound, ever deeper, in, a chanting sound. Round and round a circle of light, higher up in windy might. To the topmost of the tor, towering high above earths floor. Lights a flicker on the tor, stars a twinkle as they soar. The first light of day does dawn, sun peeps through, on this fair morn. Shadows cast off, to the west, the veil is shrouded in misty mess, through shadow and flame, i must go, through the veil, to times before. The mists of time dance in there jest, and all sight fades as the mists caress. Slower, deeper, into the silvery thread, i walk a path that others have tread. A warm golden glow, does harken to me, a path through the veil, i do see. Sunlight dapples, through the trees, and a wind so soft, floats on the timeless breeze. Bees hum gently, in summers land, soft voices whisper, and show welcome hand. Apples of plenty, fall from the trees, apple of my eye, love with ease. Silver branch and silver bough, you share with me, and to me, you endow. Orchards of apples, forest of trees, a gift bestowed, a gift to please. Blossoms of love, fall from the trees, i see you and you see me. Blossoms so heady in their smell, from which tree spirits, do cast their, life spell. Trees of the orchards, stand all around, waving gently in murmuring sound, blossoms float by, on the morning dew, trees whisper stories how life grew. Down to the water edge, of this fair, isle, i sit, i dream, i stay for a while. I drink from a spring and refresh my thoughts, swirling emotions of memory sort. A dip in the waters kisses my skin, emotions collide and new ones begin, shaping and forming like a passing tide, i sift through the ever flowing, with all of it's stride. A stroll in a meadow, of flowery wild fields, skip through the grassy knolls onto mushroom seams, i look down into the realm, a realm of dreams, where the hills are hollow and dwell in crystal seams. Up to the stone circle in the night, where a bonfire dances with the starlight. Wisps of light race through the air, and summers dance rejoices with flare. Whirls of mist shimmer in the night, and settle on the waters, glassy sight. Moon, she shines down, and sparkles, pebble and sand, as dew begins to form as father sun shines on the land. Shadows are cast again in the veil, the in-between weaves it's translucent tale. I tread the mists of time, to present day, the sun shines brightly and comes out to play. Up on the tor, the druids chant to father sun, they echo of time, and time begun, the druids chant, and they chant some more, they echo of the days, gone by, and days of yore. Down in the terraces where the green grass grows, where the trees root deep, and waters flow, i sit and rest my weary feet for a while, and dream of oaks and apples on blessed isle. Darkness dwells in heady dreamy sleep, then Father Oak shakes me to my feet, back in my grove, home to me. I dwell on the glass the glassy sea.

By
Penny Young

Le Chant du Barde

Je ne suis qu'un maillon de l'invisible chaîne
dont Esus, pour toujours, a soudé les maillons.
Je ne suis qu'une feuille au front du vaste chêne,
Que diadème encore le rameau de Gwyddon.
Tout enfant j'ai suivi les leçons de nos sages,
Écouté les propos et recueilli les chants.
Ma mémoire fidèle a transmis leur message
Des monts calédoniens aux îles du couchant.
Je ne suis qu'un chaînon de la chaîne invisible,
Je ne suis qu'un écho des vieilles vérités.
Si mes maîtres, prudents, n'ont pas laissé d'écrits,
Leur voix parle à tout cœur de l'écouter.
Bien des étés ont lui, bien des hivers neigé,
Depuis que j'ai reçu les dons qui ne s'accordent
Qu'aux porteurs de l'Awen : l'anneau de fer forgé,
La coupe rituelle et la harpe à neuf cordes.
Pèlerin jamais las de la terre celtique,
Bien des étés ont lui depuis les jours lointains,
Où j'allais consulter les oracles antiques,
Des rivages de l'ambre aux îles de l'étain.
J'ai chanté mes espoirs et j'ai chanté mes rêves,
J'ai chanté les héros, honneur du vieux pays.
Sous les coups du destin comme sous ceux du glaive,
Mon cœur n'a pas tremblé, mon chant n'a pas faibli.
Tout jeune encore j'allais, interrogeant les sages,
Méditant les conseils et recueillant les chants.
Les aïeux m'ont légué, transmis du fond des âges,
Les secrets arrachés autrefois aux géants.
Je sais des chants d'espoir et des chants de détresse,
Des chants pour le combat, des chants pour le festin.
J'ai chanté les secrets de l'antique sagesse,
La gloire des héros et les jeux du destin.
Je suis un chaînon de la mystique chaîne
Et j'attends seulement, car mon heure est prochaine,
L'enfant blond que Gwyddon a marqué de son sceau,
Pour lui rendre la coupe, la harpe et l'anneau.

André Savoret
(1898-1977),
Druide puis Alchimiste
Recommended by Sebastien

Have you ever wandered lonely through the woods?
And everything there feels just as it should
You're part of the life there
You're part of something good
If you've ever wandered lonely through the woods
if you've ever wandered lonely through the woods



Have you ever stared into a starry sky?
Lying on your back you're asking why
What's the purpose I wonder who am I
If you've ever stared into a starry sky
Have you ever stared into a starry sky

Have you ever been out walking in the snow?
Tried to get back to where you were before
You always end up not knowing where to go
If you've ever been out walking in the snow
If you'd ever been out walking you would know

-Brandi Carlisle, (Not RDNA)

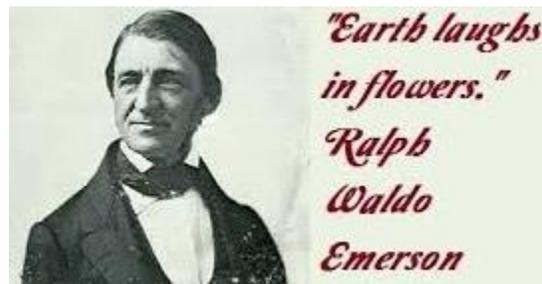
Performed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=coyMHk2LTnc>

Recommended by Mike the Fool

"There is no chance and no anarchy in the universe. All is system and gradation. every god is there sitting in his sphere. the young mortal enters the hall of the firmament; there is he alone with them alone, they pouring on him benedictions and gifts, and beckoning him up to thier thrones. On the instant, and incessantly, fall snowstorms of illusions. he fancies himself in a vast crowd which sways this way and that and whose movement and doings he must obey: he fancies himself poor, orphaned, insignificant. The mad crowd drives hither and thither, now furiously commanding this thing to be done, now that. What is he that he should resist their will, and think or act for himself? Every moment new changes and new showers of deceptions to baffle and distract him. and when, by and by, for an instatnt, the air clears and the clouds lift a little, there are the gods still sitting around him on their thrones - they alone with him alone."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson -

Shared by Mike Gwydion



Dacw 'Nghariad

Dacw 'nghariad i lawr yn y berllan,
Tw rymdi ro rymdi radl idl al.
O na bawn i yno fy hunan,
Tw rymdi ro rymdi radl idl al.
Dacw'r ty, a dacw'r 'sgubor;
Dacw ddrws y beudy'n agor.
Ffaldi radl idl al, ffaldi radl idl al,
Tw rymdi ro rymdi radl idl al.
Dacw'r dderwen wych ganghennog,
Golwg arni sydd far serchog.
Mi arhosaf yn ei chysgod
Nes daw 'nghariad i 'ngyfarfod.
Dacw'r delyn, dacw'r tannau;
Beth wyf gwell, heb neb i'w chwarae?
Dacw'r feinwen hoenus fanwl;
Beth wyf nes heb gael ei meddwl?

There Is My Love

There is my love down in the orchard,
Tw rymdi ro rymdi radl idl al.
Oh how I wish I were there myself,
Tw rymdi ro rymdi radl idl al.
There is the house and there is the barn;
There is the door of the cow house open.
Ffaldi radl idl al, ffaldi radl idl al,
Tw rymdi ro rymdi radl idl al.
There is the gallant, branching oak,
A vision, lovingly crowned.
I will wait in her shade
Until my love comes to meet me.
There is the harp, there are her strings;
What better am I, without anyone to play her for?
There's the delicate fair one, exquisite and full of life;
What nearer am I, without having her attention?

As performed <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47ug70j-H-s&feature=share>
Recommended by Penny

DRUID VIDEOS



http://www.youtube.com/attribution_link?a=1Pq_XmsNco0&u=%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DfniZzaViEZc%26feature%3Dshare



http://www.youtube.com/attribution_link?a=xyrdPEAPY6I&u=%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DVs-ZiRs_isM%26feature%3Dshare



The ancient Celtic Carnyx horn performed, and its history. Shared by Nancy.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2hE8Se9u6Y&feature=share>

Another at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w4t8ap5KXqQ&feature=share&list=RDNYM0xB5Jrc0>



Taking a walk (preferably outside), even briefly, makes you more creative. So if your spirituality seems stunted, then you need to put your sole(s) in touch with the earth and work off that Druid-block to unlock your awareness. Take the pause that refreshes, and return invigorated.

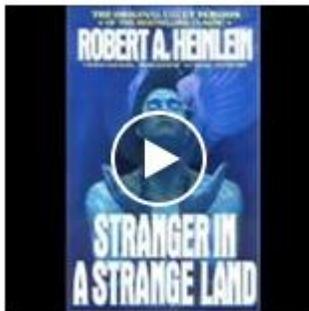
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lIZXmLe-61c>



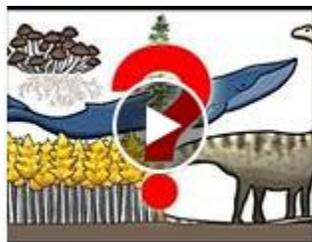
I thought you might like my new animation about Gwydion the Celtic Bard - a Heavy Metal Fairytale "Gwydion Ganwyd o Goed yn Caer Wydion", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YR9AxuXfYXw>



The Oak, recommended by Penny <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XaO-lvvFW3I>



Stranger in a Strange Land Audiobook <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CaPRKilloWE>



What is the biggest organism on earth? <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWAA-SrrFUQ>

DRUID PODCASTS

DruidCast



Order of
Bards Ovates & Druids

OBOD's Druid Podcast #86

<http://www.paganmusic.co.uk/druidcast-a-druid-podcast-episode-86/>

The Forming of Blodeuwedd and Gwydion's Dream – Robin Williamson - <http://www.pigswhiskermusic.co.uk>

Scarborough Faire – Martin Carthy

- <http://www.watersoncarthy.com>

Interview with Lynn Gosney on **SWEATLODGES**

- <http://www.touchtheearthuk.com>

Born of the Wildlands – Touch the Earth

- <http://www.touchtheearthuk.com>

Folklore – Low Flying Object

- <http://www.reverbnation.com/lowflyingobject>

Rainbow in the Dark – Corey Taylor -

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronnie_James_Dio_This_Is_Your_Life

DruidCast theme – Hills they are Hollow – Damh the Bard - www.paganmusic.co.uk
ril 2014

DruidCast - A Druid Podcast Episode 85

http://druidcast.libsyn.com/druidcast-a-druid-podcast-episode-85?utm_content=buffer042e7&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer

Shownotes for DruidCast Episode 85

Ode to Ceridwen - Lori Llyn - <http://www.lori-llyn.com/index.html>

Interview with Maxine Sanders - <http://maxinesanders.co.uk>

The Wilderness - Oysterband - <http://www.oysterband.co.uk>

Avebury - Susanne Paramore

DruidCast theme - Hills they are Hollow - Damh the Bard - <http://www.paganmusic.co.uk>



CELTIC MYTH PODCAST

Part 1

In a ground-breaking show for us, we bring you the first part of an interview with the Head of the British Druid Order, Philip Shallcrass, aka Greywolf. He talks about Druidry, the Order, how he discovered his Path and he even tells us how he got the name 'Greywolf'. The show also contains 4 fantastic pieces of music, including one by Philip himself which re-tells his encounter with the Anglo-Saxon God, Woden. An interview not to be missed! The second half of this interview will be in our next Special show, SP40 Druid Special #2 - due out in a couple of weeks!

http://www.celticmythpodshow.com/files/podcasts/CMP_Special_39_Druid_Special_1.mp3

The Short Link for this page is: <http://bit.ly/PUCjbE>

Part 2

In the second of our unique Druid Interviews, we bring you the second half of our interview with the Head of the British Druid Order, Philip Shallcrass, aka Greywolf. He talks about Druidry, the BDO's Distance Learning Courses, the Ogham and the World Drum. The show also contains 6 fantastic pieces of music, including one by Philip himself which he wrote for his three sons. Truly, an interview not to be missed! We've marked this show as explicit due to the subject matter of the 'out-takes' at the end - the body of the show remains 'Family-Friendly'!

<http://www.stitcher.com/s?eid=33589401>

<http://celticmythpodshow.com/Shownotes/episodeSP40.php>

Upcoming Priestess Event with many Podcasts



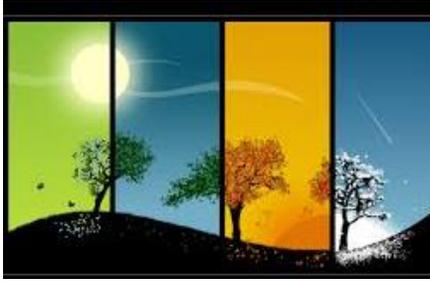
STEPPING INTO OURSELVES: A GATHERING OF PRIESTESSES

June 27 to August 1st.

<https://alchemyarts.leadpages.net/stepping-into-ourselves-live-multicast-event/>

What is a priestess? Is she a ritualist? A shaman? A role model? A coach? A soothsayer? A sybil? Or is she all of these, or none of these? *Stepping into Ourselves* is a vibrant tapestry of voices illuminating the roles and perspectives of priestesses in ancient and modern worlds, and weaving them together to discuss the beautiful fabric of women's sacred service.

With over 30 Priestesses, Wise Women and Authors from the Anthology.
And Special Guest Priestess Vicki Noble, Susun Weed, Marguerite Rigoglioso, Nicki Scully and Max Dashu



Videos on Weather 101

By Mike the Fool

I assembled some good introductory videos on the seasons.

I hope it will inform your Druidry.

Seasons 101 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wwdB22opre0>

Wind <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzSqhrn2dDM>

History of Earth's Climates https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dC_2WXyORGA

What happens if hit by lightning <http://youtu.be/L1HhRAUqFqM>

How to survive lightning https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNxDgd3D_bU

Warm seas are bigger seas? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fuvY5YG5zA4>

Why so many tornadoes in USA? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yiZveJAEp4>

Rain and Forests <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3OWgb0Bv-A>

Extreme Climate fixes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8-ag2mAoWk>

Strange weather <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y30-sNE8vB4>

Solar Energy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4uPVZUTLAvA>

Sun is nuclear https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BWh_rtYADw

Sun worship – tanning? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtD5V6cMfrM>

If the sun disappeared what would happen? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rItpH6ck2Kc>

Can we move the earth farther from sun? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHin6lk4KqU>

Rainbows <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cVX3eq6NUQ>

More on Double rainbows <http://youtu.be/sK2YI529U34>

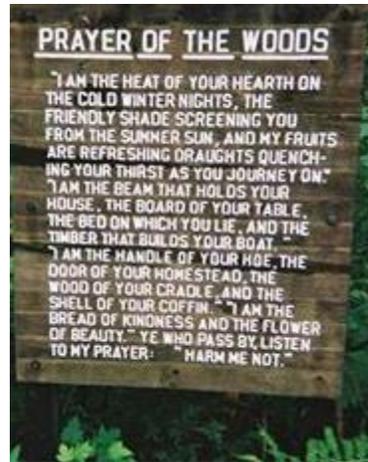
DRUID PICTURES



Jeff G



Druid Circle cookies from Trader Joes (Fulbert)



These are made by Jeffrey G
<https://www.facebook.com/jgunderman?ref=nf>
http://www.etsy.com/listing/75906050/druid-sigel-symbol-of-reformed-druids-of?utm_source=google&utm_medium=product_listing_promoted&utm_campaign=woodworking_mid&gclid=CJe94uHTpL4CFcgRMwodl0cA5Q



Demystifying the Druids

(Carleton Newspaper interview about Druids)

May 9, 2014

By Anna Schmiel

I had never heard of the Druids before I arrived at Carleton. When I found out about them, my first thought was that it must be some great conspiracy—a quirky idea that a few Carls had invented to make the

Arboretum seem more mystical. Determined to uncover the truth about these Druids, I did a little research on the group's history.

Details were scarce, but I did find that they were established in 1963 in protest of mandatory Christian chapel services. Everything else seemed shrouded in mystery. What I gathered from rumors was that members would meet in the Druid Circle in the middle of the Arboretum. I couldn't believe that there wasn't more information, and I reached out to one of these elusive Druids to help shed some light on the group. To my surprise, she emailed me back. Carleton freshman Anna Smith was more than happy to share her experience in the Carleton Druids and dispel any rumors. They may still remain mysterious even after this interview, but I'd bet that if you want to join, they would be more than happy to bring you into their Circle.

AS: Before I begin, let me just say that Carleton Druidry, or the RDNA (Reformed Druids of North America), doesn't really have much of a presence on campus to speak of. Adult members have told me that it goes through cycles every couple years, during which excited new freshmen discover the group, but it ultimately dwindles with the lack of any strong leadership. I'm not sure where I fit into all this, but I'm one of the few who have outwardly expressed interest in the organization, and the members of the greater RDNA have picked up on that.

Why did you decide to join the Druids? Were you a Druid in high school?

AS: I held a pretty casual interest in alternative spirituality for many years, but I didn't really delve deeply into Druidry until last summer, when I saw John Michael Greer's *Druidry Handbook* at Barnes & Noble. I read it in one sitting, and it had such a profound effect on me. It was almost as if it had been written to describe me, while still teaching some very universal lessons. It detailed the path with the perfect level of mutability—I could make it fit with my existing philosophies pretty perfectly. Upon finishing it, I proceeded to spend the entire summer educating myself in Celtic Reconstructionist philosophy and got a really solid sense of what Neo-Druids are all about.

The RDNA is pretty different from what I'm used to, though, because it draws its origins from a bunch of creative minds that gathered in the Druid's Den here at Carleton in the sixties to protest our now-abolished religious requirement. Of course, it's a nationwide organization now with many thousands of practitioners (it's hard to get a good count because it spawned a bunch of offshoots), so it's been thoroughly developed since then.

Is it simply a fun gathering of people or a spiritual community?

AS: I hesitate to call Druidry a matter of religious or even spiritual importance to me because it's not something I take on faith. It's more a philosophy and a lifestyle. I've definitely noticed that it has brought about a shift in my attitude. I notice things now that I didn't used to. I wouldn't go so far as to say that I personify nature, but things start to take on unique personalities. I have a more acute awareness of changes in the climate and landscape. I have a greater appreciation for the cyclicity of the seasons. I feel less superiority over other forms of life. It's all pretty humbling when you realize that you're a constituent in this greater web of life, but it also means that you're never truly alone.

What do you do during the meetings/what are some traditions you have?

AS: Most Druids celebrate a seasonal cycle of holidays known as the Wheel of the Year, which is based on ancient Celtic celebrations. Many of them have Christian equivalents. There's really no single way to celebrate them. To me, they're just ways of acknowledging the season and taking the time to recognize the interconnectedness of life. For the last holiday, Alban Eilir (or Spring Equinox), I just took a long, mindful hike to celebrate.

In your opinion, what binds the Druid community together?

AS: I don't really think about spirits or divinity, and I realize that this sets me apart from other Druids a little bit. But the great thing is that there really isn't any dogma that you're held to. There are Christian Druids, Buddhist Druids, Wiccan Druids, Atheist Druids... you name it. If ritual helps you get in the zone, there are hundreds of pages of Druidic Liturgy at your disposal. If all you want from your practice is quiet reflection and meditation in the woods, that's equally legitimate. Above all, this isn't something that should be taken too seriously. I mean, if the philosophy speaks to you, of course you should take it to heart. The RDNA gave me this ankle-length hooded ceremonial robe, and that's when I realized that we all have this mutual understanding that what we're doing is pretty much straight out of a Renaissance Fair, and also that we're allowed to have fun with it. We tell Arthurian legends around campfire rings. We call ourselves Druids, for heaven's sake.

COMMENTARY FROM RDNA CONFERENCE

Anna I also did not intend for that final block of text to answer the question they paired with it...
oh well, haha

Stacey J. Awesome!

Helgaleena excellent representation.

Mike TheFool Pretty good on your feet with a microphone in front of you, I usually get stuck on weird tangents in an interview. You seem better at this.

John Great to see you're already making history there, and three more years ahead!

Mike TheFool 3 years, so much time to have so many adventures!

Jeffrey http://apps.carleton.edu/carletonian/?story_id=1134056...

Here's the link to the story. Thanks for representing us Anna

Mike TheFool its strange how many friends and colleagues one discovers when one talks about key issues in one's life. its like you've been walking past each other for a while but then a common bond is discovered by a fortuitous word. its why it often pays to greet strangers and get to know others. hope the interview brings new acquaintances who also feel those stirrings.

Penny What a good interview, you did really well, thanks for sharing

Fulbert This is a wonderful way of sharing that which is so important to the many of us.

Mike TheFool Sharing without imposing is a lovely way to talk about Druidism. I'm always a soft-sell type. I think Druidry goes on all around me wherever people enjoy sunsets, birds, gardening and seasonal sports, but that people are doing so on an unconscious level. As an Archdruid, my goal was to connect the dots and say that all this nature, culture, contemplation and companionship without constriction can be a pathway of inclusive spiritual growth.

Easy come, easy go, sharing beauty and wisdom while we can with whomever can stay long enough to do so. Carleton is a time of questioning our rock-bottom thoughts and beliefs, and the Druids offer a secure, affirming environment to explore taboos and possibilities for a few precious years from many traditions and outlooks.

Mainstream faiths usually see a great period of loss of membership in the 17-26 year range, or they double-down on those remaining to "hold on to them", but many youngsters are taking little looksies into Wicca, Paganism and Druidism in the modern age. Many won't remain with these new traditions, but much will remain with them after they leave. One never knows how far the ripples will spread.

Fulbert Nicely stated, Mike. I thought your statement, "my goal was to connect the dots and say that all this nature, culture, contemplation and companionship without constriction can be a pathway of inclusive spiritual growth" was such a healthy way of conceiving of druidry, especially if one wants to approach it as a spiritual practice to augment their own other belief system.

Mike TheFool Most of the time, the new druids who come to you have gotten rather close to figuring it out, but haven't been able to step back and connect their ideas into a stable framework or to hear themselves say their thoughts outloud in public, and refine their phrasing with a few friendly suggestions. It's rather amazing to watch, it's not like starting from scratch with teaching trigonometry or algebra.

You are just giving them 2%, and their 98% will solidify and coalesce and take a deep breath of life and bound forth.

For those who are in the wrong field with us, we still offer them company and what advice we can, but also suggest an area that would be a better fit for their interests later on - those are the tough ones - especially if they are unstable or simply rude out of fear or pain usually.

Mike TheFool Any it is key not try to erase what baggage they've come with, that will always be a part of them, but rather to show how they can adapt it or seek out new ways that will give them the sustenance that earlier methods didn't provide entirely. Many will bounce between emphasizing older faiths and new ones through their life. A friend of mine, Sam , told me "Never be an ex-anything." define yourself in positives, and when you can't belong fully to an older path, try to salvage what you can and use it wisely in your next stage. Wise man that one.

Fulbert Wisdom indeed. I think that reframing of a challenge into an opportunity is part of what this spirituality is all about.

Mike TheFool I don't know if most Druids talk about their Druidry often with strangers, or in aggressive proselytizers, but it is never a bad idea to take a few minutes and have a 30 second spiel on summarizing what Reformed Druidism means to you,

Mike TheFool It's easier with more defined groups like ADF or OBOD, and our own eccentricity and permisiveness makes it difficult to sound like we have any actual shape or direction.



Most Likely to Become an Archdruid?

April 18, 2014

By Katie Koza

“You’ve been voted ‘Most Likely to Become a Religious Official,’” said the boy with the clipboard.

“You’ve got to be kidding me,” I responded, looking up from my high school lunch table. My friends—gamer guys, one and all—quit munching their bagels and talking about Call of Duty.

“No, no, see here,” said the boy, thrusting his clipboard in front of my nose. And there it was, clear as day, “Katie Koza: Most Likely to Become a Religious Official.” I was practically ordained.

“Sign below the dotted line if it’s okay that we put this in the yearbook,” he said, holding out a pen. So I did. A few days later, I smiled awkwardly for a photo while holding a copy of the Bible that he’d found in the school library.

I didn’t know what to make of this. Religion, and religious officials, have such different associations for different people that I didn’t know whether to be flattered or insulted.

On the one hand, there are the likes of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Dalai Lama who inspired millions through their vision and altruism. On the other hand, there are sketchy cult leaders, priests who molest children, and misguided ministers from the Westboro Baptist Church.

My father is a Lutheran pastor, and perhaps my friends voted for me believing that ministry runs in the blood. Ever since I was born, he has served as a chaplain at a nursing home in southern Wisconsin, and the residents there adore him. He does a lot of funerals and spends a great deal of time counseling the grieving. To me—and, admittedly, I’m a little biased—he represents the very best parts of what religion has to offer.

However, I sincerely doubt that the seminary is in my future. I went to church a bit when I first came to Carleton, but then TA study sessions and radio shows got in the way of my regular services. When I went back home and went to church with my family, all the rituals started looking strange. Why were we all chanting this prayer in unison? Why did we stand up, sing something, and then sit down again? Did anyone else find it strange that we were being asked to repeat some pretty radical claims without question?

I refused to give up on religion so easily, though. Just as it seemed dangerously simple to accept religion without question, so too did it seem dangerously simple to reject it without question. It was in the course of this struggle that I saw the poster for the 50th Reunion of the Reformed Druids of North America—a group that formed here at Carleton in 1963—hanging on a corkboard at Sayles. Maybe they would have some new ideas. In any case, it would be an adventure.

That weekend, I struck out at dusk into the Carleton Arboretum. I was headed for a hollow in the woods called Druid's Den, which is conveniently located behind Goodhue Hall. I had my cell phone all cued up to call Carleton Security should anything jump out at me from the darkening trees. Through their lithe shapes, I saw a flickering firelight and moved toward it.

Around the fire stood people who looked exactly how I imagined druids wouldn't. There were a couple of my political science buddies passing whiskey back and forth in a silver flask. Standing near them were some middle aged alums wearing hiking jackets and knitted hats. There was one man with a cape, a staff, and some sort of ritual box, but aside from that, they all looked pretty Midwestern to me.

I introduced myself enthusiastically. One of the druids offered me some toffee, which I politely refused, imagining it might be some sort of communion. (In retrospect, I'm pretty sure it was just a snack.) As sparks floated up to the dim sky, they began to tell me stories about the old days at Carleton, back when the dorms were separated by sex and the campus was supposedly dry. They mentioned a discontent with the requirement to attend religious services and described their joke-religion that had slowly acquired significance. As one druid told me, "There was something we were seeking that we just weren't getting in traditional services. Somehow, we found it out here."

I don't ever think I'm going to become the kind of person who is militantly sure of her religious beliefs. I don't think I'm going to follow my father into the traditional ministry, become the next Archdruid of the Carleton grove, or even become a druid at all. I'm just another human seeking to understand. And sometimes, out in the Arb on a bright day or a wild grey night, I think I've hit on something. It's not something I could quantify, but looking up at the stars and the billowing clouds over the prairie, I get the feeling that God has not abandoned me. Best wishes for a thoughtful Good Friday from the Carletonian's only Lutheran "druid."



Priesthood – A Modern Pagan View

By John Becket (not of the RDNA)

**(Recommended by Stacey &
Sebastien)**

I'm a Druid and a priest. I'm ordained as a priest in the Universal Gnostic Fellowship, and I am sworn as a priest of Cernunnos and a priest of Danu –

though not as a priest of Morrigan. But for all my talk of priesthood, I've never precisely said what that means. As part of my ordination studies, I wrote a 4200 word essay (as long as three typical blog posts) on what priesthood means to me. That essay is not suitable for posting here (it's too long and has too many references to other sources in that course of study), but I've edited and adapted it for general discussion.

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/johnbeckett/2014/06/priesthood-a-modern-pagan-view.html#ixzz35weIzN6L>

These are my thoughts on priesthood in a modern, Pagan, polytheistic setting. It draws on what we know about ancient priesthoods but it does not attempt to copy the ancients. It uses Christian definitions and concepts for comparison but it is not limited by any of them. I'm presenting this as a starting point for a general discussion on what a Pagan priesthood should be, but I am the only person bound by these ideas – if your Gods tell you to do something different, by all means do so.

A note on gender: while most Pagans generally use “priest” for men and “priestess” for women, some use “priest” for all, and there is little if any difference in qualifications and duties in most traditions. As I will be speaking largely of myself in this discussion, I will mostly use “priest.”

Priesthood is both a role and a relationship. A priest is a servant of a God or Gods, but not all who serve the Gods are priests. A priest has a clear relationship with a deity or deities, but having a patron deity does not make you a priest. That relationship is generally a formal one with oaths and covenants and sometimes with ordinations or initiations, but I mark the beginning of my priesthood from the time I was called, not from the time I swore oaths.

What are the roles a priest fills?

Priests Serve the Gods

First and foremost, priests are servants of the Gods. Monotheists argue among themselves as to what their God wants from them, while polytheists understand that the service one God or Goddess wants may be quite different from what another wants. There is no generic all-access Pagan priesthood. But there are some common elements.

Priests talk to their Gods. Prayer is a necessary activity for followers and priests of any deity: to express gratitude, to express devotion, and to express the desires of our hearts. There is power in prayer, and it is through prayer that we become more God-like ourselves.

Priests listen to their Gods. Communication with deities is a two-way street. Talking comes easy for most of us – listening is harder. It is extremely rare for a deity to speak audibly (I've never experienced it) so listening is mostly a matter of meditation and of being receptive to non-verbal communication. This may come in the form of omens or divination or it may come in the form of thoughts that appear to come from without.

Priests honor their Gods. Throughout history people of different religions have honored their deities with praise, worship, offerings and sacrifices. Deities are more than humans: they are older, stronger and wiser. They can help us and teach us, and according to the lore of most cultures, they can make our lives miserable if they so choose. It is simply polite – and good business – to show them proper respect.

Priests make offerings and sacrifices. This isn't about appeasing an angry deity – it's about being hospitable and maintaining good relationships. If a special guest came to your house you would offer him the best chair, your best food and best drink – not the last few sips of a bottle of wine you were about to throw out. A priest should do no less for the Gods he serves.

Priests prepare others to hear the Gods. If a Goddess can speak to you then She can speak to anyone else. But will they hear Her? My experience is that it's rare for a deity to ask you to deliver a message for Them (it's happened to me twice). It's more common that a deity needs you to let someone know you see the deity as real so they'll recognize the voice when the deity speaks to them.

Perhaps the most non-threatening way to do this is to tell Their stories – even the most ardent monotheist or atheist is familiar with mythology. While the ancient stories have a literary pedigree that brings credibility, we should not ignore contemporary stories of the old Gods. While we do not have the liberty to make up stories about our Gods and Goddesses, we should not hesitate to tell our own experiences and our own revelations, either as they happened or in fictionalized stories.

Priests do the work of their deities in this world. If the old stories are to be believed, the Gods can intervene in this world... though to what extent They do is rather uncertain. What is certain is that They frequently employ humans to accomplish their goals. We serve Nature Gods by caring and advocating for the natural world. We serve smith Gods when we make things with our hands. We serve Gods of justice when we protect the poor and weak against the rich and strong.

Priests Act as Mediators

If you went to Delphi, you didn't grab a scrying bowl and sit over the vent, you consulted the Oracle. You might bring a sacrifice to the Temple of Zeus, but the priest would actually perform

the rite of sacrifice. You could certainly pray to the Gods yourself and perhaps They'd answer, but if you wanted to be sure you got an answer you'd consult that God's priest. Priests were mediators.

If you need your car repaired you can do it yourself, but professional mechanics have the training and experience to do it better, faster, and more reliably. If you have a minor cut you can put a band-aid on it as well as anyone, but if you need a bone set or a major wound treated, you'd be better off seeing a surgeon and not trying to treat it yourself.

The Catholic idea that some things require a priest is not relevant here. But the low-church Protestant insistence that "we don't need no stinkin' priests" isn't helpful either. A modern Pagan priest is not a mediator because he is pure and privileged to approach a God while others are not. A Pagan priest is a mediator because he is familiar with a God and with the best ways to communicate with that God.

Rites of ecstatic possession are literal acts of mediation. When I've done this, the messages have been for me, but I've participated in similar rituals where the deity used the priest to deliver messages to others. In less dramatic rituals, priests invoke (invite) a God into the circle, make offerings (provide hospitality), and prepare the hearts and minds of the circle to receive the blessings of the deities.

Again, it's not that only priests can do these things. Because of their training, experience, and close relationship with the deities they serve, they can do them better and more reliably than ordinary folks.

Remember that having intimate knowledge of one deity doesn't mean a priest will be on good terms with every deity. I'll be happy to speak to the Forest God for you, but when I had a recent need in the realm of Gatekeeper deities, I contacted a priest who regularly works with Them.

Priests Serve Their Communities

Is serving the community part of serving the Gods or is it a goal in and of itself? Does it really matter? I once had a Methodist minister (who, while a good minister and a good person, was far from the most pious individual I've ever met) tell me "I serve God by serving people." The word "priest" is virtually non-existent in the OBOD training materials, but one of the upper level lessons says "the Druid grade is in essence a grade of service." How do priests serve their communities?

A priest serves as a teacher. He will be expected to be a subject matter expert on his religion, its history, its principles, doctrines and rituals. He should be able to explain the essence of the religion and to present it to the curious, not to proselytize but to help build an accurate understanding of it in the community and in the wider world.

A priest serves as an exemplar. He should model the behaviors and lifestyles he advocates. He is human and will not be perfect in any of this, but he should strive to live a life in alignment with his highest values and in the spirit of the Gods and Goddesses he serves. Or, to borrow a phrase from my Baptist childhood: "practice what you preach."

A priest will be a counselor. Show a little competency in leadership and begin exemplifying the Divine to any extent and people will begin telling you more than you want to know about themselves. One of the most valuable services a priest can provide is simply to listen and be an unanxious presence.

While a proper mixture of divination, prayer, ritual, and counseling can be helpful, a priest can't solve people's problems for them. What he can do is to be with them and support them until they can solve their problems themselves. A priest must also recognize the limits of his expertise – is what you're hearing a spiritual problem or is it mental illness? A priest must know when to say "I can't help you – you need to see a mental health professional."

A priest serves as an organizer. He should make sure the trains run on time: rituals are performed, offerings are made, classes are held, this-world actions are taken. A priest doesn't have to do all that himself (nor should he, in most cases), but he should make sure his religious community does the things it needs to do. People can – and should, and at least occasionally – be allowed to fail. Communities can never be allowed to fail.

If someone is regularly seen as a counselor and an organizer, eventually that person becomes an authority. Many Pagans have issues with authority – a priest should expect to be challenged, and should make sure he always exercises proper authority based on legitimate expertise and the correctness of decisions. Decisions based solely on the preferences of a priest ("I'm the priest, do it my way!") is an abuse of authority.

Application

This is how I see priesthood in a modern, Pagan, polytheistic setting. Specific traditions and deities will have specific requirements beyond, or in some cases, different from what I've described here. But this is what I've been called to do and be.

I welcome your thoughts on this – particularly those of you who are participating in the depths of commitment inherent in authentic priesthood.



DIY Midsummer Flower Crown

<http://honestlywtf.com/diy/diy-midsummer-flower-crown/>

by Erica in D.I.Y.

It's officially Midsummer and honestly, what's not to love about time-honored celebrations, especially when it involves wearing wildflowers around your head, drinking vodka and dancing around a maypole? Naturally with our love of cultures, customs, and DIYs, we've partnered up with our friends at Kanon Organic Vodka on a sweet flower crown DIY for their annual Swedish Midsummer festivities and for the ultimate contest. Participating is as simple as liking Kanon's Facebook page, picking your favorite Midsummer tradition, sharing it with your friends, and winning a chic Phillip Lim bag, gorgeous Pamela Love jewelry or much much more! Click here for more details. Good luck & SKOL!

Update: the Kanon Midsummer Contest is now over so here is the full tutorial!

You'll need:

a variety of fresh flowers trimmed down to 3" stems

2 pieces of 16 gauge floral cloth wire

green floral tape

floral shears or scissors

To begin, you'll create the base of the flower crown out of two pieces of floral wire. Mold and gently bend each piece into a half circle. Face the half circles opposite of each other to create a circle and lay it over the top of your head to check the fit. It should be quite snug as the addition of flowers will eventually weigh the crown down. Wrap both overlapping sections tightly with floral tape.

Before adding the flowers to the base, you'll create several small clusters of flowers. This avoids having to attach each flower individually and overloading the crown with tape. Pick a flower and continue adding 4-5 flowers, each one nestled right below the other. Tightly wrap the base with floral tape. Trim the tips if necessary.

Once you've made 10-15 clusters, start adding them to the base. Position a cluster of flowers against the outside of the wire base and wrap tightly with floral tape. Overlap the second cluster over the first and wrap tightly with tape. Continue layering clusters in the same direction until the entire base is filled. Spray the crown with water or keep it in a cool place until you're ready to wear it!



DRUID MAP PROJECT

<http://danaan.net/druidry/druid-groups-map/>

This is a map of Druid groups in North America that are both on the internet and meet in-person. Let me know if there are any RDG or other groups I missed. Follow the link to go to the interactive map:



10 Important Druids

Editor Note: John Greer and Isaac Bonewits are also Reformed Druid priests
May 8, 2014 By [Jason Mankey](#)

Last year I put together a few articles spotlighting the *25 Most Influential People in the Development of Modern Paganism*.

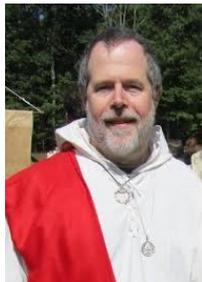
It was fun and was read by a lot of folks and even resulted in a few other similar lists, most notably a *25 person Canadian list* and *13 influential figures in Goddess Spirituality*. The original articles inspired a lot of comments too, mostly along the lines of “I can’t believe Person Y didn’t make your

list!” Usually those criticisms were spot-on, I picked twenty-five folks but a credible case could be made for lots of people I left off my initial list.

In order to fill in some of the gaps from that earlier project, and because I really like history, I’m running a feature over the next few weeks called “Ten Important _____.” This time around it’s Druids, and there’s one on *Traditional Witchcraft* already waiting to be read as well. Future installments will look at folks involved in Heathenry and Goddess Spirituality, and possibly more! Other than the time involved in writhing these things (longer than an average blog post) and the extra work of tracking down pictures and inserting links (takes forever!) these lists are fun.

Modern Druidry has re-emerged in the last 100 years due to a variety of circumstances. The Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries saw a huge upswing in the idea of Druids as a Fraternal Order along the lines of Freemasonry. Eventually members of some of those fraternal groups became more spiritual in outlook and began to try and recreate ancient Druidry. In the United States The Reformed Druids of North America began as a protest against a rule requiring all students at Carleton College to attend religious services. Like the fraternal orders some members grew interested in Druidism as a spiritual path and soon the RDNA had groves springing up across the country. A lot of Modern Druids are a part of larger organizations while others practice quietly on their own. No matter how or who they practice with, Neo-Druids are a vital and important part of the Modern Pagan landscape.

This list is presented in alphabetical order, placement is not indicative of any sort of ranking. Please remember this is all in fun and designed to simply draw attention to some important figures from our shared past and present. This list is not called “The Only 10 Important Druids” nor am I implying such a thing. These are just some figures I find interesting and/or influential. There are dozens more who are worthy of being on a list such as this and if you are of the opinion that I’ve missed someone share that person’s story in the comments section below or write your own list! I’m also not writing complete biographies here. So go easy on me all right? And as always, any list such as this is going to be reflective of the author’s biases



John Beckett John might not like being on this list, but it’s too late to turn back now! Due to the popularity of his blog [Under the Ancient Oaks](#) John Beckett is likely one of the most read Druids on the internet. In an online-sea of rancor, hurt feelings, and negativity Beckett is a powerful and rational voice. His high level of involvement in the online Pagan Community, the Unitarian Universalist Church and the Order of [Bards, Ovates and Druids](#) has made him an important contributor to both inter and intrafaith work.



Isaac Bonewits (1949-2010) [Issac](#) is the only person who is on this list and my original [Top 25](#) and if I could I’d put him on several more lists just because I think he’s that important. Not only did [Isaac](#) found [Ár nDraíocht Féin](#), he served as its first and longest-tenured Arch-Druid creating an infrastructure that’s still in place today. Isaac’s massive influence on Modern Paganism isn’t just limited to ADF either. His 1972 book *Real Magic* was one of the first great modern occult books written by an American and he was involved in various other magickal and Pagan traditions including Witchcraft and Anton LaVey’s Church of Satan (at the tender young age of 18!). Bonewits continued to write until his untimely death in 2010 after a long battle with cancer. Isaac was also a singer-songwriter, a magazine editor, and one of the most fascinating Pagan speakers I’ve ever had the privilege of listening to. What is remembered lives.



Philip Carr-Gomm Philip Carr-Gomm has become one of the most influential Druids and Pagans in the world today, and he's done it all with a gentlemanly touch, top-notch organizational skills, and a scholarly attention to detail. After becoming the Chosen Chief of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids in 1989 he turned the group into (arguably) the largest Druid organization in the world. His influence is not limited to OBOD either, Carr-Gomm has been a prolific author over the last three decades writing about Druidry and Paganism for large publishers such as Harper Collins and Random House. I know him best due to works like *The Book of English Magic* and *A*

History of Nakedness which both mix scholarly research alongside pure readability (always much harder than it sounds).



Ian Corrigan Though Ian doesn't know it, he's been a huge influence on me personally as a Pagan. As a member of the Chameleon Club he's been one of the chief organizers of the Starwood Festival for the past thirty years (for many years the largest Pagan gathering in the Eastern half of the United States) all while maintaining a high level of involvement with ADF, even serving as their Arch-Druid for a short period of time. Ian's reach is greater than most people know, and everyone reading this has most likely chanted his words during ritual. *Hoof and horn, hoof and horn, all that dies shall be reborn. Corn and grain, corn and grain, all that falls shall raise again . . .* those lyrics are Ian's. Corrigan is also a prolific

author, a born story-teller, and one of the most knowledgeable folks I've ever chatted with about Western Occultism.

Damh the Bard I'll never praise a musician or song-writer simply because they are Pagan, but when they are good at what they do and are Pagan I'm most likely a fan. Damh the Bard (Mr. Bard?) is damn good; he's got a great voice, serious writing and playing chops, and puts together some truly infectious melodies. Damh isn't just a singer either, he leads workshops and rituals (literally) all over the world and is a poet, podcaster, and blogger. I had the privilege of sharing a stage with him for a panel discussion and Damh impressed with his wit and wisdom. He's a great



ambassador not only for OBOD but also for both Druidry and Modern Paganism.



anyone on this list.

John Michael Greer For many years one of the mantras of PantheaCon was “No, I’m going to go listen to John Michael Greer, I never miss one of his workshops.” Greer is not only the current Grand Archdruid of the Ancient Order of Druids in America he’s also a best-selling “New Age/Metaphysical” author, an environmentalist, philosopher, and fiction writer. For years I really only knew Greer due to his many books sort of outside the Pagan genre, most notably his books on Cryptids, UFO’s, and Atlantis (all hobbies of mine), but he’s written extensively on Modern Druidry and the Western Magical Tradition. If that wasn’t enough he’s written seriously about the end of peak-oil and the future of the political process in the United States. He also most likely has the best beard of



dealing with Druidism.

Ellen Evert Hopman In 1996 I picked up Hopman’s *People of the Earth* (later retitled *Being a Pagan: Druids, Wiccans, and Witches Today*) which I think I praised as the *Drawing Down the Moon* of the 90’s when it was released. *Being a Pagan* is one of the great overviews of Modern Paganism, featuring interviews with Pagans from nearly every tradition under the sun. It’s still on my “everyone should read” list due to the sheer amount of diversity found within its pages. If that was all Hopman had ever done for Paganism she might still be on this list, but it’s just a start. Hopman has written extensively on herbalism and on Druid and Celtic lore in both fiction and non-fiction books. She also teaches a whole host of workshops and has been on several cable television shows



Ross Nichols (1902-1975) When I put together that top 25 list last year the hardest name to leave off was Ross Nichols. For those unfamiliar with Nichols he’s the Father of Modern Druidry, and a hugely influential Pagan in general. Nichols was active in The Druid Order, one of the first fraternal Druid organizations to openly mix elements of paganism and spirituality in their rites. While a member of the Druid Order Nichols was a friend of Gerald Gardner’s, and even used a sword borrowed from a member of Gardner’s coven for several years at Midsummer. Most likely there’s a lot more to the story of Nichols and Gardner and their influences upon each other. After leaving The Druid Order Nichols went on to found the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids in 1964. OBOD was the first explicitly Pagan Druid group of the Modern Era and the longest lasting. His *Book of Druidry* was released fifteen years after his death in 1990, exposing Nichols’ vision to a new generation of Pagans and Druids.



Emma Restall Orr Orr has been a part of many different Druid organizations since the 1980's. She was originally a member of OBOD and then went on to a leadership position in the British Druid Order. In 2003 she founded The Druid Network to help facilitate communications amongst Druids and others with similar spiritual ideas. In addition to her past group work she's also written several books on Druidry and is currently active in the natural burial movement.



William Price(1800-1893) William Price might arguably be the first modern "Neo-Druid." To Price Druidism wasn't a just fraternal order it was both a matter of Welsh pride and a spiritual calling. He was also a vegetarian and believed that marriage enslaved women, he was an advocate of free love in Victorian England. He supported efforts to legalize cremation in Great Britain and his own cremation ceremony was attended by over 20,000 individuals. Much of the "religion" behind Price's version of Druidry has been lost to history (it wasn't all written down) but his bravery and eccentric nature are still an inspiration to many Modern Druids

and Pagans.



Kirk Thomas Kirk Thomas is one of the most impressive individuals I've ever come across in Paganism. He conducts himself with class and is a credit to ADF, where he serves as Arch Druid. (I actually got to watch his instillation ceremony a few years ago, Druids know how to do ritual.) In addition to being the current leader of ADF Kirk is an amazing workshop facilitator and has been active on the Pagan festival circuit the last couple of years. He's also active in prison ministry. If you ever get a chance to see Kirk make sure you take it.

NEWS



[Touching Story of A Ranger Visiting his Forest for the Last time](#)

Hospice Patient Makes Final Visit to the Outdoors

Ed, who lived in an adult family home, had not been outside for several years – as a result of his illness and the difficulty in transporting him. His wish, which he shared with EvergreenHealth Hospice Chaplain Curt Huber, was to go outdoors. When he was healthy, Ed had been a forest ranger, and at that time, he said, he had lived for the outdoors.

When Curt learned of Ed’s wish, he brought it to the attention of the Hospice team, one of whom suggested getting in touch with a local fire department that might agree to transport Ed for this final visit to the outdoors. Curt contacted the Snohomish County Fire District in Edmonds, whose staff was happy to help.

In March, Curt and the RN Case Manager, Leigh Gardner, accompanied Ed and several members of the Snohomish County Fire District on an outing to Meadowdale Beach Park in Edmonds. Ed was picked up and transported in the EMS vehicle; other members of the fire department traveled in a fire truck.

Together, the group took Ed up and down the trails, bringing him the scents of the forest by touching the fragrant growth and bringing their hands close to Ed’s face.

Ed was delighted. So were all the professionals who accompanied him.

People sometimes think that working in hospice care is depressing. This story, submitted by North Team Program Manager Diane Fiumara, BSN, demonstrates the depths of the rewards that caring for the dying can bring. She says, “I want to thank my fantastic North Team for their love and dedication to the patients they serve.”



Irish Ghosts and Gaelic Greenery

(recommended by Glenn McDavid)

<http://www.theepochtimes.com/n3/706494-irish-ghosts-and-gaelic-greenery/?photo=3>

If there is one thing Ireland is known for it's fairy tales and ghost stories. While tantalizing hints of small, pipe-smoking men and pots of gold are offered at the end of every rainbow, every stately mansion more than 100 years old has a resident ghost or two. I was on a week's tour around the southeast

coast of the Irish Republic and in these garden counties, ghosts and greenery seemed to go together.

Ireland's energetic push for ecological sustainability is preserving its legendary "40 shades of green" for future generations. But underneath the bending rainbows and in between the forests, parks, and gardens, stand historic houses and ruined buildings with plenty of stories about the past to tell. From ancient corners on foggy evenings, ghosts, goblins and ghoulies still spring out of the darkness to frighten unwary visitors. Ghost-story sustainability is an old Irish tradition.

The Blackstairs Mountains on the border of County Carlow and County Wexford contain some of Ireland's most beautiful scenery and it was here that I found Blackstairs Eco Trails run by eco-warrior Mary White. Amid fields dotted with frolicking lambs and gamboling calves, rises the misty mountain of Tomduff, a place buried in Irish folklore. Blackthorn fairy trees rise from the hedgerows and dry stone walls crisscross its fields like supernatural latticework raised by giants.

A few years back, a mining company bought mineral rights to the area and was planning to strip-mine the entire hill. Enter Mary White. She rounded up the locals and launched a campaign that saved Tomduff and the natural beauty of the countryside around it. From her home in the Old Rectory she offered to take a group of us into that countryside and show us its wonders.

We set off down what had once been a pilgrim's path that led to sacred springs and holy wells lying hidden among the greenery. What I saw all around me was a green pastoral landscape. What Mary saw was lunch.

"Look here," she said as she pushed back a strand of ivy to reveal blossoming wild strawberries. The greenwood, it turned out, was a pantry for those in the know. Wood sorrel, dandelion greens, pennywort, wild current, blackberries, and mushrooms, all grew in abundance, enough to feed the fairy folk and the human folk alike. Oak, ash, and beech, trees sacred to the Celts, grew everywhere.

"When you cut a tree," Mary told us, "replace it. You'll never see it mature but it will be a gift to the future." But, she cautioned us, to never cut a white flowering blackthorn tree. "Blackthorn belongs to the fairies, and a broken branch in the house means a death in the family."

Deaths in the family were all too real that night on a tour of the haunted mansion of Loftus Hall. Built on the site of an even earlier haunted house, present day Loftus owes its elegant, but abandoned, appearance to the 4th Marquis of Ely. A man of towering ambition, he bankrupted himself creating a private palace where he planned to welcome Queen Victoria. He even added an elaborate wooden staircase built by the same brothers responsible for the Grand Staircase on the ill-fated ship Titanic.

That connection turned out to be an omen, for the queen never arrived, and the building was abandoned at the beginning of the 20th century. As English carpetbaggers deeply unpopular with the locals, the Loftus family left a legacy of wickedness behind. Briefly converted into a convent, even the good sisters, it was said, couldn't contain the evil within the hall. On my evening tour, I was expecting lots of prearranged special effects, recorded groans, ghostly appearances, but Loftus Hall doesn't need any help to feel genuinely creepy.

According to its legend, one dark night a shipwrecked stranger appeared on the doorstep and was offered refuge. The daughter of the house, Lady Anne, fell instantly in love but during a card game, when she bent over to pick up a card she had dropped, she discovered that the handsome stranger had cloven hoofs. He disappeared in a ball of fire and the horrified Lady Anne went mad. Locked up in the Tapestry Room for the rest of her life, her spirit is still said to haunt the place. One of our group said he is a medium, and he claimed to feel something cold and odd in the room. "You feel it too, don't you?" he said to me.

Ruined, dark, and damp, it was hard not to feel something odd. Maybe it was the reverberations from the night before when we had stayed at the Mt. Juliet Country Estate, another historic hall but with electricity. Like Harry Potter's Hogwarts, the house seemed to keep changing. The stairway I was sure led to my bedroom went somewhere else. The corridor to the reception desk ended in a wall.

Checking out the next morning, the clerk asked casually if I had slept well. My room, she informed me, was said to be haunted by the hall's former mistress, Lady Juliet herself. Well-born ladies it seems dominate Ireland's ghostly congregation.

The next day offered some anti-ghostly balm.

The ruins of a small medieval village once connected with the now-ruined Jerpoint Cistercian Abbey stand near the River Noor on the property of Jerpoint Park in County Kilkenny. In the Middle Ages, Jerpoint was a pilgrimage site with 27 houses and 14 taverns where pilgrims came to visit the Church of St. Nicholas. Here lies, according to legend, Santa Claus himself, St. Nicholas of Myra, his body brought from Turkey by the crusading Jane family and buried under a carved stone effigy.

The present owner of the property took us around and showed us the beautifully sculpted Celtic cross that had once stood in the churchyard. After an offering of tea and homemade scones eaten at the owner's table, I was feeling superior to the supernatural.

That was before our visit to Hook Lighthouse, the oldest operating lighthouse in the world.

Perched on Hook Head at the edge of the Irish Sea, it was built in the 12th century and originally manned by local monks who were dubbed Custodians of the Light. Painted a striking black and white, Hook's architecture is based on one of the wonders of the ancient world, the lighthouse at Alexandria. 115 steps climb to a windswept view of the rugged coastline where scuba divers were just hauling themselves out of the surf.

"Are there any shipwrecks around here?" I asked our guide, Liam.

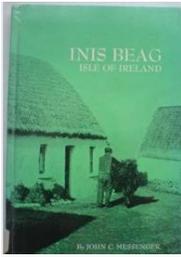
"Only 30 or so that we know of," he informed me. Did ghosts appear to scuba divers when they intruded on their watery graves? Liam didn't know. But like some marine ectoplasm around the wave-washed rocks, the sea was turning from green to grey and from grey to silver. The sun drew sparks off the swells along the horizon where the ships that were the responsibility of the Custodians of the Light had once sailed.

Ireland's ghosts didn't need to work too hard in the town of New Ross, where the Dunbrody Famine Ship now stands moored. Nearly a million people immigrated on ships like the Dunbrody during the Great Famine of 1845-50 in conditions so appalling that 40-60 percent of them never made it to the New World. Costumed re-enactors recounted the harrowing conditions of the immigrants and the challenges that awaited them across the sea.

Re-enactors awaited us, too, at the Bishop's Palace in nearby Waterford, home to one of Ireland's premier products, Waterford crystal. Waterford was a Viking town later conquered by the Normans, landlords who became despised by the Irish populace. Today's Waterford is a prosperous town where crystal tends to dominate the conversation. In the Dean's House across from the Bishop's Palace, an ancient wine cellar stands over Viking remains and here once again the ghosts of the past jostle each other in dimly-lit corners. Outside of the city, pastoral fields of green roll down to the sea.

There may be a history of conflict in the Emerald Isle but on the southeast coast, among the 40 shades of green, ecology and ectoplasm live happily side by side.

Susan James is a freelance writer based in Los Angeles. She has lived in India, the U.K., and Hawaii, and writes about travel, art, and culture.



JOHN MESSENGER OBITUARY

MESSENGER John Messenger died peacefully on June 16, 2010. Raised in "Packerland," Green Bay, WI, where he was born on April 2, 1920, it was easy for him to ignore his artistic talents and to excel in football and track. As the first Cub Scout in the U.S., he grew to love wooded Door Co., WI. WWII interrupted his liberal arts studies and athletics at Lawrence in Appleton, WI, where he became a member of Beta Theta Pi. Upon his return, he met his wife-to-be and received a B.S. in Geology. His PhD in Anthropology and African Studies from Northwestern prepared him for extensive research, with his wife, in southeastern Nigeria, Ireland, Montserrat, and New Zealand. He taught at Michigan State, Carleton College, Indiana, Queen's U of Belfast, OSU and Notre Dame.

Numerous publications and major addresses, grants, and honors in various academic associations reflect his passion for the anthropological message, his sense of humor, and his deep concern over man's inhumanity to man. In later years, he found stunning natural beauty and formed solid friendships in places he visited repeatedly here and abroad. Above all, he claimed that he worked hardest at and derived the most satisfaction from his happy 62-year marriage to Betty, who survives him. Numerous kin and friends worldwide share her feelings of loss. A Celebration of his life is planned for a future date.

Arrangements entrusted to SCHOEDINGER NORTHWEST CHAPEL, 1740 Zollinger Rd., (614)-457-5481.

- See more at: <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/dispatch/obituary.aspx...>



John Messenger's Obituary on The Columbus Dispatch

www.legacy.com

Read the Obituary and view the Guest Book, leave condolences or send flowers. | MESSENGER John Messenger died peacefully on June 16, 2010. Raised in "Packerland," Green Bay, WI, where he was born on April 2, 1920, it was easy for him to ignore his artistic talents and to excel

Morning Glory Passed Away



"It is with a heavy heart that pass on the official information that Morning Glory Zell crossed the veil into the Summerlands at 5:42 PM MAY 13, 2014.

Blessed Be Her Journey. She died in the arms of her beloved Oberon surrounded by those who love her."



Mary Stewart Obituary

Author who launched romantic suspense as a new and bestselling strand of fiction

By Rachel Hore – The Guardian

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/may/15/mary-stewart>

Mary Stewart's stories were narrated by poised, smart, highly educated young women who drove fast cars and knew how to fight their corner. Photograph: Hodder & Stoughton

The stylish, educated novels of Mary Stewart, who has died aged 97, charmed two generations of postwar readers and launched a whole new strand of modern popular writing: romantic suspense. She arguably inspired the deluge of bestselling romantic fiction that has flooded the market in recent decades. During a writing career of more than 40 years, she produced a score of chart-topping novels that sold in excess of 5m copies and made her an international household name.



Yet fame was not what she wanted. She detested the intrusions it brought and fiercely protected her privacy. In 1997, apprehensive about a forthcoming – and rarely granted – press interview, she found herself unable to write for six weeks. When her first novel, *Madam, Will You Talk?* (1954), was published and she saw "This is the new star" printed next to her publicity photograph, she burst into tears of dismay.

Stewart introduced a different kind of heroine for a newly emerging womanhood. It was her "anti-namby-pamby" reaction, as she called it, to the "silly heroine" of the conventional contemporary thriller who "is told not to open the door to anybody and immediately

opens it to the first person who comes along". Instead, Stewart's stories were narrated by poised, smart, highly educated young women who drove fast cars and knew how to fight their corner. Also tender-hearted and with a strong moral sense, they spoke, one felt, with the voice of their creator. Her writing must have provided a natural form of expression for a person not given to self-revelation.

Madam, Will You Talk? featured a woman lured into danger by her concern for a motherless boy. It was an immediate success. Over the next 15 years, a whole line of novels of a similar suspenseful nature rolled out, with titles including *Nine Coaches Waiting* (1958), *My Brother Michael* (1959) and *The Ivy Tree* (1961).

Then came a change of direction. *The Crystal Cave* (1970), the first of a fictional trilogy about Merlin, arose from her fascination with Roman-British history. The unexpected switch at first alarmed her publishers – she was, unusually, published by the same firm, Hodder & Stoughton, for her entire career, never using an agent – but the book was a No 1 bestseller for weeks.

Of all her books, *The Crystal Cave* is the most enduring, and has lost none of its freshness. It is a masterful imagining of Merlin's upbringing that vividly evokes fifth-century Britain. *The Hollow Hills* (1973) and *The Last Enchantment* (1979) completed the trilogy, earning Stewart favourable comparisons with another leading Arthurian, T.H. White. They were the books of which she was most proud.

Stewart's fans were above all attracted to her wonderful storytelling, which she saw as a skill she was born with – "I am first and foremost a teller of tales" – but also by the warmth and vivacity of her characters and the sharply drawn settings. These ranged from Skye with icy mist coiling around the Cuillin mountains in *Wildfire at Midnight* (1956) to the searing heat of Corfu in *This Rough Magic* (1964), with its echoes of *The Tempest*.

Stewart's classical education served her splendidly. Informed by lightly worn research, her books were intelligent and full of literary allusion. It might be said that in subject matter and treatment she was a natural successor to Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë. As the *Herald* commented in 2004: "She built the bridge between classic literature and modern popular fiction. She did it first and she did it best." Four children's books, including *Ludo and the Star Horse* (1974) and a book of poetry, joined her oeuvre, and *The Moonspinners* (1962) reached a wider audience through the 1964 Walt Disney film with Hayley Mills and Joan Greenwood as a young woman and her aunt visiting Crete.

Born Mary Rainbow in Sunderland, she learned to read at three in Trimdon, where her father, Frederick, was vicar. By seven, she was writing stories about her toys. Mary and her brother, Gerald, played together in the attic. "Nobody bothered to entertain us; we entertained ourselves. So I wrote," she said.

At eight she was sent away to boarding school, an experience that marked her for life. She was bullied because she was clever. Her mother, Mary Edith (nee Matthews), from New Zealand, eventually moved her to another school, but she was still unhappy. Even in later years, Stewart would say: "It does stay with you all your life. I still have no confidence. If someone's unkind, even faintly unkind, you shrivel."

When she left school, she favoured the idea of being a painter, but the family had limited means and her mother advised that she equip herself to earn a living. Oxford, Cambridge and Durham universities all offered her a place, but Durham gave the best bursary. She graduated from there in 1938 with first-class honours in English. A teaching diploma followed.

During the second world war she taught in Middlesbrough, where children were not allowed to assemble in schools, so she trudged grimly from house to house in all weathers, teaching a gaggle of children who had gathered in one mother's kitchen before going on to the next to repeat the lesson. More enjoyable was a job in Durham educating troops posted nearby.

Just after VE Day in 1945, she experienced the very stuff of romantic fiction. At an impromptu fancy-dress party at Durham Castle, she met Frederick Stewart, a young Scot who lectured in geology. "He was wearing a girl's gym tunic, lilac socks, dance pumps ... a red ribbon round his head," she recalled. "He said 'May I have this dance, Miss Rainbow?' and I thought 'You're the one!'" Three months later they were married.

In 1956, they moved to Edinburgh, where he became professor of geology and mineralogy, and one of Britain's foremost scientists. In 1974 he was knighted and she became Lady Stewart. The couple lived together until his death in 2001.

At the age of 30, Stewart suffered an ectopic pregnancy, undiagnosed for several weeks. Peritonitis set in and she nearly died. It was a long time before she accepted childlessness. "For years, every single month I thought, perhaps this time. I wanted four. I even had the names chosen." Her husband was scared of adopting. But there came consolation. "I don't suppose I'd have written books if I'd had them," she reflected much later.

She returned to work part-time as a lecturer, but yearned to write. Encouraged by her husband – always her first reader – she constructed a novel. This was submitted to Hodder & Stoughton as *Murder for Charity* by Mary Rainbow. Hodder liked neither the title nor her pen name, but they loved the book and paid her £50 for it. She did not look back after that, turning out her work first on a heavy manual typewriter that wrecked her wrist, then on an electric typewriter that she disliked because it ran ahead of her thoughts. After a period of dictating to a machine, she settled on a word processor.

The writing had to fit around myriad domestic tasks and the travel and entertaining required by her husband's position. They divided their home life between Edinburgh and a Victorian house by Loch Awe in the Highlands, with distracting views of snow-capped mountains.

They shared a love of nature and Greek and Roman history, music, theatre and art, all evident in her books. She was a fine cook. The Loch Awe house was furnished with a piano, embroidery, knotted rugs and drawings of their many pets. In later years she lived in Edinburgh.

She is survived by four nieces, Jenny, Elizabeth, Anne and Tricia, and three nephews, Frederick, Martin and Stewart.

- Mary Florence Elinor Stewart, author, born 17 September 1916; died 9 May 2014

DRUID INQUIRER INFO

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Submissions Policy: Give it to me! If you have news about your grove, written a little essay, like to write up a book or move, have a poem, saw an interesting news article in the paper, or have a cartoon, send it in to mikerdna@hotmail.com or send by Facebook message to [mike.the.fool](https://www.facebook.com/mike.the.fool). I'll try to give credit to whoever the original author is, and they retain the copyright to their works, and we'll reprint it one day in a future binding also. Nasty works will not be published. Although my standards are not skyhigh, incomplete works will be nurtured towards a publish-able form, so send those earlier for assistance. Submissions are accepted from other publications and organizations, so you need not be a formal member of the RDNA to have your items published.

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