

How do we know about the Druids?

Knowledge of the Druids, and the ancient Celts in general, is derived from direct archaeological evidence, from the writings of classical authors in Greece and Rome, and from folklore transcribed by 12th century Christian scribes and scholars.

Did the Druids build Stonehenge?

No. The Celts didn't expand into Britain until between the 5th to 3rd centuries BCE. Stonehenge was completed by about 1600 BCE. The Druids, however, did have enough astronomical knowledge to realize the significance of Stonehenge. They may have used Stonehenge, at least for observational purposes, although there is no clear evidence to support this.

Do the Keltrian Druids have a sacred or holy book?

Druidism has other sources of divine inspiration, primarily because it is a practice that includes direct revelation. That is to say, individuals following the Keltrian Druid path interact directly with deity and receive *imbas* (inspiration) based upon what the Gods see that they need.

Written materials are always of questionable provenance anyway. Were they truly from the divine or were they written through the lens of the interpreter and does that individual have their own agenda?

Also, an official "sacred text" is confining, as anything which disagrees with that text may be considered as heresy rather than the lesson or experience that others may need in a different time or place to allow the tradition to grow.

Explain some aspects of Celtic belief that you emulate in your modern practices.

We know very little about the specific religious practices of the Celtic peoples. We have adopted the use of many Celtic Deities that we know about through the study of mythology. Our rituals celebrate the cycles of life and the year. With the changing of

the seasons, we choose different Deities that best represent the things we associate with that season.

We have also adapted many Celtic symbols in our practice. We believe that these symbols helped trigger the connection the Celts felt between themselves and the Gods, and that it can do the same for us. For example, the Celts placed great importance in the number three. We have developed many associations of threes. We revere the Gods, Ancestors and Nature Spirits. We associate them with the realms of Sky, Sea and Land respectively. We also associate them with the three aspects of our being: Spirit, Mind and Body.

Another example: the Roman author Pliny the Elder wrote the only detailed account of ritual. He described the gathering of mistletoe that was found growing on an oak tree. A Druid, dressed in white, cut the mistletoe using a sickle and allowed it to fall onto a white piece of cloth. This ritual took place on the 6th night after the new moon. From this account, we see that the Druids held some importance to the color white, and used a sickle. We prefer white robes for our clergy in ritual and have adopted the sickle for our use. We also set aside the 6th night of the moon for our Mistletoe Rite.

What is the Keltrian view of Deity?

We see Deity in many different aspects, both male and female. Each of these aspects of Deity represents different aspects of life, nature and the seasons.

We use appropriate aspects of Deity in rituals and in our lives to help us maintain contact. The idea that these aspects of Deity are separate from each other is called polytheism (many Gods). The idea that these aspects are part of a larger whole is called pan-polytheism. In Keltrian Druidism, we see both polytheism and pan-polytheism as valid views of Deity.

We believe that Deity exists in all living things. We see each human, animal and plant as a unique expression of the Divine. Some Druids extend this view to what are normally considered inanimate objects such as wells, rivers, and mountains. They see Divinity in many places such as mountains, rivers, and the wind. This idea – that inanimate objects are in some way living – is called animism. Keltrian Druids are animistic at least to the level where they see the Divine within plant life.

What are the other Hallmarks of Keltrian Druidism?

The following set of statements encompasses the major points of our values and worldview:

- We celebrate the Gods and Goddesses of ancient Ireland.
- We revere the Spirits of Nature.
- We honor our Ancestors.
- We respect all life and do no harm without deliberation or regard.
- The virtue of an action is judged by the action itself, the intention behind the action and its outcome.
- Justice is sought through restorative measures.
- We gain knowledge and develop wisdom by learning what we can and teaching what we are able.
- We encourage people to follow their own paths.
- We endorse the growth and evolution of The Henge of Keltria and the membership.

How do you worship?

Since we consider ourselves a nature religion, the ideal place for our rituals is outdoors, preferably in the woods or another place away from cities and 'civilization'. This is not always practical, especially during winter, so we worship wherever it is convenient. The purpose of our rituals is to celebrate the Divine and have communion with the Gods and each other. We do this mainly through meditation, prayer and invocation of the Gods, Ancestors and Nature Spirits.

We perform most of our rituals around a sacred fire (or sacred candles for indoor rituals). Our rituals involve the participation of everyone in attendance. We distribute the ritual functions among several people, rather than have everything done by a priest and priestess. Our rituals also involve the participants through a good deal of singing.

How do you relate to the Ancestors?

Ancestors, in the Keltrian Druid context, are viewed as much more than just the genetic material that you are made of. Although genetics may be a leading contributor to your body, your mind and spirit are equally important in determining who you are. We focus not only on those who created your body but also upon those people who came before you that helped your mind and spirit develop. These include key teachers and other influences in your development.

When do you celebrate your rituals?

Instead of celebrating our rituals according to the modern calendar, we choose our times of worship according to the cycles of the Sun and Moon.

We celebrate two lunar rites. We call these rites the Mistletoe Rite and the Vervain Rite. As mentioned before, the ancient Druids collected mistletoe on the 6th night of the Moon (roughly the first quarter). Since mistletoe was known as 'all heal,' one of the themes of this rite is healing. This theme extends to healing of our community, through a sharing of food and drink at the rite. We see this as a time to seek balance in our lives.

Our other lunar rite is the Vervain Rite. The time of this rite was also chosen from classical descriptions of ancient Druidic practices. It was written that vervain was gathered when neither Sun nor Moon were in the sky. This occurs sometime during each night, except when the moon is full. We generally celebrate this around the 3rd quarter. This gives ample time for the rite during the evening hours. It also places this rite opposite the Mistletoe Rite in the lunar cycle. Vervain is said to be of aid in working magic. Thus, the Vervain Rite is our time for working magic. The purpose of magic in a Druidic sense is more like prayer. We work magic to help effect change in our lives. Druidic magic may involve contemplation, meditation, ritual or ecstatic dance.

We also celebrate eight holidays throughout the year. These holidays originally come from two separate cultures. The solstices and equinoxes, which celebrate the cycle of the Sun, came from one culture, while the 'cross-quarters,' which mark the agricultural and pastoral seasons of the Earth, came

from another. The cross-quarter feasts are: Samhain (Nov. 1), Imbolc (Feb. 1), Beltaine (May 1), and Lughnasádh (Aug. 1). The Celts adopted the solar holidays, and Keltrian Druids celebrate all eight holidays. In our modern rites, we also relate the cycle of the year to the cycle of our lives. We choose a specific God and Goddess (Patron and Matron) to honor at each rite. Each of these figures represents a different aspect of our lives, from youth to vitality to old age, wisdom, and finally death. As the year gets older, the Patron and Matron age as well.

In addition, we find this cycle useful in thinking about the stages of bringing things about, from their inception through fruition and beyond.

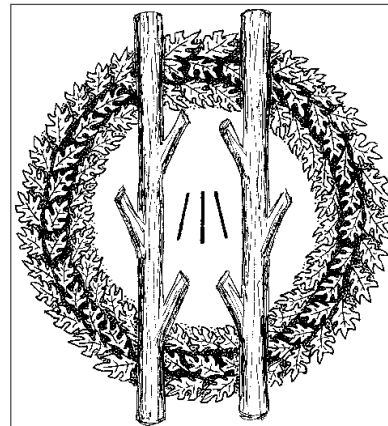
How can I find out more about the Henge?

If you would like to explore Keltrian Druidism further, write us at:

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or visit our website:

www.keltria.org



WHAT IS

THE HENGE OF KELTRIA AND WHAT IS DRUIDISM?

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Henge of Keltria?

The Henge of Keltria is a non-profit initiatory order dedicated to the positive, life affirming spiritual path of Druidism. We call it "Keltrian Druidism." The Henge of Keltria exists to provide information and training to those interested in Keltrian Druidism and to promote Celtic Earth-based Spirituality. Thus, we approach it as a religion, a personal path or a spiritual discipline.

What is "Druidism"?

Keltrian Druidism is our modern adaptation of ancient Celtic religion. The priests of the ancient Celts were called Druids.

Who were the Druids?

The word Druid may derive from an Indo-European word *Drus*, meaning "oak," and the Indo-European *wid*, meaning "to know." Literally, Druid means "to know the oak." The ancient Druids did not have many buildings for worship. The classical writers noted that the Druids' preferred sanctuaries were forest clearings.

Although the Celts existed throughout much of Europe, the Druids were known to exist only in what is called the latter Celtic range -- basically Gaul and the British Isles.

The priestly class of these Celts was on an equal level with nobility. They included the Druids (priests), Bards (poets and musicians), and Seers (diviners). The Druids were held above Bards and Seers and, according to Caesar, had authority in peace and war.

The Druids met in caves, deep in the woods, and in buildings for study and training that could last as long as 20 years. All the Druidic teachings were orally transmitted, so little is known about their teachings.