henge happenings

The Henge of Keltria, PO Box 4305, Clarksburg, WV 26302-4305

Issue #62 Editor: Tony Taylor Keltria-Office@Keltria.org Beltaine 2004

From the President Recently in my Aikido practice I came across a "Lesson in Mindfulness" that discusses the Student/Teacher relationship. I often find myself comparing the teachings of Aikido and the teachings of the ancient Druids. I thought to myself, "Well, within Keltrian Druidism, there are also Student/Teacher (or student/ mentor) relationships," and the advice given in the Lesson in Mindfulness also seems very good advice for those developing along the path of Keltrian Druidism, whether with a Grove leader or through the Correspondence Course. The Lesson in Mindfulness states that, "Traditionally in Asia, not everyone was allowed to study martial arts. Great masters would accept only students who could prove they were motivated and willing to meet high expectations. Historically, a martial arts instructor's status was similar to that of the clergy or great philosophical masters. They were recognized as very wise individuals and were highly respected in the community." I was reminded of the ancient Druids, who similarly did not accept just anyone into their inner circle, for, while they taught the children of the nobles basic education, the training for a chosen aspiring Druid could last as long as twenty years. The Filid (poets) in Ireland underwent some rigorous training to fit them for their position, as we can discover in Auraicept na N-éces (The Scholars' Primer); twelve years of study for an Ollamh, who had to know at least 350 tales! It is not unreasonable for us today to accept only motivated students who are willing to meet high expectations. The path of martial arts is one of personal growth and self-discovery, and yet one must train under a master if one has a desire to develop skill in one's chosen art. The path of Druidism is similar in that it is a path of personal growth and selfdiscovery within the spirituality of particular cultural framework. One must train under an Elder if one has the desire to develop in this spiritual path. The Druid chosen as a mentor, like the martial arts master, is a teacher in every respect. CONTINUED ON NEXT DAGE

"When the student is ready the teacher will appear."



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Yet, I have heard Elders lament that prospective students to Druidism seem to believe that they have no responsibility to their education, other than to simply show up. This is a common complaint by teachers in every aspect of our society, not just the spiritual. I believe this attitude is the result of our modern education system, and the Lesson in Mindfulness agrees, saying Western education is a system "where the teacher bears most of the responsibility in the learning process, with little accountability on the student. In the Western education system, the teacher searches for ways to effectively communicate, motivating and teaching the student, even if the student is not trying very hard. Should the student not succeed, the belief is that the teacher failed – he should work harder to teach. So, he repeatedly tries varying methods, until the student, despite his insincere attitude, eventually gets it. This method is not always effective, and rarely does a student internalize the real essence of the teaching. Only by direct personal experience do we really understand anything. We must have our own investment in the learning process." Having been a teacher in our modern education system, I can vouch for the accuracy of these sentiments.

In Asia, the students held the most responsibility for the learning process. Martial arts teachers were usually serious and rather gruff, and they would demonstrate techniques silently or with very few words. "The students had to concentrate hard to follow and learn each technique, and, as a result, awareness and sensitivity increased. Teachers did not repeat for wandering minds, and classes were never adjusted for beginning students. As you can imagine, many people became frustrated and quit their practice. But for those who continued, their beginner's wisdom expanded slowly through trial and error and they moved down the path of growth and realization. This method of teaching may seem rather brutal, but in some aspects it is very effective. Self-discovery is a very powerful way to learn. By exerting great effort to grasp the knowledge yourself, you absorb the lesson completely, making it part of your very being. You are not just mimicking or memorizing something that you will forget in a few months. You've discovered it on your own and it is important to you. When the teacher just spouts forth the information, repeating again and again, students really don't have to listen carefully, and probably won't comprehend how the lesson affects their life."

I believe that the learning process should be a partnership, where both teacher and student are responsible for the learning. Our methods of mentoring within Keltria fall somewhere between the two extremes discussed above. We have all heard this old Chinese proverb: "When the student is ready, the teacher will appear." The teacher's job is to help students grow and learn; however, the student's responsibility is to work as hard as possible to absorb the lesson. Once the light of inspiration begins to glow in the heart of the student, the influence of a great teacher expands infinitely. A great teacher points the way down the path, but does not necessarily walk hand-in-hand with the student on the entire journey. Sometimes, a teacher may even set up obstacles in the path, instigating change and reevaluation on the student's part. By facing challenges and dealing with change in the process of self-discovery, we all develop a stronger will and a greater character. Everyone should learn the excitement of self-discovery.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

From the Secretary

ELECTIONS

By Tony Taylor

For Members of the Henge Only



Visic the henge of Keltria Web Sice

http://www.keltria.org/

Frequently asked questions, reading list, mailing list, membership information and more!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

From the Treasurer

By Karl

For Members of the Henge Only

The Seer's Path Ogham

By Searles O'Oubbhain

["Keltria-L" is an E-Mail List where members of the Henge and those interested in the Keltrian Druidism may have questions answered. It also provides a forum for people to exchange ideas and provide an update of current projects. Recently, Myrddin Wolfe, a member of the Henge, who is doing research into Ogham asked about the series of articles regarding the Ogham by Searles O'Dubhain that ran in Keltria Journal several years ago. Several books were mentioned as being good books on ogham including The Book of Ogham: The Celtic Tree Oracle by Edred Thorsson and Tree Wisdom by Jacqueline Memory Paterson. Searles, our longtime ogham scholar, identified some additional works and glimpse of the works he is currently working on. The following is an extract from the Keltria-L list. —Editor]

Three other indispensable works on Ogham are:

Macalister, R. A. S. 1936. *The Secret Languages of Ireland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Macalister, R. A. S. 1996 [1945]. *Corpus Inscriptionum Insularum Celticarum. Vol* 1. Black Rock: Four Courts Press. ISBN 1-85182-242-9

MacAlister, R. A.S. 1949. *The Archaeology of Ireland*. London: Methuen.

There is also this seminal work on the Ogham:

Calder, George, ed. 1995. *Auraicept na n-Éces: The Scholars' Primer*; being the texts of the Ogham tract from the Book of Ballymote and the Yellow Book of Lecan, and the text of the Trefhocul from the Book of Leinster. Black Rock: Four Courts Press. (Original edition: Edinburgh: John Grant, 1917.) ISBN 1-85182-181-3

For more references on the Ogham go to the source of this list:

http://www.evertype.com/standards/og/leabhair.html

I'm also writing and finishing nine books on Druidic practices tied together through Ogham which is based in large part on my earlier articles on Ogham in the Journal of the Henge of Keltria. In these books, I look at comparisons of the Ogham to Vedic and Norse alphabets and other systems of ordering the cosmos. The idea of the *Dúile* and the Three Cauldrons play a large part in these books as well as traditional Irish tales, tree lore and poetic metaphor. Currently, they are in varying degrees of completion (I've been working on them for quite a while now). As I write, I try to learn and to incorporate into practice the knowledge that is discovered. Many rewrites and edits have occurred during this process and the going has been slow as I integrate tradition with experience through inquiry and revelation.

Ogham,...
Vedic...
Norse...
and other systems of ordering the Cosmos.



This is a listing of the titles of these books and a brief introduction to each of them:

OPENING THE PATHWAYS

This book investigates and reveals the Druidic traditions associated with tradition and the ways in which we perceive our surroundings. It discusses the symbolic languages that are found carved in stone as well as Celtic ideas of ritual space. The concepts of the Dúile and Three Cauldrons (of Poesy) are detailed and expanded from the original texts. Additionally, the ways in which ritual space and cosmology are identified in Druidic and Celtic teachings are diagrammed and defined. The role of the Ogham as "keys to wisdom" are established and presented in highlighted boxes through the text. The tree symbol for this aspect of Druidic wisdom is the White Birch (*Beithe* in Irish and Ogham). The Cauldron of Formation is the basis for the knowledge of stone and ancient ways. It is the ancestral knowledge that comes out of the silver-gray past. This testimony of tradition has survived throughout the ages, even as the stones from the Cailleach's apron. The *Dúil* associated with this book is stone.

THE TRUTH OF A KING

Truth was the primary force in creation and prosperity according to the teachings of the Druids. It was found within the center of Celtic society in the person of the king. The king's truth and his sacred marriage to the Goddess of Sovereignty in the ritual known as the *banais rígh* determined the fate and future of the people as well as the land. Several works attributed to Druids are presented and discussed to illustrate the powers of truth. Among these are *Audacht Morainn* (by the Druid Morann mac Main), the Precepts of Cú Chulainn, the Advice to a Prince (by Cormac mac Art), as well as the Collar of truth, the Cup of Truth and the Chant of Truth. The color of this book is earth colored for the land and its special place in the center of Celtic society. It is trimmed in bronze for its basis as a beginning in any undertaking. The Cauldron of Formation's gift to the beginning student is a knowledge of self and of one's roots. The Ogham keys are continued in this (and all of the books) to identify and clarify the concepts that are revealed within their leaves. The Dúil associated with this book is the land.

THE SONG OF THE TREES

No book on Druidic wisdom or Ogham can ignore the knowledge of the trees and the special role they played in Druidic practice. Sacred trees (known as Bile in Irish) are identified. Their role as the center of life for the tribe is detailed, as well as the special knowledge and qualities that each possesses. The *Cad Goddeu* (the Battle of the Trees) is presented along with several lesser known Barddic and Druidic works regarding tree knowledge and wisdom. The role of music in Celtic spirituality and cosmology is discussed along with the theory associating the Ogham with song and harp. The idea of "Memory Groves" is also discussed along with the time proven techniques of oral memory among Druids and scholars of the past. The role of the Ogham as a sacred alphabet and a magical language is also keyed to the trees, their songs and the images that lead to perfect

No book on Oruioic wisdom or ogham can ignore the knowledge of the trees...



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recollection. The Dúil associated with this book is Nature. Nature is the song of celebration that is heard when life renews itself in birth, death and rebirth. This cycle of being is the nectar and blossom of the Cauldron of Formation.

THE HAND AND THE KNIFE

The hand and the knife of Ogma Sunface were considered to be the parents of the Ogham alphabet and the Druidic system of classification for knowledge and eloquence. The first two groups of Ogham are the consonants that describe the majority of the king trees. These two groups are associated with conflict and beginnings as well as victories and prosperity. As such, they are on the cutting edge of Druidic wisdom and form the basis for initial work using Ogham. The qualities, forms, lists and kennings for each of these Ogham woods is defined, detailed and discussed to develop an inventory of images for Druids in training. A body of ancient wisdom, traditions and tales is tied to each Ogham character. These tales are provided and analyzed in e the "Tales to Read and Study" sections of the book so that they can serve as ready references for Druidic workings and techniques using Ogham. The Dúil associated with this book is the sea. These characteristics represent the flow or continuity of the Cauldron of Vocation.

SOUND AND FORM

This book is all about the ways that one can return to a place of balance within nature, one's life and the affairs of the world. It does this through a study of the Ogham groups known as Aicme Muin (Group M) and Aicme Ailm (Group A). These two groups of Ogham characters are the last group of Irish consonants and the primary vowels. Muin group Ogham meanings are associated with music, poetry and the ways of harmony (through an alignment with the tides that run through life), while Ailm group Ogham are tied to the ways that Goddess power returns life to life (often through or because of the many forms of death, decay and destruction). The quest for knowledge through the twists and turnings of the vine is sometimes intoxicating, while the reality of the plains of life is often stark and seemingly unforgiving. Dealing with these two aspects of the Middle Way and achieving a balance between the extremes is the central focus of the tales and lessons connected to these two Ogham groups. The Dúil associated with this activity is the wind in the world and the breath within an individual. Sound and form are the primary ways in which creation occurs and the power of spell work and chanting is realized. These functions are closely associated with the self (through naming, Irish *anaimn*) and the spirit or soul (which in Irish is the *anam*). Sound and form are the celebration of the Cauldron of Vocation.

THE BED OF THE COUPLE

The Bed of the Couple is an Ogham study of the group of woods and characters known as the *Forfedha* (extra characters or vowels). These are the double vowels sounds known as diphthongs. Some say they were a later introduction to the Ogham yet the symbols used for them are some of the oldest known to the Irish and the Druids. These range from the solar cross and the lozenge (or

The guest for knowledge through the twists and turnings of the vine is sometimes intoxicating,



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They are the Bubbles of the Sun and the Salmon of Wisdom from the Well of Segais.

diamond) that are found on and among the brughs of Ireland to the spiral and the game board of destiny (squares within squares). The function of these characters with the Ogham system is to identify the primary ritual times and festivals. They also describe and elaborate the central functions and purposes for these rituals which are known by the Irish Celtic names of Imbolc, Bealtaine, Lugnasadh and Samhain. An additional ritual known as the Feast of Age (or perhaps the Feast of Tara) was sometimes celebrated to honor the continuity of life and prosperity through the truth that was symbolized by the king and the Goddess of Sovereignty. As such, this particular ritual would be held perhaps every three years or as a jubilee for celebrating the success of the tribe through its leaders. Tales and meanings are associated with each of these Ogham woods and the festivals they symbolize. This is where one learns about the ways in which change can occur in the life of the tribe through group and individual ritual action. This information allows a Druid to mark the seasons and to create the chants and spells that are appropriate to them. The Dúil associated with this book is the Moon. Moon knowledge and its cycles are the container and foundation of the Cauldron of Vocation.

FACING THE SUN

The main topics of this book are voyages into the unknown and journeys of wonder. The primary Druidic tales and techniques associated with these pathways of enlightenment and discovery are known as immrama, echtraí and imbas. Tales about the making of Druids, their experiences of revelation and the techniques that bring about illumination and enlightenment are fully investigated. Among these tales are *Immram Maelduin Anseo* (the Voyage of Maelduin), Echtraí Condlai (also the Adventures of Cormac mac Art) and Immacallam in Da Thurad (the Colloquy of the two Sages). These journeys and voyages are used to model the shape of past and future as well as the inner, underworld and Otherworldly experiences of Druidic journeymen (and women). They describe in a traditional form how these techniques were accomplished and taught in the schools of the Druids and the Filidh. The cosmologies of Sea and Sky are more fully revealed by this study as well as the plains and backdrop for divination, augury and prophecy. Facing the Sun is all about becoming immersed in the source and the light that produces the Rays of Ogma. They are the bubbles of the Sun and the Salmon of Wisdom from the Well of Segais. The Dúil associated with this book is (of course) the Sun. The Sun is the pathway to the Cauldron of Celebration.

THE CATTLE OF TETHRA

The Cattle of Tethra is the name of the second book in Volume 3: The Cauldron of Celebration. It is also another name for the multitudes of mysteries that exist within creation. This term sometimes described the fish of the sea while at other times it was used for the stars and the constellations of the sky. In an esoteric sense, it is all about the ways in which light penetrates darkness or that knowledge pierces through ignorance. Tethra is the herdsman who regulates or herds this effect within existence.. Of all the forces of the Fomorii, he is the most ordered and eloquent. His sword, Orna, is capable of speech and reveals the deeds of all of its previous owners to anyone who possesses it. The hidden



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knowledge that is revealed is the knowledge that comes through the void supported by its own eloquence. This exists in the relationships between systems and everything that is. It is the thread that runs through, behind and out of everything. This book is a study of the knowledge that transforms and transcends. It is the knowledge from the void. It is the knowledge from the depths of space. As such, it is the star knowledge from above and the treasures of the depths of earth and sea. The Ogham is a system of knowledge that relates, quantifies and preserves this knowledge of everything. The Ogham that represents the thread running through and connecting everything is known as Uileann which is mistletoe or woodbine. Its berries are the essence of healing and revelation. In a sense, the Cattle of Tethra are the pearls of wisdom that its extracts from its life among and upon the trees. The Dúil associated with this book is the stars. The stars are the drink and flow of the Cauldron of Celebration.

THE CRO OF LUGH

A cro is an enclosure used to surround and protect. In Lugh's case, it was formed by his nine foster-fathers to protect him and prevent him from going into battle at Moytura. He escaped from this enclosure because he was many-skilled or samildánach. This escape of a kind from a surrounding of men is reminiscent of chess which among Irish Druids was called fidchell or wood wisdom. It is Lugh's mastery of wood wisdom that is the major topic in this last book in the series. That mastery is the perfection and completion of his work with Ogham. In our own mastery of Ogham we will be able to demonstrate proficiency in their many uses. Examples are given of using Ogham in divination, in encryption, in naming, in determining geasa (taboos), and in empowering esoteric workings and ritual practice. After completing the work of this last book on Ogham in its role as the keys to wisdom, Druidic students will have achieved a journeyman's status. At that time, the future choice or direction of scholarship and specialty will be faced on the Druid way. Some of the pathways that exist at this crossroads are law, medicine, philosophy, priesthood, poetry, music and science. It is to be hoped that the Ogham Keys to Wisdom will have provided the student with the necessary keys to open the doors of their choosing (or the doors that block their way). The Dúil associated with this book is the sky. The sky is the home and realization of all being which is the Cauldron of Celebration itself. In a person, this Dúil is the head and center of the soul.

I personally use Ogham for divination, astrological interpretation, naming and the construction of esoteric chants. It is my hope that the Ogham can once again become the foundation, expression and revelation for Druidic works.

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The Henge now has T-Shirts available on-line at:

http://www.cafeshops.com/keltria.

Check them out. We anticipate having a full line of Henge of Keltria merchandise over the next few months. Particular thanks to Ken F. for his beautiful artwork displayed on the back of this t-shirt.



In our own mastery of Ocham we will be able to demonstrate proficiency



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GROVES & GROUDS GARRÁN AN EICH ÓRBHUÍ

By Copaz Oul

Sometimes Groves do things a little bit differently than the Book of Ritual suggests, and that's okay. Changing things to suit your Grove is expected, as long as the change remains within the ritual framework of the Henge. The Golden Horse often deviates from the suggestions in the ritual book in order to keep our rituals fresh and to add that personal touch to our rites. We have decided to share some of these variations here in the hope that others might be inspired. In this edition of "From the Groves," we'll talk about Remembrances.

In our Grove practice, we might use different Remembrances for the Principles than suggested in the Book of Ritual — Remembrances that better suit our collective Grove personality. For instance, while the Book of Ritual suggests candy hearts for Angus Og, we've discovered that, while candy hearts are just fine for use at Imbolc, they are not so easily obtainable after Valentine's Day...and we need the same Remembrance for Angus at Spring Equinox. Now, one could save the candy hearts for the next feast, but we came to the conclusion that it would be very effective (and far more memorable) to use chocolate to remember Angus on both Feasts. Chocolate comes in different shapes, after all. Chocolate hearts are easily found near Imbolc, and chocolate bunnies are easily found near the Spring Equinox. We feel that the symbolism of the two shapes are better suited to the two Feasts anyway, hearts for Imbolc and bunnies for the Equinox (and yet still chocolate), not to mention recent research that says when you eat chocolate, the same endorphins are released into your bloodstream as when you fall in love. What could be better for remembering Angus Og, God of Youth and Love?

The lovely thing about this variation on the remembrance for Angus is that, for the Spring Equinox rite, he is honored with Boann, who's Remembrance is the hazelnut! How sublimely wonderful: a mix of chocolate and hazelnut in our mouths. Who can forget Angus (or Boann) that way?

Another Remembrance that we have changed is the Remembrance for Danu. We decided that we felt better using a fruit that was ready to harvest in our area at the time of the Feast to make the Remembrance more meaningful to us. Grapes are not ready to harvest until after the first light frost, which occurs here normally in late September. But berries are plentiful in our area; raspberries and blackcaps are ready for Summer Solstice, and blueberries are ready just in time for Lughnasadh. So we use homegrown berries to remember Danu (and we realize that any fruit in season will do).

In effect, once the Grove's understanding of the significance of the Remembrance has been ingrained, it becomes easy to find alternatives to the suggestions in the ritual book that could better suit your geographical area and Grove personality. Of course, the Remembrances in the ritual book are always our backup in case we have a bad berry harvest, or the chocolate bunnies and hearts become scarce. ;-)

USING A FRUIT THAT

WAS READY TO

harvest in our area

At the time of the

Least to make the

Remembrance

more meaningful

to us.





Apple Branch Grove

The Feast of Flowering: Reviving Traditional CDay Baskets

By Page

Each of us as a member of Keltria must decide what it actually means to be a Keltrian. I think it is important to ask that question from time to time as we continue our personal journey with the Ancestors, Nature Spirits and the Gods. There is no one correct answer to that question. However, I do believe as we personally grow in our Druid faith we will come to see how we can personally imprint our local community with flavors of Celtic Reconstruction, which is the core of Keltria's mission.

As Grove Leader for Apple Branch Grove I encourage my grove mates to think of ways to bring back the Celtic traditions of long ago into their work place and neighborhood. For this provides an opportunity to educate the masses and to re-instill traditions from the past. Apple Branch Grove always looks forward to Beltaine, The Feast of Flowering. Not only do we have a lovely fresh flower Maypole for ritual but we also make May Baskets to deliver to neighbors, friends, and coworkers.

In England in 1644, the Puritan leaders banned May Day celebrations in view of its ties with pagan traditions. Even with the ban people still managed to celebrate. The ban was eventually overturned and the celebrations strengthen with the Restoration of England.

Today, May Day is celebrated all over Europe and in many countries and in some parts of the United States. American celebrations are sporadic. Mendon, Utah has a huge celebration every year. Pennsylvania holds a Faerie Festival and Hawaii enjoys Lei Day.

Whether you are a Keltrian Solitaire or member of a grove you can participate in Celtic reconstruction by making and giving May baskets. The baskets can be simple or elaborate. Over the years Apple Branch Grove has made many versions of May baskets from paper, craft plastic foam, cardboard to real baskets. However, I think my favorite method is to buy inexpensive pre-made woven baskets from a discount or craft store. Other supplies needed inexpensive colorful material, colorful ribbons, beads, plastic wrap, a flat of annuals. Line each basket with a piece of colorful cloth. Let the cloth spill over the sides of the basket. Tie ribbons of various colors on the sides and handle of the basket. String beads on some of the ribbons. Keep the annuals in their plastic containers. Water and let drain well. Place plastic warp over the container. Then place in the basket. Fold colorful cloth over the annuals to hide the container. On construction paper or card write a greeting to your neighbor, friend or coworker. Early morning on May 1st place the basket at their door. I advise not to ring the door bell. Let them be surprised to find the lovely basket when they leave for work. Make sure you place it in a visible spot where they will not trip over it when they open the door.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

Even with the ban people still managed to celebrate.





We believe in **Divinity as it** is manifest in the Pantheon.

There are several valid theistic perceptions of this Pantheon.

From the President Continued from Page 2

Sometimes in our spiritual work, we come to a place where we feel lost or confused. At such times especially, the student must communicate with the mentor. A student/mentor relationship is based on honesty, open communication, and loyalty. Your mentor has your best interests in mind. S/he has been through his/her own struggles, and understands where you are. With his/her help and your continuous effort, you will soon feel better about your progress again. Remember, rather than heading blindly for the destination, we must also be attentive to and appreciative of the journey.

Your mentor is not looking for perfection. Your mentor is looking for effort. The Lesson in Mindfulness expresses that, "Sometimes, effort can manifest as initiative, desire, focus, and intensity. At other times, effort might be patience, persistence and an open willingness to learn." A good Aikido instructor helps and guides everyone based on his or her level of understanding, developing body, mind, and spirit to synthesize into a balanced and whole human being. A good Druid mentor will do no less.

From the Secretary
.... Continued from Page 2

For Members of the Henge Only

Your mentor is NOT LOOKING FOR PERFECTION.



Nature is the Embodiment of the Gods and Goddesses

We believe that **nature** is the embodiment of the Gods and Goddesses. For your coworker, place the basket on their desk when they leave for lunch or take a break.

For your May greeting devise a poem, or a personal message. Or here is Greeting I found on-line.

"Summer is coming, oh, summer is near with the leaves on the trees and the sky blue and clear small birds are singing their fond notes so true and wild flowers are springing in the May morning dew"

-old folk song

Many Blessing to all from Apple Branch Grove, Columbia, MO.

Page Grove Leader



Summer is coming, oh, summer is near

with the Leaves on the trees and the sky blue and clear...





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