

*Symbols And Doctrines Of The Druids [George Oliver] on blog.quintoapp.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. This scarce antiquarian book is a facsimile reprint of the original.*

The only Roman account of these Celtic holy men comes to us from the historian Tacitus. He describes the slaughter of the Celtic holy men and women on an unguarded sacred island. By this method the infantry crossed; the cavalry, who followed, did so by fording or, in deeper water, by swimming at the side of their horses. In the style of Furies, in robes of deathly black and with dishevelled hair, they brandished their torches; while a circle of Druids, lifting their hands to heaven and showering imprecations, struck the troops with such an awe at the extraordinary spectacle that, as though their limbs were paralysed, they exposed their bodies to wounds without an attempt at movement. Then, reassured by their general, and inciting each other never to flinch before a band of females and fanatics, they charged behind the standards, cut down all who met them, and enveloped the enemy in his own flames. The next step was to install a garrison among the conquered population, and to demolish the groves consecrated to their savage cults: While he was thus occupied, the sudden revolt of the province was announced to Suetonius. It is true that prisoners were sacrificed for religious purposes, but prisoners today are sacrificed for irreligious purposes. The Gundestrup Cauldron shows Celtic warriors being ritually dunked into the cauldron of rebirth. Although much of their real history and knowledge has been destroyed, hidden, or stolen, the Druidic religion has been pieced together over the years. The following outline is taken from an article by B. Beliefs and practices of the ancient Celts are being pieced together by modern Druids. Because so much information has been lost, this is not an easy task. Within ancient Druidism, there were three specialties. The Ovates worked with the processes of death and regeneration. They were the native healers of the Celts. They specialized in divination, conversing with the ancestors, and prophesizing the future. The Druids and Druidesses formed the professional class in Celtic society. They performed the functions of modern day priests, teachers, ambassadors, astronomers, genealogists, philosophers, musicians, theologians, scientists, poets and judges. They underwent lengthy training: Druids led all public rituals, which were normally held within fenced groves of sacred trees. It is not known whether female Druids were considered equal to their male counterparts, or whether they were restricted to special responsibilities. References to women exercising religious power might have been deleted from the record by Christian monks during the Celtic Christian era. The Celts did not form a single religious or political unity. They were organized into tribes spread across what is now several countries. As a result, of the Celtic deities which have been found, over occur only once in the archaeological record; they are believed to be local deities. There is some evidence that their main pantheon of Gods and Goddesses might have totaled about 3 dozen – perhaps precisely 33 a frequently occurring magical number in Celtic literature. Some of the more famous are: Many Celtic deities were worshipped in triune triple aspect form. Triple Goddesses were often sisters. Life continued in this location much as it had before death. The ancient Druids believed that the soul was immortal. After the person died in the Otherworld, their soul reincarnates and lives again in another living entity – either in a plant or the body of a human or other animal. After a person has learned enough at this level, they move on after death to a higher realm, which has its own Otherworld. We are just sparks from its flame. No Druidic creation story appears to have survived, although there are numerous accounts of the supernatural creation of islands, mountains, etc. There is some evidence that the Celts had a baptism initiation ceremony similar to those found in Buddhist, Christian, Essene, Hindu, Islamic, and Jainist sacred texts. Other researchers dismiss baptism as a forgery by Christian scribes as they transferred Celtic material to written form. Druids do not follow the Wiccan Rede which states in modern English one is free to do anything, as long as it harms nobody. The closest analogy are the Celtic Virtues of honor, loyalty, hospitality, honesty, justice and courage. A Druid is obligated to remain true to friends, family and leaders thus exhibiting the virtue of Loyalty. Honesty insists that one tell the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth to yourself, your gods and your people. Justice desires the Druid understands everyone has an inherent worth and that an assault to that worth demands recompense in one form or another. Courage for the Druid does not always wear

a public face; it is standing-strong-in-the-face-of-adversity, alone or with companions. Sometimes Courage is getting up and going about a daily routine when pain has worn one down without complaint or demur. Druids used many techniques to foretell the future: Ancient symbols seen above, in order: The Celtic Tree of Life shows a concept of the cosmos in which the universe is in the form of a tree whose roots and branches join. The flag of the Isle of Man contains a triskele. It is an ancient Druidic symbol consisting of three curved branches, bent legs or arms radiating from the center of the symbol. The Sun wheel or Wheel of Taranis honors the Celtic sun god. It is in the form of a wheel with six spokes. Wreath and staves consisting of a wreath with two vertical staves. This is a symbol drawn in the form of three pillars, in which the outer two are sloped towards the center pillar, as in the center of the above symbol. Sometimes, one or three dots are added above the pillars. The symbol has been in use since the 17th century; it recalls the Druidic fascination with the number three. The left ray represents female energy; the right: Druids, past and present, celebrate a series of fire-festivals, on the first of each of four months. Each would start at sunset and last for three days. Great bonfires would be built on the hilltops. Cattle would be driven between two bonfires to assure their fertility; couples would jump over a bonfire or run between two bonfires as well. It is a time when the veil between our reality and that of the Otherworld is most easily penetrated. February 1 marked The Return of Light. This is the date when the first stirrings of life were noticeable and when the land might first be plowable. This has been secularized as Groundhog Day. May 1 was the celebration of The Fires of Bel. This was the peak of blossom season, when domesticated animals bear their young. This is still celebrated today as May Day. Youths dance around the May pole in what is obviously a reconstruction of an earlier fertility ritual. Lughnasad or Lughnasadh, Lammas. A time for celebration and the harvest. There were occasional references in ancient literature to: The Druids were viewed as a great threat because they worked as something of an international Celtic force, uniting different tribes and coordinating attacks against the Romans. The Roman policy was to work with certain Chieftains so as to divide and rule these powerful European people, and this required the Druids to be eliminated. The Roman slaughter of Druids is likely one of the causes of the revolt led by Queen Boudicca. The Celtic people have been severed from our true religion ever since we lost the Druids. This effect of this loss has rippled through time and been absolutely devastating. At one time the closely related Celtic and Germanic tribes controlled almost all of Europe, and now our great cultures and traditions are on the brink of extinction. If we desire to reclaim our lands and our destiny, what we need is an understanding of our true nature and a revival of our spirit.

Chapter 2 : Beliefs, practices, symbols and celebrations of Celtic Druidism

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Chapter 3 : 10 Irish Celtic Symbols Explained And Their Meanings In

The Druids and Druidesses formed the professional class in Celtic society. They performed the functions of modern day priests, teachers, ambassadors, astronomers, genealogists, philosophers, musicians, theologians, scientists, poets and judges.

Resources
Druid Beliefs One of the most striking characteristics of Druidism is the degree to which it is free of dogma and any fixed set of beliefs or practices. In this way it manages to offer a spiritual path, and a way of being in the world that avoids many of the problems of intolerance and sectarianism that the established religions have encountered. Despite this, there are a number of ideas and beliefs that most Druids hold in common, and that help to define the nature of Druidism today: **Theology** Since Druidry is a spiritual path “a religion to some, a way of life to others” Druids share a belief in the fundamentally spiritual nature of life. Some will favour a particular way of understanding the source of this spiritual nature, and may feel themselves to be animists, pantheists, polytheists, monotheists or duotheists. Others will avoid choosing any one conception of Deity, believing that by its very nature this is unknowable by the mind. Monotheistic druids believe there is one Deity: But other druids are duotheists, believing that Deity exists as a pair of forces or beings, which they often characterise as the God and Goddess. Polytheistic Druids believe that many gods and goddesses exist, while animists and pantheists believe that Deity does not exist as one or more personal gods, but is instead present in all things, and is everything. Whether they have chosen to adopt a particular viewpoint or not, the greatest characteristic of most modern-day Druids lies in their tolerance of diversity: Nature forms such an important focus of their reverence, that whatever beliefs they hold about Deity, all Druids sense Nature as divine or sacred. Every part of nature is sensed as part of the great web of life, with no one creature or aspect of it having supremacy over any other. Unlike religions that are anthropocentric, believing humanity occupies a central role in the scheme of life, this conception is systemic and holistic, and sees humankind as just one part of the wider family of life. **The Otherworld** Although Druids love Nature, and draw inspiration and spiritual nourishment from it, they also believe that the world we see is not the only one that exists. A cornerstone of Druid belief is in the existence of the Otherworld “a realm or realms which exist beyond the reach of the physical senses, but which are nevertheless real. This Otherworld is seen as the place we travel to when we die. Different Druids will have different views on the nature of this Otherworld, but it is a universally held belief for three reasons. Firstly, all religions or spiritualities hold the view that another reality exists beyond the physical world, rather than agreeing with Materialism, that holds that only matter exists and is real. Secondly, Celtic mythology, which inspires so much of Druidism, is replete with descriptions of this Otherworld. In between each life in human or animal form the soul rests in the Otherworld. **Death and Rebirth** While a Christian Druid may believe that the soul is only born once on Earth, most Druids adopt the belief of their ancient forebears that the soul undergoes a process of successive reincarnations “either always in human form, or in a variety of forms that might include trees and even rocks as well as animals. Many Druids share the view reported by Philostratus of Tyana in the second century that the Celts believed that to be born in this world, we have to die in the Otherworld, and conversely, that when we die here, we are born into the Otherworld. For this reason, Druid funerals try to focus on the idea that the soul is experiencing a time of birth, even though we are experiencing that as their death to us. **The Three Goals of the Druid** A clue as to the purpose behind the process of successive rebirths can be found if we look at the goals of the Druid. Druids seek above all the cultivation of wisdom, creativity and love. A number of lives on earth, rather than just one, gives us the opportunity to fully develop these qualities within us. In both stories wisdom is sought by an older person “in Ireland in the form of the Salmon of Wisdom, in Wales in the form of three drops of inspiration. In both stories a young helper ends up tasting the wisdom so jealously sought by the adults. These tales, rather than simply teaching the virtues of innocence and helpfulness, contain instructions for achieving wisdom, encoded within their symbolism and the sequence of events they describe, and for this reason are used in the teaching of Druidry. **Creativity** The goal of creativity is also central to Druidism because the Bards have long been seen as participants in Druidry. Many believe that in the old days they transmitted the wisdom of the

Druids in song and story, and that with their prodigious memories they knew the genealogies of the tribes and the stories associated with the local landscape. Celtic cultures display a love of art, music and beauty that often evokes an awareness of the Otherworld, and their old Bardic tales depict a world of sensual beauty in which craftspeople and artists are highly honoured. Today, many people are drawn to Druidry because they sense it is a spirituality that can help them develop their creativity. Rather than stressing the idea that this physical life is temporary, and that we should focus on the after-life, Druidism conveys the idea that we are meant to fully participate in life on earth, and that we are meant to express and share our creativity as much as we can. Love Druidry can be seen as fostering the third goal of love in many different ways to encourage us to broaden our understanding and experience of it, so that we can love widely and deeply. It also encourages a love of peace: Druids were traditionally peace-makers, and still are. The Druid path also encourages the love of beauty because it cultivates the Bard, the Artist Within, and fosters creativity. Druidry also encourages the love of story and myth, and many people today are drawn to it because they recognize the power of storytelling, and sense its potential to heal and enlighten as well as entertain. In addition to all these types of love that Druidism fosters, it also recognizes the forming power of the past, and in doing this encourages a love of history and a reverence for the ancestors. The love of trees is fundamental in Druidism too, and as well as studying treelore, Druids today plant trees and sacred groves, and support reforestation programmes. Druids love stones too and build stone circles, collect stones and work with crystals. They love the truth, and seek this in their quest for wisdom and understanding. They love animals, seeing them as sacred, and they study animal lore. They love the body and sexuality believing both to be sacred. Druidism also encourages a love of each other by fostering the magic of relationship and community, and above all a love of life, by encouraging celebration and a full commitment to life - it is not a spirituality which tries to help us escape from a full engagement with the world. Some Druid groups today present their teachings in three grades or streams: The three goals sought by the Druid of love, wisdom and creative expression can be related to the work of these three streams. Bardic teachings help to develop our creativity, Ovate teachings help to develop our love for the natural world and the community of all life, and Druid teachings help us in our quest for wisdom. Living in the World The real test of the value of a spiritual path lies in the degree to which it can help us live our lives in the world. It needs to be able to provide us with inspiration, counsel and encouragement as we negotiate the sometimes difficult and even tragic events that can occur during a lifetime. The primary philosophical posture of Druidism is one of love and respect towards all of life – towards fellow human beings and animals, and all of Nature. A word often used by Druids to describe this approach is reverence, which expands the concept of respect to include an awareness of the sacred. By being reverent towards human beings, for example, Druids treat the body, relationships and sexuality with respect and as sacred. Reverence should not be confused with piousness or a lack of vigorous engagement – true reverence is strong and sensual as well as gentle and kind. This attitude of reverence and respect extends to all creatures, and so many Druids will either be vegetarian or will eat meat, but support compassionate farming and be opposed to factory farming methods. Again, the belief that we should love all creatures is likely to be tempered with a robust realism that will not exclude the possibility that we might want to kill certain creatures, such as mosquitoes. For many Druids today the primary position of love and respect towards all creatures extends to include a belief in the idea of causing no harm to any sentient being. Jains, Hindus and Buddhists all teach this doctrine, which became popular in the west following the non-violent protests of Mahatma Gandhi. Many Druids today adopt a similar stance of abstaining from harming others, and of focussing on the idea of Peace, drawing their inspiration from the Classical accounts of the Druids, which portrayed them as mediators who abstained from war, and who urged peace on opposing armies. Thus even among the most savage barbarians anger yields to wisdom, and Mars is shamed before the Muses. Nichols often used to finish essays he wrote with the simple sign-off: Instead we are seen as part of a great web or fabric of life that includes every living creature and all of Creation. This is essentially a pantheistic view of life, which sees all of Nature as sacred and as interconnected. Druids often experience this belief in their bodies and hearts rather than simply in their minds. The consequences of this feeling and belief are profound. Apart from this trusting posture towards life bringing benefits in psychological and physical health, there are benefits to society too. Abuse and exploitation comes from the illusion of separateness. The

Law of the Harvest Related to the idea that we are all connected in one great web of life is the belief held by most Druids that whatever we do in the world creates an effect which will ultimately also affect us. A similar idea is found in many different traditions and cultures: What is sown - love or anger or bitterness - that shall be your bread. The corn is no better than its seed, then let what you plant be good. The two beliefs - that all is connected and that we will harvest the consequences of our actions - come naturally to Druids because they represent ideas that evolve out of an observation of the natural world. Just as the feeling of our being part of the great web of life can come to us as we gaze in awe at the beauty of nature, so the awareness that we will reap the consequences of our actions also comes to us as we observe the processes of sowing and harvesting. Excerpts from What do Druids Believe?

Sources on druid beliefs and practices Greek and Roman records. Druids Inciting the Britons to Oppose the Landing of the Romans - from.

But how much do we know about them? Triskelion Let us start with triskelion since it has been one of the most commonly used Celtic symbols throughout history. Triskelion is a symbol comprised of three conjoined spirals with rotational symmetry. The origin of the symbol goes back to very early times. But what does it represent? There are a lot of interpretations regarding its uses most of which are related to trinities and triple nature of things. It also represents triple nature and the movement of life which is formed of past, present and future. The triskelion was also a symbol of strength in Celtic culture since it represents the will to move forward overcoming adverse conditions one might face. Different variations of the symbol were created throughout time and sometimes it can be seen as three conjoined legs. Triquetra The triquetra is another commonly used Celtic symbol the meaning of which varied with time and the tribe using it. As for its meanings, it represents unity in spirit when it is used with a circle around it. The circle, in this sense, provides protection to ensure the spirit does not get broken. The triquetra symbol was used to represent the Great Mother, a lunar goddess the Celts worshipped which was associated with three phases of the moon. Celtic Tree of Life Crann Bethadh, the Celtic Tree of Life, is much more than a single trunk borne of roots below and stretching to the heavens with branches above; it is the symbol of all of life on the planet, born of the earth and sustained by the power of the Universe. There is no better depiction of the intimate and unbreakable bonds between each of us and the natural world in which we live than the Tree of Life knot. It is an intricate representation that links every root below to every branch above, depicting the network of natural bonds that links all Life together. It represents unity, balance and the eternity of God. The two rays on the sides represent male and female energy while the one in the center represents the balance between them. The Awen was used as the symbol of unity and harmony of the opposites in the universe. Threes and trinities were of big importance to the Celts. That is why so many of the Celtic symbols were associated with trinities and the Awen is no exception. The three rays were used to represent mind, body and spirit as well as earth, sky and sea. According to one of two origin stories, the first Claddagh ring was brought to the village by a local man named Richard Joyce. That being said, Claddagh rings mean different things when worn on different hands and in different positions. Wearing the Claddagh ring on the right hand with the heart pointing at fingertips means the person who wears it is single and might be looking for love. Wearing it on the right hand with the heart pointing to the wrist means the person in question is in a relationship. On the left hand with the heart pointing at the fingertips, it means that person is engaged. Finally, if it is worn on the left hand with the heart pointing at the wrist, it means that person is married. It can also be interpreted as a symbol of spiritual journey. Ailm symbol also represents healing, protection, purification, guidance, fertility, pure energy, clarity, good health, integrity and objectivity. Evergreen fir trees are strong to survive adverse conditions and grow in spite of them. In that sense, Ailm represents strength, endurance and resilience. There are many theories regarding the origin of the symbol although none of them could be and possibly never will be confirmed. Realizing the importance of the sun and its life-giving power to pagans, Saint Patrick decided to combine the Christian cross with the Celtic circle representing eternity. Many pre-Christian gravestones made of Celtic crosses were found in different parts of Britain. Another theory suggests that the Celtic cross is derived from what was known as the Sun Cross to ancient Celts. As one of the numerous gods that the Gaelic people believed in, Taranis, the god of thunder was often depicted as he holds a wheel in one hand and a thunderbolt in the other. This wheel was used on Celtic coins and as a piece of jewelry during the Bronze Age. That is why the Celtic cross is assumed to be based on the wheel of Taranis by some experts. As it may be seen with the stone circle at Calanais on the Isle of Lewis, Scotland, the earlier examples of the Celtic cross had even arms with a circle surrounding them. This is assumed to be the symbol of sun which was of significant importance to the ancient Celts. Today, the Celtic cross is used to represent faith or as a symbol of Irish or sometimes Scottish or Welsh origins. Although it is difficult to determine what most of the Celtic symbols exactly meant due to the lack of

written sources of information , the most common interpretation suggests that the five fold symbol represents the balance of the universe. The circle in the middle represents the universe while the other four surrounding it represent the four elements: In that sense, it is the symbol representing how the four elements keep the universe in balance. It is also interpreted as the symbol of connectedness and unity. Celtic Bull Being of significant importance for the belief of the Druids, the bull was a commonly used symbol by the ancient Celts. The bull symbol was used to represent Esus, a god in Celtic paganism while the animal itself was used in sacrificial rituals by the Druids. In general, the Celtic bull symbol was used to represent strong will, fertility, wealth, abundance and virility while in some cases it is considered as the symbol of ancestry and kinship.

Chapter 5 : Common Practice and Beliefs within Druidry - The Druid Network

This neo-Druid symbol, which is a popular design for tattoos, jewellery and artwork, is said to be invented by Iolo Morgannwg, an 18th-century Welsh poet. However, studies suggest that the symbol might be older than initially thought.

Smith, the gold gorget collar copying Irish Bronze Age examples. In his description, Julius Caesar claimed that they were one of the two most important social groups in the region alongside the equites, or nobles and were responsible for organizing worship and sacrifices, divination, and judicial procedure in Gaulish, British, and Irish societies. Druidic lore consisted of a large number of verses learned by heart, and Caesar remarked that it could take up to twenty years to complete the course of study. What was taught to druid novices anywhere is conjecture: All instruction was communicated orally, but for ordinary purposes, Caesar reports, [22] the Gauls had a written language in which they used Greek characters. In this he probably draws on earlier writers; by the time of Caesar, Gaulish inscriptions had moved from the Greek script to the Latin script. Sacrifice[edit] An 18th century illustration of a wicker man, the form of execution that Caesar claimed the druids used for human sacrifice. Celts and human sacrifice, Threefold death, and Ritual of oak and mistletoe Greek and Roman writers frequently made reference to the druids as practitioners of human sacrifice. A form of sacrifice recorded by Caesar was the burning alive of victims in a large wooden effigy, now often known as a wicker man. A differing account came from the 10th-century *Commenta Bernensia*, which claimed that sacrifices to the deities Teutates, Esus and Taranis were by drowning, hanging and burning, respectively see threefold death. Diodorus Siculus asserts that a sacrifice acceptable to the Celtic gods had to be attended by a druid, for they were the intermediaries between the people and the divinities. He remarked upon the importance of prophets in druidic ritual: Mass graves found in a ritual context dating from this period have been unearthed in Gaul, at both Gournay-sur-Aronde and Ribemont-sur-Ancre in what was the region of the Belgae chiefdom. The excavator of these sites, Jean-Louis Brunaux, interpreted them as areas of human sacrifice in devotion to a war god, [24] [25] although this view was criticized by another archaeologist, Martin Brown, who believed that the corpses might be those of honoured warriors buried in the sanctuary rather than sacrifices. Rives remarked that it was "ambiguous" whether the druids ever performed such sacrifices, for the Romans and Greeks were known to project what they saw as barbarian traits onto foreign peoples including not only druids but Jews and Christians as well, thereby confirming their own "cultural superiority" in their own minds. With regard to their actual course of studies, the main object of all education is, in their opinion, to imbue their scholars with a firm belief in the indestructibility of the human soul, which, according to their belief, merely passes at death from one tenement to another; for by such doctrine alone, they say, which robs death of all its terrors, can the highest form of human courage be developed. Subsidiary to the teachings of this main principle, they hold various lectures and discussions on astronomy, on the extent and geographical distribution of the globe, on the different branches of natural philosophy, and on many problems connected with religion. Mackenzie speculated that Buddhist missionaries had been sent by the Indian king Ashoka. Druids in mythology[edit] Druids also play a prominent role in Irish Folklore, generally serving lords and kings as high ranking priest-counselors with the gift of prophecy and other assorted mystical abilities - the best example of these possibly being Cathbad. The chief druid in the court of King Conchobar mac Nessa of Ulster, Cathbad features in several tales, most of which detail his ability to foretell the future. This prophecy, ignored by the king, came true. Thus Amergin called upon the spirit of Ireland itself, chanting a powerful incantation that has come to be known as The Song of Amergin [34] and, eventually after successfully making landfall, aiding and dividing the land between his royal brothers in the conquest of Ireland, [35] [36] [37] earning the title Chief Ollam of Ireland. Female druids[edit] The Druidess, oil on canvas, by French painter Alexandre Cabanel " Irish mythology has a number of female druids as well, often sharing similar prominent cultural and religious roles with their male counterparts. Which deities they honored is unknown. They call them Gallizenae, and they believe them to be endowed with extraordinary gifts to rouse the sea and the wind by their incantations, to turn themselves into whatsoever animal form they may choose, to cure diseases which among others are incurable, to know what is to come and to foretell it. They are, however;

devoted to the service of voyagers only who have set out on no other errand than to consult them. I am an anonymous author and artist

The earliest surviving literary evidence of the druids emerges from the classical world of Greece and Rome. The archaeologist Stuart Piggott compared the attitude of the Classical authors towards the druids as being similar to the relationship that had existed in the 15th and 18th centuries between Europeans and the societies that they were just encountering in other parts of the world, such as the Americas and the South Sea Islands. In doing so, he highlighted that both the attitude of the Early Modern Europeans and the Classical authors was that of "primitivism", viewing these newly encountered societies as primitive because of their lesser technological development and perceived backwardness in socio-political development. She refers to the first of these groups as the "Posidonian" tradition after one of its primary exponents, Posidonios, and notes that it takes a largely critical attitude towards the Iron Age societies of Western Europe that emphasizes their "barbaric" qualities. The second of these two groups is termed the "Alexandrian" group, being centred on the scholastic traditions of Alexandria in Egypt; she notes that it took a more sympathetic and idealized attitude towards these foreign peoples. Lovejoy and Franz Boas. They have suggested that the idea of the druid might have been a fiction created by Classical writers to reinforce the idea of the barbaric "other" who existed beyond the civilized Greco-Roman world, thereby legitimising the expansion of the Roman Empire into these areas. In that among the Persians there existed the Magi, and among the Babylonians or Assyrians the Chaldaei, among the Indians the Gymnosophistae, and among the Celts and Gauls men who were called druids and semnothei, as Aristotle relates in his book on magic, and Sotion in the twenty-third book of his Succession of Philosophers. A military general who was intent on conquering Gaul and Britain, Caesar described the druids as being concerned with "divine worship, the due performance of sacrifices, private or public, and the interpretation of ritual questions. He claimed that they recognized the authority of a single leader, who would rule until his death, when a successor would be chosen by vote or through conflict. He also remarked that they met annually at a sacred place in the region occupied by the Carnute tribe in Gaul, while they viewed Britain as the centre of druidic study; and that they were not found amongst the German tribes to the east of the Rhine. According to Caesar, many young men were trained to be druids, during which time they had to learn all the associated lore by heart. He also claimed their main teaching was "the souls do not perish, but after death pass from one to another". They were also concerned with "the stars and their movements, the size of the cosmos and the earth, the world of nature, and the power and might of the immortal gods", indicating they were involved with not only such common aspects of religion as theology and cosmology, but also astronomy. Caesar also held that they were "administrators" during rituals of human sacrifice, for which criminals were usually used, and that the method was through burning in a wicker man. One issue raised by such historians as Fustel de Coulanges [58] was that while Caesar described the druids as a significant power within Gaulish society, he did not mention them even once in his accounts of his Gaulish conquests. Hutton believed that Caesar had manipulated the idea of the druids so they would appear both civilized being learned and pious and barbaric performing human sacrifice to Roman readers, thereby representing both "a society worth including in the Roman Empire" and one that required civilizing with Roman rule and values, thus justifying his wars of conquest. Divitiacus supposedly knew much about the natural world and performed divination through augury. Alongside the druids, or as he called them, drouidas, whom he viewed as philosophers and theologians, he also remarked how there were poets and singers in Celtic society whom he called bardous, or bards. He states that these "terrified our soldiers who had never seen such a thing before These were all written by Christian monks. Irish literature and law codes[edit] In Irish-language literature, the druids are draoi, plural of draoi are sorcerers with supernatural powers, who are respected in society, particularly for their ability to perform divination. The evidence of the law-texts, which were first written down in the 7th and 8th centuries, suggests that with the coming of Christianity the role of the druid in Irish society was rapidly reduced to that of a sorcerer who could be consulted to cast spells or practise healing magic and that his standing declined accordingly. Unlike the Irish texts, the Welsh term commonly seen as referring to the druids, dryw, was used to refer purely to prophets and not to sorcerers or pagan priests. Historian Ronald Hutton noted that there were two explanations for the use of the term in Wales: It is speculated that they were used for divination. Eleven such pairs are known. Fitzpatrick, in

examining what he believed to be astral symbolism on Late Iron Age swords has expressed difficulties in relating any material culture, even the Coligny calendar, with druidic culture. The archaeologist Anne Ross linked what she believed to be evidence of human sacrifice in Celtic pagan society—such as the Lindow Man bog body—to the Greco-Roman accounts of human sacrifice being officiated over by the druids. The crown is bronze with a broad band around the head and a thin strip crossing the top of the head. It was worn without any padding beneath, as traces of hair were left on the metal. The form of the crown is similar to that seen in images of Romano-British priests several centuries later, leading to speculation among archaeologists that the man might have been a druid. According to accounts produced in the following centuries, the new rulers of Roman Gaul subsequently introduced measures to wipe out the druids from that country. According to Pliny the Elder, writing in the 70s CE, it was the emperor Tiberius who ruled from 14 to 37 CE, who introduced laws banning not only druid practices, but also other native soothsayers and healers, a move which Pliny applauded, believing that it would end human sacrifice in Gaul. While the druids as a priestly caste were extinct with the Christianization of Wales, complete by the 7th century at the latest, the offices of bard and of "seer" Welsh: He wrote that after being excommunicated by Germanus, the British leader Vortigern invited twelve druids to assist him. In the lives of saints and martyrs, the druids are represented as magicians and diviners. They are represented as endeavouring to prevent the progress of Patrick and Saint Columba by raising clouds and mist. Before the battle of Culdremne a druid made an airbe drtiad "fence of protection"? The Irish druids seem to have had a peculiar tonsure. Next, as they endeavoured, with every possible effort, to move forward, but were not able to take a step farther, they began to whirl themselves about in the most ridiculous fashion, until, not able any longer to sustain the weight, they set down the dead body. Druid statue From the 18th century, England and Wales experienced a revival of interest in the druids. The roles of bards in 10th century Wales had been established by Hywel Dda and it was during the 18th century that the idea arose that druids had been their predecessors. Druids began to figure widely in popular culture with the first advent of Romanticism. Opera provides a barometer of well-informed popular European culture in the early 19th century: For its libretto, Felice Romani reused some of the pseudo-druidical background of *La Sacerdotessa* to provide colour to a standard theatrical conflict of love and duty. The story was similar to that of *Medea*, as it had recently been recast for a popular Parisian play by Alexandre Soumet: His writings, published posthumously as *The Iolo Manuscripts and Barddas*, are not considered credible by contemporary scholars. Williams claimed to have collected ancient knowledge in a "Gorsedd of Bards of the Isles of Britain" he had organized. Another Welshman, William Price 4 March 1823 23 January, a physician known for his support of Welsh nationalism, Chartism, and his involvement with the Neo-Druidic religious movement, has been recognised as a significant figure of 19th-century Wales. He was arrested for cremating his deceased son, a practice he believed to be a druid ritual, but won his case; this in turn led to the cremation act. Kendrick sought to dispel the pseudo-historical aura that had accrued to druids, [93] asserting that "a prodigious amount of rubbish has been written about Druidism"; [94] Neo-druidism has nevertheless continued to shape public perceptions of the historical druids. Some strands of contemporary Neo-Druidism are a continuation of the 18th-century revival and thus are built largely around writings produced in the 18th century and after by second-hand sources and theorists. Others, such as the largest druid group in the world, The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids draw on a wide range of sources for their teachings. Members of such Neo-Druid groups may be Neopagan, occultist, Christian or non-specifically spiritual. Modern scholarship[edit] In the 20th century, as new forms of textual criticism and archaeological methods were developed, allowing for greater accuracy in understanding the past, various historians and archaeologists published books on the subject of the druids and came to their own conclusions. The archaeologist Stuart Piggott, author of *The Druids*, accepted the Greco-Roman accounts and considered the druids to be a barbaric and savage priesthood who performed human sacrifices. Montfaucon claims that he is reproducing a bas-relief found at Autun, Burgundy.

Chapter 6 : Celtic Symbols and Their Meanings - blog.quintoapp.com

The Order of Bards, Ovates & Druids or OBOD is a Neo-Druidic organisation based in England, but based in part on the Welsh Gorsedd of Bards. It has grown to become a dynamic druid organisation, with members in all parts of the world.

In this way it manages to offer a spiritual path, and a way of being in the world that avoids many of the problems of intolerance and sectarianism that the established religions have encountered. Despite this, there are a number of ideas and beliefs that most Druids hold in common, and that help to define the nature of Druidism today:

Theology Since Druidry is a spiritual path – a religion to some, a way of life to others – Druids share a belief in the fundamentally spiritual nature of life. Some will favour a particular way of understanding the source of this spiritual nature, and may feel themselves to be animists, pantheists, polytheists, monotheists or duotheists. Others will avoid choosing any one conception of Deity, believing that by its very nature this is unknowable by the mind. Monotheistic druids believe there is one Deity: But other druids are duotheists, believing that Deity exists as a pair of forces or beings, which they often characterise as the God and Goddess. Polytheistic Druids believe that many gods and goddesses exist, while animists and pantheists believe that Deity does not exist as one or more personal gods, but is instead present in all things, and is everything. Whether they have chosen to adopt a particular viewpoint or not, the greatest characteristic of most modern-day Druids lies in their tolerance of diversity: Nature forms such an important focus of their reverence, that whatever beliefs they hold about Deity, all Druids sense Nature as divine or sacred. Every part of nature is sensed as part of the great web of life, with no one creature or aspect of it having supremacy over any other. Unlike religions that are anthropocentric, believing humanity occupies a central role in the scheme of life, this conception is systemic and holistic, and sees humankind as just one part of the wider family of life.

The Otherworld Although Druids love Nature, and draw inspiration and spiritual nourishment from it, they also believe that the world we see is not the only one that exists. A cornerstone of Druid belief is in the existence of the Otherworld – a realm or realms which exist beyond the reach of the physical senses, but which are nevertheless real. This Otherworld is seen as the place we travel to when we die. Different Druids will have different views on the nature of this Otherworld, but it is a universally held belief for three reasons. Firstly, all religions or spiritualities hold the view that another reality exists beyond the physical world, rather than agreeing with Materialism, that holds that only matter exists and is real. Secondly, Celtic mythology, which inspires so much of Druidism, is replete with descriptions of this Otherworld. In between each life in human or animal form the soul rests in the Otherworld. **Death and Rebirth** While a Christian Druid may believe that the soul is only born once on Earth, most Druids adopt the belief of their ancient forebears that the soul undergoes a process of successive reincarnations – either always in human form, or in a variety of forms that might include trees and even rocks as well as animals. Many Druids share the view reported by Philostratus of Tyana in the second century that the Celts believed that to be born in this world, we have to die in the Otherworld, and conversely, that when we die here, we are born into the Otherworld. For this reason, Druid funerals try to focus on the idea that the soul is experiencing a time of birth, even though we are experiencing that as their death to us.

The Three Goals of the Druid A clue as to the purpose behind the process of successive rebirths can be found if we look at the goals of the Druid. Druids seek above all the cultivation of wisdom, creativity and love. A number of lives on earth, rather than just one, gives us the opportunity to fully develop these qualities within us. In both stories wisdom is sought by an older person – in Ireland in the form of the Salmon of Wisdom, in Wales in the form of three drops of inspiration. In both stories a young helper ends up tasting the wisdom so jealously sought by the adults. These tales, rather than simply teaching the virtues of innocence and helpfulness, contain instructions for achieving wisdom, encoded within their symbolism and the sequence of events they describe, and for this reason are used in the teaching of Druidry.

Creativity The goal of creativity is also central to Druidism because the Bards have long been seen as participants in Druidry. Many believe that in the old days they transmitted the wisdom of the Druids in song and story, and that with their prodigious memories they knew the genealogies of the tribes and the stories associated with the local landscape. Celtic cultures display a love of art, music and beauty that often evokes an

awareness of the Otherworld, and their old Bardic tales depict a world of sensual beauty in which craftspeople and artists are highly honoured. Today, many people are drawn to Druidry because they sense it is a spirituality that can help them develop their creativity. Rather than stressing the idea that this physical life is temporary, and that we should focus on the after-life, Druidism conveys the idea that we are meant to fully participate in life on earth, and that we are meant to express and share our creativity as much as we can. Love Druidry can be seen as fostering the third goal of love in many different ways to encourage us to broaden our understanding and experience of it, so that we can love widely and deeply. It also encourages a love of peace: Druids were traditionally peace-makers, and still are. The Druid path also encourages the love of beauty because it cultivates the Bard, the Artist Within, and fosters creativity. Druidry also encourages the love of story and myth, and many people today are drawn to it because they recognize the power of storytelling, and sense its potential to heal and enlighten as well as entertain. In addition to all these types of love that Druidism fosters, it also recognizes the forming power of the past, and in doing this encourages a love of history and a reverence for the ancestors. The love of trees is fundamental in Druidism too, and as well as studying treelore, Druids today plant trees and sacred groves, and support reforestation programmes. Druids love stones too and build stone circles, collect stones and work with crystals. They love the truth, and seek this in their quest for wisdom and understanding. They love animals, seeing them as sacred, and they study animal lore. They love the body and sexuality believing both to be sacred. Druidism also encourages a love of each other by fostering the magic of relationship and community, and above all a love of life, by encouraging celebration and a full commitment to life – it is not a spirituality which tries to help us escape from a full engagement with the world. Some Druid groups today present their teachings in three grades or streams: The three goals sought by the Druid of love, wisdom and creative expression can be related to the work of these three streams. Bardic teachings help to develop our creativity, Ovate teachings help to develop our love for the natural world and the community of all life, and Druid teachings help us in our quest for wisdom. Living in the World The real test of the value of a spiritual path lies in the degree to which it can help us live our lives in the world. It needs to be able to provide us with inspiration, counsel and encouragement as we negotiate the sometimes difficult and even tragic events that can occur during a lifetime. The primary philosophical posture of Druidism is one of love and respect towards all of life – towards fellow human beings and animals, and all of Nature. A word often used by Druids to describe this approach is reverence, which expands the concept of respect to include an awareness of the sacred. By being reverent towards human beings, for example, Druids treat the body, relationships and sexuality with respect and as sacred. Reverence should not be confused with piousness or a lack of vigorous engagement – true reverence is strong and sensual as well as gentle and kind. This attitude of reverence and respect extends to all creatures, and so many Druids will either be vegetarian or will eat meat, but support compassionate farming and be opposed to factory farming methods. Again, the belief that we should love all creatures is likely to be tempered with a robust realism that will not exclude the possibility that we might want to kill certain creatures, such as mosquitoes. For many Druids today the primary position of love and respect towards all creatures extends to include a belief in the idea of causing no harm to any sentient being. Jains, Hindus and Buddhists all teach this doctrine, which became popular in the west following the non-violent protests of Mahatma Gandhi. Many Druids today adopt a similar stance of abstaining from harming others, and of focussing on the idea of Peace, drawing their inspiration from the Classical accounts of the Druids, which portrayed them as mediators who abstained from war, and who urged peace on opposing armies. Thus even among the most savage barbarians anger yields to wisdom, and Mars is shamed before the Muses. Nichols often used to finish essays he wrote with the simple sign-off: Instead we are seen as part of a great web or fabric of life that includes every living creature and all of Creation. This is essentially a pantheistic view of life, which sees all of Nature as sacred and as interconnected. Druids often experience this belief in their bodies and hearts rather than simply in their minds. The consequences of this feeling and belief are profound. Apart from this trusting posture towards life bringing benefits in psychological and physical health, there are benefits to society too. Abuse and exploitation comes from the illusion of separateness. The Law of the Harvest Related to the idea that we are all connected in one great web of life is the belief held by most Druids that whatever we do in the world creates an effect which will ultimately also affect us. A similar

idea is found in many different traditions and cultures: What is sown " love or anger or bitterness " that shall be your bread. The corn is no better than its seed, then let what you plant be good. The two beliefs " that all is connected and that we will harvest the consequences of our actions " come naturally to Druids because they represent ideas that evolve out of an observation of the natural world. Just as the feeling of our being part of the great web of life can come to us as we gaze in awe at the beauty of nature, so the awareness that we will reap the consequences of our actions also comes to us as we observe the processes of sowing and harvesting.

Chapter 7 : Celtic Druidism: Beliefs, Practices, and Celebrations

In addition Druids today can follow the example of one the most important figures in the modern Druid movement, Ross Nichols, who in common with many of the world's greatest thinkers and spiritual teachers, upheld the doctrines of non-violence and pacifism.

No-one called the people living in Britain during the Iron Age, Celts until the eighteenth century. To the Celts symbols played a vital role and incredible, meaningful power in their lives. Symbols reflected Celtic beliefs and traditions. Stories behind their symbols have been carried on from generation to generation with the help of bards and storytellers, allowing Celtic heritage to live on. Signs of are often part of Celtic jewelry and these symbols and they always reflect the nature of important subjects like love, wisdom, war, loyalty, energy and much more. Many of the everyday things we often take for granted can hold hidden secrets, and by having the key to this knowledge we gain an insight into the minds and concerns of our ancestors who constructed these symbols. She was born in Dundalk in A. D and is accredited with first creating the unique cross that bears her name, which is normally made from rushes but occasionally from straw. According to ancient Irish traditions, the spiral of the Brigid cross invokes the North Star and the pattern that the Big Dipper makes in the sky over the course off a year. As the night sky turns around the North Star, the Big Dipper turns through the seasonal year like the hand of a clock. According to the legend, a young man, named Richard was fishing at sea with other men from his family when they were captured by pirates and brought to Africa as slaves. Years passed, many of the Irish fishermen died and Richard was miserable because all he wanted was to get back to his beloved who was on Ireland. To keep his spirits up and to keep hope in his heart, each day Richard stole a tiny speck of gold from his slave masters in the goldsmith shop where he tended the fires. Years passed and, with his tiny pieces of gold, he was finally able to fashion a ring. It was his hope that, despite what seemed nearly impossible, he would return to his village and present the ring to his true love. It remains unknown how Richard escaped or earned his release from slavery, but one day he was able to get back to Ireland. Richard was overcome with joy when he learned that his beloved had remained true to him in his long absence, waiting faithfully for him to return. It was on that day that Richard gave his beloved the ring he created that is now known worldwide as the Claddagh Ring. The Claddagh design appears not only in rings, but in other types of jewelry as well. The heart in the cladadgh symbolizes the love Richard longed to share with his true love. The crown symbolizes his undying loyalty and the hands symbolize friendship, which is, after all, the very foundation of love, with loyalty holding the two hands together. Patrick, the Patron Saint of Ireland made the shamrock famous and today you can find the symbol on t-shirts, postcards, stamps and many other different things. It is a national flower of Ireland that has had significance in the country since the days of the Druids. Legend tells that St. The Celts believed that everything important in the world came in threes; the three dominions of earth, sky and sea, the three ages of man, and phases of the moon. A plant with three leaves would have been held in high regard. Symbol Of Immortality Of The Soul The harp was a very popular musical instrument in ancient Ireland and is still greatly appreciate in the country. It is believed the harp was introduced to pre-Christian Europe by the Phoenicians who brought it over from Egypt as one of their international trading goods. The oldest surviving Celtic harps date back to the 15th century but the music of the harp has been an important emblem to Ireland since the 10th century. It was played by the musicians of ancient chieftains in Ireland. In the 16th century the music of the harp was seen as such a threat that The British Crown attempted to crush the Irish Spirit by ordering all harps to be burnt and all harpists executed. It was almost years before the music of the harp was freely enjoyed in Ireland once again. The harp is said to reflect the immortality of the soul. The harp symbol can be found everywhere in Ireland, from coins, uniforms and the state seal to the Guinness pint glass. The Celts believed that trees were the ancestors of man and had a connection to the other world. The most sacred of trees was the oak. Crann Bethadh, the Celtic Tree of Life often depicted showing the branches reaching skyward and the roots spreading out into the earth below symbolizing the Druid belief in the link between heaven and earth. The Green Man is a symbol of rebirth. In the case of Celts, this is the physical, mental and spiritual. It also symbolizes the eternal life, the flow of

nature, and spiritual growth. The Celts believed that everything happen in threes. The symbol can be found kerbstones of Newgrange which date back to Neolithic times around BC. They also appear on coins and pottery from Ancient Greece. The triskele is the symbol of Sicily, which in ancient times, used to be a Greek colony.

Chapter 8 : Druid Beliefs and Values – Awen's Light Grove

In Stuart Piggot's book "The Druids", there is a photo of a Romano-British building, possibly a temple, located at Black Holmes, Thistleton, Leicestershire (England) in which this symbol forms the foundation; other than that, this author knows of no ancient origin for this symbol.

Pliny, a Roman historian, recorded a Druid ritual in which mistletoe was cut from an oak tree by a Druid in white robes, using a gold sickle. The mistletoe was to be caught in wicker baskets and not allowed to touch the ground. We all have seen the classic picture of a druid in a tree cutting the mistletoe with a sickle while other druids wait below to catch the mistletoe in their white robes. It has been discovered that the mistletoe ritual was indeed based on fact and reasoning. Perhaps pyrite fools gold or entirely made of brass. It would have been caught prior to touching the ground to prevent contamination. The crescent shaped knife is well known to cut easily and effectively. Druid Rod or Staff: Druids used a staff as a type of conductor for magic. It had to be made of wood, and the type of wood used depended on the type of magic that it would partake in. A metal rod could result in a surge and harm the holder. Gems can be added to the staff to increase its power and reflect it onto the desired course. Similar to a laser. This was traditionally a silver tree branch with gold bells attached to it. The sound of the bells is pleasing to the Gods and attracts their attention, while at the same time it is offensive to the ears of malevolent spirits who are driven away. Some stories include a goddess who invites a human into her home by presenting him with a branch with bells, fruit, or blossoms on it. This tool is used by some groups to help draw spirits from the other realm. In the Britain area the mistletoe berries are white, however in other parts of the world, they are yellow. It contained many treasures from such deities as Manannan and Giobhniu, and would be full at high tide and empty at low tide. One of these treasures apparently was additional letters for the Ogham. Modern druids use leather or cloth pouches to hold their most precious tools. The cauldron is a prominent tool used for everything from basic cooking, to making herbal concoctions, to making candles. Dagda and Cerridwen both had magical cauldrons, and cauldrons are often mentioned in Celtic tales. Some were said to bring wisdom to those who drank from it, and another was said to bring the dead back to life. Archaeologists have uncovered several cauldrons and buckets that were ornamented for ritual uses. The druids believed everything had a purpose and reason, and nothing went to waste, not even the remains of an animal. The uses could be anything from cloths to medicinal or as talisman. Cloths could be made from the skins of animals as well as from feathers. Plants and trees all had a purpose as well, for magic, construction, and healing. The use of sacred plants in paganism was so strong that the Catholic Church forbade the presence of mistletoe and holly in its churches. Harps, drums and woodwind instruments such as whistle, flutes and pipes are all a part of druid structure. Drums and woodwinds horns could be made from animals, and woodwinds from various woods and reeds. Musical instruments are used not only for connections with the spirits but can enchant animals. Druids primarily gathered in tree groves as they provide protection from the elements while still remaining within the elements. However stone circles were often used as well. The stone circle is often where mass gatherings occurred and ceremonies were performed. The stones acted as a grounding force. With the occurrence of magic, a grounding element must always be applied. Gems, metals in the form of stones, and other stonelike objects were often used for their healing and grounding properties. Pliny said a Gallic druid showed him one and called it "anguinum". There is a strong indication that the egg was a stone called "serpentine". Snakes are often referred to as "adders" and thus druids were sometimes called adders seeing that they carried the egg. It is said by some that the snakes St. Patrick drove out of Ireland were the druids.

Chapter 9 : Druid Tree Lore | Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids

To the Celts symbols played a vital role and incredible, meaningful power in their lives. Symbols reflected Celtic beliefs and traditions. Stories behind their symbols have been carried on from generation to generation with the help of bards and storytellers, allowing Celtic heritage to live on.

See Article History Druid, Celtic: They seem to have frequented oak forests and acted as priests, teachers, and judges. The earliest known records of the Druids come from the 3rd century bce. According to Julius Caesar , who is the principal source of information about the Druids, there were two groups of men in Gaul that were held in honour, the Druids and the noblemen equites. Caesar related that the Druids took charge of public and private sacrifices, and many young men went to them for instruction. They judged all public and private quarrels and decreed penalties. If anyone disobeyed their decree, he was barred from sacrifice , which was considered the gravest of punishments. One Druid was made the chief; upon his death, another was appointed. If, however, several were equal in merit, the Druids voted, although they sometimes resorted to armed violence. Once a year the Druids assembled at a sacred place in the territory of the Carnutes, which was believed to be the centre of all Gaul, and all legal disputes were there submitted to the judgment of the Druids. Caesar also recorded that the Druids abstained from warfare and paid no tribute. Attracted by those privileges, many joined the order voluntarily or were sent by their families. They studied ancient verse, natural philosophy, astronomy , and the lore of the gods, some spending as much as 20 years in training. The Druids offered human sacrifices for those who were gravely sick or in danger of death in battle. Huge wickerwork images were filled with living men and then burned; although the Druids preferred to sacrifice criminals, they would choose innocent victims if necessary. Caesar is the chief authority, but he may have received some of his facts from the Stoic philosopher Poseidonius , whose account is often confirmed by early medieval Irish sagas. In the early period, Druidic rites were held in clearings in the forest. Sacred buildings were used only later under Roman influence. The Druids were suppressed in Gaul by the Romans under Tiberius reigned 14â€”37 ce and probably in Britain a little later. In Ireland they lost their priestly functions after the coming of Christianity and survived as poets, historians, and judges filid, senchaidi, and brithemain. Many scholars believe that the Hindu Brahman in the East and the Celtic Druid in the West were lateral survivals of an ancient Indo-European priesthood. Roman soldiers attacking Druids in the 1st century ce, 19th-century engraving.