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THE PAGAN FEDERATION
DRUIDRY INFORMATION PACK
By David Smith

Thanks to Andy Norfolk for the front cover illustration.
Introduction

It is dawn.

Mist hangs in the cold air, swirling around the circle of grey standing stones. To one side a Rowan tree casts her veil of protection over the Spirit of Place, as she has done for many years. Inside the stone circle a small fire burns – a need fire kept alight throughout the vigil until the sunrise. Around the fire stands a circle of white-robed figures, hand in hand, awaiting the rebirth of the Sun.

Then, as if the horizon has been cut by the sharpest knife, the Sun’s first rays light up the dawn sky with an array of reds, purples and blues. The figures raise their arms and intone a single word, singing to the Sun, drawing down its power and light.

This picture is one that most people associate with Druids: the lonely stone circle on the misty morning of the Summer Solstice. However, there is much more to Druidry than dressing up in a white frock and welcoming the Sun at Alban Heruin.

The fact is that Druids come from many walks of life – from the unemployed to psychologists, from writers to accountants, Druids can be seen anywhere from the open group ceremonies at Avebury and Parliament Hill, to living in trees at road protest demonstrations. There are both female and male Druids, working to become one with Nature.

"More than at any other time in human history, the fate of the planet depends upon our thoughts and our actions. More than ever, we need a spirituality that is rooted in a love of nature, a love of the land.

Druidry is based upon the love of the natural world, and offers a powerful way of working with, and understanding the Self and Nature – speaking to that level of our soul and of our being which is in tune with the elements and the stars, the sun and the stones. Through the work of the Druids we are able to unite our natural, earthly selves with our spiritual selves while working, in however small a way, for the safeguarding of our planet” (From the introductory leaflet of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids.)

So, come with me now and explore the world of Druidry: a world of poetry, storytelling and song; a world of magic, prophecy and Sight; a world of myth, wisdom and Nature. For, ultimately, Druidry resonates with the pulse of the land, not with one culture or people.
Druidry is a nature-based spiritual path, inspired by the teachings and ways of the ancient Druids. But who were they? As this is an information pack about modern Druidry, I will say very little about the ancient Druids. Of all the books available on Druidry most are historical studies and, although interesting, are not going to guide the seeker into the forest that is modern Druidry. However, a short amount of background information will be helpful.

What was Druidry?

The Druids were the educated elite of what is now called the "Celtic" race. Many historians and archaeologists now argue that there never was an actual Celtic race but, for the sake of clarity and to give a sense of familiarity, I will use the term throughout this booklet. The Celts were a tribal people, with each tribe having its own chieftain. They were often at war with one another, raiding nearby tribal villages and stealing their neighbours' cattle. They were a warrior race who, in one of those strange historical paradoxes, created the most beautiful art and inspired a religion which had a deep respect for Nature.

The Roman invasion of the Celtic regions was made easier because Celtic society was so fragmented. The Romans systematically conquered one tribe at a time. The only common link between the Celtic tribes was Druidry. The Druids were the prophets, magicians, seers, healers, royal advisors and judges. Druids could move in complete safety between tribes as their murder was punishable by death. Very quickly the Druids began to unite the tribes and give them the focus they needed against the invaders. This move did not go unnoticed and it was in the year 61CE that two crushing blows were dealt against the British. The first was the sacking of Ynys Mon, the Isle of Anglesey, off the north coast of Wales, which was a major centre of Druidic learning. As the Romans conquered Britain, the Druids retreated to Ynys Mon and became trapped. It was written by Tacitus that the Druidesses were like screaming furies who spat curses across the bay at the assembling Roman armies. Although this chilled the blood of the Centurions, they attacked and won the battle. All of the Druid Groves (sacred clearings within the forests) were destroyed and all Druids, Druidesses and their children were slaughtered. The other blow was the defeat of the Iceni Queen Boudicca whose revolt very nearly put an end to the entire Roman occupation. However, the massacre of the Druids did not destroy the religion. It continued in smaller groups and gradually the Druid was seen as little more than a wandering magician. A far cry from the high status previously held.

The ancient Druids consisted of three "grades", or divisions – Bards, Ovates and Druids.

Bards: This was the first of the Druid Grades and introduced the student to the stories and traditions of the Tribe. The Bard learned all of the tales of the chieftain's victories and the secret lore of sacred poetry. A Bard was an honoured member of the Tribe who was welcome wherever he or she travelled. They were trained in the Art of Magic, using the power of poetry in either praise or satire. Their Lore supplied the foundation to the religious and magical practice of Druidry, telling the nature of the Gods; the deeds of the Ancestors and the sacred places of the land. Through the power of the sacred word, expressed through poetry, storytelling and song, they invoked the blessings of the Spirit of Place, and of the Gods and ancestors of the people.
Ovates: These were the prophets and seers. They worked with the three realms of past, present and future and entered into trance states, foreseeing the future fortunes of the Tribe. The Ovate was the Druid Shaman. If the ancient Druids performed sacrifice (there is no hard evidence of this other than Caesar’s account, which could well have been propaganda) then the Ovates would have been the people who oversaw such events. When considering the act of ritual sacrifice we must try to understand that the Celtic tribes lived and died by their crops. If the crops failed, then a hard winter of starvation and disease was inevitable. A whole village could be wiped out through lack of food; therefore, when such a catastrophe occurred, the ancients felt they had to offer a gift to their Gods. The true nature of sacrifice was to give somebody who came willingly. To offer themselves as such placed them with their Gods and the Tribe revered them as heroes. To view ancient civilisations from the standpoint of modern ethics is a mistake. We have supermarkets and world trade, which keeps us supplied with wonderful food throughout the year. Now imagine growing all of the food you eat yourself, without the use of pesticides to protect the crop from blight and insect diseases. Then imagine your crop fails and you face a winter of unimaginable pain and suffering. Now imagine it happened for a second year....

Druids: Having travelled through the realms of poetry, the Word, the trees and the spirits, the student finally became a Druid – the wise one who had passed through madness and survived. This brought great wisdom and peace; the Druid’s role was therefore that of advisor, teacher and judge. In Celtic mythology tribal chieftains each had their Druid to whom they turned for advice during times of need. Between 500CE and the late middle ages the Druid tradition was kept alive in the tales and songs of the storyteller and wandering minstrel. During this time two of the grades, namely Bard and Ovate, became merged and it is here we see such characters as Merlin and Taliesin emerging as seer-poets, living on the edge of sanity and completely accepted by the spirits of Nature. Much of the modern Druidic teaching stems from the words of the ancient Bardic tales and the poetry of Taliesin and Merlin.

The Bardic colleges continued to operate in Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, for many centuries, but eventually the last one was closed in the 17th century. However, the pull of this tradition was too strong and soon poets such as William Blake rediscovered the voice of the Bard. These Bardic revivalists, who revelled in the beauty of nature, met in the quieter rooms of public houses at the end of the 18th century, and thus the thread spins on....

Hear the voice of the Bard!
Who present, past, and future, sees;
Whose ears have heard
The Holy Word
that walk’d among the ancient trees.

Songs of experience - William Blake
What is Druidry today?

With the growing awareness many people have towards the environment, there is an understandable interest in the Nature, or Pagan, religions. Druidry means different things to different people. There are those who take their spirituality from Druidry and blend it with their own tradition, be that Pagan or Christian. And there are others who try to follow a rediscovered “Druidism”, ie the Druid faith.

To give an insight into modern Druidry we must start with exploring the symbol and Druidic “sacred mantra” known as the Awen.

The Awen

Central to Druid philosophy is the force known as the Awen. Literally Awen means “flowing spirit” and it is this flowing spirit that guides us through the Druid work and, because the force of the Awen is described thus, it can be seen as many different things. The force of divine poetic inspiration, which is held within the three drops of potion brewed in the Cauldron of the Goddess Ceridwen, to the Christian Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, both could be described as the Awen.

The symbol of the Awen is the “Three Rays of Light” shining from three single points surrounded by three circles. The three points represent the directions of the sunrises of the Solstices and Equinoxes. On the Summer and Winter Solstices the Sun rises east-north-east and east-south-east respectively, whilst on the Spring and Autumn Equinoxes it rises due east. The Awen also symbolises the three drops of inspiration from the Cauldron of Ceridwen. The three circles represent the three Circles of Creation in Welsh cosmology, ie Abred, Gwynvid and Ceugant. The central blackness represents the realm of Annwn.

During a Druid ritual, the Awen can be intoned as a single monotone note using three syllables “Ah-oo-en” (some Druid Orders intone the three letters I. A. U. in a similar way). The power held within the Awen mantra can be used in many ways - from initiating poetic inspiration, to drawing down the blessing of the God and Goddess or evoking a change in the atmosphere of a ritual circle. It is truly a sacred word.

Fig. 1
The Symbol of the Awen
The Three Grades

The three grades of Druidry are Bards, Ovates and Druids. The word “grade” conjures up a hierarchy of learning and importance, implying that the Bard is the infant and the Druid the university graduate. However, this is not the case. A better way of considering the grades would be to view them as three parts of the same journey – the Ovate (or Druid) is still a Bard and always will be. The three grades teach very different techniques, which can be seen as a range of skills usable in different situations – there will be times when the healing techniques learned during the Ovate grade will be more useful than Bardic storytelling.

The Bards

The Bardic grade is concerned with the Arts, with giving a voice to the child spirit that lives within us all. It is a wholly open tradition which forms the public face of Druidry. Most open, public Druid ceremonies are conducted from the Bardic grade and are therefore open to all. It encourages the personal growth of the individual by working with the four elements of Earth, Air, Fire and Water. Experiencing the individual elements, and learning to integrate and weave them into our awareness, we move towards a greater wholeness.

Once the work with the elements has begun, the Bardic tradition starts to explore the poet/storyteller within us all. Bards are encouraged, through ritual and meditation, to get in touch with their creative selves. There are some who are drawn to the sacred myths of Britain and Ireland, learning them and revelling in the fireside performances to which they lend themselves so well. Some go as far as being inspired to become harpers or to learn other folk instruments which can be used in Bardic performances. But the majority do not, for the wonderful gift of the modern Bardic tradition is to encourage the hidden creativity that lies within everyone. Whether that is painting, poetry, music, raising children, or following a profession, the direction and focus encouraged by working with the Bard Within helps any creativity to flourish and blossom.

The Bardic tradition is one of complete openness and freedom. There are no oaths of secrecy or binding promises, other than any that the individual chooses to make for his or her own personal spiritual growth. It is a sharing grade, where time during ritual can be dedicated to the Arts. The name given to Bardic performances held during a Druid ritual, or gathering (Gorsedd), is the “Eisteddfod”. This literally means “a festival of sitting” but has become a “gathering of Bards”. It is this openness, and focus on creativity, that is probably Druidry’s most important gift to the Pagan world.

The spiritual work of the Bard is done mainly in the physical world – allowing the individual to further understand how Druidry and the elements interact within the actual world in which we live, before delving into the inner planes.
The Ovates

Once the Bard has an understanding of the elements and their correspondences, and the Awen, and the way it helps with everyday life, he or she is ready to work at deeper levels, which require a different quality of commitment and responsibility. The Ovate works very much with the unseen world, both within and without. The historical Ovates were the tribal Shamans, and this element is still the inspiration behind the work of modern Ovates. During the Ovate work the student can work with both elemental and inner healing; divination using the Ogham (tree alphabet); the wealth of Druid tree lore; the elemental and faerie realm; leylines; and the three realms of past, present and future. It is no surprise that it once took 19 years to complete a Druid’s training. All teaching was done orally; students, after working with establishing Bardic memory, would have to remember the words of their teachers. Now we have writing and books that can help us in our progress. The Ovate’s main festival is Samhain, and here the work of the Ovate is used for divination.

Some people feel more at home with the Ovate work than with the Bardic studies, and become healers and diviners, putting the Ovate training to the service of their communities. Others work more with the inner planes and develop the mediumistic/Shamanic side of themselves, whilst others incorporate the Ovate studies and work them deeper into their Bardic understanding of the Natural world.

The Druids

During this grade the Bardic and Ovate work is consolidated. After learning the power of the word as a Bard, and working with the deeper levels of consciousness as an Ovate, a new spiral of the Journey is taken, as the Druid begins to understand the relationship between human and Otherworldly beings. The Deities whose stories were learnt as a Bard might become actual Spiritual advisors as the Druid steps into the Bardic realm once more, but with the benefit of the lessons learnt over several years of study. And so the spiral continues....

Fig. 2 The sacred symbol of the labyrinth
The Ogham

The one thing that becomes increasingly obvious to the student of Druidry is that Druids love trees. They are an integral part of the Druidic magical system known as the Ogham (pronounced oh-am). The letters of the Ogham (or tree alphabet) are formed by scratch marks along a horizontal or vertical line. They are linked not only with the wealth of Druid tree lore but also with birds, stones, colours and many other things - but what are their origins?

A theory popularised by Robert Graves in his book “The White Goddess” is that they come from the poem attributed to the Bard Taliesin, called the “Cad Goddeu” or “The Battle of the Trees”. The poem is too long to quote here, but is given in full in Graves’ book. Chapters ten and eleven specifically deal with the Ogham.

A fictional, yet beautiful retelling by John Matthews in his book ‘Song of Taliesin’, tells of Ogma Sunface who, in a Shamanic dream, was tied to the Wheel of Taranis (the Celtic God of Thunder and the Oak), searching for a hidden secret. He saw sigils inscribed on the spokes of the wheel - one sigil on each of the twenty five spokes. He then saw that each spoke was made from a different wood. His mind and body racked in agony, he lost consciousness, still seeing the twenty five different woods with their sigils. On waking he wandered into a forest and came upon a well, from which a blinding light shone forth. Looking through the light into the well he saw, floating on the surface, twenty five staves, each of a different wood, and each marked with its symbol. These he took and placed in a bag made from crane’s skin (the Druid’s Craneskin bag) and thus released humankind from the wheel and brought them the knowledge of the Ogham forest and their turning links with creation.

The Ogham can be found inscribed on stones from Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland. According to Celtic mythology they were also used by the Bards as a secret poetic/magical language called dordacht (darkness) or iarmerla (dark speech). It was a language spoken only by the wise, and one not easy to decipher. There are many examples of this language in mythology, probably the most well known is “The Colloquy of the Two Sages” in which two Fili (sacred poets) compete to poetically outwit each other to win the Bardic chair of the Ollamh (chief poet) - again, it is too long to reproduce here but see the recommended reading list at the back of this booklet for sources of this superb piece of Bardic exchange.

Some people believe that the Runes and the Ogham have the same source. This is untrue - the Runes have their roots within Norse, or Northern, traditions, whereas the Ogham stem from Celtic beliefs. It is true that both sets of symbols inspire sacred knowledge and are the property of the Gods, but one is under the patronage of Odin, the other of Gwydion.

There is insufficient space here to go further into the teaching that the Ogham offers us, but I would recommend a walk through the woods with one of the tree identification books (like the Collins Gem series) to begin to see the wonders and Druidic wisdom held within the trees.
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The Festivals

Druidry is a nature philosophy, which bases its yearly calendar on the cycles of the stars and the seasons. Although the calendar is divided into eight seasonal festivals, it is really two groups of four festivals. These are as follows.

**Agricultural Festivals:**
Samhain (Nos Galan Geaof) – 31st October
Imbolc (Gwyl Fair) – 1st February
Beltane (Calan Mai) – 1st May
Lughnasadh (Gwyl Awst) – 1st August

**Solar Festivals:**
Alban Arthuan (or Arthan) the Winter Solstice – 21st December
Alban Eiler (or Eilir) the Spring Equinox – 21st March
Alban Heruin (or Hefin) the Summer Solstice – 21st June
Alban Elued (or Elfed) the Autumn Equinox – 21st September

**The Agricultural Cycle**

**Samhain**
This festival is celebrated as the Druidic new year. As the old year passes, the veil between the realms of the living and the realms of the dead becomes thin. At this time the spirits move within our world and, with proper training, we can travel to theirs. Samhain is a time to honour the Ancestors who play an integral part in the Druid's training. We take our personalities not only from our physical parents, but also from our own Spirit’s journey through past lives. So, at Samhain Druids can explore their past and commune with their own past Selves, and with their Ancestors. Loved ones who have moved into the Otherworld are invited into the Circle to join with the living in a symbolic feast. In the natural world the earth is bare. Leaves are being stripped from the trees and returned to nourish the new growth which will arrive with the Spring. Seeds lie dormant in the earth. It is a time of renewal and the time of the Cailleach (the Crone aspect of the Goddess) who, as the Raven, picks the dead flesh from the trees and brings the Winter.

**Imbolc**
This festival is sometimes symbolised by the arrival of the first snowdrops on or around 1st February and is a festival of Fire and Water. It is the feast of the Goddess Brigantia, also known as Brighid, Briget and by many other names. Brigantia is the Triple Goddess of Smiths, Poets and Healers. The art of the Smith was seen as a magical one. Metal was an essential material in the Iron Age and the Smiths could obtain this by working with the four elements – Fire in the forge, Air from the bellows to feed the flames, metal ore from the Earth and Water to cool the heated metal. One can understand why the Smiths were regarded with such honour.

Imbolc is also a time to work with healing, not only the healing of our own Selves and friends, but also the healing of the Earth. Brigantia, as the Patroness of Poetry, is offered her gift by the Bards during the Eisteddfod part of the Imbolc celebration.
Beltane

Beltane is sometimes symbolised by the arrival of May blossom on the Hawthorn trees. In Druid tree lore the Hawthorn is not only a Faery tree but also a tree of fertility. The Spring has arrived and with it comes new life. The ground and trees are covered with fresh green leaves and the animals and birds are choosing their mates. This is a time to celebrate such union and to build the twin Beltane fires, through which cattle were once driven to bring good luck and to destroy infections. Now we walk between the fires to bring luck and fertility into our lives. The Green Man/Lord of the Wildwood and the Goddess watch our celebrations from the twisted branches of the Oak tree; they smile, for there are some who still show them honour and respect. In times past most children were conceived in May – not only because the weather made people feel like making love but because the child conceived in May was born in February, which was after the harshest Winter weeks. Therefore, it had a better chance of survival.

Lughnasadh

The Druidic Harvest Festival is symbolised by the harvested fields of Corn. The Spirit of the Corn can be seen as the God who each year offers himself as a sacrifice to feed the people of the land. The corn holds not only the life of the old God, but also the seed of the Mabon (young God) who will be reborn at the time of Alban Arthuan (the Winter Solstice). This is the mystery of Lughnasadh, for the sacrifice of the Corn Spirit is a willing one, and he makes way for the new Child of the following year. As the last sheaf of corn is cut so the old God returns to the Otherworld alone and waits to be joined by the Goddess. This is a time to really feel the turning Wheel of the Year, for it can be seen as the cycle of the seasons, our lives, the sacred circle within which we celebrate and the motion of the Earth in her journey around the Sun.
The Solar Cycle

Alban Arthuan (Winter Solstice)
Alban Arthuan means the Light of Arthur. Some Druid Orders believe this means the Light of the hero King Arthur Pendragon who is symbolically reborn as the Sun Child (“The Mabon”) at the time of the Solstice. Others see the Light belonging to the star constellation known as the Great Bear (or the Plough) – Arthur, or Art, being Gaelic for Bear. This constellation shines out in the sky and can symbolise the rebirth of the Sun. At this point the Sun is at its southernmost point, almost disappearing beyond the horizon, and the days are at their shortest. This was a time of dread for the ancient peoples as they saw the days getting shorter and shorter. A great ritual was needed to revert the course of the sun. This was probably calculated by the great circles of stone and burial mounds which are aligned to this festival, such as Newgrange in Co. Meath, Eire. Sure enough, the next day the Sun began to move higher into the sky, showing that it had been reborn. This time of year is very cold and bleak, which is why so many celebrations are needed to help people get through the Winter months. It is significant that many civilisations welcomed their Solar Gods at the time of greatest darkness – including Mithras (the bull-headed warrior God), the Egyptian God Horus and, more recently, Jesus Christ.

Alban Eiler (Spring Equinox)
Alban Eiler means the Light of the Earth. As the Sun grows warmer, so life begins to show through the soil. Small signs at first – the daffodils and crocuses – then more green as the bluebells and wood anemones spread through the woodland. Plants are seen by some as inanimate greenery with no actual feelings and life force. But Druids see life in all living things, from rocks and stones, to rivers and springs, plants and trees – all life is sacred. Have you ever thought about how you recognise the beginning of Spring? Is it the plant life? The weather? How does a plant know when it is time to grow? It cannot tell the time or see a calendar. Yet it knows. If it has senses then it has consciousness, if it has consciousness then it is more than an inanimate life form. So it is the return of life to the Earth that is celebrated at Alban Eiler, the time of balance. One of the inner mysteries of Druidry is the Druid’s egg. Life-giving, it is the egg protected by the hare, which is the symbol of Alban Eiler – still celebrated by the giving of Easter eggs by the Easter bunny.

Alban Heruin (Summer Solstice)
Alban Heruin means the Light of the Shore. Druidry has a great respect and reverence for places that are “in between” worlds. The seashore is one such place, where the three realms of Earth, Sea and Sky meet. There is great power in places such as these. It is the time of greatest light when the Solar God is crowned, by the Goddess, as the King of Summer. It also brings some sadness because from now until Alban Arthuan the Sun’s strength is declining and we have entered the waning year. At this time the Dark Twin, or Holly King, is born – he will take his crown at Alban Arthuan. Of all the festivals Druidry is mostly associated with Alban Heruin. The wonderful white-robed figures filmed at the dawn rituals at Stonehenge are testament to this; sadly, these are no longer allowed. However, to many Druids it is the turning seasons and the cycle of life, death and rebirth – reflected in the Wheel of the Year in its completeness – which are significant.
Alban Elued (Autumn Equinox)

Alban Elued means the Light of the Water. The Wheel turns and the time of balance returns. Alban Elued marks the balance of day and night before the darkness overtakes the light. It is also the time of the last harvests, usually of the fruit which has stayed on the trees and plants to ripen under the Summer Sun. It is this final harvest which can take the central theme of the Alban Elued ceremony. Thanking the Earth, in her full abundance as Mother and Giver, for the great harvest. It is the end of Summer and the beginning of Autumn.
The Sacred Circle

A fundamental symbol and working tool of the Druid is the Sacred Circle. This is used to define the space in which we weave ritual. Its circumference represents the cycles of time, the daily path of the Sun, the yearly festival wheel, and the stages of our lives from birth to death. From the Circle we call outward to the four quarters of north, south, east and west - invoking those elemental energies, Spirits and powers that help us to weave our web of being.

The Circle may be marked out with branches, leaves, feathers, flowers, rope, chalk, or other physical signs. More frequently it is drawn in the air or on the ground in Spirit. Usually this is done with the hand, although a wand can be used. Sometimes the casting of the Circle will be accompanied by prayer or invocation, music or song. The powers invoked at the quarters vary widely. Some of the attributions are as follows.

North: Earth, bear, boar, bull, raven, Dark Moon, Pole Star, Arianrhod, Bran, Gwydion, Gwyn ap Nudd, Bile, the Morrighan, the Stone of Destiny, Midnight, Cold, Alban Arthuan (Winter Solstice).

South: Fire, rutting stag, wolf, wildcat, lizard, Sun, Full Moon, Nuada, Nudd, Beli Mawr, Gofannon, Aengus Og, Sword, Midday, Hot, Alban Heruin (Summer Solstice).

East: Air, eagle, wren, blackbird, white horse, Morning Star, Moon’s first quarter, Olwen, Rhiannon, Lleu Llaw Gyffes, Lugh, Lugus, Spear, wand or staff, dawn, light, Alban Eiler (Spring Equinox).

West: Water, Salmon of Wisdom, cormorant, seagull, sea eagle, dolphin, Evening Star, Moon’s last quarter, Ceridwen, the Dagda, Manawyddan, The Cauldron of Plenty or of Inspiration, sunset, moist, Alban Elued (Autumn Equinox).


South West: Lughnasadh, Gwyl Awst, Lammas, Fire and Water, Lugh/Lleu, Corn, maturity and harvest.

North West: Samhain, Nos Galan Gaeof, Hallowe’en, Water and Earth, Gwydion, Gwyn ap Nudd, the Dagda, old age and decay.

North East: Imbolc, Gwyl Fair, Candlemass, Earth and Air, Brigid, birth and new life.

These attributions will differ from person to person, for we all create our own Sacred Space as a reflection of our own understanding. As we work with the Spirits of the Circle and the directions, so we explore related areas within ourselves, seeking understanding and healing.
Druid Ritual

Druid ritual takes many forms and has many functions. Druids draw on various sources for ritual - including mediaeval and later Celtic literature, previous generations of Druid revivalists, archaeology, poetry, and other traditions. But they draw mainly on their own judgement, and experience, of what is right for a given moment.

Most rituals begin with the call for peace for, as is said within Druid teaching, "without peace can no work be". The Druid will approach each quarter and say "May there be peace in the (direction)." Then the Sacred Circle is cast, followed by calls to the Spirits of the four directions. Rituals are frequently composed for a particular combination of time, place and people. They vary from the open celebration of the Bardic Gorsedd to the intimacy of personal Rites of Passage.

They may take place anywhere - from great Stone Circles to private rooms. Most take place outdoors, since contact with the Earth, Sea and Sky is very important to the practice of Druidry. Group rituals commonly celebrate the eight major festivals. Rites of Passage include the naming or blessing of children, the onset of puberty, Druid weddings (handfastings), and passing on. Rituals may also be directed towards healing or spiritual growth.

Most of the common elements of Druid ritual are those associated with the Bardic tradition. These include the Gorsedd Prayer, written by Iolo Morganwg:

Grant, O God/dess, thy protection,
And in protection, strength,
And in strength, understanding,
And in understanding, knowledge,
And in knowledge, the knowledge of justice,
And in the knowledge of justice, the love of it,
And in that love, the love of all existences,
And in the love of all existences, the love of God/dess and all goodness.

Although this prayer occurs widely in Modern Druidry, there are many who do not use it.

Another widespread element of Druid ritual is the Oath of Peace:

We swear, by peace and love to stand,
Heart to heart, and hand in hand,
Mark, O Spirit, and hear us now,
Confirming this, our Sacred Vow.

Druid ritual brings the participants into contact with the Spiritual. Thus our lives are touched with the deep sources of inspiration, creativity, wisdom and healing.
The Deities

Before looking at some of the main Gods, Goddesses and Heroes of Druidism I must first clarify that not all Druids work with the following figures. Ultimately it is personal Spiritual growth and its benefits within everyday life that are important, together with freedom of the Human will. Many Druids revere an ultimate Spiritual Force and/or Creator, others revere the Land/Earth as their Goddess/God, some take the teachings and philosophy of Druidry and blend it with their own Traditions, whilst others do not view Druidry as a religion at all. Others honour many Deities, by no means all of them Celtic. However, if I were to leave out any reference to Celtic mythological Deities this information pack would not be complete.

The myths stem from the pantheons of three major peoples: Welsh, Irish and Gaulish. The main Welsh stories are held within a group of stories now known as the Mabinogion. The heroes and Gods of Ireland hail from the book called the Tain and other myths of the Fianna and Tuatha Dé Danaan. The Breton tales speak of their links with Myrddin (Merlin), Lancelot and King Arthur, together with the lost sacred island of Y’s. There is not space to cover all mythologies in any depth here, so I refer you to the list of recommended reading to further your search. Here, I shall concentrate on the principal figures and some of their better-known relationships.

Welsh

Afagddu: The son of the Goddess Ceridwen, for whom the Cauldron was originally brewed. His name means “Utter Darkness” and it is said he was the ugliest person who ever lived. Ceridwen chose to brew the Cauldron of Inspiration, which held all of the wisdom of the ages, so that her son may give something to the world. The brew was one year in the making and, unfortunately, she left the Cauldron under the care of the youth Gwion Bach. As he carelessly stirred the Cauldron three drops of hot potion spat out and landed on his thumb, burning him. He quickly sucked it to ease the pain and therefore it was Gwion, rather than Afagddu, who obtained the wisdom.

Amaethon: Son of the Mother Goddess Don. He figures in the tale of Culhwch and Olwen. He is the God of Agriculture who gave the plough to Humankind.

Arianrod: Daughter of Don. She figures in branch four of the Mabinogion. She is known as “The Lady of the Silver Wheel” and rules the star constellation “Corona Borealis”. She is a Goddess of initiation and rebirth, and is mother to Dylan (Son of the Waves) and Lleu Llaw Gyffes.

Arawn: King of the realm of Annwn. He figures in the first branch of the Mabinogion and in the poem “The Battle of the Trees”. Dressed in grey on a grey steed he is the hunter of souls. He hunts with a pack of Otherworldly hounds who have shining white fur and glistening red ears.

Beli Mawr: An ancestral Deity who fathered some of the rulers of Wales.
Blodeuwedd: The Flower Maiden from branch four of the Mabinogion. She was conjured by Math ap Mathonwy and Gwydion ap Don to break the curse laid down by Lleu’s mother Arianrhod. She cursed him never to have a human wife so, taking the flowers of Oak, Broom and Meadowsweet, Blodeuwedd was formed and married Lleu. She is the Goddess of Springtime.

Bran Ap Lyr: Bran figures in branch two of the Mabinogion in the tragic tale of Branwen’s marriage to Matholwch, the King of Ireland. He is a giant and a great warrior who once had possession of the Cauldron of inspiration and rebirth now stirred by Ceridwen. In the fight against the Irish he was mortally wounded by a poisoned arrow and instructed his brother, Manawydden, to bury his head under the White Mount in London (upon which the Tower of London was later built). The Alder tree is sacred to Bran, who appears again in the Cad Goddeu (Battle of the Trees) as the marauding giant from the Otherworld who could not be killed unless his name be guessed. Bran is also old Scottish for Raven – linked with the Ravens of the Tower of London.

Branwen: Daughter of Llyr and sister of Bran. She dies of a broken heart after seeing both Britain and Ireland destroyed during the battle between Bran and Matholwch. She is the Goddess of love.

Achren: Goddess of the Trees who aids Gwydion in the battle against the Otherworldly army led by Arawn and Bran in the myth of the Cad Goddeu (Battle of the Trees).

Ceridwen: Mother Goddess and keeper of the Cauldron of inspiration and rebirth which figures in Arthurian myth as the Holy Grail. After little Gwion accidentally drinks the three drops of potion meant for her son Afagddu, she chases him through an initiation of Earth, Air, Fire and Water until finally, with Gwion as a grain of wheat and Ceridwen as a hen, she eats him. Nine months later she gives birth to an inspired child whom she calls Taliesin (Radiant Brow).

Gofannon: Slayer of Arianrhod’s first born, Dylan Eil Don (Son of the Waves). He is the keeper of the forge and God of Smith craft, and is linked to Wayland of Anglo Saxon mythology.

Gwydion: Said to have been the best weaver of words ever to walk the Island of the Mighty (Britain), which associates him with Bards. He was also a great magician, using his Druidic Arts to manipulate events. He figures in both branch four of the Mabinogion and in the Cad Goddeu, and causes both the death of Pwyll’s son Prederi and the downfall of the warriors of the Otherworld. He appears to be the father of his sister’s sons Dylan and Lleu Llaw Gyffes.

Gwynn ap Nudd: Leader of the Wild Hunt, which screams and rages across the skies at Samhain. He figures in the tale of Culwch and Olwen.

Llyr: The British equivalent to the Irish Lir, the Father God.
Manawydan: Son of Llyr and God of the Sea. He is the British equivalent to the Irish Manannán Mac Lir.

Merlin: Magician and Druid. He figures greatly in the Arthurian myths and has been confused with Taliesin. It seems that, over the centuries, the legends of these two Seers have become so entwined that it can be difficult to separate them. Merlin is first recognised as a great Seer when, as a child, he is brought before King Vortigern, whose palace is forever subsiding. Merlin then has a vision that beneath the palace lies two dragons, one red and one white, which he raises to do battle. The dragons have been associated with the invasions of the Saxons (white) and the defending British (red). His greatness is acknowledged, but this time is short lived as Merlin's best friends and family are slaughtered in the Battle of Arfderydd. He retreats into the Wildwood and becomes the Wild Man – accepted by the animals and birds of the woods – until the Merlin we now know so well is reborn through this dreadful initiation. One of the Welsh Triads tells us that Britain was once known as Clas Myrddin, Merlin’s Enclosure.

Olwen: Goddess of the White Track, so-called because wherever she walked a trefoil flower blossomed. She is the protector of travellers.

Pwyll: Pwyll features in the first branch of the Mabinogion and is the King who fight Hafgan, the rival King to Arawn. Disguised as Arawn, Pwyll slays Hafgan, making Arawn King of all Annwn. For this Arawn pronounces Pwyll “Chief of Annwn”. He is husband to Rhiannon and Father of Prederi.

Rhiannon: Goddess of Horses. She features in the first branch of the Mabinogion. Horses were sacred animals and, even now, their flesh is taboo. She is also keeper of the Birds of Rhiannon; when they sing time stands still, as seen in the story of Bran.

Taliesin: The Primary Chief Bard of Britain. He wrote many of the poems still used as inspiration for modern Druidism, such as the Pryddeu Annwn (Spoils of Annwn) and the Cad Goddeu (Battle of the Trees). Cauldron-born, he had the Sight and weaved the Awen to bring poetic inspiration.

Fig. 6
A Cromlech or Dolmen
(NEolithic initiation and burial chamber)
The Gods and Goddesses from the Mabinogion

Family Tree of the Gods of Don

- Manogan
- Beli
  - Don (Mother Goddess)
    - Math

- Mathonwy

- Gwydion
  - Arianrhod
  - Gilvaethwy
  - Amaethon
  - Govannon (God of the forge)
    - Penardun
      - Nudd
      - Peibaw
      - and Nynniaw
    - Gwyn (Warder of Annwn) (The Flower Maiden)

- Nwyvre
  - Dylan
  - Lieu Llaw Gyffes—Blodeuwedd—Goronwy
    - Pebyr

Fig. 7

Family Tree of the Gods of Lyr

- Iweriadd (Irish Lir)
  - Llyr
  - Penardun (Daughter of Don)
    - Euroswydd

- Bran
  - Branwen (King of Ireland)
    - Matholwch
      - Manawyddan
        - Rhiannon (Horse Goddess)
          - Nissyen
          - Evnissyen

- Gwern
- Pwyll (Lord of Annwn)
  - Rhiannon (Horse Goddess)
    - Prederi—Kicva (Daughter of Gwyn)

Fig. 8

- 18 -
Irish

Amaírge: Chief poet as well as warrior, he is similar to the Welsh Taliesin. The poem “Book of Invasions” is accredited to Amaírge and contains imagery very similar to the courts of the Arthurian sagas.

Aonghus Og: The love God and son of the Dagda who lives in the Bruigh na Boinne (the sacred burial mound known as Newgrange in Co. Meath, Eire). He is a beautiful man who is always seen with four colourful birds flying about his head.

Balor of the Evil eye: This God of death had such an evil gaze that whosoever saw his eye was killed. His one eye had to be held open by servants (similar to Yspaddaden Pencawr of Welsh myth).

Bile: The God of Death, also known as “Father of Gods and Men”. Some say he was the husband to the Irish Mother Goddess Dana. Bile leads the souls of the dead into the Otherworld.

Brigid: Triple Goddess of Poetry, Smiths and Healing. In other countries she is known as Brigantia, Bride and by many other names. The festival of Imbolc is known as “The feast of Brigid”. A Goddess of Fire and Water she was Christianised as St. Brigid of Kildare, whose sacred flame was guarded by Irish nuns for several centuries. She is the daughter of the father God, Dagda.

Cúchulainn: Best known for his single-handed defence of Ulster during the Cattle Raid of Cooley. He is also known for numerous other tales of the Red Branch cycle in Irish mythology. He is son of Deichtire (daughter of the Druid Cathbad) and Lugh. He has many magical weapons such as his sword (Caladin) and his spear (Gael-Bolg). Throughout his adventures he is given much praise, but knows true peace only in battle. He is finally tied to a pillar stone and drained of blood by the war Goddess, Morrighan. His original name was Sétanta, but he became Cúchulainn (the hound of Cúlann).

Dagda: His name means “The Good God” and he can be viewed as the Father of all Gods. Huge in stature he drags a vast club, one end of which is on wheels. He is keeper the Sacred Cauldron, one of the treasures of the Sidhe. The Cauldron is the Cauldron of plenty – nobody left it hungry. He also kept a magic harp called Uaithine.

Dana: The Goddess from whom the Tuatha Dé Danaan take their name. She is a mother Goddess who gave birth to the Dagda.

Deidre: Her story forms one of the greatest love tales from Celtic mythology. The Irish king, Conchobhar Mac Nessa, arranges to marry her when she is of age. But Deidre falls in love with Naoise, Son of Usna, a hero of the Red Branch. They elope to Scotland and, after some time, are enticed back to Ireland with a promise of peace from
Conchobhar. However, he betrays them and murders Naoise. Broken-hearted Deidre throws herself from a chariot, hits her head on a rock, and dies. At first she is buried with Naoise, but Conchobhar is wracked with jealousy and disinterres her body, reburying her on the opposite side of the river. However, a Yew tree grows from each grave and they meet above the river – none could part them.

**Fianna Mac Cumhail:** One of the greatest Irish heroes. He gained his training from the Druid Finegas, whom he meets whilst the old Druid fishes for the Salmon of Wisdom. Finegas catches the fish and leaves Fianna to cook it but, as with Taliesin, some hot fat burns Fianna’s thumb, which he sucks. Therefore it is Fianna who gains the wisdom. Through many tales he leads the great armies of the Fianna and finds his son, Oisin (which means “Little Fawn”). Some say that Fianna rests within a cave, waiting to return during the time of his country’s greatest need – a tale similar to that of King Arthur.

**Fomorii:** The evil race who dwell under the sea. They invaded Ireland on many occasions and were finally beaten during the Battle of Magh Tuitagdh.

**Goibhniu:** The Smith God, likened to Gofannon and Wayland. It is said that he could forge a spear or sword with three blows of his hammer.

**Lugh:** This Sun God is linked to Lleu of Welsh myth. He took over as ruler of the Gods when Nuada was killed. Lughnasadh is the festival sacred to Lugh. He is father of the great Irish warrior/hero Cuchulainn. His greatness was weakened as he later became one of the Faerie folk, Lugh-chromain (which later became Anglicised as Leprechaun).

**Manannán Mac Lir:** The major Irish sea God. He appears in many myths and is seen as a wondrous figure, driving his two-wheeled chariot across the waves as if the sea was a meadow. He objects to the choice of leader when Dagda resigns and retreats into the sea.

**Midir the Proud:** Son of the Dagda who, when his father resigned as leader of the Gods, fought against his successor, Bodb Dearg. Although the outcome of this war was indecisive, the time of the Gods was over. They retreated into the Sidhe mounds (Bronze Age burial mounds) and became the Faerie folk.

**Morrighan:** Triple Goddess of war, death and slaughter. Her sisters are Macha, Badb and Nemain. She is seen as a Raven or Crow circling above battlefields. Morrighan tries to seduce Cúchulainn but he refuses her. They fight and Cúchulainn wounds her, which seals his fate. He is killed and she sits on his shoulder and watches as an otter drinks his blood.

**Nechtan:** Husband of the Goddess Boann, who gave her name to the Boyne. He is a God of Water.
*Nuada of the Silver Hand:* Leader of the Tuatha Dé Danaan; he lost his hand during their first battle. Dian Cecht, the God of medicine, makes him a hand of silver. He possesses a sword from which none could escape. He is associated with Nudd of the Silver Hand from Welsh mythology.

*Oisín:* Son of Fionn Mac Cumhail. He was the greatest warrior, poet and storyteller of the Fianna. He was raised by his mother who had been cursed to live as a deer – hence his name Oisín, which means “Little Fawn”.

*Sídhe:* A mound or hill – usually a Bronze Age burial mound – into which the Tuatha Dé Danaan retreated after they were beaten by the Milesians. The Dé Danaans became the Faerie folk of myth and legend.

*Tuatha Dé Danaan:* The Gods of pre-Christian Ireland, and the people of the Goddess Dana. They came from the north and beat the Fomorii and the Firbolg. The Tuatha Dé Danaan were very human in their ways, both physical and emotional. They ruled until they were beaten by the Milesians. Later Christian scribes demoted them into heroes and Faerie; however, they could not deny the Tuatha Dé Danaan’s God-like attributes.

**Gaulish**

*Cernunnos:* Although known as a Gaulish God, he was probably also revered in Britain as the “Lord of Forest Animals”. He is seen as a horned figure sat in the meditative cross-legged position (like the figure found on the Gundestrup cauldron – see Fig. 9 below). His attributes are similar to that of the Dagda in his father God role, and it is possible that Cernunnos was the inspiration behind later Horned Gods such as Herne the Hunter.

*Esus:* When the new religion of Christianity reached Gaul it was said that the Druids had foreseen the arrival of Jesus Christ. Some people have associated this foresight with their God Esus who was also sacrificed on a wooden cross. However, Esus’ cross was a living Oak. Two reliefs, one of which was discovered under the choir of Notre Dame in 1711CE, show Esus as a woodcutter.

*Taranis:* The Gaulish “Thunder God”, linked with Thor of Norse mythology. Taranis rules the skies and thunder is his voice. The Oak is struck by lightning more than any other tree and therefore it is the oak that is particularly sacred to Taranis.

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Fig. 9
The Horned God, Cernunnos, from the Gundestrup Cauldron
The Circles of Existence

A discussion of modern Druidry would not be complete without reference to Edward Williams, whose Bardic name was Iolo Morganwg. He lived in the 17th century and is now seen as an inspiration to some, a forger to others. However, it is difficult to deny his influence over the direction of what is now termed the “revivalist” period of Druidry. Iolo presented the world with several “authentic” documents, which he claimed were the ways of the ancient Druids, in a book called the “Barddas”. These gifts included the Circles of Existence. There is little doubt that some of the Iolo material is authentic; however, he was such a good forger that it is almost impossible to discern the bogus from the credible.

The Barddas is now 200 years old which makes it an ancient document by modern standards. It contains much visionary material, but it is the Three Circles of Existence – Abred, Gwynvid and Ceugant – that we shall explore here. The central space represents the cauldron of Annwn.

![Diagram of the Three Circles of Existence](image)

Fig. 10
The Three Circles of Existence

The three circles represent the journey of the Spirit/Soul

**Annwn**: All life begins in Annwn. This is the home of the Cauldron of rebirth – the smelting pot of Spirit. Once born the Spirit is within the Circle of Abred (physical).

**Abred**: Abred is the Circle of the physical – of mineral, plant, animal and human. It is the Spirit’s journey of enlightenment through the four realms which is taking place in the world around us. There are many roads we can travel during our lives, and the realm of Abred is our learning ground on the way to oneness with Spirit. If our lives have been lived with an awareness of all existences then the cycle continues; others may slip back into the Cauldron to be reborn again, retaining the lessons learnt. Some may find peace within the shape of animals, or the running Spirit of a river.
**Gwynvid:** Once the physical journey is complete and that oneness with Spirit has been attained the Journey moves into the Circle of Gwynvid. Here we find the Enlightened Ones who have gone before – spirits who have greatly affected the spiritual direction of Abred with their teachings. Merlin, Christ, Buddha and other great prophets contact the living within the Circle of Abred through dreams and spirit vision which teaches us on our Journey. It is possible (nobody will truly know until they get there) that our personal Spirit Guides/Helpers teach us from the Circle of Gwynvid. At the time of Samhain it is possible for Druids to enter Gwynvid and Annwn to seek guidance on their Journey.

**Ceugant:** This is said to be the Circle of the Spirit/Goddess/God alone – the one governing force of the universe and nature which watches over us all. It is the ultimate space of creation from which all came and into which all will return.

Some see the Circles as a spiral which takes us on our inward (rather than outward) Journey to the Source (see Fig. 11 below). It is important to state that the three Circles do not form a dogma. It is true that they influence many on the Druid path, but it is equally true that others find them too constricting and have their own ways of understanding the Spirit and its relationship with God/Goddess. What has been discussed here is only the beginning of the symbolism of the three Circles. If you want to find out more, refer to Recommended Reading.

![Fig. 11](image)

*The Three Circles of Existence (inward Journey)*
1. Do you have to be Welsh, Cornish, Breton, Scottish or Irish to follow the Druid tradition?
No. Although the Path takes its inspiration from the “Celtic” countries, the spirituality and philosophy taught by Druidry is not constrained by your ancestry or where you live.

2. Do I have to complete all three grades?
No. Many people remain Bards or Ovates and are happy to do so. Also, many of the Druid Orders do not teach the three grades separately but choose a different approach, blending the grades into one but still teaching the individual aspects of the grades.

3. Did the Druids build Stonehenge?
Some historians now say that the Celtic race (if there ever was such a thing) never reached the British Isles in any great number. The British were British until the invasion of the Romans and, later, the Saxons. If Caesar’s statement that the Druids from Gaul were sent to Britain to be trained, then Ancient Druidry already existed on this island. These ancient people have been called “proto-Druids” or early Druids. If this is true, then Stonehenge was built by Druids, long before the religion reached its height during the iron age. However, other historians dispute this.
So, the answer has to be an absolute, positive, maybe....

4. Do I have to wear a white robe?
No. Many people feel uncomfortable wearing robes. Others will wear a robe linked with the colour associated with their grade, ie Blue for Bards, Green for Ovates and White for Druids.

5. Do I have to be able to write poetry, tell stories and play an instrument?
It is not necessary to have any artistic talents to begin to tread the Druid Path. These are things that can be learnt along the way as the Awen inspires you.

6. Do Druids worship the Sun and always perform their rituals during the day?
There are no fixed rules as to when Druids perform their ceremonies; however, the public rituals are often held “in the eye of the Sun”.

7. Is Druidry patriarchal?
The 18th century revivalists were mainly men so Druidry did get the reputation of being a patriarchal tradition. This was mainly because the early revivalist Druid groups bore more similarity to freemasonry than to historic Druidism. In recent years the balance has been achieved and membership of many Druid Orders is divided equally between men and women.

8. Do Druids meet in groups?
When Druids meet in a group it is called a “Grove”. Some Orders have groups called Seedgroups or Proto Groves, made up of people who are just starting their Druidic Journeys.

9. Do Druids have to honour the Celtic Gods?
Although Druidry draws its inspiration from the Celtic religion of Druidism, people are free to find their own Path to their Deity or Deities. Personal freedom is paramount in most modern Druid groups.
Druid Groups

The following pages contain information on some of the major Druid Orders and addresses where they can be contacted.
Each Order was asked to write a few paragraphs explaining its main areas of activity. The submissions from the following Orders have been reproduced here and are their own words/views. As such, the PF cannot be responsible for any information, or titles, offered as historical fact.
Titles such as “Arch-Druid” and “Chosen Chief” are usually relevant only to the members of the individual Orders to which they refer, and not to all Druids or Druidry as a whole.

The Albion Conclave.
The Albion Conclave was founded in 1992 as a private group. Its main aim was – and still is – the rediscovery and proliferation of authentic Druidic Lore and Celtic Spirituality. Over the years since its inception, the members of the Albion Conclave and friends, have devoted countless hours of their time to the study of historical and archaeological literature, natural sciences, mythologies, folklore, mystical texts and no small amount of personal experimentation, to try and get to the Truth of the mysteries of the Druids. This, along with years of collective experience within the field, has led to the production of this course of instruction. So it was, with the desire to discover the real history of the Druids – warts and all – that the Albion Conclave was formed.
Essentially, the first part of our course may be perceived as a gateway into the world of the Druids. The course is as expandable as the student’s capabilities.
In all correspondences, send an S.A.E. to: The Albion Conclave, c/o 136 Meadow Lane, Long Eaton, Notts. NG10 2FQ

The British Druid Order - (BDO)
The British Druid Order teaches and celebrates Druidry as European native spirituality. It organises events, ceremonies, workshops and talks in Britain and abroad, designed to engage heart and body, mind and spirit.
Druidry seeks inspiration – the “flowing spirit” of Awen – and centredness, within time through our ancestors and within space through the land.
The BDO initiates Gorseddau of Bards, encouraging multi-faith public gatherings within the spirit of Druidry, celebrating diversity and creativity, the land, its cycles and the cycles of our lives, offering rites of passage and Eisteddfod. Private rites are also offered. The BDO practice extends from the seclusion of the forest out into the wider community, working for the better understanding of our native traditions.
The BDO publishes various booklets and the magazines “The Druids’ Voice” and “Tooth and Claw”. Joint chiefs Philip Shallcrass and Emma Restall Orr both have books due for publication soon.
For more information and a publications list, send an SAE to: BDO, P. O. Box 29, St. Leonards-on-Sea, E. Sussex TN37 7YP.
The Druid Clan of Dana - An Clann Draoidreachta Danaan
The Druid Clan of Dana was founded in 1992 at Clonegal Castle by Lawrence and Olivia Durdin-Robertson, Archdruid and Archdruidess - Arddraoi and Ardbandraoi. To date (1997) it has 31 Groves in 12 countries. Like the Order of Tara, the Clan is part of the Fellowship of Isis and - like these - membership is free. It is dedicated to Goddess centred Druidry with the emphasis on celebrating Nature and Her cycles. Beyond this, the precise nature of the Clan's Druid beliefs and practices are up to the individual members and Groves. A Grove must consist of at least 3 members - An Draoidchdh (Chief Druid), An Ban Draoidh (Chief Druidess) and Ollabh (Bard). All must be members of the Fellowship of Isis.
The Clan's initiatory tradition is derived from Ross Nichols of O.B.O.D. and the Megalithic Order of Ireland. The initiation ritual is available from the Fellowship of Isis, Clonegal Castle, Enniscorthy, Eire. (£0.00 inc. P & P).
Druid Clan of Dana networking address: Fi, 7B Northover, Glastonbury, Somerset, BA6 8AA.

The Druidic College of Albion
The Druidic College of Albion is not a building but a confederation of Druids from various Orders who are united in their aim to spread the benefits of Druidry. The College offers the chance to train as a Druid by putting you in touch with an experienced Druid Tutor from one of the major Pagan Druid Orders. Each Tutor has undertaken to keep his or her student numbers small (under 10) so that you will receive the individual attention you deserve throughout your training. Wherever possible we will endeavour to put you in touch with a Tutor in your area or, failing that, a contact (a fellow student or kindred spirit) so that as well as receiving an excellent postal course you will be able to share your thoughts and feelings with people who understand you. During the course of your training you may choose to remain a solitary practitioner; to practice with a partner; to join an existing Druid Grove or to form your own. Whatever the choice we will support you to the best of our ability.
For further details please reply enclosing an SAE to:
BM Stargrove, London WCIN 3XX.

The Glastonbury Order of Druids - G.O.D
The Glastonbury Order of Druids has its roots in antiquity, and is genuinely the most ancient Order in Britain – from the legendary Abaris the Druid in the 5th century BC. Other famous heads of the Order include Joseph of Arimathea, Merlin, Dunstan, and Dr. John Dee. The present-day heads of the Order, whose work is largely influenced by antiquity and visionary John Michell, are Rollo Maughling and Jacki Paterson. Rollo is Arch-Druid of Glastonbury and Stonehenge and founder of the Council of British Druid Orders. Jackie is Arch-Druidess of Glastonbury and Avebury and author of "Tree Wisdom". With the other West Country Druid Orders we have built up a large body of Druidic practice at Britain’s most famous ancient shrines, despite ongoing difficulties with the authorities at Stonehenge, which we are seeking to resolve peacefully by resorting in court to the ancient statutes of Britain which permit Druidic worship and religious assembly. We encourage Gorsedd all over the West Country, the Eisteddfod at Glastonbury and the establishment of a future National Eisteddfod some miles from Stonehenge.
We encourage all three grades of practical Druidry but wish to emphasise that this can be obtained only in the field, by participation, not by correspondence course.
G.O.D. Dove House, Barton St. David, Somerset.
Insular Order of Druids - IOD
The IOD is a shamanic working group of Druids and Bards, who wish to share and promote the skills of individual members whilst holding their maxim: “If it be to the greater benefit of all - Do what you will.”
The IOD wishes to work in harmony and conjunction with other Druid groups in Britain and around the world to promote Druidry as a recognised faith, and establish an annual Eisteddfod on British soil; to fight and quell religious suppression and intolerance wherever it occurs; to crusade to free Stonehenge and other limited-access Druidic temples so that all who wish may once more worship where they please.
The IOD is seeking new Groves and applicants in and around the Wise Isles of Wales, Scotland and England. Any interested individuals or groups should write to:
I.O.D. Membership Secretary, c/o Labyrinth, 2 Victoria Road South, Southsea, Hants PO5 2DF.

Loyal Arthurian Warband - LAW
The Loyal Arthurian Warband has for some time been thought of as the Warrior arm of Druidry, as personified by their Titular Head and Chosen Chief King Arthur Pendragon who, at Newbury, answered the question and riddle:
“Who’s more the Druid, the protester up in the tree, or the guy on the ground wearing the white frock?”
Although both are arguable, Arthur’s answer was:
“The guy up the tree in the white frock, the Loyal Arthurian warband.”
However, the LAW is in point of fact the Druid arm of a Warrior Order known simply as the Arthurian Warband, and is one of the most magical and spiritual Orders of our time; each member is also a warrior, yet could head a Druid Order in their own right – in fact many do as Arch Druids and Chosen Chiefs of other contemporary Orders.
The LAW is a true Round Table fellowship allied to the Arthurian Warband, a Warrior Order that is also sworn to fight for Truth, Honour, and Justice.
For more information, write to:
Awen, BCM GAIA, London WC1N 3XX (enclosing an SAE).

The Order of Bards, Ovates & Druids - OBOD
The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids offers a full training programme through all three grades of Bard, Ovate and Druid. There is a distance learning programme which offers lessons, audio cassettes and a monthly magazine called “Touchstone”. About 30 Groves and Seed-groups worldwide offer the opportunity to meet and celebrate with others. We also hold an annual retreat at Beltane, and four camps a year. Most members are Pagan and many are Wiccan too. We run an environmental campaign, a tree-planting programme, and place a strong emphasis on the Arts, with members producing anthologies of music and poetry.
To find out more contact:
OBOD, PO Box 1333, Lewes, E. Sussex BN7 1DY.
e-mail: office@obod.co.uk
Website: http://www.obod.co.uk/obod/
Recommended Reading

Druidry and Celtic Lore
Elements of the Druid Tradition – Philip Carr-Gomm (Element)
The Druid Way – Philip Carr-Gomm (Element)
The Druid Renaissance – ed. Philip Carr-Gomm (Thorsons)
The Book of Druidry – Ross Nichols (Aquarian)
The Druid Source Book – John Matthews (Blandford)
The Mysteries of Britain – Lewis Spence (Senate)
The Druids – T. D. Kendrick (Senate)
The Druids – Peter Berresford Ellis (Constable)
Celtic Lore – Ward Rutherford (Aquarian)
Celtic Bards, Celtic Druids – R. J. Stewart & Robin Williamson (Blandford)
The Celtic Shaman – John Matthews (Blandford)
Tree Wisdom – Jaqueline Memory Paterson (Thorsons)
The Enchanted Forest – Yvonne Aburrow (Capall Bann)
Exploring the World of the Druids - Miranda Green (Thames & Hodson)

Celtic Mythology
Gods and Heroes of North Wales – Micheal Senior (Gwasg Carreg Gwalch)
Dictionary of Celtic Mythology – Peter Berresford Ellis (Constable)
The Mystic Life of Merlin – R. J. Stewart (Arkana)
Celtic Myths, Celtic Legends – R. J. Stewart (Blandford)
Celtic Gods, Celtic Goddesses – R. J. Stewart (Blandford)
Mabon and the Mysteries of Britian – Caitlin Mathews
Taliesin – John Matthews (Aquarian)
Song of Taliesin – John Matthews (Aquarian)
The Mabinogion – Gantz (Penguin)
The Táin
Celtic Myths and Legends – T. W. Rolleston (Senate)
The Coming of the King – Nicolai Tolstoy (Corgi)

Pagan and Celtic Studies
Pagan Celtic Britain – Anne Ross (Constable)
The Celtic World – Miranda Green (Routledge)
The Stone Circles of the British Isles – Aubrey Burl (Yale)
The Pagan Religions of the British Isles – Ronald Hutton
Stations of the Sun – Ron Hutton (Oxford University Press)
A History of Pagan Europe – Prudence Jones & Nigel Fennick (Routledge)
Paganism Today – ed. Dr. Graham Harvey

Divination
The Druid Animal Oracle – Philip & Stephanie Carr-Gomm (Connections)
The Celtic Tree Oracle – Liz & Colin Murray (St. Matins Press)
The Celtic Book of the Dead – Caitlin Matthews (Aquarian)
Other Helpful Books
The Collins Gem pocket nature books - particularly those on trees, wild flowers, mushrooms and birds
Discovering Prehistoric Britain - James Dyer (Shire)
Wild Food - Roger Phillips (Macmillan)
Gaelic - Teach Yourself (Hodder & Stoughton)
Welsh - Teach Yourself (Hodder & Stoughton)
Ancient Britain - Ordnance Survey Map

Recorded Celtic Myths
The Mabinogion - read by Ron Hutton (Talking Myth)
The Battle of the Trees - read by David Brown (Talking Myth)
Songs of Love and Parting/Five Bardic Mysteries - Robin Williamson