



Celtic Guide

Volume 1, Issue 10 – October 2012

IN THIS ISSUE:

CELTIC
MYSTERIES

artwork created Vasilius Markousis



From the Editor

We've been down this road before – the road to Celtic Mysteries – and no doubt we'll travel it in further issues, as there are just so many untold stories, unsolved mysteries, unresolved issues, as far as the Celts are concerned.

From witches to warriors, from hidden treasures to hidden heroes, this issue is jam-packed once again. We even have a few more new authors, as has been the case for the last several issues. If my figures are correct, we have had two authors from England, two from Wales, two from Ireland, four from Scotland, two from Canada, and several from the United States, including one from Alaska. The major Celtic lands are certainly well represented and our monthly themes and varying points of view present a wide assortment of storytelling efforts. There should be something to satisfy all interests.

Our page hits just continue to grow, here and on Facebook and Pinterest – plus our “likes” on these sites are growing. I am so personally thankful to all the readers and writers who are making this publication a central point for the dissemination of Celtic legend and lore, fact and fantasy.

Nearly every day I find a surprise in my email inbox. For instance, just after September went “live” I received a few emails from a reenactment group in Chile that specializes in Pict and Roman battles in ancient Scotland . . . from Chile! We've been trading information and I have attempted to find answers for them on some subjects.

We have also received emails from Australia, New Zealand, Portugal and Germany. We know from hit tracking information that people all over the world are logging on to one site or another.

It is a fact that we have not only gone viral . . . we have gone global!

We chose Celtic Mysteries for October because of the Celtic-inspired holiday of Halloween, but as you shall soon see, the subject matter for the October issue spans the spectrum of mysteries, not just those to do with the October holiday, but mysteries from around the world with a Celtic bent. Six new authors and several returning authors have provided grist for the mystery mill. We received so many submissions that I only had time and room for one full-length article, myself.

CELTIC GUIDE CONTRIBUTORS

Rod Perry	Debbie Kennett
Ed and Star Jones	Christine Woodcock
Cass and Deborah Wright	Andy Douglas
Kristin Olsen	Rev. Scott Woodburn
Victoria Roberts	Cindy Vallar, MA
Crichton Miller	Albert Thomson
Ronald Henderson	Rebecca Knowles, LPCC
Sharron Gunn, MA	Tyrone Bowes, PhD
James Wiener, MA, BA	Gillian Smith, PhD
Joshua Mark, MA, MA	Chris Halliday
Martin Vaughan-Watkin	Morgan Daimler
Betty Jo Harper, BS, MS	Vasilios Markousis
Cameron Morrison	Beth McQuiston

Ancient History Encyclopedia • Family Tree DNA
Freens o Reid Harlaw • Gaelic College of Nova Scotia
NYC St. Patrick's Day Parade

Carolyn Emerick, BA - Social Media Coordinator
and contributor

For November, we will be featuring the theme of Celtic Heroes. Again, the tales of these heroes will come to us from around the world, but somewhere in the person's past will be Celtic blood and or at least Celtic influence. I have a few of these already submitted.

For December, the theme will be Celtic Gifts. I already have four stories for this theme, all very surprising to me.

Our cover art, this issue, features the work of artist Vasilios Markousis, depicting an ancient and “verra spooky” graveyard. A few other folks have also submitted some original photography to enhance our stories.

All in all, another great issue with the largest number of pages, to date! The way readership is growing, I'll wager it will have the largest number of readers, too.

by Martin Vaughan-Watkin

The Holy Grail in Wales?

Since the Nanteos Cup was first discovered by the influential Welsh Powell family, it has acquired a special significance among the sick and injured of County Cardiganshire, Wales, for its reported ability to heal whomever drinks from it. The cup would be loaned out for months at a time in return for “pledges” of valuable items.

By the turn of the 20th century, the cup gained even more renown when local rumours began to suggest it could actually be the Holy Grail.

According to legend, the cup was brought over to Glastonbury, England, by Joseph of Arimathea, where it remained until Henry VIII’s dissolution of the monasteries. At this point, the Nanteos Cup was said to have been spirited away over the hills to Wales by seven monks, where it remained to be discovered by the Powell family centuries later.

The cup still exists and the present custodians (the descendents of the family who sold Nanteos in the 1960s) still treasure it. There are a handful of paper slips, the earliest dating to mid-nineteenth century, recording the name of the borrowers, what was left as a pledge, the date of the return, and whether the cure was successful.

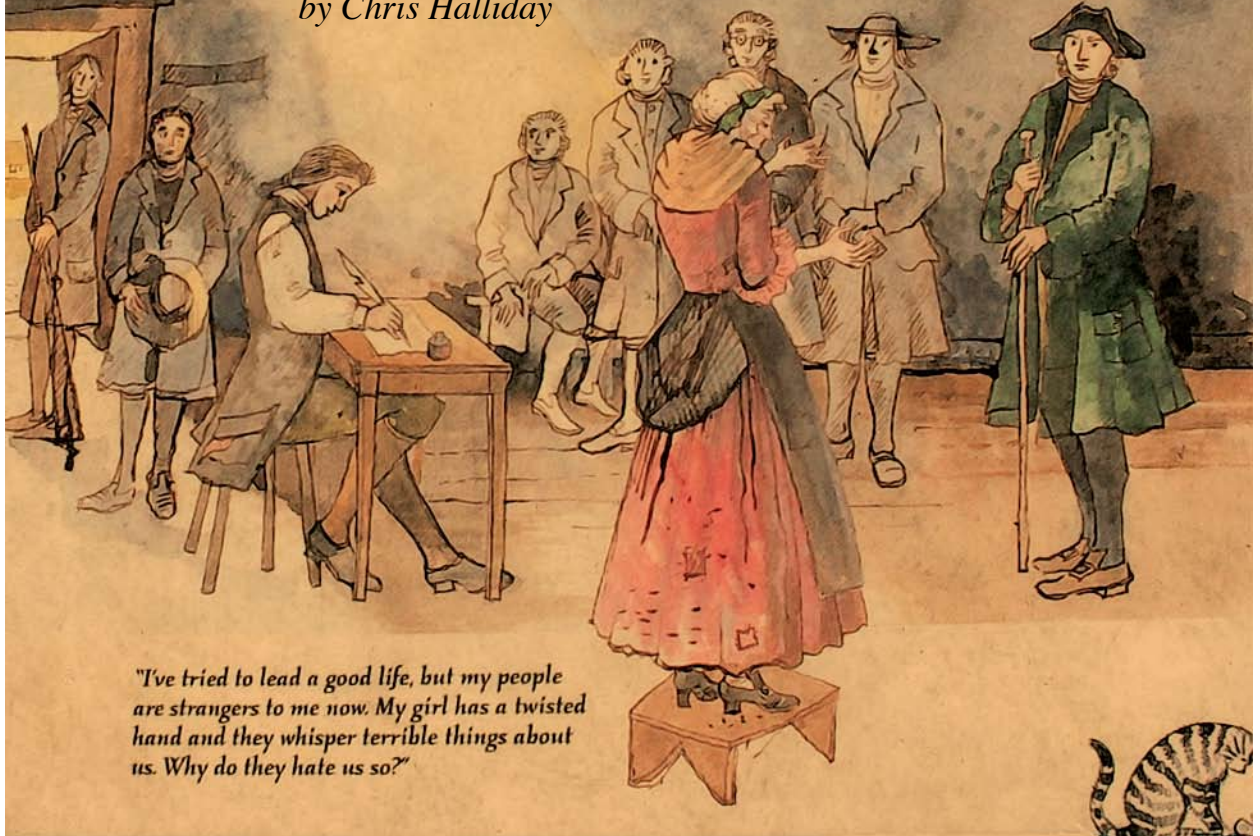
According to these slips, all cures were successful. While this substantiates the idea that it was used as a healing cup, the association with the Holy Grail does not go back much before the beginning of the twentieth century.



The Nanteos Cup made its way to the Powell family through monks escaping Glastonbury Abbey. Whether it is the original Holy Grail or not, it has been a relic of the past for several centuries now, and has gained quite a reputation. Martin Vaughan-Watkin is one of our newest authors and hails from Wales. He maintains several websites on Welsh lore. He also retains contact with the current holders of the Nanteos Cup, thought by some to be the Holy Grail. If any of our readers want to make contact with the owners of the cup they can go through Martin by writing to his email at - orderofystrad@yahoo.co.uk

Scotland's Last Witches

by Chris Halliday



“Burn the witch!” was a familiar cry throughout 17th century Scotland, as the persecution of both men and women for dabbling in the black arts reached its peak. At least 3837

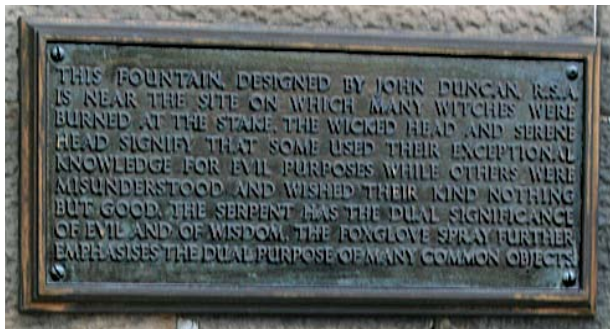
people were accused of witchcraft and up to 70% were put to death. Yet this persecution, which arose from fear and the works of the established religions, has left few physical reminders in the Scottish landscape

Chris Halliday, one of our newest Celtic Guide authors, is based in Edinburgh. He is a professional genealogist and local historian with an MA(Honors) in Scottish Cultural Studies and an MSc in Genealogy. Witchcraft was first made illegal in Scotland in the year 1563, and it wasn't until 1736, after many were put to death for witchery, that the cruel law was finally repealed. In this tale Chris focuses on the memorials erected to some of those unfortunate individuals singled out for persecution, for a variety of unfounded reasons.

Beliefs in the old ways persisted in local communities until fairly recently. Local women, often widowed and elderly, with perhaps a cat for company, were known for their arts in folk medicine and divining.

My own grandfather recounted from his Highland childhood how he was warned by his father not to cross an old lady who had ‘powers’ to stop the cattle from producing milk. Today many a ruined Highland croft stands in the shadow of a solitary Rowan tree, testimony to the ancient tradition of our Celtic forebears

that this tree could ward off evil. There are no public memorials to these unfortunate souls in Scotland. The following memorials, found in both the Highlands and the Lowlands, were privately erected, in some cases by descendants of the accused.



Many tourists heading towards Edinburgh Castle unknowingly pass a plaque on the castle esplanade, marking the site where over 300 women were burned to death, accused of witchcraft. One of these victims was accused of using a spell to sink the ship carrying King James VI and his bride-to-be as it arrived at North Berwick. James, a fervent believer in witchcraft, even presided over a trial in 1590. Something of an expert in the field, he also wrote a book on magic, sorcery and witchcraft known as *Daemonologie*.



In the Perthshire parish of Dunning stands a roughly hewn cross to Maggie Wall or Walls

who allegedly was burnt here in 1657. However no record has survived about her or her trial. Still the memorial is well cared for and the inscription –

**Maggie Wall
burnt here
1657 as a Witch**

is regularly maintained by anonymous visitors.

It has been suggested the stone foundations are similar to the wooden fagots used for the burnings and the Christian cross and shaft an eerie representation of the unfortunate individual.



The Presbytery of Dunbar in East Lothian was responsible for burning 100+ witches including six women and two men from the Parish of Spott.

In 1698 the trial of Marion Lillie, known as the Rigwoody Witch (old Scots for thin or bony) was recorded in the kirk session. The Session, after long examination of witnesses, referred

the case of Marion Lillie, for ‘imprecations’ and supposed witchcraft, to the presbytery who then referred her for trial by the civil magistrates.

The stone, set back from the roadside in a hawthorn hedge, marks the spot where she was consumed by the flames. On the day I visited, coins had been deposited on the stone and there are reports of candle wax and incense also being left at the site. Perhaps witchcraft has not died out in East Lothian after all.



The last person to be tried and executed for witchcraft in Scotland was Janet Horne in Dornoch, Sutherland. She had been a lady's maid before she married, but by 1727 she was old and confused. Early that year her neighbours reported that she was using witchcraft to turn her daughter into 'the devil's pony.'

Janet and her daughter, whose hand was deformed, were imprisoned in Dornoch, where they were tried and found guilty of witchcraft.

The daughter escaped before she could be punished, but her mother was sentenced to death.

The next day, Janet Horne was stripped, rolled in tar and placed in a barrel. A grim procession carried her from the High Street to the foreshore, where she was burned alive. She was the last recorded person in Scotland to die in this terrible way.

The execution place is marked by a stone in a private garden overlooking the golf course and the Dornoch Firth. The date on the stone should be 1727 not 1722. Nine years after her death the Witchcraft Acts were repealed in Scotland and England and it became unlawful to execute anyone for alleged witchcraft.

The legacy left by the persecution of witches still remains. Only this year a campaign and 'referendum' by the local community council of Pittenweem in the Fife, was held to gather opinion for a public memorial to 26 victims from the Fife coastal villages. The result was split 50/50 and the final decision by the council decided not to support it.

Some say the local villagers, perhaps descendants of the original persecutors, still are ill at ease with those times.

So on 31 October, as we celebrate Hallowe'en and its origins in the Celtic festival of Samhain, remember those unfortunate souls who perished – accused of witchcraft.

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A very interesting database and electronic resource, The Survey of Scottish Witchcraft by Edinburgh University has over 4000 people listed between 1563 - 1736.

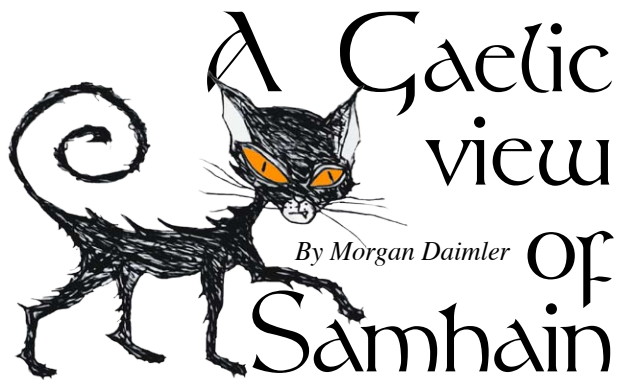
Information about who, where and why they were tried is available and their fate. <http://www.shc.ed.ac.uk/Research/witches>

Other useful publications are:

Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland: James VI's Demonology, and the *North Berwick Witches*, Lawrence Normand (2000), University of Exeter Press

Larner, A. et al (1977) *Source Book of Scottish Witchcraft*, Grimsay Press

The Scottish Witch Hunt in Context, ed Julian Goodare (2002), Manchester Univ Press



The modern Halloween has its roots in the ancient Celtic fire festival *Samhain*, pronounced SOW-en, believed by some to mean “summer’s end”. *Samhain* is the Irish Gaelic name for the holiday, which is also called *Samhuinn* in Scottish and *Calan Gaiaf* in Welsh (Kondratiev, 1998). According to the Gaulish Coligny calendar it is called *Trinoxtion Samonii*, which means the “three nights of summer’s end”, indicating that the holiday was originally celebrated over a three day period (Kondratiev, 1998).

In modern vernacular *Samhain* is called Halloween, abbreviated from All Hallow’s Eve, the name given to the holiday by the Christian church. Originally the Catholic holidays that take place on and around *Samhain* of All Souls and All Saints days were in February, having been set during the Roman feast of *Feralia*, but when the Church spread to the Celtic lands the dates were shifted to November.

The Celts celebrated *Samhain* as the ending of the old year and beginning of the new. Caesar tells us, in his writings about the Gallic War, that the Celts saw the day as well as the New Year beginning at sunset (Freeman, 2002). This would mean that *Samhain* would have been celebrated starting as the sun went down on one day and continuing on to end at the next sunset.

Samhain stood opposite *Beltane*, and as *Beltane* marked the beginning of summer, *Samhain* marked the beginning of winter; moreover as the beginning of the New Year *Samhain* was probably the most important holiday of the year (McNeill, 1961).

The precise dating of *Samhain* is difficult to determine, as it was, like all the Celtic festivals,

agrarian based, but it is likely that it would take place around what is now November as this is the time when vegetation dies and the sun is clearly waning (McNeill, 1961).

In most modern practices the date is set on October 31st, although some people still celebrate it on November 12th, holding to the older date before the transition between the Julian and Gregorian calendars, which shifted everything back two weeks (McNeill, 1961).

It is the end of the harvest period, and indeed any produce not gathered in by *Samhain* is left in the fields (Kondratiev, 1998).

This is done because tradition holds that after *Samhain* night everything left in the fields belongs to the fairies; in some areas the people believed that one fairy in particular, the *Púca*, went out on *Samhain* night and claimed all the fruit that was left by urinating on it, or some say spitting on it (Estyn Evans, 1957; McNeill, 1961; Danaher, 1972).

At this time as well the herds that were put out to summer pasture at *Beltane* are brought back in, reuniting the herders with their families and allowing the people to decide how much stock could be kept over the winter and how much should be butchered (Estyn Evans 1957).

This was a time for settling debts, and as the last of the harvest fairs ended people would make sure that anything they owed was paid before *Samhain* (Danaher, 1972).

Samhain was a time that was both joyous and eerie, as it was marked by great feasts and community gatherings, but was also a time for telling ghost stories and tales of the faeries stealing people (McNeill, 1961).

Today we continue to celebrate with this dual feeling, enjoying the atmosphere of closeness and the visitations by our dead family members, but also relishing the scariness that comes when the veil is so thin. Great bonfires would be lit just as at *Beltane* and Midsummer. While the *Beltane* fires were traditionally lit at dawn the *Samhain* fires were lit as the sun set as a symbol of the light surviving in the dark (McNeill, 1961).

These modern bonfires are carry-overs from the ancient Celtic time when all the fires in each home would be put out and the Druids would light a huge bonfire on a hilltop from which all the other fires would be relit (McNeill, 1961). This practice in Ireland centered on Tara, as it was believed that what was done there would spread outward from the center (Kondratiev, 1998).

After all the fires were extinguished the Druids would light a bonfire at Tlachtga, a sacred site near the hill of Tara (Kondratiev, 1998). Even up until the 1970's bonfires were still regularly lit by people on *Samhain* night in Dublin (Danaher, 1972).

In some areas of Ireland when the fires began to die down men and boys would scoop up still burning embers and throw them at each other, which may possibly be linked to older rituals, although the practice is dangerous (Danaher, 1972).

In Scotland the ashes from the bonfires were scattered to fertilize the fields and for protection, since it was believed that they possessed the power to drive away dangerous spirits (McNeill, 1961).

In other areas people would blacken their faces with the ashes, believing it was a protection against baneful magic (McNeill, 1961).

Possibly the most prominent theme of *Samhain* was that of the thinning of the veil between the worlds. On this night the dead could return to visit the living and the fairy hills were opened, releasing all the creatures of fairy into the mortal world (Estyn Evans, 1957; McNeill, 1961). The belief in this was so strong in rural Ireland even up to the last century that it was considered extremely bad luck not to set an extra chair at the table, put out a bowl of a special porridge, and leave the door to the home open on *Samhain* (Estyn Evans, 1957).

EDITOR'S NOTE: Morgan Daimler is a teacher, a speaker, and a writer of articles, web pages, and books on the subject of ancient Celtic beliefs. She is a member of the Druid Order of the White Oak, and a new author for Celtic Guide, as of this issue.

In other accounts the door should be closed but left unlocked and a bowl of fresh water left out by the hearth to welcome any returning family ghosts that choose to visit (Danaher, 1972).

In Ireland, however, it is more widely believed that November 2nd is the day when the dead return to visit (Danaher, 1972). This is of particular interest because it may reflect the older practice of celebrating *Samhain* as a three day holiday, in which case the return of the dead may have marked the final day of the celebration.

In modern practice in Ireland people would light a candle for each deceased member of their family, and in some cases visit the graveyards where they were buried to clean the graves (Danaher, 1972).

Although popular imagination paints the idea of the dead returning in a negative light this is not the way the old belief was; in the old practice people didn't fear the dead who came back to visit but saw them as protective of the living family (Danaher, 1972).

It is a very old doctrine of the Celts that the soul is immortal and passes from one life to spirit and then to another life so it would be impossible for the Celts to see *Samhain* as a holiday devoid of celebration (McNeill, 1961).

Just as all the dead were free to return to earth to visit, so the realm of Faery was opened up, although it has always been a very blurry line between faeries and the dead, as it was often said that some of the dead went to live with the fairies.

The denizens of fairy were most likely to be encountered now and it was said that should a person meet a fairy rade and throw the dust from under his feet at them they would be compelled to release any humans they had taken (Danaher, 1972). This night was one of celebration and merry making, but people preferred to travel in groups, fearing that to walk alone on *Samhain* risked being taken forever into Faery (Danaher, 1972).

It was thought that dusk and midnight were particularly dangerous times, and that the fairy troops passed to the west side of homes, and along water ways making it best to avoid these times and places (McNeill, 1961).



*From the cover of William Butler Yeats's
Irish Fairy Tales, from 1892*

It was also a long-time custom to shout out beware (*seachain!*) or water towards you (*chughaibh an t-uisce!*) if one was tossing water out of the home so that any passing fairies or ghosts would be warned (Danaher, 1972).

This is the time that all the fairy raths, or hills, open up and the inhabitants parade from one hill to the next playing music which some people claim to hear (Danaher, 1972; McNeill, 1961) Anyone who had been kidnapped to faery could be freed within the first year and a day from when they were taken, but the spells to do so were the strongest on Halloween, as we can see in the old tale of Tam Lin (McNeill, 1961).

Because the faeries were all abroad it was also the custom in many places to leave them food offerings, but unlike the plates of food left for the dead, the food offerings for faeries took the form of a rich porridge that was made and then placed in a small pit dug in the ground (Sjoestedt, 1949).

Another feature of the celebration is divination for the year to come. One form of such divination was to observe the direction the wind was blowing at midnight, as it was believed that this would indicate the weather of the winter to come (Danaher, 1972). In a similar way the moon, if visible, was used for divination: a clear moon meant good weather, a cloudy moon would be observed and

the degree of clouding would represent the amount of rain to come, and clouds passing quickly over the moon's face meant storms (Danaher, 1972).

Other folk divinations took on a more homely focus as, for example, two hazel nuts or walnuts could be named after a couple and then placed near each other by the edge of the fire and if they stayed together it was a good omen but if they popped or jumped apart it meant the relationship would not last (Danaher, 1972). Apples were also used in a variety of ways, including the modern game of bobbing for apples, which could be used to tell a person's luck in the year to come. Another method to foretell an individual's fortune was to blindfold them and seat them at a table in front of a certain number of plates or bowls each of which contained something different; the bowl which the person touched first indicated something about how their year would go (Danaher, 1972; McNeill, 1961).

While these practices are clearly modern they are fully in the spirit of the holiday and using divination to predict the fortunes of a person, and these methods are more easily used today than some of the older ones which focused less on the individual and more on the welfare of the community.

In Scotland there was a form of divination that utilized the sacred bonfire; a circle would be made from the ashes of the still smoldering fire and around this circle of ashes stones would be placed to represent the people present – in the morning should any stone be moved or damaged it indicated doom for that person (McNeill, 1961).

Samhain is also a time in the Celtic world to give thanks for the harvest, and the bounty that had been secured to get the people through the winter. McNeill compares Samhain to saying a prayer of thanks after a meal, just as she sees Beltane as a prayer before a meal (McNeill, 1961). In certain parts of Scotland it was the custom up to the 1600's for the people of a town to gather and each contribute a portion of ale, which one man would then carry out into the ocean as an offering to the sea god, Shony (McNeill, 1961).

Another interesting custom is the baking of a special oatmeal cake, which would be prepared with much ceremony and then offered to a stranger (McNeill, 1961). This may be a reflection of older customs of sharing from one's own abundance to ensure more in the future; this is also a reflection of a similar custom from Imbolc where after the feast the remnants were offered to the poor of the community (Carmichael, 1900).

Offerings would be made during this time by tossing them into the sacred bonfires, both in thanks for blessings received and symbolizing requests the people would like granted in the new year (Kondratiev, 1998).

It is likely that the modern practice of Halloween trick or treating comes from older Celtic practices, called guising. In County Cork into the 19th century there was a practice of that involved a small procession led by someone dressed as a white mare that would go door to door asking for tolls and singing (Estyn Evans, 1957; Danaher, 1972). In some parts of modern Ireland it is still the practice of trick or treating children to chant "Help the Halloween party! Any apples or nuts?" (Danaher, 1972). This request for apples or nuts is almost certainly a reflection of older traditions, as apples are strongly connected to the Otherworld and the Hazel was a symbol of occult wisdom (McNeill, 1961).

All through Scotland it was the custom of groups of boys to go out disguised and travel from door to door asking for money or treats, often while singing or chanting (McNeill, 1961). The practice slowly switched to children going out dressed in masks and carrying torches who would repeat chants like "Hallowe'en! A nicht o' tine! A can'le in a custock!" (Halloween! A night of fire! A candle in a holder!) or "Heigh ho for Halloween, when the fairies a' are seen, some black and some green, heigh ho for Halloween!" (McNeill, 1961). Both of these chants reflect the older practices of the pagan holiday in referring to fire and to the fairies being abroad.

Finally *Samhain* was also connected, as were all the fire festivals to some degree, to blessing

activities and making charms to bless, draw luck, and protect in the year to come. In Ireland it was a custom to make a charm very similar to the solar cross of St. Brigid which would be hung on the wall over the inside of the door to ward off all bad luck and harm in the year to come (Danaher, 1972). Infants and children would be sprinkled with blessed water and a piece of iron or a cold ember from the fire was placed under their bed to protect them; in other areas a mix of oatmeal and salt is dabbed on the child's forehead (Danaher, 1972). In Scotland, even up until the 1850's, people would go out on *Samhain* and make torches from wood or heather and these would be lit from the sacred fire (originally the Druidic fires and later the bonfires lit at home); these torches would be carried around the boundary of the home sun-wise by the family to bless the place (McNeill, 1961).

This holiday was one that was likely of supreme significance to the ancient Celts and which remained significant even as the religion shifted from paganism to Christianity. The abundance of evidence relating to folk practices at this time of year make clear how deeply ingrained the beliefs surrounding this holiday were to the people who celebrated it. Even today, in the Celtic countries and Celtic diaspora, traces of the old beliefs remain, and these beliefs have strongly influenced the modern holiday of Halloween.

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Of

by Betty Jo Harper, BS, MS
Astronomer

Stars and Stones

**A look at the mystery behind ancient
standing stones and stone circles.**

EDITOR'S NOTE: Betty Jo Harper is of Welsh heritage. As an astronomy teacher and planetarium director in Fort Wayne, IN, USA, she is very much into Archaeoastronomy, or the study of ancient sites and how they relate to the stars and planets. Betty has made many trips to Great Britain and offers us this great look at the mystery of many ancient standing stones and stone circles, and how they relate to astronomy. This is Betty Jo's first article for the Celtic Guide, and it's a good one!

My Welsh roots are on my father's side of the family, both of my grandparents being born and reared in Llanelli which is not far from Swansea, Wales. They immigrated to the U.S. around 1900. After many trips to Great Britain and to standing stone and stone circle sites, there, I have taken a particular interest in the mysteries that Archaeoastronomy may help solve.

This science combines the two disciplines of archeology and astronomy. It is the study of the astronomy of the ancients and the stone remains of their cultures, which still stand today and are recognized as being aligned to various cosmic happenings in the sky.

I am of course most interested in Great Britain which has many, many of these sites, typically remaining as stone circles and standing stones.

Most people are familiar with Stonehenge in Wiltshire County, England, on the Salisbury Plain. Many of the smaller stones are blue in color when they are wet and are of igneous rock called diorite and rhyolite. The major source of this type of stone is from SW Wales in the Preseli Mountains.

For years it was thought that the "bluestones" were quarried from the Preselis, rafted across the Bristol Channel and up the Avon River to their present site (about the same time as the Pyramids were being built in Egypt.)



Stonehenge



However, Brian John, a geologist, glaciologist and archeologist who lives near Cardigan, Wales, in the foothills of the Preselis, believes – with evidence – that the “bluestones” were moved by glacial drift during the last ice age and, found and shaped, were put in place where many remain to this day. He has fought a lot of doubt, but others are pursuing his lead and the worm is turning to the fact that he is probably right.

The larger sarsen sandstones that make the uprights and lintels of the outer ring at Stonehenge were found about 30 miles from Stonehenge and are erratics that have been uncovered from the bedrock and are lying all over and clearly exposed, near Marlborough.

Many of the “long barrow” tombs found in the British Isles are aligned to the rising of the Sun in the East with particular alignment to the sunrise on the Summer Solstice. Likewise the architecture of the cathedrals, built later, have the main orientation focusing back on a much earlier time.

About 30 miles NE of Stonehenge is the Avebury stone circle, made of undressed sarsens as opposed to the shaped or dressed stone of Stonehenge. Avebury may predate Stonehenge or be contemporary with it. It covers many acres and is formed by two large circles with inner circles or “coves”. Many of the stones weigh much more than those at Stonehenge.

In the same area you can visit “Woodhenge” (not to be confused with the wooden Sun circle

near Cahokis, IL just across the Mississippi River from St. Louis). The original Woodhenge was a wooden post structure, contemporary to or even predating Stonehenge, and is believed to be a forerunner of what Stonehenge became. Many think the “henge” design was made of wood before it became more commonly made of longer-lasting stone. The Woodhenge site is aligned to the rising Sun on the Summer Solstice or “mid-summer day” as the Brits call it.

I have been to just about every stone circle in Great Britain, but I think the most unusual is Callanish in the Outer Hebrides, on Lewis Island (which is connected to Harris Island.)

It is a stone circle and avenue built in the form of a Celtic Cross and many have tried to discern how this form could be, if it was built in about 4200BC, much earlier than the first known use of the Celtic Cross.

It may be that Callanish follows the shape of Cynus, the Swan constellation which is quite prevalent in the northern night sky through much of the year, not far from the Arctic Circle.

I have been to Callanish on three separate trips, meeting with Margaret Curtis who is perhaps the most knowledgeable person on the planet about Callanish. She and her two husbands (at different times) excavated the peat and uncovered many of the sites of which contain several smaller stone circles all over Lewis, as a part of the Callanish complex.



Callanish

Callanish appears to be built in honor of the Mother Goddess—the Moon. It uses the mountainous surroundings to define the “sleeping goddess”.

Margaret’s late husband Gerald, was a professor at Edinburgh University. She has offered all of her findings to the University, but they will not accept them unless they are digitized, which they are not at this point. She has wonderful hand-drawn diagrams that have been published in paperback form, but no digital material, and, at the moment, would like to find someone to scan and digitize her work so that at least some of it could be added to the Edinburgh University archives.

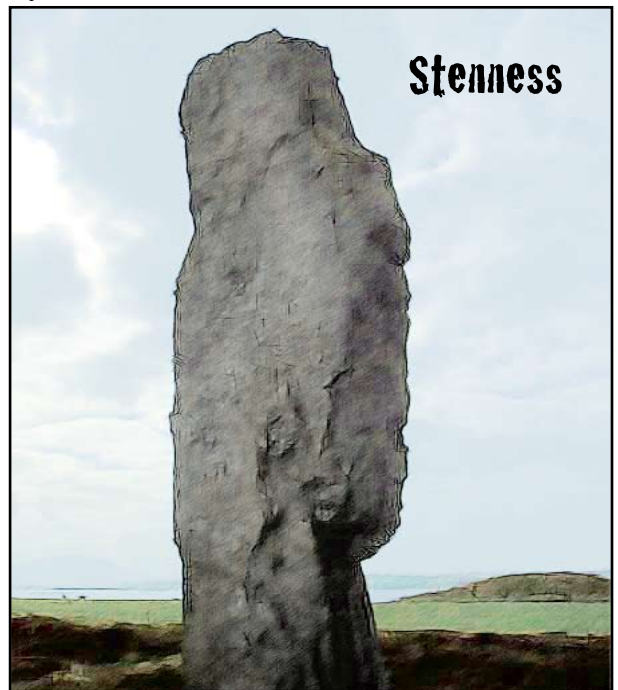
Several years ago, my husband and I travelled to the Orkney Islands, north of the mainland of Scotland, to the largest island called Mainland Island. Here is located the Ring of Brodgar (larger than Stonehenge and built of huge flat slabs of stone) along with its companion circle – the Stones of Stenness. These sites are separated from each other by a freshwater loch and another saltwater loch. Close to both of these is located Maes Howe which is a large round tomb, its opening facing to the sunset on the Winter Solstice (mid-winter day).

In Ireland at Newgrange, the portal above the entrance is aligned to the sunrise on the Winter solstice. Many people feel that Stonehenge was built to align to the Sun, but in more recent times we have come to find out that it may have originally

been a Moon tracking monument, or at least marking the minimum and maximum positions of the Moon throughout the 18.6 year cycle that the moon goes thru.

Likewise it is proposed that the chalk rounds that are on the inner platform in the center of Stonehenge were moon eclipse predictors using the sidereal (17.3days) and the synodic (19.5 days) cycles of the moon to get the number of stones that combined for “whole days” as they had no decimal or fraction system that we know of.

Thank you for allowing me to indulge you with my “chatter”.



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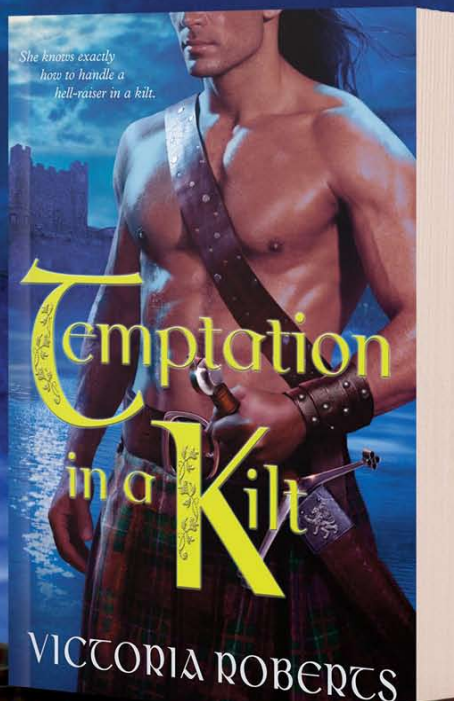
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KENNETH MACALPIN

A Murder Mystery

by Sharron Gunn

Kenneth MacAlpin (aka *Cináed mac Ailpín*) was a king of *Dál Riata* (modern Argyll) and later king of Picts.

To maintain their independence in 7th and 8th centuries, the Picts had fought and won enough battles against the Gaels (*Scotti*) of *Dál Riata*, the Angles of Northumbria (including Lothian) and the Britons of Strathclyde to maintain their independence. However, the annals record the disastrous defeat of the Picts by the Vikings in AD 839.

AD 839 Bellum re genntib for firu Fortrenn, in quo cederunt Euganan mc Oengussa 7 Bran mc Oengussa 7 Ed mc Boanta 7 alii pene innumerabiles ceciderunt.

AD 839 A battle was fought by the heathens [Vikings] against the men of Fortriu [Picts], and in it fell Eogannan [Ewen] son of Angus and Bran son of Angus and Aed son of Boanta; and others fell, almost without number.

(Mac Airt & Mac Niocaill 1983: 298)

The last three people mentioned in the above entry were men of *Dál Riata*: Ewen, Bran and

EDITOR NOTE: Returning author Sharron Gunn, of British Columbia, treats us to a great bit of detail on the life of the man who many believe united the Picts and Scots. Kenneth MacAlpin is a very important man in Scottish history whose life has been surrounded by a bit of mystery. Sharron is a lecturer in the Gaelic language and Celtic history, and is a very valuable asset for the readers of the Celtic Guide.

Aed. There were several levels of kingship in Celtic kingdoms; Aed son of Boanta was king of *Dál Riata*, a client kingdom of the Picts. He would have paid tribute to them, given hostages to them, and fought in their wars. In the battle noted above the Vikings killed most of the Pictish leaders and the leading men of *Dál Riata* as well. In the aftermath Kenneth MacAlpine became king of *Dál Riata*; he may have been elected by his royal kin group (*derbfine*).

The Melrose Chronicle was written from the late 12th until the early 14th century.

The earlier material, such as the entry which follows, was borrowed from another source. It was compiled by English-speaking monks who may not have known about the laws concerning Celtic kingship. In Celtic kingdoms, a son never succeeded his father directly in the Early Middle Ages.

Anno DCCCXLIII [843] Obiit Alpinus rex Scottorum, cui successit Kined filius eius de quo dicitur. [insertion] Iste vocatus est rex primus, non quia fuit sed quia primus leges scoticanas instituit, quas vocan leges Macalpin.

Alpin king of Scots [i.e. of the Gaels of *Dál Riata*] died whose successor was his son Kenneth of whom [the annal] has spoken... It is said that he was the first king, but not because he was [the first] but because he first established the Scottish [Gaelic] laws, which they call the laws of MacAlpin.

(Anderson 1990: vol 1, 270)

Alpin, father of Kenneth actually died in 834, and was not immediately succeeded by his son as the annal above says. Aed son of Boanta,

the king who was killed in the battle with the Vikings, was preceded by three men as kings of *Dál Riata*: Conall son of Tadg, Conall son of Aedan and Domnall son of Constantín. (Woolf 2007: 63-65)

Kenneth became king of *Dál Riata* about 839 and king of Picts two years later. According to the *Chronicle of the Kings of Alba* (aka *The Scottish Chronicle*-- from the Poppleton manuscript) Kenneth had a long and happy reign:

Kinadius, then, the son of Alpin, first of the Scots [*Dál Riata*], ruled this Pictavia happily for 16 years. Pictavia, moreover, was named from the Picts, whom, as we have said Cinadius destroyed, for God condescended as reward for their wickedness, to make them alien from, and dead to, their heritage; they who not only spurned the Lord's mass and precept but also did not wish to be equal to others in the laws of justice; he, indeed, two years before he came to Pitavia, assumed the kingship of *Dál Riata*. In the seventh year of his reign he transported the relics of Columba to the church he had built, and he invaded, six times, Saxony [i.e. Northumbria] and burned Dunbar [kingdom of Strathclyde] and overthrew Melrose. Also the Britons burned Dunblane and the Danari [Danes, Vikings] wasted Pictavia to Clunie and Dunkeld. He died eventually from a tumour before the ides of February, on a Tuesday, in the palace of Forteviot [in Pictland]. (Woolf 2007: 94)

This was written over 100 years after Kenneth's death, but it is a favourable report of Kenneth's reign. Note that the Picts' religion was considered defective by the annalist -- which explained why God was wrathful and caused their defeat -- not the first time religion was used to justify political change or war.

The chronicle, inaccurate in many aspects, is incorrect about who destroyed the Picts; they were routed by the Vikings as mentioned by

the entry from the Annals of Ulster, which was written soon after the date of the battle.

The date following refers to the king's death:

858 *Cinaedh mac Ailpin rex Pictorum, Adulf rex Saxan mortui sunt.*

858 Kenneth mac Alpin king of Picts, Adulf king of the Saxons died.

(Mac Airt & Mac Niocaill 1983: 316)

He was king for about 16 years -- a long time for this era. He must have done something right.

The Murder of the Pictish Nobles

There were two sources for the 'murder': the so-called 'Prophecy of Berchan' and Gerald of Wales's *Concerning the Instruction of Princes*. Both were written in the twelfth century, about 300 years after Kenneth's death. The annals which are contemporary or near contemporary do not mention a murder at a feast in Scone -- not a syllable.

Kenneth MacAlpine was considered a successful, happy king.

If Kenneth had murdered a number of the Pictish elite, as is often stated, it would have merited the attention of the annalists. Perhaps the entry from the *Chronicle of the Kings of Alba* was later embroidered, or embellish, to discredit Kenneth MacAlpin, and 'destroyed' was simply interpreted to mean 'murdered'.

The sources for the Early Middle Ages (400-1000) in Scotland are problematic for historians because writers of the High Middle Ages (1000- 1300) recast the history of the earlier period to suit their own political agenda. Kenneth MacAlpin was described as a murderer only hundreds of years after his death. He was succeeded as king of *Dál Riata* and Pictland by his descendants. Anyone who became king of Scotland after him had to be descended from him or at least a lineage from *Dál Riata* and so it was for three hundred years after his death.

Gerald of Wales (1146-1223), Giraldus Cambrensis as he is known in Latin, was a clergyman of Norman origin whose family was granted land in Wales. They married noble Welsh women to reinforce their authority, but



An artist's depiction of Kenneth MacAlpin

this clergyman spoke no Welsh, only French and Latin. His book on Wales shows some sympathy and understanding for that nation, but his book on Ireland is full of disdain for the Gaels. Similarly his description of Kenneth MacAlpin shows a strong bias against the Gaels of Scotland.

In *De Principis Instructione* (About the Instruction of Princes), a book on how princes should behave, Gerald gives the example of a bad king, Kenneth MacAlpin, king of Picts -

After the island had been occupied by the Saxons, as we have said, and peace had been established with the Picts, the Scots, who were allied to the Picts and had been invited by them to the land, seeing that although fewer in number, because of the nearness of Ireland, the Picts were yet far superior in arms and valour, they [the Scots] betook themselves to their customary and as it were innate treacheries, in which they excell the other nations.

They brought together as to a banquet all the nobles of the Picts, and taking advantage of their perhaps excessive potation [drinking] and gluttony of both drink and food, they noted their opportunity and drew out the bolts which held up the boards; and [the Picts] fell into the hollows of the benches on which they were sitting, [caught] in a strange trap up to the knees, so that they could never get up; and [the Scots] immediately slaughtered them all, tumbled together everywhere and taken suddenly

and unexpectedly, and fearing nothing of the sort from allies and confederates, men bound to them by benefits, and companions in their wars. And thus the more warlike and powerful nation of the two peoples wholly disappeared; and the other, by far inferior in every way, as a reward obtained in the time of so great treachery, have held to this day the whole land from sea to sea, and called it Scotland after their name.

(Anderson 1990: vol 1, 273)

The Prophecy of Berchan

The 'prophecy' gives a few details about the 'murder':

*Géabhaidh mac do chloinn a mheic
ríghe Alban a los a neirt
fear bhiaidhfeas baidhbh, bhrisfeas cath
Díambo ainm an Ferbasach.*

**A son of the clan of his son will take
the kingdom of Scotland, by force of his
strength;**

**a man who will feed ravens, who will
conquer in battle:
Ferbasach [Kenneth MacAlpin] will be
his name.**

...

*Is lais bréctair tair na buirb
tochlait talmhan trén an cheird
bordlainn bodhba bás n-airgne
for lár Scoine scíathairde.*

**The fierce men in the east [Picts] are
deceived by him**

**They dig the earth, mighty the art
a deadly pit, death by wounding
under the floor of Scone of the high shields.**
(Hudson 1996: 42; Skene 1867: 83-84)

But in the 'Prophecy' Kenneth is still described as a man who will conquer in battle even if he murdered the Picts in Scone. So stories of his prowess in battle may have been current in the 11th & 12th centuries when the 'prophecy' was written. Notice that it's written

in Gaelic which was still the language of the Scottish nobility. The story of the ‘murder’ was written in the late 11th century or early 12th century perhaps as late as the reign of David I.

Anglo-Norman Incomers

Why fabricate a story in which Kenneth and his men murder noble Picts -- 300 years after his death?? The answer may lie with the anglicised and normanised kings of Scotland in the High Middle Ages. Malcolm III and Margaret, his Saxon queen, introduced new religious orders to Scotland, and Malcolm designated his son Edward as his heir according to Anglo-Norman custom. After Malcolm and Edward’s death in battle, Domnall Bàn, Malcolm’s brother, was probably elected King of Scots by Gaelic law. David and his sister Edith (aka Maud, Matilda) fled to England as those who were too closely related to the new regime often did.

David I spent 30 years at the court of King Henry I in England before becoming king of Scotland in 1124. He learned French and admired all aspects of Norman society and law. William of Malmsbury said of him:

...a youth more courtly than the others,
and one who had rubbed off all tarnish of
Scottish barbarity through being polished
from his boyhood...by friendship with us.
(Oram 2004: 58)

David is responsible for the introduction of feudalism to Scotland. In the feudal system all land ultimately belongs to the king who could forfeit the lands of a treasonous noble. A feudal king was much more powerful man than a Gaelic high-king.

In the Gaelic system, the land of a given lineage (derbfine) was owned and administered by the adult males; one of them was elected their head. A *ríg* (king) was the head of several lineages; he might rule a tiny kingdom but was still inaugurated as a semi-sacred figure.

David brought about 1000 Anglo-Norman mercenaries back to Scotland with him, and

they became influential at the Scottish court.

According to feudal law the lands of a man without sons was inherited equally by his daughters and those daughters were married to Anglo-Norman knights and gave rise to dynasties such as the Bruces, the Comyns, FitzFlaads (Fitz Alans/Stewarts) and others.

According to Gaelic law the royal lineage elected a son, grandson or great-grandson of a previous king. As a result of the clash between feudal and Gaelic law, there were rebellions among the native Gaels and the Normanised kings for more than 100 years after David’s accession.

The king and his successors wished to create a political climate in Scotland where the incomers were seen as civilised and the Gaelic order as backward and corrupt; David introduced more foreign religious orders and suppressed the Gaelic monasteries of the *Céli Dé* (i.e. Culdees). The Prophecy of Berchan is a survivor of what must have been a massive campaign to discredit Kenneth MacAlpin and his successors to the throne of Scotland. If Gerald of Wales used the ‘murders’ in his *Instructions to Princes*, the calumny was successful and well-known to Anglo-Normans.

A good king was expected to give justice to his people and to protect them by success in battle; a just king would result in bountiful crops and fertile women. To discredit a king, fabulists made up stories to show that he was unjust and underhanded, a coward who would fight unfairly or not at all. Worst of all was a secret murderer. His reign would result in famine and disease.

David I had to discredit Kenneth MacAlpin, the first king of his dynasty; although he was of that dynasty. Gaelic law had to be discredited to establish feudal law. David’s administration made histories which showed the progenitor of the dynasty was evil, lacking in generosity and could not protect their people from enemies, famine or plague. To further tarnish his reputation, Kenneth MacAlpin was described, not as a war leader, but as a murderer.

Aftermath

By the end of the Wars of Independence (1296-1357), the foreign elements had combined with native Gaels to resist domination by the English. And that should have put an end to the fabrications about the murder of Pictish nobles. But the falsifications of the High Middle Ages lived on; the tales of the evil Kenneth MacAlpine and his murder of the Picts are to be found in 'popular' histories and all over the internet.

Unfortunately the Jacobite rebellions of the 17th and 18th centuries made governments in London and Edinburgh very nervous about Highlanders (Scottish Gaels). Scotsmen were proud of their country, and did not want Scotland to become 'North Britain', a backwater like the north of England. On the other hand they wanted to create a Scottish identity as independent of the Gaels as possible. The Picts were the perfect sort of ancestors -- so little was known about them, so much could be invented.

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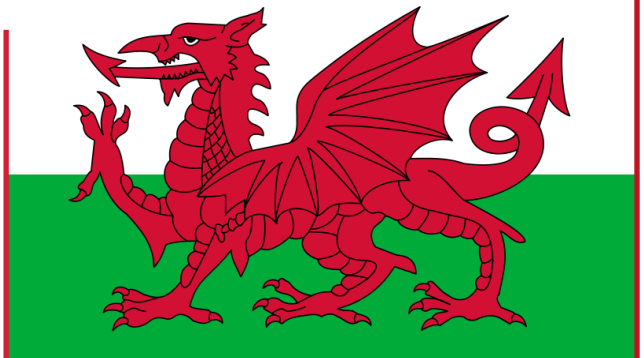
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Oak Island

The Hope of the Possible

By Joshua J. Mark

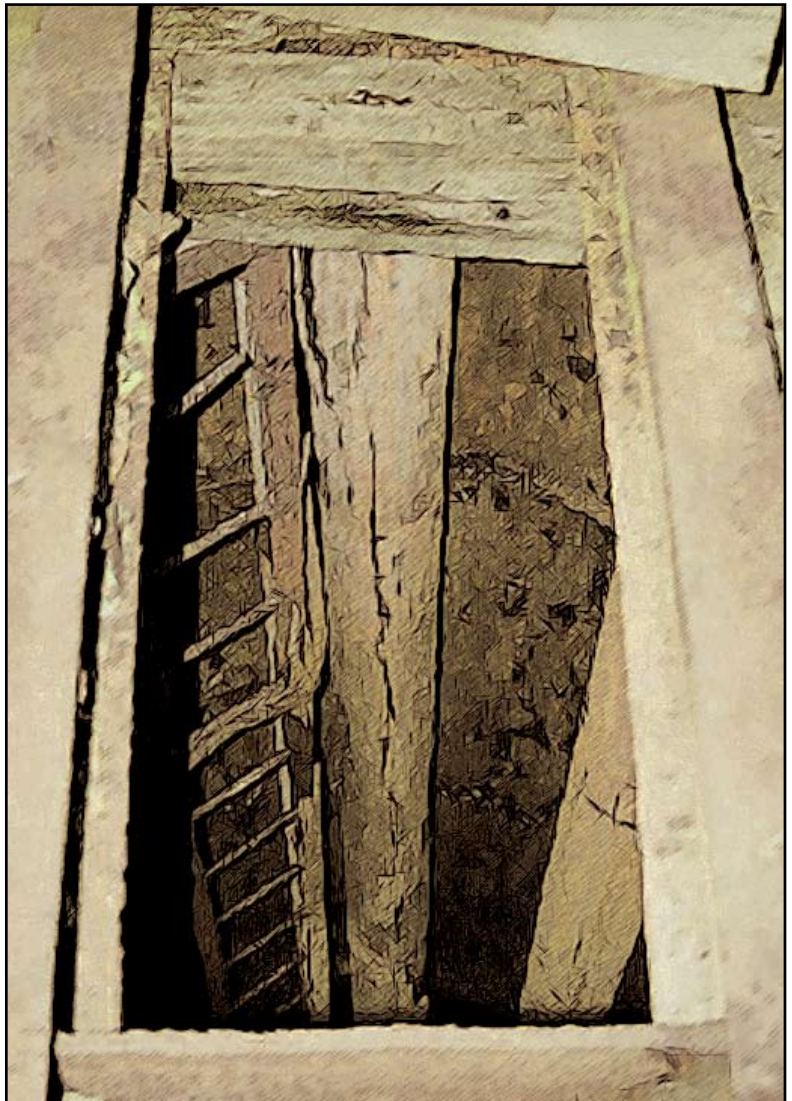
Nova Scotia's Oak Island and its so-called 'money pit' has been fascinating and enticing treasure hunters and speculators for centuries.

Legend and myth inspire us with the hope of the 'just possible' rather than the probable, of things just beyond the ordinary instead of the mundane, and so it may be with the story of the money pit on Oak Island. According to the history surrounding the site, there has been no shortage of speculators over the years convinced that a vast treasure lies somewhere deep beneath the earth, protected by elaborate traps in the form of flooding tunnels, and that it is only a matter of time before this treasure is brought to light.

The original story of the treasure tells of a man named Daniel McGinnis (in later versions an 18 or 16-year old) who, upon seeing strange lights on Oak Island, rowed there to investigate. He found a tackle block dangling from the limb of an oak tree above a depression in the earth. Believing he had stumbled upon buried treasure, he went back to the mainland to secure the help of two friends, John Smith and Anthony Vaughn.

The three men began to excavate the site and found a wooden platform ten feet (3 meters) down. Continuing to dig, they found another wooden platform another ten feet down. They continued in this way, finding platform after platform along with flagstones seemingly purposefully

placed, until they realized they would require more resources than they had. They returned to the mainland with the intention of coming back the next day, but eight (or, according to some sources, nine) years would pass before they resumed their work. When they returned in 1803 or 1804 they had financial backing from a man named Simeon Lynds.



Entrance to the 'Money Pit'

The men continued their work and discovered a flagstone apparently not native to Nova Scotia bearing what appeared to be Norse runes. The inscription on the stone was translated (by whom there is no record) to read 'Forty Feet Below Two Million Pounds Are Buried' (though this translation was not documented until 1951 by Edward Rowe Snow in his book on buried treasure).

For some reason, whether before or after the writing on the stone was deciphered, John Smith (who then owned the island) used it to repair his hearth and it was lost.

After the discovery of the stone, work was halted for religious reasons (the next day was Sunday, according to some reports while, according to others, work stopped in order to procure more supplies) and, when the men again commenced digging, they found the pit flooded to a level of 33 feet (10 meters) below the ground. They arranged to pump the water from the pit but, no matter what they did, the

water remained at the same level. The project was abandoned for a year and, when the men returned, they dug a tunnel into the original shaft at a depth of 109 feet (33.5 meters) which then collapsed, almost killing the men doing the work. At this point the original excavation was halted. Every expedition to work the site since has encountered the same problem of flooding to precisely the level of 33 feet, preventing discovery of the treasure, no matter what sort of technology has been applied to find whatever may be buried there (even 'technology' such as divination).

In 1967 it was alleged by an expedition that a camera lowered into the pit recorded what appeared to be large treasure chests and human remains but this claim has never been substantiated.

Theories as to what lies beneath Oak Island have ranged from the Scottish pirate Captain Kidd's buried treasure, to Spanish gold, to Norse riches, to relics and riches left by St. Brendan the Navigator, to a French hoard of treasure spirited away from court by Marie Antoinette, and even to The Holy Grail or the Ark of the Covenant hidden there by the Knights Templar.

According to Richard Joltes and the researchers at *Critical Enquiry*, the legend of the money pit of Oak Island comprises many elements common to tales of fantastic treasure: There are three original 'seekers' who discover the treasure (McInnis, Smith, and Vaughn), there is a huge excavation of great depth, there is the belief that the Spanish were somehow involved in the burial of vast hoards in the Northeast and divination of some type was involved in the alleged discovery of appropriate locations for excavation (*Critical Enquiry*).

There is, further, the recurring motif of the treasure which is almost in hand but snatched away at the last minute for some mysterious reason. In treasure hunting stories of the past, the prize was lost through some kind of supernatural intervention. One of the members of the party spoke when he was not supposed



Those who have died in this quest

to and so broke the spell which would have enabled them to carry the treasure off or sprites, fairies, or a hoard of black cats would appear to stop the discovery of the find. In the case of the Oak Island legend it is the flooding of the shaft which prevents the treasure's discovery and this is attributed to a brilliant network of tunnels dug as traps at different angles which flood the original shaft before one can reach the treasure trove. This particular device in the story, according to Joltes, is important in that,

The theme of the "incident that breaks the spell" is very common in folklore involving treasure recovery using divination. Many examples may be found in which, for example, diggers are exhorted not to speak until the treasure has been uncovered and removed from its pit... It is not unreasonable to assert that the Oak Island legend has actually survived and prospered because it is more reasonable. A human-designed trap is far more appealing and acceptable to modern readers than a claim of ghosts or demons attacking hapless diggers. Folklore must appeal to the culture in which it is transmitted, and just as claims

of men being "ridden by witches" at night have given way to modern stories of alien abduction, tales of treasure recovery involving clever concealment by humans are more likely to survive than those involving the spirits of vengeful pirates.

Whether the Oak Island money pit is illusion depends on belief and interpretation of what has been found there. Over the centuries that the pit has been excavated many claims have been made and yet nothing has been found and many people have invested a great deal of money in hope of discovering fabulous wealth.

Does this mean there is nothing to find or that the efforts have all been a waste? Perhaps not. Perhaps, for those seeking the treasure, the hope of what may come tomorrow, of the unseen wonder waiting to be found, is finally worth more than finding what is - or is not - there.

For Further Reading:

1. Oak Island Treasure: <http://www.oakislandtreasure.co.uk/content/section/5/35/>
2. Critical Enquiry: Oak Island http://www.criticalenquiry.org/oakisland/OI_chapter3.shtml
3. The Mystery Pit of Oak Island: <http://www.unmuseum.org/oakisl.htm>

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Henceforth Tales

by Cass & Deborah Wright

MacFarlane

The war-like MacFarlanes claim descent from Gilchrist, brother of the 13th Earl of Lennox, who held territories at the head of Loch Lomond. The clan takes its name from Parlan, grandson of Gilchrist. Their 6th chief, Duncan, obtained the lands of Arrochar from the Earl of Lennox and, in 1395, acquired many of the adjoining lands by marriage of Sir Duncan MacFarlane to the sister of the Campbell chief. On the death of the last of the old Earls, with the bearing of no male issue, MacFarlane claimed the title and the lands. This was rejected, and the title was conferred on Sir John Stewart of Darnley, leading to long enmity between the two families, further agitated by their relations with Clan Campbell.

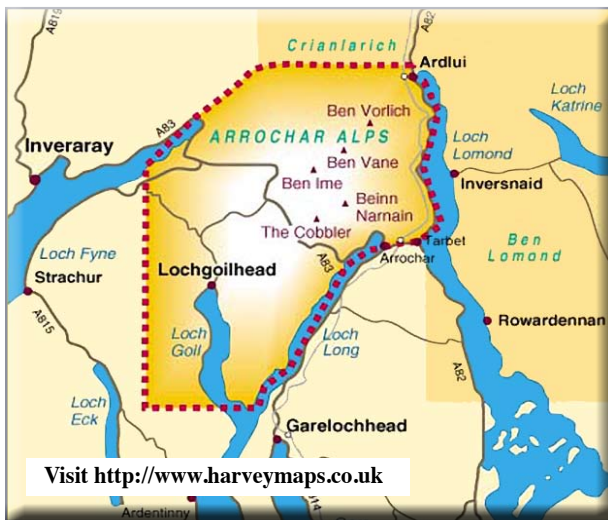
Interestingly, the origin of one of the names of the branches of the clan, which became the sept of the MacNaires of Lennox, illuminates a most curious internal struggle for power. Apparently, one of the chiefs left his second wife a widow with one son, while the heir by his first wife was vain and a little weak-minded. The younger brother owned a handsome silver stallion, and on one occasion, the elder, setting out for Stirling, desired to ride it there so as to make a good appearance. The stepmother, a true Highland Rebecca, refused the loan on the pretext that the horse might not be returned safely home; finally the young Laird signed a deed that would forfeit the lands of Arrochar to his half-brother if the valued steed were not returned in good health. The stepmother then secretly bribed the groom to poison the horse during the trek; this was done, and in consequence, her son took possession of the entire estate. The clan, however, refused to accept him as their chief, and years later the document was annulled and the lands

restored to the rightful heir. From this incident certain MacFarlanes became forevermore known as *Sloichd an Eich Bhain*, “descendants of the fair horse,” while those who supported the heir took the name of *Clann an Oighre*.

During the early 16th century, the clan found outlets for their warrior appetites by supporting the Earls of Lennox; this was a turbulent period in clan history, when their continual raids on Lowland holdings brought them unfortunate notoriety. Because these raids usually took place on bright, clear nights, the full moon came to be known throughout the western Lowlands as “MacFarlane’s Lantern.” Further, the clan’s nightly “gatherings” was referred to as *Thogail nam Bo*, or “lifting the cattle”, an expression highly favored amidst the kinsmen, though the slogan of the Clan has always remained “*Loch Sloigh*”, commemorating the gathering-place of the MacFarlanes, on the shores of that beloved sheet of water. Clashing frequently with other local clans like the Buchanans and the Colquhouns, the only neighbors they were reliably friendly with were the MacGregors, and even they became rivals where the business of thieving cattle was concerned. Those occasional conflicts over looted livestock reached a peak when the MacFarlanes



MacFarlane Tartan and Shield



reportedly began fitting their hunting hounds with coats of chain mail, to protect them from the MacGregors' arrows while in pursuit.

The clan distinguished themselves in 1568, fighting under the Regent of Moray against the forces of Mary, Queen of Scots, during which the clansmen captured three standards at the Battle of Langside. In 1587, the Laird of MacFarlane signed his name to the Rolls of the Chiefs, declaring himself thereby as accountable for the conduct of each of his followers. This seemed to have given him little pause however, when the MacFarlanes embarked upon an ambitious feud with the Colquhouns, allegedly stemming from the exposure of an affair between Sir Humphrey Colquhoun of Luss and the wife of the MacFarlane chief, and resulting in the pursuit and murder of Sir Humphrey, and the destruction of his fortress of Bannachra Castle, in 1592. The MacFarlanes' violent revenge was made all the more memorable by the chief's decision to "un-man" the Colquhoun's corpse, and upon returning home, to have that "unspeakable portion" of anatomy served to his Lady at dinner. Small wonder this near-biblical vengeance helped to fuel such ferocious warfare with Sir Humphrey's heirs. That bitter blood-feud reached a shocking climax in 1594, when the MacFarlane warrior known as *Donnachaidh Dubh* (Black Duncan) discovered a band of his enemies asleep in a remote woodcutter's hut; lashing the door shut, he set the hut ablaze, then encamped nearby to sup on oatcakes and beer with his men, and listen to the screams of those burning to death.

Later, the name of many MacFarlanes appear alongside their allies (and sometimes rivals), the MacGregors, in statutes for the punishment of theft, reiff, oppression and sorning. Those, and other acts of outlawry and mayhem, resulted in the clan being made landless; in 1624, their surname was proscribed through an Act of Estates. The MacFarlanes scattered, many of their kin adopting aliases, the most widespread likely being "Miller" and "Allen". However, they retained enough solidarity to rally themselves to support Montrose in his war of resistance against Cromwell, an act of irrefutable patriotism which caused the destruction of their beloved castle Inverglas by English troops.

The loss of the house of the chiefs is linked by legend with a curious incident. Clan MacFarlane, it is claimed, had on the waters of Loch Lomond a beautiful flock of swans, of wide renown, with which the fortunes of the family was associated. In the last chief's time, a certain Robert MacPharrie, who had the second sight, declared that the days of the Chiefs of Arrochar were numbered, and that the sign of this event would be the coming of a black swan to settle among the elegant white ones so prized by the clan. Ominously, soon thereafter, a great, black cob was seen swimming among the other birds on the loch, remaining for three months before flying away, and very shortly afterward the barony passed out of the hands of the MacFarlane chiefs forever. In 1785, the Arrochar estate was brought to judicial sale and was purchased by Ferguson of Raith for £28,000; later it was acquired by the chief of the MacFarlane's feudal rivals, Colquhoun of Luss, for £78,000.

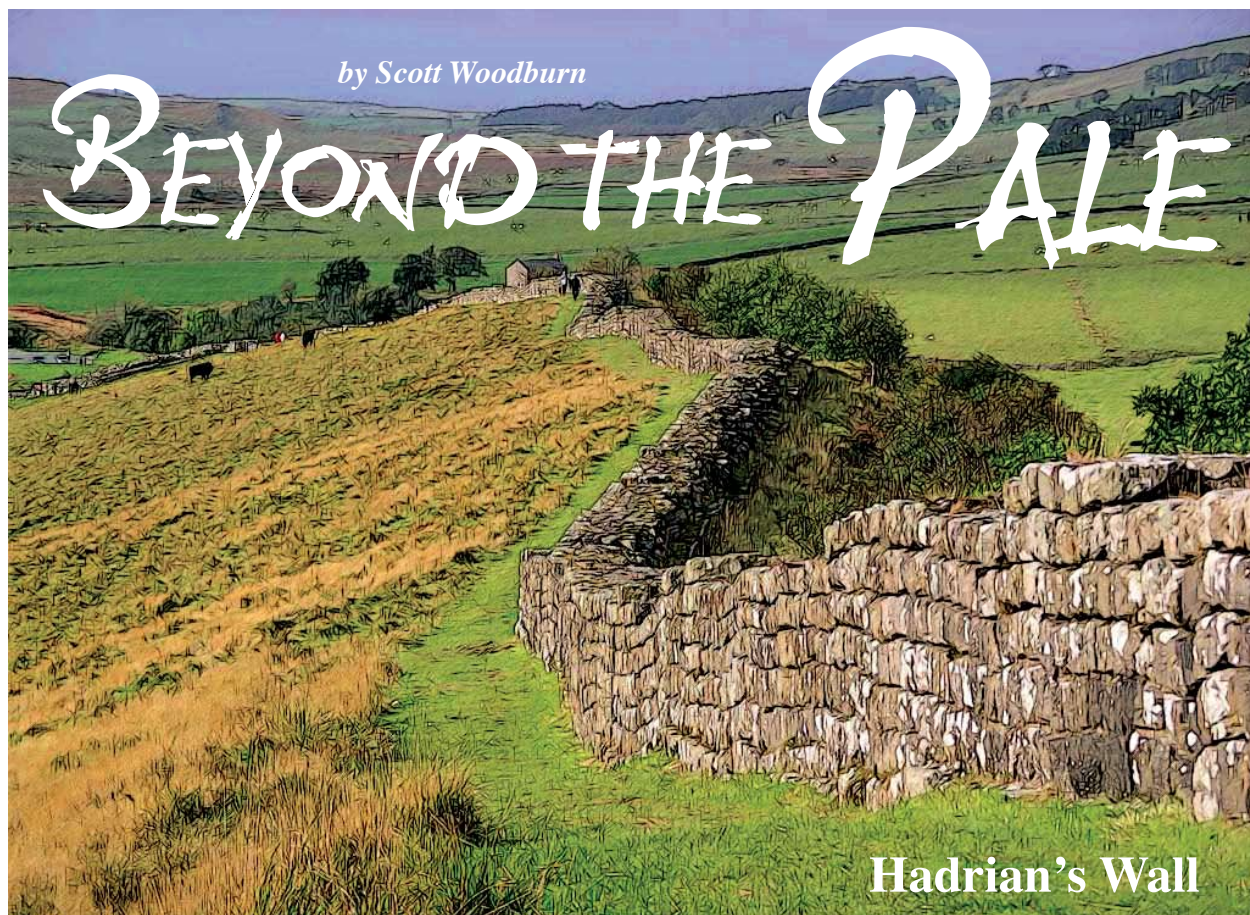
This material is just a sampling of one of the 60 clan names and legends appearing in the upcoming book -

Henceforth Tales

by Cass & Deborah Wright

Follow future issues of Celtic Guide for further information about publication details. . . . and thank you for joining us at the hearth !

- DW



I am the second son of Norman & Linda Woodburn, born in the Ulster Hospital on the 10th May 1979.

My proud parents took me home several days later with a short bus trip down the Newtownards Road to our family home in Hollycroft Avenue, Belfast. I would grow up in Belfast, go to school in Belfast, work in Belfast and fall in love and marry in Belfast.

Truly I am a city boy and it is appropriate to use the Belfast phrase to describe my upbringing – I was “born and reared” in Belfast.

I lived and worked in Dublin throughout the year 2000 but I had simply swapped one city for an even bigger city, so imagine the culture shock when I moved to my first church in 2008.

Edengrove was not in a city but in the rural town of Ballynahinch. Tractors often would drive past my house, cows could be seen from our kitchen window and shops did not have all night opening hours.

I remember, during our early days in Ballynahinch, I headed out at 11:30 pm to buy some bacon for the next day's breakfast.

In Belfast this would be more than possible but I soon realised as Dorothy and Toto did that I wasn't in Kansas anymore! All the shops were shut and had been for several hours, there was little activity on the streets and certainly only a city boy like me was driving around looking for bacon!

I'm glad to say that our initial culture shock has passed and my family and I have settled in well to the slower pace of country life.

I tell you our experience to try in some way to describe the phrase “beyond the pale”. For someone, someplace or something to be “beyond the pale” is to say that they or it is beyond the usual standards of a particular people or culture.

I jest in my description of our move to Ballynahinch; the people and town have been exceptionally warm and friendly and we adjusted

to the new culture relatively quickly but imagine Emperor Hadrian in 122 A.D. Here is a man who genuinely believed that the Roman people and culture were superior to all others and so as a symbol of Roman power and prestige he built the famous Hadrian's wall in the north of England.

To the south of the wall lay Roman Britain - conquered, glorious and civilised. To the north of the wall lay the unconquered Scots - uncouth, rebellious and barbarous. The word "pale" derives from the Roman word "*palus*" which means a stake or fence, and so Hadrian's wall denoted the boundary between the civilised Roman Empire

- his "pale" - and the as yet unconquered Scots. The Romans could feasibly therefore have stated the Scots were "beyond the pale" or beyond the boundaries of Rome and therefore beyond the standards of the Roman culture.

Over 1000 years later the Normans would arrive in Ireland in 1169 and, after a successful campaign led by Henry II in 1171, the "Lordship of Ireland" was established.

This "Lordship" would last from 1177 to 1541 and essentially declared the King of England to be the Lord of Ireland. Over these years the limit of the King's authority grew to vast swathes of the

island. In 1300 for example his authority stretched from the north coast to the south and from east to west with only a few territories still offering resistance.

The years that followed however witnessed famine, the "Black Death" of 1348-50 and war with the famous Scot Edward the Bruce. English influence therefore steadily decreased so that by 1500 the English crown could only boast about a Kingdom in Ireland that included Dublin and the surrounding area.

As war on various fronts continued to weaken the English crown, its shrinking perimeter in Ireland was fortified in the counties of Meath and Kildare.

While the Romans built a wall the English built ditches and fences and so the "Pale" or the area behind the fortifications and loyal to the crown was born. These fortifications would ultimately extend to parts of counties Dublin and Louth as well.



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To live “within the Pale” was to be a subject of the crown and so English was adopted as the official language of all “Pale” dwellers. As a display of the supposed superiority of the English culture, officialdom within the Pale attempted to stamp out all vestiges of Irish culture. English settlers could not marry locals and attempts were made to remove the Irish language, customs and dress from “Pale” life.

The English like the Romans before them firmly believed that their ways were the most civilised with any alternatives being considered “beyond the Pale” and therefore worthy of contempt.

It would appear however that their attempts to anglicise this small corner of Ireland failed, as while the Pale remained loyal to the King,



within its boundary the Irish language and culture continued to flourish with the Pale once again becoming decidedly Irish by the 16th and 17th centuries.

While the Irish Pale had been consigned to the history books, Russia's Catherine the Great in 1791 created the “Pale of Settlement” within Russia's vast and increasing empire. This was a swathe of territory encompassing much of present day Lithuania, Belarus, Poland,

Ever wonder what the Celtic Cross is all about?

The Celtic Guide is honored and very appreciative to include Crichton Miller as one of its many contributing authors. There is undoubtedly no other person alive, or perhaps who has ever lived, who has more deeply studied the history and purpose of the Celtic Cross. In his writings, Crichton reveals how this ancient measuring device, which predates even the pyramids of Giza, was also used for maritime navigation. Like much of pre-Dark Age knowledge, its symbol was kept alive in the land of the Celt, in Ireland and Scotland, as grave markers, jewelry, and more.

The author tells us -

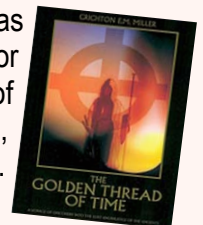
Christ said “seek and you will find.”

“The truth will set you free” is often used as an ideal to aspire to. But is illusion more comfortable for the Human condition?

This work shows that most ancient religions were born out of measurement, and therefore modern science is descended from that same tree of knowledge. Yet the gulf between has become widened by a lack of understanding of archaic words and symbols.

The Celtic inheritance of ancient practical seafaring skills and the revealing symbols may unlock a door to a hitherto unseen history.

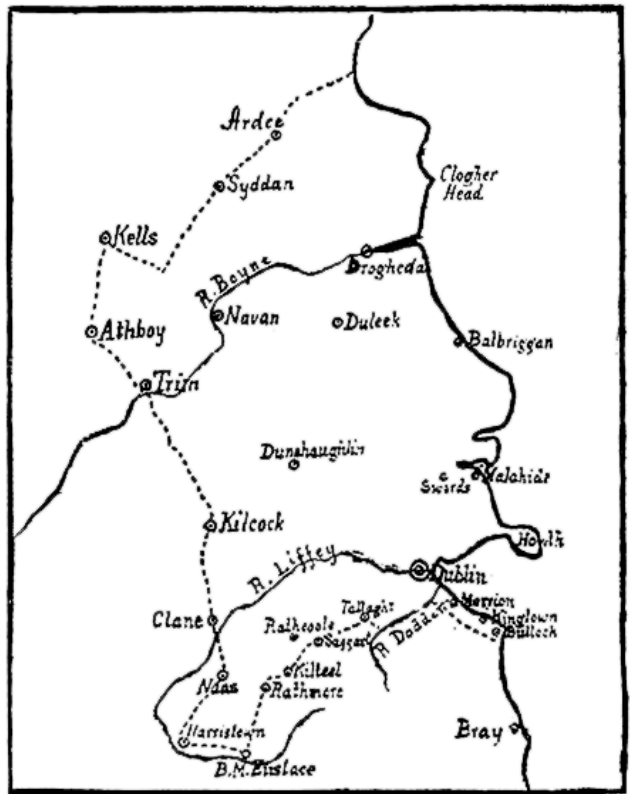
I am a Scottish sailor with an interest in ancient histories, philosophies and religion who has written of his discoveries so that others might tread the path behind the door that has remained firmly shut for a thousand years.



**Available soon
on Kindle and
as eBook**

<http://www.crichtonmiller.com>

In the battleground of ideas we must declare this notion to be “beyond the Pale”.



The Pale according to the Statute of 1488

WWW.ANCIENT.EU.COM

by Ronald Henderson

A WEE TALE OF FIONN MACCUMHAIL

(Finn MacCool)

There is an ancient Gaelic tale that tells of how the hero Fionn MacCumhail and his warrior host was set up in the old days of the Picts and the Scots to help combat the invasions from the Norse Vikings. This host was known as The Fianna. These were huge men of gigantic strength and fierce fighting prowess.

Rather than have them just simply die of old age as all men must, a druid cast three spells upon them and they were put to sleep in a mountainous area of the Isle of Skye known as the Quirang, in a cave below a huge rock called The Storr. There they were to lie until such time as Scotland needed them again.

Beside the sleeping host was placed a bronze battle trumpet, and the legend has it that if this trumpet is blown once the host would awaken. If it is blown a second time the host would be

able to turn on their side. If it is blown a third time the host would waken completely from their slumber, be able to stand, pick up their weapons, and stride forth to help the Scots defeat their enemies.

For many centuries the Fianna lay sleeping within their cavern, until, as happens so often, its whereabouts eventually became unknown, although the legend itself was never forgotten.

One day a shepherd lad was looking for a lost lamb when he stumbled upon a narrow opening that widened out into a tunnel. The lad took a lighted brand of heather and pine and followed the tunnel down to where it eventually opened out into a vast underground cavern. All around him the boy was amazed to see the Fianna lying



View from the Quirang



in their deep enchanted slumber. Beside them rested their swords, shields, spears and armour: all with the dust of a thousand years upon them. He recognised many of them from the tales he had heard from his grandfather.

There lay handsome Diarmid of the auburn hair. Beside him lay Conan with his wolfhounds lying sleeping alongside him. Over there was Goll the strong, his huge arms folded over his chest.

And there also reclined Fionn MacCumhail himself; the mightiest of them all. His long red hair lay spread out on his rocky pillow and the legendary bronze battle horn lying in the dust by his side.

Knowing the legend, the lad lifted the war trumpet, brushed off the dust, and with trembling hands raised it and put it to his lips.

He blew the trumpet a first time.

As the echoes began to die away he saw with astonishment that the giant men had opened

their eyes and were becoming aware of their surroundings.

He blew the trumpet a second time.

The host stirred as one. They raised themselves on their elbows and all eyes turned expectantly upon him, waiting for the third blow on the trumpet. Fionn's eyes were shining.

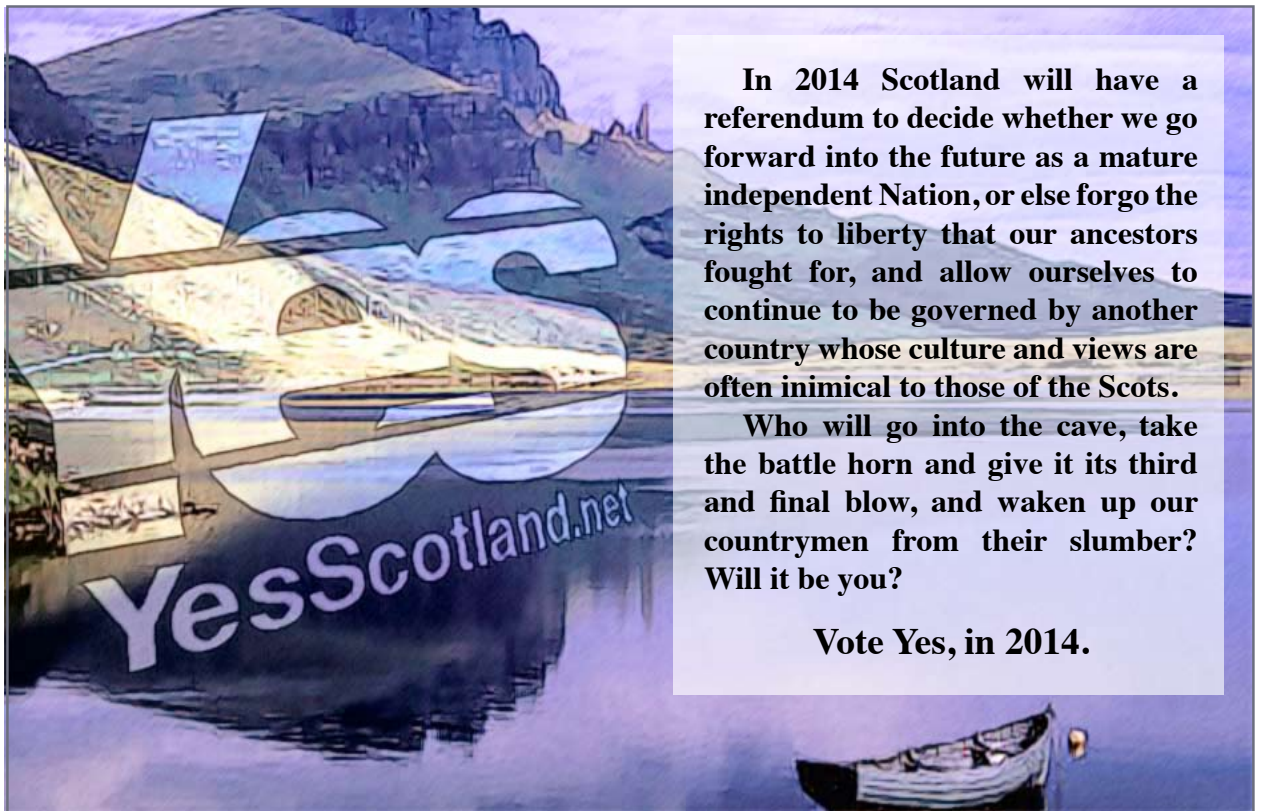
In a sudden dawn of realisation as to what he was doing the boy cried out in horror, 'Oh Lord in Heaven, what have I done, what have I done?' He dropped the trumpet from his hand and fled in blind panic away up the passage into the light. The sound of many voices followed him; crying with a terrible sorrow:

"Worse have you left us than you found us. Worse have you left us than you found us...."

The boy ran home without looking back and he never found the entrance to the passageway ever, ever, ever again . . .



The Quirang

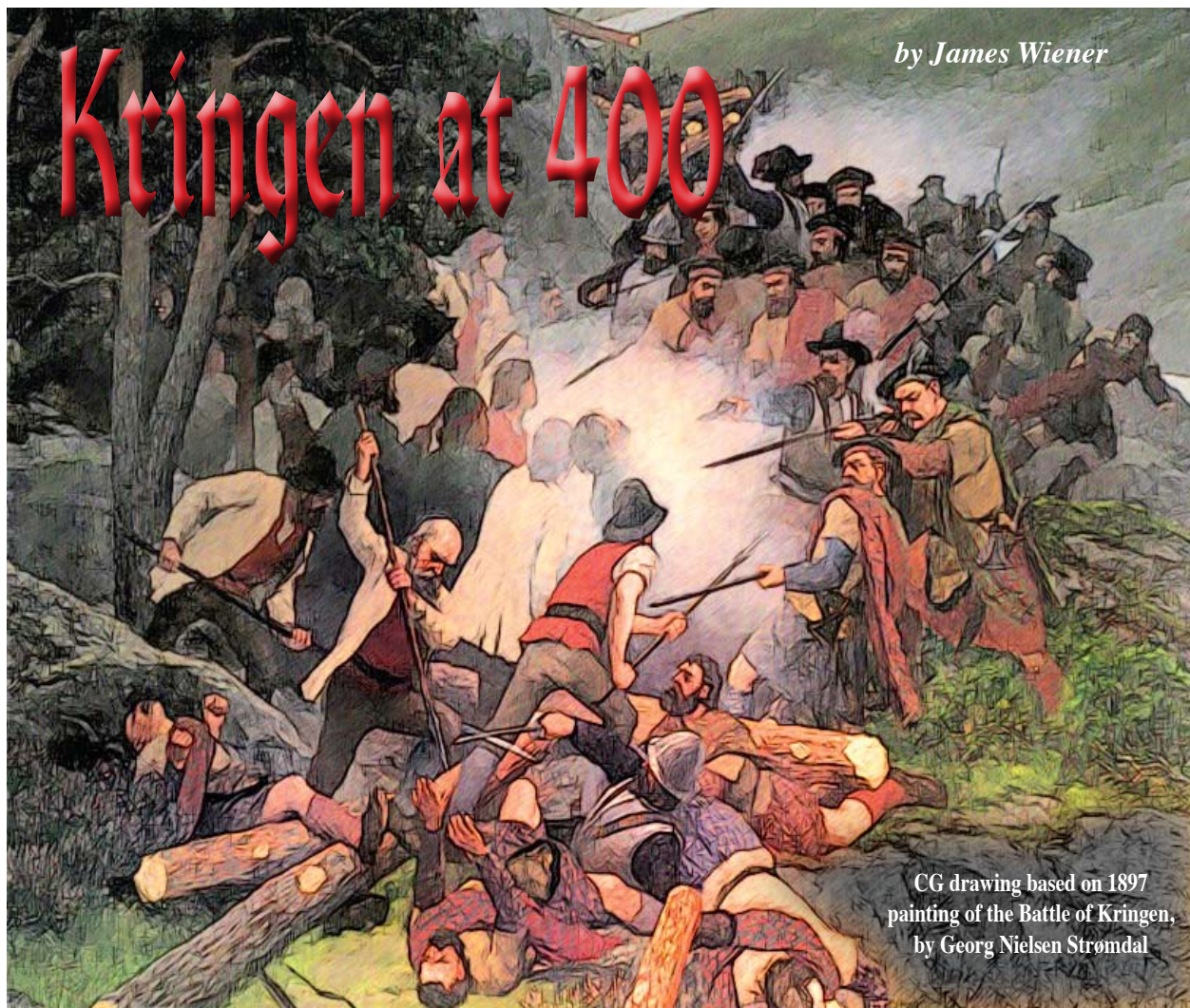


In 2014 Scotland will have a referendum to decide whether we go forward into the future as a mature independent Nation, or else forgo the rights to liberty that our ancestors fought for, and allow ourselves to continue to be governed by another country whose culture and views are often inimical to those of the Scots.

Who will go into the cave, take the battle horn and give it its third and final blow, and waken up our countrymen from their slumber? Will it be you?

Vote Yes, in 2014.

<http://www.yesscotland.net>



How A Celebrated Scottish Military Disaster Colored The Early Seventeenth Century and Norwegian Folklore

This year marks the 400th anniversary of the Battle of Kringen in which Norwegian peasants and petty militiamen from across the County of Oppland massacred several hundred Scottish mercenaries, on their way to fight for Sweden.

Although the battle is rarely discussed or studied outside of Norway, it has played a decisive role in shaping and inspiring the national consciousness of the Norwegian people: plays, novels, poems, numerous paintings, and even a musical suite by the renowned composer Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) celebrate the deeds of the humble Norwegian peasants who risked their lives to defend “*det landet*.”

Long a part of Norway’s rich repository of folklore, this skirmish between Scots and Norwegians merits further attention and wider consideration.

The history of Scottish-Norwegian relations runs deep and has often been quite close. Despite centuries of recurrent Viking raids and periodic contention over the status of Orkney and Shetland, Scottish kings favored commercial and dynastic alliances with their Scandinavian neighbors.

Like Scotland, the Scandinavian kingdoms of Norway, Denmark, and Sweden were sparsely populated and suspicious of their powerful



Contemporary drawing of actual Scots in the service of Gustav Adolf

Garde Écossaise,” and in the Netherlands during their wars of independence from Spain (1568-1648) as the “Scots Brigade.” When internecine wars broke out between Denmark-Norway and Sweden in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, entire clans took sides and regional rivalries played themselves out across the European continent.

In 1523, the Kalmar Union, which had united the entire Nordic region from Finland to Iceland in 1397, imploded when the

neighbors, but commercially minded. During the Middle Ages, Scottish merchants frequented Norwegian ports like Bergen, Stavanger, Trondheim, and Tønsberg, where they conducted a lively trade of wool, skins, and copper, in exchange for herring, iron, timber and furs. Commercial and familial ties cemented through intermarriage facilitated further cross-cultural and commercial exchange. The vessels, which crisscrossed the North Sea, also carried Scottish mercenaries who had sought fortune and fame on the battlefields of northern Europe.

The primary method of distinguishing one Highland man from another was to review their success (or failures) in battle. Opportunity for competitive independent wages, the distinction of being a “gentleman,” and the quest for honor thus lured Highlanders and some Lowlanders abroad throughout the Early Modern Era. Throughout the Middle Ages and well into the “Age of Absolutism,” Scottish mercenaries and soldiers served in armies and navies from Tsarist Russia to Gaelic Ireland, Imperial Spain to Princely Saxony.

More popularly known as the “gallowglasses” or “redshanks” by the Irish, Scottish mercenaries distinguished themselves in France as “*Le*

Swedes declared their independence from what they perceived as a Danish dominated union. In the ensuing decades, and following years of fierce fighting, the Swedes managed to retain hold over Finland and the eastern Baltic while the Danes retained control of Norway, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands. Bitterness and rivalry remained undiminished on both sides, and the two kingdoms kept uneasy periods of peace followed by brief, but ferocious outbreaks of war. In 1611, Denmark-Norway and Sweden declared war on each other over taxation on Swedish ships passing through the Øresund (the narrow strait between the Denmark and Sweden, linking the Baltic Sea and the North Sea).

The charismatic Gustav II Adolf of Sweden (r. 1611-1632)—father of the equally legendary Queen Christina I (r. 1632-1654)—envisioned himself as a “Protestant Holy Roman Emperor” and the Germanic heir to the legacy of Imperial Rome. Devoutly Lutheran and a consummate statesmen, Gustav Adolf was determined to make the Baltic Sea a “Swedish lake,” from which he could counter the enemies of Protestantism. During his reign he successfully waged wars against the Holy Roman Empire (Austria), Tsarist Russia, and the Polish-

Lithuanian Commonwealth, winning acclaim from Europe's Protestants. As a commander, he earned great respect and his fame spread as dignitaries and soldiers spoke of his prowess and valor on the battlefield. While he is most infamous for a series of devastating invasions of Germany during the Thirty Year's War (1618-1648), at the beginning of his reign, his most pressing foe was a man who was quite similar to him in personality: Christian IV of Denmark (r. 1588-1644).

Christian is perhaps the most colorful personality in Danish history, distinguished by his zeal for erecting beautiful palaces and founding new cities of economic importance. Christian was Gustav Adolf's match as a statesman and he rightly feared that Sweden would pursue a policy of encirclement around his domains: Norway's natural resources and ports with access to the Atlantic Ocean were prime targets of Swedish aggression.

Moreover as Christian also envisioned himself as a "Protestant Caesar," he prepared Denmark and Norway for a protracted period of war. Norwegian and Danish peasants were forcibly pressed into service with the Norwegian people being particularly hard pressed. As the tensions escalated into outright war, the nation-states of Europe remained officially neutral.

In England, James VI/I (r. 1568/1603-1625), a wily ruler himself, opted for a position of defensive neutrality while privately favoring the Dano-Norwegian cause. James' wife, Anne of Denmark (1574-1619), was the elder sister of Christian, and James had traveled to both Norway and Denmark at the time of his marriage in 1589. He had supported warm relations with Christian, and British merchants benefited from Danish trade.

However, at the same time, James had authorized English and Scottish men to travel to Sweden to serve as mercenaries in the armies of Gustav Adolf's father, Karl IX (r. 1604-1611), since 1607. Issues of geopolitical importance mattered little to James' countrymen in the

Highlands during the spring of 1612. Yearning for fresh prospects and hearing of Gustav Adolf's glory, Scotsmen from Caithness and Angus enlisted and were recruited to fight for the Swedish cause by the Scottish adventurer Sir James Spens (c. 1575-1632). Spens had served the Swedish cause previously and would remain a lifelong follower and devotee of Gustav Adolf.

Among the prominent military men recruited were Colonel George Sinclair (c. 1580-1612) and Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Ramsay. Both had pursued careers as soldiers and diplomats, and both were partial to Sweden.

Two ships set sail for Norway at the beginning of August, stopping to resupply in the Orkneys and Shetlands, before reaching the expansive Isfjorden, in the County of Romsdal og Møre.

The Scottish mercenaries, lead by Ramsay, planned to traverse mountains of Romsdal and descend into the Gudbrandsdal Valley, from which they could then follow a series of descending valleys and rivers into Sweden. The Scots deliberately choose this route in order to limit detection from the local Norwegian populace and to minimize the risk of skirmishes as they were only lightly armed.

According to Norwegian legends and folklore, the Scots suffered from poor luck from the time that their ships dropped anchor in the Isfjorden: it is said that a man named Ivar Helland of Vestnes, a fisherman from Vestnes, cheated the Scots, providing them with false intelligence as to the location of Norwegian villages and mountain trails.

The Norwegians quickly discerned that these Scots were not the friendly merchantmen who visited their western coasts, but mercenaries in the pay of Sweden. Word spread like wildfire that the Scots were on their way into the Gudbrandsdal Valley, and a contingent of Norwegian farmers, peasants, and militiamen, numbering about 500 strong, gathered in the tiny parish of Dovre to halt their advance and plan an ambush.

The previous year had been one of immense turmoil and considerable hardship for the people of the Gudbrandsdal Valley: mothers and fathers had seen their sons forced into service only to later learn of their capture and execution by Swedish forces at Nya Lödöse, following the horrific siege of Älvsborgs Castle (near the present day city of Göteborg, Sweden).

Motivated by a fierce sense of memory of their loved ones and loyalty to their beloved Norway, these Norwegians were determined to eliminate the Scottish contingent completely.

On August 26, the Scottish force reached the site of the planned Norwegian ambush: the precarious Valley of Kringen, along the Lågen River, in County Oppdal. The heroine of the day was a peasant girl named “Pillar Guri,” who located the Scots from across the Lågen River and sounded the signal to attack with a traditional horn known as a “*lur*.”

The Scots were completely surprised and outnumbered. Without heavy weaponry—they were to receive arms once they had entered Sweden—the battle was one sided. In only about an hour, the majority of the 300 Scots lay dead, with only 134 remaining alive. Of the 134 who survived the skirmish, legends testify that only 15 were spared execution and sent to Oslo and Copenhagen. The rest were duly executed in the town of Kvam, which is close to the present day city of Lillehammer.

Only six Norwegians died during the battle if oral traditions are believed. While Sinclair was one of the first to fall, pierced by a bullet to a head, fortune was far kinder to Ramsay; he kept alive, in hope of a handsome reward, and was sent to Christian’s court. Following an interrogation by Danish officials, he was then allowed to return to Scotland.

When James heard the news of the *débâcle* in London, he was deeply embarrassed and distressed to learn of the deaths of so many Scotsmen. Thenceforth, he played an active role as an intermediary between Gustav Adolf and Christian, helping to bring an end to the Kalmar

War with the Treaty of Knäred in 1613. Although the treaty was unfavorable to Sweden, Gustav Adolf’s star was just beginning to rise. At the time of his death, surrounded by his Scottish mercenaries at the Battle of Lützen in 1632, Gustav Adolf ensured that Sweden would be Northern Europe’s superpower for a century.

Christian, on the other hand, saw his domains shrink at the expense of Swedish military success. Norway would nonetheless remain under Danish suzerainty until 1814. Despite the disaster at Kringen, determined Scottish mercenaries continued to make their way across the North and Baltic Seas until the first rumblings of the Industrial Revolution.

The legacy of the Battle of Kringen belongs to Norway and the Norwegian people. The defeat of the Scots has colored their national consciousness and is still celebrated every August 26 across Norway’s central counties.

The memory of this encounter provided the opportunity from which Norwegians could stoke the flame of national pride while concurrently emphasizing the beloved values of the Norwegian peasant and farmer: loyalty to one’s timeless traditions; love of one’s land; and pride in one’s cleverness when in the face of danger.

As the Norwegians chaffed under Swedish rule (1814-1905), Kringen came to represent a powerful patriotic episode in which misguided Scots and Swedes had sought to subvert the wishes of a peaceful Norway. Prillar Guri, who is only recorded in history hundreds of years after the events of Kringen, was recast as the archetype of the strong Norwegian woman, whereas George Sinclair’s reputation softened in the centuries since his death.

Immortalized in 1781 by Edvard Strom (1748-1794) in his “Ballad of Sinclair” or “*Zinklars visem*,” Sinclair emerges as a misguided youth rather than a rapacious legionnaire. The memory of heroic events endure in Oppland as the county’s traditional *bunad* costume echoes the colors and pattern of the Red Sinclair tartan.

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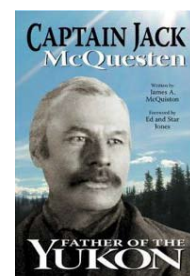
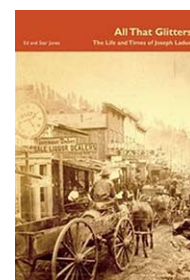
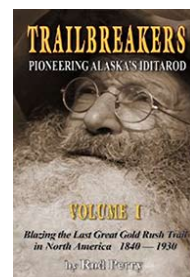
Celts in the Yukon?

People of Celtic blood played some of the more substantial roles in exploring the Yukon River Valley and other parts of Alaska and Northwest Canada. The three books shown here have been written by some pretty darn good Yukon River historians.

- Book one *Trailblazers* is by Rod Perry, most likely the world's expert on the Iditarod race. Rod has been with the race since its beginning. He also produced a feature movie in Alaska. You can find out more about Rod's work at <http://www.rodperry.com>.

- The second book *All That Glitters* was written by Ed and Star Jones and is principally about the Frenchman Joe Ladue. These folks are two of the premier historians for Alaska and Yukon. Their stories are as authentic as it gets. Their book is on <http://www.amazon.com>.

- Finally, Celtic Guide publisher, Jim McQuiston, presents some great history of the Father of Alaska, Father of the Yukon, along with substantial information on the 25 years BEFORE the Klondike gold rush. His book *Captain Jack* is available on [amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and other book sites, with more info at <http://www.fatheroftheyukon.com>.





When our editor, Jim McQuiston, told us that October's issue of the Celtic Guide was about Celtic Mysteries, I was pretty excited. Not only is Halloween about ghosts, goblins and Celtic lore, it's also this Celtic Guide author's birthday. That's right! October 31st is a celebratory day in the Roberts' household.

With that in mind, I searched for a topic that would be appropriate—one that would still reflect my love of Scotland. Low and behold, nothing fit the bill better than Scottish vampires. You read it right. Who would ever think up such a thing? I'm going to tell you.

A *baobhan sith* is a type of female vampire in Scottish mythology. Somewhat comparable to a banshee, the *baobhan sith* are fairy vampires who are also referred to as the "White Women of the Scottish Highlands."

These women are bonny enchantresses who prey on travelers at night – as if the Scottish Highlands weren't spooky enough in the midnight hour with imposing castles and tales of ghosts. Now we have vampires roaming the countryside.

These fairy vampires sometimes appear as crows or ravens. And other times, they take the form of bonny lasses with long, green dresses which hide their deer hooves. Legends have

these female vamps seducing young men with their beauty, inviting the men to dance with them, and then draining the poor lads of their blood.

The weakness of the *baobhan sith* is similar to most vampires: the bonny seductresses cannot tolerate daylight. Legend has it the women do not use fangs to draw blood, but instead, use razor-sharp fingernails. Similar to other vampire tales, the *baobhan sith* uses seduction to gain access



to her victims. The women vampires arise from their graves once a year to feed and the only way to stop them from waking is to build a cairn over their grave—or so it is told.

There is a certain legend in regards to the *baobhan sith*, where a group of young men stopped for the night in a small glade in the Scottish Highlands. They built a fire and began to wish for the company of beautiful women. Four bonny lasses appeared, and began to dance with the men. The seductive dance changed, became violent, and the women tore at the men and drew blood. One of the men ran from the shelter and hid between two horses. The women encircled the horses, but they seemed unable to cross to the man. When dawn came, the women disappeared. The man found his companions dead and drained of blood. It was thought that the fairy vamps could not cross to him because of the iron in the shoes of the horses.

I think I just gave my paranormal author friends some ideas. Be careful if ye and yer mates venture out into the Scottish countryside at night. Ye may just get what ye wish for...

MAIDEN OF STAFFA (from 1824) by Mrs M. E. Ebsworth

Maiden of Staffa! list! beware
Of lips that smile but to betray,
Of words that woo thee to despair,
Dread to become a Vampire's prey!
The blood that mantles on thy cheeks,
And circles round thy heart, he seeks:
Tremble lest my counsel slighting,
Heart and faith together plighting!
Maiden of Staffa, be warn'd and save
Thyself from ruin and the grave.

Celtic Warrior Pendant

Actual size: 1" x 1/8" diameter. This Shield of protection is a Celtic design based on the numbers 3 and 4, which enable magical powers to come into play that help provide circles of protection and other important esoteric forces to enhance well being. The central design in this work is a Quatrefoil composed of 4 circles interlocked into magical Celtic Knots. They represent the four corners of the Earth, the 4 winds, the 4 elements: earth, air, water, and fire. Most importantly these points represent the 4 angelic guardians. The quatrefoil is a symbol of good luck as in the 4-Leaf clover. One of several world symbols, this design is where the 4 realms of North, South, East, and west are joined and the 4 elemental angelic guardians bring protection to those who wear this amulet. Comes on an adjustable black cord.



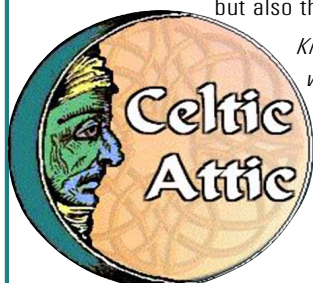
Artzy Claddagh Shamrock Cake Topper

These tops measure approx. 4.25" wide x 4.25 - 5.25" High (depending on design) and are 3/8" thick acrylic. A clear acrylic plate is included, for extra support on cake surface (most will stand on their own). Afterwards, this top becomes a keepsake to remember your special day. Personalize with your names and date. We will engrave layout and font as shown.



Trinity Knot Cake Topper

Ceramic Trinity Knot Cake topper. Perfect for any wedding. Trinity is the symbol of the divine, but also the interlocking knot work symbolizes the unending union of love.



Kristin Olsen is the proprietor of the Celtic Attic web site, where you will find all types of Irish, Scottish and Viking imports. Kristin won't sell anything that she is not absolutely proud of. "I want happy customers, I want repeat customers, I want my customers to call me by my first name and have a smile part their lips when they think of Celtic Attic and the pride of the Celts & the Vikings!"

<http://www.celticattic.com>





CELTIC KNOTS

unravelling

By Kristin Olsen

Virtually all cultures can trace their paths back to a time when there were no computers, automobiles or airplanes. The Celtic peoples' origins, for example, can be traced far back to antiquity.

For the ancient Celts, grand tales were told by word of mouth and passed from parent to child and to the clan. Imagine a vibrant bonfire of orange and yellow flames shooting towards the night sky. Close your eyes and see a clan of Irish Celts sharing tales of Giant Trolls chasing a wee Fairy Princess through the wooded forest.

Envision now, if you will, a culture that did not write down a single word of its most precious and prized tales.

Can you hear them speak?

Listen to the wind as it passes grand stories and adventures through the air. What of these people? Why did they not write down for future generations their most prized tales and visions?

Join me now as we explore an ancient way of communication from the Celtic Lands. Come let us explore the world of the Celtic Knot and what its strange and entrancing symbols meant to the Celts, and mean to us today.

Hurry to the land of Shamrocks and Heather as it beckons you listen and observe! Welcome to the Celtic Lands.

The Celts have been around for quite some time. There is much magic and mysticism associated with these people and with the land of Erin, the Emerald Isle and all the British Isles indeed. Modern folk are attracted to the Celtic Knotwork of these lands. Spirals, Key Patterns, Interwoven Love Knots and Geometrically perfect symbols. What do all these symbols mean? Does each have a place in history? Did the Gods and Goddesses wear these symbols? Did the mortals design them out of reverence for their world and surroundings?

Does the Spiraling knot shaped like hearts truly represent "Love"?

Ah! To answer these questions in a mystical and enchanting way is quite the challenge on the part of Historians, Secular and Religious folks, alike.

Before the time of the Christian influence on the Celts, the only known Celtic Knotwork consisted of simple geometrical patterns. While they were ornate, delicate and painstakingly crafted, I am sure; they did not represent anything specific to the ancient Celts. They did not create the love knot to express adoration of their spouse, nor did they create the peace knot in hopes of ending the Roman occupation of the British Isles. The basic premise of life was simple for the Celts, all things were revered and worshiped, but I do not believe and historians have debated this, that they created Knotwork as symbolism. It is more likely they created it as a lovely way of adorning their land, their person and their dwellings. This early Knotwork did not feature plants, animals or humans.

As with many Pre-Christian civilizations, they might possibly have believed that making a representation of any living thing was contrary to their belief of the interconnectedness of life. To form a symbol would be to take away the very spirit of what they were trying to represent.

As time marched on in the Celtic lands and Christianity, and its teachings came to the Emerald Isle and the other cultures, the Knotwork symbols were re-born. Christian Celtic artwork was strongly influenced by pagan Celtic sources. It is only in the artwork of the post Pagan era that we see Knotwork representing a certain idea or aspect of life.

The Christian Celts added human, plant, and animal forms to their glorious Knotwork designs. The most famous example of this artwork form is the beautiful illuminated manuscripts – The Book of Kells. Images of the ancient lands and of a people that were steeped in magic and mysticism come to life in the Book of Kells and

other Knotwork manuscripts. The Crane, Raven, and the Dog are gloriously depicted in the Book of Kells. The Celtic cross, which is now one of the best-known symbols of Irish Christianity, was introduced in this post Pagan era.

Today Celtic Knotwork symbols have been assigned attributes and meanings. This is a modern interpretation and re-design of the ancient Knotwork patterns. I will mention a few to entice your appetite to explore this symbolism further. Keep in mind these are the modern interpretations. The modern Eternity Celtic knot symbolizes the never-ending eternal circle of life. The Shield Celtic knot is a symbol for protection.

The claddagh is a traditional celtic symbol, the hands are for friendship, the heart is for love and the crown is for loyalty and sometimes this symbol has Knotwork woven into it. The Celtic Love Knot can spark relationships, heighten passions and attract true love.

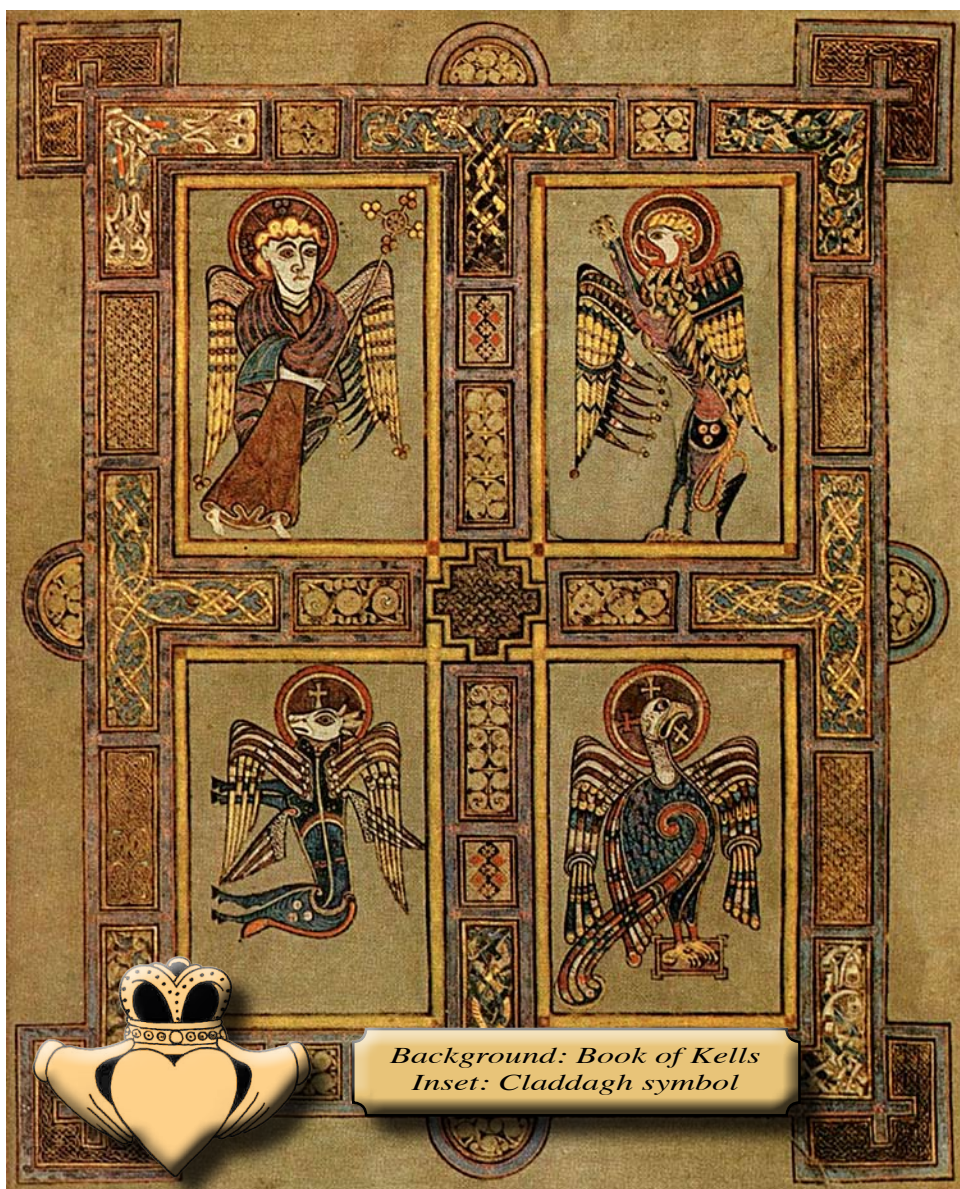
The Triskele was a sacred symbol to the Celtic People.

It represents the eternal rhythm of life that we are all a part of. The traditional ancient Knotwork Interlace pattern is probably the most common pattern.

Basically it looks like strands of braided strips that bend and weave amongst themselves.

It could possibly

represent the interconnection of life and the universe. The Trinity knot spirals are included in this grouping and may occur in double, triple or quadruple swirls. Spirals are typically joined to one another in either an “S” or a “C” type format. They may represent the universe, heavens, and water or an individual’s journey through life. I am sure as you explore the various Knotwork patterns of both the ancient Celtic People and the modern Christian art, you will see meanings within meanings. After all, artwork is about inspiration and magic and vision. Open your vision to see the sacred Knotwork of any ancient people still in use today.



A Four-Term President?

The ‘Celts’ behind the scene

by James A. McQuiston

Not all Celtic mysteries need be ancient. There is no doubt that those of ‘Celtic’ blood continue to shape the modern world. There are a number of books available that tell of how our journey into this world was led, to a large degree, by people whose families had roots particularly in Scotland and Ireland. When this journey involves personal freedom, their involvement becomes particularly significant.

Set aside, for the moment, the great role people of Scottish-Irish descent played in the success of the American Revolution. Put aside, for the moment, the great role people of Scottish and Irish descent played in settling America and Canada (including more remote locations like Nova Scotia and the Yukon), plus Australia and New Zealand. Put aside, for the moment, the role these people have played in all exploration including that of space; that the Scottish-Irish name “Houston” was the first word spoken on the moon and the first footsteps made there were by the Scots-blooded Neil Armstrong, or that Doug McCuiston, the current director of NASA’s Mars exploration, is Scottish-Irish (Scotch-Irish or Scots-Irish) through and through.

Put aside, for the moment, Watt’s steam engine, Fulton’s steamboat, Bell’s telephone, Baird’s television, Fleming’s penicillin, the Wright brother’s airplane, Guinness’s beer, Ferguson’s tractor . . . the list goes on and on.

Forget all that.

Let’s look at one single U.S. presidency, without any doubt one of the most significant presidency . . . a presidency that saw the end of the Great Depression, the defeat of the Nazis, the establishment of a safety net that has literally saved millions of people from suffering in their old age, a presidency that set the course for a country changing from a principally rural, agricultural, under-educated nation to the modern, powerful, compassionate, significant country that the United States is now.

Roosevelt is not a Celtic name; it is Dutch. Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR; see image #1 on following page) had a grandmother, however, who was a Lyman, a name thought to be a version of the Lamont family of Argyllshire, Scotland, a name that also appears often in Ireland.

Regardless, this story is not about whether FDR was, or even knew he might be, part Scottish and/or Irish.

Instead, it is about several men who were most definitely of Scottish and Irish descent who played major roles in at least one or more of his four consecutive elections as U.S. President.

Roosevelt had to deal with world leaders like Churchill and Stalin, and even Hitler, Hirohito, and Mussolini . . . in a less friendly way.

He established a diplomatic relationship with the globally-influential Vatican.

A list of Roosevelt’s generals reads like a *Who’s Who* in American military leadership, from MacArthur to Patton, from Eisenhower to Marshall.

Let’s begin the guts of our story with another Roosevelt general – Major General Butler, a man with the unlikely first name of Smedley, who came from one of the most influential, widespread families in Ireland (image #2 on following page). During his 34-year career as a Marine, Butler participated in military actions in the Philippines, China, in Central America and the Caribbean during the Banana Wars, and France in World War I. By the end of his career, he had received 16 medals, five for heroism. He is one of only 19 men to twice receive the Medal of Honor, one of only three to be awarded both the Marine Corps Brevet Medal and the Medal of Honor, and the only man ever to be awarded the Brevet Medal and two Medals of Honor, all for separate actions.

In ancient times the Butler family owned much of the counties of Tipperary, Limerick and Wicklow, along with Kilkenny Castle.

The name actually traces to Theobald Fitzwalter (d.1205), who held the hereditary title of Le Boitiler (the king's chief butler), which actually meant 'wine steward' at the time.

Before FDR's first run for president, a large group of disaffected veterans from WWI marched on Washington, DC, rightfully demanding some relief from their shattered lives. They were met, face-to-face, by Major General Butler who told them to direct their energy into getting Roosevelt elected, as FDR understood their plight and would do something about it.

Roosevelt had been Assistant Secretary to the Navy during WWI. He knew, firsthand, the horrors of war and the bleak aftermath faced by our brave warriors.

Two more Celts, Harry Colmery and Senator Ernest MacFarland, took Roosevelt's original idea for an overall relief program for all the poor and turned it into the first G.I. Bill of Rights.

However, Butler's involvement didn't end there. Shortly after Roosevelt's first presidential victory, a group of American Fascists began organizing an army of a half a million armed men ready to march on Washington, DC, to force FDR to adopt their policies. They made the mistake of asking Major General Butler to lead the men. Instead, he gained their confidence, learned who the financial backers were, and took the whole matter to the U.S. Congress and the American people. The famous, former Speaker of the House, John McCormack, said about Butler - "In peace or war he was one of the outstanding Americans in our history. I can't emphasize too strongly the very important part he played in exposing the Fascist plot in the early 1930s backed by and planned by persons possessing tremendous wealth."

The Irish Major General Smedley Butler nearly single-handedly saved FDR and the country from Fascist extortion, if not worse.

From the very beginning FDR had the support of other famous men of Celtic blood. Joseph P. Kennedy (#3), whose son became the first Irish Catholic President of the United States,



backed FDR, as did media giant and Scots-blooded William Randolph Hearst (#4), and the Scotch-Irish William McAdoo (#5), former Secretary of the U.S. Treasury.

These three men were famous and wealthy beyond any need to patronize a politician, and yet they saw in FDR and his policies the only hope for America to rebound from its sad state of economic and mental depression.

One of the most mysterious stories of FDR support involves four entirely new men of Scottish and/or Irish blood. We'll begin with Cardinal Francis Spellman (#6). Spellman's father, Patrick, came to America from Tipperary. His mother's father had come from County Cork. By the time of FDR's first election to the presidency, Spellman was on the outs with Roosevelt after being denied an appointment as Chaplain in the Navy by FDR, twice. We'll leave America's most famous Cardinal for a moment to introduce our last few Celtic performers in this real-life drama.

James Farley (#7) was Post-Master General of the US and the National Chairman of the Democratic Party. His family had come from Castletown in County Meath, Ireland. In 1930, Farley launched the pre-nomination campaign for Roosevelt and was largely responsible for FDR receiving the nomination of the Democratic Party, in 1932, at their convention.

One Robert H. Jackson (#8), of Scotch-Irish heritage, was born on a poor farm in an area called Spring Creek, PA. His family left their mark on the place, especially in the naming of Jackson Hill Road, a road I know very well; a road impassable most of the year as it climbs one of the taller foothills of the Allegheny Mountains; a road I have ridden trail bikes over, and gotten stuck in its mud in a Jeep, with only a fold-up Army shovel to escape its clutches. This is *the* middle of nowhere.

Robert Jackson was born in this still remote area, way back in 1892. He went on to become the only person who ever has or ever will be U.S. Solicitor General, U.S. Attorney General, U.S. Supreme Court Justice, and U.S. Chief Prosecutor of a War Crime Tribunal.

He also was a right-hand man to Franklin Roosevelt, writing many of the briefs that led to the Social Security program and other FDR accomplishments. He set some of the most important American legal precedents and is considered America's greatest jurist.

Just four years earlier, and just 25 miles away, perhaps the best friend Jackson ever had was born. His name was John Leo Blair (#9).

COURSE: SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS 16TH - 17TH CENTURIES

30 November - 31 December – Cost \$20.00 U.S.

Do you believe the Scottish Highlands are the most romantic place in Europe? A connection exists between many different peoples and the people and landscape of this country on the edge of the western world. The Highlander in a kilt and the playing of pipes are instantly recognised and indicate a society quite different from that of mainstream Europe. In the 16th & 17th centuries, the laws and customs of the Highlands were considered archaic; they were common in western Europe in the High Middle Ages, but had disappeared by the Renaissance. Want to know more? If you can't travel there, consider this course.

Late registration is not a problem.

Lurkers also welcome during the busy Christmas season!

More Info: www.celtichearts.org/workshops

Lecturer: Sharron Gunn, w/a Sheila Currie, lives in British Columbia, and teaches Irish & Scottish History as non-credit university courses and online for Romance Writers of America.

Both men were country lawyers. Jackson only attended one year of law school and was nearly all self-taught and self-made. Blair earned a three-year law degree, no longer offered, and established what would, at one point, become the largest direct mail business in the United States, and also the oldest stock on the American Stock Exchange, from 1924 until 2007, when the company he founded was sold into private hands.

Among John Blair's customers were FDR, his wife and his mother. Also included were Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., Mrs. Cecil B. DeMille, Mr and Mrs. Alfred DuPont, the Hon. William Gibbs McAdoo, Mrs. Thomas Edison, and many others of renown. All of these people allowed Blair to use their names in his advertisements.

In his earlier years, Jackson practiced law in New York State, just across the border from where Blair conducted his business. In his many trips to Albany, NY, Jackson met both Franklin Roosevelt and James Farley, thus planting the seed for the campaigning to come.

Bob Jackson and John Blair traveled the world together with their wives. They wrote each other many times and the Library of Congress has provided this author with over 200 pages of correspondence between them, beginning after Jackson started his career in Washington, DC.

On one of their many trips abroad the Blair and Jackson couples found themselves on a cruise in the Mediterranean Sea, near Gibraltar.

John, having had such a good time the night before, was late in reaching the transport boat that was taking passengers to the shore. He waved frantically for one of the boats to return and on that boat was then Monsignor Francis Spellman who reached out his hand to help John Blair aboard the small skiff.

The two men became immediate and life-long friends. Blair introduced Spellman to Jackson later that day. This chance meeting was a central cog in FDR's second election, as these three Irishmen conspired, a few years later, to get their hero re-elected.

The year of the meeting was 1928. Spellman kindly arranged for an audience for only the Blair and Jackson couples with Pope Pius XI, for a full hour. It is not known what was discussed, but at the time the Vatican was not yet its own country. It became the Vatican State the following year in an agreement signed by Pius XI and, of all people, Prime Minister Benito Mussolini.

Pope Pius XI was not political. In fact, it was his right hand man, Cardinal Pacelli, who dealt with the dangerous Fascist winds blowing throughout Europe. Pacelli had signed a Concordant with the Nazis as an agreement to keep Church and State separate.

When thanked by a group of Cardinals for finding at least some safety in a dangerous world, Pius XI pointed to Cardinal Pacelli and stated - "Thank him. He has done everything. From now on he will deal with everything."

The Vatican was in a very precarious position for decades because of the Nazi threat. It would be this precarious position that would help lead directly to FDR's second victory.

On this 1928 trip, John Blair and Bob Jackson also coincidentally made a trip to Nuremberg, Germany, a place Jackson would return to, 17 years later, to prosecute the very men who threatened the Vatican.

This would be a good point at which to explore the Blair and Jackson Celtic lineage, before resuming our great mystery tale.

The Jackson family had a long history in Ulster, establishing a very powerful dynasty at Coleraine. The earliest-known Jackson of the Irish line was Richard, once a horse tenderer for the McDonnells of Keppoch, in Scotland, before marrying Mary McRanald. She was most likely the daughter of the Keppoch chief, since these chiefs sometimes used the patronymic of McRanald. This couple moved to Coleraine, and, under the watchful eye of Clan Donald South, they built their Bann Valley dynasty.

It was during the great Scotch-Irish Bann Valley migration that the Jacksons first came to America, including the families of President

Andrew Jackson, and Confederate General Stonewall Jackson.

The Blair family had come from County Cork, Ireland, leaving behind several Blair landmarks there, and of course the famous Blair Castle back in Scotland. Theirs, like the Jacksons', was a long history in both countries as well as in early America. Another John Blair had signed the American Declaration of Independence, and yet another of this name built a railroading empire across the length of the country, becoming the largest owner of rail mileage in the world.

Robert Jackson first became familiar with Franklin Roosevelt, when FDR was involved in New York State politics. He worked on FDR's first presidential campaign and suggested that his friend John Blair submit marketing ideas to Roosevelt, which he did. Blair was already known as a master marketer by this point. Even though the term "Great Depression" is said to have been first coined in 1934, John Blair used this term in a letter from 1929, so keen was his intuition of the state of the union.

Another letter exists, from 1932, signed by Franklin Roosevelt to John Blair asking him to pass along his campaign marketing ideas to FDR's campaign manager. That manager, of course, was the wild Irishman, James Farley - the "Kingmaker." Years later, Blair referred to this man as "Brother Farley" in a private letter to Robert Jackson.

FDR won his first term in 1932, with the help of Jackson, Blair and a handful of other powerful Celtic-Americans. He was inaugurated in 1933.

John Blair was on another overseas trip at the time. He was, in fact, on a boat heading to China from Japan. War had just broken out between these two countries and so no normal tour boat would make the trip. However, John's plans were laid and he was determined to follow through on his pre-arranged schedule. He carried little cash with him in these under-developed countries, relying on contacts he had at American banks located in foreign lands, along the way.

The Blairs found themselves on a fishing boat loaded with Japanese peasants, chickens

and all, heading for an unknown reception at a Chinese port. Luckily they picked one that was heavily involved in commerce and which could care less about the ongoing war.

In the middle of the night John was listening to the radio and heard the announcement that FDR had frozen all banks until the nation's financial mess could be straightened out. He woke his wife to see how much money they had between them. By now they were millionaires but their total funds amounted to only a few American dollars, unfortunately considered nearly worthless at that moment.

John went to sleep but his wife was now quite disturbed and went up on deck to find the captain of the small craft hiding behind sandbags unsure of the reception they would receive as they entered the Chinese port. Luckily, they were welcomed and the Blairs went immediately to an American bank to see if they could get some cash to allow them to continue their trip.

The bank was full of people cashing out their accounts in the only money that seemed safe in the world, a coin dollar made largely of real silver. All around the Blairs customers were dropping the coins on the floor to hear the tell-tale sound that they were real. One man walked out of the bank, past the Blairs, pushing a wheelbarrow of silver coins into a crowded, panic-ridden street.

The bank manager happened to know John Blair and lent the couple \$50 in silver coin to hold them over. Soon FDR lifted the sanctions and their life and travels were back to normal.

Though much good was done during FDR's first term, some Americans were impatient and it looked like he could lose his second term bid for the presidency. This is when the Irish trio stepped up to the plate.

Jackson, and possibly Blair, was undoubtedly instrumental in patching things up between mutual friends, Franklin Roosevelt and Francis Spellman.

Spellman brought Cardinal Pacelli, now Secretary of State for the Vatican, to America and the two men of the cloth scoured Catholic

enclaves campaigning for votes for FDR. They also shut down the radio broadcasts of a right-wing hate mongering Catholic priest.

It has been said that without their help FDR would have lost his second of four bids for election to the presidency. In turn, the Vatican expected and eventually received American salvation from the hands of Hitler.

Jackson went on to play an extremely important role in FDR's administration, and in national and world affairs. Spellman went on to become America's most famous Cardinal.

Cardinal Pacelli went on to become Pope Pius XII and a few years after the dust had settled he called John Blair to Rome, once again, to bestow the honor of knighthood upon him for his support of the Catholic Church during nearly two decades of troubled times.

During these same years, Blair met with FDR for a few hours, on the night after the president gave his famous "I Hate War" speech. Blair also visited FDR at least twice at the White House. He was asked to analyze government attempts to sell War Bonds, and because of the great answers he provided, he was offered a position as Special Secretary to the U.S. Treasury. He declined in favor of his family and his business.

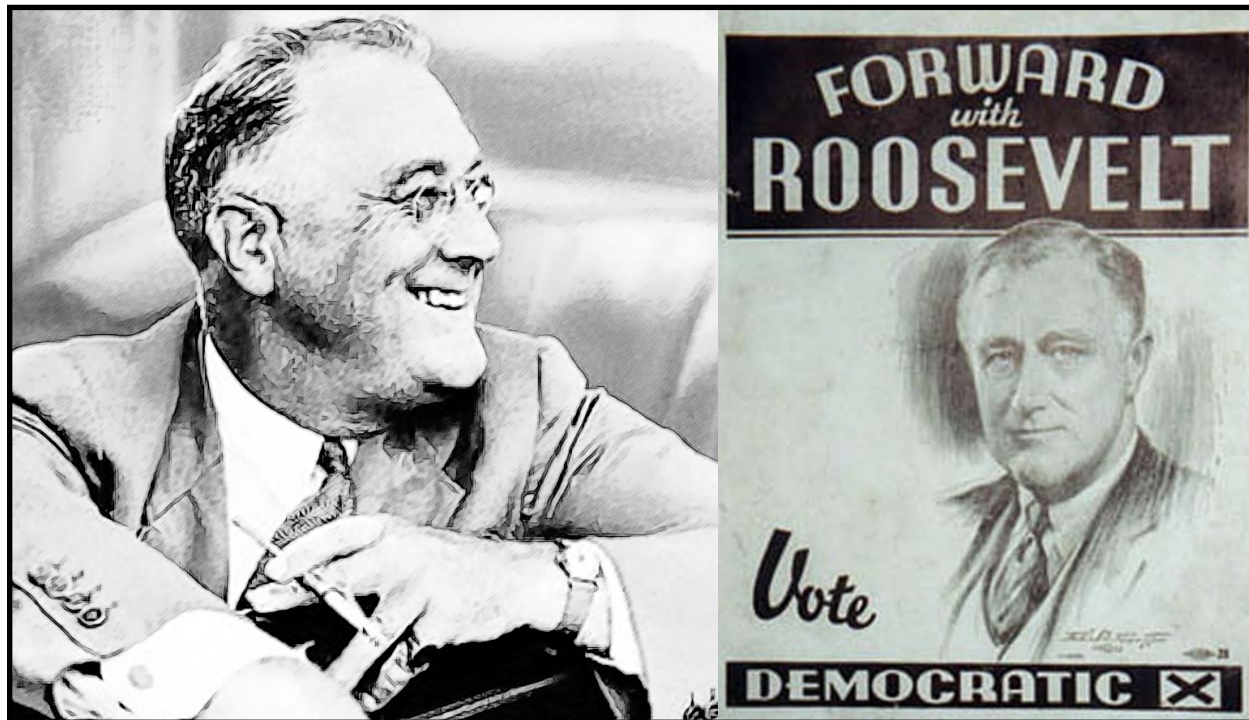
Later, Blair was asked to serve on the U.S. Census Board and wrote many of the questions asked for that now-famous 1940 Census.

Jackson and Blair remained friends for the rest of their lives. Since Blair was working with the government on the 1940 census, and Jackson was working directly under FDR, it is nearly certain they both continued to support FDR's 1940 and 1944 presidential campaigns.

Jackson served this country in a way no other jurist will ever be able to match, through his keen social insight, compassion and judicial genius, and through all the significant offices he held in the federal government.

Blair met a number of times with FDR and played a substantial role in the success of this nation through his marketing genius. He had audiences with two Popes (being knighted by one of them), as he affected world affairs.

It is perhaps fair to say that no other U.S. President has had such a long-lasting effect as has Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Though he may have had a wee drop 'o the Celtic blood through his grandmother, he at least had the benefit of gallons of it through the support he received from some very famous, successful, compassionate, Celtic geniuses of his day.



IS IRELAND HAUNTED



This county that I claim as my homeland is steeped in tradition and mystery. It's stories from the ancients about fairies and dragons and *Tir Na Nóg* capture our hearts and minds. We sit enthralled as we read about the Hill of Tara or the mystery of the Standing stones. What created them and what were they used for? Many questions, but do we have the answers...?

I can only assume what I believe I might know to be true. Well that is a puzzling statement indeed. I know for me I believe in things outside of what I can explain. I believe in the interconnectedness of life and the eternal spirit and energy that makes up this planet and all life forms on it. I believe in spirits that have gone before me as I believe in spirits that still occupy a space and time that they should not still have access to. I believe that eternal energy cannot be explained, nor can it be extinguished. Therefore I believe that the impossible is possible and I have experienced it first-hand. Do you believe?

A few years ago I was in Ireland on a buying trip for my business, Celtic Attic. As I always do when I travel anywhere, I go off the beaten path. I don't travel on main roads, take major freeways or follow a map or plan. I let my surroundings guide me and I have found the most interesting towns, artists, villages and products by just going with the spirit flow or energy of the place I am visiting. In Ireland, energy and spirit abound.

This can be said for any country or city or even state that has ancient artifacts or monuments that tell a tale from the past.

Well on this particular trip I started in County Cork, where my family is from and headed to Dublin. I found some amazing things and visited my great-grandfather's gravesite. This is another story indeed. There were some close encounters of the spirit kind at that graveyard. This might be the reason why I was so energetic and a little unnerved by the time evening rolled around. It had been a long day and I was tired. I had my youngest son and my now ex-hubby with me on this journey. At a little after dusk we started looking for a hotel, motel or bed and breakfast inn. Since we were off the main roads, we didn't find much. It was getting very dark and I was crabby. I looked and looked and finally off in the distance I saw what looked like a wee castle. Perhaps a hotel I thought to myself.

So we pulled in and indeed it was an old historical hotel complete with hot springs. Sounded wonderful after our long day of driving



Irish B&B and scene of the haunting

country roads. We settled into our room and I peered into the wash closet and what appeared was pure magic to my tired eyes. A claw foot bathtub was what I saw. I love old Victorian furniture and a bath sounded simply wonderful at that moment. Little did I know it was going to be quite the experience.

I drew the bath and closed the door while my counterparts settled into take in the TV and wait for me so we could go have a late supper in the pub. I hadn't been in that darn tub more than a minute and the curtain that was attached to pegs on the ceiling, ripped out of the ceiling and fell to the floor. I was a little upset but thought maybe I had tugged on it or caught it with my arm and it just fell. Only a matter of seconds went by and the water in the tub started moving. Having lived in California, I immediately thought it was an earthquake. I started to get up and then the water violently moved and sloshed and came spilling out of the tub onto the floor. I was now worried it would damage the hotel room and maybe spill downstairs. I jumped out, put on my robe and turned to see the bathtub move back and forth on

it's feet. I believe at this point I screamed. I turned back to the door, there was my son standing there just watching this with his mouth open.

Just as suddenly the door slammed shut on him. I tried to open it to see if he was OK and to get the heck out, but it wouldn't budge. I just turned and said, "knock it off, I am tired and hungry and you need to leave me alone". The door flew open and I turned and my son was still standing there along with the ex. When I turned back to the wash closet, the curtain was in place, the water was in the tub and the floor was dry.

I didn't know what to say, was I crazy? Had I dreamed it all because I was so tired? My son witnessed it so I know it was not just me. I decided to just file it as another one of those experiences that cannot be explained. We went downstairs to supper and told the barkeep what had happened. He laughed and just said; well of course you're not from around here so they gave you the haunted room so you would leave. Since you made it through the test, your first pint's on me! He brought us a couple of pints and the best steaks and boxy I have ever had in my life.

A Famous Isle of Skye Ghost Story . . .

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Back in 1601, Hugh Gillespie was the disgruntled cousin of Donald MacDonald, Chief of *Clan Uisdean*, the MacDonalds of Skye. Hugh built the last castle on Skye on the west shore of the Trotternish Peninsula of Skye. He sent a letter to his cousin inviting him to come see his new home, *Caisteal Uisdean*, or Hugh's Castle. He also sent a letter to his neighbors, the Martin family, asking their help in ambushing Donald. The Martins returned to his castle to tell him the unfortunate news that they had gotten the wrong letter. Knowing his cousin had, too, Hugh escaped to North Uist, where Donald's men eventually captured him, disguised as a woman, despite his great size. Hugh was brought back to Donald's castle of Duntulm where he was placed in a dungeon to die, with only a plate of salty beef and an empty water jug. His corpse was hung in a public place to warn other traitors, until eventually he was buried. However, it is said that his ghost haunted Duntulm Castle so badly that the MacDonald chief finally abandoned it for the MacDonald lands on the Sleat Peninsula of Skye. The Martin family still owns the farm above the castle after all these centuries. In 2006, I visited Ian Martin, the young owner of the family farm. He was shocked to learn that I was from the *MacUisdean* family, though not in a direct line to this particular Hugh or *Uisdean*. Ian repeated the old legend word for word as if it just happened the other day. In the world of ghosts perhaps it did!

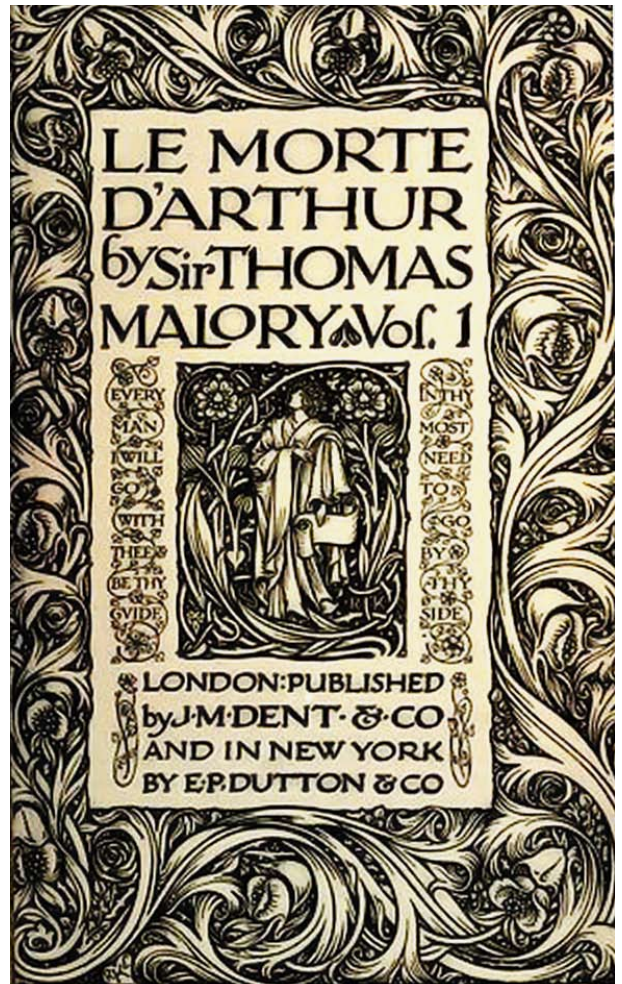
The Myth of Merlin

by Carolyn Emerick, BA and the Men Behind the Legend

Of the many characters in Arthurian Legend, Merlin stands out as a driving force. Not only does he play a crucial role in the life of Arthur, but his character's own life is rife with adventure and drama. Much research and speculation has been conducted on an "historical Arthur." Books, movies, and documentaries abound on theories about who might be the man behind the mythic king. But what of Arthur's mage? What of the magician who made Arthur the great king of legend? Is there a historical basis for the character we know as Merlin? As it happens, there is some truth to this legend. But, it is a rather twisted Celtic knot. So let us begin to unravel it.

The major source for Arthurian Legend as we know it is *Le Morte d'Arthur*, published in 1485 by Sir Thomas Malory. Though Malory did not create the legends, he collected existing versions and compiled them into a single volume, perhaps adding some of his own invention. The stories of King Arthur and his Round Table, the romance of Lancelot and Gwenyvere, the epic battle between Arthur and Mordred, and other chapters of the drama with which we are so familiar are recounted in detail. Malory's text is the springboard that most subsequent authors based their works on Arthur upon.

However, three centuries before Sir Thomas Malory penned his masterpiece, Geoffrey of Monmouth was hard at work with his ambitious *Historia Regum Britanniae*, otherwise known as *History of the Kings of Britain* (circa 1136). In order to appreciate his work, we must remember that the standards of Medieval historians were somewhat less scrupulous than standards of today. Like many historians of his era, Geoffrey mixed true history with legend, perhaps peppered



Le morte d'Arthur, published in 1906

with his own inventions that no doubt seemed like excellent enhancements at the time.

Geoffrey's *History* is an ambitious work in the vein of Bede's *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (circa 731). Both authors attempted to fill in the blanks of British history and give a sense of national identity to the people of the British Isles. However, "historical" works of this period were typically clouded by bias and personal editing of the facts. Geoffrey of Monmouth mixed figures who are known to have



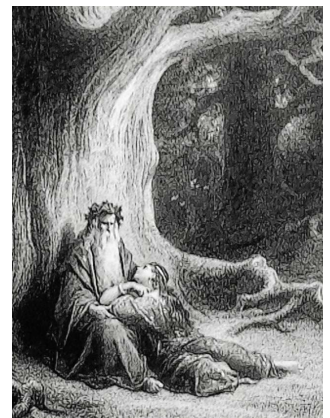
Vortigern's Tower and the Two Dragons
- Illumination from an early copy of Geoffrey
of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*.

existed (or *thought* by scholars to *probably* have existed) with characters of folktale and local legend. Being from Wales himself, Geoffrey added local Welsh legends to his historical work. King Arthur is grafted into English history right alongside documented kings and rulers. Beyond this history volume, Geoffrey of Monmouth also published two works strictly on Merlin; *The Prophecies of Merlin* and *The Life of Merlin*. Geoffrey was, of course, influenced by earlier writers; and there are other works of substantial influence. But, due to space constraints we shall move on.

We have established that literature about Merlin spanned centuries, but can we go back

in time even further to discover the figure who spawned the legend? In his book *The Quest for Merlin*, historian Nikolai Tolstoy asserts that Merlin is a true historical figure, but that he lived apart from the speculated time of Arthur. Tolstoy argues that Arthur's Merlin is based on a Welsh Bard known as Myrddin Wyllt who lived in the mid-6th century A.D., approximately fifty years after the supposed death of Arthur. Myrddin Wyllt is Welsh for "Merlin the Wild." Born in Wales, Myrddin Wyllt appears to have been a bard in the service of one of the last great Celtic pagan kings, Gwenddoleu of Arfderydd, located in Southwest Scotland and Northwest England, near Carlisle. (That Myrddin was born in Wales, transplanted to Scotland, yet his tale was recorded and preserved in Welsh is a testament to the unity of Celtic peoples despite distances). Legend has it that Myrddin went mad when King Gwenddoleu was defeated in battle by the Christian Rhydderch Hael. This event was the catalyst that drove Myrddin to the woods, hence the name Merlin the Wild.

Tolstoy believes that Myrddin was one of the last remaining druids of the Celtic tradition. Although little is known of druidic practice, it is known that druids thrived in Ireland until the introduction of Christianity in 4th century. Further, he cites evidence of druidic revival in Celtic areas of Britain after the departure of the Romans and



Gustave Doré. "Vivien and Merlin Repose."
from: *The Doré Gift Book: Illustrations to Tennyson's Idylls of the King*. London: 188-.

continuing into the 5th and 6th centuries. Tolstoy also believes that druidic practices were likely to have continued in the Scottish Highlands, as these areas were outside the reach of Roman influence.



Wild Man - Hans Holbein the Younger, 1528

That he was referred to as “Myrddin the Wild” is itself further evidence of ties to druidism, and/or shamanism. Shamanic religion was animistic. As such, there was a deep connection with animals and nature. Author Jay Hansford C. Vest explores the connection between Northern Europeans, including Celtic druids, in his article *Will-of-the-Land: Wilderness among Primal Indo-Europeans*. Vest cites linguists who break down the etymology of the word “wilderness” to its Old English roots “wild-deor-ness.” (The article citation is in the bibliography for those interested in the full break down of the word). The gist of meaning is this: wild = will as in self-willed or uncontrolled, deor = animal, ness = land or place → Place of Self-willed Animals (i.e. non-domesticated animals). Although this is a Germanic word, Vest explains that these concepts were universal among Northern European peoples.

The etymology of this word is important in understanding the world view of pre-Christian Northern Europe. Vest explains that the descendants of the Indo-Europeans (including the Celts) maintained a world view that respected the Will-of-the-Land. As such, their places of worship were not in temples constructed in towns and villages apart from nature, but were in sacred groves deep within Nature herself. Further evidence for pre-Christian people’s connection with nature are the terms “heathen” and “pagan.” As Christianity spread in Northern Europe, it was first practiced in the cities and towns. The country-folk were the last to convert and held on to their ancestral ways. This pattern is true of conversion periods in all areas of Europe. The word “pagan” comes from the Latin “paganus” which referred to a “rural or rustic person” (Vest, 326). Similarly, “heathen” derives the Germanic root for “heath.” Therefore, a “heathen is one who worships on the heath: moor, glade, grove, or wilderness” (Vest, 326). So, here we have established a firm connection with practitioners of Celtic religion and the wilderness.

There is further reason to relate “the wild” with druids. In her book *Merlin*, Medieval scholar Norma Lorre Goodrich explains that in subsequent generations “violent anti-Celtic prejudice” associated “the Welsh, the Scots, and the Irish” with being “wild” (Goodrich, 19). This was primarily political propaganda, as the Celtic people were both the retainers of the old religion in their rural lands, but also difficult to assimilate into the new society of whichever invader was conquering the Isles at any given time. Druids were not only the carriers of ancient wisdom and religion, but they are known to have played a political role. Roman historian Tacitus “tells how the Gauls were invited to revolt by their druids” (Tolstoy, 85). This is consistent with Myrddin Wyllt acting alongside King Gwenddoleu to fight the invading Rhydderch Hael. And, of course, the legendary Merlin was adviser to King Arthur.

Further evidence of the role of the druid/bard as adviser to Celtic kings can be found in life of Taliesin. Although Taliesin himself drifted into the realm of legend, with many poems later falsely attributed to him, the evidence seems to support his existence. An unnamed contributor to the 19th century publication *The Cambro-Briton* describes the life of Taliesin in their column “Bardic Portraits”. The author explains that “Taliesin, as a bard, was necessarily initiated in the Druidical mysteries [which his writings] prove him to have been strongly attached” (*The Cambro-Briton* , Vol 1, No. 1, page 12). It is confirmed in various other sources that Taliesin was in the service of several Celtic kings during his lifetime. Taliesin is often conflated with Merlin (Tolstoy, 136 and Goodrich, 288) and is considered by many to one of the influences forming the composite character of Merlin that we know today.

However, just to complicate matters, it should be mentioned that Goodrich believes there were two separate Merlins. She clearly respects Tolstoy’s theory, as she calls his work “a book of admirable scholarship” (Goodrich, 18), but she believes that Myrddin Wyllt was not the figure represented in Geoffrey of Monmouth’s works. Goodrich asserts “there probably are two separate Merlins, the first being King Arthur’s Merlin, born about 450[A.D] and died in 536” (Goodrich, 18). However, although her scholarly credentials are formidable, Goodrich seems to be the only scholar espousing this view, and it is not generally accepted that Geoffrey of Monmouth was describing a truly historical figure.

In addition to serving as our Social Media Coordinator and contributing greatly to our viral and global success, Carolyn Emerick has provided this great insight into the nature of the legendary Merlin the Magician. Carolyn has a BA in Literature from Empire State College and is currently pursuing a Masters of Library and Information Science at the University at Buffalo.

Whether Merlin existed as a sole individual, as a legend growing from glimmers of truth, or as a composite of numerous influences seems of little consequence to what he came to symbolize. Perhaps the only certainty we can deduce from this exploration is that Merlin stands for something profound. He lived, whether literally or figuratively, during a tumultuous time in British history. It was a frightening and transitory time. With the abandonment of Gaul by the Romans, the British Isles were left undefended. The Celts rose again to reclaim their land and their ancestral ways, only to face the onslaught of new invaders. The figure of Merlin was a symbol of strength and reliance on the old ways. As time marched on, however, the new Christianized society of Britain viewed the people of the heath with suspicion and fear. And, thus, Merlin became a figure shrouded in magic and mystery. Perhaps the fear of change, transition, and the unknown is the timeless thread tying us to this legend. Indeed, contemporary society is experiencing uncomfortable and frightening transitions of our own. It is fair to say these changes are eternal and ongoing. And, thus, the legend of Merlin, nearly two millennia later, still resonates with us today.

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Did you ever eat Colcannon,
made from lovely pickled cream?
With the greens and scallions mingled
like a picture in a dream.

Did you ever make a hole on top
to hold the melting flake
Of the creamy, flavoured butter that
your mother used to make?"

"Yes you did, so you did,
so did he and so did I.
And the more I think about it
sure the nearer I'm to cry.

Oh, wasn't it the happy days
when troubles we had not,
And our mothers made Colcannon
in the little skillet pot.

from "The Skillet Pot"
- a traditional Irish song



One often rare but always delicious Irish treat is the dish called Colcannon. It is most often made of mashed potatoes and cabbage, with the addition of a choice of ingredients from salt and milk, to onions, chives or leeks . . . and, of course, butter! It was an old Irish Halloween custom to serve the dish with prizes inside, such as rings, thimbles, or coins.

In Wales, there is a dish called *cawl cennin*, which is basically a leek soup and does not seem to have any relation to the Irish dish, despite the very similar name.

Whenever or wherever you can find a bowl of Irish Colcannon, do not pass it up!

So, what's next?

The number of authors and readers continues to grow for the Celtic Guide. Our number of pages has fluctuated to accommodate the new authorship, though the trend is towards an ever-increasing number. This issue is the largest yet. There is a technical situation with keeping the file size small enough for reasonably fast loading, and that is really the only limit we have.

I enjoy the fact that all opinions are welcomed, that the stories vary so widely in nature, and that everyone seems happy with writing towards a monthly theme.

This publication will be a great archive to have of a vast amount and wide range of Celtic-oriented knowledge. I am looking into what it would cost to have hard copies printed after the December issue is posted, of the entire year's issues, for folks to share or simply to decorate their bookshelves with. I know I would love to have a year's worth of printed Celtic Guides on my own bookshelf. I have some preliminary pricing and it may be prohibitive but by next issue I will let everyone know if it will be possible and what it will cost.

For November the theme will be Celtic Heroes. Lord knows there are enough of them to choose from. These can be leaders, accidental heroes, mythical heroes, any person, male or female, who has instilled pride, patriotism or inspiration to the masses.

In December the theme will be Celtic Gifts and Christmas will be its inspiration. Enjoy!!

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