

Author's Note : This is the only chapter that is very significantly out of date. It deals with how those interested can explore more fully the Druid tradition, and ends with a list of Druid groups, books and website. I have left it in here as a piece of history. Please refer to the notes published on the website (<http://www.whatisdruidry.org>) for more up to date information.

Chapter Nine

The Journey On ...

Druidry is growing at an extraordinary rate. As a spirituality which offers us ways of reconnecting with the powers of our land and our sacred heritage, offering links to the past and so into the future, it seems to counter the trend of many centuries of a culture which denies us our natural processes of regeneration. By bringing the brilliance of spirit into the physical world, it validates the sensuality of our experience, enabling us to perceive new depths of beauty and strength. Through honouring death, sexuality and change within nature, it offers a deeply affirming philosophy, offering us a freedom with which we ourselves can utilise these processes, and by so doing enjoy the continuous stimulation of renewal.

Its focus on nurturing creativity is based on the premise of celebrating individuality, the uniqueness of each soul's experience and growth. Yet because of this the wider reality of Druidry, as it is expressed through an ever increasing number of Orders and Groves world-wide, is harder and harder to describe.

Groves And Orders

It would be impossible to list here all the Orders and Groves that now exist. There are books which attempt to do this, for both historical reasons and to enable networking, but there would not be space in this introductory book.

There are listed here, however, some of the larger and more open Orders. It must be left up to the individual to judge whether any person they meet, associated with these or any other groups, shares their vision of Druidry and is worthy of their attention and resources. The reason for listing the Orders I do is because they are useful for making contacts, whether the seeker is looking for more information, for training or for open celebration that they can attend. By picking up a copy of one of the books which lists more Orders, others can easily be found.

If the training of a Druid used to take some 20 years, it may now seem strange to be offered a course which lasts only a year, or perhaps four. This is done with the clear understanding that the process of becoming a Druid is at least one lifetime's work and during that time a person will work with many teachers, in many different ways. Some Druids teach and learn through the apprentice system, while others work within Groves or by correspondence course with tutors.

In the search for a teacher, there must above all be trust. Any sense of superiority is a sign saying 'Back off!' Such a person may be a good teacher, but not for you! Perfect equality and perfect tolerance must be in evidence in any who teach. Druidry is about perfecting the art of connectedness, relationship, soul to soul, spirit to spirit, and it is through the warmth of interaction that we find our courage for the journey.

These are listed in alphabetical order:

The British Druid Order (BDO), run by the founder Philip Shallcrass and myself as joint chiefs, came into being in 1979. It organizes events, workshops, conferences and talks in Britain and around the world, including public and private ritual for rights of passage and major festivals. It publishes books and periodicals, including *The Druids' Voice*. Contact: BDO, PO Box 29, St Leonards-on-sea, East Sussex TN37 7YP, UK. The internet web page is at; <http://www.druidorder.demon.co.uk>

The Druid Clan of Dana is another international Order with many Groves world-wide. It was founded in 1992 by Lawrence and Olivia Durdin-Robertson and operates as part of the fellowship of Isis, the largest goddess centred network in the world. Contact: FOI, Clonegal Castle, Enniscorthy, Eire.

The Druid College of Albion is a gathering of Druids from many Pagan Druid Orders which offers a Correspondence course rich in Celtic culture and star lore. Students have a personal tutor to guide them through the training. Contact: BM Stargrove, London, WC1N 3XX, UK.

The Gorsedd of Bards of the Isles of Britain organizes public celebrations at the major festivals at Avebury and other ancient sacred sites in Britain and around the world. Ceremonies are family affairs, open to followers of any tradition, held in the spirit of Druidry and includes rites of passage, initiation into the Gorsedd and open eisteddfod. Contact: BDO, PO Box 29, St Leonards-on-sea, East Sussex TN37 7YP, UK. In America, contact: The Bards of Caer Pugetia, PO Box 9785, Seattle, WA 98109, USA.

The Henge of Keltria, one of the larger American Orders, runs a correspondence course with a strong Celtic leaning. There are Groves across the country sharing ceremonies and teaching of the Order. Contact: Henge of Keltria, PO Box 48369, Minneapolis, MN 55448-0369, USA.

The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids (OBOD) is the largest Order world-wide, led by chosen chief Philip Carr Gomm, many of whose books are listed below. Ross Nichols created the Order in 1964, but after his death in 1975 there was a period of dormancy until Philip, a former student of Nichols, resurrected it in 1988. OBOD runs a correspondence course which runs through the three grades of the tradition, giving a sound and inspiring grounding for any study of Druidry. Students are supported by a tutorial system. There are numerous Groves and groups which meet regularly all around the world, each with its own character and focus. Contact: OBOD, PO Box 1333, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1DY, UK. Their Internet web page is at: <http://www.obod.co.uk>

Further Reading

Emma Restall Orr, *Spirits of the Sacred Grove* (Thorsons, 1998): a very personal weave of experiential Druidry and healing philosophy, revealing Druidry in its many colours.

Druidry

Philip Carr Gomm, *Elements of the Druid Tradition* (Element Books, 1991): a short book doing much the same as this one, only with a different style and focus.

Philip Carr Gomm, *The Druid Way* (Elemental Books, 1993): a journey through the Sussex countryside, weaving Druid history, philosophy and experience with psychotherapy.

Philip Carr Gomm (Ed.), *The Druid Renaissance* (Thorsons, 1996): a fascinating collection of articles written by prominent members of the Druid community.

Ross Nichols, *The Book of Druidry*, edited by Philip Carr Gomm and John Matthews, (Aquarian, 1990): It is quite a tome but filled with genuine eccentricity and interest.

Animals

Philip and Stephanie Carr Gomm, *The Druid Animal Oracle* (Simon and Schuster, 1995): a divination deck filled with animal lore and mythology, with illustrations by Bill Worthington which make it worth its weight in gold.

Myths

Jeffrey Gantz, *The Mabinogion* (Penguin, 1976): one of the best translations of this key text of Welsh medieval literature.

Jeffery Gantz, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas* (Penguin 1981): Equally good on the Irish myths.

Thomas Kinsella, *The Tain* (Oxford University Press, 1970): a great translation of the Irish epic.

John Mathews, *A Druid Source Book* (Cassell, 1996): featuring some medieval literature together with a good deal of the eighteenth century revival material.

Philip Shallcrass, *The Story of Taliesin* (British Druid Order, 1997): a clear and vibrant, annotated version of this key text.

History

Miranda Green, *Exploring the World of the Druids* (Thames and Hudson, 1997): useful and accessible for history if rather inaccurate on modern Druidry.

Ronald Hutton, *The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles* (Blackwell, 1991): one of the best texts on British Pagan history, if rather academic, blowing out all the invalid assumptions and the romantic misconceptions.

Ronald Hutton, *Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in Britain* (Oxford University Press, 1996): the only work available which so comprehensively deals with this issue.

Prudence Jones and Nigel Pennick, *A History of Pagan Europe* (Routledge, 1995): a well written and accessible text which covers all of Europe and a must if you can't face Ronald Hutton's *Pagan Religions*.

Anne Ross, *Pagan Celtic Britain*, (Routledge, 1967); a classic.

Trees

Ellen Evert Hopman, *Tree Medicine, Tree Magic* (Phoenix, 1992): an interesting and well crafted book on tree lore and Druid spirituality.

Ellen Evert Hopman, *A Druid's Herbal* (Destiny Books, 1995): as above, on herbs.

Jacqueline Memory Patterson, *Tree Wisdom* (Thorsons, 1997): a Beautiful and Informative book on trees and Druidry,

Liz and Colin Murray, *The Celtic Tree Oracle* (Rider, 1988): a delightful divination set with useful tree lore.

Nigel Pennick, *The Secret Lore of the Runes and Other Ancient Alphabets* (Rider, 1991): runes and ogham and all the rest.

Other Orders

Philip Shallcrass, *A Druid Directory* (British Druid Order, 1997): a regularly updated edition listing all the working Druid Orders and Groves in Britain, with many from around the world.

The Future

Where Druidry is heading as a spirituality of freedom and creativity, reaching into the indigenous wisdom of these European islands, yet relevant world-wide, is an exciting concept. If you choose to follow its path through time to come, may you be guided well. May your gods be with you!