

ULTIMATE CELTS GUIDE



THE LANDS OF ALBION



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ULTIMATE CELTS GUIDE

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ULTIMATE CELTS GUIDE

The wind swept isles of Albion have long held the popular imagination, and legends are still being invented about the Celtic peoples. In modern times, the Cornish, Welsh, Scottish, Irish, and Manx are the heirs to the Celtic line. In ancient times, the Celts were spread across continental Europe and the Isles. They held great kingdoms and were skilled on horseback, at crossing the oceans, and at strength of arms.

There is much difficulty in separating reality from myth regarding the Celtic peoples, especially given their own penchant for interweaving their myths with reality. There was an oral tradition, and much was not written down until far after. This feeds our view of the Isles being a place fogged in myth and legend. They fought against the Romans, terrifying even the most trained of Legions, traded with the ancient Greeks, built castles on the barest of ocean rocks, and more.

The *Ultimate Celts Guide* is a sourcebook for Savage Worlds that seeks to convey a handful of polished gems made from the myth and history of the Celts, ensuring you can utilize these people and their legends in your games. Remembered for their ferocity in battle, their bravery that bordered on foolhardiness, and their love of land and place, the Celts are as much a people of story as they are people in history.



HISTORY OF THE CELTS

The first origins of the Celts are shrouded in mystery. Proto-Celts originated somewhere in central Europe, largely in what is now southern Germany. They quickly expanded across Europe until reaching their height in 275 BC when their tribes reached from the lands we now know as Great Britain, down into much of Spain, the majority of modern France and Germany, and into modern Turkey and Ukraine.

The Celts can be split, due to this widespread reach. There are the Gales (or Gaels, occasionally Gauls) made up of the Irish, Scottish, and Manx (the Manx are a group originating from the Isle of Man in the North Irish Sea, and long had their own empire amongst the sea). The other is the Brythonic Celts made up of the Welsh, the Cornish, and the Bretons (found in Brittany).

Those that reached into Europe fought against the Romans and were renowned for their utter fearlessness. One of the best-known sources of descriptions for Celtic Warfare comes from Julius Caesar himself in his *Commentaries on the Gallic Wars* (aka *Commentarii de Bello Gallico*). This war included a number of Germanic tribes beyond the Celts, but the Celts in particular terrified the Romans. They would enter battle in various states of nudity, even when fighting in the snow-swept Alps. Caesar himself described one incident where the Celts, camped farther up the mountains than the Romans, began to run down the mountain only to throw their shields on the ground in front of them and ride them down as though they were modern snowboards.

The modern view of the Celts comes from where they settled and lasted the longest: the Islands of Great Britain and Ireland. They settled here and traded with the ancient Greeks, shipping copper from modern Cornwall prior to Alexander the Great.

The early Celts of Britain followed a druidic faith. They had an absolute belief in the Otherworld, where their souls go after death. This helped support their bravery on the battlefield, making them nearly fearless. Later, when converted to Christianity, most Celts would exhibit a similar, almost manic, devotion.

Celtic druidism, or animism, is focused on the land, sea, and sky. This led to an eloquence of speech capable of describing their vast and beautiful lands, again commented on by Julius Caesar in *de Bello Gallico*. Eloquence was, in part, a product of prodigious memories exemplified by nearly all Celts the Romans had dealings with. Emperor Constantine I (305-337) was visited by a Celtic prince who exemplified both comfort in front of crowds, 'haranguing the Senate, leaning on his long shield', but also a precise recollection of even the smallest details.

Poetry was used by the Celts as an ongoing and ever-evolving tool for memory, and through the devices of meter, rhyme, repetition, alliteration, and more, they were able to flummox and woo Romans. Their focus on being well spoken and able to engage in rhetoric resulted in many Celts who had dealings with the Romans to be fully fluent in Latin, and it is easy to surmise they were capable of learning other languages when it suited them.

Another reason for the difficulty of the Celts' early history is their unique reckoning of time. Stories would often include specific and spurious claims as to the difference of time between two things. However, all stories focused on the paradigm of Celtic society – the story itself is important, when it happened is much less so. Much of early Celtic history is simply lost as it was upheld through an oral tradition that regularly dropped earlier history when it was of limited use.

It is theorized that Keltoi, the origins of the modern Celt, comes from the Indo-European root *kel*, meaning hidden. Some have suggested this was due to their penchant for writing down nothing in order to preserve their store of knowledge and maintain the secrecy of religious and magic lore.

Ultimate Celts Guide

The name 'druid' doesn't come from Celtic roots. Instead, it was a label applied by the Greeks as a merging of *drus*, meaning oak, and *wid*, meaning to know, meaning that druids were the "oak-knowers". This fit in with Celtic beliefs of the oak being the mightiest and most important of all trees, with the others ranked below it.

Much of their history is determined by their dealings with others. We know that by 400 BC, the Celts had settled throughout much of Europe, and in 335 BC they entered into a treaty between the adjacent Celtic tribes and Alexander the Great. In 275 BC, after attacking and pillaging Greece after the death of Alexander, the Celts established the state of Galatia in what is modern Turkey. Much of the wars between the Celts and the Romans happened before Caesar's time, and between 224 BC and 191 BC, Rome conquers much of the land they called Gaul, inhabited by Celts.

The roughly sketched out history of the Celts begins to fill-in after 58-51 BC, the years in which Caesar fought against the Gallic tribes, invading Britain in 55 BC. Perhaps serving as a cruel twist of historical revenge for Brennus, an early Celtic leader who sacked Rome in 400 BC, Rome conquered vast swaths of the Celtic lands, pushing them north into what is now Scotland and across the Irish Sea to Ireland. The Celts were not easily subdued and the Picts, a Scottish variant of the larger Celtic people, were one of the groups that ultimately stopped the expansion of Rome.

With the collapse of the Roman Empire in 476 AD, the Celts were ready to resume self-rule. Many had been converted to Christianity, especially the Irish. Despite the transition to Christian belief, many superstitions and traditional practices remained.

Somewhere between 490 AD and 570 AD, St. Brendan the Navigator lived and traveled amongst the Celtic isles. Like many of the holy men of the Celts, Brendan spent much of his time on the move, visiting the Orkney Islands, Shetland, and Iona itself as only a few of the locations during his lifetime. During these travels, Brendan claims that he had set out to find the Promised Land amongst the islands. Using a unique, and still used, boat design that sat high in the water called a *curragh*, made using a large wooden frame covered in ox-hide, he set out with a number of monks. Throughout his story, fantastical though much of it is, there are suggestions that even at this early year he may have reached as far West as Iceland or even the coasts of Newfoundland.

Even in this year, Irish Monks knew the world was round, and after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, they took pains to gather a large volume of classical scholarship including scientific and geographical treatises. Ireland served for a long time as a focus for scholarly refugees; leading to a great accumulation of knowledge within Irish monasteries.

By 793, Celtic domination of their own lands and seas was coming to an end when Vikings ransacked the island monastery of Lindisfarne off the coast of Northumberland. For the next few hundred years the Celts, Danes, and Anglo-Saxons would fight over the islands. During this time the Celts largely and generally retained control of Cornwall, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, and by the end of the period Scotland was able to impose rule over many of the outlying island kingdoms around it. Orkney and Shetland remained in control by the Norwegian Vikings, and later under Norway, until the fifteenth century when they were annexed by Scotland. To this day, the islands belong to Denmark as their king never renounced his right to the land. Their control began to slip as Cornwall was annexed in 824. Edward I of England invaded North Wales in 1277 and 1282. Despite Cornwall's legal annexation, it retained much of its rights and legal systems into modernity, and the Cornish peoples are still widely considered to be unique from the rest of the larger nation.

It was during the rule of Edward I of England that much of the Celts were brought under the heel of England. Edward led two massive invasions of Wales in 1277 and 1282, enacting a number of laws and regulations aimed at stamping out the language and history of the Welsh. This was all in addition to his ongoing struggles

against the Scottish. Prior to this, in 1170, a Marcher Lord of England set sail for Ireland and seized Dublin and the surrounding land. The nobles that relocated from England to Ireland, ironically, became more Irish than the Irish, adopting their culture and became monoglots, speaking only Gaelic. This led to the Statute of Kilkenny, which required the English language be used to conduct business, they could only refer to each other by their English names, and horses must be ridden in the English style rather than the Irish manner.

Despite this, bits of seamanship knowledge continued and the Irish and Manx, in particular, were fond of smuggling and laundering money and goods through their activities. The smuggling eventually became so problematic the British crown bought the Isle of Man from its proper rulers in 1765.

By the 1800's, England had all but solidified its control over Great Britain. There were small uprisings and tensions, but there were no great rebellions like those that once took place.

As late as 1900, there was an incident where a number of druids and the Order of Bards, Ovates, and Druids cursed the owner of the private land that Stonehenge was upon at that time.

DRUIDS AND PAGANISM

Despite centuries of Christendom and Anglicization, druidic and pagan traditions continue to exist. This religious adherence, however, has largely been in secret. Though we know much of the ancient history of the druidic faith, and much of the detail that is related to these religious observances, there is relatively little known about the secret followers from much of history.

There have been a number of larger Celtic traditions adapted or otherwise altered to fit into their Christian or Western society. The great bonfires of Samhuinn have been mixed with the traditions for Hallowe'en and Guy Fawkes, and the ghost fences of old made from the heads of the deceased have been replaced with turnip lanterns.

Despite these aspects that remain, much of the old druidic beliefs are based on conjecture, theory, and recreations from modern practices. We do know the druids were polytheistic, though their pantheon was not organized and neat like those of the Greeks or the Romans. Instead, druidic beliefs were often oriented around shape-changing, gods and goddesses in triads, and the relatively common changing of genders amongst the gods and spirits, leading to a cloudy view of their pantheon. The Celts long believed they were in a situation of constant bargaining with the gods, who were capricious and almost childlike. Sacrifice or gifts were given before the harvest, to ensure it would be bountiful, and they knew the gods often needed to be distracted.

Julius Caesar believed druidic teachings took at least twenty years, due to his limited exposure to them. The oral tradition, oft used to preserve secrecy, was presumably used here again. There has never been a major cache of druidic texts found and exposed to the public, further enshrouding this faith in mystery.

Above and beyond their religious functions, the druids also served a judicial function, acting independent of any individual tribe. They would dispense justice in small disputes, and were occasionally called upon to adjudicate wars. The Greeks, who traded with the Celts before the reign of Alexander the Great, noted the Celtic druids were capable of stopping battles in the middle of the carnage. A druid, ensconced in their robes that may have been white, as they are now, but were more likely brown, could step out into the battle with arms raised high to gain the attention of the warriors, ordering them to lower their arms.

Celtic justice was based very much on the concept of a life for a life. It was not uncommon to punish murderers with death and, in the way Celtic justice often included aspects of the supernatural, the death of a druid or a king could be ordered to stop a plague.

Over time, Christian Saints and druidic figures blurred and merged, creating some of the modern interpretations. A number of older Celtic myths and stories were later attributed to Saints.

There are a number of differences between the modern Celtic languages, and they have experienced extensive drift. Most individuals have variations on their names, and they may not all be presented here. There are also a number of different words adopted and used interchangeably.

It is key to note the beliefs of the Celts were brutal and bloody, even compared to the activities of the Romans and other contemporaries. Caesar provided us with a description of a Celtic grove his men stumbled upon. The branches of the trees comprising the grove were interlaced, cutting off all light that would have normally trickled down. Water, ever an important factor in Celtic beliefs, flows from a natural spring. On altars, human body parts, entrails, and offal are piled in offering to whatever spirits they worshipped. While Caesar had incentive to be colorful in his writings, other sources have demonstrated that kings would be drowned or brutalized and dumped in bogs as a sacrifice to the gods if things went poorly under their rule.

Other research has revealed the practice of the “fountain of blood” – a practice where a live person would have a rope tightened around his neck, many Celtic sacrifices appear to be men, immediately before the head would be cut off. The result was an enormous pressurized fountain of blood to erupt forth. The Celtic beliefs were bloody, brutal, and often sexual.

After battles or war, Celts would not ransom their captives. Instead, they sacrificed the captives to gods, spirits, and even the very forces of nature. They would sacrifice them by sword or spear, through hanging, impaling, and even drowning. The bodies, or at least the parts that remained, would often be either immolated, along with any animals they had seized, or would be organized into designs, the meaning of which has faded into history.

The first battle with Boudica, for example, demonstrated the willingness to engage in bloody sacrifices. After defeating the Romans, they marched the wives of the Romans out to a ritual site for Andraste, the Celtic god of victory. There, they tied the women to trees, cut their breasts off and stuffed into their mouths right before inserting sharpened stakes into their anuses and shoved up to kill them through impaling.

Writer Neil Gaiman has noted in his work that the Celts have a sort of proto religion they practice underneath whatever other religion they appear to be practicing. This may shed light on the reasoning behind the sacrifice of bulls continuing until at least 1670 in Scotland, despite being ostensibly Christian. In this particular incident, a man sailed a bull to a particular island and sacrificed the bull to a god named Mourie, saying it was done for his wife's health.

CELTIC LANGUAGE

Language has always been an important aspect of life for the Celtic people. There have been a number of steps taken by the British Crown to stamp out the use of various languages. Up until recently, there were a number of laws and other acts that sought to limit the use of these traditional languages, including laws against the recitation of poetry and other aspects of the Celtic oral tradition. In modern times, only one of the Celtic languages is considered by UNESCO to not be endangered – Welsh.

There is a long history of the Celtic languages being feared and many attempts to stamp it out. Despite languishing and suffering for much of recent history, they continue to be spoken in many places, and the languages have not died. This remains an ongoing challenge between the Celtic people and the rest of the isles.

CELTIC SOCIETY

Caesar, again our primary written source for much of the early history of the Celts, compiled a sketch of Celtic Society. Like many early societies, it was a pyramid structure with a warrior class on top supported by a professional class of priests, prophets, bards, physicians, lawyers, and artists and finally a broad base of both free and unfree agricultural proletariat that supported Celtic society. As Celtic societies evolved, the king, or *righ* in Gaelic, sat at the top of this pyramid and was widely believed to be close to the divine.

Druids, and later other religious figures, sit to the side of Celtic society. Their neutrality is often highly valued, and they were aside from society general.

RANKS IN CELTIC SOCIETY

Ceann Mhor (Great Chief): An honorific adopted or given to some great rulers throughout Celtic history. The closest analogy is probably the title of Great Khan in the parlance of the steppes tribes after the few generations immediately following Genghis Khan. Ceann Mhor would be the greatest ruler of an area, often holding an above average set of holdings for a king.

King (or Queen): A king (*righ*) or queen (*banrigh*) in Celtic society ruled over a small kingdom. This could be anything from a smattering of islands or the Isle of Man, to the entirety of Scotland. The use of the honorific king or queen was looser in Celtic societies than many of their neighbors. Further, crowns were not always passed directly down a bloodline through primogeniture, as the play *Macbeth* shows us through a highly inaccurate portrayal of historic events. They did, nearly always, fall to the male of the line. This wasn't without exceptions, and Celtic history is peppered with powerful and fierce women who rose to power and led armies. There was a tendency for rulers to be men, and that was certainly the assumption for much of their history, but women were often able to demonstrate capacity and assume leadership. The power held by the king or queen of a land was largely dependent on the approval and agreement of their vassals. It was not uncommon for disgruntled vassals to rise up against their ruler and impose a new head of state.

Lesser Kings (or Queens): Unlike other forms of medieval and other contemporary societies, many of the Celtic nations recognized kings and queens of a lower rank than the absolute ruler. The lesser kings and queens were, at times, interchangeably referred to as lords and ladies or as kings and queens.

Nobles: There was, within each Celtic society from the tribal up to the vastest of kingdoms, a noble class. Nobles comprised the primary warrior class. They were the precursors, in many instances, to the knightly class. They were primarily made of the men of the nobility, but there were inconsistent rules and norms regarding whether women could be warriors. When they were not at war, the nobility was much like their Viking neighbors in that the men were largely farmers, fishers, and traders. Warriors wore their daggers and swords at all time to signify their rank, and for protection.

The treatment of noble women was inconsistent over time and across different tribes. In broad strokes, women could own property, choose their own husband, and were involved in decision-making. There are several incidences of women becoming warriors and great leaders, but this was a relatively rare occurrence. Women were also able to divorce their husbands for nearly any sort of marital failing.



Fianna and Border Reivers: At multiple times during the history of the Celts, there have been different groups of unmarried noblemen that would wander the Celtic lands, living by hunting and looting. The Fianna were a druidic warrior cult that roamed the hills, terrified the countryside, and were berated for their druidic lifestyle.

Later, the Border Reivers were formed from both the British and the Scottish and raided both sides of the English and Scottish borders indiscriminately. The Reivers were active off and on between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries. They conducted raids on the backs of nags and bog ponies, specialized horses for picking their ways across the highlands and the bogs of Scotland and the border areas. The Reivers would conduct raids from between a few dozen people, to gigantic raids of three thousand men. They used lances, swords, and crossbows or longbows. Later in history they would also use one or more pistols.

Druids: The druids stood aside from Celtic society, though certainly were well regarded by all. They served multiple roles as advisors, judges, and religious figures. Often a single group of druids would be associated with several different tribes, and, in the same vein, a single tribe could be associated with several different groups of druids.

Vate or Ovate: Some consider there to be three pillars of Celtic culture – the druids and the bards constitute two of them, with the vate, or ovate, serving as the third. Where druids handled the general spiritual needs of society, vates served as prophets, seers, healers, and diviners. They served as a sort of fortune-teller for the Celts, with some sources suggesting they could communicate with the dead through their own near-death experiences. They were also often responsible for the actual act of taking a sacrifice during such a procedure.

Bards and Poets: Bards of Celtic culture also stood aside from the greater body of Celtic society. They served multiple functions of entertainer, newspaper, and archivist or historian. If they traveled, they would collect the stories and histories of the greater Celtic people of their particular region and weave them into the larger mythology of the Celtic peoples. They would regularly recite ballads, poems, and stories for the entertainment of all. They were often hired by the nobility to compose eulogies for the deceased. Many bards and poets went to specialized schools to prepare for this role in society. Elsewhere, such as with the *seanchaithe of Ireland*, they were taught by their parents and the position was inherited.

Fili: In Ireland, there was a particular elite band of poets known as the *fili* that existed up until the dismantling of Irish classes by the English during the Renaissance. The *fili* served many roles including magician, lawgiver, poet, historian, counselor, and more. Over time, these responsibilities were split between the *brehons*, for law, and druids, for spirituality. The *fili* are not bards; in fact many consider bards to be relatively cheap entertainers, and this is certainly true in Ireland.

Tribesmen: This was the general class of many members of Celtic society. They were not given their own land to work, though land was generally held entirely by the king or queen with the license to farm it dispersed throughout the larger organization of Celtic society. They were non-professional and would regularly work as different forms of labor whether it be for farming, herding, or unskilled crafts.

Non-Freemen: This was the lowest rank in Celtic society, comprised of law-breakers or holders of some kind of debt to society. These individuals were expected to work off their debt to society, and as a result physical punishment was relatively rare. The non-freemen of society were not necessarily slaves, though it depended on the crime in question.

Slaves: Despite some recent whitewashing of Celtic history, there was a healthy trade in the export of slaves from the Isles for centuries before the Norman invasion. Non-freemen could, at times, be sold as slaves. This was looked down upon by some tribes and other groups, and it was one of the first versions of slavery to be intermittently banned. Many of the slaves were either particularly egregious criminals or individuals captured during war or raids against other tribes or societies.

The Celtic languages reflected their fascination with their own land. Considered flowery by both the English and the Romans, it was a language focused on describing their land and their herds. Herds of cattle and sheep were often more important as a signifier of wealth than land to the early Celts. They were a source of meat – a luxury. A deep and meaningful love of land permeates throughout the people, and much time has been spent composing poems and odes to its beauty.

CELTIC LANDS

While there is a mythological time when the Celts were settled across much of Europe, and may even have controlled much of this land, the Celtic lands and holdings most often refer to the British Isles. This has been the land they have, more or less, held throughout the centuries.

The lands of Scotland, Ireland, the Isle of Man, Wales, and Cornwall are widely considered to be the sources of the Celtic people. These lands have some commonalities – all are hilly, green places with similar climates, all are near the sea, and all were capable of supporting both herds of sheep and herds of cattle. The lands include hills, mountains, bogs, forests, and more. The highlands of Scotland, the Moors, and the spits of rock that make up some of the smaller islands around the larger ones have long captured the imagination of writers, directors, and more.

IRELAND (GREEN)

Ireland is the second largest island amongst the British Isles. In broad strokes, the island's geography is largely low-lying mountains surrounding a central plain. Prior to the Middle Ages, the island was largely forested. There are many rivers throughout, with the River Shannon bisecting the island, and lakes of varying sizes mark the island. Countless inlets and bays cut into the coastline. Many of them have been used as places to land ships and build villages.

The ocean shapes and rules Ireland, giving it a temperate climate, though it is much warmer than other locations at similar latitudes. There is regularly less than two months of the year the temperature drops below freezing. The bogs of Ireland are of key importance for not only the character of the island, but also provide one of its more important heating resources for some of its history. Peat has been cut out of the bogs into near cubes to be burned for heat. (It is still used for burning to create electricity and heat.) Icebergs scraped the Earth over the last Ice Age, leaving depressions that filled with water, creating numerous bogs typically located near bodies of water.

The most northerly point of the island is Malin Head in the northern mountains of the island. The first lighthouse can be seen to the northeast as the rocks continue directly into the sea.

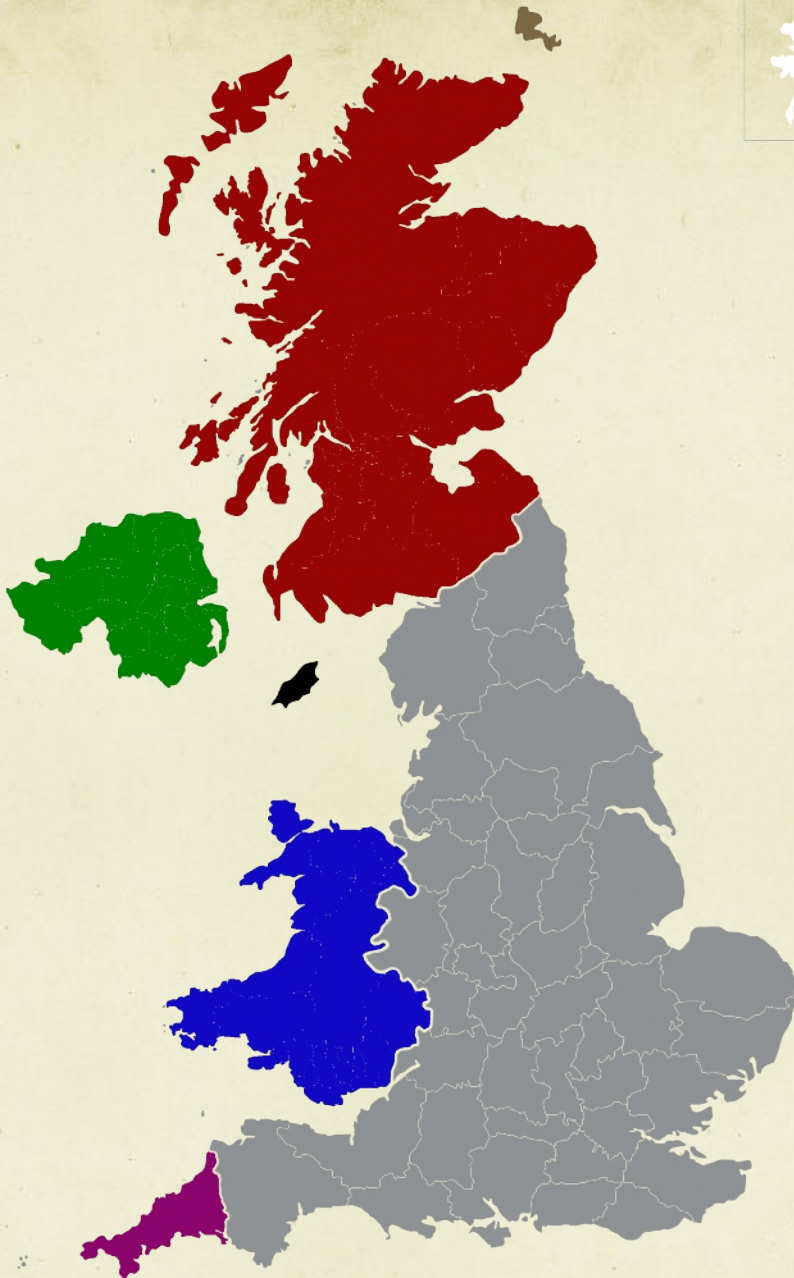
SCOTLAND (RED)

Scotland, exempting the islands, can be divided into three main geographic regions: the Highlands, the Central Lowlands, and the Southern Uplands. The islands are divided into the Inner Hebrides, the Outer Hebrides, the Isles of Shetland, and the Isles of Orkney.

The Southern Uplands is the southernmost portion of the country, forming the entire border with England. They are primarily rolling hills, light forests, and some open moors. The lands were used extensively for forestry and farming for much of its history, and are part of the lands the reivers inhabited during their time.

Similarly, the Central Lowlands, the other portion of Scotland that makes up the lowlands along with the Southern Uplands, is made up of relatively rolling hills. The region is more densely populated than the Uplands and is bordered to the north by the Grampian Mountains and to the south by a fault line.

Amongst the mainland features are the Highlands. They reach from the Grampian Mountains out to the sea. The Grampian Mountains cut across Scotland from northeast to the west. Numerous streams that become mighty rivers have their



origins amongst these heights. The mountains range across a number of different heights, reaching their highest point with Ben Macdui at 4,295 ft.

Apart from these are the islands that surround Scotland, the Inner and Outer Hebrides. Geographically, they are similar to the Highlands, merely thrusting out of the water instead. Both in ancient and modern times, the primary method of transportation around them was through the use of ferries and boats, even when land passage between two points was only theoretically possible. The islands are often rocky and despite the fact there are more than a hundred of them, only the minority are currently populated. Some are capable of supporting crops or herds being covered in fields of green. Many of the larger ones have, or once had, forests topping their cliffs.

Scattered across many of these islands, especially along the Outer Hebrids, are *machair*, a fertile low-lying dune pastureland. These lands are used for either grazing or farming. They form inland from a large dune ridge that offers a modicum of protection from the oceanic weather. The *machair* is largely sandy, with the sand being bright white due to high calcium concentrations, with grasses and soil on the top. Bogs are found adjacent to *machair*, given the relatively watery locations they are found in.

ORKNEY ISLANDS (BROWN)

People have inhabited Orkney for at least the past 8,500 years, beginning with Neolithic tribes, then the Picts, before being annexed and settled by the Norse. Scotland later annexed the islands to the Scottish Crown following failure to pay a dowry for James III's bride. The islands are largely on old red sandstone, and are extremely fertile. Despite their small size, much of the islands are used for farmland.

Orkney Islands are dotted with ancient ruins, including round houses from at least 700 BC, and the ruins of round towers called *brochs*. The nature and origin of the *brochs* is still debated, but from the surrounding ruins and underground storage near them, they were certainly the center of communities. The transition from Pictish rule to Norse is contentious, with theories ranging the entire gambit from peaceful integration to enslavement and genocide.

This set of islands is largely low-lying with the occasional sandstone hill. The islands are notable for the absence of trees, in part due to the strong and bellowing winds that tear across the ocean not broken up by any hills or mountains. Lochs dot the islands, but there is an absence of developed rivers outside of small drainage from highlands to lowlands.

The Northern Isles, a group of moderately sized islands clustered to the north of the rest of the collection, are home to, amongst other flora and fauna, a unique, feral, seaweed eating sheep. Farther north the islands are less settled, mostly due to their relatively small sizes.

SHETLAND ISLANDS (WHITE - INSET)

The Shetland Islands lie much farther north than the rest of Scotland. There are about one hundred islands, though only sixteen of them are inhabited. The islands are in an area geologically active historically, seen through the sandstone with granite intrusions and ores.

There are at least 6,000 years' worth of inhabitation on the Shetland Islands and over 5,000 archaeological sites. Settlements go back to at least the Bronze Age, including the *brochs* also found in the Orkney Islands. Similar to the Orkneys, the islands were annexed by the Norse, again with the status of what happened to the indigenous peoples unknown. The islands are similarly flat to the Orkneys.

WALES (BLUE)

Wales is a mostly mountainous region that lies to the west of England, bordered on three sides by sea. There are more than fifty islands off the coast of Wales considered to be part of Wales proper. The land is called *Crymru* (pronounced sort of like "Kem-Ri") by the locals, with a unique local identity since at least the departing of the Romans.

The coast of Wales has been renowned for beautiful beaches, but, due to many rocks off the coast and dangerous winds that blow through the local waters, shipwrecks are common. Unlit islands abound in the waters off the coast, further exacerbating the problem.

From a land-use basis, Wales is a grazing and grasslands region – along the slopes of many hills and mountains herds of animals can be seen. A minority of the

land is used for agriculture, with more land going to woodlands and urban lands than agriculture.

Due to its coastal nature and the wall made of the mountains that lie between it and England, Wales tends to be overly cloudy, especially when compared with other parts of the isles. The temperatures range from -20°C (-4°F) up to 30°C (86°F).

ISLE OF MAN (BLACK)

The Isle of Man, once the seat of the Kingdom of the Isles, a kingdom that for a long time made up the Isle of Man, much of the Scottish Hebrides, Orkney, and the Shetland Islands, sits in the middle of the Northern Irish Sea, almost equidistant from Scotland, Ireland, England, and Wales.

The island is mostly flat with hills to the north and south and a large central valley between them. The Northern hills are more resembling of a plateau and include deposits left from glacial time. The land to the south is more traditionally hilly with distinct valleys cutting through them.

The Isle of Man is unique in many ways – the parliament on Man is the oldest continuously existing governing body in the world and it still holds control over all of its own domestic matters. The Isle of Man is not officially part of the United Kingdom under British law, but in practice it is for dealing with international affairs and military actions. The result is a crown dependency within the larger British or UK nation.

Fisheries and agriculture, combined with military might and a tactical location, were once the most important aspects of the island. As it transitioned towards a modern economy, the focus has become more on banking, tourism, and serving as essentially an offshore tax haven.

CORNWALL (PURPLE)

Cornwall makes up the southwestern peninsula of Great Britain, exposing itself on three gigantic sides to the weather of the Atlantic Ocean. The coasts of Cornwall are largely cliffs, plunging from heights into the frigid sea and ocean below. Though there are many cliffs, there are also many golden-sanded beaches that support a modern tourism industry. The southern coast, sheltered through features of the geography and by the bulk of the rest of the peninsula, is called the Cornwall Riviera and has several places ideal for anchoring.

The inland of Cornwall is largely an east-west spine of rocky, infertile, exposed uplands. Great growths of granite intrude through the sedimentary rock and the soil. Within the uplands, and permeating throughout much of the rest of the peninsula, are deposits of tin, copper, lead, zinc, and silver. Surrounding these uplands are more pastoral, fertile farmlands. Nearing the south coast, valleys covered by deep and dark woods create a shaded, moist climate.

Cornwall is the mildest and sunniest climate in all of the United Kingdom. Warm ocean currents and gulf-streams help to mediate the weather, coupled with its relatively southern location. Extreme temperatures at either end of the spectrum are exceedingly rare.

Existing at the periphery of the United Kingdom, and of strategic importance due to the resources found on the peninsula, Cornwall has long had a strained relationship with England. There is evidence that Roman dominance was likely more in theory than in actuality in much of the Cornish lands. Throughout much of Cornish history, their neighbors held power over them but didn't fully control them. Over time, however, the English gained more and more control over Cornwall.

War parties often served as mercenaries for other forces. Hannibal Barca was known to have employed a large number of Celtic mercenaries in his attempts to cross the Alps with reports that others were found in Egypt and even being present at the funeral of King Herod the Great.

THE POWERFUL CELTS

The Celtic people have a long history of military engagements. Until the adoption of the feudalism most nations of the Middle Ages utilized, and to an extent continuing even afterwards, the Celts organized their military along cultural, rather than practical, lines. They organized into war bands from numerous tribes and locations, each following a war leader (potentially called a *Uiros Ueramos* in Celit-berean). Tribes could organize into confederations and larger parties for raiding and other activities, based on requirement.

Upon adopting feudalism, especially in Scotland and Wales, military activities became increasingly organized along more commonly accepted principles. Hints and pieces of the traditional Celtic modes of organization continued however, as can be seen with the Celtic Reivers and the fights over the crown of Scotland and other nations. Modern historians have challenged many of the portrayals of Celts as mere barbarians, especially from ancient times. Through there were certainly aspects to their fighting that were barbaric compared to the Romans and others, they likely had at least some form of organization, unlike the complete free-for-all that Caesar portrayed.

Historians confirm the Celts regularly fought in light cloaks at most and sometimes in states of near nudity. Whether they fought in the nude or not is under some contention, though they were certainly in a much less dressed state than the Romans and others. They often didn't fight in metal armor or helmets, a fact supported by both their own stories and archaeological evidence.

The Irish were the last to adopt the medieval style of warfare in response to the Norman invasion.

GAELIC WARFARE

This refers to the warfare of the Manx, Irish, and Scots in the medieval to pre-modern periods of warfare. After the Roman period, the military practices and stratagems diverged from those utilized by the Welsh and the Cornish. This was, in part, due to a lesser degree of exposure to the Britonic and pre-Britonic people, unlike the Welsh who regularly had to protect themselves from their neighbors. Similarly, the Lowland Scots had adopted what was primarily in line with the English style of fighting in the Middle Ages.

These Celts were often in a state of nearly perpetual war with their neighbors, but pitched battles were rare. Instead, there was a nearly constant threat of raids or skirmishes with neighbors. The seizing of cattle and slaves forced economic pressure resulting in assaults on neighbors.

When true pitched battles did occur, they were handled differently if it was an intertribal conflict between Celtic tribes compared to when they faced Romans, Angles, Saxons, Vikings, or others. In these battles it was almost always a battle of champions. Though entire armies would be arrayed, only key champions from each side would engage in actual combat. The battle would usually be decided by these champions, with the rest of the army going unbloodied. This was an economically efficient approach and would minimize total deaths while still resolving whatever conflict there was. It is noted by modern observers how neatly this fit into the Celtic view of the world. Celtic history focuses almost solely on the great deeds of great men and women, negating to consider the ebbs and flows of larger issues. At times, all-out battles would break out resulting in vast and violent charges.

For centuries, the Gaels had relied on the *Ceithearn* (pronounced, confusingly enough “kern”), light skirmishing foot soldiers who harassed their enemies with missiles. They wore colored tunics without significant armor, only occasionally affording boiled leather tunics or padded coats. The Irish, in particular, were notorious for looting or purchasing the newest weaponry and copying the methodologies of the rest of Europe. It was not uncommon for each individual soldier to provide his or her own arms and armor. As a result, the nobility often had better equipment than other members of the military. By the 1500s, the Gaelic Irish were up to date with modern weaponry, including the pike and shot formations favored by the mainland.

GALLOWGLASS

Gaelic warfare led to the development of the gallowglass, from *gall óglaigh* in Irish, a type of mercenary that arose amongst the Scots and Irish. They originated from the Scottish-Norse intermarriages occurring regularly. Over time, they began to settle and establish sects in Ireland after being dispossessed for choosing the wrong side of the War for Scottish Independence.

The gallowglass were fierce fighters who demonstrated unwavering loyalty to whomever held their contract. It would not do well for them to renege on a contract that was in effect, so they were often chosen as private bodyguards for nobles. Many were rewarded for effective service with lands and noble titles of their own, further engendering a strong sense of loyalty.

The gallowglass warriors would remain in force until the widespread advent of gunpowder, which largely rendered them ineffective at their role. Prior to this development, they wielded either massive two-handed sparth axes with broadswords or a claymore. They would be equipped with heavy mail armor over padded leather jackets with an iron helmet, and each would be accompanied by one or two young boys: one with throwing spears and the other carrying provisions. The uses of the young men would change from time to time, occasionally dipping so low as a single young man to carry the provisions and additional weapons of two separate mercenaries.

These warriors served as a block of formidable shock troops, usually tasked with holding a location. Their mighty axes and claymore allowed them to withstand the charges of men on horseback, and skilled mercenaries could break the legs of a horse mid-charge.

Reports have told of these mercenaries fighting across mainland Europe, including with the French and Dutch, in the Swiss Guard, and in the forces of the Swedish during the Thirty Years War.

CHAMPION WARFARE

The Gaels adopted the practice of ritual combat from the Vikings, based on a value of both the clan and the prowess of the individual. These battles were often the subject of epic poetry and myth, and regularly occurred before the beginning of a pitched battle. The best soldiers from each army would be chosen as champions and face off at the fording of a river.

Champion warfare evolved over time, taking aspects of Viking champion fighting, the Italian practice of honor duels, and others. In the 1600s, efforts were made to stamp out duels throughout the British Isles. Despite these efforts, the practices of duels continued to spread.

This eventually gave rise to the Scottish martial arts, a specific methodology of fencing focused on the basket-hilted Scottish broadsword and a dirk. There were other disciplines developed including the use of a spadroon, dirk, quarterstaff, targe, and others.

With the widespread use of pistols, most duels shifted over to their use. Despite this, each duelist would have both sword and a pistol to undertake the duel with. In 1773, for example, there was a duel between Lord Townshend and the Earl of Bellamont on the outskirts of London. They undertook the proper rules of a duel, such as they were at the time: at the turn, Lord Townshend fired a shot and hit Bellamont in the groin. Bellamont was taken from the field in a chair. This turned the public against Lord Townshend, and Bellamont was soon lauded as a hero for standing up to the Lord on issues of principle. This became contentious soon after as the duel was due to positions each had taken on political issues, rather than actual issues of honor as was widely understood within Irish society. It was nearly impossible to not accept a challenge, even if it was believed to be unwarranted or ridiculous.

It is important to distance duels and champion warfare from trial by combat. Even as late as the 1700s, there would be the rare trial by combat ordered. Duels, by contrast, continued well into the 1800s. The ambivalence of Irish society towards dueling can be exemplified in the duel between O'Connell and D'Esterre – the Catholic Church frowned upon duels, as did the law, and this duel became symbolic as it was a Catholic dueling against a Protestant. O'Connell wanted to refuse the duel, but D'Esterre was affirmed as the Catholic champion and was unable to do anything but accept for his honor's sake. Following this, and an aborted duel with Sir Robert Peel, O'Connell refused to fight anymore duels and made this public knowledge. This kick-started a drastic shift in how problems were resolved, and by the 1840s most differences were settled without dueling.

RAIDING

Much of Gaelic warfare was not actually based on the control of territory or victory in pitched battles. Instead, the purpose was based around raiding and the theft of cattle. Cattle were one of the most worthwhile commodities within Ireland, and they were highly movable. The theft of large numbers of cattle, for example, could effectively bankrupt a lord. It was often a common practice for the lord's wealth to be restored if they were willing to submit to the rulership of whoever the thief was. At this time, they would be required to send children as hostages.

Battles were typically only fought during large military engagements or if the lord and his troops were able to intercept raiders before they were able to escape. Raiders were only able to conduct military actions against peasants rather than being prepared for pitched combat. The various petty kings of Ireland didn't have standing armies, and the system was primarily based on the levy-style of raising armies as needed. This led to drastic transitions over to standing mercenary forces, like the gallowglass discussed above.

INTO MEDIEVAL TIMES AND BEYOND

As the nations transitioned into medieval ages, military strategies changed. They adopted the same practices as the rest of Europe, namely a combination of mounted knights, the gallowglass serving as strong infantry blocks, and lightly armed and armored skirmishers using missiles against their enemies. These were, in essence, continued evolutions of the *ceithearn*, the gallowglass, and mounted nobility on horseback. The *ceithearn* made up the vast bulk of the troops deployed at any given time, with fewer members of the gallowglass and the mounted nobility.

As a result, Irish military practices long favored mobility and speed. Even when allied with the Spanish against the British, the Irish relied on their tried and true military practices. In part, this was because larger military traditions, especially coming from the British, their most common foe, were oriented around holding land. The British generally assumed that if they were to decapitate a state, by removing the leadership and assuming that mantle for themselves, they would gain control of both land and the labor to work it. Feudalism was oriented around this capacity and lords would be allowed to submit to a new ruler, transferring their lands and subjects to a new king. There were also attempts to force the Irish to submit voluntarily without the killing off of the higher-ranking lords.

These efforts did not always work – though there was a focus on what were counter-insurgency tactics through developing loyalty and goodwill amongst the population; rebellions were not an uncommon feature amongst the Irish. Even when a submission was gained and guaranteed through hostages, English generals doubted the value of these attempts. It is these very enmities between the English and the Irish that echo down through the generations and is still found in modern times, albeit in updated forms.

Irish troops on their own lacked meaningful staying power for prolonged engagements and artillery to partake in decisive sieges. Fighting between the British and Gaelic rebels was effectively guerilla warfare.

Scotland tended to follow the established military model adopted by England and other forces. Prior to the Wars of the Three Kingdoms (a series of civil wars between Ireland, Scotland, and England based on issues regarding bishops, religion, and crowns), Scotland utilized the same clan and warband model the Irish used. Following this series of conflicts, Scotland adopted a more classically feudalistic approach. For a long time, they fielded large masses of poorly trained and equipped bow and spearmen. After the 12th century, they underwent a process of modernization, and began augmenting their foot troops with heavily armored and mounted knights. This led to increased training and better arms for troops, eventually leading to the French regularly hiring Scottish archers to help counter the skill and dominance of British archers.

WELSH WARFARE

The Welsh adopted a drastically different style of warfare with the Romans departure from the British Isles. During the Norman invasion and prior, the Welsh exploited movement and the natural features of the land to fight their enemies. They relied extensively on fighting while on the run, either retreating or chasing down enemies. These skirmishers were largely similar to those utilized by the Gaels.

After the invasion of the Normans, the Welsh adapted to the increased use of bowmen and armored knights. Their bowmen were considered to be nearly as good as those the Norman's fielded, but their cavalry were different. The Welsh nobility formed armored cavalry corps, but were regularly found on foot as the terrain demanded or strategy allowed. Even with these developments, the Welsh continued to use their mountains, woods, and bogs to their advantage.

The Welsh's greatest weakness, and the cause of their eventual defeat, was economic rather than military. The English were able to utilize blockades and cut off strategic trade routes to starve the Welsh out, eventually forcing them to surrender. At this time, Wales became subject to the English crown, and militarily they were a part of the larger nation.

Water and bodies of water are incredibly important to the Celtic people. After war or battles, weapons are often broken and tossed into the water. Some have even suggested that Celtic mythology is metaphoric and focused on things like the creating of faults or breaks, for example through the breaking of weapons, to be able to reach their gods.

CELTIC MYTHOLOGY

Celtic mythology is difficult to properly define as it evolved separately in each location and community. Tribes would adapt and adopt different practices based on their own needs and experiences. There are some overarching and unifying features, including a pantheon of gods and goddesses as close as anything gets to universal across Celtic mythology.

It is also important to know the Celts believed in many spirits of place, not unlike Japanese Shintoism. There are literally hundreds of gods and spirits throughout Celtic mythology. Throughout this section, an effort has been made to present the most famous and the best for stories as there are entire books out there dedicated just to the task of attempting to cover all of Celtic mythology.

The Celts had interesting relationships with their gods and spirits. They are often bargaining and negotiating with the gods, and prayers may be quite upfront and include things nearly as blunt as "I will kill this cow for you if you give me a good harvest."

Throughout this section, beings are referred to either from the modern nation(s) they were found in or painted as a broad picture by examining details from each. There are many, nearly innumerable, gods in Celtic belief as most are tied to a particular location or natural feature.

POLYTHEISM

The Celts believed in gods and goddesses in the time before the spread of Christianity. There are some commonalities across these different belief systems, but there are also many points of divergence.

For example, Irish gods were treated oddly and given relatively limited powers. They appear more like great persons with supernatural powers than the Greek gods or modern views as to how gods exist. Within the Irish tradition, the gods were believed to be an earlier set of people that had settled the island long before the current generation. They were known as the *Tuath(a) Dé Danann*, or the tribe of Danu.

BRIGID

Brigid was a goddess in both Celtic and Irish mythology and, as is the case with many deities within this mythos, she is sometimes portrayed as being three sisters, all named Brigid.

As is the case with other gods, she owns certain things as an important aspect to her character. She owns the Kings of Boars, Torc Triath, and the King of Wethers (sheep), Círb. Brigid is also the inventor of keening, and develops a whistle that can be used to move quickly at night.

Brigid is the goddess of poetry and for a long time was worshiped by poets, resulting in her serving as a Celtic version of the muses. She is also the goddess of "high things" including wisdom, excellence, perfection, eloquence, craftsmanship, druidic knowledge, and more. After Christianity spread throughout the isles, she was largely merged with Saint Brigid of Kildare. The merged version borrows heavily from the ancient Brigid stories, but reworking them with a Christian bent. For example, both versions of Brigid are associated with high flames, with the Christian version being sacred.

CERNUNNOS

It is unknown if Cernunnos is the proper name for the horned god, only being referred to by this name in one incident. Despite this relatively shaky position for a name, it has been adopted as the name used by modern historians. He is most often depicted as a man sitting cross-legged, associated with animals, and crowned with great antlers. He has not survived in any known stories or legends to pass him down through the generations, instead only being speculated upon in modern stories and historians with the presumption that he is related to nature.

DAGDA

The Dagda is believed to be the leader of the Irish pantheon, a pantheon that he appears to be unique to, a figure that is essentially the embodiment of idealized masculine traits. The imagery of Dagda has been compared to Heracles (Hercules), being depicted armed with a club and with an animal skin draped across him. He is also used as the butt of many jokes; an odd dichotomy with his theorized head of the pantheon.

Dagda is given a large number of different powers, largely denoted through various things he owns. For example, he owns a club capable of killing nine beings with one blow, or returning life with the handle; a bottomless cauldron called the Undry that would satisfy anyone who ate from it; two pigs, one of which is always growing and the other is always roasting; a harp known as Uaithne used to put the seasons in order; and many more.

Dagda is often portrayed as particularly oafish or foolish and is shown without pants, dragging a gigantic penis along the ground. Often wearing only a rough tunic that barely covers his buttocks, it has been suggested these detractions were the result of Christian commentators undermining the belief in the traditional Irish gods.



DANU AND DÔN

Known as Dana under modern parlance, she is the mother goddess of the Tuatha. There are no direct sources that describe her or what she is capable of in modern texts. It is theorized that she came from the Vedic water goddess Danu, though others criticize this viewpoint.

Within the Welsh tales, there is Dôn, who may or may not be a Welsh analog to Danu. It appears that Dôn derives either from an ancient name of the Danube, or from an old Celtic word meaning “fluvial water.” Though Dôn is not a major part of the tale that she appears in from Welsh folklore, she is the mother to several major characters, mirroring the role as the mother of gods or heroes.

Mother goddesses of different stripes are a common and recurring feature in Celtic religions. They often appear in sets of three, or triples of the same mother. Unlike other religions, the mother goddesses of the Celtic faith were not merely subject to being symbols of fertility and motherhood, and both were often associated with water, combat, and other aspects of society.

EPONA

In Celtic and other religions, Epona is a protector and goddess of horses, donkeys, and mules. The Celts both prior to and after being primarily on the British Isles continued to worship Epona. Meaning "Great Mare," Epona actually became one of the widest worshipped deities of Celtic beliefs. Often portrayed as a white mare, she is essentially the embodiment of the spirit of horses.

LUGH OR LUGUS

Also known as Lugus, Lug, Lu, and by many other names, he is a widespread god or hero across many Celtic peoples. Some modern historians have theorized that many modern city names, including London, Lyons, Leon, and others, come from Lugh Dun, "Lugh's Fort," or some other variation.

Lugh was renowned for his skill with sword and sling. Within the Irish tradition, he is the sole survivor of a set of triplets killed because of a prophecy that one would kill their grandparent. He eventually becomes a member of the court of the Irish pantheon when he claims to be the only being capable of serving as a wright, smith, champion, swordsman, harpist, hero, poet, historian, sorcerer, and craftsman. He is renowned for his magic sword – no one could tell a lie or move when it was at their throat, places the wind at the command of whoever wields it, and has a piercing wound from which none can recover – and his horse Enbarr who could travel over both land and sea. Lugh's spear is the subject of many different tales and has been given a number of different powers throughout these tales including: being capable of being thrown and returning by saying magic words, is impossible to overcome, and was perpetually aflame if it was not kept immersed in a post of water. He is, within the Irish tradition, roughly analogous to the sun gods of other religions or possibly a storm god as his fights are considered to cause storms.

While Lugh is most commonly used to refer to the god underneath the Irish tradition, Lugus is often used to refer to him underneath the larger Gaelic tradition. He is the Celtic analog to the Roman god of Mercury, serving as "the light," the god of commerce and trade, the protector of travellers, and the inventor of all of the arts. Birds, particularly ravens and the cock, horses, the tree of life, dogs or wolves, mistletoe, and two snakes in a shape similar to the Caduceus are all common iconography for the god. Similar to Lugh, he is most often seen wielding a spear.

THE MORRIGAN

The Morrigan, known as the Phantom Queen or the Great Queen, is also known as Morrígu, Morríghan, Mór-ríoghain, and other ways. The Morrigan is usually depicted as a trio of beings, usually sisters, though the membership does vary. She is associated with battle, strife, and sovereignty, and is often depicted with imagery related to crows. In one of her earliest appearances in legends, in the Ulster Cycle, she interferes with a battle by transforming into different creatures, though it is not enough to turn the tide of battle.

She is almost exclusively found within Irish legends and mythology, often predicting great battles and who will win or die during them. Her role in stories is to predict the death of a major character, serving as a prophesizing. She was also involved in turning the tides of battle, either by a crow flying above or through the fray to choose a side.

Some stories have survived that associated her with cattle, in the Ulster Cycle she drives a heifer from a man's land and later turns into a cow; she may have once been a goddess of life and bounty. Attempts to reconcile these differences have been performed by modern interpreters by suggesting her domain was sovereignty.

SUPERNATURAL BEINGS

BANSHEE

Also known as the 'woman of the barrows' or *bean síth* (Scottish), banshee is a fairy woman who wails when someone is about to die. In Scottish mythologies, she is often used to fill in for the Morrigan, regularly seen washing the armor or clothing of those who are about to die, especially in battle.

Within Ireland, many thought particular banshees would be associated with a family and were given names and stories. Each would wail and scream whenever a member of said family died.

The banshee, and variations of her, appeared in a number of different guises, though most commonly as an ugly, frightening hag. In various stories she was described as a beautiful woman, a stoat, a hooded crow, a weasel, a hare, and even as, or being revealed as, the Morrigan.

The screeching, crying, or keening of the banshee is described as being different in varying parts of Ireland and Scotland. It is described as a screech, low pleasant singing, thin long screech somewhere between an owl and a woman, or the sound of two boards smacking together.

There is a comparator within Welsh folklore in the form of the Hag of the Mist. She, similar to the banshee, foretells death through her wail and usually appears as an old and withered hag. The primary difference is that the Hag of the Mist can only appear at the crossroads or at a stream when the mists are rising.

The Scottish variant is also highly similar to the trend established by the other versions. In Scotland they are the spirits of women who died giving birth and are often depicted washing clothes at deserted streams. They look highly different from the Irish and Welsh versions – having one nostril, one giant protruding tooth, webbed feet, and low-hanging long breasts. She could, however, disguise herself as a young and beautiful woman if needed. If you were able to sneak up and suckle from her breast, you would be able to claim you were her foster child and be given one wish. In the alternative, if you were to ask politely and graciously, you can learn the names of those about to die.

BLUECAP

Bluecaps are a variation on the theme of knockers and kobolds as being fairies or goblins related to mining. They are seen as blue flickering lights seen within mines. When they were well treated, through giving proper food offerings, they would lead miners to rich veins of ore and have been reported to help move coal and mine carts.

BLOODY BONES

Also known as Rawhead or Tommy Rawhead, Bloody Bones was a bogeyman used to terrify children. Philosopher John Locke specifically observed that it was used to keep children in “awe and subjugation.” Bloody Bones was said to live in dark cupboards, usually under the stairs. Only the bravest, or most foolish, would attempt to get a peek at him and would see a gnarled, crouching creature with a bloody face gnawing at a pile of the bones of children who told lies or said bad words.

BODACH

Meaning “someone who has a penis,” or simply “old man” in modern Scottish Gaelic, they were a form of evil bugbear spirit that would come down the chimney to steal naughty children. They were used as the Irish and Scottish bogeyman to scare children into appropriate behavior. Folklore stated they were mutable in shape and capable of changing as needed.

The term bodach has evolved over time and can now be used as a term of endearment, calling someone a scoundrel or rascal.

BROWNIES

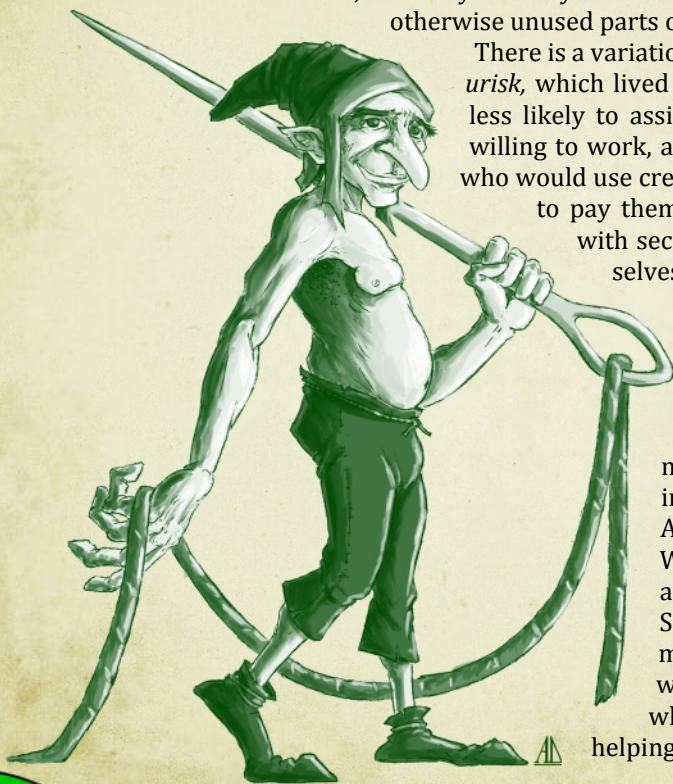
Brownies are a Scottish and Northern English goblin or hob that lived in or around a person's home. They assisted with things around the home, and kept things safe, though they didn't like to be seen. As a result, they would only work at night, and were believed to work in exchange for food, with some folklore suggesting they preferred honey and porridge.

Brownies were believed to abandon their home if the food was referred to as payment, suggesting this was supposed to be viewed as something other than a transaction, or if they felt they were being misused. They were believed to live in otherwise unused parts of the home.

There is a variation amongst some Scottish beliefs called the *urisk*, which lived near streams and waterfalls, and was far less likely to assist with work. After harvest they became willing to work, and often were heard charming milkmaids who would use cream, their favorite, to bribe them to help or to pay them to leave. They were only seen by those with second sight, though they could reveal themselves if they desired. They had blond hair, wore a broad blue bonnet, and had walking staves.

BUCCA

A creature of mines and the earth in Cornish folklore, the bucca are believed to have inhabited mines and coastal communities. Also known as a *púca* in Irish or the *pwca* in Welsh, these creatures were mischievous and neither inherently helpful or malicious. Some myths describe them as “wicked minded, black-looking, bad things” that would appear as colts draped in chains, while others portray them as generous and helping farmers by doing their work at night.



The bucca are associated with the wind by the Cornish, while are seen as shape-shifters by other beliefs. They are capable of human speech and, though mischievous, tend to have done more good than ill. Some tales tell of them giving people rides that were terrifying, but ultimately harmless. They are also responsible for making wild fruits and vegetables inedible in the winter months. Beliefs often say they must be given food, a portion of the crops by the Irish or a share of the catch by the fishermen of the Cornish.

CAT SÌTH

Also known as the *cat sidhe*, it is a fairy from Celtic mythology. Appearing as a large black cat with a white spot on its breast, they appear predominantly in Irish and Scottish folklore. Some versions of the story suggest *cat sidhe* is not a fairy but actually a witch capable of transforming into a cat. It is theorized they are inspired by kellas, a cat breed unique to Scotland and the result of interbreeding between common house cats and wild cats.

The *cat sidhe* was said to wander the wilderness, especially the highlands, and was not to be trusted. Stories told of souls being stolen by this creature before the body could be buried, resulting in being unable to reach heaven or the afterlife. As a result, many steps were taken to distract the *cat sidhe* including sprinkling catnip, games of leapfrog, and more to protect bodies before burial.

However, the *cat sidhe* was also responsible for blessing the milk on *Samhain*, and it was believed you had to leave out a saucer of milk or cream for him to drink. Failure to do so was likely to result in the milk of your cows running dry during the following season.

FAR DARRIG

Also known as the red men or the rat boys, the far darrig are a fairy from Irish mythology. They wear a red coat and cap and are fat with long snouts, skinny tails, and hairy bodies. Responsible for a number of different practical jokes, they are more malicious than other jokesters from Irish mythology. Like other creatures of folklore, they are responsible for replacing children with changelings and are one of the sources of bad dreams.

FOMORIANS

Fomorians are a semi-divine race from Irish mythology. They are wild and chaotic in nature, and are an approximate analogy to the Greek titans. They are described, occasionally, as having the body of a man and the head of a goat, or to have one eye, one arm, and one leg. In other instances, they are described as beautiful beings.

Medieval myth tells us fomorians were apparently on the Island before the first humans came. Some storytellers reported they came from Africa long before the precursors to the modern Irish. Myth also states the first king of Ireland, Bres, was half fomorian and half god under the traditional Irish belief of gods.

GIANTS (CEWRI)

Prominent amongst Welsh folklore, *cewri* are intelligent beings. They are considered to be much like humans with different personalities, allegiances, and traits and are described as exhibiting features matching various cultures. At the beginning of one of the great Welsh stories, Britain is ruled by Bran the Blessed, a giant that was never able to fit inside of a dwelling. In the Welsh language, Stonehenge was once referred to as "the council of the giants." Scottish, Irish, and other Celtic people also have legends of combat with giants.

In Scotland, at the village of Kinloch Rannoch, there is a local hill said to be the head and shoulders of a sleeping giant. It is said he will awaken when a specific musical instrument is played near the hill.

KELPIES

Kelpies are the shapeshifting spirits that inhabit the lochs and bodies of water in Scotland. They are described as being like horses, but capable of turning into human form. Nearly every body of water in Scotland has a tale of a kelpie associated with it. It is believed the kelpies, or whatever their originator was, were who the original human sacrifices to bodies of water were made to. There are also parallels to kelpies within other parts of the British Isles: the nuggle of Shetland, the tangie of Orkney, the Welsh *ceffyl dŵr*, or the Manx *cabbyl-ushtey*.

There are many conflicting views about how kelpies looked and behaved. Some suggested they were living within bodies of water, while others suggest they lived next to the bodies of water. They are most often described as powerful black horses that inhabit and rise out of bodies of water, especially deep ones. Their hooves, however, are reversed when compared to a normal horse. They were believed to lure men and women to the water's edge where they would then pull them into the water and devour them, only to throw their innards onto the water's edge. In its equine form, the kelpie is able to stretch its body to simultaneously pull many people into the depths at once.

In one story, a young man finds a beautiful horse near the water's edge somewhere in Scotland. He decides to pet the horse, hoping to discern if it is tame, or at the least tamable. While petting, his hand becomes stuck in the kelpie's mane, or to the neck. The kelpie then begins to pull towards the water, where the young man will surely drown. In some versions of the story, the young man is able to quickly cut off his fingers or his whole hand to save himself, while in others he is soon subject to a watery grave.

Sometimes kelpies fall in love with a stallion, since all kelpie are apparently female. They would mate and, some time later, their offspring would be born. These would be horses with shorter ears than normal and would be impossible to drown.

When kelpies turn into humans, they are almost invariably male. They are, in this form, preternaturally strong and there are several tales of multiple adults being overpowered and drowned by such a creature.

Kelpies are apparently only capable of being killed by silver, much like a werewolf. When they are killed, they collapse into a shapeless mass of turf and jellyfish. Another story tells how they can be killed by red-hot iron pierced into their sides, whereupon the kelpie in question collapses into a starch-like substance.

KNOCKERS

The subterranean bucca may also be referred to as knockers – they are also known as knackers, bwcas, bucca, or tommyknockers. They are similar to the Irish leprechauns and Scottish brownies. They stand two feet tall and regularly appear grizzled. Living beneath the ground, they are often seen dressed in mining equipment they have stolen from miners, or wearing matching, tiny versions of this type of clothing.

Some viewed the knockers as the malicious spirits that brought down the mines, while others viewed them as mischievous beings responsible for nothing more than the disappearance of the occasional waylaid piece of equipment. They were thought to be the source of knocking immediately preceding a cave-in, interpreted to be the sound of them bringing down the tunnels or trying to issue a warning respectively.

Like many other Celtic spirits, they can be bought off with food, usually in the form of pasties brought into the tunnels.

KORRIGAN

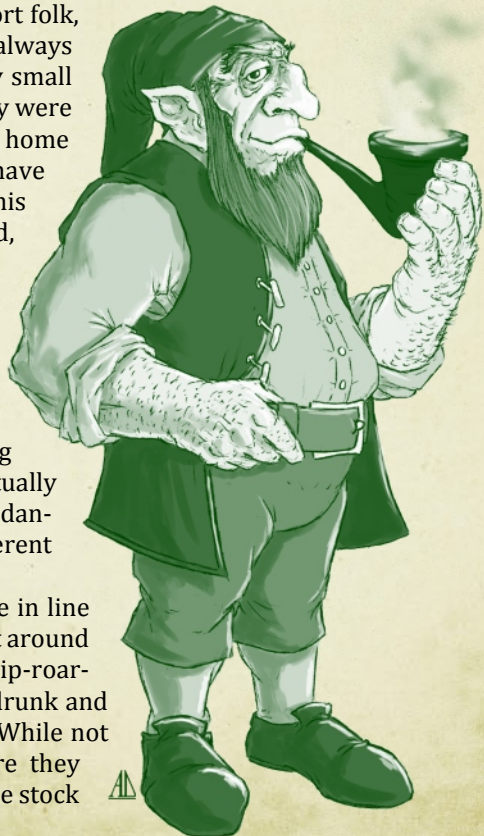
Meaning “small dwarf,” they are known by many names. The Celtic people often describe fairies as being different and separate in type from dwarves. Other academics have suggested this difference is essentially meaningless. Korrigan are sometimes referred to as siren-like females who inhabit springs and rivers. They sing and lure young men to their watery beds and, subsequently, death. They are notorious for stealing young children and replacing them with changelings.

LEPRECHAUN

While in modern times they are viewed as short folk, dressed in green with fiery red hair, this was not always the case. In ancient times, they were apparently small folk dressed in red coats and leather aprons. They were solitary creatures that would help out around the home and take care of families they cared about. They have always been capable of granting wishes, and this may have been where the legend of the pot of gold, through the granting of a wish, came from.

The leprechaun legend is ongoing with the most recent sighting reported in the mid 1990s. They have always been fond of playing various instruments and the presence of alcohol or drunkenness may or may not be a modern addition to their myths. Despite the enduring iconic nature of the leprechaun, a species actually protected under modern European Law as an endangered species, they were but one of many different spirits to the Celts.

The clurichaun is a “form” of leprechaun more in line with modern interpretations. This fairy helps out around the home, but afterward goes out and becomes rip-roaringly drunk. They are said to nearly always be drunk and surly and enjoy riding sheep and dogs at night. While not outright malicious, there are no legends where they murder someone, they will wreak havoc on a wine stock if they are mistreated or otherwise abused.



MERMAIDS

Though legends of mermaids are found throughout the world, the Celtic people have a unique take on the creature. In Celtic folklore they were bad omens capable of swimming upstream into freshwater lakes and rivers.

There is one legend from Cornwall about a man, Matthew, and a mermaid falling in love. Matthew, from the village of Zennor, would sing in the choir and the mermaid would listen to his singing. The two fell in love over a long period of wooing, and eventually Matthew would join her in her home at Pendour Cove. Legend tells that we can still hear the two of them singing on summer nights.

Other legends state that mermaids would leave shells, combs, and other shiny objects on the beach to distract humans. When they were distracted, especially if they were weak or children, they would be grabbed and dragged into the ocean or sea.

There are also legends of the merrow, creatures that strongly resemble mermaids but are of apparently friendlier disposition. They have green hair and scales they fondly groom and fuss over, while their human skin is somewhere in shade between white human skin and eggshell. They also have webbing betwixt their fingers.

Unlike mermaids, the merrow apparently mated with humans. The offspring of these relationships had scaly skin and webbing between their fingers. Even if there were up to a few generations on land, over time the call of the sea would overcome them and they would return to it. The similarities to Lovecraft's deep ones continue when it is considered that the mermen, or male merrow, were apparently hideous and almost never found above the waves. They have been described as having green hair and teeth, scaly skin, and a tail between their legs. They apparently had a strong fondness for brandy, and could be distracted by it.

PECH

The pech were a gnome-like people from Scottish mythology. They were short but extremely strong and brewed heather ale. Scottish legend regularly has the ancient Scots doing battle with these creatures. Some historians have speculated these legends may be referring to ancient battles between the proto-Scots and the Picts that came before them. They were considered to be so strong that, even when sick and dying, they were able to shatter metal cups with their bare hands.

PISKIES

Also called pixies, pixy, pizkie, and many other variations on the theme, they are mythical creatures of Cornwall and Devon, though they are akin to the Irish and Scottish Aos Sí. Piskies are believed to inhabit ancient underground sites such as stone circles, barrows, dolmens, ringforts, and menhirs. Their descriptions have changed over time, and in the Victorian era they were given the modern view of pixies being tiny, dressed in green clothes, with eyes pointing upwards towards the temples. In ancient mythology, they are small, mischievous things fond of waylaying travelers and children. They were invisible to all but those capable of second sight.

Piskies are usually described, by those apparently capable of seeing them, as ill-clothed or naked with pygmy-like characteristics. They are fond of horses, especially colts, and children, and tend to be more wary of adult humans. They are ruled over by Joan the Wad in Cornwall, the Queen of the Piskies, and Jack o' the Lantern, their king. Joan the Wad was known for providing a light home for those who were lost, and is a being of both fire and water.

Their Irish and Scottish cousins, for lack of a better term, are also known for their tendency to live in mounds. In this tradition, they are known to live in a world parallel, but invisible, to the world of humans. They are easily pleased by offerings, especially small pieces of ribbon or food. It was also considered bad form to name them directly in these bodies of folklore; instead they were referred to as “the good neighbors” or “the Folk.” They are described as being stunningly and, unhelpfully, indescribably beautiful, except when they are terrible and hideous. These dualities are common within Celtic folklore and are often difficult to reconcile. Within Irish and Scottish folklore, banshees are often considered to be a member of the larger Folk.

SELKIES

The selkies are seal-folk that live in the sea. They are capable of transforming from seal form to human form in order to live on the land. Male selkies are apparently handsome beyond compare and capable of exerting great influence over women. They typically seek those otherwise dissatisfied with their life, especially the wives of fishermen always waiting for their husbands to return home. If a woman wishes contact with a male selkie, she can summon one by shedding seven tears into the sea.

Female selkies are also beautiful, and apparently make excellent wives. The only way to wed one, however, is to steal their seal skin when they shed it and hide it from them. They will forever love the sea, however, and will gaze longingly at it. So long as their skin cannot be found, they will be unable to return to the sea.

Selkies are benevolent creatures and their myths often include romance and sex. At the worst, they are said to seduce men and women and convince them to come live at sea. There, lovelorn, they never return to land. Unlike legends about the merfolk, the lovelorn human doesn't appear to necessarily die from this.

SLUAGH

In Irish and Scottish folklore, these are the spirits of the restless dead. They were often viewed as generally evil people who had been rejected by the deities and the earth itself, being left to wander. They flew in large flocks like birds, unable to settle to the ground. They would arrive at the home of someone as they died, trying to grab their soul and carry it off. Some considered the souls of innocents kidnapped in this way to eventually be forced to join the flying horde. To prevent these kidnappings from taking place, western-facing windows would be barred when someone was sick or dying, and, since they could only enter from the west, this would prevent them from entering the home.

WILD HUNT

Another myth shared with many other places is the belief in the wild hunt. The Celtic wild hunt was said to include fairies and many of the ghosts of long passed gods and heroes riding through the skies. Also present in Welsh legend, the wild hunt includes a pack of supernatural hounds led by their once fairy king. Much like elsewhere, the wild hunt is believed to serve as a portent for coming war or strife, and is a solemn and dark thing. Some legends even suggest the Celtic version of King Arthur was lost to ride amongst these heroes, gods, and fairies until he is able to escape or is needed again.

The huntsmen are described in one telling as being all dressed in black and riding astride black horses and black he-goats, with black hounds baying. They were seen in the woods and from far off their sounding and winding of horns could be heard.

ARTHURIAN LEGENDS

It is from the Celtic traditions that the Arthurian Legends spring, and there are Welsh and Briton legends that identify Arthur as a legendary figure defending the isles far before the Arthurian Legend, also known as the Matter of Britain. He allegedly fought against the Anglo-Saxon invasions of the fifth century, protecting what was largely Celtic lands from the Saxons who would one day rule over them. In these ancient legends he was a peerless warrior who mainly served as a monster-hunter, ridding the isles of the supernatural. Far from the modern interpretation of him as the king, and a Christian king no less, he was the head of a warband that included pagan gods and spirits.

In many ways, Arthur serves as the spirit of the isles and sort of a personification of the Celtic people from this time. His warband was repeatedly held up as the ideal of warrior hood in the era with poems and tales of other warriors and warbands including the phrase "but he was no Arthur." The addition of Lancelot and the Holy Grail were later additions to the legend, co-opting it for a Christian audience.

THE RETURN

An important and enduring part of the pre-Christian legend of King Arthur is the myth that King Arthur will return to save the Isles at some point in the future. Though not recorded until the 11th century, it may have predated this in the oral tradition. Around the twelfth century onwards, a widespread belief of King Arthur's messianic return began. This belief was so widespread that Philip II of Spain reportedly swore at his wedding that he would resign the kingdom if Arthur should return.

The legends are still discussed today, particularly in Wales, as more of a rallying cry than an actual belief. This may or may not, depending on the individual, be the same as the *Mab Darogan*, or the son of prophecy. The Welsh tradition of Arthur has survived this long, and they still claim he will return. Whether he is leading the wild hunt, asleep under the hills of Wales, or far off in Avalon, there remain the whispers of his return.

CELTIC CHARACTERS

Celtic history is full of heroes and legends, many whose stories have survived throughout the ages. Members of the tribes or clans that populated the British Isles are heir to a history of adventure and magic. From the fog covered islands, characters can sail forth to discover new lands or defend their home and way of life from the many invaders that harass the island.

HINDRANCES

EXISTING HINDRANCES

CODE OF HONOR

The Celtic people had a code of honor that was highly clan or family based. This gave rise to the dueling culture, especially as it evolved and absorbed the ideals of other dueling cultures. This also manifested itself with the obsession over familial and clan history from their background.

LOYAL

Celts of all stripes are incredibly loyal to their familial ties. It was not uncommon for them to chant their familial history back over the generations before battle and care deeply for their family.

STUBBORN

There are many stories about the Celtic people's stubbornness. It has permeated the ages with even modern Celts refusing to bow down with the Scots, Welsh, and Irish that continue to fight for their independence and freedom.

NEW HINDRANCES

TRIBALISM (MINOR)

Until late in their history, and arguably continuing until modern times, many Celtic people are far more loyal to their local family and friends than to a larger cause or belief. This, historically, has interfered with successfully unifying them. With this Hindrance, a leader can only command, at most, a group of a couple dozen in combat; each group needs its own leader. Additionally, attempting to use Leadership Edges on an individual from another tribe incurs a -2 penalty or its effects are halved (whichever applies).

BRUTAL BELIEFS (MINOR/MAJOR)

There were a number of brutal beliefs the Celts followed throughout their history. Many of these practices required human sacrifice in order for the individual to believe his gods would be able to help him in the world. Though it is not widespread, rumors abound that some still follow these ancient beliefs in modern Celtic countries. Whether the gods exist or not, the character still believes sacrifice is required for his religious practices. He must take sacrifices to his gods when possible, often using captives from military operations to do so.

This can have a significant moral impact on those around him. If part of a team that morally accepts these sacrifices, the Hindrance is considered Minor. If part of a team that finds these practices shocking or appalling, the Hindrance is considered Major.

edges

EXISTING EDGES

BERSERKER

Whether they learned it from the Vikings, or came up with it independently, berserkers were not uncommon within Celtic tribes, especially amongst their champions.

BRAWNY

Nearly every other nation that faced the Celts during their heyday noted they were of gigantic size and heavily muscled.

LINGUIST

To this day, the ancient Celtic people were particularly adept at understanding and mastering new languages.

LIQUID COURAGE

It was very common for the Celtic people to rely on both liquid courage and other narcotics to bolster their lines and their bravery.

NEW EDGES

LOVE OF LAND

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8+

The Celts love their homeland like nothing else. They fight with unyielding ferocity and against ludicrous odds to protect it. They also tend to know their own lands incredibly well, and tactics against foreign enemies often relied upon them. With this Edge, characters attempting to navigate the British Isles, or understand its geographical features, gain a +2 bonus to Smarts and any related skill (such as Boating).

PEOPLE OF THE SEA

Requirements: Novice, Boating d6+

The Celtic people are unavoidably tied to the sea. Entire lives would be spent perpetually in sight of it, going out into boats every day. Throughout much of their history, every member of a village would know at least how to navigate their boats and repair and make new ones.

With this Edge, the character gains a +2 bonus to Boating rolls that takes place throughout the British Isles and areas beyond they are familiar with.



ROLE-PLAYING OPPORTUNITIES

CELTIC LEGENDS

The legends that permeate and weave their way throughout Celtic societies are some of the greatest opportunities to draw upon. Combined with their focus on the 'great person' instead of 'trends', Celtic legends are great fodder for both role-playing and adventures. The difficulty exists in trying to run a straight historical game since Celtic folklore almost invariably is mixed with legendary and mythical tidbits.

There are a great number of fascinating and exciting periods in Celtic history that can be mined for role-playing ideas. A people whose economy long relied on raiding and piracy means there are often great warriors and heroes cropping up from both genders. Though there were not as often the great pitched battles the Romans and Greeks experienced, some still existed. They are also a people of freedom and the wild, giving ample opportunities for mercenaries and anti-heroes petulantly opposed to whoever the current conquering people are.

These options continue throughout the Middle Ages and onward, especially as Scottish and Irish soldiers became common mercenaries in other people's armies. There were a great many pirates, *reivers*, and other exciting lifestyles that continue until dangerously close to modern times. There were duelists and others who defied the rulers of the day. (This is a modern theme throughout Celtic history – defiance of rulers. *Braveheart*, *Macbeth*, and *Centurion*, to name a few examples that don't include the Arthurian legends, are all based on the defiance of the ruling or invading people.)

Celtic myth is where the sensational stories are found. The Arthurian legends themselves can provide nearly innumerable jumping off points. The lands held by the Celts have long been held to be mystical, inspiring pieces like *Brigadoon*, and the poetry of Robert Burns. The Isles are home to fairies and foul folk, and this is the land that believed there were great monster hunters that went into the woods to do battle with monsters and invaders to protect the small folk. In Ireland, the gods walked the earth next to mortals and would eventually go on to swear fealty to Arthur.

The myths and ideals of the Celts also provide ample opportunities to link to a fantasy or fantastical RPG. The Celts often believed their heroes gained abilities from magical equipment, not unlike the average role-playing character. Their attitudes and the legends of the place, a realm filled with heroes wandering the wilderness righting wrongs and getting into trouble, are perfect for the average player-character to muddle their way through.

MODERN TIMES

The Celtic people still exist, and a surprising amount of their folklore continues. Some Welsh still believe that Arthur or the Prophesized Son will return and oust the English from the Isles. Writers joke that the Isles are great except for those "Germans" (referring to the Anglo-Saxons) sitting on the throne, and more. Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Cornwall, and The Isle of Man all continue to discuss going their own way and continue to capture popular imagination. The Bardic and Druidic traditions are still practiced by some, albeit in disjointed and problematic forms.

The Wild Hunt and Arthur could still return to the Isles, either to oust the British like some suspect, or to go on to fight some other, greater threat to the people. How have the many spirits and fairies of the Isles, many of whom are still reported to be seen despite modernity, adapted to the encroachment of humanity? What are the

effects of the real life leprechaun protection zone (and yes this is an absolutely real thing)? If there is anywhere the wild and fae still exist at the edges of society and civilization, it is the Isles. There are still windswept crags of rock and wilderness, there are still valleys that no one lives in and are covered in forest, and the entire island can be subject to pea-soup thick fogs that could hide anything.

POST APOCALYPSE

The Isles will exist forever as an easily defensible position – the wooden wall of the English long protected them from their foes, and they took the idea from the Celts who did it before them. This will likely happen again should there be any sort of apocalypse, and this factor was considered in novels like *World War Z*. The British Isles also have the capacity, should there be a much reduced population, to be largely self-sufficient. There are forests, plenty of land for farming and ranching, precious metal deposits remain, and for the time being there is oil. If you wanted to create a fortress in the sea, you could do far worse than relying on the British Isles.

Amongst many of the people of the British Isles, especially amongst the Celts, there are those who live traditional lifestyles. Unlike many parts of the United States or other Western developed countries, it is difficult to be far from Celts who still live in modernized versions of traditional ways of life. There are still many fishermen, farmers, and others who practice updated versions of long standing methods of doing things. The *curraghs* remain a viable option for boats, and may still know how to construct them. This body of skills is incredibly useful in a post-apocalyptic society. If the Isles can survive the strain of the refugees of London, much of the rest of the isles have a robust mix of primary and secondary economic activities.

There remain the ruins of many powerful castles scattered about the isles. Most were built with rocks from the area, and there are many that can be easily rebuilt. Depending on the rate of whatever causes the apocalypse, this could be key to either surviving the apocalypse or rebuilding after it. Tied to this, however, is whether the Isles would remain relatively united in such a circumstance.

CELTIC GEAR

Though amongst their legends, gods and heroes would often have special or magical equipment, there is much evidence that equipment was largely expendable amongst Celtic society. Armor and weapons would be used and replaced as needed, and the Celts were especially keen to learn and steal from their competition. Their primary weakness, largely throughout their history, was a lack of skill and equipment for conducting sieges. Armor was largely lighter throughout much of their history, further compounding their preference for mobility and lighter fighting.

Each individual was responsible for their own equipment, and it wasn't until there was widespread and meaningful military organization that standardized equipment became the norm. Even in those instances, certain militaries reflected a lack of unified equipment.

MUNDANE EQUIPMENT

It was not uncommon for the nobility to own better equipment than the common folk, and it was often only the members of the nobility that owned horses that could be used for warfare. Most farmers, ranchers, and merchants wouldn't dream of risking their horses for military actions.

Each person would have a number of farming implements, and if the average person was called into battle, this is often what they would use in early history. It was over time that they began to stock increasingly better weapons, including bows and spears, to be able to hunt and defend themselves.

WEAPONS

The Celts commonly used whatever weapons they could learn to develop themselves, or were otherwise able to loot from their enemies. Swords were particularly important amongst the nobility and owning them was often a sign of rank. The noble classes made up the bulk of the militaries in early history, and in later periods would make up the elite. They would train extensively in these positions, and throughout much of their history would keep sharp through engaging in raids or piracy.

The Celts became famous in large part through the gallowglass and their use of large axes and claymores. These weapons relied primarily on timing to be able to break lines of cavalry that would charge their positions. Both were often used to break the legs of the horses mid-charge, resulting in the line being broken. They would use a similar strategy when facing charging foot troops – let the enemy come to them. While this happened, they would count on the cavalry associated with them to protect from enemy missiles.

They made widespread use of skirmishers that didn't really fight in any formation. When the Celts engaged in rebellion against the British crown, they often fought in this way. Throughout much of their history, bravery and ferocity were more valued amongst the Celts than organization. Slings and other relatively rudimentary weapons were especially common and valued. They would be used not only to hunt, but also in warfare against their enemies.

Type	Damage	Weight	Cost	Notes
Claymore	Str+d10	18	500	2 hands, Parry -1
Sparth Axe	Str+d10	15	550	Reach 1, 2 hands, Parry -1

ARMOR

The Celts regularly preferred mobility over stout armor. In part, this was because of the tendency to engage in raids and skirmishes over large and pitched battle. Over time, the nobility on horseback would adopt heavier armor, but the gallowglass and *kerne* never really did. This may have been further compounded by a preference for sea battles and using the environment to their advantage.

Armor never played a significant part in the legends of the Celts either. There appears to be some veracity to Caesar's claims that the Celts fought in nothing but warpaint. This would have provided for ample movement, and it was common for each soldier to be focused more on winning their combat against a single other person than worrying about the larger melee. Whereas the Romans, the Mongols, and many others relied upon strategy and organization, the Celts did not. A leader would create and implement an overarching strategy, but it was difficult, if not impossible, to rely on a shield wall or anything of that ilk.

Celts largely wore either padded armor or leather if they were a member of the *kerne*, or whatever the skirmisher analogy would be in each time period. The goal was to provide a modicum of defense, but the focus was on being able to maximize movement. The gallowglass would wear padded armor and chainmail, providing defense against cutting weapons like swords and axes, which were often used by charging cavalry.

ROLES

The Celtic military focused on different variations of the same theme for most of its history. Most often it would include a small core of elite mounted and mobile riders, slightly more heavily armed elite foot soldiers, and then masses of lightly armed and armored skirmishers. The strategy was often to harass the enemy with skirmishers and archers, attempting to weaken them and break formations, to use the cavalry to harass enemy flanks and skirmishers, and to engage in great charges to break formations, and then the armed mass of elite foot soldiers to shoulder the brunt of enemy charges and slowly deny avenues to the enemy.

Over time, these strategies would update and evolve. The elite members of a tribe or clan would be replaced with the gallowglass, which in turn lasted until the widespread advent of gunpowder. By this point, more and more of the Celtic people were 'plugging in' to the larger zeitgeist of Europe, and were adopting the same practices utilized nearly everywhere else.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

BOUDICA

Boudica's (also Boudicca, Boudicea, Boadicea and others) family was killed by the Romans, and many versions of the story implied she was taken as captive and raped. Despite her lands being conquered, her people extensively under the heel of Roman troops, she managed to rally them and eventually defeat a Roman legion. She was ferocious in her vengeance and gave no corner to the Romans.

Shortly after the first Caesar's death, Boudica became a legend for fighting back against the Romans in 60 AD. Her husband had ruled his own lands as an independent ally of Rome, assisting in holding the borders of the Empire intact. After his death, the Emperor annexed his lands. She was able to raise over 100,000 Celts, composed of the Iceni, the Trinovantes, and others (all various Celtic tribes), to rampage throughout much of modern England. During her revolt, an estimated 70,000 to 80,000 Romans and British were killed for standing against her forces. It was not until the Romans could regroup and bring the full organization of the Legions to bear against the Celts that they could finally be defeated. Boudica then either fell ill and died or committed suicide so she would not be captured.

During her revolt she was able to defeat Legio IX *Hispana* and other Roman forces. Tacitus tells us that in preparing for the battle that would eventually be her first great defeat, Boudica gave a speech to her army not as a noble but as an ordinary person avenging their shared loss of freedom, her battered body, and the abused chastity of her daughters. Though the British Celts fared better in chaotic and guerilla fighting, on the open road, where this final battle took place, her forces were defeated by superior Roman organization. The location of this defeat is unknown, and legends of Boudica are still told to this day. After being forgotten for much of the Middle Ages, especially by the British establishment, she experienced a renaissance of fame in the Victorian Era.

Mannerisms: Boudica lived so long ago that we know little about her day to day life. Once she raised her rebellion against the Romans, however, she was without mercy. She was inspiring, giving speeches that motivated her troops and unified several tribes against the Romans. Her ferocity and rebellion gave even the emperor in Rome pause, and Nero considered removing all Romans from Britain. Eventually she was crushed, but this was a hint of things to come.

Distinguishing Features: Boudica is often portrayed as a tall woman with brown or reddish brown hair. There have been many reinterpretations of her look over the years, and there is not a single view that has survived. Given that she was a noble and did not come from a background of combat, it is likely that she was relatively slight, and not necessarily built for battle.

BOUDICA

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Fighting d10, Knowledge (Battle) d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Tracking d8

Hindrances: Berserk, Vengeful

Edges: Command, Natural Leader, Noble, Love of the Land, Inspiring

Armor: None

Weapons: Short sword (Str+d6)



GRACE O'MALLEY, THE SEA QUEEN OF CONNACHT

It was in 1530 that Celtic sea power was finally broken. Born the only child of Dudara O'Malley, King of Umhall (an area on the western coast of Ireland), Grace O'Malley, also known as Granuaille Ni Malley, would eventually become the Irish Pirate Queen.

On Dudara's death, Grace usurped the usual kin-based system of inheritance and claimed her father's holdings for herself, fighting off male contenders to do so. Her kingdom was not one made of land, but rather she inherited a vast fleet from her father. They were primarily concerned with trading goods, but were also granting spurious licenses to fishermen, ostensibly running a protection racket. Over time she increasingly partook in piracy, particularly along the English coasts.

When English forces sought to besiege her castle, they were easily repulsed as an attack had to come from the sea, and her captains were worlds more talented than the Brits. They constantly used the features of Ireland's coasts – rocky crags and undersea rocks, not to mention hiding in bays known only to the locals – they were able to out maneuver and defeat the British feats repeatedly.

Grace had three partners over her life, and eventually gave birth to the child of her and the third aboard her pirate ship the day it was attacked by Algerian corsairs. Her first mate came below deck to ask what should be done, interrupting

her new-born son's first nursing. Legend has it she roared "Can you not do without me for one day?" before belting on her cutlass, taking to the deck, and leading her sailors to victory. In 1593, Queen Elizabeth requested the presence of Grace O'Malley – both were 63 and were ultimately given several unattended hours closeted together. Grace was given a letter to "hang the Queen's enemies" wherever they were found. Grace O'Malley died in 1603 and was buried on Clare Island. With her death, the final vestiges of Celtic sea power finally collapsed.

GRACE O' MALLEY



Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Skills: Boating d10, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Seas and Ships) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Taunt d10

Hindrances: Liquid Courage

Edges: Command, Love of Land, Natural Leader, People of the Sea

Armor: Leather armor (torso, arms, legs +1)

Weapons: Short sword (Str+d6)

Mannerisms: O'Malley was a great leader, fierce, and defiant. She was known to have joked with many of her own soldiers, and commanded fierce loyalty from them. This was likely due to her tendency to put her people and the good of many before personal profit. She is often referred to as the personification of Ireland, and seems to fit many of the tropes about it.

She was well educated, but spoke no English. For much of her life she supported the Irish rebellions against the English crown, though in her twilight years she negotiated a deal with the Queen of England that resulted in her ceasing to support these activities.

Distinguishing Features: The few remaining paintings and pictures from the times show O'Malley to be tall and dark of hair. Paintings exist showing her next to Queen Elizabeth, and these show her to be both taller and wider than the English Queen. It was widely said that she was formidable and a competent opponent, suggesting she was muscular and large, especially for a woman of the era.

OWAIN GLYNDŴR

The last rebellion of the Welsh took place in 1400, led by a Welsh nobleman named Owain Glyndŵr. He had previously served in the British military, fighting against the also regularly rebellious Scots, and had essentially settled into a quiet life at his estate at Sycarth in north Wales.

He was viewed by the Welsh as the latest in a line of Messianic or National Redeemer characters they had long hoped would save the Welsh lands. Fired by poetry and the bardic Welsh tales, the Welsh rose up in support of Owain Glyndŵr. England immediately banned Welsh poetry, knowing that bards

and poets carried with them propaganda and fostered and fed the prophecies that Merlin and a National Redeemer would return the country to glory.

Owain Glyndŵr was crowned the Prince of Wales, the last native Welshman to ever do so, and reined from 1401 until at least 1415, possibly 1416. There is some uncertainty regarding the time and place of his death. Supported by France, Wales had many early successes including the devastation of Devon and setting fire to Dartmouth. By 1406, however, the French had largely withdrawn from the war. The Welsh were unable to meaningfully stand up to the might of the English and began to be defeated through English efforts to cut off arms and supplies to Welsh forces. Economic blockades began the slow process of starving Wales.

Owain remained free until his disappearance in 1412. In spite of vast rewards for turning him in to the British Crown, he was never betrayed. Adam of Usk, a one-time supporter of Owain, entered into a chronicle in 1415 that Owain had died. His body was buried and then reburied in secret to prevent his body being taken.

Mannerisms: Owain was stubborn to a fault. The British repeatedly offered him pardon on generous terms, but once the rebellion had started, he refused to accept anything other than a free Wales. Like many other Celtic heroes, he was extremely charismatic and was never betrayed by any of his troops.

Distinguishing Features: Owain was known to be tall with very dark hair, either dark brown or black. He had a fairly wide face, and almost all portrayals show him with a beard, often with two points coming off his chin.

OWAIN GLYNDŴR

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Skills: Fighting d10, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d10, Persuasion d8

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Stubborn

Edges: Command, Natural Leader, Noble, Love of the Land

Armor: Chainmail (torso, arms, legs +2), Helm (head +3, 50% vs head shot)

Weapons: Short sword (Str+d6)



CELTIC ADVENTURES

THE GHOST FENCE

BACKSTORY

Terrifying fences made of either skulls or stylized heads made of wood, ghost fences were an attempt by the Celts to harness the power they believed lay in severed heads. The Celtic druids attempted to use these to chase the Romans away from the British Isles when they first arrived and keep dark spirits at bay. Read or paraphrase the following:

This story takes place in the mist-shrouded time of the ancient British Isles, when the Romans were just starting to come into contact with the Celts. You're all members of a war band, tasked with defending your people, raiding your neighbors, and condemned to a violent life. The people believe that you go into the forests and fight monsters that would otherwise rampage throughout society. You own your own weapons and armor, but are often able to live a relatively quiet life herding. If you're wealthy, maybe you own a small handful of horses, likely stock ponies, which you use as a part of the mounted force during battle.

You've been asked to ride forth and investigate reports of strange new arrivals to the land. Trading partners from Gaul have spoken about these forces that fly across the land, conquering and assimilating wherever they go.

You say goodbye to your family, organize your belongings, and set forth to investigate to the south.

INVESTIGATING

This adventure is meant to be one tinged with sadness – even a success on the part of the adventurers should be tinged with the realization that eventually the Romans will come and conquer the Celts, and set off generations of difficulties across the isles. If the GM wishes, this could easily become a fantasy adventure about the struggle between nature and civilization.

Braen, their Lord, sent the heroes on this task to gather information and, if necessary, repel the invaders. “I trust you to do what you deem right, and to return if an army must be raised. If they can be discouraged from coming farther, do so. This is our land and we’ll fight to defend it.”

The PCs’ lands have often been the targets of raids from other tribes and groups, so they should be used to defending it. A druid has been sent along with the party, either as one of the party members or as an NPC. He likely has his own beliefs about how best to repel the Romans – by using a ghost fence. The characters should understand the druid’s place in society and should know, whether they believe in the ghost fence’s ability or not, this is a dangerous exchange and if the invaders are Celts, this will be a war-worthy offence.

GATHERING THE GHOST FENCE

The druid pushes to have materials ready for preparing the ghost fence. This requires the gathering of skulls – either new ones through raiding or old ones blessed by the gods and spirits. Either of these is a risky option – grabbing the skulls blessed by the gods means recovering them from a nearby bog and gaining



new ones means a raid on neighboring tribes. If someone catches the party grabbing skulls from the bog, it could easily be seen as an act of desecration or war. This can be developed as a Dramatic Task for sneaking behind the lines of another tribe to take skulls from within a bog or can be a combat encounter.

Other than skulls, the PCs need a series of pikes to put the skulls on, enough wood for a gigantic fire, and mistletoe. The lot is relatively easy to pick up so long as they don't have anyone hunting or chasing them.

FINDING THE LANDERS

If the party travels towards the coast, finding the "strange new arrivals to the land" is relatively easy. The first signs are entire swaths of trees cut down with drag marks indicating their destination. The Romans have built a hill fort to defend their landing position and have cut down a great number of trees to do so. Evidence of troops marching can also be found throughout the area.

Their fort is on a hill, a highly defensible position. There are a few hundred troops landed here as a scouting party. Not a full legion, but enough troops that the war band is unlikely to fight them singlehandedly. The fort is built from logs dragged up the hill and developed into a combination of abatis lines and wooden walls. The structure is well defended, making it difficult for the Celts to besiege.

ALONG THE WAY

The land along the way can easily have encounters with bandits or other tribes concerned that this war band is a small scouting and raiding party. Other tribes could believe them to be testing the limits of enemy defenses. This can result in armed conflict, or the heroes could talk their way out of it. These conflicts could also be resolved through a combat by champion.

The purpose of resolving this combat is not for the purposes of killing the perceived scouting party, but rather trying to make a show of strength. If it is combat by champion they choose, this will almost certainly be to the death, or at least to the point of Incapacitation.

MEETING WITH FOREIGNERS

The PCs may meet with the landed party. By approaching peacefully, they find someone from the landed party that speaks a passable version of Celtic. He isn't able to debate philosophy or law or anything, but he is able to speak in a reasonable way. The Romans talk long and at length about the nobility of their Empire and inform the Celts of the great benefits of joining them. They present both the carrot and the stick – join us and great things will happen, don't and bad things will.

Describe how strange the Romans are to the Celts; they talk to each other in language that no one from the isles understands, Latin, and it sounds harsh compared to the relatively sing-song Celtic languages. The Romans also talk different, even when speaking in Celtic. Aside from their accent, which is thick, they act as though they are better than the Celts and their barbaric ways. The Romans don't hide their disdain for those they perceive as barbarians, and the Celts certainly fit into that camp.

In many ways this is a philosophical clash between the parties. The Romans are, genuinely, bringing civilization and technology wherever they go. They also bring slavery, pollution, and a very early form of industrialization. By this point there are mines in Spain and Italy under Roman rule that resemble modern mines in terms of the land being stripped and pollution being dumped into the air.

Under no terms can the Romans be convinced to leave the land. It is possible the Celts could surrender to the Romans, but they know Braen is unlikely to go along with this. It is also out of the character of many Celts. They can establish trade routes, however, and perhaps make progress here.

GUERRILLA WARFARE

Another option is for the characters to choose guerrilla warfare, raiding the Romans and harassing their troops. This can go on for some time, and even after a series of combats the Romans leave, defeated for the time being. If this happens, let them celebrate their victory, but remind them the Romans are still coming, and a full legion will be there before long.

THE GHOST FENCE

The final option is to use the ghost fence to chase off the Romans. Depending on the world setting, this could be a psychological ploy or magic. There was an incident of the Celts attempting to use a ghost fence to chase off the Romans historically, and a group of druids died for it. The Romans were unsettled by the Celtic behavior with the chanting and line of skulls, but not enough for them to stop from killing.

This could result in a tragedy – a sign of the things to come. The Roman invasion marks the start of a series of conquests and re-conquests across much of the Celtic isles. It could also be used to chase off the Romans here, giving them a victory at this tense time.

The ghost fence is a line of skulls on pikes with a gigantic fire behind them. The Celts, usually all druids, chant and summon spirits to chase off the Romans. This process could be truly supernatural, with the skulls coming to life and the dark and wild spirits of the Isles coming forth to fight the Romans, or it could end just like it ended in our world – with a lot more Celtic blood seeping into the land.

ADVERSARIES

ROMAN LEGIONNAIRE

A scout of the Roman legion, these men are well armed and armored. Their equipment is better than the PCs and they are trained to operate in a unit. It is likely the heroes could beat one of them in single combat, but they are trained to work in a unit to a much better degree than most.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d6, Survival d8,

Armor: Roman gear (torso, arms +2), iron helm (head +1), roman shield (+2 Parry, +2 Armor vs ranged shots)

Weapons: Knife (3/6/12, Str+d4), short sword (Str+d6)

THE MORRIGAN MURDERS

BACKGROUND

This scenario is about a serial killer attempting to resurrect the druidic practices of the distant past. The individual is a true believer, but is also a mentally unwell individual who has convinced himself that druidic magic and beliefs justify his activities. While these practices were bloody and brutal, his work is still a perversion of what it once was. He is attempting to summon the morrigan to increase his own position; to take care of himself and better his position in society. Druidic practices often included sacrifice, but it was generally for the good of the many, rather than the good of the individual.

This investigation traipses through 1880's Dublin. Ireland has been under excessive strain due to food shortages and famine throughout west Ireland. Images from this time show the farmers from these areas suddenly highly impoverished, being depicted with very poor quality clothing. Certain members of the rich and the religious would distribute alms to the poor to assist with their struggles. In terms of politics, the general election has resulted in a majority for the Irish Parliamentary Party amongst Irish seats, a party whose primary objective was legislative independence for Ireland. The seeds of future troubles are being sown, and the troubles are about to begin.

THE MURDERS

Three bodies are found on the remains of the stage of the burnt out Irish theatre, which burned down the previous February. Plans are being developed to rebuild the theatre and are just going through the process of approval. A cultured and higher class individual may care about this, but for the time being it is largely abandoned with only the occasional homeless person squatting within. One such individual, a displaced farmer from Western Ireland, was the first responder that set into motion the chain of events resulting in the heroes investigating the murders.

"I found them in the middle of the night, you know, I was out coming back from looking for the craic. (Note: Craic is pronounced "crack" and is Irish slang for 'the party' or 'a good time') I came in here to sleep it off 'round five, get out of the cold for a spell, and found this. I came and reported it; didn't touch nothin'. This reminds me of some of the stories me ma used to tell when I was young."

The farmer can be searched to verify he took nothing. He can be convinced to watch the place in exchange for money, liquor, or food, but if given money or liquor, he becomes drunk and makes for a poor watchman.

The three bodies are positioned on chairs sitting in a semicircle near the center of the stage. All three are women, and they've been strangled and gutted. Their intestines have been piled up in the center with small pieces of wood arranged almost like a fire that the three women are warming themselves around. There are black feathers, likely from crows or ravens, scattered about and there are splatters of blood as well.

The following clues can be discovered investigating this site – all three women were malnourished and thin, suggesting they had been living on the streets or otherwise suffering from the famine, two of them had jewelry taken (demonstrated by bruises on their fingers from rings removed), and they were all attacked while they were drunk.

It is also important that the three women were each killed three ways: strangled, beaten over the head, and gutted. The number three is of huge importance to Celtic beliefs and traditions, and three times three is that much more important. Draw on

the morrigan tradition, described earlier, and other fantastical elements. The morrigan would want the killer punished, and if using the supernatural, she will try to help the investigators.

THE JEWELRY

By canvassing the area, it doesn't take long to find a number of pawnshops where jewelry can be sold. By asking to investigate recently pawned jewelry, the PCs can identify the rings if they use magnification or something similar to find evidence of blood. It is trace amounts, and the pawnshops will admit they aren't looking for that so much as value of the ring. Times were tough.

After some convincing, the jeweler admits that a young man, slight of frame with dark hair, brought them in. He smelled awful, like he had been working with chicken feces or something, but looked fairly neat and clean. There was nothing to suggest he had murdered anyone, nor any evidence he had been in a struggle. He didn't look particularly strong, but could possibly have hauled a young woman if he had to.

One ring is a silver claddagh with specs of blood deep in between the fingers on the hand and in the details of the crown. The other is an apparent engagement ring with a green emerald on an unassuming golden band.

If the investigators wait too long, the jewelers will have washed the rings and put them on sale, essentially cutting off this line of inquiry.

THE STREETS

The investigators can ask around on the streets for information about the identity of the missing women. Asking relocated farmers will be the trick, and they quickly identify them all as women that had come into the city recently, displaced by the famine.

The three women were not related, though they did look similar. This was not too uncommon, especially with the black hair. All three were, uncommonly, apparently unattached and alone in the city. One was a widow, the other two had never been married. They were living off the charity of others; apparently one was sleeping in a church nearby that had a few beds set aside for the poor.

Other than their appearances, they had little in common. One of the women who had never been married wore a wedding ring to be able to that there was a man waiting for her, giving her a modicum of defense against unscrupulous individuals. The widow still wore her wedding ring for the same reason. Witnesses report the unmarried woman pretending to be married wore a silver claddagh on her left hand.

THE RITUAL

That the ritual is supernatural is more than obvious, it is glaringly so. Speaking with anyone claiming to be a druid in this era is near impossible. The investigators may be able to contact someone similar to Aleister Crowley and his ilk, or someone similar at the least. Suspicious groups about to explode on to the fore with half-baked interpretations of hermetic myths and occultism will not provide great information, however, and will likely strut about with self-importance and muck up the investigation.

The best source would likely be a historian. Even by this point, historians and academics are trying to wade through the oral tradition and establish an Irish tradition. They can explain that it seems the individual is trying to conduct some sort of ritual dedicated to the morrigan, but this is a mess of an adaptation. It isn't quite right for anything the individual has heard of.

Any historian or academic would be able to explain there aren't any druids still practicing any sort of sacrifice in Ireland, or if they are they haven't done anything like this. If asked about it, it is entirely possible this sacrifice was to stave off the famine, but the morrigan isn't the best deity to sacrifice to for it.

THE CROWS

Crows aren't exactly common within city limits, and after asking around for a little while, the characters are able to hear rumors and gossip about a young man in nice clothing trapping crows, and carrying them off. No one is chasing him down about it, and the assumption had been he was doing it for food. It was incongruous with his clothing, but even the wealthy could fall on hard times.

This is actually one of the best ways to catch the killer, Brian Crawley – watching for someone trying to catch crows. After a short time the party sees a young man doing this, and can catch him then. He runs if captured and begins a game of cat and mouse. He'll rework his plan at this point to somehow justify killing the women for the morrigan. He's under the misapprehension that she's a general goddess of death, similar to how the thuggee considered the goddess Kali.

ADVERSARIES

BRIAN CRAWLEY



Believing his name marked him as a hero and chosen by the crows, Brian quickly went mad and began to kill believing the morrigan would give him the gift of foresight so he would know when he would die, thus enabling him to escape it.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Charisma: -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Knowledge (Druidic Myth) d4, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6, Survival d8

Edges: Berserk

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Stubborn, Vengeful

Armor: None

Weapons: Garrote (Str+1, +2 to grapple maneuvers), knife (3/6/12, Str+d4)

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The wind swept isles of Albion have long held the popular imagination, and legends are still being invented about the Celtic peoples. In modern times, the Cornish, Welsh, Scottish, Irish, and Manx are the heirs to the Celtic line. In ancient times, the Celts were spread across continental Europe and the Isles. They held great kingdoms and were skilled on horseback, at crossing the oceans, and at strength of arms.

There is much difficulty in separating reality from myth regarding the Celtic peoples, especially given their own penchant for interweaving their myths with reality. There was an oral tradition, and much was not written down until far after. This feeds our view of the Isles being a place fogged in myth and legend. They fought against the Romans, terrifying even the most trained of Legions, traded with the ancient Greeks, built castles on the barest of ocean rocks, and more.

The *Ultimate Celtic Guide* is a sourcebook for Savage Worlds that seeks to convey a handful of polished gems made from the myth and history of the Celts, ensuring you can utilize these people and their legends in your games. Remembered for their ferocity in battle, their bravery that bordered on foolhardiness, and their love of land and place, the Celts are as much a people of story as they are people in history.

Ultimate Celts Guide includes:

- A brief history of the Celtic people.
- Ranks within Celtic society.
- A look at the Celtic lands.
- An overview of Celtic mythology.
- Options for creating Celtic characters.
- Non-player Characters.
- A Celtic adventure.
- ... and more!

Ultimate Celts Guide can lay the groundwork for a historical or alternate history adventure set within the Celtic lands of old. It can also be used as a guide for creating Celtic characters within fantasy games.

