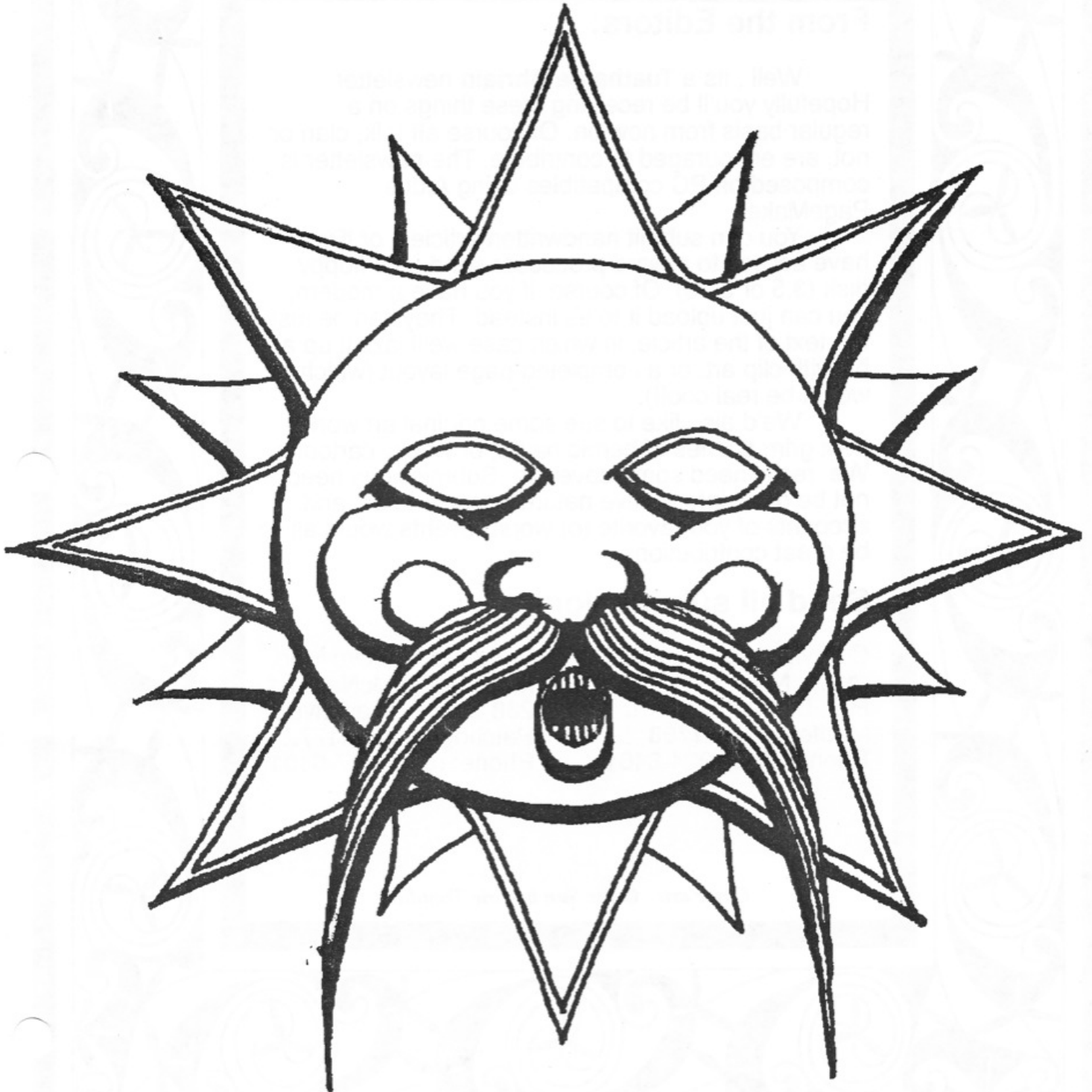


Tuatha de Bhriain





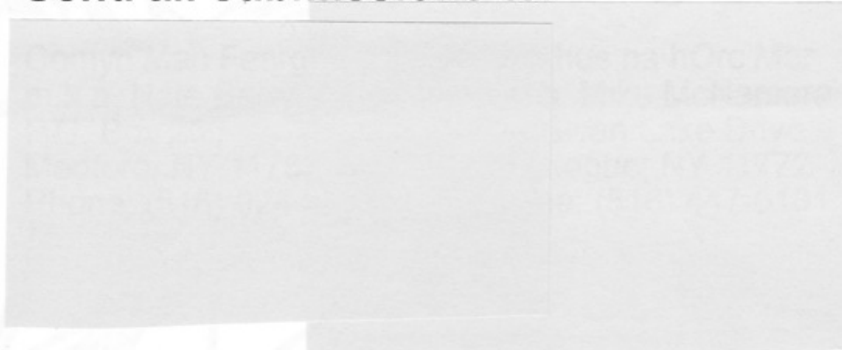
From the Editors:

Well , its a **Tuatha de Bhriain** newsletter. Hopefully you'll be receiving these things on a regular basis from now on. Of course **all** folk, clan or not, are encouraged to contribute. The newsletter is composed on PC compatibles using Aldus PageMaker.

You can submit handwritten articles, or if you have access to a word processor send us a floppy disk (3.5 or 5.25). Of course, if you have a modem, you can just upload it to us instead. They can be just the text of the article, in which case we'll jazz it up a bit with clip art, or a completed page layout (which would be real cool!).

We'd also like to see some original art work, be it grim scenes of heroic battle, or wacky cartoons. We really need some cover art. Submissions need not be of an informative nature, stories, tales, and accounts of you favorite (or worst) events would all be great contributions.

Send all submissions to:



Cover art: Celtic Sun by Eric Treudler

Lughnasad Event!!!



That's right clan, we're having a summer event! The event will take place **Friday July 14 - Sunday July 16 at Cathedral Pines Park**. So far plans include: a feast on Saturday by Erlyn, another throwing contest sponsored by Guthrum, and bardic circle a la Rutger.

Erlyn has offered to cook the feast for us with the following requests: that those who will be partaking of the feast bring something like bread, cheese, or fruit, and that the cook fire is tended for her. Of course, RSVP's will be necessary. The cost to participate in the feast has not, as of yet, been determined, but expect it to be somewhere between \$5 - \$10. The site fee has not been determined either but expect it to be between \$10 - \$20. Home-brew will be supplied, so at worst it'll be \$30 for three days of fun, sun, beer, and a meal, which is reasonable, but I'm shooting for a \$15 - \$20 all inclusive event fee. If you're just showing for the day it's \$5. **We'll be sending out a more detailed flyer about 4 weeks before the event.**

As far as collecting fees is concerned, it's a real hassle. So far I've had the unenviable task of shaking down members and guests for money. It's not a job I'm at all comfortable doing, especially explaining why the site fee is the amount that it is and begging folk to run to their car or tent to get their wallet. As a result, people still owe money from the last event and it was only because of the graciousness of the park supervisor in not charging for that rainy Friday that we were able to cover our expenses. So I'm asking that clansfolk come and find me to pay their fee as soon as they arrive on site. I'm also asking that clansfolk take responsibility for their guests (as is clan law) and see to it that their site fees get paid in a timely fashion as well.

I'm supposed to pay the park on Sunday before I leave. The past two events, I've had to stall till Monday or Tuesday to pay. The park people have been very forgiving thus far, but I feel real bad about it and we would be ruining a good thing by pushing it. Of course, if you're genuinely short on cash we could work something out (I'd rather see every member there and clean out the clan account to cover the park fee than be there by myself and have to clean out the clan account anyway). But **Please, Please, Please, make every effort to pay your fee as soon as you get there or in advance.**

From your Chieftain:

This past Bealtaine event proved to be yet another success despite the torrential down pour on Friday. We proved that we can still have a great time just being together and that we'll always make the best of things no matter what obstacles crop up. The clan remains on excellent terms with the park people and they are looking forward to seeing us again.

That said, I'd like to single out a couple of individuals who went the distance and made the event something really special...

First I'd like to thank friend **Guthrum** for holding the throwing contest and having the tenacity for supplying all the necessary equipment and the cool period prizes.

Next, I'd like to thank clansman **Volund** for supplying the brew. The five gallons of mead he made for the event was the best I've ever tasted. His talent is clearly one of the clan's greatest assets in providing a good time.

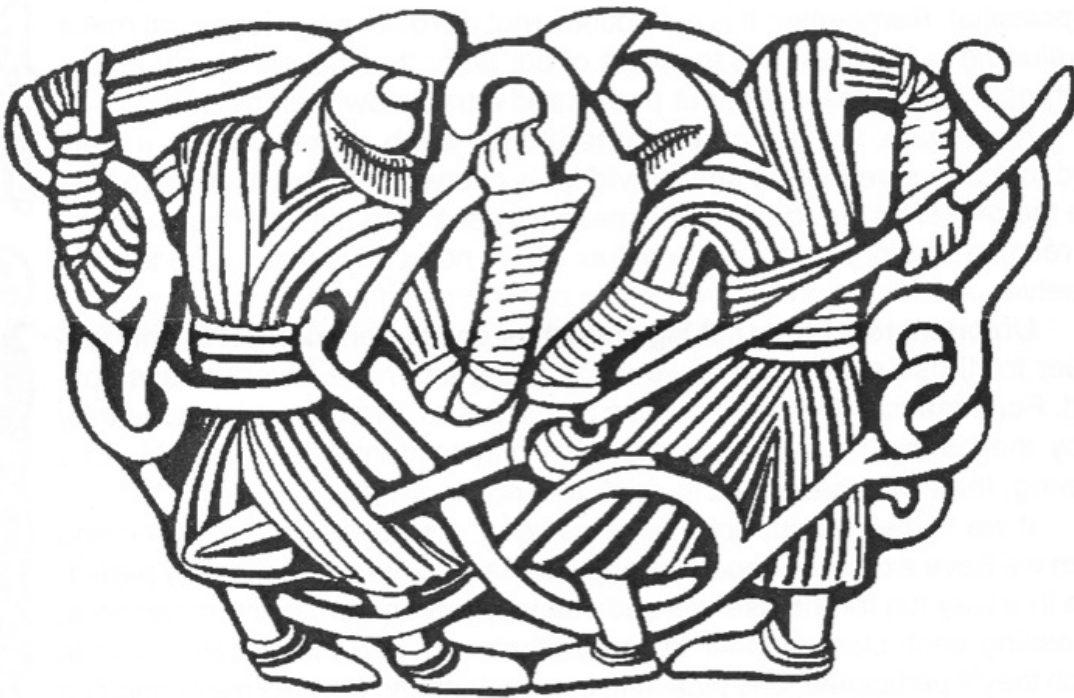
I'd also like to thank clansman **Rutger** for the awesome story he told at the fireside. It was period storytelling at its best and I'm sure we'll all be looking forward to another one at the next event.

Most of all, I'd like to thank clansman **Sil**. Sil really put his back in to it this past event by making sure we had plenty of wood, keeping the camp tidy, and lending a hand whenever one was needed.

Those who were unable to make it missed out on a lot of fun, but they were in our thoughts and I know I speak for everybody when I say we hope that circumstances will improve in the future so that we can see all our clansfolk and friends at the next clan event.

Firewood

The next thing the clan has to consider is firewood. We have exhausted the Treudlers supply, and because its always a hassle getting people to collect wood on site, I'm considering buying wood for the next event. Though this may seem like the easiest thing to do, Fire wood is another expense and will certainly drive the site fee up. Last event, I had to make three trips off site for firewood and I'm not doing it again. I'm hoping to get a phone call from some people who have a definite solution to this problem and are willing to volunteer. Which brings me to the next subject: **Volunteering**





Volunteering

Its time for all clan members to claim a piece of the clan and make it their own. What do I mean by this? Simply put, **the clan is a team that needs contributions from all its players.** We, as a clan, have plenty of great ideas, but very few come to be. We as members have a tendency to say things like "The clan should do this" or "The clan should do that" as if the clan were some living entity that could act on its own. Well, that's not the case. **YOU** are the clan. If you have an idea, act on it. Its the only way it will get done. If you have a problem, solve it. Empower yourself. No one can express or act on something you feel as well as yourself. If you're unwilling to act, sit quietly and smile. If everyone volunteered to run an activity or take responsibility for a job that needed doing, we would have a real smooth event and strong clan.

The Thuatha de Bhriain has the highest concentration of creative and competent people of any group I know. You are some of the most talented artists, able craftsmen, and brilliant thinkers I've ever had the pleasure of knowing. I know for a fact that there is very little beyond our ability. If I seem demanding, it is only because we are not truly working up to our potential. Remember, It is our actions (not words or intentions) that make us valuable to the clan. It is the fruits of our labor that will enrich our enjoyment, gain us the respect of our peers, and attract new members.

As a team, **we are all responsible for each other.** We, as a clan, need to make sure that no one individual is overworking themselves to provide the rest of us a good time. We need to make sure that every clan member receives his or her fair share of fun. All we need do is make sure that we ourselves are taking on our own share of responsibility.

Unfortunately, we're not big enough or diverse enough yet to only volunteer for those activities that we enjoy doing and have all our bases covered. For instance, The clan now has four brewers. They brew because they enjoy the hobby. If all the brewers wish only to contribute to the clan by brewing, then we'll have a lot to drink and not much else.

If we tighten up our act, I have no doubt the day will eventually come when we have a diverse enough group that each individual need only participate in a way fun for themselves and valued by everyone. In the mean time, I'm asking each clan member to search their soul and think of two ways in which they'll participate, one pleasant, one unpleasant. Contact me (Aonghus) and let me know what you come up with.

Bottles and Cans !!!Banned!!!

Our last event suffered from an over abundance of beer cans and bottles strewn about camp. They detracted significantly from the period atmosphere also, Sil, Momus, and Comyn were unfairly left in charge of this mess. In order to avoid this from happening again, Bottles and cans are hereby banned out side of your own tents.

Any medievalist worth their salt has a drinking horn or other period drinking vessel that they could fill inside their tent, thus you can enjoy your beer and help maintain the period atmosphere. And why are you bringing beer anyway? For those who don't like home-brew, try talking to our clan brewers and see if they'll make the beer you prefer. Our home-brewers take pride in their work and in making beer that people enjoy. In talking to them, you will be helping them determine what beers the clan as a whole prefers and what they will make.

Let us all endeavor to be the best clan
we can be and make Lughnasad the
greatest event yet!





Comyn on Celtic Knotwork



"Hey, if it's knot work, I'm into it!"

I've spent some amount of time recently studying the art of Celtic decoration and although I'm still not very good at it, I'd like to share some of the things I found interesting. My first exposure to Celtic art was Gunnars' cloak pins up at a Fall Thing at the old Norseland camping area. I didn't pay too much attention then but I remember being struck by the never ending aspects of the interlaced patterns.

Then, one day when Aonghos and I were strolling around Port Jefferson, we stumbled into some wierd crystal shop and Aonghos pointed out a book by Aidan Meehan: Celtic Design: Knotwork. The book is basically a "step by step" method for the construction of Celtic knotwork decoration. Within the week I was doodling knotwork on everything. Although the book is for beginners, there's still enough ideas packed away in the appendix to keep you busy for a long while.

Aidan Meehan has written a bunch of books on the subject if you're interested in this sort of thing including Celtic Design: Spiral Patterns which isn't quite so much a beginners book. I'm still mystified by most of this one but it's a little more concerned with the art of the period we re-create.

The most challenging aspect of the style of decoration known as La Tène is employing the compass and straight edge effectively. Personally I'm thrilled that I actually have a use for the really good set of compasses my parents got me for Christmas when I was 15...

"From the first century, compasses were used to make spiral patterns as part of Celtic craft training and later as part of monastic training. Even when freehand methods were used, they derived from 'an incredibly clever play of compasses', as Françoise Henry noted."

- quoted from Celtic Design: Knotwork

But as you might already know, spirals go back a long way. There is evidence that even stone-age cultures employed the spiral in decoration. In the period from around 5000 B.C. to near 3000 B.C., spirals were turning up as decoration on pottery. Near the end of this span of time, during the megalithic period, when people began to build the huge monuments of stone for which this period is named, a tomb known as Newgrange was constructed in Ireland. At the entrance to the tomb is a stone inscribed with a triple spiral. Down a passageway leading into the mound, the first rays of the winter solstice sunrise shine. This solar alignment is marked in the burial chamber by a stone bearing another triple spiral.

The spirals both seem as if they were placed there to be read. Could there be a cryptic message hidden in the triple spiral's form and construction? Could it hold a secret wisdom? Aidan Meehan gets pretty esoteric on this topic during one of Celtic Design: Spiral Patterns' short asides. I'd advise any clan member or friend of the clan to take a look at any of the books in this series, and you do not have to be an artist to appreciate them... Drawing Celtic Knotwork is technically demanding, but more akin to drafting than painting...



Irish Music History

with Comyn Mac Fergus

I spent a little time recently in the music library at Stony Brook and I came across a pretty interesting book on the musical history of Ireland. Instead of trying to synthesize what I found in that book, I decided to just paraphrase sections from it that seemed interesting. What follows was taken from that book, The Melodic Tradition of Ireland by James R. Cowdery 1990 by the Kent State University Press, Kent Ohio

Traditional Irish music has been evolving over at least the last two centuries into the form in which it is heard today. Most traditional musicians feel that their music comes from times even more distant. Although no evidence refutes this idea, there is little to support it concretely, as the music of Irish peasants was not considered a matter of scholarly interest until the nineteenth century. Before that time, references to indigenous Irish music were fragmentary, shedding little light on specific musical practices. However, these scattered and tantalizing references have become part of the mythos of the music, and as such they have a place in a discussion of the historical background perceived by modern traditional musicians.

This is not the place to chronicle the ebb and flow of political fortunes in Ireland, for that story is intricate and too often oversimplified. Mythological and historical considerations are mentioned here only in relation to those cultural consequences which affected the music and the way it is perceived today.

The earliest human artifacts unearthed in Ireland show that Neolithic people were there around 6000 B.C. Bronze Age sites show great stoneworks - dolmens, raths, and tombs - but little is known of indigenous culture before the coming of the Gaels around the middle of the fourth century B.C. Popular imagination, mixed perhaps with a vestige of truth, has peopled pre-Gaelic Ireland with four waves of inhabitants. First came the Fomorians, sinister giants who embodied Evil. They were conquered by the Firbolgs, who were small and shrewd, overcoming their giant foes by superior cunning. The Firbolgs were eventually vanquished by the Danaans, often seen as the embodiment of Good. The Danaans were able to manipulate nature to some extent, due to their close harmony with natural forces; but eventually they fell before the invading Milesians. The Danaans then transformed themselves into the invisible "little people" known as "leprechauns," "si," or "faeries," and inhabited the old stoneworks and various other parts of the Irish country-side. The Milesians were in turn ousted by the Gaels.

The Gaels revered the memory of the Danaans - perhaps because of their common foes, but for cultural reasons as well. "The Gaels attributed their own love of poetry and desire for knowledge to the Danaans. Lugh himself, the sun god, and Eriu, the earth goddess of Ireland, were said to have been Danaans in origin... Even the Lia Fail, the sacred stone of Tara, was said to have derived its magical powers from the Danaans" (Costigan 1969,12). The Danaans were also admired for their music, and today the music of the faeries is often said to be the sweetest music ever heard. Many folktales attest to the supernatural powers of faery music, and several tunes in modern oral tradition are said to have been composed by the faeries.

Music was very important to the Gaels, too. Flood(1913,23) collated a list of instrument types used in Gaelic courts: harps (*cruit and clairseach*); zithers (*psalterium, nabla, tiompan, kinnor, trigonon, and ochttdacht*); fiddles (*fidil*); flutes (*faedan*); shawms (*buinne and guthbuinne*); bagpipes (*cuisle and piopaí*); horns (*bennbuabhal and corn*); trumpets (*stoc and sturgan*); and percussion (*craebh ciuil, crann ciuil, and cnamha*).

We have no concrete knowledge of the tunes and playing styles of the early Gaelic court musicians, but a suggestion of a developed musical system is found in their variously interpreted musical categories, given by Breathnach(1971,2-4) as *goltraí* (music for sorrow), *geatraí* (music for happiness), and *suantraí* (music for sleep). Citing eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sources, Flood gave the terms as *goltraighe* (music for valor), *geantraighe* (music for love), and *suantraighe* (music for rest), translating *traighe* as "a mode or measure," and designating each of the three categories as belonging to one of the three Greek musical modes, Dorian, Phrygian, and Lydian (1913, 35). At least one example of "music of valor" may have survived from the Gaelic courts: "Brian Boru's March" is believed by some to have come from the period of that monarch, perhaps having filled the air on Good Friday in 1014, when his forces won the decisive victory over the Viking invaders at Clontarf.

Breathnach, Breandan Folk Music and Dances of Ireland, Dublin: Mercier Press. A version of "Brian Boru's March" appears in O'Neill 1903, 338.

Costigan, Giovanni A History of Modern Ireland, 1969 New York: Pegasus.

Flood, W.H. Grattan A History of Irish Music, 1913 Dublin: Brown and Nolan. Reprint, New York: Praeger, 1970

Clan Members and Progress

Persona	Mundane Name	Street	City	St	Zip	Phone
Aonghus						
Coiser						
Comyn						
Cymrot						
Falgon						
Sil						
Grimnir						
Monlia						
Cailin						
Momus						
Rutager						
Vollund						

Please notify Aoghus of any address corrections or errors

