Archetypes
From the Editor

The word ‘Archetype’ is interesting in that what it means depends on who you ask. For instance, Plato is the first person known to have used it and his archetypes were pure mental forms that were imprinted in the soul before it was born into the world.

The earliest known use of the word in the English language is from 1540 when it was used to represent the “original pattern from which copies are made.” It was taken from Latin archetypum, which came from the Greek arkhetypon literally meaning “a pattern, model, figure on a seal,” and the adjective arkhetypos meaning “first-molded,” from arkhе- “first” + typos “model, type”.

Sir Francis Bacon used the word, in the 17th century in the sentence, “First, therefore, let us seek the dignity of knowledge in the archetype or first platform, which is in the attributes and acts of God, as far as they are revealed to man and may be observed with sobriety. . .”

Bacon also wrote a vision for a utopian New World in North America, laid out in his novel The New Atlantis. We only know of Atlantis because of Plato’s writings and so it is almost certain that Bacon got his ideas for Atlantis and for the word ‘archetype’ from Plato, though Plato claims archetypes live in the human soul, whereas Bacon states that they are “the attributes and acts of God” meaning even Bacon was willing to slightly change the definition stated by the earliest user of the term.

By 1919, the psychologist Carl Gustav Jung used the concept of archetype in his theory of the human psyche and the collective unconsciousness, in the form of primordial images, characters, or pattern of circumstances that recur throughout literature and are thought of consistently enough to be considered universal or ideal. Jung was also not ashamed to change the meaning of the word, and so, by now, we have presented four distinctly different definitions of ‘archetype’ from some of the most ancient and honored users of the word. Jung even went so far as to name the twelve types of human archetypes, which include the hero, the rebel, the healer, the sage, the regular guy or gal, the explorer and more.

Generally speaking, reoccurring images, symbols and patterns are considered archetypes, and these range from ideas like ‘the quest’ and “the heavenly ascent’, to characters like the hero or the healer, to symbols such as the apple and snake.

And so it is obvious that the use of the word ‘archetype’ is a free-for-all, as long as it refers to some type of primordial person, place or thing, which reoccurs throughout human literature and philosophy, and which profoundly affects and influences humankind on a continuous basis, or represents a ‘perfect example’ of a type of person, place or thing. That is my definition, and as far as I am concerned it is as good as any other on this page.

So, within the balance of this issue you will read several articles that lean on my definition in the presentation of an archetypal person, place or thing. Once again, I am amazed at how our authors came through with original twists and turns on this theme, making for another great issue of the Celtic Guide.

As you read this issue, remember, next month will be themed “The Muse” and will feature many artistic presentations, as well as an interview with fiddler Natalie MacMaster, who has been called the world’s greatest Celtic performer!

http://www.celticguide.com • celticguide@gmail.com
Special Announcements

In response to a few of our regular authors I will try to include a table of contents for each Celtic Guide issue, going forward. We may even be able to create a table of contents for past issues, which would be accessed through our website . . . but first things, first.

Just for the record, this project is entirely volunteer. We have two sponsors, Harrigan Holidays and Triskelt.com who do help cover some expenses. All other advertising is in trade for articles, photographs, illustrations and other services. Carolyn Emerick runs our Facebook page entirely volunteer, and has been able to make Celtic Guide hard copies available on Amazon. This was in response to over 60 requests from the U.S. and Europe. No profit from these print copies makes its way into Celtic Guide coffers. They are offered at cost only as a service to our readers.

NOTE: The Celtic Guide is free to everyone. There is a certain person in Wales claiming that he has something to do with the Guide and he offers it as a part of a course. This is FALSE. He is lying to the public for his own financial gain, which is a sad thing to have to live with, I suppose.

We so appreciate all the great authors who respond monthly to each new theme. This issue is a first in that I have no article in it. I wrote the entire first issue myself and have had a couple articles in each successive issue, but this time out so many authors responded that it was all I could do to keep up with editing and laying out their work in our pages. I am absolutely thrilled at this, as we gain perspective from all over the Celtic world this way.

We have had authors from the U.S., Canada, Scotland, Ireland, England, Wales, Poland and Portugal, and have received many wonderful photos and illustrations. About 2,000 to 3,000 people hit our site each issue, plus our likes on Facebook are over 8,100 and we have a weekly reach, there, typically of around 30,000 people! We are a force in the Celtic world now, and are doing all we can to remain FREE to all, and to present a variety of opinions, articles, styles, etc.

Now for the table of contents . . .

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My name is Liam O’Shea and I live in Ballincollig, County Cork, Ireland. I have five dogs – Tarabh, Beag, Bramble, Gypsy, and of course Obie. My dogs are pets/workers/pot fillers. Yes, they even catch their own meat!

I was brought up in Irish speaking schools and gained an interest in all things Irish and traditional.

I’ve also had a passion for dogs, and for long walks in the countryside – always a great way to clear the head.

Finally, I have always had an interest in old ruins, castles and forts, and loved to explore these as a youth, as all lads do, I suppose.

I began taking photos while out either hiking with or working the dogs and so I combined all of these interests and began posting my photographs online, getting some very good feedback.

With Obie’s ancient and majestic Deerhound appearance he just seems to add to my photos of these ancient and majestic sites. Obie looks like he belongs at these sites – both being archetypes for the Celtic race – with Obie being from one of the oldest Celtic breeds.

I suppose it’s just the romantic notion of the hero Cu Chulainn and his hound that I was going for with these photographs.

In the Celtic Guide cover shot, Obie stands near a dolmen at Burren, in Co. Clare. In the photo above, he is shown at Carrigadrohid Castle, Carrigadrohid, County Cork.
Above: Obie in front of an old manor house at Aherla, County Cork, Ireland. Below: Obie guards a large field of stone fences on the Aran Islands – three islands located in Galway Bay.
Above: Obie takes a break at Killcrea Abbey, County Cork, Ireland. Below: Obie at the scenic Cliffs of Mohar, which are Ireland’s most visited natural attraction and feature a magical vista that captures the hearts of up to one million visitors every year . . . make that one million and one!
If a future encyclopedia, on some distant planet our descendants will colonize, were to describe the archetypal Scotsman in a single paragraph, how would it read? The progenitor of a mighty clan? A doughty adventurer sang of by bards? A defender of mighty kings? A highland chief who carves out a great holding? An ambitious statesmen who surpasses his rivals for lofty rungs of nobility? A perpetrator of bloody feuds? A builder of castles? A stealthy raider preying upon foreign settlements? What if all those designations were essential, but you needed a single surname for one good example? Certainly, among the few that might serve, you could do worse than choose Gordon!

The origin of the name is oft debated; many point to Bertrand de Gourden, the man who fatally wounded Richard the Lion-Heart with a crossbow bolt before the castle of Chalus in Limoges, as perhaps being the founder of the Gordons. But a progenitor arriving in Britain with the Norman Conquest seems more solid; those descendents would have entered Scotland in the days of Malcolm III, settling in Berwickshire. The first of the name crossing the River Tweed was a valiant knight who, slaying a ferocious wild boar that had terrorized the region, was rewarded by the King with grants of lands, to which he gave his surname. Settling there, he assumed the boar’s head for his armorial bearing; modern gin labels notwithstanding, later Gordon chiefs would select instead a stag’s head to grace the badges they pinned to their bunnets.

Generations later, the Gordons moved their seat to northern Scotland, leaving behind kin like the Gordons of Lochinvar, and Earlston. Sir Adam de Gordon was the founding ancestor of most of the great families of the name in Scotland; in reward for his service, Robert the Bruce granted him the lordship of Strathbogie, in Aberdeenshire. Sir Adam fixed his residence there, giving those lands and his lordship the name of Huntly, after a village in the Gordon parish, the site now marked only by a solitary tree. Over time, they succeeded in building great castles and redoubts faster than the Forbeses and the Murrays could attack and burn them . . . and the day came when none would dare to even try.

The main interests of the family, though, were still on the Borders, for a while longer. Sir John de Gordon, having joined in the burning of Roxburgh, became a target for English border reivers, inciting him in turn to raid their lands, carrying off great plunder. Famously, he once even turned upon a pursuing force twice the strength of his own, and against all odds,
managed to defeat them, earning him the battle-sobriquet of “Blood tae his Elbows” among his surviving followers. Sir John also rode with the young Earl of Douglas in the battle against the forces of the Earl of Northumberland on the moonlit field of Otterbourne in 1388.

Years later, the Battle of Homildon Hill took place, in which again the leaders of the two opposing sides were the Earl of Douglas, and Hotspur, son of the Earl of Northumberland. Sir John Swinton, seeing the carnage to Scottish ranks made by English bowmen, couched his lance to charge, when Sir Adam de Gordon, long at feud with him, knelt and begged his forgiveness, pleading to be knighted by his former rival. Swinton complied, then the two mustered their followers and charged the enemy. Their bravery was in vain; both died in the pursuant English victory, and marked the last time a Gordon allied himself with a Black Douglas.

Sir Adam, son of Sir John de Gordon, was the last male of his line. By his wife, he had an only daughter, Elizabeth. She wed Alexander, 2nd son of William Seton; ever since, the heads of the House of Gordon have been Setons in the male line. In right of his wife, Seton was known as Lord of Gordon and Huntly; his son, another Alexander, assuming the name and arms of Gordon, and marrying a daughter of Lord Crichton, was made Earl of Huntly by James II in 1449.

For the next century and a half, the House of Gordon consolidated virtually all their interests around their lands in Aberdeenshire and environs, evolving into the strongest clan in the North. They then rose to great utility in the plans of their nation’s rulers for another reason: within the span of no more than two generations, they managed to amass, improve, expand, and keep dependably ready, the greatest cavalry in all of Scotland – deeper in rank than those of the Scotts and Red Douglases on the Borders, stronger than the mounted forces of the Murrays of Midlothian, better outfitted than the bristling Campbell riders from Inverary, more agile even than the lethal dragoons of the Sinclairs of Ross-shire – and wisest of all – held it perpetually at the beck and whim of whichever James currently sat the throne. So vital was this “weapon” to the emerging dynasty of the Stuart monarchs, that some 20th century historians have postulated that the exploits of the great Gordon cavalry might well have provided the boldest inspiration for author J.R.R. Tolkien’s legendary Riders of Rohan.

Feuds and battles were frequent, especially with the Grants, Murrays and Forbeses. Later, the Duke of Gordon, also the chief of his House (as the Gordons came to favor that term over “clan”), was usually addressed simply as Huntly, and frequently referred to as “The Cock of the North”. His most ancient title was “Gudeman of the Bog”, from the Bog-o’-Gight, a morass in the parish of Bellie, Banffshire, in the center of which is the former stronghold of this family, and also the site of Gordon Castle.

When rebellion erupted in the Western Isles in 1505, a later Earl of Huntly was sent to quell the northern area, storming and taking Torquil MacLeod’s stronghold of Stornoway. At Flodden, Huntly led the Scottish vanguard, charging and routing the English front lines, the only part of the battle where Scotland triumphed. His son, Lord John, wed Margaret, daughter of James IV; John’s grandson, the 5th Earl, married
Ann Hamilton, herself a descendant of James II, creating another link to the Royal House of Stewart. It was that Earl, who, as a captive of Somerset’s army at Pinkie Cleuch, was heard to coin the phrase that was so swiftly adopted by historians for the Anglo-Scots ‘betrothal war’ of the 1540’s: “The Rough Wooing”.

The rivalry between the clansmen of Huntly and the mighty House of Murray often erupted in bloodshed, and fueled by George Gordon, the 6th Earl, climaxad after the Regent Moray’s only daughter married James Stewart, a descendent of the Duke of Albany. In right of his wife, that Stewart assumed the House’s earldom, and from his handsome looks became known as “the Bonnie Earl o’ Moray”. Evidently, James VI was highly jealous of his Queen’s admiration for the Bonnie Earl, and so urged Huntly to accelerate the families’ enmity.

In 1591, while Moray resided at Donibristle House near Culross, the manor was attacked and set ablaze one night by Huntly and his men-at-arms. Moray exited safely, but fleeing along the shore, his long yellow hair brightly reflected the light of the burning mansion, and betrayed him. Swiftly overtaken, he was dragged before Huntly, who, just prior to dealing the death stroke, brutally slashed Moray across the face, causing the latter to cry out bitterly, “Ye have spoilt a better face than your own!”; a sadly bitter last line to speak before one’s head bounces ‘cross the turf. The King’s complicity in the event became clear when Huntly was created a Marquess only eight years later, as well as Earl of Enzie, Viscount of Inverness, and Baron of seven other holdings.

Despite having always worshipped as devout Catholics, and always cleaving to service under the Stuarts, the Jacobite rebellions deeply divided the House; following the resounding defeat at Culloden, the 3rd Duke of Gordon was rewarded for his loyalty with the governorship of Edinburgh Castle, even though his uncle, Lord Louis, had been charged with insurrection, and fled to France with a price on his head, dying there in 1754, in a bed far distant from his beloved moors.

Though well-remembered as having been so long bound and pledged to the greatest monarchs of Renaissance Scotland, this war-loving family squandered not one day after the Duke of Cumberland took martial control of the entire Scottish population. Seeing the English troops’ fervor in breaking the nation’s remaining spirit with iron-shod enforcement of the infamous Acts of Proscription, the Gordons began pressing all their military expertise into promoting the formation of King George’s new “Highland Regiments”. This goal was ultimately successful, but placed them in a bizarre partnership with one of the largest of their former rivals: the Clan Campbell, who now rose to great authority from their “catbird seat” as the most prestigious of the Hanoverian allies.

The dream of Jacobite independence was forever shattered, and yet this fiercely resilient House, built by proud Caledonian warriors, had found a way to rise at least high enough from the ashes to go on carrying their beloved swords and muskets, and march forth in tartan’d kilts to ply their ancestral trade. The flag they carried from the Summer of 1746 on would no longer be that of their Fathers, but if it could help protect the future of their children, they knew they would be forgiven.

For half a millennium, the Gordon crest has said: Byddand, and indeed, they have remained!

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

Henceforth Tales

by Cass and Deborah Wright

Follow future issues of Celtic Guide for further information about publication details. . . . and thank you for joining us at the hearth! - DW
EDITOR’S NOTE: Piotr or Peter Kronenberger comes to us from, of all places, Poland! He has studied the Eastern European origins of at least some Celtic tribes and has been a student of this race for most of his life. In this column Piotr speaks of the archetypes of human sacrifice and of the ‘explorer/colonizer’, which was one of Carl Jung’s twelve human archetypes.’

It should be said in all honesty – though deadly rituals were for the Ancient Greeks and Romans something very commonplace, they couldn’t remain calm when writing about such practices among the Celts. My ‘brothers’ were exceptionally skilled in that regard.

The Greek traveller Strabo mentions in his Geography a group of priestesses from Northern Britain who excelled in cruelty. Men could enter their sanctuaries only as sacrificial offerings.

Even the most battle-hardened warriors preferred to die by the hand of a male Druid than end up in the company of these blood-thirsty women.

Strabo left us a description of how the females slit one man’s throat. They tied him up and danced in ecstasy, while the victim’s blood trickled into a sacrificial bronze bowl.

Several years ago, two British archeologists, while exploring caves on the Welsh border, accidentally stumbled on a chamber filled with human skulls. The men immediately reported their find to Cardiff University. Examinations revealed the remains came from the time of Julius Caesar.

This ambitious dictator was at one time the governor of Gaul which he slowly conquered piece by piece (though not without effort), in much the same way as European colonists had done with the Americas and other lands in recent centuries. In this light, Caesar (and Rome in general) could be viewed as the archetypical colonist.

During the Gallic Wars (58-51 BC) the Roman statesman killed, by his own account, some 1,125,000 Celts.

Even in the midst of those battles, Julius already dreamt of Britain. Although he managed to move large forces across the English Channel (the first man in history to accomplish such a feat), his victory was Pyrrhic. The Britons weren’t a wealthy people. Furthermore, they offered up massive human sacrifices to defeat the aggressors, literally pitting their gods against those of the Romans.

The aforementioned skulls discovered in Western England were part of those ceremonies.

That same area yielded another discovery: the remains of a Celtic temple dedicated to Nodens, their dog-god, and human bones intermixed with exquisite carvings of dogs.

Caesar’s bold victories caused unease among the barbarians. Hearing about the planned Roman invasion of the Isles, the Veneti (a tribe living in Brittany) formed a loose coalition to
help their brethren. A couple of tribes sent their men to Britain. Others offered purely spiritual assistance.

The outcome? Julius furiously slaughtered the Veneti elders, along with those Druids who still opposed his rule.

Thus, the Celtic flame in Gaul was fully extinguished. For the next century, the civilized world bordered on the English Channel...

Presently, many sacrificial altars full of human bones discovered in recent years in Normandy and Brittany are a memory of those desperate times.

Political unrest and family troubles back home forced Caesar to abandon his British conquest and return to Rome. Besides, the losses he suffered were so great they could not be ignored. My brothers in Britain could breathe easy...at least for the time being.

As was mentioned above, the Roman Empire’s northern border after the incorporation of Gaul remained on the English Channel for some 100 years. However, it didn’t take the Romans quite that long to once more turn their gaze toward those mist-shrouded lands up North...

In the year 39 AD, Emperor Caligula began to assemble an army several thousand strong, marching across Europe to win Britannia for the Empire. This ambitious plan fell apart on the beaches of Normandy. There, Caligula suddenly stopped his men and ordered them to start gathering seashells!

Such odd behavior stemmed from the fact that just a year before, His Imperial Majesty started suffering from a condition which modern physicists term the bipolar disorder.

To Be Continued…
The role of ancient Celtic women as healers, priestesses, shamankas, medicine-women, oracles, diviners, and/or wise-women has been one of both empowerment and disempowerment through subordination, as has been seen historically for women, in general, through history. This has been attributed to power struggles, many times involving the Church, and done to undermine female power, subordinating them to men, as in the Christian dogma (women subordinate to men, as man is to the church, as the church is to Christ). In fact, the Bible disempowers women with the dictates that women are to be kept are to be separated from men and quiet concerning church matters. Additionally, King James edited the Bible and in his version, had women taken out of leadership roles.

Interesting to note, is that women in priestess, healer, teacher, counseling and leadership roles, have been those who have been open to attack and it is women who are cast into primary roles of evil, such as in witchcraft and the dark arts, while having equal/lateral skills, but being subordinated by gender in role. What a paradox to Christianity, which puts the female on a pedestal as a maternal figure to be respected, revered, and honored.

Both druids and Christians use the cross as symbols. “Interestingly, the Celtic Cross was enclosed by a circle, for spirit, the turning of the wheel. The Circle is Feminine, to the spokes’ angular Masculine. The Christian Cross elongated to the Masculine and shrunk the Feminine until it was usually gone completely” (Druidry & Christianity, 2011, para. 4).

Throughout history, this is seen multiple times. For example, Joan d’Arc was charged with witchcraft, which “arose in her initial contact with the aristocracy, years before her Inquisitorial trial, and her stance of prophetic power and divine inspiration played a role in her execution” (priestesses, power, and politics).

In 60 A.D., Boadicea, married to King Prasutagus of the Icenian nation, became a widow. Her husband, during his reign, had assured, through his will, that upon his death, his wife and two teen-aged daughters, would inherit his wealth and the small Briton kingdom. At this time, Iceni was an independent ally of Rome. However, upon his death, the Roman governor, Paulinus decided otherwise. It was his belief that, as he desired Iceni for his own, that he didn’t have to follow Briton law. He marched troops into Iceni, pillaged their castles, flogged Boadicea unmercifully for standing up to them and then made her watch as her two children were brutally raped. Roman women would have cowered and become submissive, but not so in a Celtic woman,
and queen at that. Once recovered, she vowed vengeance and revenge, not only for herself, but for her daughters, her deceased husband, and his kingdom.

A fierce figure she was to behold; she rode by chariot with her daughters by her side from village to village, rallying country men and women to stand against the Romans; a feat heretofore unheard of, especially by a woman, which of course, led to monumental humiliation for the Romans, a male-dominated culture.

She led her troops, made up of men and women, boys and girls, through Roman town after town, totally decimating everything in their path. No Roman man, woman, child, or home was left. It is estimated that they killed over 70,000. Boadicea’s final battle saw Druids lined up and shouting curses to the heavens, and black-cloaked women with hair flying and holding torches high, screaming like banshees. The Roman soldiers had never lay witness to battle such as this and were scared into an eerie quiet. Boadicea rode her chariot into the fray, leading some 230,000 into battle.

The fight was fast and furious. She lost close to 80,000 as the Romans used shields and short swords to push back and slay the once-mighty Britons. It was as if a wall of metal had been formed and kept pushing them back. The battle became a massacre of the Britons, as only 400 Romans were lost. It is recounted that when the queen saw what had been lost, she took her own life with deadly nightshade (Matthews, 1988 & Wilde, 1997, p. 2).

Even writers such as Joyce (writing in the early 20th century) added almost as a footnote: ‘It is worthy of remark that in our legendary history, female physicians are often mentioned: and so we see that in ancient Ireland the idea was absurd which is so extensively coming into practice in our own day.” Thompson (2010, para. 3) attributes that change of role for women to the Roman church.


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Books by Laura Veazey
Visit Laura’s website at: www.herownanamcara.com

Full Circle is a non-fiction book dealing with the journey from ancient Celtic healing practices to modern day herbalism.

Their Own Anam Cara: A Journey of Destiny is the first in a trilogy of fiction novels set in Scotland, dealing with the magical and the historical.
Legend has it that a man, who was tall and dressed in black, came to visit Ruthven Castle, home of the Wolf of Badenoch. The Wolf and his visitor then played a game of chess which went on for several hours until the darkly-dressed man moved one of the chess pieces and called ‘check’ and then ‘checkmate’. He rose from the table. As he said these words a terrible storm of thunder, hail and lightning surrounded the castle, and continued through the night until silence befell the castle. In the morning, the Wolf’s men were found outside the castle walls, dead and blackened as if every man had been struck by lightning. The Wolf was found dead in the banqueting hall, and although his body appeared unmarked, the nails in his boots had all been torn out. It was obvious to all that his soul had been taken by the devil as punishment for his evil deeds in life.

Note: Ruthven is pronounced ‘riven’.

So who merited such a legend? Alexander Stewart, Earl of Buchan.

The Normans

In the 12th century David I requested Henry I of England send Norman mercenaries whose families had settled in England and Wales to come to Scotland. He and his successors gave them the former lands of Gaelic aristocrats under crown control as a result of the ‘failure of heirs’ or rebellion. In Gaelic law the new head of the kindred was chosen by four generations descended of a previous head from among their number. There was no such thing as a ‘failure of heirs’. In feudal law, if a man had no sons, his lands were divided equally among his daughters. These incompatible laws resulted in rebellions among the native Gaelic nobility, and further confiscations of their lands. In this manner, the incomers: Comyns, Bruces, Stewarts and others gained land and power in Scotland.

The Wolf of Badenoch

Even before they became the royal family of Scotland, the Stewarts were successful in acquiring many of the Gaelic earldoms in the north: Atholl, Strathearn, Menteith and Caithness. About 1212 Buchan came into Anglo-Norman hands when Fergus, mormaor (great officer) of Buchan, died. By Gaelic law there were several male heirs, but by feudal law, Fergus’ heir was Marjorie, his daughter and only child who was married to William Comyn. Adam, the illegitimate son of Fergus, was likely elected head of his clan, and could have become mormaor (great officer) of Buchan. Illegitimacy in Gaelic law continued to be no impediment to advancement. But any claim Adam had to be mormaor (earl in feudal terms), was ignored by Alexander II.

As the earl of Buchan, William Comyn became the first foreigner to rule a Gaelic earldom in Scotland. The Comyns were the most powerful baronial family in Scotland until the Wars of Independence. But they supported John Balliol, and their lands were confiscated when Robert Bruce became king.

Alexander Stewart –
the Wolf of Badenoch

Alexander Stewart (c.1343-1406) was the third son of Robert II, the first Stewart king of Scotland, and his first wife, Elizabeth Mure of Rowallan. Robert’s policy was to continue building up territorial power in his family and consolidating the dynasty’s position; in so doing he also dealt with the rivalries of his many sons by granting them lands. Robert married the widow of Randolph earl of Moray
which included Badenoch. Alexander ruled the latter in his father’s name by 1370 when he issued letters patent from Ruthven Castle, his caput (headquarters) as lord of Badenoch. He promised to protect the men and lands of the bishop of Moray, but the relationship initiated at this time would prove problematic.

At the beginning of his father’s reign, Alexander began to acquire the lands that would make him the most powerful man in the north of Scotland. He was lord of Badenoch, and probably wanted the rest of the earldom of Moray. However, the Dunbars, kin of the Randolphs, pressured Robert II to grant the earldom to John Dunbar as a reward for supporting the new royal dynasty. In 1372 Alexander became royal lieutenant of the North giving him greater status than the earls of Caithness, Sutherland and Ross.

In 1382 Alexander married Euphemia countess of Ross, thereby gaining a huge territory in the north including the Isle of Skye as well as the barony of Kineddar, which comprehended the old earldom of Buchan in the northeast of Scotland. He finally became an earl—the earl of Buchan. By 1387 he had become justiciar (chief justice) of Scotia, Scotland north of the Firth of Forth. At the height of his power he controlled the castles of Ruthven, Lochindorb, Urquhart, Inverness and Dingwall.

A major challenge to Alexander’s power was Alexander Bur, bishop of Moray; as there was no earl of Moray in the 12th and much of the 13th centuries, the bishop wielded considerable political power. Alexander believed he held rights of regality (jurisdiction) over church lands in Moray and the bishop disagreed. To exercise his judicial power, Alexander called the bishop to an assembly held at the standing stones of Easter Kingussie. (Gaels held political assemblies for administration and justice outside on neolithic sites, not in a hall.) The bishop had to prove he held church lands in Badenoch directly of the crown. The dispute was referred to the royal courts which found against the bishop, but after long discussions between Alexander and the bishop, the judgement against the bishop was revoked. The bishopric would remain officially outside Alexander’s overlordship, but the latter continued to gain territory and their revenues within it.

**Downfall**

In 1385 his brother David complained that Alexander was illegally detaining the barony of Urquhart on Loch Ness and likely would not submit to family arbitration. Then the earl of Moray complained that some of his men had been killed at Alexander’s instigation. At council meetings in 1388 Alexander was again blamed for lawlessness in the north, for not doing his duty as justiciar. He was said to be ‘useless to the community’ and removed from his office. Murdoch Stewart, his nephew, became the new justiciar of Scotia in 1389. At the same time James Lindsay of Crawford claimed a hereditary right to the earldom of Buchan.

Alexander was reported to have a ferocious temper, but that wasn’t unusual among rulers of the Middle Ages; Henry II of England few into rages and is said to have chewed the straw strewn on the floor. A strong personality was a prerequisite of leadership, but good kingship was meant to benefit subjects. A wise leader knew how to get along with his relatives, and
when to forgive if not forget. A wise leader minimised raiding and war and chose peace whenever possible.

Instead, the complaints of Alexander’s rapaciousness and depredations became legion.

**The Wolf and the Burnings**

The nickname ‘Wolf of Badenoch’ may not be contemporary, but certainly gives an idea of the strength of opinion against Alexander. He did his worst in the bishopric of Moray. In 1390 the bishop of Moray made an indenture with Thomas Dunbar, eldest son of the earl of Moray and sheriff of Inverness, whereby Thomas promised to defend the bishop’s men and possessions in return for an annual fee. The bishop refused to pay any longer for Alexander’s expensive protection; the earl was furious and determined to demonstrate he was the most powerful man in the north.

Because Euphemia, Alexander’s first wife, was childless, he wanted to divorce her and marry Mairead nighean Eachainn, the mother of his illegitimate children. The bishop of Moray reprimanded him and commanded him to return to his wife, which gave the Wolf another excuse for depredations in his diocese.

The Register of the Bishopric of Elgin leaves no doubt about who burnt churches in Moray:

The men of lord Alexander Stewart, son of the late king [Robert II]...burned the whole town of Elgin and the Church of St Giles in it, the hospice beside Elgin, eighteen noble and beautiful mansions of canons and chaplains, and —what gives most bitter pain—the noble and beautiful church of Moray, the beacon of the countryside and ornament of the kingdom, with all the books, characters and other goods of the countryside preserved there. (Bannatyne Club 1837: 381)

His brother King Robert III of Scotland was outraged and obliged his brother to do penance for his heinous crime, a penance witnessed by his brother, nobles and dignitaries of the church. The king, believing that he had learnt his lesson, pardoned him, and he was received back into the Church.

**Highlands & Lowlands**

But the destruction blackened Alexander’s reputation among his peers and he acquired the nickname ‘the Wolf of Badenoch’. The raiding also resulted in the opinion among Lowland communities that the Highlands were a source of disorder and a refuge for criminals. A raid in 1392 on the lowlands of Angus, led by Alexander’s two illegitimate sons with an army of caterans, resulted in the death of Walter de Ogilvie, the hereditary sheriff of Angus.

Cateran comes from Gaelic ceatharnach which means a soldier, a sturdy man suitable for the clan army (sluagh). Service in the sluagh was part of land rental according to Gaelic custom, and a leader could billet caterans on those who lived on lands subject to his authority; therefore, a sizable army could be maintained at little cost. The Wolf used bands of ceatharnaich to prosecute his feud with the bishop of Moray; anyone reluctant to send their young men to the sluagh saw their homes burnt.

In the 1440s Andrew of Wyntoun wrote that the church in Elgin was burnt by Scottish Gaels. Carefully excluded from his chronicle was the fact that their commander was Alexander Stewart, earl of Buchan and scion of the royal family.

*That ilk yhere efftyr syne Brynt the kyrk wes off Elgyne Be wyld wykkyd Heland-men…*

*That each year ever since the church was burnt that was in Elgin by wild wicked Highland men…*

**Aftermath**

Giving the Stewart princes wide powers over regions of Scotland was supposed to maintain order in the north and prevent Highlanders from descending the Great Glen and other routes through the Highlands and attacking the Lowlands.

The Wolf’s rule aggravated a situation of lawlessness and barbarity in the northwest, created by the Wars of Independence and Robert the Bruce’s confiscation of the Comyn lands. In particular the Wolf’s burning of Elgin
Cathedral emphasised the threat to law and order presented by his power in the north. He had hoped that, by threatening order, his elder brother Robert III would support him against Murdoch Stewart and he’d regain the lost office of justiciar of Scotia. The rivalries between the Stewart princes threatened the security of Scotland and their own dynasty.

During the Wars of Independence there was no distinction between Highlands and Lowland Scots. After the wars, Gaelic-speaking people are called ‘wild Scots’ and those of English speech call themselves ‘domestic’ or ‘civilised’ Scots. Circa 1500 those of Gaelic speech were called ‘Highlanders’ because most Gaels lived in the northwest Highlands, and those of English speech are called ‘Lowlanders’ because they occupy the fertile lowland regions of the south and the north-east coast.

The Wolf was buried at the Cathedral of Dunkeld, Perthshire far from the scenes of his depredations. His sarcophagus (stone coffin) was topped by an effigy portraying him lying down in the best plate armour of the period. He left an illegitimate son, Alexander Stewart, earl of Mar, who fought the MacDonald Lord of the Isles for the earldom of Ross at the battle of Harlaw in 1411.

Ironically his descendent was Colonel David Stewart of Garth who fought with Wellington in the Napoleonic Wars. Unlike his infamous ancestor, Stewart of Garth was a true Highland gentleman, kindly and generous, well-spoken in Gaelic and English. He wrote Sketches of the Highlanders of Scotland, still a good resource for the history of the Scottish Gaels and regiments of the Scottish Highlands.

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When I first started out on my Celtic Pagan path as a spiritual way of living I was armed with very little other than a basic working knowledge of the Ogham. This ancient alphabet and way of writing was the seed, my point of origin as it were. In the Ogham I found a state of awareness that has been a guide to my learning and understanding for many years. This ancient wisdom has been my mentor, and still is.

A week ago I started researching ideas for this article and I had in mind the famous gods and goddesses of the Celtic pantheons and I honestly believed I would be writing a piece about Cerridwyn, The Morrighan or Taliesin the Bard; all of which hold an important relevance in my own beliefs. However as I researched and defined what an archetype actually is I realised the archetype of my spiritual life is the Ogham – so that is what I should write about.

Inspired by Ogma, the god of eloquence, the Ogham is a 25 letter alphabet dating back to 5th century Ireland. Evidence of its early existence can still be seen today in stone markings.

Pronounced ‘AHG-m’ or ‘OH-ehm’, the Ogham is read from bottom to top or occasionally from right to left and served as an alphabet for one of the many ancient Celtic languages. The origins of the Ogham are unclear as much has been lost to time. The current understanding is that the main twenty letters are also the names of twenty trees sacred to the Druids and other Celtic Pagan traditions. It is also used in divination but there is no proof as to that being the case historically or of its use for magical purposes.

The Ogham is said to have been invented by Ogma Grian-ainech mac Elatha mac Delbaeth as proof of his own ingenuity and that this language belonged to the learned rather than rustic herdsmen. Elitism of the arts it seems was common place even in the old days of the Celtic tribes.

The question of the Ogham being an ancient tool of divination is a difficult one, whilst there is no real evidence that the ancients used it in that way there is also no evidence to say they did not. Whilst humanity certainly evolves it does stay intrinsically the same so I would put the
odds in favour of some using it as a divination tool back in the day. I do not suppose they used the same methods as I do. Ogham divination uses staves or discs of wood, each with a carved Ogham letter on them.

As a witch I believe the full moon is symbolic of wisdom and intuition so if I am doing an in-depth divination work I do it when the moon is at her fullest. The timing is dependent on the reader so should be when they feel it is right. I use divination more for confirmation than prediction. Over the years I have learned to trust my gut instincts on matters of spirituality even so sometimes I need the added certainty so I cast my Ogham. I use it because it is the one I know best and have most success with; is that magical? Well, probably not as I use it more than anything else so more likely it is practice.

The Ogham is an alphabet, an elite form of communication of its time, a tool of divination and of inspiration. Just discussing my research with my partner Roxi led her to apply her poetic muse to the following poem:

**Ogham** by *Roxi St Clair*

Alphabet on tree and stone wisdom that knows no time they’re still standing weathered and honed ancient oracles connecting to divine. Upon some granite or some bark, the sages etched their marks perpendicular strokes made by enlightened folks antiquity throughout the ages.

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**NAME:** Pollyanna Jones  
**TALENT:** Author/Illustrator  
**RESIDENCE:** England  
**INTERESTS:** Northern Traditions Celtic, Nordic, Germanic and Anglo Saxon

http://www.facebook.com/SeidkonasHearth?ref=hl  
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We don’t hear very much about the contributions that the Scots made to the Crusades, and of course this is hardly surprising, for Scotland at the time was expending more than enough of her energy in fighting for her very existence. Just about every single document in Scotland was destroyed by invading hordes so we have virtually no written records at all from that period and must rely on the writings of others.

We had just cleared the Norse from most of our shores at the Battle of Largs in 1263 and were starting to get back on our feet when barely thirty years later we were again doing battle for our independence with, this time, the English.

It’s hard to be able to spare men and arms for crusading wars in the middle east when you need every able bodied man you have available to fight your own battles against foreign invaders.

It is well known that king Robert Bruce had never been able to fulfil his pledge to take part in the wars of Christianity against Islam, and that subsequent to Scotland regaining her independence in 1320 (and after Bruce’s death in 1329) his heart was removed and placed in a casket to be carried by Sir James Douglas to the Holy Land. It was intended to act as an inspiration to the Scots Crusaders that had accompanied Sir James and to be placed in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

Sir James and the casket never got further than Spain, sadly, for he agreed to help king Alphonso of Spain in a battle for Teba castle. Douglas and all but one of his men were killed in that struggle. Bruce’s heart was brought back to Scotland in 1331, by Sir William Keith, to be placed in Melrose Abbey where it resides to this day.

It’s a fascinating story and I heartily recommend that it be read by all who are interested in Scotland’s history.

This article however is about the other less well known bits and pieces regarding the Scots and the Crusades.

I have drawn them from an excellent book written and researched by Prof. Allan MacQuarrie called ‘Scotland and the Crusades. 1095 - 1560.’ Published by John Donald Publishers Ltd., Edinburgh. 1997.
“And who indeed would deny that the Scots are Barbarians? Nevertheless, while in our company they have never transgressed the laws of duty and friendship”.

This back-handed compliment was part of an impassioned speech by English crusader Hervey de Glanville to dissuade his fellow countrymen from deserting the Siege of Lisbon in 1147 ad. This particular siege had dragged on for months and some of the English had begun to regret that they had not persevered with their original intention of sailing through the Mediterranean.

As a result of this plea the English army somewhat shamefacedly decided to remain with the rest of the besiegers who comprised men from Cologne, Flanders, Boulogne, Brittany, Normandy, Germany and Scotland.

Shortly after, on 24th October of 1147, Lisbon surrendered to the Christian army. And it was just as well, for the capture of Lisbon for the Portuguese was the only success of the Second Crusade.

“Then the Welshman abandoned his poaching, the Scot his familiarity with fleas, the Dane his continuous drinking, and the Norwegian gorging himself on fish”.

This was the ‘Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’ historian, William of Malmesbury’s rather uncomplimentary description in 1121 of the reaction of England’s neighbours to the summons of Pope Urban in 1096 and the pursuits which they deserted to go to Jerusalem. Quite clearly, English Euro-sceptics aren’t a recent phenomenon.

“You might have seen groups of Scots, ferocious among themselves but elsewhere unwarlike, with bare legs, shaggy cloaks, a purse hanging from their shoulders, rolling down from their marshy borders: and those
who seemed ridiculous to us bore copious
arms, offering their faith and devotion as
aid. Their speech was until then unknown, so
that, having no voice, they crossed one finger
over another in the sign of the cross; thus
showing us that they had set out for the cause
of the Faith”.

Picard (France) chronicler Guilbert de
Nogent, c. 1100, describing the exotic strangers
encountered by the Frankish crusaders.

Was Guilbert talking about Gaelic or was
it Pictish? As Scotland had become a fully
united nation of Picts and Scots only 250 years
previously it is more than likely that many Scots
still spoke the Pictish language in 1100.

Gaelic was certainly known on the continent
of Europe. Irish annals record frequent
pilgrimages to Rome, and MacBeth, the
Gaelic speaking king of Scots, had been in
Rome in 1050 - ‘scattering money like seed
among the poor’ according to one witness and
contemporary writer.

Gaelic is still spoken in Scotland, but of the
Pictish language we now know next to nothing.

“1150 A.D.

“In our own times in Western Scotland
not all of the people wear drawers, but all of
the knights and townsfolk do wear them!
The rest make do with a general covering,
which is closed at the front and back, but
which underneath is open at the sides. This
was related to me by certain clerics who had
come from these parts. And it was clearly
seen that some of these people who were
travelling through our land on pilgrimage
were not wearing drawers”.

This last piece was written by the
Premonstratensian Abbot of the Diocese of
Cambrai c. 1150 ad.

The ‘general covering’ referred to above is
of course a Highlander’s plaid. This is probably
the earliest example of speculation as to what
we Scots wear under our kilts.

What more need I say?

Ronald Henderson, Perth, Scotland

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

Who will take the battle horn and
waken our countrymen from their
slumber? Will it be you?

Vote Yes, in 2014.

http://www.yesscotland.net
The Greeks and the Romans have taught us a lot about the Celts. If it wasn’t for their accounts of how Celtic people lived, nearly all of our knowledge would come from archaeological evidence and oral stories.

We do have to be careful, of course, when using their sources to learn about the Celts because they were very much enemies of both the Greeks and the Romans. Thus it is thought to be the case that many records of them have been exaggerated. Not only were these people enemies, but the Celts were very much an enigmatic people to Greece and Rome.

Could it be that much of their exaggerated tales have actually survived and become the common image held of the Celts, even today?

There are several Celtic regions in Western Europe today but some stand out as more typically Celtic than others (at least, in the layperson’s stereotypical idea of Celtic). Think for a second about what you most associate with the Celts. Is it castles and medieval princesses? Is it water, trees, jewelry, faeries (including such characters as Leprechauns and Banshees)?

All of these are of course things many of us associate with Celtic culture. But there’s something else which seems to have become a Celtic stereotype, though mainly considered to be a very Scottish or Irish trait – and that is…Red Hair!

Mary Stuart/Stewart, Queen of Scots

Is it true that the Celts had (or have) a large percentage of red headed people?

It is not easy to know a great deal about the ancient Celts because they were largely illiterate (with exception of some small pockets) and this is why we have to rely on much of the Greek and Roman writings.

Is there one archetype where this all started? . . . one historical figure who could be responsible for the existence of such a stereotype? Or does the stereotype exist because there is some truth to it?

Let’s start with the Greek and Roman writers. First of all, we have the Roman writer, Tacitus who wrote about the Caledonians (Roman name for the Scots)...a barbaric people to him who had “red hair and large limbs.”

More than a century later, and using Tacitus’ writing as a guide, the Greek writer Dio Cassius wrote about how Queen Boudica (also known as Boadicea) of the Iceni people was “tall and terrifying in appearance...a great mass of red hair...over her shoulders.”
Judging by such accounts, it seems as though the stereotype was well and truly the common view held by the Greeks and Romans. It should be noted, however, that nobody knows for sure just what colour Boudica’s hair actually was, as both writers wrote much later than the event involving Boudica (Tacitus writing 50 years later and Dio Cassius, 150 years later, using Tacitus as his source).

Whether or not as a direct consequence of such records from people like Dio Cassius and Tacitus, it seems that the image of a fierce red headed warrior was very much associated with the Celts and to this day, this image remains the case.

It’s not completely fair to blame it all on the enemies, however. Although the image of a savage red headed warrior is very much an exaggerated stereotype, we must also consider that it is very probable that many of the Celtic warriors would indeed have had red hair.

When we consider the present day for example, both Scotland and Ireland have been found to have a much larger percentage of red-headed people than any other country in the world. In Scotland, a massive 13% of the population actually has red hair (around 650,000 people) with 40% (1.6 million) actually carrying the MC1R (red hair) gene; in Ireland, 10% (or more than 400,000 people) have red hair. Compared with a 1-2% global average, this is a huge percentage. It doesn’t seem too ridiculous, then, to assume that there would have been a large percentage in Tacitus’ day, too, when a female warrior, for the Romans, was unthinkable. They were rather intimidated by the sheer physical size of the Celts as they were generally a lot taller than the Romans. It is no surprise then that they were seen as fierce warriors to these more ‘civilized’ nations.

So is the red hair merely a stereotype that should be ignored? I do not think so. Red hair is, as genetics prove, very common place within certain Celtic regions, especially Scotland and Ireland. But that’s not to say all Celts had red hair...some Celts also came from Spain (Galicians) and would often have been dark haired. Both popular culture and mythology have made sure the red hair stereotype has never really gone away...characters like Willie from the Simpsons, Sansa from Game Of Thrones, Jamie Fraser from the popular Outlander series.

Mary, Queen of Scots, Rob Roy, Brian Boru’s wife and King Arthur, himself, are all said to have had red hair (there is no way of knowing this to be true, or even if King Arthur even existed).

In addition, Robert Bruce’s only day of infamy was when he killed his red-headed competitor for the throne – The Red Comyn – or John Comyn III, Lord of Badenoch and Lord of Lochaber - the ‘fiery redhead of Scotland’.

Many of these examples are real people, some are characters, but all have become part of the legends we associate as typically, stereotypically, archetypically ‘Celtic’.

One other highly important discovery, in the Taklamakan Desert, Western China, also shows that many of the Celts buried there had red hair; this during the discovery of the Taklamakan Celtic mummies. Many of them had red hair and were unmistakably Celtic warriors – solid as a warrior of the Caledonii tribe. One man’s hair is reddish brown flecked with grey, framing high cheekbones, a long nose, full lips and a ginger beard. When he lived three thousand years ago, he stood six feet tall, and was buried wearing a red twill tunic and tartan leggings. He looks like a Bronze Age European. In fact, he’s every inch a Celt. Even his DNA says so (as reported in the Independent UK). He is the very image of the Celt portrayed regularly in both myth and in historical accounts.

In conclusion; yes, the Celtic people are very much stereotyped as being red headed, fierce warriors and often very much exaggerated, but that doesn’t also mean that the Celts don’t have that reputation for a reason. There are a lot more red-headed people in certain Celtic countries...
today, and with the discovery in Western China as well as Greek/Roman accounts, it seems that this has been the case for a very long time. It also seems that there is not just one archetype either, although many may see Boudica as the ideal archetype of the Celtic woman.

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EDITOR’S NOTE: Lucy Stewart comes to us from Aberdeenshire, Scotland, with a degree in Celtic Civilisation. Her mother was originally from County Antrim, N.I.
Author note: As our editor for the Celtic Guide has indicated, we have a vast array of global readers. I am so thankful that you found us and share our love of all-things Celtic. I know that most of you are avid readers, but did you know there are also writers and aspiring authors who read our online magazine as well? I hope the following article is informational and provides some insight to all those pre-published authors out there who are destined for greatness.

“It’s kind of fun to do the impossible.”
—Walt Disney

As a writer, isn’t that statement the truth? That’s one of my favorite quotes by Walt Disney.

Imagine my surprise when I finished my first manuscript in September, submitted a full to an editor in October, and then received an offer for a Scottish historical romance series from a traditional publisher right out of the gate. Believe me, I was an exception to the rule. That rarely happens to anyone. One friend of mine submitted her manuscript through the slush pile and landed a deal with the biggest publishing house in the United States her first time out. And yes, that rarely happens to anyone, but as Walt Disney said, “It’s kind of fun to do the impossible.”

With three novels under my belt and a new series on the way, I am far from an expert in the field. Since the writing business is all subjective, that’s what makes our efforts so darned hard. What I think of your writing style, what your family thinks, what your critique partner thinks, is not necessarily the way the publisher or the editor thinks. And it gets even better. What one publisher seeks in plot and characterization is not the same as what another publisher is looking for in their particular publishing line.

So how do you survive the ever-changing tides of the industry?

Follow your gut. Do you remember the books you’ve read that have literally blown your mind away? I’m sure you do. Now think back to the doozies that you’ve read and try to figure out why the story didn’t work for you. What would you have done to fix the pages from within?

Characterization strength is extremely important when penning your novel or short
story. A few weeks after my first novel was released, I received several e-mails where readers told me they were so wrapped up in the story that they actually cried. That moved me, and apparently my characters moved them. If we can touch a few readers with our words, isn’t that reward enough? That’s every author’s dream.

Determining how we can make readers fall in love with our hero and heroine can be a grueling task, but the answer may be a lot closer than you think.

What are some characterization strengths that you would list to define a hero?

If I break down the hero from my first book, his characterization strengths would be as follows: (I’ll list five to keep it short and simple.)

1. Highland laird who has a duty to his clan above all else
2. Protector, defender, provider
3. Natural leader
4. Compassionate
5. Honorable

Those are some pretty admirable strengths of character. You may find the task of assigning flaws to be a lot simpler if you take the strengths and turn them into flaws. After all, that’s what makes us human. For example, we’ve already determined strengths. Now what can we do to break them? Think about how our hero’s character would change when placed in an opposing situation.

1. Our hero is a Highland laird who has a duty to his clan above all else, but what happens to his character when the neighboring clan forces him to break the king’s command?
2. Our hero is a protector, defender, provider, but what happens to his character when he has to leave his younger reckless brother in charge of the clan in his absence?
3. Of course our hero is a natural leader, but what happens to his character when things don’t go according to plan?
4. Oh, this guy’s compassionate, but what happens to his character when he can’t wed the love of his life?
5. Our hero is honorable, but what happens to his character when he offers to escort a woman to the northern Highlands and then realizes he doesn’t want to let her go?

Those are examples of how outside influences impact characterization. Now let’s take a look at the heroine.

1. Half-Scottish, half-English lady with a carefree spirit
2. Determined
3. Compassionate
4. Loyal
5. Kind

Again following the same concept, turn those strengths into flaws. Think about how our heroine’s character would change when placed in an opposing situation.

1. Our heroine has a carefree spirit, but what happens to her character when her mother and father have a battle of the wills and break her spirit?
2. Our heroine is determined, but what happens to her character when a big Highland laird steps in the way of her new life?
3. This lady’s compassionate, but what happens to her character when she hears our hero say he doesn’t love her?
4. Our heroine is loyal, but what happens to her character when her best friend (who’s the captain of her father’s guard) confronts our hero in a heated moment?
5. Our heroine is definitely kind-hearted, but what happens to her character when our hero’s leman says some things about her personal traits that are not too kind?

Remember when I said that determining how we can make readers fall in love with our hero and heroine can be a grueling task, but the answer may be a lot closer than you think?

Don’t rule out family dynamics. We all have them. Use them. Family dynamics play a large part in all of my books. After all, falling in love is easy. It’s all the outside influences that drive
characterization. Who didn’t love the Starks? And who didn’t cry when they were massacred? I felt for every single one of them. *(Game of Thrones)* Make your characters realistic in their actions and behavior. If your characters are somewhat “off the wall,” let us know why they act the way they do.

There are no guidelines that will tell you what kind of character strengths and flaws will make a successful novel or short story. Whatever genre you write, place yourself into each of your characters and experience what they experience.

How would you act? What would you say?

The hero from my second book had me so angry at times that my blood pounded, my heart thumped, and my fingers couldn’t keep up on the keyboard. You want that love/hate relationship with your characters. Keep it real.

But regardless of the genre you write, one of the hardest things to accept is the fact that not everyone will love your work. Our stories are like people. You care for some and do not care for others. What I firmly believe is to stay true to your path.

Whether you write poetry, science fiction or historical fiction, write your passion.

Do not let anyone tell you differently. If you literally put your heart and soul into your words, stand by them.

I’ll leave you with another one of my favorite quotes and I hope you agree.

“All dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them.”

—Walt Disney

I’m living proof of that fact. If my words meant something to one of you, I’ve done my job. Happy Writing!
EDITOR’S NOTE: With this, the fourth Celtic Guide interview we have had the privilege to run, Damien Hackney, of South-West England, brings us insight into the life of what might be called an archetypal free spirit - a man who lives off the land, and celebrates his country's early pagan roots and closeness to the earth. As always, we present all opinions as long as they harken back to the Celtic or Viking races. Damien also has a wonderful line of jewelry, as shown in his CG advertisement and on his website. Be sure to check it out.

Its early May as I follow a track lined with trees and granite rocks to the Steward Woodland Community on Dartmoor in the South-West of England. The path winds upward and I’m enjoying the sun on my face, the singing birds, and glimpses of the first hawthorn blossom; but as I turn the final bend and see the first wooden forest house and communal fire place, the excitement mounts: I’m going to experience what it means to be a deer stalker first hand.

Although there are seventeen people living here, all in self-built wooden homes, its one man in particular I’ve come to visit; his name is Seth Kirton.

Seth is no ordinary deer stalker. As a follower of Norse paganism, deer stalking is when Seth feels closest to his gods. This hunt is not a sport, but a practice in spirituality.

As I reach the wooden steps to Seth’s raised house, he comes out to greet me with a warm welcome and a cup of tea on the front porch. The view over the woods and moorland beyond is stunning. Seth asks me tactfully about my motivation in doing an interview with him - my first insight into the deeply personal relationship this man has with his religion. Satisfied that my interest is genuine, he supplies me with a pair of binoculars to replace the useless toy ones I brought with me, and we set off.

The community is set into a wooded hill side, so we begin an uphill climb. Once on higher ground, the trees open out into a clearing with a large fire place surrounded by bench logs. It’s here, in this idyllic sanctuary to mother nature, that our interview takes place.

**Damien:** Given that heathen religions in the west are mostly reconstructed, most modern heathens weren’t brought up as heathens, but discover their heathen roots after a childhood within Christian, atheist or other families. How did your journey into heathenism begin?
Seth: I was fourteen when I met an old lady in Yorkshire. We befriended each other, and eventually I found out she was a witch. She told me about her faith, and what was to become my faith. It was quite an amazing experience; she really opened my eyes to heathenism. It started me thinking, and for a couple of years after that I started looking into Wicca and all kinds of other forms of paganism. I researched all kinds of stuff, but it was Odin who eventually found me. I felt a strong connection to him, so I started researching about the heathen Norse; and I felt more and more found within Norse paganism. I read all the Old Norse tales. It felt really good. I speak with Odin every day. That’s how it came to be.

Damien: So, that’s your entry into what you might call Norse paganism.

Seth: Yes, that’s the term I use.

Damien: As reconstructed Norse paganism has developed, various different groups have formed; such as Astruism, Odinism and Theodism. Have you aligned yourself specifically to any of these affiliations?

Seth: For a long time I had a very personal relationship with the gods myself. As I grew up and explored the world when I was very young I got to know other pagans, but I never really met anyone who was specifically Norse pagan, and I never really looked for anyone. I know loads of other pagans: wiccans, druids, arch-druids, but with regard to my own faith, it’s always just been me and gods. No, I’ve never joined a group or anything. There’s been no kind of going to meetings or anything. I don’t really even talk about it with people generally. You’re the first person I’ve talked to about it for as long as I can remember. It’s just something I’ve built up around me over years.

Damien: It sounds like you don’t really feel the need to join a group – that your faith has been really internalized into a deeply personal experience.

Seth: Yes, yes; it has.

Damien: And yet, would I be right in thinking that there are still connections? I mean, it can’t be coincidence that you live here in the woods so close to nature and away from mainstream society.

Seth: My whole life is very ritualistic: being connected to the earth and the seasons; being in the woods the whole time. You have to deal with everything: where you get your water from, your food, and how you get your energy. We live completely off grid. The only line we have is to the internet. So everything we do in tune with the seasons. We have to prepare for each season. You have to manage your wood for firewood and for nature.

The seasons define our whole lifestyle. Everyday life is ritual. We do celebrate the big rituals, like the summer solstice, Beltane: naked fire jumping - obviously (starts laughing). I’ve never really got the pagans who just put on some crushed velvet for an hour, light a couple of candles in their front room, and that’s it: that’s their connection to the gods. I think it’s quite funny. I do know them and I think their lovely, but there you go: that’s their connection to the gods. Anyway...

Damien: Your way of life certainly lends a kind of authenticity to your world view. You’re not just putting on a robe and escaping to your own little world for an hour: it’s your real life; twenty-four seven.

Seth: I do feel terribly sad for those people who can’t live along the natural seasons. Something I’ve been trying to do for a while is offering a day, a kind of outside living for indoor pagans kind of thing; you know, to really get out there and see what it’s like to collect wild, edible food and cook your own meal, chop firewood, skin an animal; see what it’s like to live so close to nature. It could be a week or a weekend, kind of like a bush craft course with a spiritual dimension to it.

Damien: Is there a missionary aspect to your beliefs?

Seth: Not at all; I mean, the course I just talked about wouldn’t be for just anyone. I feel drawn from time to time to help other pagans, to
help them get out and drink deeply from nature, but generally I don’t talk about it. I don’t talk to people about religion.

**Damien:** Well I hope you’ll have a go now, because I want to ask you a very religious question.

**Seth:** Oh go on then.

**Damien:** In the world of modern heathenism, the gods are generally understood in one of two ways. Either they are seen as archetypes; aspects of the human unconscious: anthropomorphized symbols of the forces of nature heathens wish to develop a relationship with, or they are felt to be actual gods in themselves; agents who are external to the imagination of the heathen. Do you fall into either of these camps, or could you comment on this at all?

**Seth:** I feel Odin a lot, especially when I’m hunting. I feel Odin as an entity, deity; I do have a personal relationship with him; but also the other gods: they are there. But the whole spirit of nature is enveloped in the gods, our ancestors and spirit animals. It’s all one — it just comes together in different chunks of one. We give thanks at our dinner table about what ever we want; it’s kind of a ritual we have. So, we’ll give thanks for the water we collected, or for Odin, or to the animal we’re eating.

I’d like, if I may, to say a few words about my deer stalking.

**Damien:** Yes, of course.

**Seth:** I deer stalk because of its deep connection to nature. When you deer stalk you actually become nature because you’re not viewing it: you’re becoming a hunter. You feel like a wolf, or a fox; you’re actually enveloping yourself in nature. To walk around nature — it’s lovely to see it; but you’re not really being it. You’re not influencing it. When you become a hunter you’re influencing nature; you’re becoming a part of it. You’re really present. Everything around you becomes much clearer. When I hunt I feel the ancestors with me all the time because all our ancestors used to hunt. It’s like a meditation. If my mind wanders at all, I won’t catch anything.

**Damien:** Thank you. If I could ask just one more question; how would you answer the vegan challenge that we don’t need to eat meat anymore, so we shouldn’t.

**Seth:** These things don’t stand in isolation. Look at it in terms of damage. If you’re a vegan, mostly you’re buying in soya and other protein products from across the world that need loads of land and packaging to end up on your dinner plate. My diet doesn’t need anything except the natural habitat we all want to preserve; there is no packaging, no pollution from the food having been shipped across the world; and I know my

You also get to see stuff you don’t normally see, spiritually and physically. When I’m hunting I feel like I’m becoming a wolf — I don’t mean actually becoming a wolf; but I’m filling that role, because we don’t have wolves in this country anymore, and we’ve got more deer than anyone else and they do need thinning out. They cause lots of damage; they produce so many offspring and many of them starve to death, which is a horrible death. They also catch their legs when they jump barbed wire, and the legs get torn and rot. You have deer limping around in pain for weeks until the leg drops off because they have no predators — no wolves. I always try to hunt the sick and the old when I see them. So it’s all tied in, the practical, physical and spiritual elements of deer stalking are all what make me feel so close to the gods. It’s great.
meat hasn’t been drugged or mistreated. There is so much damage to nature through the system of food production we have developed; the act of taking a deer’s life isn’t what we should be worrying about: we should be worrying about all the crap we’re filling our world with. As for the moral obligation not to eat meat: I just don’t feel it. I’m a meat eating animal. I don’t see myself as more evolved than any other species. In fact, I admire many other species who manage to live in far greater harmony with nature than humans do.

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And so, after a briefing in safety (Seth quite rightly takes his responsibilities as a rifleman very seriously) we set off.

Almost immediately I begin to understand the meditative aspect of the hunt; we walk slowly -very slowly- with frequent stops during which Seth peers into the undergrowth or the distance, or moves his head slightly in order to listen to the sound of some slight movement. It’s about twenty minutes in that we sight our first deer: a Roe buck. Seth uses his binoculars to verify whether the deer is a suitable target, but decides the angle isn’t safe enough: the bullet might fly into open country if he misses. We are both in awe of the sight though, and continue with an even greater sense of anticipation.

After traversing both woodland and open terrain, the next deer we meet is a Fallow deer. Again, Seth doesn’t want to shoot, explaining that this one’s a stray that he’s been trying to encourage back to the herd for a few weeks. At this point something becomes clear to me: Seth takes no pleasure in killing in the way one might if hunting for sport. He actually cares for these animals like a guardian -a guardian who is at the same time an intimate part of the cycle of life and death in nature.

At the edge of a small patch of woodland on top of a hill we rest. Although meditative, stalking demands a high level of mental concentration, and Seth himself admits that he can’t maintain the levels required for more than an hour or two. It becomes clear that we aren’t going to kill a deer today, so we relax, and Seth talks a bit about the process of bringing the deer home (which he carries himself!). When I asked whether carrying a deer that had just been gutted might not be a bit messy, Seth gave me a look that told me I’d completely missed the point. For this pagan, the blood and the mess and the death are a vital part of life, and certainly not something to shy away from.

On our way back, we encounter a deer’s leg lying on the forest floor, lending credence to Seth’s earlier explanation of how many lame deer wander around in pain for weeks because there are no predators to hunt them. Well, I think, at least they have Seth.

As a parting gift, Seth gives me some of his home made venison jerky. I try it: it’s delicious.

I leave the Steward Woodland’s deer stalker with a sense that I have been privy to something sacred. Some aspects of Seth’s practice might seem taboo or distasteful to those of us who have long forgotten the root of our animal natures. Seth, clearly, has embraced that side of himself; and yet this has done nothing to compromise the genuine love that this thoughtful man has for nature, his fellow creatures, and his gods.

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Local legend states that Saint Columba visited a cave located at Loch Caolisport, in Argyll, Scotland, during his travels. This cave, whose entrance is shown in the drawing above, is certainly one of the oldest Christian sites in the whole of Scotland.

The first thing that you will see once your eyes become accustomed to the darkness is a drystone altar made up of local stone. I have no idea of how old this altar is.

Outside of the cave are the ruins of a 12th century chapel. It is covered with undergrowth and is falling to pieces. I’d like someone from the Council come along and cut this growth back. It ought not to be tolerated that our ancient Christian sites are allowed to degrade like this.
The other consists only of four holes. Above this one is a proper cross. From its style it most likely dates from sometime later than the others.

There is also an enigmatic shape that appears to me to look like a carving of a dwelling or hill, (Golgotha/Calvary/the Tomb?). On each side of this carving is a single hole, (The two robbers/the two Marys?). I humbly suggest that the reader takes his bible, blows the dust from it, and reads the story for himself. It sure won’t do any harm.

The monk or missionary would doubtless have used these carved symbols to explain the message of the New Testament to the general assembly of people who had come to listen to his words.

There’s a large hole or bowl that is carved into the bedrock of the cave. The vertical groove running into the bowl is man made also. If you look very closely you can
see the ‘pecking’ marks along the edge of the groove. It catches drips that fall from the roof of the cave onto rock above the hole and the water is led into the bowl.

It’s reckoned that this carved bowl is several thousand years old. It was a very basic cooking pot. It worked by putting raw meat, shellfish or vegetables into the hole when it was full of water and gradually adding stones that had been heated in a fire. These stones were taken out when they had lost their heat to the water and were replaced by other stones from the fire. Eventually the water came to boiling point and the food was cooked.

The archaeological dig that was made at this site in the late ‘70’s found that the cave had been inhabited from around 10,000 years ago. Primitive fishing hooks and lots of evidence of shellfish were found.

Also found were items from the time of the early Celtic Church, ie from the time of St. Columba.

There was next to no water in the bowl when we visited the cave in June this year. There had been very little rain for some time but there were still drops of water falling from the roof onto the exact same spot on the rock above the bowl. So there you are, no change for 10,000 years.

Now that’s just why I love Scotland so much. Leave something for a few thousand years and when you come back it’s still there and it’s still working.

This land has been in our blood for an awfully long time and long may it continue.

For the past millennium or so the Vikings have had quite a reputation. And it hasn’t been for their fabulous taste in fabric textures and color palettes! But lately, much has been written exploring the softer side of the Vikings. It came as a surprise to a lot of us, but we might just say that the Vikings were more “metrosexual” than we ever imagined.

The reputation given to them by some foreigners, most often the victims of raids, has stuck with the Vikings for well over one thousand years – that they were barbarians. The stereotype of barbarians is that they are ignorant, filthy, and brutish. However, we live in an age that prides itself on breaking down stereotypes and reevaluating how we look at people. And so, as we as a society have reconsidered how we define the many different people we interact with in the contemporary world, the stereotype of the Viking has recently been given a makeover as well.

Far from being filthy brutes, we find that Vikings were actually very well groomed and perhaps even fashion conscious. Just for the sake of perspective let us consider that for the past century or so Western society has seen a homogenizing of men’s fashion. The business suit as we know it is not that different than its earlier incarnation in the late Victorian Era. Mainstream men’s haircuts tend to be very similar, discounting sub-culture and counter-culture trends. And while we may sometimes make assumptions about class due to a man’s hairstyle, hair itself does not represent class. In other words, the male mechanic, the school teacher, and the CEO likely all have a very similar haircut as Prince Charles. Further, many men today feel self-conscious about being overly concerned about style or fashion, and some men shave their hair clean off rather than facing the dilemma of deciding on a style.
Indeed, styling the hair at all, beyond a part and quick comb through, can be seen as not masculine but rather metrosexual in some circles. So, one might assume, based on our contemporary notions, that the Vikings, the epitome of the male archetype, wouldn’t be very interested in hair. Wrong!

Hairstyle was considered important to men of the Viking age. It could denote class status, as very short hair often marked someone as a slave, or it could be an indicator of someone’s profession. A man who engaged in raiding might be cautious of how his hair and beard could be a liability in battle. But, by all accounts it appears that there was much personal choice and variety in hair style and length, as well as in beard style and length.

Personal grooming habits were also expected from individuals in Norse societies during this period. Grooming tools have been unearthed which verify that Viking age men and women used tweezers, combs, and ear scoops for… erm, scooping out earwax. Ahem.

Another trend that the modern metrosexual man may embrace, while a more macho modern man often eschews, is coloring the hair. In our society it is predominantly women who dye their hair. There is a growing trend for aging men to consider covering the gray, but it is still done less often by men than women, and men tend to stay close to their original hair color. And, in our society many women of all ethnicities and complexions ‘go blonde’ whether it looks remotely natural or not.

Well, you guessed it, so did the Vikings!

According to medieval accounts as well as archeological analysis, it is thought that the strong lye soap used by Vikings for washing was also used for bleaching hair. And it was not just the ladies going for that Marilyn Monroe aesthetic – it is recorded that many Viking men bleached their hair and beards blonde.

Celtic men, who are reading this and snickering, don’t be so quick to laugh. Apparently Celtic men were caught doing the

_Idunn and Bragi by Nils Blommer, 1846_
same thing red handed (pun intended). Yes, Celtic men reddened their hair also with lye soap (I’m imagining a peroxide experiment gone bad wherein the poor teenage girl ends up with orange hair instead of blonde).

Pliny the Elder recorded: “Soap is the invention of the Gauls and this is used to redden the hair. It is made from fat and ashes. The best is beech wood ash and goat fat, the two combined, thick and clear.”

Now, I can’t help but wonder if the coloring of the hair was the side effect of the washing, and the observers so unaccustomed to soap may have been oblivious to the hygienic properties and simply zeroed in on the more obvious visible results on the hair; or if hair coloring was the intention and cleanliness was just a pleasant unintended result. Perhaps the lye soap could be made in various strengths, so there was one version for regular bathing and a more intense one for bleaching the hair.

Since we’re aiming to break stereotypes here, it should be pointed out that not all Vikings were blonde, just as not all Celts were ginger. Both groups had a good mix of both as well as just as many brunettes. But it is true that Celtic groups tended to have slightly more redheads on average than others, just as Scandinavians had more blondes. Based on historical accounts about hair coloring, one might speculate that both groups were keenly aware of their respective hair color trends and may have considered it a mark of their tribal identity, attempting to emphasize their tribal stereotype by altering their hair color.

Incidentally, Pliny the Elder’s next sentence regarding lye soap was this: “Many among the Germans use it, the men more than the women.”

No comment on German women.

The Norse were so keen on weekly cleaning that their word for Saturday, Lørdag, means “washing day.” This was quite irritating to the Anglo-Saxons because by the time of the Viking raids they had long been Christianized; a religion which dissuaded these Germanic cousins of the Vikings from regular bathing.

John of Wallingford, an English chronicler, lamented that the Danish men’s habits of washing and changing their clothes regularly was too strong a temptation for English women. Apparently many a marriage was ruined and more than one nobleman’s daughter lost her virtue to a well groomed Dane.

Not only were they as sparkling fresh as the morning dew, but Viking men were evidently quite the romantics. When they weren’t marauding or inflicting the blood eagle on some poor English chap, Vikings enjoyed a bit of poetry with love being a popular topic.

Professor Judith Jesch’s new book, Viking Poetry of Love and War, was recently reviewed by Emma Rayner, on Medievalists.net. She says that, if anything, this book proves that Vikings had a sense of humor. And it seems that love and romance were just as much daily concerns in the Viking age as they are today.

Some of the poetry is just plain silly, if not bordering on the bawdy. One great example is this 10th century gem by Viking poet extraordinaire Egill Skallgrimsson entitled –

“The poet is past it”:
‘I’ve a crick in my neck,
and tend to fall on my head,
my trouser-snake is soft,
and my hearing’s gone away.’

Too bad for Egill, but his contemporary Ingolf had much better luck. As is attributed by the poem –

“Ingolf is popular with the ladies”:
All the grown girls wanted
to go with Ingolf,
those who were of age;
the wee ones were wretched.

‘I, too,’ said the old woman,
‘want to go with Ingolf,
as long as I have two teeth
still wobbling in my gums.’
And there we have it. Vikings: neat freaks, heartthrobs, comedians. If that doesn’t make us second guess our stereotypes, then I dare say nothing will.

Web bibliography and links for further reading:

“Viking Age Hairstyles, Haircare, and Personal Grooming” by The Viking Answer Lady: http://www.vikinganswerlady.com/hairstyl.shtml

“What Vikings Really Looked Like” by Irene Berg Petersen for ScienceNordic: http://sciencenordic.com/what-vikings-really-looked


Along a side street running off the main High Street in Kings Heath, Birmingham, is a small shop. Hardly the sort of place one would expect to find an individual gifted with extraordinary powers. Yet Mirrorstone Crystals is an extraordinary place. When I first found the shop, I was unsure if it was even open. The window display enticed me with a wonderful array of mineral and fossil specimens. The shop was although dimly lit, so I tentatively turned the door handle and pushed the door open. A bell tinkled and an Australian Sheep dog bounded over to check me out. From the back of the shop, behind an array of cabinets and display cases came a voice, “Hello, I’m Adrian. Who are you?”

Amongst the fine collection of rocks and mineral specimens, the cabinets display dinosaur remains and rare and beautiful fossils. Above the sales counter sit some cave bear skulls, and the skull of an ancient species of crocodile. Incenses, Tibetan bowls, magic wands, and beautiful jewelry mingle between the cabinets. Adrian, as it turned out, was not only a collector of crystals and minerals, he also happened to be the only blind mineral shop owner in Britain. He also walks the path of a seer.

Whilst I went to interview him, we got talking about protection measures against evil spirits. Adrian spoke of past life events, and summoning entities. I drew him a symbol of an Icelandic protection stave known as the Helm of Awe and explained how it was used, by pressing a lead copy against one’s forehead and invoking the power of the charm. He picked up the paper and pressed it to his head. Having drawn it with a soft charcoal pencil, the image stuck to his skin. I smiled and politely informed him that he had the mark on his forehead. “Oh no, I’ll leave it. It feels quite powerful.” he replied, smiling.

Seer:

1. A person who sees; observer.
2. A person who prophesies future events; prophet.
3. A person endowed with profound moral and spiritual insight or knowledge; a wise person or sage who possesses intuitive powers.
4. A person who is reputed to have special powers of divination, as a crystal gazer or palmist.

by Pollyanna Jones
England
back, placing the paper upon which I had drawn the stave into his pocket.

Our conversation continued, and a customer visited the shop to purchase some boxes of incense. “The dog won’t get me, will it?” she asked nervously. “No, but I might.” came the reply, with a mischievous grin. Having heard some of the conversation, the lady paid for her items, briefly noticing the mark on Adrian’s head, and made her way out of the shop with a slightly un-nerved look upon her face. “Best get on with it, shall I?” I asked, realising that we might just have freaked out one of his gentler customers with talk of ritual protection measures. And so it began.

Adrian came to Birmingham to study for a Masters Degree. With a passion for collecting minerals, he was disappointed to find that there were no satisfactory shops at the time. After having acquired a box of fossilised sharks teeth, he, and his then fiancée, set out in business together operating a market stall. The hours were long and with his fiancée suffering health problems, something else was needed. Thanks to the kindness of his landlord, he was able to rent a retail unit and set up his store, which has been operating now for six years. Over this time it has grown, and Mirrorstone Crystals now sell on the internet as well as from their shop. Adrian also decided to put his abilities to good use, and decided to offer readings and healing sessions.

At the age of eleven, Adrian lost his sight following an undiagnosed medical problem. The trauma rocked the roots of his world and that of his family around him. An intelligent chap, his mind took him down a somewhat self-destructive path, and by his late teens he had isolated himself and had turned to alcohol and substance misuse. Being blind, he had no calibration from the “outside world” and deserted those close to him. He describes how he suffered a psychotic episode, which seemed to be his rite of passage. During this time of isolation, his gift began to reveal itself. At first, ungrounded, Adrian was not able to put his visions and inspiration to any useful purpose. He wrote runes all over his walls, unaware of what he was writing, unable to see the symbols and images he had created. He would dream of grey snakes eating away at his energy; something he now knows as the snakes eating at the dead useless energies that were damaging to him. Adrian underwent a personal transformation, deciding to draw a line and pull himself from a path of self-destruction onto one of healing and love. Visions came to him of a golden serpent which would move towards him, then merge with him so that he would be seeing through his head. He began to see energies, sense things around him with what he describes as “feellers” from his body, and commune with spirits.

As he learned to ground himself and channel these energies properly, Adrian began to turn his life around. The visions would come to him whilst he was awake, but he was able to use them constructively. Not having physical sight
made him more receptive to his experiences, but he had to learn to trust them. “You can get caught up in your own head, if you can’t see.” he remarked, before explaining how he had to learn to appreciate and find a sense of balance. He described how he knew he had this, once the energies felt right.

I asked him if he sees these internally, or with the mind’s eye. Premonitions come to him at times as visions, but mostly as feelings. He explained that when he carries out his work he sometimes gets the information and will just know, somehow. It all depends on the person he encounters, or the situation he is dealing with. He will see energies first, then gain an understanding. From this, the images emerge. He believes that his role is to help people get into the right place for the situation they are in, so that they are able to guide themselves onwards. He wants all who come to him to feel empowered when they leave. But this can only be done if they have made a conscious decision to take control of their lives. He is mindful that they need to be able to think for themselves.

He explained how his readings help a person work through a problem or life event and look at possible outcomes. They have a storyline. He uses his gift to look at retelling the story so their soul can have a different pattern. He scrutinises and addresses how their behaviour affects where they will be going. Like any holistic practitioner, he gets a lot of queries about relationships and problems within these. He uses his gift to help discover patterns which could have emerged from other issues, family history, self-perceptions, or even past-life events. He then looks at how to rebuild this so that a person can go forward.

“We’re very powerful creators.” he tells me, as he explains how our thinking process affects the world around us. The Law of Attraction is something he swears by; if we think negatively about things, then negative things will happen to us. He helps teach people to work to think of a positive. He explains how if one thinks and believes in light and love, one will attract light and love into your life. He added that this doesn’t mean you won’t have to deal with darkness, but you will come at it more balanced. He describes how people have two aspects; a Daemonic Self and an Angelic Self. The Daemonic Self has a constant thirst and need, making a person think “I must have this or can’t go forward”. This fills a person with sense of loss, and they never have enough. The Angelic Self knows that it you already have what you need, and allows a person to appreciate what is around them. This removes need and hunger and brings peace to one’s spirit.

Despite his traumas, Adrian has overcome the difficulties that life has thrown at him, choosing instead to let his experiences empower him. He believes that we live in a loving universe. Trust in that, and it becomes that.

Adrian has a strong bond with Ancient Egypt due to past life experiences, and is able
to sense a person’s past life events in relation to difficulties they are having in this one. During his healing sessions, Adrian may sometimes call upon spirits or other entities from these past lives and help a client patch up an old wound. He describes how one cannot solve emotional trauma through waving a spiritual wand, but that one needs to work through emotional issues to enable grounding. There are no short cuts.

I asked him about the place where these entities come from. Due to his lack of physical sight, he is not in contact with this world in the same way as sighted people are. He senses through his body when he has reached that space, explaining that “You’re part of everything, everything is a part of you.” He takes a step back and enters a space within him to facilitate his work, and often will draw spirits into himself, returning them afterwards to their rightful place. I asked him if this scared him at times. “No,” he replied, “Because I’m in control.” Adrian uses his will to prevent things taking a turn to the untoward, but this is not something for the inexperienced to try out! He uses his will as protection, but only through practice is at the point where he is able to do this.

As well as the energies from the crystals in his shop, Adrian uses sound to assist him. He has a singing bowl, and uses his voice during sessions, similar to shamanic techniques or galdr. Sound has an energy and he uses this to tap into the energies of a person he is working with. “Sometimes you know, you can sing a lullaby to the soul.” he explains as he told me how he used sound with one of his clients. During a healing session of a person afflicted with MS, he used his singing bowl as he worked down their chakras. As he reached the base chakra, a voice came through with sound of bowl “I can’t carry on, I can’t carry on”. This was the part of the person that had been buried after being in a children’s home for two years. His client had buried the memories of their childhood so that they could move on with their lives. This poor part of their self was neglected, unloved, and afraid. After the voice came through with the singing bowl, Adrian was able to speak to them and help address some very deep rooted issues that the client wasn’t even consciously aware they were carrying with them.

Adrian believes that sound is a very powerful thing to use and has also used it to help remove an energy that was causing depression. Whilst working with another client, he found that his own face was flooding with tears, carried on through his client’s locked emotions. Adrian pulled them out the other side and brought out a spirit of depression, which he could “see” as a small pulsating physical being in his bowl. He was then able to release the entity to send it away and help the client move on.

Adrian has a deep love of animals, especially his dogs whom he describes as his companions and friends. He has an Australian Sheepdog, a Kelpie (dingo collie cross), a Whippet Staffordshire Bull Terrier (Staffie) cross, and a Kelpie Staffie cross, with whom he has a very special bond. He has chosen not to train any of them as guide dogs, but has at least one of them with him in the shop every day. He explained that he is not against anyone who uses guide dogs, but feels that to be a guide dog, the animal has to do what it is told all of the time. “That’s not being a dog, that’s being a tool.” He instead uses a stick to find his way about.

His bond with his animals is noticeable and he believes that two were known to him in past lives, whilst another was a gift directly from heaven, his shaft of light. The dogs help to ground him. He smiled as he explained, “Animals balance the world. They’re divine love on four legs. Their trust is such an example to follow.”

It was an extraordinary conversation. Adrian is an extraordinary fellow. And when I left his little shop in Birmingham, he still bore the mark of the Helm of Awe on his forehead.

Details of Mirrorstone Crystals can be found at http://mirrorstonecrystals.com/
Scotland & Ireland vs the Tudors

The Tudors of Early Modern England are well-known to historical writers. Both Henry VIII and Elizabeth I have been featured in wonderful costumes and elaborate sets in films and mini-series.

Much less is known about the origin of the Tudor dynasty in Wales. Tudor aggression did not succeed in uniting the smaller states of the British Isles into a single, culturally unified country. Yet a good portion of Scotland, the Lordship of the Isles was quite friendly with Henry VII. Find out why in this course.

Instructor: Sharron Gunn w/a Sheila Currie
MA Scottish History & Celtic Studies, University of Glasgow
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is psychologically, the matter becomes more complicated. So far mythologists have always helped themselves out with solar, lunar, meteorological, vegetal, and other ideas of the kind.

The fact that myths are first and foremost psychic phenomenon that reveal the nature of the soul is something they have absolutely refused to see until now. Primitive man is not much interested in objective explanations of the obvious, but he has an imperative need – or rather, his unconscious psyche has an irresistible urge – to assimilate all outer sense experience to inner, psychic events. It is not enough for the primitive to see the sun rise and set; this external observation must at the same time be a psychic happening: the sun in its course must represent the fate of a god or hero who, in the last analysis, dwells nowhere except in the soul of man.

All the mythologized processing of nature, such as summer and winter, the phases of the moon, the rainy season, and so forth, are in no sense allegories of these objective occurrences; rather they are symbolic expressions of the inner, unconscious drama of the psyche which becomes accessible to man’s consciousness by way of projection – that is, mirrored in the events of nature.

The projection is so fundamental that it has taken several thousand years of civilization to detach it in some measure from its outer object. Primitive man impresses us so strongly with his subjectivity that we should really have guessed long ago that myths refer to something psychic.

According to Carl Jung, Archetypes and Myth have been intrinsically linked for the vast majority of humankind’s existence.
So, what’s next?

Wow! (once more). So many authors responded to the theme of archetypes that I was knocked out of the table of contents. I am so happy with this, as I/we get to read stories from all over the world. My brain needed a rest anyway.

The theme for September, once again, will be “The Muse” and we will depart a little from our typical non-fiction narrative style to allow for the artistic. If all goes well, I will have an interview with Natalie MacMaster, considered the world’s greatest Celtic performer, and certainly in the running for the world’s greatest fiddler. We will have poetry, and illustrations, and photography, and book reviews and lots of things artsy-artsy.

What a bunch of creative Celts there are out there in the world. Speaking of music, we hear that Izze Rose may be adding two new songs to our ‘Free Music’ page on our website, soon. We have gotten so many good comments about the page and about her music.

For October, we are celebrating everyone’s favorite Celtic holiday - Halloween. We are sure to have stories of witches and ghost and other things that go bump in the night.

For November, I am considering a catch-all or catch-up issue to make use of all the other non-thematic offerings folks have had to offer. I may name the theme ‘Free For All’.

For December, our theme will be “The End” and will feature stories about the end of dynasties, movements, civilizations, power houses, lives, etc. Since it is the end of the year, this seems quite appropriate.

The response to the Guide has been phenomenal. From its little 12-page beginning we have grown and grown, til we’ve almost outgrown our own britches. But I suspect it is still only the beginning. I hope so. Until next month, enjoy!!!