



# DRUIDS

## Some Basic Information

### The Druids...



About the only thing that can be said about the Druids is that we don't know that much about them!

The Celts did not write their history down and so we have to look at the commentators and many of those commentators may well have had their own political agendas for writing what they wrote. Historically there are less than a dozen written contemporary references to the 'ancient Druids'.

They did not build Stonehenge (which pre-dates the Egyptian Pyramids) so the popular image of robed Druids celebrating the Solstice amongst 'stones' is a fairly modern one.

Modern Druidry is about re-creation or re-construction, depending upon your viewpoint.

One of the key figures in contemporary Druidry is Edward Williams, better known by his bardic name Iolo Morganwg (1747 – 1826), a Welsh antiquarian, poet and collector. He was widely considered a leading collector and expert on medieval Welsh literature in his day, but after his death it was revealed that he had forged a large number of his manuscripts. Such was the extent of his forgery that, even into the 21st century, some of his tampered versions of medieval Welsh texts are better known than the original versions.

Part of his aim was to assert the Welshness of South Wales, particularly his home region of Glamorgan, against the prevalent idea that North Wales represented the purest survival of Welsh traditions. The metaphysic explained in his forgeries and other works proposed a theory of concentric "rings of existence", proceeding outward from Annwn (the Otherworld) through Abred and Ceugant to Gwynfyd (purity or Heaven). He was instrumental in the creation of the tradition of the Gorsedd.

Despite, or perhaps because of this, Druidry in the 20th and 21st Centuries, has developed its own 'spirit' all revolving around the idea that Nature and the celebration of Nature is at the core of our own spiritual development; that we are all connected to the Universe and each other. In the UK Ross Nichols in the 1950's and latterly Phillip Carr-Gom (OBOD), Phillip Shallcross (BDO) and in the US Issac Bonewits (RDNA and RDG) have taken the movement forward developing a core set of teachings which all revolve around the inspiration from nature expressed in tales, songs, poetry and art of earlier peoples. Some might say that the Druid and The Shaman are linked in terms of their devotion to 'their land', 'their stories', and their healing, magical and priestly practices. In the UK Druidry is recognised as a 'religion' by the Charities Commission although most Druids would question the word religion because of its dogmatic connotations. Druidry is spiritual but not dogmatic.