**Folk Deities** of the British Isles

by A.C. Fisher Aldag

**Intro**: Welcome, Me & Dave, British Isles; Folk deities /entities /beings – Hx, info, theories, then how to venerate them ourselves! \* = photo / visual cue

**What is a Folk Deity**?

 Deity / powerful being not found much in written literature

 Instead in art, oral stories /folklore, rites, seasonal observations

 Honored, Revered, given offerings, asked for blessings by common folk

 Found in art, topography, folklore: by anthro /archeo /historians /folklorists

 Matrikas /Venus statues (show mine)

 Sheila-na-Gigs

Modron /Mawb /Mab /Matronae /Morrigan /Morgan

Cernunnos /Herne /Buca … leads to:

 Arawn /yr Angau /underworld deities … leads to:

 Ag gods & Smith gods

Uncanonized /non-beatified /undoc Saint – recog by people, not Catholic Church

 Examples: Madron /Madrone /Modron /St. Modron

 \*St. Bríd /St. Bridget

May have been Pagan first, Christianized

 Examples: Madron /Modron

 Bríd /Bridget /Brighid /Brigantia /Boudicca

 Tubal Cain /Vulcan /Hephastus /Gofannon /Weyland

 Mari Lwyd

 Beings that may have been Christian first, Paganized

 Examples: St. Nicolas /Santa Claus /Sion Corn /Father Christmas

 Sheila na Gig

 Green Man

**A bit o’ History:**

Birth /Hunting mysteries gave rise to female Goddess & male God\*

 People migrated to Britain – Indo European, Eastern Europe, Southern Europe /Continent

 brought their own deities

 Agriculture /Taming Horses w/ assoc. deities\*

 Death God split off from Hunting God\*

 Commerce /wealth deities and Ag/ horse training gods split off from Hunting God\*

 Bronze Age, Iron Age: Smith deities\*

 Christianization – merging

 Common people revered folk deities & beings post-Christianity

 Awareness of deities /beings: appeasement, offerings, wishes, holiday roles up ’til 1930s

 Revival: Morganwg, amateur anthropologists, Murray, Fraser, Gardner, Cochrane

**Mother Goddesses**:

1. **Matrikas** /Venus Figurines\*

Upper Paleolithic - Neolithic mostly 35,000 to 11,000 years ago

Carved of soft stone, bone, or mammoth ivory; clay-fired

Small image voluptuous /pregnant woman

Represent Goddess\*? Woman /Childbirth? /Religious Icon? Survival?

 (\*location, red ochre paint, lunar decorations, comparison)

Not many Britain – Mostly on European Continent – Ice Age, Doggerland

1. \* Britain’s: Grimes Graves Goddess, Norfolk, chalk carving, circa 2,600 BCE, forgery?
2. \* Orkney Venus, Westray, Orkney, Scotland; found 2009, sandstone, Neolithic,

 found in ancient farmhouse, 5,000 +/- years old

 Others similar found in Wiltshire and Dorset, not in good shape

1. Also: 1,800 year old Roman Venus, Gloucestershire

\* Magna’s Venus – Roman soldiers, cast pipeclay, about 100 found in Britain

 **Personal veneration**: Make /buy Matrika figure, honor Earth energies & Divine feminine

Leads us to…

1. **Madron** /Modron(e) The Primal Mother – /St. Madron /Madern aka Madern, Madrun, Madryn, Madernus, Medron, Medran, Mādan – pronounced “maiden”

Name: Proto-Celtic /Brythonic: Mātir = “mother”, **on = deific**; Cymraeg: Mad = “good, pleasant”, Mod = “be”

1. Celtic literature: 1. *Mabinogion* Mabon ap **Modron** – 1st Uther PenDragon’s servant,

Arthurian tale *Culhwch & Olwen* quest story, stolen son like Rhiannon.

2. Divine spouse: Gwron “war”, *Cad Goddeu* = “Battle of the Trees” in *Mabinogion*

3. Mentioned *Celtic Triads*: Dogs bark at invisible Modron when bathing @ Rhyd y Cyfartha “Barking Ford”, Denbyshire = den bych “den of the female dog” Uriens of Rheged finds, abducts /marries /impregnates. Modron mother of Owain & Morffyd, Father Afyllach “Avalon” = Morgan laFey in later tales.

4. Later Christianized – washerwoman – must have son w/ Xian to be freed

5. Washer at the ford = Morrighu /Morrygan /**Morrigan** = banshee (foretell death)

1. Celtic toponyms: 1. Madron, Village in W. Corwall, St. Madern’s Church 1m away

built on older Celtic structure. Holy well H20 piped baptistry, door N - devil

St. Madern ♂ – disciple St. Cierán – preCongregational – obscure – 17 May

Historian John Koch thinks Christianization of ♀ Celtic deity

Cornish hermit Madron ♂ patron cures, protect against pain

2. \* Madron’s Well – holy well, natural spring, most ♀, healing, clootie tree – Pagan veneration near church. Most visited holy well in Cornwall. See online, FB page

Ritual: enter well naked X3, circumnavigate well X3 for healing

John Trelille, “poor cripple” paralyzed, 1641 bathed in well, slept on “St. Madern’s bed” (hillock) cured, got job as laborer

Ritual: \* clooties – rags tied to trees; appease spirit w/ offerings (see online)

Ritual: Beltane, make X of 2 straws w/ pin, throw in well, number bubbles = years ’til marriage. Doc. 1879

**Veneration**: Kindness to dogs; motherhood; H2O, healing, honor w/ coins, clootie tree, “well dressing”

Leads us to…

1. Other possible forms of Madon:
2. Madrun, Vortimer’s daughter, became a saint. aka Madryn (ryn = “now” in Cymraeg). Toponym: town Caerfadryn, Wales
3. St. Materiana, Welsh saint 6th century, churches – Minster, Corwall; another in Wales. Materi = “matters” in Cymraeg. *Hymn to St. Materiana*, Anglican church w/ statue & stained glass window.
4. Puerto Madryn, Argentina, named after Madryn of Wales

*Questions?*

Leads us to…

1. Folkloric Goddess /Faerie **Queen Mab** – aka Mabh, Madd, Maub = “if” in Cymreag, Mawb = “all” in Cymraeg. Mab in Cymraeg means “son” or child, but definitely ♀

Perhaps conflated with: Mebh /Medhbh /Maeva in Irish Gaelic; Morgan /Morgana /Morgan laFey, Mari, mare, Morrigu /Morrygan /Morrigan, etc.

1. **Mab**, Queen of the Fairies /Fae: 1. Theory: Fae were actually proto-Celtic people, short stature, dark skin, black hair, light colored eyes; warlike. (archeologic recon confirms true about 1st people Britain). Mab means “child” (small). Became earth spirits, then supernatural beings.
2. Celtic folklore assoc. Mab & fae w/ dreams, nightmares, spirit journeys; midwifery, dogs. References in Brit lit shows familiarity w/ folktales.
3. *Mabinogion* name? Mabinog = “poet”, “bard in training”. Mabinogi = “book”
4. Welsh folklore: Queen of Ellyllon = woodland ♀ elves; Bendyth y Mamau = “blessings of the Mother”; Irish Dona, queen of Doane Sidhe or fairyland, underground; Anglo-Saxon “Queen of Elphame”. Folklore – fae bring dreams /nightmares = being “hag-ridden”. Fae = “fate” in Latin.
5. Shakespeare, 1597, *Romeo & Juliet*, Mercutio’s soliloquy, Queen Mab is fairy midwife who drives her nutshell chariot over sleepers’ faces, give birth to dreams. Size agate stone in ring, team – “atomies” = atoms or emaciated bodies, “plaits manes of horses in night” = elf locks.
6. Historian Thomas Keightly: Queen Mab assoc. w/ Tatiana = Habondia, possibly inspiration for Leland’s *Aradia*, also assoc. w/ Diana – fairies & witchcraft
7. Chaucer: Mabel /Mabily, Amabilis – Latin form = “loveable”. Ben Johnson *Entertainment at Althorpe*, 1600s, Mab pinches lazy servants, undoes chores, hinders churning. Michael Drayton *Nymphidia, or the Court of Faery*, 1627. Edmund Spenser *Fairy Queen*. In the Child Ballads *Tam Lin* & *Thomas the Rhymer*. Melville chapter *Moby Dick*. Percy Shelley Mab = “queen of spells”.
8. In older versions, Mab is benevolent, sexy, small & cute, but mischievous; Xianized = “collects tithe to hell”, hag, dark sexy /temptress
9. Recent assoc. w/ corgi dogs, Cymric folklore fae ride corgis.
10. Our family story: Mawb assoc. w/ Herne or Buca, hunt deity. Wife. She transforms him into a stag so starving family can eat. Led diaspora across Doggerland to Britain.
11. Mab could be inspiration for Mari Lwyd, “old horse” folkplays, as nightmare
12. Possible links to the **Morrygan**: 1. Mor = Brythonic word mare = “terror”, as in nightmare; assoc. w/ fate = fae. Gan = “from” in Cymraeg.

2. Welsh literature: married to huntsman entity Dark Edric = Herne? Corn king? Assoc. w/ war, death, underworld, possibly Wild Hunt.

1. **Morrigan** /Morrígu: one of Tuatha de Danaan in Irish literature, went underground after defeat in war. Rí = “ruler” old Irish
2. She has triplicate form or sisters, 3 morrígna: Badb = “fear” (crow form), Macha, Nemain or Anand. Name Morrigu= “great queen”, queen of the land
3. 3 goddesss of land, protects Ireland & her people
4. Assoc. w/ fate, prophecy, shape-shifting, war, death, victory, witchcraft
5. Granddaughter of Nuada, Married to Dagda, the Good God (in both Irish & Welsh lit.) also sex & battle, cauldron to rebirth dead, cook meat of brave
6. Morrigan appears in Ulster Cycle – Washer at the Ford, predicts war & bloodshed, soldiers’ deaths, in crow form, prophesized death of CuCullain.
7. Assoc. w/ bean sidhe = banshee = “fairy woman”, wails to foretell death
8. Assoc. w/ lamia /snakes
9. Irish legend – wife of the “good god”, the Dagda
10. Queen Mab and Morrygan (Welsh) may be associated with **Morgan laFey** of Arthurian legends. In older tales, (Geoffry of Monmouth, *Vita Merlini* 1100s) not Arthur’s sister or nemesis, but a healer & prophetess. Assoc. w/ Avalon, father Affalach. Mor = “sea” in Cymraeg. Mentioned in *Sir Gawain & the Green Knight*
11. Medb /Meadhbh /Meibh /Meabh (bh = v). Anglicized to **Maeva**. Proto-Celtic Medu = “mead” and Medua = “intoxicating”
12. May have been a sovereignty Goddess in Ireland.
13. May have been a fertility Goddess.
14. May have been a real person who reigned as Queen of Connaught around 2,000 years ago. May have been woman named for the deity.
15. Her name is assoc. with mead, intoxication, drunkenness. Historians speculate that in a ritual marriage between the King (rí) and the land, the candidate must accept a ritual cup of mead from a priestess who portrayed the Earth Goddess.
16. Prominent in Irish lit in the Ulster Cycle story of CuCullain *The Cattle Raid of Cooley*. Might have been mythologized.
17. May have been reduced to comical figure – “cougar”, argued w/ husband, killed because struck by a cheese
18. Topography: Burnt mound or Morrigan’s cooking pit in Tipperary, “breasts” /hills in Meath, another site called “vulva of Medb”.

**Personal veneration**: Motherhood, kindness to dogs, dream visions, spiritual journeys, sexuality, the Mari Lwyd folkplay (all); poetry, literature, pranks, offerings that Fae like – bread, butter, honey, beer, shiny things (Mab); sports and games, drinking, mead, (Maeva); meat, corn, food cooked in a cauldron, honoring the dead, revering crows and snakes, honoring the military, witchcraft, and laundry (Morrigan). Note: Do not tell Mab /Mawb “thank you”, but the Morrigan appreciates this acknowledgment.

Leads us to…

1. The **Matronae**, Dea Matrona, Dea Matres. Romano /Gaulish Goddess in triplicate form. \* Brought to British Isles by Roman soldiers & colonizers. Motherhood & abundance. Possibly merged with Modron & Morrigan.
2. Where word “matron” comes from (Latin Matrona), possibly word “maiden”.
3. Dea Matrona = “divine mother” in Latin.
4. Many statues of the 3 Matronae survive in Britain: Caerwent in Wales, Cirencester, Hadrian’s Wall. Can have grain, fruit, symbols of harvest.
5. Images survived & were public (Romans had representational art, Celts didn’t.)
6. Toponyms – mostly exist in France (Gaul) including River Marne.

*Questions?*

**God of the Hunt**:

1. Horned Lord **Cernunnos** /Kernunnos /Kern /Cern /Kernunno – Gardner /Karnayna – Sanders; Buca /Bucca /Bwcca – Wales & Cornwall; Atho /Artho; Herne /Hern
2. Anthropologists: any horned man figure, Celtic = Cernunnos
3. Found mostly on Continent, however, some veneration in pre-Roman Britain
4. \* Frontlets: 21 skull-caps made from red deer bone& antler, Mesolithic, Star Carr, North Yorkshire, UK, made to be worn, early folkplay /ritual theater, found 1950 AFTER Gardner
5. \* Drawing on bone, Pinhole Cave, Cresswell Craigs, Derbyshire, Mesolithic, 15,000 years old, found 1928, resembles other deer/bull men on Continent
6. Catalaunii, Veniti tribes’ coins, southern Britain, 60 to 30 BCE, before Romans; Petersfield in Hampshire, 20 CE.
7. Mosaic in Roman villa in Verulamium, Roman city in Britain, 160-90 CE, city sacked by Boudicca, now in St. Albans museum. “Sea God” or Cernunnos?
8. Found in 2018, seated figure w/out horns, copper, 2nd century, Cambridgeshire
9. Folkplays: Ritual theater, portrayals of stag, bull, horse w/ Hunter w/ dance, song. Some say original Pagan, others say “paganized”
10. Dorset ’Ooser, used on Beltane & Yule, could also be punishment for spouse abuser. Bull mask, original disappeared in late 1800s, pix in Dorset museum, revived, mentioned by Murray & Gardner
11. Ol’ Buck, USA, came from UK, Rodanth, Hatteras Island, NC, 12th night, hunt
12. Abbots Bromley Horn Dance, antlers from extinct deer, 1100 years old, trad folk play /folkdance, 6 “deermen”, boy w/ bow & arrow, earliest recorded 1226, unbroken trad. Disagreement: “ancient Pagan ritual”, “fertility dance”, commemorate legal hunting.
13. Hoodening – proscriptions against the practice of wearing an animal skin, called “heathenish” or “devilish” in Middle Ages up to Renaissance. Tradition endured to 1930s, Derby Tup, Kent Hooden Horse, precursor Trick or Treat (?)
14. Stag “beastie” mascot w/ Mummers
15. My own family tradition, Mawb transforms Herne /Buca into deer, tribe hunts him for food during Ice Age
16. “Sion Corn” Santa Claus, Welsh
17. British Traditional Witchcraft – pre-Gardner, revived by Cochrane: Stang, Buca Ddu and Buca Gwydon, darkness /death, fertility, wild lord, rituals outdoors

Leads us to: God of wealth, agriculture, horse training, abundance

Cernunnos in the Roman pantheon became a deity representing plentitude

1. \* Depicted in art w/ bags of coins or nuts
2. British Folkplays present the firgure w/ or as a horse, ram, or bull = ag not hunt
3. British Herne is King’s chief huntsman. When thwarted, disrupts agriculture

Leads us to: **Underworld Gods**

1. **Cernunnos:**
2. as Underworld God, chthonic entity in Roman statuary & Anglo /Celtic legend
3. \* Symbols: rat, snakes, deer. Deer seen as messengers from Otherworld
4. Associated w/ Wild Hunt rounding up souls, Hunt of animals, death
5. Assoc. w/ Herne, king’s huntsman, legend in Berkshire woods. Mentioned by Shakespeare’s Merry *Wives of Windsor*. Legend of suicide. Name: “horned”. Toponymn: Herne’s oak
6. In Brit Trad Witchcraft /Cornish folktales, Buca Ddu = “Dark Buck”, aspect of winter, death, darkness, chthonic
7. In family story, husband to Mawb, transforms into stag to feed starving family
8. **Arawn**: Lord of the Underworld in *Mabinogion*
9. Husband of Rhiannon, Welsh myth similar to Persephone & Hades
10. Viewed as king, fierce warrior, not particularly spooky
11. Assoc. w/ hunting, Lord of the Dead, rules Underworld Annwyn
12. Later became assoc. w/ Wild Hunt, became more scary
13. Symbols: dogs / hounds = Cwn Annwyn, Deer (Otherworld messengers), Pigs (assoc. w/ Underworld)
14. **yr Angau** “the death” \* in Cymraeg & in Cornwall, **l’Ankou** in Breton (Brittany, Celtic nation, now NW France). Welsh & Cornish folklore, Angau is death’s henchman. Few written sources. Art/ images
15. Appears as emaciated old man, long white hair, big black hat
16. Drives cart w/ skinny white horse, one squeaky wheel, collects dead
17. Found at crossroads, graveyards, after dark
18. Folktales: Disguise himself seeking alms – test. Strikes down those who mock him
19. Later (plague) shown as skeletal figure, striking down people w/ scythe.
20. Image shown on gravestones, churchyard carvings /reliefs, woodcut prints: skeletal figure, skull, winged skull, skull w/ roses
21. *Danse Macabre* on Continent, “Dance of Death” – actual dance, music Franz Lizt
22. *Death and the Maiden* on Continent
23. Morphed into Grim Reaper w/ skull, black robes, scythe

**Personal veneration**: Stang, antler headdress, dressing as Stag in folkplay, hunting w/ bow & arrow (Cernunnos, Herne, Buca Ddu); Honor /appease death, kindness to dogs, hunting, eating pork (Arawn); Kindness to beggars & elderly, images of skeletons & skulls, scythe or sickle (Angau); Winter rites, dark rites acknowledging death, Samhain /Nos Calan Gaeaf; Yule /Alban Arthan (all).

Leads us to: **Smith Gods \***

Metalworking, craftsmanship. Creating metal from ore considered magick

Developed after Bronze Age, around Iron Age

 Many in different cultures: Hephaestus – Greek, Vulcan – Roman, Ogun – Yoruban

 Often lamed, one eye, sometimes Gay

 Most assoc. w/ fire, some w/ horses

1. **Gobannus** /Cobannus /Cobanno: Gaulo-Roman, Continental Celts (now France).

A. Proto-Celtic goben = “smith”, gof in Cymraeg

B. Bronze cauldron “Deus Cobannus” now in Getty Museum, CA, also bronze statuette.

C. Zinc tablet in Bern, Switzerland

 2. **Goibniu** / Gaibhne /Gavida /Gavigan: Irish, in written literature & folklore

 A. Blacksmith for Tuatha de Danaan

 B. Father Tuirbe, axe thrower, Brothers: Credne, Silversmith; Luchta, Carpenter;

and/or Diancecht, physician;

Nuada, war

C. After Nuada lost his arm in battle, Goibniu crafted him a new arm of silver

D. In battle, speared by Bríd & Brígh’s son Ruadan, kills Ruadan w/ own spear, Diancecht healed one or both

E. Also hospitality, provides feasts for gods

F. Owns magic cow – assoc. w/ agriculture

G. Post-Christian, invoked in St. Gall incantation, along w/ Jesus, to remove a thorn

H. As Gaigan, wife was Balor’s daughter, father of Lugh (folkloric)

I. Toponym: forge at Doire na’Tuan

J. Xian: Gobban Saer “the joiner” – built churches

 3. **Gofannon**: Welsh, in written literature

 A. Son of either Dôn – Earth Goddess or Belenos – Sun God & Anu, Earth Goddess

 B. Metal worker, architect, builder

 C. Brewer, created elixir of immortality

 D. Weapons created by Gofannon guaranteed to fly true and hit their mark

 E. Killed nephew Dylan ail Dôn by mistake (also son of Lleu Lau Gyffes)

 F. Culhwch asked him to clean & sharpen bro. Amaethon’s plow (ag deity)

 G. Created silver hand for Nodens /Lludd when his was lost in battle

 H. Artefacts – pots decorated w/ smithing tools found in north England

 I. Images: Plaque of Soldiers in “Gobannium”, Roman Fort in Wales, 2nd century;

statuettes of Vulcan /Gofannon in Cambridgeshire & Yorkshire

Ring found in Canterbury, inscription to Gofannon, now in British Museum

 J. Sometimes portrayed as Gay, no wife in legends. (Celtic deities mostly paired)

K. May be connected w/ pre-Christian aspects of the “Plough Play”. Plow = sex

 5. Romano-British syncretization w/ **Vulcan**, conflated w/ Mars & Jupiter, too.

A. Festival Aug. 23

B. Several images and statues in British Isles.

C. Paired w/ Venus by Romano-Celts

D. On Pillar of the Boatmen along w/ Cernunnos

E. Name proto-Celtic Wulkānos – root of Vulcan, Weyland, Cain (see below), also “volcano”

 4. **Weyland** /Waland: Anglo-Saxon, Teutonic, Germanic smith entity

 A. Name’s root word same as for “violent” and “gallant”

 B. *Poetic Eddas* – Smith enslaved by a king, lamed. He either makes a feathered

cape or flies off as an eagle.

C. *Beowulf* mentions him as Waldere, crafts the hero a mail shirt & swork

D. Finnish version Volundr – marries either a Valkyrie or swan princess, King of

Nictland captures & hamstrings him, Volundr kills king’s sons & uses skulls for

cups & impregnates king’s daughter

E. Frank’s Casket, found in Northumbria, depicts story along w/ other Pagan tales

& Xian myths. Carven wood, 8th century, now in British Museum. Dead guy under his forge. His brother Egil creating a winged cloak

F. In some versions, Weyland promised king’s daughter, forges her a ring, love & marriage. In others, he rapes & impregnates her

G. In poem *Deor*

H. Not written in Old English, just folktale

I. Folklore: If you leave Weyland a broken tool, he will fix it; will shoe horses

J. Images in Halton, Lancashire; Leeds, W. Yorkshire, 2 in N. Yorkshire

K. Toponymns: Wayland’s Smithy, neolithic long barrow, near Uffington White Horse chalk figure in Oxfordshire. Weyland’s Forge, Berkshire Downs burial mound

5. **Tubal Cain** /Qayin: A. name = worldly possessed or possessed of confusion. Qayin =

Spear-bringer in Hebrew

B. From Jewish legend, Bible *Genesis* 4:22. First Blacksmith, a descendant of Cain,

forged bronze & iron, instructed smiths.

C. Tubal Cain’s blind father Lamech deceived by him, kills Cain by shooting him

w/ an arrow

D. Jewish legend – Tubal Cain invokes Cain’s sin of murder by forging weapons

E. Also related to agriculture, plowing. Cain was farmer, tilled land

F. In Free Masonry, first chemist, father of smithcraft, arts, civilization, “Masonic Ancestor”. Invoke Tubal Cain or Vulcan, referenced in 3rd Degree. Gerald Gardner borrowed some Masonic ceremonies for Wicca.

G. In Cornish folklore, Tubal Cain or Weyland pounds out people’s fates with his iron hammer upon his anvil.

H. In *Traditional British Witchcraft* from Robert Cochrane (Roy Bowers), Tubal Cain is the “Witchfather”. Named their group Clan of Tubal Cain. Considered first alchemist, sorcerer, father of High Magick. Uses fire, water, earth and air in his art.

I. Equated with “Horseman’s Word” magickal group, blacksmithing, horse training, horse-drawn plowing. Still active in 20th century. Also with “Ploughmen” secret society.

J. Michael Howard wrote about Trad Craft, Cochrane, Tubal Cain, Horseman’s Word, etc. in *Children of Cain*, also *Cauldron Magazine*.

K. Rabbit Hole: Qabalah, four directions /elements, holy spear that pierced Jesus’s side, Arthurian legend, Spear of Destiny

L. Conflated w/ Luciferianism

 **Personal veneration**: Metalworking, blacksmithing, iron, bronze, hematite, tools, horses,

craftsmanship, honor with fire, brewing & drinking beer, archery, weaponcraft, throwing javelins, other sports & contests, iron cauldron or pot, Plough Play, Mari Lwyd & “old horse” folkplays featuring a blacksmith, sacred alchemy, celebrating on Aug. 23

Which leads us to: Celtic Blacksmith & Fire Goddess, as well as Mother Goddess, Agricultural Goddess, Tutelary Goddess… and Saint!

1. **Brighid**, Bríd, Bride, Bridey, Brigit, Bridget, \* in Ireland (pronounced Breed or Bride); Vrain, Fraid, or Brenda or Branwen in Cymraeg; Bergitte in German (pronounced Bear-jeet); Maman Brigitte in French /Afro-Cuban; may be conflated w/ the British Brece. Britannia, Brigantia, and possibly Queen Boudicca. Very probably remade as St. Bridget in Ireland.
2. Bridget was originally an Irish Goddess, found in literature as well as folklore. Goddess of Tuatha de Danaan.
3. Name means “shining one” or “the exhaulted”, possibly a title
4. She may have originally been a Druid, or a Priestess, perhaps named for Goddess
5. Birthplace Kildare, originally spelled Cill Dara, means “hill of the oak” or “church of the oak”. Pagan shrine? Druid temple? Sacred flame there
6. Daughter of God Dagda or a Druid named Dubhthach.
7. Born at dawn with fire shooting from forehead (red hair)
8. Goddess of: fire, blacksmithing, refined craftsmanship, skilled trades, agriculture, cattle, dairying, livestock, brewing, water, 3 rivers come together, motherhood, midwifery, healing, poetry, song, inspiration, control weather
9. May be a triplicate goddess, “three Brighids” Maiden /Mother /Crone
10. Many sacred wellsprings in Ireland w/ clooties, healing; sacred font in Kildare
11. Rituals: Brighid’s crosses, Brighid’s bed, Brighid’s footprint
12. Husband was Lugh, and /or Bres of the Fomorians – married to create peace, and /or Roman Sylvanus
13. Sons Angus & Ruadan, killed by a spear forged by Goibniu, Bridget cried aloud with began custom of keening. Sons By Bres: Brian (Boru?), Iucharba, Iuchair.
14. Goibniu’s cow = Bridget
15. Toponymns: Brighid’s Chair, can bring on childbirth for pg. ladies. Plains named for her oxen, Fea & Femen. River Brigid, all in Ireland
16. May be seasonal Goddess, takes turns w/ Cailleigh /Cailliech
17. Holiday Imbolc, precursor spring; assoc. w/ sheep, lambing, means “In belly” or “ewe sheep’s milk” Feb. 1 or 2, ½ between Winter Solstice & Spring Equinox

1. “Ground hog day” = day a brown snake emerged, Scotland, assoc. w/ Bridget. In Britain, badger

2. Whistle in the night to summon Bridget

1. **Brigantia** – Identified w/ Britain, origin of name; Celtic tribe from around Yorkshire. Proto-Celtic = “high, exhalted”
2. Goddess of protection, victory, healing, celestial, tutelory.
3. Name was Briginda in Gaul: later Brigantia, Goddess of the North; also Bricta, Brixta, Brigendona = “bright, endowed”
4. Romans identified her w/ Minerva, Tyche, Fortuna, Victoria – late antiquity in Yorkshire. No real equivalent in Roman pantheon
5. Celts identified her w/ Bridget. Her name is a cognate w/ Bridget, possibly Old German Burgunt, possibly from Sanskrit Barati = “high”
6. Later Anglicized to Brittania – icon like Uncle Sam in WWI
7. Celt-Iberian coin
8. 8 known surviving Roman images /shrines in UK include:
9. Corbridge, Hadrian’s Wall, has inscription to Brigania
10. Irthington, Cumbria
11. Deae Nymphae Brigantiae = “divine nymph”
12. Sandstone statue found 1731, Birrens, Dumfries, Scotland; gorgon or enemy head on her chest crowned, spear, globe, wings, w/ inscription “sacred to Brigantia”. Now in Nat’l Museum of Scotland
13. Inscription “Tutela Brigantia Augusta” found 2009
14. Head w/ crown found 2014 S. Shields, Newcastle, old Roman fort Arbeia, on Hadrian’s Wall, originally pained, 2nd century
15. 2 in Yorkshire, Roman fort, was originally seat of Briganti tribe
16. Toponymns: 2 Brigantium; Rivers Brent, Braint
17. Associated w/ rivers, wells, healing, Mercury, Mars statues

Which leads us to…

1. **Saint Bridget** of Kildare:uncanonized, no longer saint after 1969 purge, not officially recognized by Catholic church, they can’t prove she actually existed, feast day Feb. 1 removed from calendar, will become Irish public holiday in 2023. St. Bridget is widely revered in Ireland (and elsewhere). Mother saint / Patroness of Ireland
2. Said to be baptized by St. Patrick – however, he’s now expunged too.
3. Medievalist Pamela Berger says Goddess Brighid /Bríd synchronized w/ St. Bridget in Middle Ages.
4. Bridget may have been a real person, named after the Goddess. Or not.
5. Sacred flame at Kildare possibly originally made for Goddess Brighid, it’s an ancient Indo-European custom.
6. Flame existed in antiquity, at least 480 ’til Protestant Reformation
7. Tended only by women
8. Rekindled 1912
9. Sacred well at Kildare ancient – artifacts
10. Switched to St. Bridget
11. Pagans & Catholics alike use it for healing, give offerings
12. Clootie nearby
13. Huge tourism draw
14. Born in Fulgart /Faughart, Louth, approx. 451
15. 20 years ac Christianity inception Ireland
16. At the time, Xian was peaceful, gentle, no forced conversion, healing, teachings of Jesus
17. Bridget’s Father either Dubthach, chief of Lienster or chief Druid of the region, Daithi O’hOgain (? as Druids mostly wiped out by then, by Romans) (2nd ? may have been Druid at Pagan temple to Goddess Brighid)
18. Mother Brocca, a Scots slave or Broicsech, a Pictish servant, sold to B.’s father
19. Saint representing: blacksmiths, dairying, cattle, brewery, fertility, babies and children, midwifery, women, poets, scholars, healing
20. Saint needs 2 miracles, yet several came from Pagan folklore of Goddess Brighid:
21. Dubthach, King of Lienster, was upset with Bridget, age 10 giving away his possessions, including sword, to feed the poor. However, then he relented & freed her from slavery.
22. Part 2 of above legend: Dubthach said she could have as much land as her cape could cover. Bridget’s mantle covered many acres. Pagan – build temple, Christian – build monastery
23. Miracles of healing at her monastery
24. Said to be able to control the weather
25. Could turn her bathwater into beer
26. Monastery known for smithing, metalwork & crafts, also arts & publishing of illuminated manuscripts, incl. *Book of Kildare*
27. Bridget known for her purity, founding nunnery
28. However, she may have been Gay. Close companion /pupil Dar Lugdach ♀, successor to Bridget
29. Bridget died 525, Dar followed her 527

**Personal Veneration**: Celebrating Imbolc, eating mutton /lamb & sheep cheese, eating beef, drinking milk, eating Irish foods; drinking beer; composing & reciting poems, scholarship, storytelling; lighting candles & sacred flames; healing, being kind to the poor, honoring women and children; making Bridget’s Crosses, Bridget’s beds, looking for Bridget’s footprint, worship beneath oak trees, clootie trees & wellsprings; bravery; looking for the groundhog /snake /badger