
Renewal

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Alec Christensen - one of the unsung heroes of the Folk

by Else Christensen

Age Alec Christensen was born September 14, 1904, in Copenhagen, and grew up in a working man's home. His father was a candy-maker who unfortunately died when Alec was 10 years old. A 15-year-old brother was just about to leave home, so Alec was alone with his mother, who without much schooling herself put all her energy into giving her son a proper education. As Alec didn't have any special preferences, his mother found him an apprenticeship with a family friend who was a wood-carver. As it turned out, this was a good choice as Alec had a talent for drawing which stood him to good use in his new trade, and he became an excellent craftsman.

As a journeyman young Alec went 'travelling on his trade' as it was called and often done by those who wanted to see a little more than their own backyard. All were, of course, union members, and the local office would help any young journeyman to find jobs and accommodation. Alec went as far as France, learning more tricks of his trade, and in between even won a few bouts as an amateur boxer.

On the way back through Germany he experienced the total break-down of the German economy which came a few years after the end of WWI. He told stories about the devaluation of the German mark, of the workers having to be paid twice a week to keep up with the swiftly rising prices, then paid each day to get at least a few items for their wages. He also told how he and the man in whose house he was studying, on Sundays went outside the city begging potatoes from the farmers. When the situation became too severe all foreign workers were told to leave, and just inside Denmark Alec had to get money from the Union to buy a ticket back to Copenhagen.

All along the young wood-carver was passionately interested in politics and the various swingings of the political scene caused by the Russian Revolution, the formation of the USSR, the fight within the



Aage Alec Christensen. 1901 – 1971

different small socialistic groups and the rising nationalism of the workers of Germany. On arriving home this interest was in no way forgotten, and Copenhagen was abuzz with political discussions in the coffeehouses and meeting halls; and you could often find Alec in the middle of a fierce argument.

In the meantime his first marriage where a daughter had been born went on the rocks; he moved out of the house. His mother had died and his older brother had his family to care for. So Alec stayed around with friends or in rented rooms. Wherever he was, he was arguing for fair pay for the workers, for freedom of choice and for protecting his country and its ways against the internationalism of most of the socialistic parties.

This was how I met Alec. I, too, was very interested in politics and on the rather radical side of the issues. We started going to meetings together, hanging out in the same bars, and before long our liaison took on a permanent nature. Shortly after, Denmark became occupied by the German forces, and we decided to remain neutral. We liked the social program of National Socialism, but we

were Danes, not Germans, so to stay out of the events seemed to us to be the better policy. Since we were known as political activists, Alec was later picked up together with other such individuals and taken to the local concentration camp; luckily this happened so early that the camp had not yet been moved to Germany. Alec was able to persuade the German political police that we did not intend to participate one way or the other, and after about half a year he was let go. Later we were both picked up for questioning as it became known that we had weapons. The investigators only knew about the handguns, so when they were handed over and we had been duly interrogated, we were let go after a couple of hours; and we experienced no further problems.

The many restrictions during the occupation had gotten under our skin, so when things again became closer to normal we took advantage of the freedom. At the time we had acquired a 9-ton yawl, so after talking plans over, we decided to pack up most of our important belongings, sell the rest which we could not take with us and see how far we could get. The boat was strong enough for crossing the Atlantic; but somehow the weather gods did not like that idea. For such a crossing you have to pick up the trade winds at the Azores at a certain time of the year. Various problems delayed us and we were too late to reach the islands in time, this was in '48. We tried again the following year, but again there were delays and the storms came early that year too. Finally we gave up the great plan, sold the boat in England, got immigration papers to Canada and arrived in that country in February of 1951 with forty bucks between us.

I had some school English, we had spent almost half a year in England, Alec spoke a little French, so we made out all right. He had of course taken his tools, with him, so we found work and accommodation, and began to get used to the Canadian way.

To our disappointment Toronto was politically dead, nobody seemed interested in

Continued on page 2

(Continued from page 1)

what the politicians were doing with the people's money. The Socreds¹ were most alive but even they were not able to attract much activity. We finally met some other Europeans who, like us, were politically aware, and we were discussing ways of getting people interested in the political scene.

Nothing really happened until we accidentally came across a fellow who had the books written by A. Rud Mills and didn't know what to do with them. Alec right away grasped the idea Mills had developed. He had earlier come upon the idea to promote British pre-Christian² beliefs. WW1 interrupted his efforts, but after the war he again gathered a small group of friends who celebrated the seasons, read the few books available dealing with Norse mythology and, mostly, British history.

The fellow gave us the books sensing that we were interested and we began holding meetings, exploring the idea of picking up where Mills had left off; he had died in the mid-fifties.³ The more we read, the more enthusiastic we became; here, finally, was something solid we could put before our Folk to replace barren christianity with its concepts of sin, death and spiritual stupor, something that would bring new emotions to our people and give us back our forgotten spiritual heritage.

We tried, as a feeler, to send out a small publication, poorly done for we did not yet really know what we were doing, only groping; however, we also soon realised that we needed to study the past more before we would be able to do anything realistically.

Unfortunately Alec developed heart problems, and had several heart attacks which caused activities to be put on hold. He died in May '71, but the idea of going back to our past to regain our future stayed with us; a few friends in Toronto and southern Ontario decided to go ahead.

We brought out the first issue of *The Odinist* in August '71 – the rest is history.

Notes

This article first appeared in *Wodanesdag*, Volume 1 Number 9, pages 12-13. This is only the second time in our history that we have re-published an article from another source. We do so now as a tribute to Else, Alec, and the good folk at Wodanesdag.

1. "Socreds": presumably "social creditors", monetary reformers who achieved some electoral success in Canada.

2. Else's own lower-case spelling.

3. Here Else is wrong. Rud Mills died on the 8th of April, 1964. See: http://www.geocities.com/osred/images/RAM_Death_Cert.jpg

Oskar Speck's epic 50,000 km kayak trip ended up among Aussie Odinists

Oskar Speck, born in 1907, was a gifted kayaker and canoeist in his native Germany. By 1932 his electrical components factory was forced into liquidation by the Depression. Speck decided to get away from his homeland, but his only means to do so was a 5.49 m (18 foot) collapsible kayak that could be folded up and carried on public transport.

This boat, called *Sunnschien*, had a foot-controlled rudder and a gaff sail of 1.49 square metres. He took it to Ulm on 13 May 1932, then sailed down the Danube. By March 1933 he was in Thessaloniki in Greece, where he learned that Adolf Hitler had become Chancellor of Germany.

He crossed over to Rhodes, then to Turkey, following the coast as best as he could. At night, on land, he slept inside his boat under a canvas covering. He then decided to keep going. Unfortunately, he was not permitted to travel through the Suez canal. He therefore took his boat by bus to the village of Meskene in Syria, then sailed down the Euphrates river to the Persian Gulf.

After many adventures Speck reached Pakistan, then sailed around India to Burma, Thailand and Malaya. By 1938-9 he was crossing the Indonesian archipelago to New Guinea, where, despite serious bouts of malaria and a vicious roughing up by the natives resulting in a burst ear drum, he managed to take extensive 16 mm footage of the lives of the tribespeople.

In September 1939 Speck arrived at Thursday Island, which was and still is Australian territory. Unfortunately for him, Australia and Germany now being at war, he was arrested as an enemy alien. After a month he was flown to Brisbane, and thence taken to Tatura concentration camp near Shepparton in Victoria.

His adventures were not yet over. On 9 January 1943 Speck escaped from Tatura. He was picked up by vigilant police in Melbourne, put in solitary confinement for four weeks, then sent to Loveday concentration camp in the South Australian desert. He saw out the war at Loveday, then set up a successful opal business, helped establish the Australian marathon canoeing tradition, and finally died in 1995.

Speck may or may not have been a Nazi. Photographs of his kayak show a tiny swastika flag on the bow. His main sponsor, though, the Pionier Faltfoot Werft, had supplied him with four replacement kayaks during the course of his seven-year, 50,000 km journey to Australia. Perhaps his little flag was part of the deal.

At any rate, Speck was sent to Loveday concentration camp in about late January 1943. There he stayed until the end of WW2. Now, the pioneer of Australian Odinism, Rud Mills, had been sent to Loveday in May 1942, and was allowed to leave on 17/12/1942, so their paths would not have crossed at that stage. But Mills' Odinist friend Les Cahill, of whom little else is yet known, was in Loveday from March 1942 to February 1944 – at the same time as Speck. It is almost inconceivable that Cahill and Speck didn't meet, given that both of them were effectively under suspicion of being pro-NS.

Furthermore, the reason that Cahill was arrested in the first place was supposedly that on Mills' request he had tried to convert the legendary Australian publisher P. R. "Inky" Stephensen to Odinism. Stephensen was also in Loveday for some of the time that Speck spent there.

It should be stressed that none of these men was ever charged with any offence. Tatura and Loveday were not prisons for convicted persons. They were concentration camps, just like the British wartime camp on the Isle of Man, or indeed the concentration camps the British pioneered in South Africa during the Boer War.

The uncharged inmates of the Aussie camps were a strange group. Stephensen was probably Australia's greatest man of letters. Mills, a lawyer-poet, was the founder of modern Odinism. Cahill, a serving soldier at the time of his arrest, had been expelled from the Communist Party in 1932. Speck was the founder of modern Australian long-distance canoeing, and therefore the spiritual ancestor of the immensely popular annual Murray River Marathon. All served time in Loveday.



How a German paper depicted Speck during his epic voyage

- *New sacred site ● Britain, 680,000 years BP*
- *Hertha has her moments of heat and cold, but “Global Warming” doesn’t match the graphs*

What’s new

Odinist victory-ground discovered

One of the last great Odinist military victories took place in 616 C.E., somewhere near modern Chester.

In that year King Aethelfrith of Northumbria was threatened by an alliance of West Britons, East Anglians and Mercians. The great Odinist king didn’t wait for his enemies to approach his capital at Bamburgh. Sweeping south along the old Roman roads he met the Christian West Britons near Chester. Bede tells us that:

When he was about to give battle and saw their priests, who had assembled to pray to God on behalf of the soldiers taking part in the fight, standing apart in a safer place, he asked who they were and for what purpose they had gathered there. Most of them were from the monastery of Bangor, where there was said to be so great a number of monks that, when it was divided into seven parts with superiors over each, no division contained less than 300 monks, all of whom were accustomed to live by the labour of their hands. After a three-days’ fast, most of these had come to the battle in order to pray for the others. They had a guard named Brockmail, whose duty it was to protect them from the swords of the barbarians while they were praying. When Aethelfrith heard why they had come he said, “If they are praying to their God against us, then, even if they do not bear arms, they are fighting against us, assailing us as they do with prayers for our defeat.” He therefore directed his first attack against them, and then destroyed the rest of the accursed army, not without heavy loss to his own forces. It is said that of the monks who had come to pray about 1200 perished in this battle, and only 50 escaped by flight.

The precise location of this great Odinist victory has long been lost.

However, in 1929 a mass grave was discovered at Heronbridge immediately south of Chester, on the banks of the River Dee.

Some skeletons were exhumed, but were subsequently lost by Manchester University.

In 2004, therefore, another dig was mounted at the site, and two more skeletons were excavated. Carbon dating placed the two male skeletons at the time of Aethelfrith’s great victory.

Here, then, were two warriors who had fallen in that battle. One was in his early twenties, the other was about 40. Both were about 1.84 m (5 ft 10in). The patterns of wear and tear on the bones showed that they had been soldiers by trade. They had died of gruesome sword wounds inflicted by opponents on foot.

At this stage there is no way of knowing whether the two men were Christian Britons or heathen North Angles. Radio-isotope analysis may be the only way of determining this.

At least the site of this great victory has now been discovered. It is almost exactly two kilometres SSE of the Roman fortress at Chester, at the point where the Dee runs closest to Watling Street.

This is a truly sacred site for all Odinists. We hope that our comrades in England will be able to arrange pilgrimages to the battlefield where, despite great loss of life, our ancestors successfully defended their – and our – religion.

The (newest) oldest Britons

Swanscombe Woman lived and died in a very warm period between two major ice ages. The second ice age (known as “Mindel”) ended about 435,000 years ago, and the third (“Riss”) ice age started perhaps 230,000 years ago. The earliest-known English lass therefore flourished at some time during this Mindel-Riss Interglacial period – between about 435,000 and 230,000 years ago.

The only evidence that she ever existed is a few fossilised bones from her skull. They were found from 1935 to 1955 in a gravel pit near Dartford in Kent. From these fragments anthropologists have concluded that she was female, and about twenty years old. She is referred to in the text-books as Swanscombe Woman.

The greatest anthropologist of the twentieth century, Carleton Coon, speculating on her relics, said that they were undeniably human: *Homo sapiens*. A scientific conference held in 1962 officially concluded that she was a modern human. A cast taken from the inside of her skull proved that her brain was indistinguishable from those of our more recent British and northern European ancestors.

Her bones were found in a 100-foot stratum of the Thames estuary, together with the remains of various animals of the period. Scientific tests, such as the degree of fossilisation, confirm the archaeological dating. Yet although she lived so long ago, experts have established that her brain capacity was at least 1,270 cc: close to average for a modern European woman.

In 1994 a human shin-bone and two teeth were discovered at Boxgrove, West Sussex. They belonged to some sort of modern human who was over six feet tall, and it is currently thought that Boxgrove Man lived during Marine Oxygen Isotope Stage 13, and therefore about 500,000 years ago. It is impossible to tell from the few remains found at Boxgrove whether their owner was ancestral to Cro-Magnons (our ancestors),

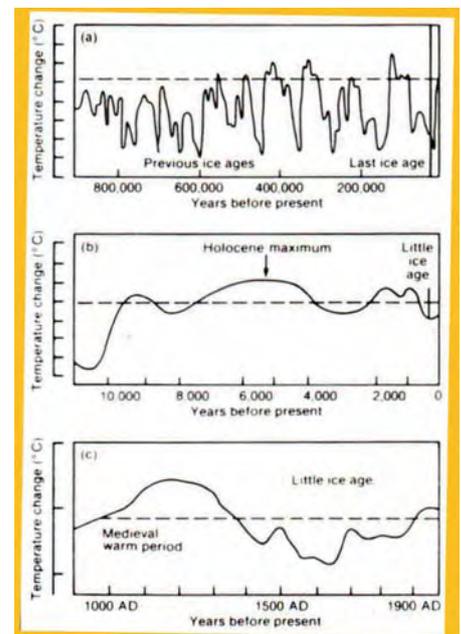
Neanderthals, or some other type of humans.

Then in 2000 a flint handaxe was discovered on the Norfolk coast near Happisburgh (pronounced “Hazeborough”). Now, it has to be admitted that pebbles can be chipped away over the years so that they look like human implements, but the Happisburgh handaxe is as good, and as sharp, as such implements get. Furthermore, the same site has yielded a bison bone that has clearly been cut with a flint. Obviously the Happisburgh people were hunter-gatherers.

We may never know what type of humans the Happisburgh people were, but they seem to date from the Marine Oxygen Isotope Stage 17, suggesting a date of *at least* 680,000 years ago.

So without wishing to cause offence to anyone who may prefer to believe that modern humans have a very recent footprint on Gaia, that is the state of current knowledge on our ancestors. People pretty much like us were making tools and carving up bison for dinner in Norfolk more than half a million years ago.

Just because some readers may not know how much our earth’s climate has fluctuated in the time that humans have been around:



The graphs above all come from Basil Cracknell’s brilliant new book, *Outrageous Waves: global warming and coastal change through 2,000 years* (Phillimore, £19.99).

In the Roman period, Jersey was apparently part of France. Cracknell’s message seems to be: Cheer up, we may survive global warming!

The Trial of Loki

In 1999 we published a pamphlet titled *The Trial of Loki: A study in Nordic heathen morality*. That volume is now out of print in Australia, although the US edition is still available from our friends at Theod (see page 8 for their address).

Having received several requests for information about how Loki “fits in” to Odinism, we have decided to serialise this important work, for the first time, in *Renewal*.

6. More on the *Senna* of *Lokasenna*

Frigg replies that if she had a son “like Baldr” here, Loki would regret that accusation. We know, as all the gods who understand Fate know, as Loki knows, as the poem knows, and as its audience would have known, that Baldr isn’t available to avenge her insult. All parties also know why. Likewise, we know that Frigg has another son, or stepson, “like Baldr”, who isn’t here just at the moment, but who might well be here soon. The response that Loki makes to this statement will determine the future shape of the poem – and of the larger eschatology. Loki, however, has lost all self-control. Yes, he crows, like a petty crook in the dock, Baldr isn’t here – and he’s not here because of me!

This should be the logical turning point of the poem. If these suggestions regarding the gods’ motives have been more or less correct so far, Loki is “banged to rights”. He has been afforded every legal protection, has confessed to his deeds, has refused to put in a lesser guilty plea, and has made it clear that he shows defiance rather than remorse.

All that remains now is for the gods to pass sentence. Why then do they not punish Loki at this point? They certainly have no further responsibilities to him, but Loki’s virtual self-conviction may not override other moral obligations that they are obliged to follow. Ægir’s hall is still a place of sanctuary. Only one of the Æsir seems to have the specific moral right to disregard oaths and vows when the situation requires it. *Voluspá* 26 suggests that this is one of Þórr’s special roles, and Loki himself recognises this later, in stanza 64. But Þórr is not yet present.

What would a modern judge do if, for some reason, there were no police or prison authorities in the court to take charge of the

prisoner whose own words had just convicted him? Maybe try to keep the prisoner talking, in the hope that the missing officials would turn up sooner or later. This is exactly what the gods do. It is perhaps significant that from this point in the poem there are no more legal quibbles. It seems to be relevant, also, that there is a literary precedent for this stalling technique: Þórr himself uses it in *Alvíssmál*, keeping the dwarf talking until the sun destroys him. This parallel, between Þórr keeping the dwarf waiting for the sun and the gods keeping the traitor waiting for Þórr, seems irresistible.

Given that Loki has been almost obsessive in making sexual allegations against other goddesses, Freyja is shrewd to speak up at this point. If anything can hold Loki’s attention now, it is the easy target that Freyja presents to his smutty mind. It scarcely matters what she says, as long as she can engage him. In fact, though, what she chooses to say is relevant. Loki must be mad because Frigg, she reminds him, understands Fate. This statement, made at this point in the poem, seems to mean that Loki has fallen into Frigg’s trap.

Loki’s response is tediously predictable. He accuses Freyja of having slept with every male present. As a goddess concerned with sexuality Freyja would have failed her own divine duties if she had not in some sense shared the holy aspect of her sexuality with others. In reducing this sacred obligation to the level of a fishwife shrieking at her neighbour over the back fence, Loki succeeds only in displaying his own coarseness and vulgarity. That may not worry Loki, but to the poem’s audience it confirms that Loki is not fit to share the company of the gods.

Njörðr cleverly sticks to Loki’s favourite subject. What his daughter may do is *válitit*, harmless, but Loki’s perversions are shameful. The technique works. Loki feels obliged to counter-attack. Njörðr, he says, came to Ásgarðr as a hostage. What’s more, Hymir’s daughters urinated in his mouth. As Óðinn, at least, knows, Njörðr will return to Vanaheim after Ragnarök, while Loki will be destroyed (*Vafðrúnismál* 39, 4-6). As to the claim about Hymir’s daughters, one starts to wonder whether Loki really is crazy, as Freyja has just suggested. No myth survives that could be twisted, even by Loki, into this accusation. It has often been suggested that Loki may be referring to rivers flowing into the sea, which is of course Njörðr’s special domain, but if so his mental processes are shown as bizarre to the point of insanity. Njörðr ignores the last claim completely, pointing out only that although sent to the gods as a hostage, he differs from Loki in being manly, and the father of the heroic Freyr.

Loki replies that Freyr was the product of incest. Since we know from *Heimskringla* that marriage with close relatives was a Vanir custom, Loki is merely exhibiting yet again his paucity of imagination. At this stage he is unable even to pretend to find any fault in Freyr’s character.

- continued next issue

Worth thinking about

“An untrue estimate of oneself in all or any of one’s aspects results in an untrue view of all outside the self.”

- A. Rud Mills

The Norroena Society is dedicated to the thorough and proper investigation of the ancestral traditions of Northern Europe as well as the promotion of our results and expansion of the Asatru faith.

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Feast of the Gods

by Mark

Before we begin looking into the sanctity of the food and drink our gods and goddesses enjoy, I would like to say that when we consider mythic elements the original state of the lore should be preserved at the same time, while allowing interpretations to be left up to the readers. Sometimes we may discuss the old stories in a way that sounds literal, ignoring the symbology that lies behind them, at least for the time being. We never forget that these tales are handed down to us full of metaphor and allegory, though often-times it is not their deeper meaning we are considering, but rather the myths themselves. Maybe this was part of the entertainment of skaldic poetry – the bard would speak a difficult verse, of which the listeners would have to figure out the meaning, like solving a riddle.

With that said, I will now present the

Renewal

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Renewal exists to share the views of modern Odinists, both within Australia and world-wide. In Australian and British law Odinism is described as “the continuation of ... the organic spiritual beliefs and religion of the indigenous peoples of northern Europe as embodied in the Edda and as they have found expression in the wisdom and in the historical experience of these peoples”.

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results of an investigation into the traditions concerning the sustenance of our deities. Although most of the gods and goddesses are said to eat other kinds of food (which obviously has sacrificial connotations), every Indo-European religion has two primary forms of this that are said to grant the deities wondrous powers. These two forms are a food and a drink. The Greeks call the food “ambrosia”, the drink “nectar”. The Vedic Hindus have the food called “amrita” (etymologically linked to ambrosia) and the drink “soma”. In our religion the sacred food is Idun’s apples, Ellilyf Àsa, “the gods’ remedy against old age” (*Haustlaug* 16) and the drink is, of course, the mead, which consequently is identical to the Hindu soma-madhu.

Yggdrasil is the mighty, evergreen, everlasting tree from which all life is created and sustained. It is from this tree that the gods get their meal of power, which rejuvenates them and makes them immortal. That Idun’s apples come from the great ash is probable, given that the mythic concept of their growing on trees should have its origin in the prototype of all tree-kind. These fruits (*aldin*) are the embodiments of youth, which is expressed in *Fjölsvinnsmál* 22, where it is stated that they are delivered “on fire” (*á eld*, i.e. sanctified) to expectant mothers. In *Volsungasaga* ch. 20 it is stated that a queen who could not give birth was sent an apple by Frigga, which came from Valhalla. In the *Rigveda* (X,121, 1,7 and 82, 5-7) we are told that the World-Tree grew from a golden seed, which may explain the appearance of Idun’s apples. Thus, we have the fruits of Yggdrasil, representing the power of birth and youth, which then would be prepared in another way to keep the gods young. The ability to transform them for this use is given to Idun and Idun alone (see *The Prose Edda*), which may have been taught to her by Völund himself, if we trust the relationship between our lore with the Vedas.

Idun is the equivalent of the Hindu Vâk (*Rigv.* X, 125, 1 and III, 53, 15) and the Greek Hebe, all of whom are entrusted with the holy feast that keeps the gods young and immortal. Hebe was the cup-bearer of Olympus, who brought Zeus and his kin the holy nectar. Idun, in *Haustlaug* (18), is called Öl-Gefn (“Ale-Giver”) and she might be identical to Saga, who drinks the mead with Odin daily in Sokkvabek “The Sinking Ship” (the moon, *Grimnismál* 7). As the mead-drinking dis from the moon she is the same as Bil, who, with Hjúki, carried the mead of the Byrgir fountain to Mani in the pail known as Saegur (which is said to be the origin of the word “Saga”, see *Investigations Into Germanic Mythology* by Viktor Rydberg, no. 121). Again, in *Haustlaug* she is called Byrgis-ár-Gefn “Byrgir’s Harvest-Giving dis”, denoting her bringing of the mead from the Byrgir fountain.

From all of this we can see that Idun is not only in charge of the rejuvenating apples of

youth, but also of the mead, which has great powers itself. Other goddesses may have the position of distributing the mead (such as the Valkyries and Groa, who in *Haustlaug* is called Öl-Gefjun, which is identical to Öl-Gefn), but none have the ability Idun has in fructifying the apples for the gods, and probably the mead as well. Certainly there is a good reason why she is married to Bragi, the god of poetry, when she brings the most inspiring drink.

Although Idun’s apples were no doubt considered incredibly holy to our ancestors, it is the mead that holds prominence in the stories and traditions, mainly because it, like the soma of the Hindus, is the primary sacrifice humans offer to our divinities. Also, it is the most sacred substance because it is the source of Yggdrasil’s life-preserving might, whereas the apples are but a by-product of this.

In *Hymiskviða* we find that the gods cannot brew the mead themselves, for they have to go to the giant Aegir to do this at an annual feast (verse 2). Hence, they are not in possession of the Ölrúnar (“Ale Runes”) (*Sigrdrifumál* 7 & 19), which are the secretes of brewing. As we see in *Hávamál* 145, the runes are spread out among the divine clans, with each family having its representative. Odin takes them for the Aesir, Dainn for the Elves, Dvalin for the Dwarfs, and Mimir for the Jötuns. That Aegir would be the Jötuns’ representative of the Ölrúnar, as Idun is for the Aesir, is very likely.

There are three subterranean wells containing the purest forms of the mead: Urd’s well, Mimir’s and Hvergelmir. Each of these fountains has a different power it bestows upon those who drink of it. When Heimdall came to Svithjod he was endowed with each of these powers. From Urd’s well he received “Urd’s Strength” (*Urdar Magn*), from Mimir’s he was given “Son’s Drink” (*Sónar dreyri*), which is known to give wisdom (*Skaldskaparmál* 57), and from Hvergelmir “the cool-cold sea” (*Svalkaldur sær*) he gained endurance (see *Völuspá hin Skamma* 9). It is very likely that “Urd’s Strength” designates a regenerative quality similar to that found in Idun’s apples, for *Gylfaginning* 17 tells us that this is what keeps Yggdrasil from rotting and decaying. Also, it is likely that this is the element which restores the shades of the dead when they come to the Underworld (*Gudrunarkviða in forna* 21, cp, to *Völuspá hin Skamma* above).

The first question that may arise when considering the mead and Idun’s apples is how did the gods age when Idun was taken from Asgard by Loki, when they obviously have mead in ample supply? This is

answered when we realise that there are different forms of mead, which should not come as any surprise, since **our** mead is obviously different from that of the gods. The purest drink is, as stated, from the three Underworld fountains, each giving Yggdrasil a different form of sustenance. Hvergelmir gives it the power to endure the many attacks it must face throughout time, especially from the deadly serpent-demons of Niflhel (*Grimnismal* 34). Mimir's fountain gives it a creative force to thrive and grow, for his is the central fountain where Ginnungagap was (*Gylfaginning* 15).

In Asgard, the mead is delivered to the gods by means of two vessels. The first is Heidrun, a s h e - g o a t w h o c h e w s "Laerad's" (Yggdrasil's) branches, symbolising the mead's origin from this source (*Grimnismal* 25). Like the Hindu soma, the mead is here pressed from the leaves of the World-Tree. Eikthyrnir eats the leaves of "Laerad" as well (*Grimnismal* 26), and is at the same time a reservoir for the liquids (probably from libations) back to Hvergelmir, the mother of all waters. In both instances we can see that the mead generally drunk in Asgard is not the pure liquid found in the Underworld fountains, but rather comes to the gods and einherjar via the leaves of Yggdrasil and the animals that chew them.

However, the pure form of the mead has made its way to the realm of the gods and goddesses. When Odin hung on Yggdrasil he was allowed to drink from Mimir's well (*Hávamál* 142). Also, when Allfather went to the giant Fjalar's he obtained the mead, stolen from the powers in the first place, so that both gods and men may enjoy it (*Hávamál* 102-110 and *Skaldskaparmal* 57-58). But this mead is only that which came from Mimir's fountain, which, in *The Prose Edda*, has its epithets Odroerir, Bodn and Son, representing three mead vessels, rather than the mead itself (Rydberg no. 89). From this we learn that only the mead of inspiration is in the hands of the gods, and this was only due to much sacrifice and struggle. Consequently, this helps in bringing men poetry, or poetic inspiration, which is the same as saying that we get to taste of Asgard's mead, though not in a literal sense (cp. *Skaldskaparmal* 2 and 3 where poetry is called "Allfather's malt-surf", "dwarf's mead", "giants' mead", "Suttung's mead", "Odin's mead", etc.)

Even more than Asgard's, our mead comes to us from the heavens in a diluted form. Through a third source, namely the horses of Nát (*Vafthrudnismal* 14) and the Valkyries (*Helgakvída Hjorvarthssonar* 28) the holy drink falls down as morning dew. That this dew is connected to its Underworld counterpart is explained in the story of Lif and Lifthrasir who, in the company of Mimir live on the morning dews throughout the ages (*Vafthr* 45). When this dew falls from the divine steeds' foaming bits onto "the dales", it is the source of our sacred drink, same as the

Greeks' nectar. Bees collect this dew and from their honey we make our version of the mead. For this reason the bees themselves are considered holy.

From Mimir's subterranean fountain of wisdom came the knowledge of the runes (*Hávamál* 142 and 144, Fimbulthul "The Great-Thinker" is a name of Mimir). These "potent songs" must not be confused as any sort of "magical" formulae separate from the holy rites of the gods and goddesses. In fact, when occult powers are invoked that have nothing to do with the sacred prayers or hymns devoted to the divine clans, this was considered by our ancestors to be the black art, called Seið. It is not the intent of this article to prove this statement, but I will say that there is a clear distinction between the holy Galdr and the Seið, and the latter is in almost every source (every source if we properly understand what is said in *Ynglingasaga* about Freya's practicing the Seið) somehow connected with evil workings. Galdr is the sacred means of connecting with the divine.

Consider the section of *Hávamál* known as the Rúnatal, where Odin learns the runic songs that are described. These verses are not intended for our use in calling forth whatever charms they describe; instead, they are a list of abilities Odin gained, which we can pray to him for when we need help in these types of circumstances. The main proof against the idea that we can gain these powers is *Hávamál* 158, where the highest Ás tells us that he gained the runes allowing him to grant victory to those he favors. That Odin, and only Odin, is able to do this is an idea well attested to, and *Hávamál* tells us how this came to be.

The use of runes as prayers and as sacrificial formulae seems to have been their original purpose. *Sigrdrifumál* 18 tells us that they were drawn onto sacred objects or the focus of one's prayers, then scraped into the mead. Then they are "sent on distant ways", meaning they are offered to the gods and goddesses. To this must be compared *Hávamál* 146 which asks if we know how to rist (carve), interpret, draw or prove the runes. Then we are asked "Do you know how to pray? Do you know how to offer? Do you know how to sacrifice? Do you know how to consume?" This specifically tells us, all in the same strophe, that runic wisdom is integral to religious offerings.

But what runes would be drawn and for what purpose would they be intended? The obvious answer would be that the prayers themselves would be risted on the object (which could generically be a piece of birch-bark or "bok", to then be scraped off. However, this might be missing the point of offering in the first place. In Indo-European religions, including ours, sacrifice is not performed out of humility or solely for the purpose of honouring the deities. Our ancestors believed that it was a means of

strengthening them so that they would be able to perform their wondrous feats in our favour and against the forces of chaos. In return for this gift, they give a gift, answering our prayers in accordance with the ancient codes of friendship (*Háv.*140). This is why in *Hávamál* 147, right after the verse on runic understanding (above), Odin warns that we should not sacrifice too much, since "a gift ever looks for a return". One would be thought of as greedy for favours if one offered too much, even if those offerings have purely altruist intentions.

This explains why, in *Völuspá* 7 the Aesir "built lofty temples and altars" and why Odin sacrificed himself to himself in *Hávamál* (140). They can make offerings to themselves or to each other in order to gain power. The more potent the gift sent to them, the stronger they get. This is why we scrape the runes into the mead. We have to replace some of that which has been lost through the process of it coming to us from the mead wells, into Yggdrasil, on to the horses of the goddesses to the fields or dales of Midgard as morning dew, to the bees who make the honey and finally into our brewing. By replacing the runic force once ingrained in the mead we are performing a ritual act in devotion to our gods and goddesses as we give **them** a gift, in hopes for a return. Not that we should expect one, for sometimes Wyrð is greater than any decrees of the gods, and we are taught to never begrudge our oblations (*Hávamál* 46).

We drink a portion of this rune-powered mead, feasting in friendship with our deities and folk. We libate it onto Mother Earth, Frigga, who absorbs it and, probably through Hvergelmir, is taken to Asgard. When we choose the runes and use them in the rites described in *Hávamál* 146 and *Sigrdrifumál* 18 and scrape them into the holy liquid, we consider our prayers and how the deities will be empowered by each rune. I would then consider the rune poems in conjunction with this, and any of the futharks (runic alphabets) you prefer. Using this method we are very likely to be returning to the ancient ways of offering, backed as it is by evidence found in our sources.

Wisdom from Else Christensen

"Religious perspectives become brittle when they are encased in a shell of bigotry, whereas they are vivified when tested, when enriched by contrasting points of view."



Ota's Talking Point

The film company that brought you *Four Weddings and a Funeral* is now working on its own version of the 1971 *Oz* trial in London, the longest obscenity case in British history.

Since most readers won't have a very clear memory of the trial, if any at all, a little background information may not go astray.

Oz was a satirical magazine founded in Sydney in 1963 by Richard Neville, Richard Walsh, Martin Sharp and Peter Grose. They were all university students at the time, so the satire was fairly predictable, but the mag attracted writers such as art historian Robert Hughes. By issue number 6 the lads found themselves in the dock on charges of obscenity. They were convicted, but the conviction was overturned because the magistrate had misdirected the jury.

Neville and Sharp then moved to England, and with Jim Anderson, another Australian, they founded the London *Oz* in 1967. This became the leading hippie, psychedelic magazine of its day, until history repeated itself. Issue number 28 of May 1970, which was compiled entirely by school kids, was alleged to be a "conspiracy to corrupt public morals". Neville defended himself. Sharp and a local boy, Felix Dennis, were defended by Geoffrey Robertson and John Mortimer. The trial was a complete farce, partly because of defence evidence given by comedian Marty Feldman, who ended up screaming at the judge, partly because the boys insisted on antics such as turning up to court dressed as schoolgirls, and partly because the judge, Michael Argyle, was totally out of his depth. (In one famous exchange he asked what cunnilingus was, and the music critic George Melly helped out his honour by saying, "In the navy we called it 'yodelling in the canyon'.")

The boys were again convicted, although on lesser charges. Mick Jagger helped pay for the defence. John Lennon told Neville he should marry Yoko Ono so as not to be deported back to Australia.

So we can probably guess what slant Working Title Films will put on all this. No doubt we'll see a bunch of fresh-faced, long-haired, wouldn't-harm-a-fly hippies being persecuted by wicked old men trying to shore up a corrupt old order. Defended, of course, by the great and good PC people of that era.

And to some extent that is true. The

Special Branch officer who drove Judge Argyle to and from the courtroom has recently admitted to Neville that he dropped the judge off at a brothel every night, no doubt to seek relief after a hard day's work. Jim Anderson was a poof, and the prosecution kept raising this in code, referring to him as an Earl's Court "bachelor". Felix Dennis learned that one of the chief prosecutors was also a pillow-biter who used to go to Latin America for his kicks. In Dennis' own words, "I handed an usher a note for the prosecution, which said, 'I will tell them about ACAPULCO.' It stopped them dead in their tracks." Yep, there was plenty of corruption. There was also any amount of *real* hard porn floating around London in those days, because the Obscene Publications Squad was taking massive bribes to ignore it. These bent cops were eventually charged in turn at the Old Bailey, and sent down for a long time.

And yet, and yet ...

Richard Neville recently said that as a result of the *Oz* trial, "For all the darkness and corruption that abounds today, we live in a more open-minded society."

Let's at least credit Neville with admitting that *Oz* did nothing to alleviate "darkness and corruption". But maybe we might also wonder just what we have gained from living "in a more open-minded society".

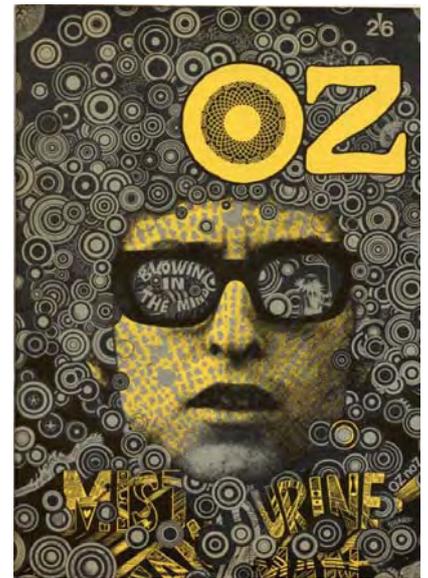
Oz was all about the usual hippie themes of those times: pro-sex, pro-drugs, anti-Vietnam, anti-anything-that-reeked-of-the-establishment. But those themes are now totally establishment, and are we any better off?

Well, maybe not if you're a gay who was encouraged by *Oz* to be more in-their-faces about it. If so, you've probably suffered a few nasty diseases in your time. Maybe not if, like so many of the boys' music idols, you have learned the hard way that drugs aren't liberating. Maybe not if you're a girl who has found out that sexual freedom can lead to outcomes like single parenthood or chlamydia.

One of the *Oz* coterie was Louise Ferrier, at that time Richard Neville's pretty, flower-power girlfriend (see the *Oz* cover, centre right). She says this: "Richard may like to say that *Oz* was cheerfully sexist, but he should just say it was sexist. Not that I was conscious of it at the time. I posed for the cover with bare breasts and it was a gesture of liberation ... I guess I'm much more critical now of those days - and of myself being spun along by other people's ambitions."

Ah yes, those ambitions ... Neville is now a successful author and a commentator-in-demand at the ABC. Walsh became Senior Publisher at Kerry Packer's Australian Consolidated Press, and also headed the fine old Aussie publishing house of Angus & Robertsons. Geoffrey Robertson QC is a mega-rich celebrity lawyer. Jim Anderson is doing well out of photography.

Let's hope that the new film will show us how so many of those radicals now have their snouts in so many troughs. But I wouldn't hold your breath expecting an apology from any of them.



Number 7 – Bob Dylan cover



Number 17 – Louise Ferrier



Number 28 – School Kids

☐ I liked your "Important AIDS update" in the last issue, but here are two more aspects to the situation.

* At last count, in 2003, there were an estimated 5.1 million HIV-positive people in India. But in April last year Narinder Mehra of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi announced that many Indians have a special genetic variant called HLA-B*35px which speeds the progression of HIV to AIDS. This means that any vaccines developed in the West will probably be far less effective on Indians.

* Second, as far back as 2001 the US Centre for Disease Control estimated that one in every 50 black American males has HIV, just like one in every 160 black American females. Black columnist Bob Herbert, writing in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* on 6 June 2001 about these devastating infection rates, quoted one 15 year-old black girl as being typical of the state of denial in her community. She said, "Don't tell me nothin' about no AIDS 'cause that won't impact me. And if I was to get it, all I'd have to do is take a pill in the morning and I'll be OK."

I suppose the moral is simple: readers should only have sex with other members of the Nation of Odin.

Charles, Toronto, Canada

☐ I've been to the Vikings Exhibition at the National Maritime Museum. What can you say ... "wow", maybe. To actually see the Lewis Chesspieces! Some of the models are very good too, an inspiration for me, as a model engineer myself. Unfortunately I didn't take a camera, so no photos for *Renewal* as yet, but it's going till June so I'll go back and get some. Also there was quite a good selection of Thor's Hammers in the shop. A friend of mine (a Priestess of Freyja actually!) bought me a Dragon's Head Thor's Hammer attributed to C11th Iceland. (I guess late heathen era but great design.)

Actually some friends of mine were involved in the promotion of it, as the Museum advertised in the *Sydney Morning Herald* for Vikings. One of the friends (who is also a playwright and working on a play called *Asgard*) phoned me and wanted to borrow some gear for the audition. I also put him onto a friend in the AET who also auditioned and "got the gig". Also I informed various people and local Heathens via various e-lists and emails, the result was about 15 Heathens descended on the NMM in one go. An awesome sight!

Geoff, Sydney, NSW

Greetings Geoff. You're an inspiration to all of us. If we only had another hundred with your energy, Odinism would really start moving in the Land Down Under. We look forward to your photos. One other practical step you could take ... Please try to make sure that your friends have all

subscribed to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Wolfhearhandfriends/>

☐ I must congratulate you on the article you wrote about my work. I am afraid to say that, just as with the one that appeared in *éléments*, a strong aversion to reading about myself prevented me from reading your article. But I read the rest of the magazine, which I found interesting and should like to commend you for. I should however say that I do not agree with some of the sentiments expressed, and in particular I found some of the humour and expressions used in Ota's *Talking Point* inappropriate for an Asatru or Odinist magazine, that is to say for a religious magazine.

Rud Mills is someone I should like to know more about and then look at some of his liturgical writing. I believe he wrote blóts or composed a book of prayers. Is that true? Is anything available?

Stead, London

Greetings Stead,

To start with Rud Mills, you are indeed correct. We are currently trying to learn more about his life. The research is beginning to appear on our website, at: <http://www.geocities.com/osred/RudMills.htm>. It will be added to as we learn more.

As to your point about Ota's writings, an outspoken opinion column is bound to be controversial at times, but we hope not offensive.

☐ Crop circles have me so curious. I'm convinced it's our goddess Sif trying to awaken us, or our mother Jorth, and there is a connection between the mounds, Stonehenge and crop circles. All heathens should be keeping an open eye on these crop circles. Is it a message board from multi-dimensions, or is it our Bifrost Bridge being opened? If so, Heimdall is near and so is Ragnarok. I know this is very special and I don't want us heathens to miss our own ship because we are too busy looking for our future in the wrong places. Mother Jorth says to me this is real and sacred. It's time to awaken, for those who really can see through Odin's third eye.

name withheld, WA

☐ Another good issue, of course, but I didn't think much of the joke about Syrians, and accompanying photo, on the back page.

I say "joke" because that is surely what it must be. I can't believe that in a vast crowd of Syrians there wasn't even one who could read enough English to translate the banners! There are in fact many highly educated Syrians - I was taught by one at university, down there in Victoria. (Incidentally, he looked nothing like the uglies in the pic!)

Well, that's my complaint out of the way. Otherwise, keep up the good work. I particularly liked the article on Steadman.

Diana, Canberra

Notice Board

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Wolfhearhandfriends/> All readers of this journal should consider joining this Melbourne-based Odinist list.

For updates on the *Australian Viking Ships Museum*, see:

www.australianvikingshipsmuseum.surf.to

The AVSM aims to build a replica of the Gokstad ship, and also to collect other replica ships that have been built in Australia. In addition there will be a land-based interpretation centre, through which thousands of people will be exposed to our heritage.

Wodanesdag - Celtic & Viking Craftworks has provided original hand-crafted products to the Celtic and Viking Community since 1993. <http://www.odin.org/>

The Scorpion is an independent magazine dealing in depth with matters relating to the survival of European culture. Its address is: *The Scorpion*, BCM 5766, London, WC1N 3XX, England or <http://thescorp.multics.org>. A sample issue costs £5.00 sterling.

éléments: pour la civilisation européenne is a stylish and intelligent magazine sympathetic to the heathen world-view. Published in French, a year's subscription costs 180 F or 240 F by air. Address: 41 rue Barrault, Paris, France. This is an often brilliant publication!

Odinic Rite Briefing is a quarterly publication of the (British) Odinic Rite. Enquiries to: BCM Runic, London, WC1N 3XX

The Runestone is a quarterly journal of Asatru, "dedicated to our Gods and Goddesses, to the people of the North, and to the values of courage, freedom, and individuality within the context of kinship". Cheques for \$US15.00 airmail should be payable to S. A. McNallen, PO Box 445, Nevada City, Ca, 95959, USA.

The *Asatru Alliance* believes in "standards of behaviour which are consistent with the spiritual truths of the Norse gods and goddesses and harmonious with our deepest being". The Asatru Alliance, PO Box 961, Payson, Az 85547, USA.

Theod has suspended regular publication, but plans to put out occasional special issues from time to time. All back issues will be kept available, and a free brochure is available for the asking at any time, from PO Box 8062, Watertown, NY 13601, USA.

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