Meanings of the Ogham Staves

Beth / Birch

Birch is one of the first trees to grow on bare soil and thus it births the entire forest. Children's cradles were made of Birch. The tree bark is white, the inner bark provides a pain reliever and the leaves are used to treat arthritis. Criminals were at one time birched to drive out evil influences on them, to renew them for the new year. Axe handles were also made from Birch. The Amanita Muscaria grows well under the Birch. Birch indicates new beginnings.

Physical: You must rid yourself of negativity, unhelpful influences and bad thoughts for a new, fresh start.
Mental: Concentrate on your desire, the image of the result wanted must be held firmly in mind.
Spiritual: For a new beginning focus on the white of the birch, it stands out clearly from distractions and obstructions.

Luis / Rowan

The Rowan tree is long known for aid and protection against enchantment. Sticks of the Rowan were used to carve Runes on. It was also used in the art of metal divining. Rowan sprays and crosses were placed over cattle in pens and over homes for protection. Its lovely red berries feed the birds in winter. The berries have a tiny pentagram on them. The pentagram is the ancient symbol of protection. The Rowan tree indicates protection and control of the senses from enchantment and beguiling.

Physical: You will keep your senses about you to distinguish good from bad, and harm from help.
Mental: You will not be swayed, tricked or beguiled. Keep your wits about you.
Spiritual: Your strength will turn away anything that threatens your purpose and your serenity. Be not afraid.

Fearn / Alder

The tree is a water lover. The oily water resistant wood has been used extensively for underwater foundations and pilings in Venice and elsewhere. It is used in dairy vessels and the branches in making whistles. It is associated with Bran, as He used His body as a bridge to span dangerous waters. It is used in the construction of bridges. Bran's Head was oracular. Alder indicates protection and oracular powers.

Physical: Be aware of uniqueness in self and others. Keep your eyes open to see the unusual and acknowledge what is seen in another if at all possible.
Mental: You will utilize something you previously overlooked. Oracular skills are not easy to acknowledge. The mind is unwilling at times to deal with the intuitive part.
Spiritual: You offer spiritual aid and protection in a dispute. Let your intuition guide you.

Saille / Willow

The Willow is another water loving tree. Willow bark contains Salicin which is used in the treatment of the malaria fever and various damp diseases. Her catkins, which appear in early spring before her leaves, attract Trees to start the cycle of pollination. She indicates cycles, rhythms and the ebb and flux.

Physical: A comfortable relationship to the material world is full of lessons and cycles of changing values. Change is necessary for growth, and values are no exception to the rule.
Mental: To gain understanding of a particular concept, a steady accumulation of facts is the foundation that brings understanding. All cannot be learned in one lesson. Repetition is the key.
Spiritual: This is a period of taking it easy rather than full speed ahead. Learn to play with the cyclical nature of things.

ᚅ Nuin / Ash

The Ash tree has the toughest, most elastic wood. It is used in weaver's beams. Women would weave cloth and intermingling threads together in a tight pattern as the microcosm and the macrocosm are united. The Ash tree indicates the linking of the inner and outer worlds.

Physical: Your actions echo in the cosmos as a stone thrown in a pond casts ripples. Know you and the world are interconnected. Be aware of the effect of your actions.
Mental: Your problems or questions are not yours alone; others have the same ponderings. Look at the question in the wider context and ask opinions.
Spiritual: Endeavour to become aware that all things are connected. Balance your need with the Earth's.

ᚆ Huatha / Hawthorn

The wood from the Hawthorn provides the hottest fire known. Its leaves and blossoms are used to create a tea to aid with anxiety, appetite loss and poor circulation. This small tree can create dense thickets and have thorns that are an excellent defence. The Hawthorn signifies cleansing, protection and chastity.

Physical: You need to work upon the physical condition of yourself. To better yourself you need to alter diet, smoking or eating properly. Healthy body can be attained by diet and exercise. A healthy body means a healthy mind.
Mental: You must open your mind to the self-imposed thickets of ignorance and false facts. Free your thoughts and cleanse your mind.
Spiritual: However hot the problem, the forge heat of overcoming it, in your spirit creates new and unexpected strengths.

ᚇ Duir / Oak

The grand Oak, King of the Forest, grows slowly. Its dome shape and clean, straight trunk make it known on the horizon. Its wood is hard and tough and it burns slowly. Acorns when processed feed humans. Druids taught lessons under the Oak. Duir means doorway. This tree indicates protection - a doorway to mysteries and strengths.

Physical: A hands-on approach will nurture the skills you wish to have. Step through the door, one learns by doing.
Mental: You have accumulated acorns of wisdom, the time for dropping and sharing your wisdom is here.
Spiritual: You as a teacher or student must be tough and resilient despite life's unpredictability as an Oak is to the bolt of lightening. Strong and wise.

ᚈ Tinne / Holly

The Holly is an evergreen bush with bright red berries. It is one of the three timbers used in the construction of

chariot wheel shafts. It was used in spear shafts also. The qualities of a spear shaft are balance and directness, as the spear must be hefted to be thrown the holly indicates directed balance and vigour to fight if the cause is just.

Physical: Challenges will be overcome with unity and concerted effort. Ensure the cause is just.
Mental: As warriors train and retrain until what they do with spears is instinctive, so you too must train and learn daily.
Spiritual: Cultivate dynamic and instinctive intuition to respond to fast moving situations and accept the reality of here and now. Ensure the ability of slipping in and out of a great variety of behaviour styles, to be able to respond to the environment at hand.

Coll / Hazel

The Sacred Salmon is associated with the Hazel tree in legend. The Salmon swimming under the overhanging Hazel trees ate the 9 nuts of poetic wisdom. The number of spot on the Salmon's side denoted the number of nuts eaten. The Hazel tree provided shade, protection and baskets. Hazel twigs were used for divining because of their pliancy and affinity with water. Hazel indicates intuition to lead to the source, poetry, divination and meditation.

Physical: Your skill in poetry, divination and meditation allows you to inspire others to increase their capacity in these arts. Example is the best teacher.
Mental: Allow the promptings of your intuition to bring ideas to the surface. Become a catalyst with those ideas.
Spiritual: Follow your intuition to the source, you will be rewarded with wisdom and your soul will ring with poetry.

Quert / Apple

The Apple is the earliest cultivated tree. It is associated with choice. At Somerset, an auction was held for single acre plots on two pieces of common land. Plots were marked and matching marks made on the fruit. The apples were then placed in a bag and commoners were allocated land by the distribution of the fruit. All the acres of land were similar, as many times today choices must be made between similar and equally attractive things. Regardless, the choice must be made. Apple indicates choice.

Physical: Choice, while not easy, is necessary. Stop procrastinating, you will end up with nothing or an unsatisfying taste from each choice.
Mental: Many paths of learning are open to you - choose one! Better master of one than expert of none.
Spiritual: In your journey choose one of the Eight Paths to complete the others will follow.

Muin / Vine

The Vine has been known and grown in the British Isles for a long time. Its distinctive fruit and foliage appear on Bronze Age artifacts. The grapes of the Vine are the supply of wine. The effects of wine are well known. Wine loosens inhibitions and allows one to speak more truthfully than normal. The Vine indicates the release of prophetic powers.

Physical: Unwind, if you then sense at a deep level that you must act in a certain way at this moment in order to deal with an issue; let intuition be your guide and do it.
Mental: Allow your senses to open to speed inner development as you learn to place trust in them when they are acting strongly. Instead of using reason constantly.
Spiritual: Open your inner self so it may harvest and gather all signs and omens that it is capable of

understanding. Allow yourself this boon.

// Gort / Ivy

Ivy is capable of growing and spreading in any land climate conditions. It is strong and difficult to destroy. Growing in a helix pattern it represents the spiral of the self and the search for the self. Ivy symbolizes the soul's wandering inward and outward seeking nourishment and experience from both the inside and out to achieve enlightenment. Ivy indicates the search for the self.

Physical: Link with others turn out this is not the time to be alone.
Mental: Recognize group unconscious has an influence on you, absorb, go inward to learn more about the self.
Spiritual: Enter group mind with joy, assist others in their spiritual journey as they assist in yours. We all are intertwined as the Ivy, their success is yours and vice versa.

/// Ngetal / Reed

Reed grows in clumps at the river's edge. Reed resembles an arrow by its thinness. It was at one time used to make arrows. It is symbolic of music, bagpipes and flutes. In the winter the villagers rethatched their roofs with reed for security in the cold ahead. Weavers used reed to separate threads and to beat the fibres before spinning. Reed indicates direct action, and finding direction and meanings to the purpose of your journey.

Physical: You are able to find order where others find and create only chaos. Put this valuable skill to work. Take charge.
Mental: Your results are as sure as the intentions with which you began. Keep your target in sight. Do not be distracted.
Spiritual: Your journey has begun, surprise encounters and upsets are only to be expected. The skills you overcome these troubles with are as valuable as the trip itself.

/// Straif / Blackthorn

Blackthorn is a winter tree. The sloe, its fruits ripen and sweeten only after the nip of the frost. White flowers are seen even before the leaves in the spring. It is black barked with vicious thorns and grows in dense thickets. The wood is used in the cudgel shillelagh and Blasting Stick. Its thorns are used to pierce waxen images. Blackthorn indicates strong action of fate or outside influences that must be obeyed.

Physical: Unexpected change, plans altered or ruined. No choice however unpleasant. Events take over forcing you down the unavoidable path. Take courage, issues must be faced, decisions are unavoidable.
Mental: Your negative view, clinging to old ways and facing challenges with anger and stubborness will only make it worse and hurt you more. Accept the changes and move on.
Spiritual: Realize you and your life have changed radically, enter reborn.

//// Ruis / Elder

Elder regrows damaged branches with ease and can root rapidly from any part. A tea for purifying the blood can be made from the flowers and wine from the fruit. Sticks of Elder were used as magical horses by Witches. Elder indicates the end in the beginning and the beginning in the end. Life in Death and Death in Life.

Physical: Though one aspect of your life is over, another begins anew.
Mental: Changes from the old will bring creativity, to usher in new ideas and thoughts.

Spiritual: Links are continually formed as new phases of life and experience repeat in different forms that lead to renewal.

Ailim / Silver Fir

Fir is a very tall slender tree that grows in mountainous regions on the upper slopes. Fir cones respond to rain by closing and the sun by opening. Fir can see over great distance to the far horizon beyond and below. Fir indicates high views and long sights with clear vision of what is beyond and yet to come.

Physical: In this issue you can see what is beyond and what is coming. You have the perception to see and to understand from the point where you stand. Take long view point and foresee the future.
Mental: Receive from the past and present strength and healing from which to draw insight and knowledge for your future.
Spiritual: Be aware of your progress on your spiritual voyage.

Ohn / Furze

Furze is a yellow flowering shrub that grows on the moorland and common land. It blooms throughout the year. The flowers are plentiful in pollen and nectar and give off a strong sweet aroma of honey. The flowers are frequented by the first bees of the year. The bruised shoots provide food for the horses. In the spring Furze is set on fire to burn away the old growth to make room for the new. Furze indicates a gathering together, a skill at collecting elements needed for a goal.

Physical: Your search is over. What you seek shall be found. Continue on towards your goal.
Mental: Share the knowledge you have gathered, as the bee shares pollen and nectar gathered from the Furze.
Spiritual: There is an abundance of blessings in your spiritual voyage, do not stockpile and hoard. Share with others, you will be rewarded.

Ur / Heather

Heather grows on top of peat moss, which provides fuel after it is cut and dried. Heather blossoms are used in the brewing of tea. The blossoms also attract bees and are valuable as a source of honey unsurpassed in flavour and delicacy. The bee travels from the heather back to the hive in relation to the position and angle of the sun. It is regarded as a messenger from and to the Spirit world by the Celts. Heather indicates closer contact with the Spirit world and healing.

Physical: Listen to your body's message. The time for healing is now.
Mental: Do not permit yourself further stress. Go inward for healing and respite. This issue can wait.
Spiritual: Integrate inner with self to heal and be whole, to build the foundation for what will follow.

Eadha / White Poplar

The White Poplar flourishes beside rivers, in marshes and in other watery areas. The pith is star shaped. The upper leaves are green, the underside is silver. The wood was used in the making of shields. Leaves move with every puff of wind. It is commonly referred to as the talking, whispering and quivering tree. The Poplar's ability to resist and to shield, its association with speech, language and the Winds indicates an ability to endure and conquer.

Physical: Whatever challenge you now face, you will endure and conquer with determination. You can bend

and not break.
Mental: Shield your thoughts from the fears and doubts about the odds you must overcome. A positive attitude will prevail.
Spiritual: Do not give in to worldly pressures, great assistance is yours on your journey to rebirth.

Ioho / Yew

The Yew is an evergreen tree with the leaves attached spirally to the twigs. As the outer tree decays a new tree grows within. The branches grow down to form new stems. Yew timber is dark and very strong. Yew berries were used to poison weapons. Wine barrels were constructed of Yew to symbolize the death of the Vine. Yew was also used in the manufacture of bows. Yew indicates rebirth.

Physical: Something held for many years must be passed on, let go. It serves you no longer.
Mental: The knowledge that nothing lasts forever will bring ease at this time.
Spiritual: Changes are coming to you, you have a tendency to try and hang on, let go and experience the change as an ally not an enemy.

Koad / Grove

Certain groups or groves of trees have always been revered. Their branches are never pruned or loped. It is assumed these are the remnants of Druidic Groves. These groves contained various types of trees, among them the Oak, and were by a stream. It is here all meetings by the Druids were held 'in the face of the Sun and in the eye of Light". Here grievances were heard and judgements rendered that would settle issues. Grove indicates all knowledge, past, present and future, where all are linked in unity, and the resolution of conflict.

Physical: You may be participating in a resolution of conflict.
Mental: Misunderstandings can be ironed out if all parties will meet, work towards this.
Spiritual: You must try to hold the energy of judgement, of life aligned to the values that are above reproach. By example do we teach others.

Oir / Spindle

The hard wood of the Spindle was used in the making of pegs, bobbins and spindles. It is a small and delicate tree with smooth grey bark and tiny white flowers. Deeply lobed brought crimson fruits appear in Autumn. Spindle indicates honour of tribe, community and the sweetness and delight of a sudden revelation.

Physical: Fulfil your obligations, not for reward but because you must, honour demands it and the greatest happiness will be yours.
Mental: Sudden realization gives you the right and obligation to question authority.
Spiritual: Develop your consciousness of the right relationship with others in the community and tribe.

Uilleand / Honeysuckle

Honeysuckle is also known as Woodbine. It twists and coils as the Ivy does. Beautiful yellow flowers entwine with the leaves. Its scent is very cloying and sweet. the Honeysuckle shows the way in which to achieve the search for the self. Honeysuckle indicates hidden desires, secrets and the path to the search for the self.

Physical: Pursue your desires; allow yourself to experience pleasure - you are not a monk. By joy do we learn, not by abstinence of what we enjoy.
Mental: The hidden secrets you pursue are not as impenetrable as you suspect. They are simply muted by

background noises, home in on the secrets, put aside the distractions.
Spiritual: Remain true to your beliefs and principles in your journey to the self. Follow the Honeysuckle in safety and joy.

 Pion / Pine

The Pine tree is an evergreen, its old title was "the sweetest of woods". Its needles are a valuable source of vitamin C and can loosen a tight chest. The scent of Pine is useful in the alleviation of guilt. The Bach's flower remedies lists it for dealing with feelings of guilt. Pine indicates issues of guilt within you.

Physical: Use the guilt you have to clear the slate with those you have hurt and renew the relationships.
Mental: Creativity can be released as you release the guilt. Let it go and transform the energy from guilt to positive action.
Spiritual: Use the discomfort of your guilt to pursue essential changes within yourself. Transform the guilt and yourself.

 Phagos / Beech

Beech wood is closely grained, very easy to work giving a smooth even surface. At one time Beech tablets were used as writing surfaces because of the above mentioned qualities. Beech and book have the same word origins. Beech is concerned with ancient knowledge as revealed in old objects, places and writings. Beech indicates guidance from the past to gain insight which protects and provides a solid base upon which all relies.

Physical: Reviving memories will bring understanding that is needed. Do not neglect the past it is rich in experience.
Mental: Heed the echoes within your mind, they will give wisdom to make the changes necessary.
Spiritual: Do not discount the past as old fashioned, words written, buildings erected and experiences gained have come with a price. Remember and respect and listen to the inner voices and you will not go wrong.

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