

CONTENTS

THE CELTIC LANDS	2
Notes on the programmes	4
Updated key powers	4
<i>Understanding the programmes for users of other games</i>	5
Gods	
Aonghus mac Óg - youth, beauty, time	6
Bran - giant king and protector	6
Brigid - poetry, healing and smithcraft	7
Cernunnos - horned master of animals	8
The Dagda - multi-talented father god	9
Epona - horses, animals, fertility	10
Goibhniu - smithing and craftwork	11
Lugh - shining master of all skills	12
Manannan - wise sea-lord and sorcerer	13
The Morrigan - crow of battle and death	14
Nuada - silver-armed king	15
<i>Unicorn</i>	15
Ogma - orator and champion	16
Heroes	
Arthur - legendary king	18
Cúchulainn - furious warrior	19
Fionn mac Cumhail - canny adventurer	19
Merlin - famed magician and seer	20
Robin Hood - virtuous outlaw	21
Monsters	
Brownie - small, rustic domestic faery	22
Fachan - misshapen thug	22
Fomor - brutish pirates	23
Redcap - vicious little goblins	23
<i>Crimson</i>	24
Spriggan - ugly, sizeshifting faery thieves	24
Water Horse - shapeshifting predator	25

Legends Walk - Truth & Justice Edition only includes three pantheons, in the interests of keeping the book a manageable size, but of course there are many others from cultures around the world. So welcome to the second in a series of add-ons detailing some of these, with compact descriptions of the mythic entities and power programmes for your LWTJ game.

This one gives a broad sampling of Celtic myth, adapting material that originally appeared in *Legends Walk Original Edition* in 2006.

PANTHEON: CELTIC

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THE CELTIC LANDS

The people we know as Celts were a group of tribes with similar language and culture originating round the river Danube in present-day Germany. (The label "Celt" comes from a Greek word - it was not the way they referred to themselves.) They spread rapidly in all directions, reaching France, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Ireland, Britain, Italy, Greece and Turkey. Their warlike nature made them widely feared, and between about 450BC and 250BC they were the most powerful people in Europe. Eventually they were beaten by the armies of Rome, whose organised approach to war overcame the Celts' reckless personal bravery.

Most of what we know about their mythology comes from Ireland, which was never conquered by Rome. Related legends are found in the Isle of Man. There are surviving stories from Wales, which are different but parallel. Both of these portray the gods as being like mortals but with various supernatural abilities, rather than beings of great moral or spiritual authority. They are about aspects of society rather than elemental forces, and skill and energy are the things most valued. References to the gods of Gaul (France) are patchy, mostly consisting of inscriptions and statues to local gods adopted and renamed by the Romans. Scotland doesn't have its own stories of the gods, but does have a rich folklore of supernatural creatures, faeries and monsters. This work pulls these together into a (somewhat artificial) whole, along with some legendary figures from the "Celtic" countries.

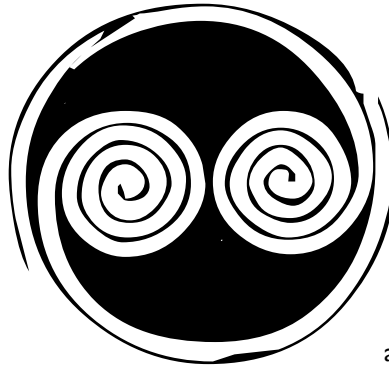
Ireland

The **Irish** gods are the "Tuatha Dé danaan", the "people/descendants of Danu", a shadowy mother goddess. They are "ever living" because they do not age and die as mortals do, but they are not so much divinities as ancestors writ large. The stories say that they arrived in Ireland in a magical mist or ships that moved through the air, and fought the Fir Bolg people already there for dominance over the land in the First Battle of Magh Tuireadh (or "Moytura" - it means "Plain of Towers"). They won, but their king Nuada lost his arm in that battle, and as only a whole

and unblemished person could be king they gave the rulership to Bres, whose mother was of the Danaan but whose father was of the Fomorian people. The rule of Bres was poor, with the gods Ogma and the Dagda reduced to building forts for little food.

Nuada's arm was replaced and the Danaan deposed Bres, who went to his father for help. This led to the Second Battle of Magh Tuireadh, around which most of the Danaans' tale revolves, ending in the defeat of the Fomorians.

However, when the Milesians - the ancestors of the modern Irish - came to Ireland the Tuatha Dé Danaan themselves were defeated, and retired to dwellings in the *sidhe* or faery/burial mounds. From there they played important parts in the later stories dealing with heroes like Cúchulainn and Fionn mac Cumhaill.



Wales

The Welsh myths centre around two groups, the Children of Don, including Arianrhod, Gofannon and Gwydion, and the Children of Llyr, including Bran, Branwen and Manawydan. The original cosmology behind them is lost - the stories we have are collected in the medieval Welsh 'Mabinogion'. They don't appear as gods in any sense, but as mortal nobles with some special skills and abilities. The programmes here focus more on the Irish myths.

England

Sadly, England hasn't done very well in the legendary stakes. The most obvious place to look is the tales of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. These have had a very mixed parentage: he probably originates in stories of British resistance to the Saxons, but the stories have been added to by medieval Welsh, Continental and other writers, incorporating the romantic elements and making Arthur popular across Europe. In the Welsh stories he acts mainly as the patron of the active characters rather than having adventures himself. Another well-known English figure is Robin Hood, a peerless

Cúchulainn

The greatest Irish hero, a mighty warrior, son of the god Lugh and a mortal woman. He got his name, which means “hound of Culann”, at the age of 7 when he killed the great hound of the smith Culann and offered to take over its guarding duties till another could be trained. He took up weapons after overhearing a druid’s prophecy that one who did so that day would be famous but short-lived.

Normally Cúchulainn was short, dark-haired, good-looking and very fast and agile. He was known for his battle frenzy or warp spasm, which distorted his body horrifically and made him dangerous even to allies. Once he was returning from battle in such a state, and all the women bared their breasts to distract him so he could be seized and plunged into three successive vats of water to cool him off. He was also known for performing the warrior’s “salmon leap” high into the air. Women were attracted to Cúchulainn, including Manannan’s wife Fand at one point, which strained relationships with his own wife Emer. His most famous weapon was the Gáe Bolg, “belly spear” - when it entered a man’s body thirty barbs opened so that it “filled every limb and crevice with wounds” (it was usually thrown with the foot).

During the war with Connacht Cúchulainn defended Ulster single-handedly when all the other warriors were rendered weak as a woman in childbirth by the curse of Macha (see *Epona* above). He carved a swathe of destruction through the Connacht warriors and killed many of their champions including, reluctantly, his old friend Ferdiaid after four days of single combat. There are many other tales of his deeds. One of his affairs produced his only son, but when he later met the young man he killed him before discovering his identity. Later Cúchulainn refused the love of the Morrigan, and she set events in motion to destroy him. Towards the end of the fight he strapped himself to a pillar stone so he could die standing up. His enemies only dared to approach when a crow perched on his shoulder and an otter began to drink his blood.

Required Powers

- Fury*

Qualities

- Agility, Endurance, Presence, Athletics, Spear Fighting, Sword Fighting, Unarmed Fighting, Quick Reactions, Attractive Appearance



Optional Powers

- Leaping*
- Run Like a Horse* (ceiling Good)

Spear - Gae Bolg

- Secondary Damage (physical trauma) - if an attack gets through to cause damage to a living creature, the target must immediately resist a second set of TN damage, which cannot be blocked by external armour.

Vulnerabilities

- Berserk - you tend to be overcome by rage in the heat of battle, targeting reason and perception.
- Friendslayer - if you need to resist or avoid harming a friend or ally, this doom targets your ability to do so.
- Too Brave - when faced with a dangerous challenge this targets your judgment.
- Warp Spasm - in battle your face and body swell and distort to become weird and frightening for the rest of the scene, acting as a Meta marker that targets appearance and social Qualities.

Fionn mac Cumhail

Sometimes rendered into English as “Finn mac Cool” (it means “Fair, son of Cumal”), he was the most famous leader of the Fianna, a band of elite Irish warriors who swore allegiance to the High King rather than their own clan. As a boy he served a druid who had caught the Salmon of Knowledge. The young Fionn was charged with cooking it. He burned his thumb on the fish, and when he put it in his