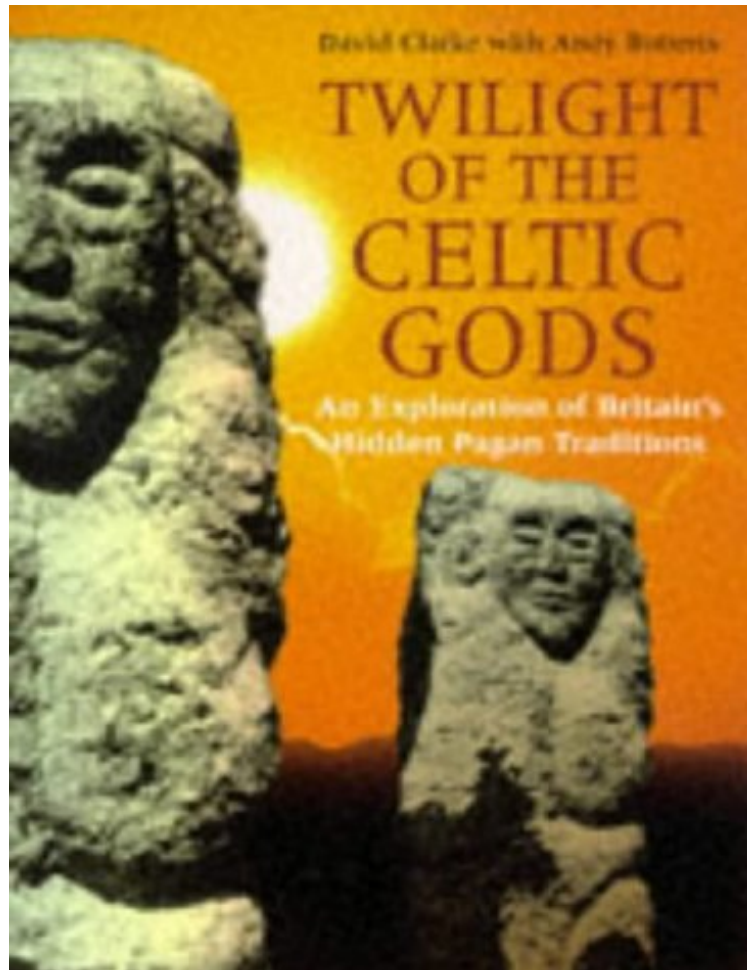


(Free) Twilight of the Celtic Gods: An Exploration of Britain's Hidden Pagan Traditions

## Twilight of the Celtic Gods: An Exploration of Britain's Hidden Pagan Traditions

David Clarke, Andy Roberts  
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**David Clarke, Andy Roberts : Twilight of the Celtic Gods: An Exploration of Britain's Hidden Pagan Traditions** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Twilight of the Celtic Gods: An Exploration of Britain's Hidden Pagan Traditions:

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Could have been so much more ...By Silebought this book as it was considered the antithesis of all that Professor Ronald Hutton pronounced about there being no continuous survival of pagan traditions in the British Isles.The authors rely on testimony from unnamed interviewees living in the Peak District, the Dales and parts of Scotland. I have to say as much as I can respect these witnesses wanting to remain anonymous, it does give the book an air of "a friend of a friend" type tales. It is even stranger that none of the practices to which the sources testify have ever been written down in this modern age, despite the authors' assertions that these

areas remained isolated from the rest of Britain. The book covers a number of different practices, such as veneration of stones, wells, rivers and trees. It also delves into local folklore and the strong links people in certain areas of Britain have with the Celtic landscape, at least up until ten years ago, and it showed how, at times, incomers were rebuked for disturbing areas of importance. I enjoyed the book and admired the authors' attempts to offer proof of a continuous tradition of honouring the spirit of the land, but I had real difficulty in believing the proof being offered; I'd need more evidence to be convinced. What's more, I was not in this country at the time that various television programmes, mentioned several times in the book, were broadcast. I wanted to believe, but, for me, the links were tenuous at best. The book was written in an easy and comfortable style, the photographs were good if a bit scarce. "Twilight of the Celtic Gods" could have been so much more, but I think the authors' approach from a folkloric, rather than purely academic approach may have hindered them. For those using *Twilight of the Celtic Gods* as a criticism of Prof. Ronald Hutton's work, it's flimsy indeed. I will keep the book for future reference, I am just not sure why.

17 of 20 people found the following review helpful. The Plain Unvarnished Truth By Jeremy McGuire There is, perhaps, no pre-Christian tradition that is more misunderstood, often intentionally, than the Celtic religions of the ancient British Isles. No tradition, it seems, has undergone more distortion and misinformation than that of the Celtic gods and, more to the point, goddesses. Such a confusion of political and social nonsense has been written about the Celtic "old ways" that it is refreshing to find a scholarly work that attempts to set the record straight. That there are those in England, Wales, Cornwall, Scotland and Ireland who still practice the "auld ways" is undeniable. That their practices have little or nothing to do with modern Neo-Paganism is not surprising. The engine that runs Neo-Paganism is feminist politics, not, in itself a bad thing, but hardly the stuff of religion. It is, in fact, a rebellion against the perceived oppressiveness of "patriarchal Christianity." The concept that comes up most frequently among them is that of "the evils of Patriarchy and the goodness of Matriarchy," and so, the ancient gods are reduced to the position of lap-dogs in the service of the goddesses. The Matriarchy/Patriarchy dichotomy is as far from the ancient world as one can get, but it does result in large book-sales for those who promote it. Without malice, David Clarke and Andy Roberts debunk these modern charlatans. Most telling is the existence of "Guardians" of the old ways, who run interference with strangers inquiring about them. Every village, it seems, has at least one. They will smile, serve tea, tell a little about folklore and say good-bye. The guests will go away feeling as if they have learned much while actually being told nothing of any importance. ". . . Local informants take pains to point out 'Witchcraft' and 'New Age' are words that have no place in the local tradition ... It is a worship of God, not of pagan idols or anything funny like that, and it seemed we had to give them back their respectability to know that they were doing right." Having established what the old ways are not, Clarke and Roberts go on to describe in great detail, what they are, how ancient traditions weave themselves into contemporary Celtic culture in ways that are not adverse to Christianity but, in fact, entirely harmonious with it, giving it great depth and beauty, an interpretation quite different from that of Asia, Africa or America. The ancient gods and goddesses of the Celts were, in fact, not universal, but specific to locations: this rock, this brook, this hill. "It was not a theology or philosophy or any kind of organized religious thing. It was more like the fairy faith in Ireland, all to do with *genii loci* - spirits of the place." That these spirits have been abducted in the modern world by a made-up political religion based on the texts of a few Victorian Bad-boys, is a dishonor to them. In "Twilight of the Celtic Gods," Clarke and Roberts try to set the record straight and succeed wonderfully. It is scholarly while still being readable. It is an accurate description of the way in which the ancient world influences the present without a lot of New Age gloss.

12 of 14 people found the following review helpful. The Plain Truth By A Customer This is a must-have for those who seek to follow a Celtic path of spirituality. It will not tell you how to be a neopagan-- it will show you how the remnants of ancient Celtic tradition are (or were, up until the 1970s) practised in rural parts of Great Britain-- and you can take it from there. It will give you insights into the essence of ancient Celtic spirituality as gleaned from living traditions, and a sprinkling of folklore, archeology, history and legend. This book will no doubt anger followers of "Celtic Wicca" and "Faery Wicca", as this book will disabuse its readers of any notion that these paths are in any way traditional Celtic paths.

Includes stories of Celtic beliefs, such as the Healing Stone or the Dolly and the Statue, whilst enabling you to journey on to the living landscape with stories of secret shrines and dark waters. dw 1996 176pp