

Damh the Bard:

I am sitting here, on Zoom, with Luke Eastwood. I have seen your books, but we have never, I don't think, spoken before. So, welcome to Druidcast, Luke.

Luke Eastwood:

Thank you very much for having me. It's nice to finally speak to you. I've seen you, obviously, at some of the OBOD gatherings, and I've listened to a lot of your music. But yeah, this is the first time we've actually had a chance to talk.

Damh the Bard:

Yeah. No, it's really nice to actually connect properly.

Damh the Bard:

For the listens of Druidcast, can you tell a little bit about, who is Luke Eastwood? How did you discover your Druidry, would be a good point to start with?

Luke Eastwood:

I suppose it's hard to kind of nail a particular point where I became interested. But I was always interested in history; one thing my dad was always very keen on. So I can remember certain things like, I got bought a set of little, tiny figures, they were about an inch tall. And one lot were Roman, and the other lot were the Ancient Britons, so I'd have these little wars. The Romans usually won, because they all had the better equipment-

Damh the Bard:

They did-

Luke Eastwood:

... a lot more cool.

Luke Eastwood:

And I remember the '70's series, I think, was it called Arthur? I think it was a BBC series, I'm not sure. But I remember watching that, and being very impressed. And I was also a bit spooked because it had all this mystical stuff, and strange knights, and weird things going on.

Luke Eastwood:

And later on, yeah, my dad would mention stuff about history. He was a big fan of British history, especially Scotland, where I was born, myself. But, as you can tell, I didn't spend that much time there.

Luke Eastwood:

So I remember watching the film, Excalibur, in the early '80s. Again, that was with my parents. And really, really liked that. So a lot of these sort of things slip in there, subliminally, I suppose. You don't really quite figure ...

Luke Eastwood:

I got quite confused about religion, being in a Catholic family. My dad was also a bit of an atheist, despite being Catholic. So he says, "You've got to go to Mass, but don't listen!"

Damh the Bard:

That's brilliant!

Luke Eastwood:

So I reached the age of about 15, and I was a bit confused about, well, you know, is it all a load of all rubbish, and I'm supposed to just ignore it all? Or should I take it seriously?

Luke Eastwood:

My uncle introduced me to Buddhism, the Buddhist text called the Dharmmapada, which, ironically, he'd stolen it, from a hotel in Japan! So I had this book, and one page is in Japanese, and the other page is in English. So I was really like, "Wow! This is amazing," just from having the strangeness of this Japanese book. So I read it, and started doing a bit of meditation. I had to give it all back, this little Buddha I had. You know the Buddha with the fat-

Damh the Bard:

Yes-

Luke Eastwood:

... the big ears, and the corpulence of ... Very much associated with abundance, I think, that particular version of a Buddha; a smiling happy Buddha.

Luke Eastwood:

Anyway, but it did leave an impression on me, this short period of time I'd had the book. Which, I managed to read all of it. So it got me thinking about the different versions of religion, the different versions of reality, I suppose. Because for many people, your reality is shaped by your religious beliefs, isn't it?

Damh the Bard:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Luke Eastwood:

And I figured, well, no, there isn't no answer. So I sort of thought, maybe it's a bit like supermarket, where you can just go in and pick whatever fruit that you like? You don't have to have just apples. You can have oranges, or passion fruit, or whatever. You've got a choice. It was at that point, really, I started thinking about, what do I really believe? Do I believe in this gray-haired old man in the sky? Or do I believe something else?

Luke Eastwood:

So it took me some time, looking at different religions and things, to figure out what I thought suited me. Even now, I'm still very interested in lots of different religions from a curiosity, social anthropology, kind of viewpoint.

Damh the Bard:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Luke Eastwood:

I had a real big interest in Vedic culture. You're probably aware, yourself, that a lot of people have suggested there's a big link between India and the Celtic culture?

Damh the Bard:

Yes.

Luke Eastwood:

The idea migrated across into Europe. And there may be some truth in that. It's so far back, it's quite hard to prove, really.

Luke Eastwood:

So I kind of stumbled towards it, towards the Druidry. And then I really got interested in the whole eco movement. When I was about 16, I joined a conservation group at college. And we'd gone round removing rhododendrons to make room for other species because they'd invaded so much of the college; there was very little else, really. And then I got involved in Greenpeace as well, when I went to London.

Luke Eastwood:

And then, as this was happening, I kind of came more across Celtic stuff, and the Neo-Druidism. At that time I didn't really know anyone, I wasn't involved in any groups or anything. Just, sort of, reading and stuff, myself. And I thought, well, this really fits, because I'm really into the whole eco thing. And then, so you've got this religion that very much revolves around nature, in the same way that Daoism does. In fact, probably, I would have ended up being a Daoist if I lived in China or somewhere, because there's so many parallels between the two, in their approach.

Damh the Bard:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Luke Eastwood:

So it just seemed to make sense; that my kind of ideas about how to live in the world in terms of ecology, fitted very well with modern Druidism. So I thought, well, yeah, I think this is probably what I want to do. But I had a great difficulty in making any connections.

Luke Eastwood:

It was kind of later on, I suppose ... Yeah, I think it was in, something about 1996, I think, I stumbled across The Book of Druidry, Ross Nichol's book, in a shop window. I'd never seen a real book on Druidry. And it's all been history books that I ... Like, this is what the Druids did, whatever. There's loads of books like that, but I'd never found a book that actually told you what being a Druid is, or how it works.

Damh the Bard:

There weren't many around, at the time, were there? There weren't many books around, in the mid-90s, like that.

Luke Eastwood:

No, not at all.

Damh the Bard:

Yeah. Yeah.

Luke Eastwood:

So when I saw this in the shop window, I rushed in there. I think it was quite expensive, actually, at the time. But I came back at lunchtime, from work, and bought it. I think they only had the one in there, actually. But it was in the window, which was lucky for me.

Luke Eastwood:

I found that really difficult, at the time, because some of it was over my head. I didn't really kind of get some of it. But I came back to it again, later, read it again, when I think I started the OBOD course, for, you know, the Bardic Grade. I returned to it, then.

Damh the Bard:

And that's where you do it.

Damh the Bard:

So it's amazing isn't it, I think, a lot of people, probably their first kind of explorations of these kind of things, they were films like Excalibur. And for me, it was Robin of Sherwood, back in the-

Luke Eastwood:

Oh, I remember that.

Damh the Bard:

You remember? With Michael Praed? And that was the first time I'd ever seen a figure of Herne, an antlered god, in the forest. And I was young at the time, and it was the same thing for me: there's something going on here, that's way beyond everything I've been taught. I've been taught that horns on a figure is the Devil. But that is just fantastic!

Luke Eastwood:

Yeah, it was great. And the music as well, Clannad.

Damh the Bard:

That's right.

Luke Eastwood:

They'd been massive in Ireland, for a long time. But they weren't really, really known, at all. But that soundtrack kind of propelled them into the limelight, a bit.

Damh the Bard:

Yeah, very much.

Luke Eastwood:

In fact, I bought the soundtrack album of that series. Actually, no, it must have been not that long ago, probably maybe 10 years ago, or something like that?

Damh the Bard:

Yeah.

Luke Eastwood:

I saw a copy of it in a shop, and I thought, "Yes! Great."

Damh the Bard:

Great. I've just got to hear that theme, "Robin, the hooded man," and I'm back, sitting down, Saturday night, with my mum and dad, eating our tea in front of the TV.

Damh the Bard:

But it's the mysticism that draws people. It's the sense that, inside, many of us know that there's more to life than just the three dimensional: get up, go to work, come home, go to sleep, life, that many of us seem to ... That there is more to this. That life is such a miracle, that there must be more to it. These programs, I think, just, go, "Yes, there is," and they allow us to become more in touch with that kind of mystical side of us.

Damh the Bard:

And you use the word "religion" a lot, in your search for Druidry, which is not what everybody says. A lot of people would say that it would be a "spirituality," or something like that. But I know, for many people, it is a religious path. Would you say it was, for yourself? I mean, for instance, would you say that you were animistic? Or polytheistic? Or is there a labelistic that can describe your view of that kind of stuff?

Luke Eastwood:

I came from a religious dogma, and then, sort of, sewed that idea. Religion, it means different things to different people. It can be a dogmatic, hierarchical system, but it doesn't necessarily have to be that way. I mean, Quakerism is a religion, but as far as I know, people just sit around in a circle, in equality, and then, when they feel moved by the spirit, they just speak. So that's a kind of religion that isn't dogmatic. But as a general rule, yeah, throughout history, it has tended to be hierarchical and a bit dogmatic. So I'd say it's whatever you want it to be. It can be a spiritual path, it's a spirituality, but it also can be a religion, if you want it to be that. As you know, there's a massive diversity of different types of Druids.

Luke Eastwood:

Going back to what you said about, there's more to life than the house and the car and the job, that's one of the reasons why I wouldn't be an atheist. Because I just thought, well, for me, atheism is absence of meaning, that I feel like there's no point in existing, particularly. If life has no meaning, because it

doesn't mean anything, there's no consequences, nothing is important. There's no need for morality, or any sense of value, if nothing has any point at all. So I felt I really needed some sense of meaning.

Damh the Bard:

Yeah.

Luke Eastwood:

So that kind of brought me towards ... I sort of figured out, what I really believe in is animism. I suppose I'd be a kind of Pantheist, or a Polytheist, in that I do kind of ultimately think there's one godhead, if you like. But I'm kind of, like, I suppose, Henotheist, in that I believe that all these different gods and goddesses or whatever, they're all aspects of the one, because they're just anthropomorphisations of whatever spirit is. I think spirit is beyond human definition, myself.

Luke Eastwood:

We're like little goldfish in a bowl, looking at the world through this sort of distorted bowl. But the reality of the world is so much bigger than that. We've got very limited faculties, we're only human, and so we have to describe spirit in some way that we can understand.

Damh the Bard:

Yeah. Yeah. I've only got to go for a walk with my dog, every day, and just watch him as he explores the world through him. And he will read the newspaper, as far as he's concerned. I call it the "P Mail." So he will just go with me, and we'll go for a walk, and he'll read his P Mail as he walks along." Now, I can't see the world through that. I look at my dog, and I'm just in a sense of wonder at the different way that a dog will see the world. And sometimes I think we're so tight with how we see the world as it being all there is, but, actually, you've just got to look at another creature to know that there are many ways of experiencing life, you know?

Damh the Bard:

And I love what you said about meaning. I think it was Rupert Sheldrake, I think, is the name of the writer that brings to mind, he says something that really struck me, a long time ago, as being like a truth with a capital "T". And that is that the constant drive and search for happiness is a mistake. Happiness is elusive, and can literally fall through your fingers. What will keep that is a search for meaning. Meaning is what makes life powerful. It's what gives you direction in life. It's not just about happiness, it's about meaning. So yeah, I absolutely agree with that. It's about finding the meaning in your life. And I think spirituality, myth, for instance, can give meaning to our lives, and direction, as well. So yeah, yeah, absolutely.

Damh the Bard:

You've just released a new book. I know you've got a few books out, haven't you? You've got some under your belt, already, to be honest with you. But you've just released a new book that is all about Samhain, which is why I've asked you onto Druidcast this particular month. A book dedicated to the festival. So, what I probably need to ask you is, what inspired you to write one book about one festival? What led you to make that decision to write that book?

Luke Eastwood:

Obviously, I've become interested in Celtic cosmology, over the time, through my studies with OBOD, and various other people and organizations, mostly here in Ireland. So one thing that struck me is, that it seems to be quite a common theme, not just in Druidism, but in other Pagan parts, that the Celtic New Year, the beginning of the year, is Samhain. So I often wondered, why is that? Wouldn't it make more sense if it was the Winter Solstice? Because that literally the cusp of the shift between light and dark; that's that point where the light starts to return. So I kind of thought, that's a bit odd. What's that all about? Why is that happening?

Luke Eastwood:

So I would have thought, myself, you've got the year end, with Samhain, and maybe the year kind of sleeps and starts again when the Solstice comes. And you talk about it with people, and it's this idea of incubation, this whole thing, for the winter. But then I thought, well, there must be something that substantiates all this, where does it come from? So a bit of digging, you start to find, there it is, hidden in the mythology, and you've got the practices which are folk practices which survived, plus, some of which have been recorded in history, as well.

Luke Eastwood:

So, really, strong evidence to show it was a very significant time. And literally, is the beginning of the old Pagan year in Britain and Ireland. And also in Gaul, which, the Coligny calendar has a particular reference to Samhain on it, with the three days marked very clearly. Obviously, the whole thing was in pieces, but I think there's about two-thirds of the thing, of the big plate as it originally was, that they'd put it back together and managed to translate a lot of it. So that's going back into the pre-Christian era, that discovery of the calendar in Gaul. So it's definitely ... You could say that proves it's that old, at least.

Luke Eastwood:

But in my kind of researches, I came across a book by John Gilroy, called *Tlachtga: Celtic Fire Festival*, which he wrote last ... And it was published in 1999, I think. Anyway, that's out of print, sadly, and it's really difficult to get it. The only place I've managed to get a copy is going to the library and taking it out, repeatedly, so I could read it, or get it out again, if I wanted to look stuff up. I actually spoke to him, and he didn't even have any copies himself!

Damh the Bard:

Wow!

Luke Eastwood:

So I couldn't buy a copy anywhere. It was like gold dust. But that book was really good. But things have moved on a lot, since, in the last 20 years, in terms of research. And a lot of archeology has happened, as well, particularly at this place in County Meath called the Hill of Ward, outside a little village called Athboy. The hill was formerly called Tlachtga, which, if you trace it back, goes back to this druidess or goddess called Tlachtga. There's a lot of stories about her, and also her father, Mug Ruith. And it's all a bit confused. So, one of the things I've done in the book, is trying to unpick the stories.

Luke Eastwood:

Because one of things that happened, very much in ... Particularly in the Norman Conquest onwards, you had a Christian Church, but it was very Gallicized. And then after the Norman Conquest, they

replaced all of the Irish bishops, a more sort of egalitarian clergy, with a lot more hierarchical Roman church. So they were very keen to eradicate all of these Pagan survivors. And one of the things, of course, was Halloween; they wanted to get rid of Samhain, as it was called. Samhain, actually, is still a word that you'll find in modern Irish, it's the name for the month of November. So it has survived.

Damh the Bard:

Yeah.

Luke Eastwood:

But the actual festival, they're trying to stamp all these practices out, all this Festival of the Dead. That's why you have All Souls Day. All Hallows Day, as well. These two days were brought in, to try and stamp it out. And then, you've also got St. Martin's Day, a little bit after the beginning of November, which has got associated with Samhain.

Damh the Bard:

Yeah. Yeah. Samhain and Beltaine are definitely the two most popular, I think, Pagan rituals, of the wheel of the year. And of course, when you look at the Earth, they are part of an axis that goes through the Earth. So when it's Samhain, for us, it's Beltaine of the southern hemisphere. And when it's Samhain for the southern hemisphere, it's Beltaine for us.

Damh the Bard:

One of the things that I love about Samhain is, it's said that the veil between the worlds is thin. I love that kind of part-mythology that is centered around Samhain. Where you can utter the name of a friend or relative into the air, and they will hear your words, and they will know that they are remembered, and what is remembered lives. And I love that part about the Samhain ritual, that thinning of the veil.

Damh the Bard:

A couple of years ago, we were in Australia. And we were down there for May, for their Samhain. So I had two Samhains that year, and no Beltaine. I was interested to send out our little spidey senses, to see and feel whether or not that veil is thin there too, in May. And it really is. I mean, we did a Samhain ceremony under the stars, the stars were above us. Orion was upside-down to me, because we were in the southern hemisphere, but that was the only star constellation I could recognize. The moon was waxing and waning, backwards. It was very alien. But even in that time of May, you could still feel the influence of the Otherworld, in Australia. And that, to me, is one of the great things about Samhain.

Damh the Bard:

I don't know if you've had experiences of Samhain that you can share with us, like that? Practical stuff that's happened, with you?

Luke Eastwood:

Before I tell you that, you reminded me of something, actually. As you mentioned, about May, Beltaine is one of the three times when the veil is supposed to be very thin. So, as you mentioned, they're right opposite each other. Yeah, Samhain, the summer solstice, and also Beltaine, are times when the Sidhe, and the faeries, and the ancestors, are more accessible. So it's no accident, really, you mentioning May; that is a special time, as far as the veil.



Luke Eastwood:

This ceremony, or ritual, or a few days, even, it can be, has been historically a day, three days, even, some peoples say, a whole month. It was very much a time for connecting with the ancestors, and either connecting with the Sidhe, or trying to avoid them, as is also the case for some people who may have been a bit frightened of them. That's why people wore an iron pin in their lapel, or something, or in their tunic, or whatever they had, to try and keep them away. Because they could be considered, both benign or malevolent, depending on your relationship with them.

Luke Eastwood:

One particular thing, for many years I celebrated Samhain, and nothing really happened. I might have left a plate of food for ancestors, prayed for ... Tried to communicate with, say, my grandmother, or something like that, and not really got anywhere with things and just been a bit disappointed. One particular year, we did a Druid ritual out in a woodland, in Wexford. And as it happened there was, for some strange reason, just two of us. Because we had quite a decent sized grove, but I think we had 12 or 13 members. And on this particular occasion, there was just two.

Luke Eastwood:

So we went and did our ritual. We'd sat down and started our meditation, and then there was this flood of the souls of the dead that just sort of hit us, washed over us, like hundreds of them. It was almost like getting slapped in the face, really, it was quite shocking. But then, after this had happened, I felt a bit sick actually, from the experience, temporarily. And then we realized we'd actually been sat down in the middle of a crossroads.

Damh the Bard:

Yeah. Yeah.

Luke Eastwood:

And you're just like, "Duh!" That was really, really stupid, to have done that. Because, as you know, yourself, on a spiritual level, it functions the same; it's a place where traffic converges. In a more sinister sense, you probably know about Robert Johnson, the crossroads, the Devil; that they'd taken that idea, and then just have turned it on its head. Where, instead of being a spiritual meeting place, it's a sinister place where you meet the Devil at the crossroads.

Damh the Bard:

It's a liminal space. It's like the seashore, or somewhere else. There's a liminal space where two areas meet, and that's it, really, isn't it?

Luke Eastwood:

Yeah.

Damh the Bard:

And places of pain, you reminded me, actually, of another Samhain experience, as well. For a couple of years, me and a group of eclectic Pagans ... This was many years ago, now ... went off to a woods, here, in Sussex, called Clapham Woods. It's a tiny little copse; it's only very, very small, out near the village of Clapham, in Sussex. It's got a kind of reputation attached to it, which kind of attracted us, at the time.

We thought, if we're going to go anywhere, let's go to Clapham Woods, at Samhain. It was one of those, if it was in a horror film, you would say, "No. No, don't go there!" But we did. We just headed off, there.

Damh the Bard:

We were walking around, and we found that, within the woods, are these dips in the earth. And you can literally walk down into them. And you can have a tiny little ceremonial fire in there, and you couldn't be seen within the woods. And so, we went into one of these pit areas. It had overhanging hazel trees, it was very magical. And we did our Samhain ceremony in there, and we had a very similar experience to you. We felt the presence of many, many spirits with us, on that night. And it was only later on, when I looked up a bit more about Clapham Woods, that we found out that those pit areas in the woods are plague pits. It's where they basically put the dead of the local villages, into these pits. And over the hundreds of years, so they've decomposed and created these pits within the woods. So we were holding a Samhain ceremony above the bodies of people who had passed away through the plague.

Damh the Bard:

Our ceremony was an honoring of the dead; that's the thing that I think is always important to say. We weren't conjuring anything, like that. We were just communicating, and just offering remembrance, and stuff like that. We went there the next year, and they'd boarded it off. You couldn't get into the woods. They put big gates up, at Samhain. And I think, for a number of years, they just wouldn't let anyone in. It was probably the destination of a number of Pagan groups in Sussex, and they just got fed up with us, probably, at Samhain.

Damh the Bard:

But that was an experience that will always stay with me, as well. It was like you could feel the ghosts with us, that night. It was almost like, "Oh, you remember we're here? People haven't remembered that, for a long, long time." Yes, the veil is thin, without a doubt!

Luke Eastwood:

Yeah. Well, I don't think there's much point in being terrified of spirits and the dead. But, at the same time, I think they do deserve a certain level of respect; they're not to be trifled with.

Luke Eastwood:

Years and years ago, a friend of mine, he knew I was studying to be a Druid, and he says, "Right, let's go down to the graveyard and see if we can raise a dead person or something." I said, "Well, okay, when we get there, and we call up some spirit of a dead person, what are you going to do, when they show up?" He says, "Oh, I don't know." Well, when they say, "Why have you called me here? What do you want me for? What's going on?" And you're, like, "Oh, no reason. I just thought I'd just do it because I felt like. And see what would happen."

Luke Eastwood:

And I said, "That's not really a very good reason to do this, is it?" So, "No, we're not doing it." And once I explained it to him, like that, he was like, "Oh, yeah. You're right, actually. That's really stupid and disrespectful."

Damh the Bard:

Yes, absolutely.

Luke Eastwood:

I think, a lot of people, maybe because the modern celebrations have got very blasé about this stuff and think it's just a bit of fun, "Oh, it's a bit craic. Let's go off and do silly stuff." It is, primarily, a festival of the dead. And it's interesting how foreign concepts, like the Mexican Festival of The Dead, have begun to merge. And that's at a similar time of year. But they take it very seriously in places like Mexico; reverence of the ancestors, and paying respects to them. Whereas that's been lost, to some extent, in Europe. Well, in North America, you know, it's all fun and tricks and pumpkins, and it's got very detached from it.

Luke Eastwood:

People should have a respect, not just for the fact that their ancestors, they've gone, but also they have a certain, I suppose, power, in themselves, as spirits. So you don't want to be messing with them and really annoying them. Do that at your peril, really. And the same applies to the Sidhe; otherworldly creatures do have the ability to punish you, if you're going to just mess around with them, in some sort of trivial manner.

Damh the Bard:

We're very protected from death, these days, I think. When people pass away, they're taken away from us, now. They're dealt with by someone else. I think that Samhain is a beautiful opportunity to acknowledge our own mortality as well, and also to reconnect with our loved ones. And they don't have to be human, either. I mean, I always think of my pets, at Samhain, as well. I don't think that it's only a place filled with human souls. I just feel that connection too; of all those people that I've loved, and things that I've loved, over the years.

Damh the Bard:

When we hold our open rituals for Samhain, it's the one where I just say, "It's okay to cry." I mean, it's okay to cry at any ceremony. But the likelihood is that if you connect with that feeling, and you visualize your father, mother, sister, brother, or dog, or whatever, cat, and you want to step into the circle and call their name out into the wind, the air, to let them know they're remembered; that can create a deep emotion in people. That is important too, at Samhain, is to just not push that down, but just say, "Yes, let it go. Let it out." It's the one time of year it's totally and utterly right to feel those things. And they can feel those things as well, they can feel that emotion. Emotion is energy in motion isn't it? And so it goes into the other world and they feel that as well. It truly is a beautiful time of year.

Luke Eastwood:

Yeah. I totally agree with you. And I think it's really healthy.

Luke Eastwood:

I suppose that kind of distancing from death, maybe that began in the Victorian era. And it's got to the point where people might be buried, a month after they've passed, which is a very bizarre situation. And certainly, from Ireland, for instance, really, you're normally buried in three days, a week, at the maximum. And it's all very compressed. It's very, very intense. You have the removal of the body. It's prepared. It's often brought back to the house. You have people come to the house, paying their

respects. And then you have the funeral, and you have the wake. And it's very emotional. There will be laughing and crying.

Luke Eastwood:

If this is terribly tragic, like a little baby or something, you won't have the wake the same, with all the music and celebration of a life, because obviously it's so tragic. But in a normal sense of things, it runs the whole gamut of emotions in a very short time; it's very cathartic.

Luke Eastwood:

And I think, as you say, Samhain's a brilliant time for this catharticism, or dealing with death, dealing with your own mortality. Some of us have unsaid stuff, that we never got to say to the people who've passed, et cetera. Burying all this stuff, as you said, pushing it down, that's really bad for your mental health, bad for your spirit, your soul. And it is, really, the perfect time to address all this kind of thing, I think.

Luke Eastwood:

I think, you come out of it, feeling more complete, enriched, happier, more at peace with yourself, if you've made peace with those who've gone before you. And, also, learning to be prepared for your own death, and the fact we're not going to live forever. No matter how much plastic surgery you have, or you want to go and be put in a cryogenic freezer in L.A. or something; that's not the reality of life. We are all going to leave this mortal coil, eventually. If we learn to accept that, maybe the leaving won't be as painful and traumatic, I think.

Damh the Bard:

That's what I love about the wheel of the year, because, of course, after Samhain comes the Winter Solstice, rebirth. We see it in nature, with the cycles, we see it in the Sun and the Moon, with the seasons; that, after death, there is still more. And I love that about the wheel of the year. And I love that about that little bit of Samhain, to the Winter Solstice, and then, of course, to Imbolc, first; the first stirrings of spring. Those three festivals fill me with hope, to be honest with you. I don't see them as dark. Even though they're the dark part of the year, they are like the gestation part of the year, for new life, and new hope, and everything that comes after it.

Damh the Bard:

Well, I think we've talking for nearly 45 minutes. I mean, it's flown by.

Luke Eastwood:

Yeah. It's been great. I've really enjoyed chatting with you, you know?

Damh the Bard:

Yeah. No, it's been really lovely, Luke. Thanks for that.

Damh the Bard:

People can get your book from all of the usual places, I guess?

Luke Eastwood:

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Yeah, that's right. Yeah. I also have it on my own website. It's a little bit cheaper than the retail, and it's signed as well.

Damh the Bard:

Brilliant. Okay. And your website is ...?

Luke Eastwood:

... lukeeastwood.com.

Damh the Bard:

lukeeastwood.com. Is that the hub of all things Luke, that if people go there, they'll find everything else? Yeah?

Luke Eastwood:

Yeah, pretty much. It's got all the other things I'm involved in.

Damh the Bard:

All the other links, and things like that? Thank you.

Damh the Bard:

I was going to ask you about a walk and a talk. But maybe I might get over to Ireland, and you can take me somewhere? Rather than having another ...

Luke Eastwood:

Yeah. If you do come, there's a few special places. But the one I had in mind, in particular, is a place called Loughcrew. Its Irish name is Sliabh na Callai. That's very much associated with the Equinox. But the Tlachtga, herself, is very much part of the winter, and from this time, onwards, would be a very powerful energy at that place.

Damh the Bard:

Yeah. Yeah.

Luke Eastwood:

If you're ever over, yeah, I'd love to bring you up there. It really is quite special.

Damh the Bard:

I have been there, actually.

Luke Eastwood:

Okay.

Damh the Bard:

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But, briefly. Because me and Cerri went over to Ireland in my old VW camper, which was a proper Scooby Doo bus, from the '70s. And it was only when we got on the ferry, I realized we weren't covered by the AA. And the van sprung an oil leak, just as we were going to Loughcrew. So my mind was partly there, and partly, "Oh my god! How are we going to get back home again?"

Damh the Bard:

But it was so magical. I remember sitting there, above. And I do remember ravens. I seem to remember the call of corvid being really prominent in the area. And another hill ... I seem to remember seeing a hill?

Luke Eastwood:

Yeah, there's two. There's another tomb, which is closed to the public.

Damh the Bard:

That's it.

Luke Eastwood:

A hummock I suppose you'd call it. It's not necessarily a tomb.

Damh the Bard:

Well, I'll have to go with you, and you can tell us a bit more about it. So, we won't talk too much about it, now.

Damh the Bard:

Thank you for coming on to Druidcast, Luke. It's a been a pleasure to talk to you.

Luke Eastwood:

Thank you so much.

Damh the Bard:

And good luck with the book, as well.

Damh the Bard:

And don't forget everybody, [lukeeastwood.com](http://lukeeastwood.com), if you want to find out more about Luke and his books.

Damh the Bard:

Thank you very much.

Luke Eastwood:

Thanks a million.