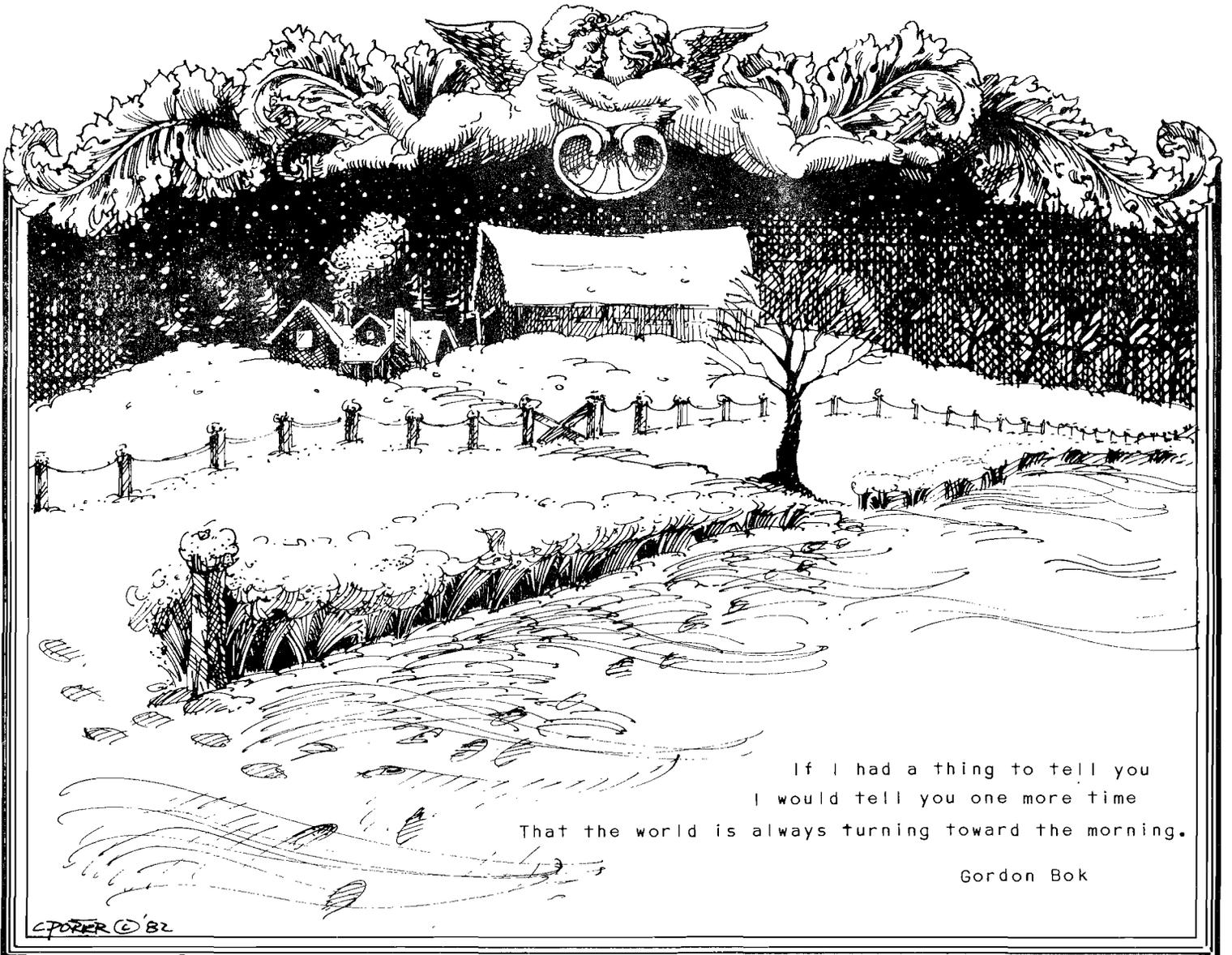
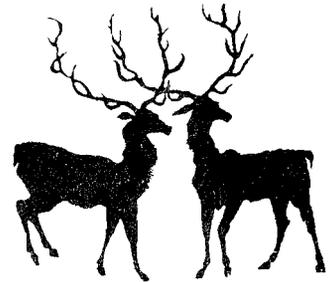


MONADNOCK FOLKLORE SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

December 1982

THE JOURNAL FOR FOLK CULTURE IN SOUTHWESTERN NEW HAMPSHIRE



If I had a thing to tell you
I would tell you one more time
That the world is always turning toward the morning.

Gordon Bok

As the year comes to a close I am very grateful to all the good people who helped the Monadnock Folklore Society get started, and whose support has kept us going. A year of producing concerts on a monthly basis has given us some good lessons, as well as drained our personal pocketbooks, and while we do look forward to big concerts in the future, 1983 is going to be a year for focusing more on local resources. Nearly every one who responded to our reader survey last month wanted more attention on local folklore and music, both in the Newsletter and in our productions.

For several months we held a coffeehouse at the Gap Mountain Bakery in Troy. There were many pleasant evenings there, however it was not a feasible situation in terms of the bakery's economics for it to continue. I'm sure that in the near future there will be another site available; of course suggestions are welcome.

During the next year I'd really like to see the Monadnock Folklore Society become more of a members organization. If we're going to be producing fewer big concerts, perhaps we'll increase the discount available to members, which is one way of making it worthwhile to be a member. But there are more important reasons to be part of this group. As it has been, most of our members have merely been consumers, and those of us on the board of directors have been marketing folk music and a newsletter. The economics must remain a factor, but it should not be the axis for our relationship. Think about it! What would you like to see happening that's not? What do you want to do, that can be made possible by an organization like this?

Devik Rich of Keene sent us a letter recently, and her ideas are an example of what I hope will come about. She has been kind enough to let me share it with you.

I hope that Devik's letter will be an inspiration, and I look forward to having 1983 be a year for the fellowship of this organization to grow, with good times, good music and new ideas.

An excellent opportunity for us to get together is our First Second Annual Christmas Party and Contra Dance, in the Nelson Town Hall on Saturday, December 18th, at 8:00 PM. There will be a large orchestra comprised of the areas finest musicians and the evening will be interspersed with caroling and eating (refreshments will be free). We had a great time last year, and we hope that our Christmas Party in Nelson will become a part of the tradition for which that hall is renown.

Just a quick look into 1983 - we're working on an evening of storytelling in January, and in February there will be an evening of Cape Breton music with Harvey Tolman and Jason Little. On April 9th we'll have a concert with Jean Redpath. There are a few more irons in the fire, and a lot of what can happen is up to you.

And for 1983 - May your material prosperity be always exceeded by your happiness.

Gordon Peery



SPECIAL THANKS

To Coni Porter who designs our concert posters, and who did this months cover.

To Anne Thomas, who did our Christmas Party poster and who has helped us with book keeping, and whose general support is warmly appreciated.



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(Editors note: the following letter was submitted in response to the reader survey in last months newsletter. The letter has been edited, with the permission of the author, as it was originally not intended for publication and not all of it was pertinent to our purpose in printing it.)

Dear MFS,

I'm really glad that the MFS exists, and I do enjoy getting the newsletter. Please keep that in mind as I proceed with the other side...

What I had hoped for from MFS was not more newsletters (I get plenty of newsletters) but more music. In particular, the chance to participate in music on an amateur and local level. It seems to me that the point of folk music is doing it, not listening to someone else. Its advantage is that five or six people can get together and make music -- without collecting an entire symphony orchestra or thousands of dollars worth of equipment. Unfortunately, people don't do that very often.

What I had hoped for was a way of getting folks together regularly to sing and play on an informal basis. The Greater Boston Folk Song Society had a format I liked and frequently attended when I lived in Boston. They met on Monday nights at a local bar from 8:00 to 11:00, sort of off in a corner. You could buy a beer and join the circle. There was a moderator, different every time, who made sure that no one monopolized the evening, and everyone had a chance. They would gently say to the next person in the circle something like, "Sam, have you got a song tonight? ", and Sam would have a choice: he could play a song for others to listen to, he could lead a group sing-a-long, or he could merely suggest a group song if he didn't feel competent to lead. He could also pass. The group was very understanding about beginners trying out new songs. It was a real low-pressure way to start singing for a group. There were also good musicians who tried out their original works or played rehearsed numbers with friends. But they were not able to monopolize the floor. Certain songs would become popular after being sung a few weeks in a row, with much trading of hand written or copied words and cords - everyone would learn them. Then the group would tire of them and the next month there would be new favorites.

Hoping this idea is something you can use - please contact me if I can help put it together.

Sincerely,

Devik Rich



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Say **MERRY CHRISTMAS** to a friend with a gift membership in the **MONADNOCK FOLKLORE SOCIETY**. Members receive this newsletter every month, a discount on MFS concerts, a special contra dance and party for members in the spring, and the opportunity to participate in an organization which will be doing a lot in the coming months to explore old ways and discover new ways of appreciating our folk heritage.

Send \$10 for individual, \$14 for two people, same household, \$8 for students and senior citizens to MFS/ PO Box 43/ Peterborough, NH 03458 And if your not yet a member - treat yourself to a Christmas present.

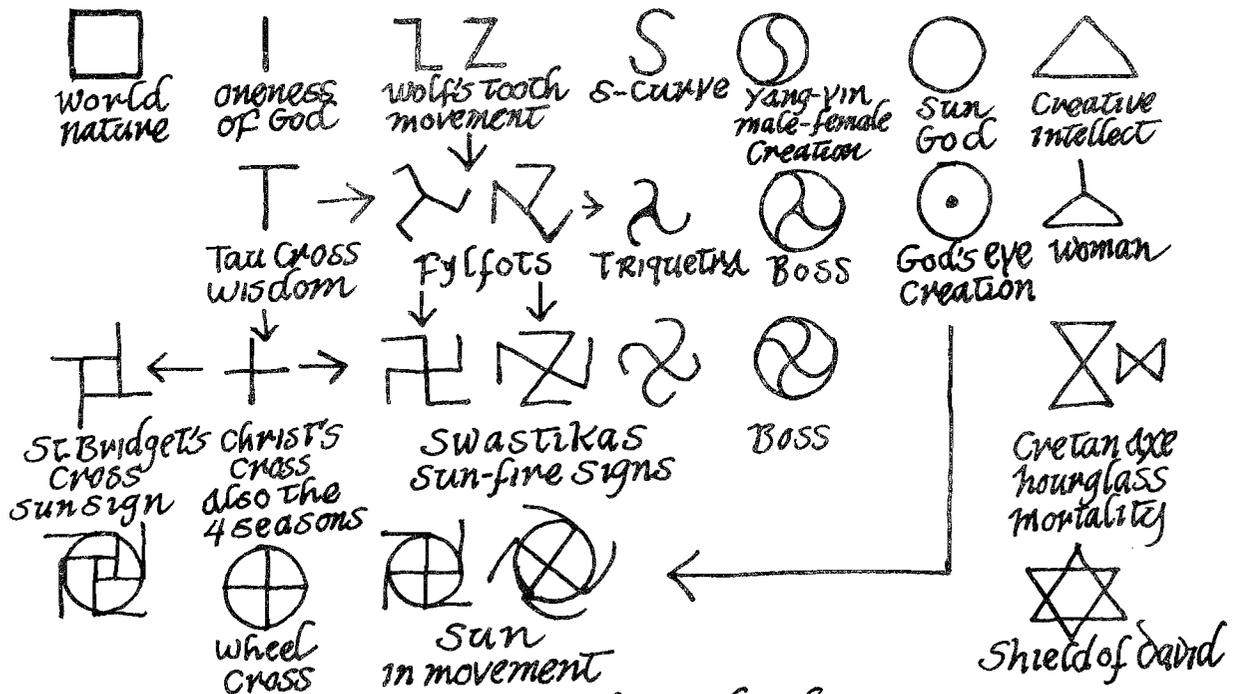
CELTIC ART: the Beginning

by Arthur W. Ketchen

It is my pleasure to write on the nature of the art of the Celts for the Monadnock Folklore Society. I shall not cover in detail the history of the Celtic people. That has already been excellently covered by my friend Morgan Llywelyn in the October Newsletter. In this first article I shall touch upon the important and outstanding premises of Celtic Design.

The first thing anyone must realize about Celtic Art is that from the earliest time to the present we are dealing with an aesthetic aimed at expressing abstract concepts rather than naturalistic representation of the seen world. Indeed, due to certain restrictions placed upon the expression of artists by Druid custom, it would seem that Celtic art might have been doomed to one kind of style (that called Ultimate La Tene). The salvation of Celtic art was to be found in the very nature of Celtic society, a basically laissez-faire, anarchistic enterprise. Celtdom was an environment, since the days of Nuada, where heroic, independent thought and action was a virtue, even if the opposition was belligerent (and often supernatural), from the impetuous Saint Columba in the sixth century A.D. onward new influences were brought into the art through which they became integrally Celtic features (such as interlace). Even the various catastrophes which befell Irish and British Celts (the Viking and Norman invasions, the Reformation) only served to influence a resurrected Celtic art a few generations later.

To begin with one must go back to the Druids and the religious purposes of art. Basic, and of older origin than the Druids, (dating from Stonehenge, New Grange, Malta and according to some sources, Atlantis) are the abstract symbols manipulated by the Druid religion. I have here a chart of the same and some notes on their meaning:

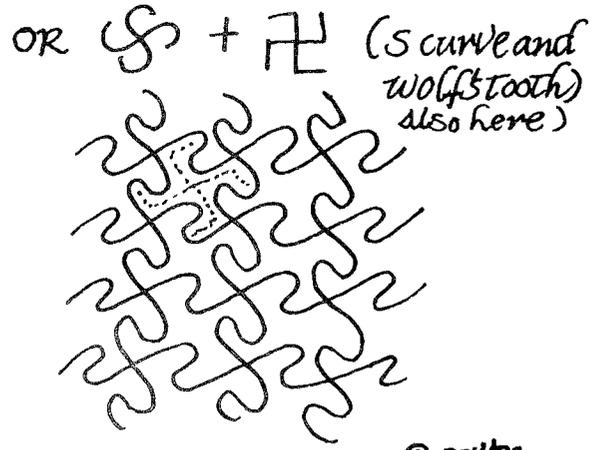
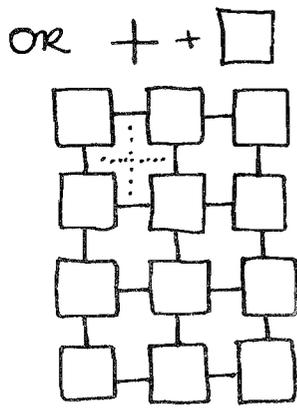
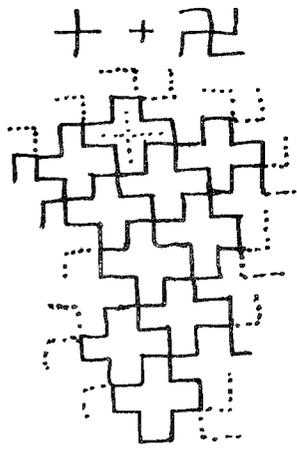


I have greatly simplified here the chart I use in my course. There are many more symbols and also many different levels of meaning.

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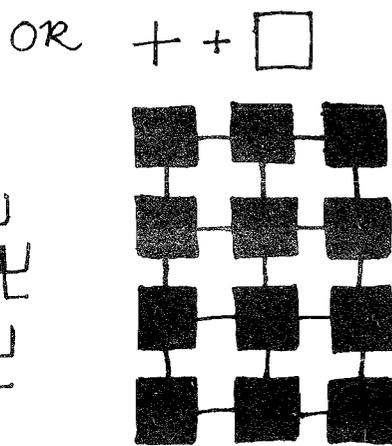
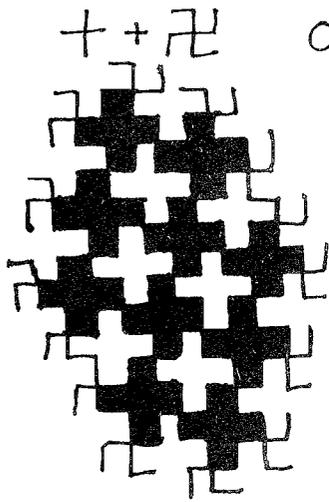
From the earliest times these symbols (also incorporated into Norse Runes and many other cultures) have been used to invest military gear, buildings, household items, clothing and human bodies (tattooing and painting) with their power.

The combination of the symbols in a multiple order could work magic of many varieties.

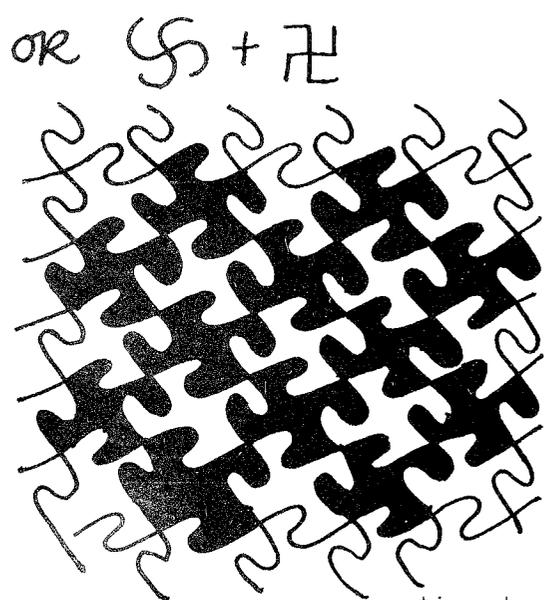


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Celtic Art is not an art of soft edges, of greys fading into the mist. It is an art of black and white, of darkness and light, its ambiguity arising out of its very geometry and precision.



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continued next page ..

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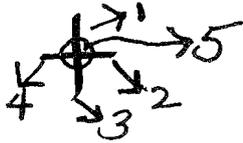
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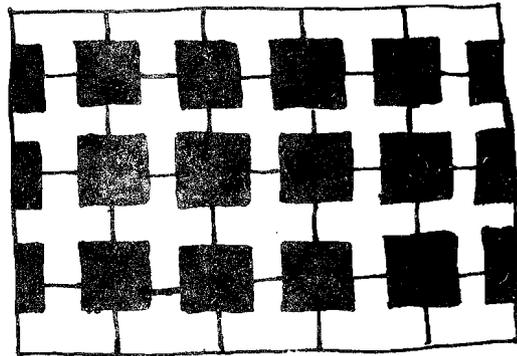
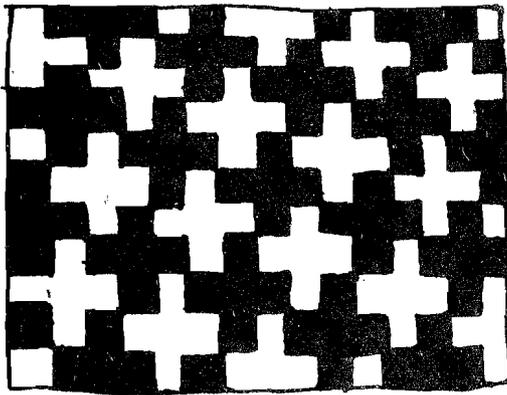
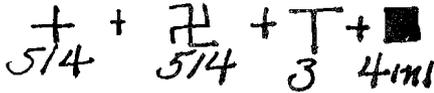
Celtic Art (continued)

Naturally the Celtic use of geometry included at its root an emphasis on the use of numbers. The importance of numbers and completeness dominated the Celt's world. I recommend to anyone interested the fine book Celtic Heritage by Alwyn and Brinley Rees.

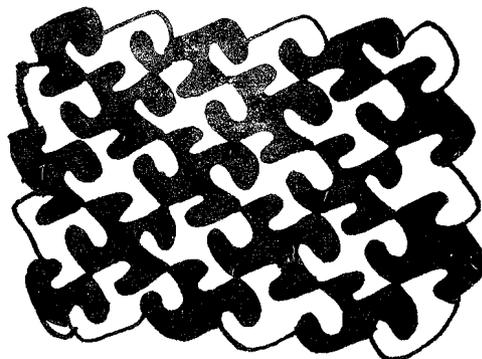
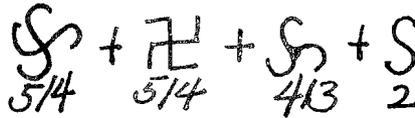
The concept of the Center, in which a 4 sided figure can be understood as having 5 components, as in:



also in political divisions (4 Greenfields of Ireland: Ulster, Munster, Connaught, Lemster, with the center: Meath) was fundamental. From the Center, the junction of all parts of the design and the sum of their numbers, the symbols spread out and grow less in the quantity they represent.



This kind of use of numbers is applicable to this particular simple design. With interlace borders and other motifs the power of numbers and necessity of a complete design still holds. The reader is invited to experiment with all the designs herein.



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will do w if you haven't a penny then God bless you.

ting fat w would you please to put a penny in the old man's

hat w if you haven't got a penny a penny

It was perhaps three Christmases ago that this song came to me out of the air. The words were in the kitchen, and someone was standing behind me taking particular care that I got all the right ones. The melody was in the bathroom, mostly, and I had to find it for myself. The title comes from one of the characters in Dickens' Christmas Carol, who is probably responsible for the song.

It now being almost that time of year again, I wrote it down in hopes that some of you might learn it and perhaps even put a harmony to it.

THE CAROL OF THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

It was near 2 thousand years ago, the whole idea began.
In those days God could still appear and reveal His will to man.
And so for this a child was born upon a winter's night,
And those who understood the sign from the walks of man and woman kind
Came with love in heart and mind and were guided by a light.

And children, shepherds, beasts and kings brought forth the best they had.
And with grace the child received their gifts and blessed them and was glad.
And from that night, all went their ways, the journey now began,
And strengthened by the love of they who blessed him as a babe he lay,
All wrapped in homespun in the hay, the child became a holy man.

And now the time comes round again, good spirits walk the earth,
Reminding us of love and joy and of that baby's birth.
So from this night, all go your ways, your journeys start again,
And now and through the whole year long, while singing every season's song,
To keep the Christmas Spirit strong is the greatest work of men.

It was near 2 thou-sand years a-go, the whole idea be - gan. In
those days God could still appear and re-veal His will to man. And
so for this a child was born u-pon a win - ter's night, and
those who un-der - stood the sign from the walks of man and woman kind
came with love in heart and mind and were guided to him by a light,

NOWELL SING WE CLEAR in Dublin

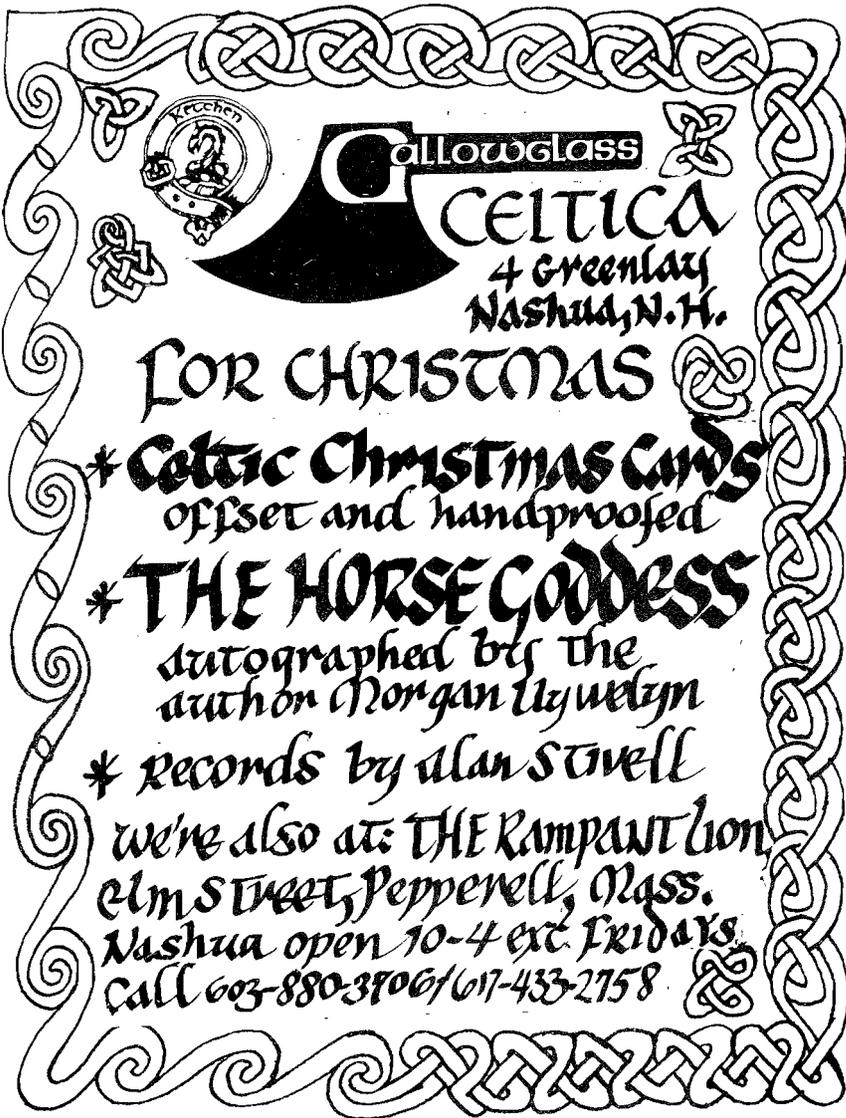
Noel Sing We Clear is a pageant of midwinter and Christmas Carols performed, much in the old manner of travelling carollers and mummers (from the French, momer - to go masked) by John Roberts, Tony Barrand, Steve Woodruff and Fred Breunig. The program combines the two great December celebrations: the pagan Saturnalia or year-end rites, and the (relatively) recent Christian observance of the birthday of Jesus. The music of Nowell is drawn from both folklorists and merrymakers, from both hymnbook and tavern. It combines familiar carols and Christmas songs with very ancient melodies and tales.

The highlight of Nowell Sing We Clear is the mummers play: an age-old observance which combines ritual significance with slapstick. The mummers play, which has been performed in northern Europe at Yuletide for centuries, is essentially a resurrection story in which a superhero St. George triumphs over an archvillain. The plot is a simple one, but the antics of the mummers and the reaction and interaction of the audience turn the play into a high tragicomedy.

As a celebration of the Christmas season, Nowell Sing We Clear is a delight for young and old. As a celebration of traditional song and ritual, it is the high point of the season.

This years performance, at the Dublin Community Church, will be at 8:00 PM on Friday, December 3rd. Tickets are \$6.50 for adults, \$3.00 for children under 12. They are available at The Melody Shop in Keene, The Folkway and Toadstool in Peterborough, and Fiddlers Choice in Jaffrey. The concert is sponsored by the Grand Monadnock Arts Council. For more information call 603/357-3906.

notes by Mary DesRosiers



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PERFORMER LISTING - DECEMBER



- 3 - Bill Staines - Burlington
Welcome Table
- 3 - Barbara Bailey Hutchinson - Folkway
- 3 - Noel Sing We Clear - Dublin Church
- 4 - Michael Cooney - Paine Hall, Harvard U.
617/492-8341
- 4 - Utah Phillips - Church of Christ
W. Hartford, CT 203/563-3263
- 4 - Guy van Duser, Billy Novick - Folkway
- 9,10 - Stan Rogers - Folkway
- 10 - Michael Cooney - Norwich Congregational
Church, Norwich VT.
Muskeg Music - 603/643-2741
- 10 - Noel Sing We Clear - Burlington
Welcome Table
- 11 - Stan Rogers - Church of Christ
W. Hartford, CT 203/563-3263
- 11 - Chris and Dennis Pearne - Folkway
- 11 - Michael Cooney - Burlington
Champlain Folklore Cooperative
- 17 - Mason Daring & Jeannie Stahl - Folkway
- 31 - Guy van Duser & Billy Novick - Folkway
New Years Eve Concert - Champagne Toast
Tickets only

The Folkway - 85 Grove St. - Peterborough, NH
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The Welcome Table and
Champlain Valley Folklore Cooperative
concerts are held at the College St.
Congregational Church in Burlington.
Info number 802/425-3435

*The Monadnock Folklore Society Newsletter is published
monthly. We welcome submissions of articles or information
pertinent to our cause. We reserve the right to determine
the appropriateness of the material.*

*Subscription to the newsletter is included as part of member-
ship, or may be obtained separately for \$5.00 annually.*

CONTRA DANCES - DECEMBER

- 3 - Northfield, MA - Town Hall
- 4 - Frankestown - Town Hall
- 11 - Frankestown - Town Hall
- 17 - Northfield, MA - Town Hall
- 18 - **NELSON** - Town Hall - MFS

Weekly Dances

- Monday - Nelson - Town Hall 8:00 - 10:30
Admission - 1.50
- Sunday - Brattleboro - Green St. School

(Editors note): I did receive notice of the
NEW YEARS EVE DANCE in Brattleboro. I
apologize for not having the details here as
I have misplaced them. Check your local
papers and bulletin boards.

The Folklore Society had a very successful
dance in Greenfield, NH. There was enthusias
to start a regular dance there. Any
suggestions for specific dates are welcome,
as are volunteers to help organize.

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