

# Sacred Sites of Raven's Knoll



## Sacred Sites at Raven's Knoll

There are many sacred sites at Raven's Knoll. Some have etiquette and taboos that should be respected, according to the spiritual traditions in which they are maintained.

Some general etiquette for all sacred sites is:

- Refrain from touching other people's offerings.
- Unless noted, refrain from touching the monument.
- Do not leave full bottles of beverages, but pour out the offerings.
- Do not leave offerings of food. If food must be offered, please notify the Shrine Keepers.
- Do not leave plastic objects (such as beads, glow in the dark items, etc.).
- Do not leave unattended flames (i.e., candles) or burning items (i.e., incense or smudge sticks) unattended. All fires must be approved.
- All sites on Raven's Knoll are open to everyone, regardless of gender identity.

### The Shrine Trail

The Shrine Trail is a purposefully built path which is maintained by the Keepers of the Sacred Spaces and other dedicated volunteers. In 2019, the entrance was moved from near the Jötunn Vé (which itself will be moved in the future) to the pond, near the Sekhmet shrine. The Shrine Trail is home to a variety of dedicated shrines such as: the Trickster, Bards, Sistrum, Bear, the Æsir, and the spirits of the Witch Wood. There is also one shrine for each of the three community champion rites (the Huntress, Stag King and YANA) which occur annually at the Kaleidoscope Gathering. Offerings can be made at any of these shrines, usually along the theme of the shrine. Everyone is welcome in any of the shrines, regardless of their religious path, participation (or not) in the challenge, or gender identity.

The Æsir Vé is the largest ritual space, in its own clearing after emerging from the Shrine Trail, delineated by vé-bond ropes. See below for its rules.

The Witch Wood contains the stangs erected every year during the Witches' Sabbat, which were ritually moved to their own location during the final year of the event. This is the end of the Shrine Trail. Common offerings at the stangs include: stones, coins, bones, jewellery, feathers, carved wood, herbs.

Each shrine is maintained by the group who erected it. A proposal is required for all shrines, and the placement is decided upon by the land owners and Keepers of Sacred Spaces.

### The Birch Grove

The Birch Grove is a natural circular grove in which rituals of many types take place. This ritual space is quite private. It can be used for workshops or rituals, large and small.

### **The Lord and Lady Shrine**

On the path to the Birch Grove and Fire Pit is the Lord and Lady Shrine, one of the first shrines which was established prior to the Shrine Trail. Common offerings include: candles (not lit), incense, jewellery.

### **Dreamcatcher and Red Spiral Cairn**

This Dreamcatcher was erected as a memorial to missing and murdered women in Canada. Please do not touch the dreamcatcher or add items to it. Offerings can be placed under it. The Dreamcatcher is situated at the Red Spiral Cairn, reached by a path found in the Birch Grove. Common offerings: red cloth, the four medicines (tobacco, cedar, sweet grass, sage), verbal blessings. Do not offer alcohol.

The Cairn replaces the Red Spiral, which was established during a women's event that is no longer held. The red stones were ritually moved to their present location in 2018. This is a feminine mysteries site. All people who wish to interact with feminine energy are welcome. Common offerings: a stone taken from a home locale painted red to add to the spiral, favourite flowers, herbs, homemade fibre crafts

### **Standing Stone**

The Standing Stone is a monument at which to worship the Ancestors. Feel free to gently touch the stone and to pour liquid offerings over it. Paint can only be added to the stone in pre-approved and scheduled rituals. Common offerings: food, drink, candles, beads, incense, coins, crystals and stones.

### **Gnome Home**

The Gnome Home is a site to honour the landspirits, Nisser, fairies, álfar, and hidden-folk. Please only approach the home on the short path that connects it to the road. Common offerings: coins, shiny objects, cream, butter, honey, hard alcohol, gnome statues, doll house furniture.

### **The Drumming and Dancing Fire Pit**

This fire pit was created by a dedicated RK volunteer in 2010. It is where many rituals occur, as well as much merriment. It is also a location used when working to maintain the Knoll. However, in addition, it is also a sacred place. The direct centre of the fire pit contains some of the ashes of many a passed community member. Physical offerings to the fire circle are only made during scheduled rituals, while liquid offerings can be made just inside the ring of stones whenever there is no fire.

### **Rainbow Tree**

This cedar tree naturally grows from the ground, and back into the ground. It forms an archway with five branches reaching for the sky. The sacred tree forms a unique gate between the underworld and upperworld. Because of its rainbow form it has become an object of special devotion for the LGBTQ2S+ community. Do not cut or remove leaves, branches or bark from the tree. Take care not to touch the poison ivy in the forest surrounding the tree. Rainbow colour

items can carefully and loosely be draped on the tree, as an act of devotion. Do not leave offerings directly under the arch. Common offerings: crawling under the arch, personal poetry and writing, rainbow coloured items, herbs, verbal blessings.

### **Sacred Well**

The Well is a small pond that fills naturally from underground water sources, and is surrounded by 'witch trees' such as alders. There is a memorial garden at this location in which trees, flowers and bushes have been planted in memory of lost loved ones. The ashes of many people have been offered to the Well, as well as under several of the memorial plants.

The Well is connected to ancient holy wells through having water from places such as Glastonbury, Bath, and Lourdes poured directly into it, as well as all 'unity waters' being added from many druidic rituals. The Well is a place of special devotion to Nerthus and Brigid, as well as a general sacred space and wishing well. All physical items from the other shrines at the Knoll are ritually deposited here by Auz and helpers, after spending some time at their locations. Take extreme care if you are collecting water from the Well, as the banks are steep and slippery. There is no swimming or bathing in the Well. Please do not deposit copper items in the well. All clothes tied in the trees should be natural fibre only. Common offerings: silver and gold coloured coins, jewellery, weapons, cloth.

### **Pet Cemetery**

There is a pet burial location at the Knoll on which work is on-going. A doorway reminds us of how these loved ones shared a home with us and our connection to them still. Common offerings: pictures, pet treats, collars, name tags, catnip.

### **Cairn**

This is a male mysteries site. All people who wish to interact with masculine energy are welcome. Common offerings: a stone taken from a home locale, thunder and lightning blessed objects (like lightning struck wood, water collected during thunderstorms), personal jewelry, tools.

### **Nematón**

This is a sacred place for honouring the Celtic pantheon and heroes of Celtic legend. The spear that currently stands was raised to the god Lugh, the sun over waves is for Manannán mac Lir. In 2019, a stunning altar to Brigid was erected at the Three Rivers festival. In word and deed, only honour the Celtic deities in this place; refrain from discussing or mentioning Gods or beings from other traditions (e.g., Diana, Hecate, Thor, Jesus, Buddha, etc.). Common offerings: grain, song, poetry, drink, alcohol.

### **The Spiral**

The Spiral is a sacred path leading to an open grove. It is used for contemplating transformation, nature, and interacting with Spirit. Do not ride bicycles into the Spiral; scooters, power chairs and golf carts are permitted as accommodation vehicles. Unless in a scheduled ritual, please keep sounds low while walking the path, as others may be close by in quiet

contemplation. The Spiral had become known as the Witch Ring or Witches' Spiral, but the process of re-wilding the space began in 2019. The stangs were then moved to their own site on the Shrine Trail. The Spiral is open to everyone and rituals of any denomination are welcome. Do not enter the Spiral at night without express permission. Please stay to the path, as we are trying to encourage undergrowth and it is easy to get lost in the New Pine Forest.

### **Æsir Vé**

This is a sacred place for honouring the Gods of the Norse / Germanic pantheon. Currently god-poles for Skaði (Skadhi), Freya, Frigga, Oðin (Odin), Freyr, Eir, and Þórr (Thor) stand in the enclosure. The gate is formed from two god-poles, on the left is Syn and on the right is Heimdall. (A movable Ratatoskr pole moves between the entrances to any of the Shrines.) To enter within the roped off enclosure an oath must be made and certain rules followed. The oath must be spoken aloud at the entrance and can be administered by any person who has previously taken the oath. In this Vé, three basic rules should be strictly followed as a sign of respect for the holy powers and to ensure one's own continued good fortune.

#### 1. Honour only the Æsir

- Honour and speak of only the Gods and goddesses of the Æsir and Vanir (e.g., Thor and Frigg, Frey and Freya) or their clear allies (e.g., Ægir and Ran), and those bound in kinship to them by blood-oath (e.g., Loki) within this vé.
- Beings that stand in opposition to the Gods (e.g., Fenrir, Hella, Jörmungand, Thiazi) should not be honoured within this enclosure.
- Gods, Goddesses or spirits of other pantheons or monotheistic faiths should not be honoured in the holy enclosure (e.g., Diana, Cernunnos, Jesus, Baron Samedi, Lakshimi).
- This must be demonstrated in word and action. Thus, do not wear signs or symbols of Gods, goddess or spirits not of this Heathen custom. (Tattoos are OK, since they are part of you.)

#### 2. Keep frið

- Maintain peaceful and socially harmonious relations in your actions and deeds between people and Gods and spirits.
- Carry nothing that might be considered a weapon into the upper Vé.
- Tools to be used to maintain the sacred enclosure and certain items to be explicitly used as part of a ritual to honour the Gods may, in some circumstances, enter the sacred grounds (e.g., hammer, wood carving knife, ritual spear). Check with a goði or gythia who has previously performed public services in this Vé before bearing such items before the Gods.
- Do not insult people or Gods within the Vé, even in jest.

#### 3. Be clean

- Let no human bodily excretions touch the ground or any object in the Vé.

- Definitely do not allow any spittle, urine, or feces to come in contact with the sacred area.
- Avoid contact with earwax, tears, sweat, pus, and blood, if possible. If emotion or medical necessity or extreme youth do not allow one to follow this taboo, it is understood some contact may occur and is understood as permissible.
- Refrain from personal self-care (e.g., blowing your nose, spitting out a bug, applying bug spray or sunscreen) in the Vé. Simply leave the Vé completely to do so.

Also, please turn off and leave behind all electronic communication devices. There is a 'weapons-rack' with a shelf has been constructed just outside of the Vé upon which to place, hang or rest any items that are not being taken into the holy grounds.

Offerings should be made only on the stone altar, called a hörgr. Do not place or pour offerings on the poles or at their base (this rots them more quickly). Common offerings: food (especially apples), alcohol (especially mead), tools, silver coins, jewelry, crafted objects (carved wood and bone, weaving and spinning, etc.)

### **Jötunn Vé**

This is a sacred place for honouring the jötunn of Norse / Germanic mythology. The jötnar are a tribe of beings akin to the Gods, but that are (for the most part) not welcome in Ásgarð. They are sometimes glossed as "giants." A pole for Loki, a pole for Hyrrokkin stand in this enclosure, and one for Hella (Hel) stand in the Vé . (A movable Ratatoskr pole moves between the entrances to any of the Shrines.) As a sign of respect only Jötunn should be honoured in this enclosure, which can include Jötnar who are allies of the Gods (such as Ægir and Ran), went to Ásgarð as brides (such as Skaði or Gerð), or were blood brother kin (such as Loki). Gods descended from giants that are clearly in opposition to jötnar, such as Óðinn (Odin) or Tyr, should not be honoured at this lower Vé. This Vé will be moved in 2020 or 2021, as its current location is eroding and its popularity demands expansion. Common offerings: food (especially fat and meat), alcohol (especially hard alcohol or mead), tobacco, bones, stones, ice, caffeinated beverages, sugar, salt, herbs, charms.

### **Graceland, also known as the Elvii Shrine**

The King reminds us to not be too serious about anything and to shake our hips from time-to-time, that a good thing never really dies, and that life is pretty absurd and surreal. This is a Discordian shrine dedicated to the amusing paradoxes and surreal absurdities of existence. The main rule is fnord. Leave nothing but your smiles, smoked butts and roaches in the cans provided. This area is used by those who wish to partake in cannabis, socialize and talk. There is an 'art installation in the woods' that will be begun in 2020 across from the shrine.