



# Blood and Mistletoe: The History of the Druids in Britain

*By Ronald Hutton*

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**Blood and Mistletoe: The History of the Druids in Britain** By Ronald Hutton

Crushed by the Romans in the first century A.D., the ancient Druids of Britain left almost no reliable evidence behind. Because of this, historian Ronald Hutton shows, succeeding British generations have been free to reimagine, reinterpret, and reinvent the Druids. Hutton's captivating book is the first to encompass two thousand years of Druid history and to explore the evolution of English, Scottish, and Welsh attitudes toward the forever ambiguous figures of the ancient Celtic world.

Druids have been remembered at different times as patriots, scientists, philosophers, or priests; sometimes portrayed as corrupt, bloodthirsty, or ignorant, they were also seen as fomenters of rebellion. Hutton charts how the Druids have been written in and out of history, archaeology, and the public consciousness for some 500 years, with particular focus on the romantic period, when Druids completely dominated notions of British prehistory. Sparkling with legends and images, filled with new perspectives on ancient and modern times, this book is a fascinating cultural study of Druids as catalysts in British history.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"'Blood and Mistletoe is undoubtedly the most extensive and systematic account of its subject ever written.' (William Whyte, Times Literary Supplement) 'This is an ably researched and well-written book.' (Peter Ackroyd, The Times) 'Lucid, open-minded, encyclopaedic and yet still fascinating - almost perfect history if such a thing were possible.' (Terry Jones) 'This book is a tour de force: surely the definitive work on our perception of the Druids.' (David V. Barrett, The Independent) 'Hutton takes a refreshingly even-handed view.' (Noel Malcolm, Sunday Telegraph) 'Written with great verve, this is a sparkling account of how the Druids were reinvented over the last four centuries.' (Jeremy Black, BBC History Magazine) 'my only regret is that although it extends to a quarter of a million words, it is not a few score thousand longer.' (Tom Shippey, London Review of Books) 'should be a copy of this important, occasionally sensational and highly entertaining book in every Welsh library... Hutton's scholarship is not only breathtakingly thorough but also ruthlessly critical.' (Timothy Mowl, Times Higher Education Supplement)"

#### About the Author

Ronald Hutton is professor of history, University of Bristol, and the author of many books including *Witches, Druids, and King Arthur: Studies in Paganism, Myth, and Magic*, and *Debates in Stuart History*. He lives in Bristol, UK.

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