

Diversity of Toilets

June 29, 2005

I'm stealing a moment in a borrowed house to try and write this while Annie, one of our greywater crew, takes a shower.

Yes, we have a rural convergence center for the actions. Finally, after all the setbacks and last-minute disappointments. It's in a bend of the Forth River, with views of Stirling Castle, the Wallace Monument, and the Achill hills. We're camping onsite, setting up. I got there Monday, after a weekend of travel so insane I won't even describe it or you will be calling the trauma team to do an intervention. Monday was one of those horrible days when everything falls apart. Sunday night a visitor in some altered state of consciousness tried to swim in the treacherous river and nearly drowned. The Rescue Squad and police had to come out—fortunately, he was saved. Monday morning, the metal tracking for the road didn't come. The big tents, marquees in the language they speak over here, fell through due to storm damage at last weekend's festival in Glastonbury. The biodiesel generators, big water tanks, and compost toilet barrels fell through. We lost about a third of the camping area to methane emissions from the former dump. Basically just about everything that could go wrong did. A whole lot of people were standing around eager to do jobs that couldn't be done. Nonetheless, people mostly remained civil to each other, and tried to solve the problems.

Emma Magenta, a magical forester woman from the Highlands, came up with the idea of using scrap wood, the half-rounds and shaved-off pieces from milling, to lay a track. Other people with road and truck experience contributed ideas and everyone pitched in to carry wood and lay the track, about two hundred meters of it, lovingly and carefully placed, and eventually covered with chicken wire. It was exhausting carrying heavy batches of wood, but satisfying, and nice to do something that required no thought or analysis. We had a meeting, got organized, and Tuesday was much better. We now have two compost toilets almost built, plus the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency gave us permission to also do pit toilets. We have chemical toilets required by the Council as well, giving us a true diversity of toilets. In a day or two, perhaps I can stop obsessing about toilets and start thinking about something else. As important as toilets are, there is more to life, I vaguely recall.

At the end of the night, one of the young women activists from Edinburgh briefed those of us who were interested on the plans for the Faery Army, which is gathering energy and sparking many creative ideas. After a late, late night meeting, some of us sat around the faery hawthorne tree in the field and held an impromptu circle, grounding and listening and singing. Red-haired Rooh has a magic way with songs, and has a beautiful chant to mother thorn that we sang. John, from Ireland, plays a magic fiddle—I met him a year ago at Tara on Beltane when we were dancing around a faery thorn there, and he sang an Irish tune about a Faery Army. There's magic working and

energies moving—and we're not moving them, they are moving us. It's going to be an interesting week.

And there's lots more to write but Annie is out of the shower now and I'm going to send this out while I have internet access. More later.

-- *Starhawk*

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Starhawk is an activist, organizer, and author of *The Earth Path, Webs of Power: Notes from the Global Uprising*, *The Fifth Sacred Thing* and other books on feminism, politics and earth-based spirituality. She teaches [Earth Activist Trainings](#) that combine permaculture design and activist skills, and works with the [RANT trainer's collective](#), that offers training and support for mobilizations around global justice and peace issues.