

## Boggy Archeology

I don't remember much of my death, and I don't remember much of my life. My conscious existence only began a few years ago, or maybe it was decades, I'm not so sure. Time is a weird soup for my old brain. These days many people come to visit me, students and their teachers, families, people from many places who decide to come by my little circular chamber. I call my chamber a public grave, they call it a museum. Some stay for only a minute, others for longer and they come really close to me and inspect the crevices of my brown body. They can't come too close, though, because there is a glass screen between me and the rest of the world. My neck, left shoulder, arm, and hand gain the most attention because they look the best. That's what Doctor Daly said at least. My torso is also still quite nice, she says. My hip and leg and foot not so much. These are crushed and mostly just bone these days.

Doctor Daly and her team inspected every little nook of my body. That was before I got laid into my public grave. Once I was in a very loud tube, I don't know why or what it even was, but I think it showed them my inside somehow. Not what I feel or what I think, but literally the inside of my body. Their probing might sound very invasive, and I'd be lying if I said it wasn't ever uncomfortable, but really, they took great care of me. They dried me, cleaned me, touched me with gloves and never tried to hurt me. On the contrary, they made sure I never knocked hard against anything or was exposed to too much light. Many of the things they found out about me even helped me remember things about myself, because I forgot a lot during the time of my death and them digging me up.

They found out what I had eaten before I died. They knew that in the few months before my death, I had mostly eaten grains, vegetables, and fruit. My favorite fruits were apples and blackberries, but above all, I loved warm bread and sheep. But they don't know that. They say I was from before christ, which I don't know what that means because I've never heard of christ, and I couldn't learn about it from their conversations, but me not knowing what it is makes sense if I was from before it. I was over 25 years old at my time of death. They estimated that I must've been around 1.75 meters tall, but again, I don't know what meters mean or whether that is right or wrong. I do know that it has to do with height. When I was alive, I was seven troighid and three ordlach tall which was extraordinarily tall for past standards. The implications of my height were both a blessing and a curse back then. A curse because beds, doors, tables and desks, everything was quite small. And when I said I was considered extraordinarily tall, it really was weirdly tall, so people looked at me as if I was strange sometimes. A blessing because, if at all, only men were ever thought to be that tall which added to my masculinity. But they don't know that I think about my height like that.

They theorized a lot about why my right leg was missing. They tried to find out whether my leg had been severed before or after my death and how it had been severed. Had it maybe been chewed off by an animal or cut off? If it was cut off, did it happen in an accident or had it been done by a human? If it had been done by a human, what was their reason to do it? Had it been one step in a sacrifice? All these questions remained unanswered for the people that studied me, but they did make me remember. I remembered that animals were indeed involved in the destruction of my leg. Or maybe it was just one animal, I can't remember. But definitely an animal. It wasn't an exciting wild animal so maybe it was cattle. It must've been cattle because that's what I came into contact with on a regular basis. Cows maybe since they are strong and big. But I don't actually remember what kind of animal it was, just that it wasn't an animal I had never heard of or never seen before. It's instances like these that are the most agonizing these days. Sometimes the memories are almost there, I can almost grasp them, and I want to squeeze them fast in my fist. But then they flow away and the only thing I remember is that there was almost a new memory, but I don't even remember what it was related to or what had even triggered my almost-memory. Like walking into a room with a purpose and then forgetting all about it.

My leg was not cut off in a sacrifice. I am very sure of that. I have no pain connected to the memory of losing my leg. I don't even remember a lot of blood. Maybe that means my death was a quick one. I also remember that I died on a grassy hill and that the hill was close to where I lived. The sky was overcast and gray on that day, so much so that it could've been any time of the day. It didn't rain.

The people who found me kept talking about a bog which is a place, I think. And from what they said, it sounds like the watery dangerous place that was also close to where I lived. It really wasn't far away but no one ever went there because it was too dangerous. There were stories of people sinking into the ground and drowning there but I never saw it happen with my own eyes. At least I have no memories of that. I don't remember dying there but that is where they found me and it's the reason why my body is still in such a good condition.

In Doctor Daly's team, most people wanted to call me Carbury Woman at first. If I could've haunted them for that decision, I would've. Or maybe I wouldn't have because I'm too shy, but I would have scorned them for that decision for the rest of my conscious after-life. Oh, I don't even want to imagine an existence like that and who knows how long I'll have this ability? It could last well into a time of after christ.

Luckily, Una Miss Byrne put the dots together. Una Miss Byrne's name is a bit confusing because sometimes people call her Una and other times it's Miss Byrne. It took me a long time to figure out that the two names referred to the same person and then I was confused why she was called both Una and Miss Byrne. Then at some point I thought that maybe Miss is a title but why would

Doctor Daly use a title for someone that seems to be in a lower social position, while Una Miss Byrne and the rest of the team uses Doctor Daly's full name all the time without any title? Eventually I settled with Una Miss Byrne because that seemed to make the most sense.

Anyway, it was Una Miss Byrne that first voiced her doubts about naming me Carbury Woman. She is very interested in people like me, and she knows a great deal about us. The main reason for her doubts was my chest. I had scars along my skin which had deepened as I spent all that time in the bog. There were no nipples left. I remember how it had happened, how I got the scars. It was the most painful thing that had ever happened to me, and it had been bloody and dangerous. The person in the village who was the best at taking care of sick people did it. I asked him to do it. He must've denied a couple of times because I remember a few scenes where I asked him to do it. I remember saying that my chest hurt a lot, even though it didn't. I said that removing it would surely help in the long run. The healer must've agreed eventually because another memory is of him cutting away my breast. I cannot describe the pain, how much I wailed and cried and screamed. Losing my leg was nothing compared to it. Most of the memories are just quick impressions of bloodied red stone and wood, hands holding me in place, a bowl of water, shushing and humming, my knees, my toes wriggling in anticipation of the procedure. Everything accompanied by the burning pain of a sharp edge cutting, followed by the cold wet pain of an open gaping wound. Numbness and yet pain emanating from somewhere within me. The horrible sight of my bloody torso. I do not recommend that pain to anyone who does not feel like they need to get through it. But I had to, despite the risk. I could've easily died that day or the days after, but I was lucky enough to live. The healer had done a job beyond anyone's expectation. I don't know how long it took me to heal but I have the distinct and very proud memory of sitting by the river with my naked torso and the big scars on my chest prickling from the sun light.

What if the chest was removed for a medical reason? That's what someone asked. I wonder, was my reason not a medical reason? The discussions that followed regarding my chest and the various preconceptions that they had were embarrassing and uncomfortable to listen to. It's like finding out your parents talk about you to other people and tell them things that aren't your side of events at all. They're a gross misrepresentation and an incomplete picture that is still painted as a whole by someone that has power over you. Or they're painfully and utterly true. There were many times I wish I could've just told them my reasons if I were just able to speak. It is hard to be dead sometimes.

Una Miss Byrne also pointed out my hair, short and similar to the conventions of men of my time. My hair is maroon now but it used to be brown. Una Miss Byrne's implications led to more questions in Doctor Daly's team, of whom some were tired of them and just wanted to slab the name on me and be done with it. But Una Miss Byrne persevered and worked on writing a paper about me.

I don't know how big the units of paper are these days, but she seemed to take a long time to write on it. She talked to Doctor Daly about it quite a lot, and most of it I didn't understand. But somewhere in that process, the team decided to call me Carbury Bog Body. I am fine with that. I don't need to haunt anybody after all.