Early books on Druidism printed before 1820
Here is a selection of early books on Druidism in the Fintry Trust Library, all of which were printed before 1820

**William Borlase:** Antiquities, Historical and Monumental, of the County of Cornwall: consisting of several essays on the First Inhabitants, Druid-superstition, Customs and Remains of the most remote antiquity in Britain and the British Isles, exemplified and proven by Monuments now extant in Cornwall and the Scilly Islands, with a vocabulary of the Cornu-British language.

Second edition revised with several additions, by the author, to which is added a map of Cornwall and two new plates Illustrated. London: Printed by W. Bowyers and J. Nichols. 1769. (Pp. 464)

William Borlase (1695-1772) was a Cornish antiquary, geologist and naturalist, and a Fellow of the Royal Society. He was a friend of Alexander Pope for whose grotto at Twickenham he provided the greater part of the fossils and minerals.

Borlase played a significant role in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century revival of interest and research into the Druids and megalithic remains.

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**John Toland:** A Critical History of the Celtic Religion and Learning: containing an account of the Druids; or, the Priests and Judges, of the Voids, or the Diviners and Physicians; and of the Bards, or the Poets and Heralds; of the Ancient Gauls, Britons, Irish and Scots. With the History of Abaris, the Hyperborian, Priest of the Sun. To which is added An Abstract of the Life of the Author.

London: Lackington, Hughes, Harding, and Co. (1814?) (Pp. 252)

John Toland (1670-1722) was a rationalist philosopher and free-thinker who wrote numerous books and pamphlets. Born in Ireland, he ended his life in London ‘as he had lived, in great poverty, in the midst of his books, with his pen in his hand.’
William Cooke: An Enquiry into the Patriarchal and Druidical Religion, Temples, &c.: Being the substance of some letters to Sir Hildebrand Jacob, Bart. wherein, the Primaeval Institution and Universality of the Christian Scheme is manifested; The Principles of the Patriarchs and Druids are laid open and shewn to correspond entirely with each other, and both with the doctrines of Christianity; the Earliest Antiquities of the British islands are explained; and, An Account given of the Sacred Structures of the Druids; Particularly the stupendous works of Abiry, Stonehenge, &c., in Wiltshire, are minutely described.


William Cooke (c.1710-1780) was an antiquarian and vicar of Enford in Wiltshire. He maintained that ‘Druical Temples were laid out in such Figures as were hieroglyphical and intended to describe the Nature of the Divinity’. On Avebury, Cooke proposed ‘that it was really a Temple sacred to the ever-blessed and undivided Trinity’.

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John Smith: Galic Antiquities: consisting of a History of the Druids, particularly of those of Caledonia; a Dissertation on the Authenticity of the Poems of Ossian, and a Collection of Ancient Poems, translated from the Galic of Ullin, Ossian, Orran, &c.

Edinburgh: T. Cadell. 1780 (Pp. 352)

bound with: Squire Choir Gaur; the Grand Orrery of the Ancient Druids, commonly called Stonehenge, on Salisbury Plain, Astronomically explained, and Mathematically proved to be a Temple erected in the earliest Ages, for observing the Motions of the Heavenly bodies. Illustrated with copper plates. Salisbury: the Author. 1771. (Pp. 73)

John Smith was the Minister at Kilbrandon in Argyleshire and was widely regarded as an accomplished Gaelic scholar. He was involved in the controversy surrounding the poems of Ossian (published by James Macpherson in 1760) and argues here for their authenticity. The consensus now is that the poems were written by Macpherson himself.
**John Ogilvie:** The Fane of the Druids. A Poem. In two books. (This edition printed without the author’s name)

London: Printed for J. Murray. 1787. (Pp. 50, 38)

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John Ogilvie (1732-1813) was a poet and a Minister in the Church of Scotland, at Midmar in Aberdeenshire. This was the first poem entirely devoted to Druids. The poem shows Druids as devotees of peace, education and the one true God, led by a silver-haired chief robed in white.

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**Jacob Des Moulins:** Antiqua Restaurata A Concise Historical Account of the Ancient Druids; shewing their Civil and Religious Government, Ceremonies, Groves, Derivations and Etymologies; With Biographical Sketches; Also, the Remains of Druidical Antiquity in England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and France.

Frontispiece of Arch Druid.

London: T. Jones (1794?) (Pp. 58)

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This book is dedicated to ‘The Brethren of the Most Noble and Venerable Order of Druids, under the sanction of the Grand Lodge of England’. The author in his preface says that ‘whatever vindictive proofs I may aver of the sublimity of our Ancestors, it must at the same time be owned, if they had their bright side they had a dark one too.....’
Edward Jones: The Bardic Museum, of Primitive British Literature; and other Admirable Rarities; forming the Second Volume of the Musical, Poetical and Historical Relicks of the Welsh Bards and Druids: drawn from authentic documents of remote antiquity (with great pains now rescued from oblivion) and never before published: containing, the Bardic Triads; Historic Odes; Eulogies; Songs; Elegies; Memorials of the Tombs of the Warriors; of King Arthur and His Knights; Regalias; the Wonders of Wales, et cetera: with English translations and Historic Illustrations: Likewise, the Ancient War-tunes of the Bards; to these National Melodies are added New Basses; with Variations, for the Harp, or Harpsichord; Violin, or Flute. London. Printed for the Author. 1802 (Pp 112)

Edward Jones: Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards: preserved by tradition, and authentic manuscripts, from very remote antiquity, never before published. To the Bardic Tunes are added Variations for the Harp, Piano-Forte, Violin, or Flute, with a select collection of the Pennillion, and Englynion, or Poetic Blossoms, Epigrammatic Stanzas, and Pastoral Songs of Wales, with English translations. Likewise, a General History of the Bards, and Druids, from the earliest period to the present time: with an account of their music, and poetry. To which is prefixed, a copious Dissertation of the Musical Instruments of the Aboriginal Britons. The Third Edition, augmented, and corrected by the author, with additional plates (The First Volume). London: Printed for the Author. 1808. (Pp. 184)

Edward Jones (1752-1824), known as ‘Bardd y Brenin’, was a harpist, music antiquary and Eisteddfod judge. He studied and collected a great variety of traditional music, publishing in addition to Welsh melodies the music of other parts of the British Isles and also of many countries worldwide. Among the music is the reputed first printing of the music to ‘Nos Galan’, now used in the popular carol ‘Deck the Halls’. The publication of these books cost Jones first his office and later his extensive library which had to be auctioned off to pay his debts.
Edward Davies: Celtic Researches, on the Origin, Traditions & Language of the Ancient Britons; with some introductory sketches on Primitive Society.

Edward Davies: The Mythology and Rites of the British Druids: ascertained by National Documents; and compared with the General Traditions and Customs of Heathenism, as illustrated by the most Eminent Antiquaries of our Age, with an Appendix containing Ancient Poems and Extracts, with some remarks on Ancient British Coins.
(includes Section II – General View of Druidical Theology – Character and Rites of Hu, the Helio-Arkite God – the Bacchus of the heathen Britons)  London: Printed for J. Booth. 1809 (Pp. 642)

Edward Davies (1756-1831) was a Welsh antiquary and curate, known as ‘Celtic Davies’. He was closely involved in the revival of Druidic tradition and was highly influential in his day. In 1823 he was made a Companion of Literature by the Royal Society of Literature. He was one of the first to question the authenticity of the claims of Iolo Morganwg with regard to the Gorsedd of Bards. One keen reader of his books was William Blake, who used his books as the basis for his painting ‘the Ancient Britons’ (now lost).

A Complete History of the Druids; their Origin, Manners, Customs, Powers, Temples, Rites, and Superstition; with an Inquiry into their Religion, and its Coincidence with the Patriarchal.  With two engravings.

This work may have been written by a Mr Green, a Lichfield antiquary. The book contains a striking image of a wicker man: ‘The most solemn sacrifice, either in Gaul or Britain, was the human hecatomb they offered under the shape of a man. They used to rear and dress up a huge statue, or image of a man, whose limbs consisted of twigs woven together in the nature of basket-ware: they filled it with live men, and after that, set it on fire, and so destroyed the poor creatures in the smoke and flames.’
Travels of a British Druid; or, the Journal of Elynd: illustrative of the Manners and Customs of Ancient Nations; with Appropriate Reflections for Youth. To which is added, A History of the Doctrines of the Druids, and of their Final Extirpation in Caledonia. In Two Volumes


An educational novel in which Elynd the Druid travels to Rome, Greece, and Egypt. ‘The juvenile reader may ... with safety follow the footsteps of the British Druid, through those countries famed for the earthy knowledge of wisdom and science, and become familiarised with ancient manners, without risk of corrupting his own.’

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William Richards: The Welsh Nonconformists’ Memorial; or, Cambro-British Biography; containing Sketches of the Founders of the Protestant Dissenting Interest in Wales. To which are prefixed, An Essay on Druidism, and Introduction of the Gospel into Britain. With an Appendix, including the author’s minor pieces, and his Last Views of the Christian Religion. (Edited with notes and illustrations by John Evans)

Frontispiece of An Ancient Druid

London. 1820 (Pp. 504)

William Richards (1749-1818) was a General Baptist minister and historian, who was born in Pembrokeshire but lived most of his life in Kings Lynn. In 1803 he married Emiah Owens, who died two years later. Profoundly distressed, Richards was unable to go out into society, but he did produce historical essays, which are collected in this volume.