

SerpentStar

Newsletter for members of
The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids
in the Southern Hemisphere.

Imbolc 2009



Early wildflowers at Wyeuro



wyverne's words

G'day, Southern Hemisphere OBODies!
Welcome to the Imbolc 2009 issue of SerpentStar.

Spring has sprung, the grass has riz - that's certainly true here at Wyeuro! We've had a satisfying amount of rain at last and now the wild flowers are beginning to bloom. You can almost **see** the energy rising in the land, and feel the pulse of life quickening after the coldness of winter.

SerpentStar is starting to realise an important role it has begun to play in Southern Hemisphere druidry, in keeping us all aware of each other and where at least some of our collective and individual foci are. It's an exciting time for druidry as worldwide we seem to be actively seeking our identity, celebrating our diversity while nevertheless finding and confirming our unity, the coming into harmony of our many contributing parts. Being in the Southern Hemisphere does set us apart. Being druids unites us with druids worldwide. Being antipodean distinguishes us. In honouring both the distinctiveness and the continuity of our Druidries we can be aware of ourselves co-creating our collective identity as it comes into being. When we know who we are, we'll understand better what to do.

The one thing that makes SerpentStar such a help in understanding our identity is the reader input. In poems, our souls speak to each other, in articles we share what's on our minds, photo-essays and reports let us share visions and events, through links to interesting urls we share our wider interests. Let's hear more from you - email a paragraph, poem or idea to me anytime - just mention SerpentStar in the subject.

In this issue as usual we have poems and articles images and ideas to inspire and delight you and enrich your experience of life as druids, bards and ovates. Thank you everyone who was brave enough and generous enough with your time and energy to share your own personal magic with us all.

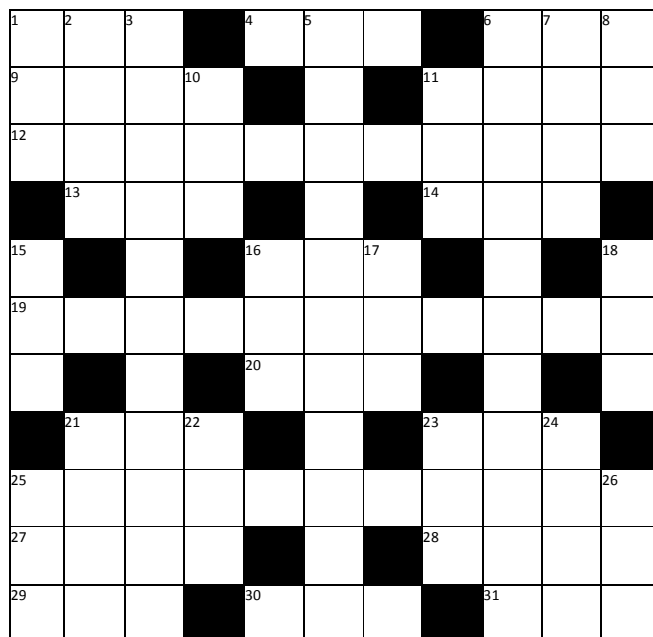
Have a BLESSED IMBOLC!!!!

wyverne/1

SerpentStar comes out four times a year at each of the Fire Festivals, Imbolc, Beltane, Lughnassadh and Samhuinn. **Subscriptions:** By email, free - just email me at wyeuro@bigpond.com. By post, send \$Aus12.50 made out to v o wyverne to PMB2 Angaston SA 5353 Australia. **Contributions** are eagerly sought by email or post. Please make sure your contributions do not violate copyright laws. **Opinions** expressed in **SerpentStar** by contributors are their own and not necessarily the opinions of the editor or of the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids.

Deadline for next issue: Sunday, 26th Oct 2009

Crossword Puzzle



Clues Across

1. Little hat.
4. Kind.
6. Canine.
9. Fierce man.
11. Toy building blocks.
12. Assumed in advance.
13. Snake.
14. One-spot card.
16. Belonging to that female.
19. Diligence.
20. Timid.
21. Maori food.
23. A direction (abbreviation).
25. Ruin.
27. Metal bearing rocks.
28. Female gonad.
29. Public transport.
30. Donkey.
31. Catching device.

Clues Down

1. Police officer (slang).
2. Place in India.
3. Assumes in advance.
5. Little people of Ireland.
6. Account of appearance.
7. Architectural moulding.
8. A deity.
10. Psychic ability.
11. Voudun nature spirit.
15. Fairy.
16. Belonging to that male.
17. A beam.
18. An Irish goddess.
21. South American country.
22. Belonging to that thing.
23. Housing for pigs.
24. Sharpen.
25. A small lump.
26. Louse egg.

Why the Secrecy?

We know you've been involved in some **great rituals**, public or just private home celebrations, having all kinds of **magical experiences** alone or in groups with other pagans, in city or country, been hatching some remarkable **druidic insights** and discovering well- springs of **creativity and talents** you never knew you had until now!

Why not share them with **SerpentStar?**
Articles, poems, stories, art, photos, links, items of interest, long or short, for SS.

Children's work especially welcome.
 If it's not your own work, make sure it doesn't violate copyright laws.

GreenMan

He exists now
He exists here
In the tree outside
The Bushes are his home

He exists now
He exists here
In the forest out there
In the ferns of the floor

He exists now
He exists here
In the giants of the land
In the leaves of the roof.



A Green Man with the body of a [faun](#): *Green Mason*
by Australian artist Graham Wilson (21st century) ...
from wikipedia

Morfran the Poet

My Office

I sit at my desk
Looking at the piles of paper
Some require marking
Others could be sorted
More need to be files
Some have migrated to the floor
To join the books stored there.
Packaging lines the shelves
To be looked at and compared
Some stands on the table
Larger packs all over the floor.
Not a lot of room to walk
Just a chair in a small square
For me to sit and wonder
Where did all this paper
And packaging come from?
As I look out the window
watching the blackbird feed
On the berries of the flowering
tree
That is my focus, my life.

The Garden

The garden stands bare
But for the green silverbeet
New spring onions recently
planted
Fallow is this time of year
Last of the lettuces survives
The hard frosts that have come
early
Remains of corn and tomatoes
To be cleared away
Compost waits to be added
Firewood pile needs restacking
As it starts to shrink
And even the weeds
Seem to have slowed
This is winter in the garden.



Anthology & CD of Southern Hemisphere Bardry. Contributions now being eagerly sought.

*O Hear the Voice of the Bard,
Who present past and future sees
Whose ears have heard the holy word
That walked among the ancient trees...*
William Blake, *Druid*.

It's nearly six years since *Southern Echoes, An Anthology of Druid Writing from the Southern Hemisphere* was published by a team of dedicated editors, and it's an excellent record of where we Bards, Ovates and Druids are, spiritually and artistically, in the early 21st Century. Even six years on, it's a refreshing read. We Southern Hemisphere Bards have vital, vivid voices, speaking of things never spoken of before in these ancient lands so new to our own people, in which such a diverse range of cultures meet and marry.

The first anthology was a resounding success because of the enthusiasm of all who contributed. There are more of us now, and our talents are developing, so let's give them an airing in a new Southern Hemisphere anthology. This is also a call to singers, song-writers and musicians, story-tellers and actors: all that hidden and not so hidden talent out there: YOU ALL KNOW WHO YOU ARE! Send a selection of your best mp3s, cassettes, CDs or whatever you've got to send to me, wyverne, at wyeuro@bigpond.com, or send it on snail-back to SerpentStar C/- Wyeuro, PMB2, Angaston, SA 5353, Australia. and we'll see about getting up a CD to showcase our best talent.

wyverne

Imbolc's many blessings are here at last. The long cold winter is drawing to a close and the early signs of spring are visible all around us. This is a time of new beginnings, to take a fresh look at our lives, to see new opportunities, and to give ourselves and our communities a healthy rejuvenation in the blessings of this vitalising time of the year

Imbolc

Imbolc is the time of the first milk, when fresh, green grass first reappears to nourish the lactating animals, giving strength and health to their newborn young. There's an invigorating freshness and newness everywhere as the sap rises anew in the trees and in city and country, we can feel and join in the joyous response of all nature. The choirs of birdsong are swelled with voices of the newly fledged young, and the strengthening sunshine fills everything with warmth and beauty.



Look for the first wildflowers, the earliest fruit tree blossoms and the exuberant greenness of the land.



Imbolc is
the early **spring-time** in the circle of the year,
the young **crescent moon** in the circle of the lunar month,
the **early dawn** time in the circle of the new day,
the time of **childhood and youth** in the circle of our lives.



Imbolc is a time for the sowing of seed. This can be taken literally – it's a perfect time to start or renew a garden, be it just a pot of herbs or an outdoor vegie patch or flowerbed. Or it can be symbolic – a time for beginning new projects, for taking on board new ideas, or revisiting old ones. Sometimes new ideas grow into fascinating projects that can enhance your life, your family's life and the life of the whole community. Feel the vitality and freshness of the lengthening days, and be part of the spirit of Imbolc.

Prayers and rites for the children in your life will be most effective at this time. light a candle for each child, and have them whisper their wishes to the young flame. Then, as the candle burns away, so their wishes will find their way to fulfilment.

Light nineteen candles for Brighid. Set eleven of them in water – set them in sand in a large mixing bowl and arrange the others around it. Surround in with flowers and set it in front of a mirror. Let the children light them, and then share a special meal.

Our lives aren't always so attuned to the seasons these days. Even farming has learned to create artificial conditions for animals and crops and new plant varieties in order to produce our food without much regard for the seasons –and anyway, improved transport, food storage, and international trade mean that nothing is ever 'out of season' in our supermarkets. So what can we do to awaken the spirit of Imbolc in our lands? In ritual and meditation we can use this time to focus our minds on the seeds and young shoots, the newborn animals and their mothers, and the new processes of production that keep our world prosperous and healthy. Find time to send your good wishes into the world for the renewal of all that is good and pleasant.

**We
are
here!**

Blessed Be!



Include a blessing for the children in your rituals for the world this Imbolc. Remember that they will inherit what we bequeath them, so it really matters what we do now to prepare them for their adult lives and to bequeath them a beautiful future.

A Druid's Diary

Exploring the magickal natures of Australian plants and trees

By Julie Mills

When it comes to learning more about the magickal properties Australian plants and trees there are many good resources available that we can learn from. Resources like the work of Ian White with Bush Flower Essences can tell us much about the magickal uses of Australian flowers. There is also a wealth of information about bush tucker and native foods and medicines from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers. It is wonderful to learn about how we can find food and medicines in the bush which can enrich our ritual practice as learning more about the natural environment helps us to become more connected to the cycles of nature around us.

As with animals, as I discussed in the last issue, a good way to learn more about the magickal meanings of plants is to see them in nature and spend time with them ourselves, meditating on their specific energies. We can learn much by working intuitively, learning how to interpret their symbols for ourselves. For centuries the medicinal properties of plants were thought to be encoded in the way that they looked by what was called the 'doctrine of signatures'. The plant might look like a certain body part or a symptom of a disease. For example, if a plant had red spots it might have been used for skin rashes. It was by this process that many of the herbal remedies we know today were discovered. However, as there are many poisonous plants in Australia and those which are edible often need a lot of processing before they can be ingested, so don't try this at home. These days, when it comes to medicine, we are lucky enough to have the hard work done for us, and needn't work with trial and error. Always act with caution with wild plants and use a reliable fieldbook reference to identify them before harvesting them.

Bearing this in mind, there is much we can learn by taking field trips into the bush to learn about the magickal energies of plants, and can then use them in meditation, ritual, altar decoration and divination, without too much need for understanding their uses as food or medicine.

As with animals, there is a great diversity of plants and trees throughout Australia, and creating a definitive guide to the country as a whole would be an arduous task, as each place will have its own species, symbols, cycles and therefore meanings to be found. There is certainly not enough scope for a definitive guide in this article, however, I have put together a set of Australian plant oracle meanings for you to begin your journey into understanding more about the magick of nature all around you. And hopefully you will be able to use this as a guide to finding out more about your own unique local plants.

Tree divination is connected with the Celtic ogham script, which is the oldest script ever used in Britain. Each of the letters represented a tree and a corresponding divinatory meaning. The letters were used for inscriptions on grave markers, memorials, tombs and also for sacred charms and spells. Many Druids today use this alphabet for divination and other magickal work, as well as using it as

a guide to understanding the energies of the forest. Many people seek out the different trees and create a set of ogham sticks for use in divination. However, as many of the trees in this alphabet, including species such as oak, ash, rowan, and birch, are hard to find in Australia, I have found that working with the more familiar native trees much more useful, and the process of creating a native ogham set is a wonderfully fulfilling activity in itself. Some people may prefer to work with the non-native trees and some may live in an area with many European trees, they may even plant them in their gardens, so that they can access them more easily, but as native trees provide food and habitat for native species, choosing to plant them instead we not only gain access to the wonderful native energies, we also attract more wildlife into our backyards. Using native trees, I have found it quite interesting to create my own alphabet of symbols to represent each tree that I have found, although some people like to study both the traditional ogham and their native findings to get equivalents of meaning, and then use a matching ogham. What is important is that it feels right to you.

By using a uniquely Australian ogham and becoming more in tune with the plants and trees of the bush we can also make bushwalking much more interesting as we will come to learn a whole new language of the places we walk through. We will feel their magickal essence, and not just appreciate their aesthetic beauty. You might find that in doing so you will discover not only a set of ogham sticks to make for yourself, but a set of sacred locations relating to the energies of each of these plants and trees that you can then use for divination, meditation or ritual.

Here are some examples of Australian plants and trees and the meanings I have discovered myself:



BANKSIA: Banksia trees have gnarled bark and branches that look like the skin of the old and wise, the floral columns have a masculine energy, and as they turn to seed pods and open, they look like laughing mouths. They symbolise communication with spirit guides, fertility, giving, masculine energy, longevity, wisdom of age and energy.

BOTTLEBRUSH : Bright red floral brushes, the colour of our life-blood, the colour of passion and love, blooming after rain they represent fertility and love. Their name invokes banishing, cleansing and renewing energies. Red, the colour of fire, they represent death and rebirth, doorways and entrance to the underworld.



EUCALYPTUS: Eucalypts represent the king of the forest, leadership, clarity, goals, focus and healing. There are literally hundreds of species, each with their own energies. Generally they increase energy and boost the immune system, healing and cleansing the body and providing rejuvenation and connection.

SCRIBBLY GUM: A particularly interesting eucalypt for the scribbly patterns found on the white trunks. Best seen before bark-fall, they represent communication, divination, mediumship and channeling. Look at the bark to find symbols and messages, paying attention to the direction they face and the elemental correspondences this represents.

IRON BARK: A eucalypt with thick strong fibrous bark. They represent strength, determination, protection and prosperity.

GREVILLIA: With their long leaves and curling flowers, they represent beauty, femininity, love, peace, elegance, and grace. They can be found in many colours with white for the moon, yellow for the sun and red for fire, love and passion. They may be trees of small shrubs, and may have large or small flowers. Infuse their essence by soaking their flowers in water in the sun.

MELALEUCA / TEA TREE / PAPERBARK: Paperbark bark is waterproof and was used by the Aboriginal people to make shelters, bowls and other items. The leaves were used to make tea by the early settlers, and the essential oil is used today for many medicinal purposes. The magickal representations are protection, healing, safety and security. It is also important for children, art, and learning as the papery bark represents books, study and creativity.

SHE OAK: These beautiful trees are always found by the water. They are sacred to mermaids, oceanic wisdom, rivers, lakes, tides, fishing, sea creatures, femininity, and therefore also the moon and the mother as the waters. Aboriginal people say that the whistling of the wind in their fronds are the voices of the ancestors and spirits around us.

GOLDEN WATTLE: Flowering from the winter solstice to the spring equinox the many varieties of wattle are sacred to the sun and the solar festivals. The golden orbs represent not only the return of the sun but also wealth, success, good fortune, masculine energy, and abundance.

FIG: These huge majestic trees have a dark, powerful and mysterious energy, but at the same time they provide fruit and nurturance, their wide trunks creating cosy sitting spots where one can feel enveloped in their energy. A wonderful tree for meditation, for magick and mystery, protection and nurturance, their towering nature invoking leadership, safety, strength, and a love akin to that of parents for their children.

MANGROVE: Standing on the shore between the worlds of land and sea, mangroves represent doorways, and entrances to the otherworld, as well as duality, balance, change, adaptability. Being aware of two ways of being they give us the power to embrace spiritual sight and intuition.

CREPE TREE: One of the few native deciduous trees, with beautiful pink blossoms flowering after storm festival, they represent beauty, love, fertility, passion, regeneration, rebirth. They stand as a communicator between the northern and southern cycles, a translator of traditions and a symbol of adaptation, and understanding.

REDGUM: With mottled bluish and bright orange bark and blood-red sap these enchanting trees are at their most vibrant just after bark-fall near the summer solstice. Their bark becomes a brighter orange representing the fire season and the shedding of unwanted energies. They represent fire, release, change and transformation, purification and cleansing.

MAKING AN OGHAM SET:



You might like to make a set of ogham sticks which you can use for meditation and divination. The best thing to do is to find a tree which you would like to understand better. It may be one from the list I have provided, or it may be one local to your area. Spend some time looking at it, feeling its energy, letting it know who you are and what you would like to know. Then spend some time meditating near the tree. You might like to imagine yourself as the tree, learning to feel and be as it does. Once you have come to understand something about the tree and its energy it's time to ask for a stick to make your ogham with.

To do this, first find a suitable branch with a twig about 1cm in diameter and about 10cm long. Hold it and ask the tree (either in your mind, or out loud if you feel comfortable) for its permission to take the twig for your magickal purposes. You should get either a good feeling or a feeling that the tree needs the branch and that you should find another one. Take heed of your intuition here as the tree may be putting energy into new growth and taking a part of its branch may threaten its life. You will usually find that if the tree wants you to have the twig it will break surprisingly easily, but if it needs it you will have a lot of difficulty removing it. Remember that a branch given freely will give you much more of its essence and power freely in the future.

Once you have your twig, cut it to the appropriate size and carve off a part at one end to draw on the symbol of the tree (make one up if you like), and on the other side carve it again to write the name of the tree so you don't forget where it came from. Remember to record what you learned about the nature of the tree and its meanings so that later, when you have a few sticks you can use them for divination. Keep them in a special bag or box together, and when you need to ask a question, shake the bag or box, concentrating on the question, then take a stick and read the divinatory meaning for your answer.

Hope for a Miracle

Often a hunter in mountainous wilds,
trained from his boyhood to feel like a man
alone in the woods with his rifle still hot
and a carcase before him still shuddering out
its life with the blood welling out of its wounds,
has gazed on a morning of beauty sublime
when the sun as it rose made the deep valley glow
back-lighting in splendour a single wild beast
broad-antlered, wise-muzzled and proud in his stance
who deeply communed with him there as he stood
and held in his sights the most vulnerable spot
in the flat of his skull right between his two eyes
all ready to fire, his trigger-touch taut,
but then paused, took a breath, and lowered his gun
not firing, but standing admiring instead. . .
And was it the sunshine, or was it the beast,
or was it some spirit, some devil or faun,
made him feel in his heart a miraculous change?
till he swore on his rifle that never again
would he hunt the wild creatures to kill them for sport
and he knew as he vowed he was more of a man
than any destroyer of wild dignity -
and thenceforth became a protector of life
in nature's wild places, and all her wise beings.

Australia's great forests have no noble stags,
their wildlife too small for the game-hunter's sights.
The birds fly away, they don't try to commune
when the great roaring trucks with their chainsaws
come through

devastating for profit, not kudos or sport,
vast tracts of wild habitat. Trees have no mouths.
Loggers see livelihood, work to be done,
where tall forest giants whose bodies are wood
whose blood is sweet sap, whose brains are bright
leaves

whose guts are deep roots, whose fingers strive deep,
are in their broad sights, fore-doomed to be pulped.
they hear nothing plead, they hear nothing scream
except their own chainsaws, their howling machines.
The rare Tassie devils flee, now dispossessed,
not valued and loved in their wild scenery
but poisoned and sick in this vast devastation.
The spirits of wilderness, fairies and fauns,
Aborigine ghosts, and dryads and elves
mere tricks of the light to those unseeing blades,
for the people who plan this are too far away
in their high office buildings or soaring jet planes
polluting the air as they fly overseas
to make their cruel deals to supply more wood pulp

for paper and products that just make more waste
for out-of-touch cities to choke themselves on
polluting their land and their waters and air.
They can't see the dying, they can't hear the trees
fall roaring like giants cut down in their prime,
the cracking of limbs and the tearing of guts
that spells the sad death of these wilderness gods.



Yet miracles happen: the man on the mountain
has lowered his rifle, respecting the stag.
The day might come, and it might come soon,
that 'Gunns' of another sort cease to destroy
and learn to respect with a life-giving awe
this noble intelligence, sacred and wise,
that touches them, wakens them, makes them real
men,

who'll lay aside chainsaws and screeching machines
forever, respecting, protecting the homes
of the uncounted myriad creatures and plants
from tall forest giants to small dasurids
from yet unknown fungi to devils and birds
and all the rainforests and wild places green
will be for all time safe, protected and free.

by vyvyan ogma wyverne



THE MELBOURNE ASSEMBLY

What we are offering

April 23 - 26 2010

The Melbourne Grove is richly blessed. We have a birch grove for the bards, a yew grove for ovates, and an oak grove for druids. Within the extensive parks and gardens in the Dandenong Ranges can also be found rowan, alder, willow, ash, hazel, pine, holly, and poplar groves. We can also show you our native species of gorse, broom, heath, and elderberry. We won't be able to show you all of this in four days – we will have to select a handful of such treasures to focus on – but let us know if there is something that you would especially like to see, or do.

We have outlined a program and will write it up for the next edition of *Serpentstar*, but for now we need to know if there is something in particular that we can do for you. We can offer bardic, ovate, and druid initiations, and other rites of passage such as namings and weddings! We have already received a request for a crowning ceremony.

If you haven't already done so, now is also the time to let Vicki know if you are pitching a tent or parking a caravan at her place, and if you have any special dietary or other needs. Vicki can be contacted by email at faster28c@yahoo.com.au or by post at PO Box 858, Cockatoo, 3781. Please send your full payment of \$150 to Vicki Minahan at this address.

There are still places at Cockatoo Springs, the house we have booked for those who want a bit more comfort. Please send a cheque or money order for the same amount to Elkie White, PO Box 404 Ferntree Gully 3156, for 3 nights accommodation there. (An additional charge for food and sundry expenses will be worked out later). We have recently discovered that the creek that runs through this property is classified environmentally sensitive because it is one of the few places where the endangered helmeted honeyeater lives. There are always new things to discover and learn here!

Let me know how long you are planning to stay in Melbourne. Cockatoo Springs is only booked for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights, and Vicki & Pete will need to resume their ordinary lives after Monday, as will most TMG members and probably most other Assembly participants as well. But if you want to stay the week and join us for Samhuin on Saturday May 1, let me know and I'll see what can be worked out. I have already decided that April 23 – May 2 is 'Druid Time' for me and everything else will just have to wait, so there's opportunity for further adventures after the Assembly if you are interested. Please keep the letters coming – it's great to hear from you!

Blessings of Imbolc to you,

Elkie

whitelk@bigpond.com

The Patupaiarehe.

Many cultures recognise some kinds of fairies as sentient beings, nearly always beautiful, usually friendly and good, sometimes disguised or swathed in mist radiant with moonbeams. The Patupaiarehe of Aotaroa can shapeshift, preferring birds such as cranes or swans, and can take human shape to woo a human being.

Kahukura was a Maori fisherman. His name means Rainbow. One night he was approaching Rangi-Aowhia, an uninhabited island, in his canoe, he heard singing.

Patupaiarehe were fishing, throwing their nets into the sea and hauling them in full of fish.

They didn't notice Kahukura, who had never seen a fish net before, staring in wonder as they sang happily in the moonlight, because he was nearly as white-skinned as they were.

At dawn the Patupaiarehe prepared to leave but Kahukura delayed them by untying their nets full of fish. As daylight grew, they saw he was a Maori and not a Patupaiarehe, and they vanished at once.

They made their canoes out of reeds, very skilfully, by magic. Kahukura studied their net, made by knotting tightly-spun, long plant fibres into squares just big enough to catch fish by their gills. He took this net home to his own people and taught them to make and use their own fish nets.

Te Kanawa was a handsome youth. Once, at nightfall, after hunting in the forest all day, he made his camp

among the roots of a tall tree. During the night he heard strange singing, joyful and beautiful, and he saw the Patupaiarehe by the dying light of his fire, staring at him from the shadows with their large, entrancing eyes. Then suddenly they vanished.

The wife of a man named Ruarangi disappeared while he was out fishing, and the local *tohunga*, or shaman, said she'd been taken by the Patupaiarehe. And he was correct. She had.

Their king had come to her as she was walking in the garden one moonlit night and carried her off body and soul. In his palace she was free to wander about, because she was so entranced by the singing, the beauty and the gaiety and pleasure that she forgot her own home.

But one day she heard the singing of the ngirungiru, the white breasted blue tit, which is the Maori Bird of Love, and she at once remembered her beloved husband, Ruarangi.

This bird had been sent to her by the *tohunga* by singing a magical incantation, so that even though the land of the Patupaiarehe was much pleasanter than the earth, she longed to be home again among friends and loved ones once more.

Home she went and Ruarangi took her back and warmed her and gave her good, normal food again, and her proper place in the community and the *tohunga* made sure with magic and singing that she could never be taken again.

Adapted from Pacific Mythology: an Encyclopedia of Myth and Legend by Jan Knappert, 1995 Diamond Books London.

If you died during
the night it was said
that the Patupaiarehe
carried your soul
away.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Vyvyan,

There is obviously a lot of effort that goes into making SerpenStar. I know we don't have to pay for subscription for email version. Is there any way that we can help in terms of the production of SerpenStar? It is such a wonderful newsletter and provides a Southern Hemisphere grounding to the whole OBOD experience. I just feel a bit bad getting it for free!!

Kind regards,

Steve Pitman.

(Editor's reply:

Hallo Steve,

I'm glad you're enjoying SerpentStar. I take much pleasure in editing it, and I'm delighted to be able to offer it for free, so don't feel bad about it.

The best way to help with it is to contribute articles, poems, stories, artwork, photographs, links and snippets of interest. These don't have to be elaborate - a few photos with captions and a bit of narrative can fill a page or two with really interesting information, as well as sharing the immediacy of an activity.

If you have a special interest, such as wands, herbs, or anything like that, readers would enjoy reading what you have to say. If you've done research, fine, but if you haven't, just a subjective account of your experience is sometimes even better. Poems and artwork too. It's reader contributions about our real-life, here and now, druidry that makes the paper what it is - in my opinion, anyway.

But if you can't (and sure, not everyone can) believe me, your kind words are contribution enough - made my day!

ed.)

Links:

Participate:

<http://www.parliamentofreligions.org/index.cfm>

Cloak of invisibility: futuristic science.

<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg20327156.300-modified-invisibility-cloak-could-make-the-ultimate-illusion.html>

Important Discussion about Unity and Harmony and the future of Druidry

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/1691?page=1>

SCIENCE LINKS

Million Year Old Mammoth Fossil

<http://news.theage.com.au/breaking-news-world/millionyearold-mammoth-found-in-serbia-20090604-bw2o.html>

Picture here:

http://www.b92.net/eng/news/society-article.php?yyyy=2009&mm=06&dd=07&nav_id=59672

35000 year old flutes discovered.

<http://news.theage.com.au/breaking-news-world/stone-age-man-played-the-flute-20090625-cx44.html>

Pictures of them here:

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/06/090624213346.htm>

Amazing Australian dinosaur find.

<http://news.theage.com.au/breaking-news-national/three-new-dinosaurs-discovered-in-qld-20090703-d77r.html>

Picture here:

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/275246>

Thanks to Debra Annear for these links.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS

1	C	A	P		I	L	K		D	O	G
9	O	G	R	E		E		L	E	G	O
12	P	R	E	S	U	P	P	O	S	E	D
		A	S	P		R		A	C	E	
15	F		U		H	E	R		R		A
19	A	P	P	L	I	C	A	T	I	O	N
	Y		P		S	H	Y		P		U
		P	O	I		A		S	T	H	
25	D	E	S	T	R	U	C	T	I	O	N
27	O	R	E	S		N		Y	O	N	I
29	B	U	S		A	S	S		N	E	T

The Old Border Ballads

vyvyan ogma wyverne

Druidry in the southern hemisphere does two things – through ritual magic it connects us with the new lands we have come to and their spirituality, strange and yet familiar as that might be to us, and it connects us with our own tribal roots.

The Aborigine rock group Yothu Yindi told Australians in no uncertain terms that 'you gotta listen to your tribal voice' and although they were talking mainly to Aborigine people, these are words that apply equally well to non-indigenous people – perhaps to everyone in the world. In Druidry we hear our tribal voices speaking, often enough in Gaelic, or in the lilting dialects of Scotland the north of England, such as we hear in the border ballads.

For some of us, these are our race memories, coded in our genes, inherited from ancestors who were bards or knights or witches. For some they are soul memories, reconnecting us to past-lives that left us yearning for the old ways. For others their charm is in their value as memories, cherished for the enduring inspiration of their beauty, or as poetry or art, which indeed they are to anyone enthralled by the imagery and artistry of the tales they tell.

Here's one of my favourites.
Hear the melody at:

The Witch of the Westmoreland.

*Pale was the wounded knight,
that bore the rowan shield,
loud and shrill the ravens' cries
as they feasted on the field,*

*Saying, 'Black water cold and clear
will never staunch your flood,
There's none but the maid of the winding
mere
can save your dear heart's blood.'*

*He said, 'Course weel, my brindled hound,
and fetch me the mountain hare,
wha's coat is like the west-water
or as white as a lily fair.'*

*It said, 'Green moss and heather bands
will never staunch your wound,
there's none but the witch of the westmoreland
can make ye hale and sound.*

*So fly free your good grey hawk
to gather the goldenrod,
and turn your steed in tae the clouds
above yon gay green wood.'*

*And dark was the paling moon
when the shadow passed him by –
high overhead the grey hawk flew
when he heard the howlet cry,*

*Saying, 'Why do your ride this way,
and wherefore come ye here?'
'I seek for the witch of the westmoreland
that lives in the winding mere.'*

*'Then turn, turn your stallion's head
till its red mane flies in the wind
and ride before the moon goes by
or the dark clouds fall behind.*

*'Then wear ye by Allswater,
by the bitter brakethorn way.'
Below the cleft o' the kirkstane path
the winding water lay.*

*He said, 'Lie down, my brindled hound,
and rest, my good grey hawk,
and you, my steed, may graze thy fill
for I must dismount and walk,*

*only come when you hear my horn,
and answer swift the call,*

*for I fear ere the sun goes down this
day
that ye'll serve me best of all.'*

*And then down to the water's brim
he bore the rowan shield
and the golden rod he has thrown in
to see what the lake might yield.*

*And withal she rose from the lake
and fast to him did steer,
one half the form of a maiden fair
with a jet black mare's body.*

*Then long, loud and shrill he blew
and the hound was by his side,
high overhead the grey hawk flew
and swiftly he did ride,*

*Saying, 'Course weel, my brindled
hound,
and fetch me the jet black mare!*

*Stoop and strike, my good grey hawk!
Bring me the maiden fair!'*

*She said, 'Pray sheath your silv'ry sword,
lay down your rowan shield,
for I see by the briny blood that flows
that you're wounded in the field.'*

*And she appeared in a gown of the velvet green
bound round with a silver chain,
and she has kissed him ainst and twice
and three times round again.*

*Then she bound his wounds with the goldenrod
as fast in her arms he lay,
and he has woken hale and sound
with the sun high in the day.*

*She said, 'Ride with your brindled hound at your heels,
and your good hawk on your hand,
for there's nane can harm a knight wha's lain
wi' the Witch o' the Westmoreland!'*



The Inundation of Spencer's Gulf.

South Australia's Yorke Peninsular's Narrangga people's history records the inundation of Spencer's Gulf. Spencer's Gulf is the larger of the two large gulfs in South Australia's coastline. Before the inundation it was all luxuriant marshlands and lagoons, where black duck, wood duck and teal bred prolifically, and some distance away, the different kinds of shag, and snipes, and black swans and water-birds of all kinds. There were fish and native freshwater lobsters, shell-fish, terrapins and frogs. On tracts of higher ground was an abundance of land birds: cockatoos, emus, kookaburras, the eagles and hawks, magpies and crows and all the birds in the scrub. There were abundant witcheties and other insect food in their seasons. There were seeds, nuts and wild fruits, yams, bulbs and sweet roots and fungi, and sweet and flavoursome gums and resins. There were plenty of possums, wallabies, kangaroos, the kangaroo rat, the native cat, and deep in the marshy grasslands, snakes and lizards such as goannas, skinks, dragons and the frill-neck lizards. Food was free and abundant.

The people all lived in harmony, visiting each other and sending invitations, and sharing everything as friends. There were no boundaries. But specialisations arose, perhaps brought on by increasing population density and kangaroo hunters tended to camp where kangaroos were abundant, and pelican hunters where there were pelicans, so it came about that they had separate camps.

They still shared everything they caught, and peace reigned at first, although the hunters of water birds and fishers became discontented with everyone

using their land. Quarrels arose after a while, offence was given and taken. The hunters of water birds and the fishers issued a proclamation banning the reptile hunters from visiting their lagoons, claiming that they disturbed their hunting and fishing, and they rose up militant and denied them access by threat. War broke out, but the kangaroo hunters, emu

hunters and budgerigar catchers from further out managed to turn it quickly into peace-talks.

The emu hunters suggested punishing the selfish hunters of water birds by taking away their possessions, but feeling was running high and it was clear that that would cause more bloodshed. The budgerigar hunters suggested a way of doing it without bloodshed.

They argued that everyone had to have access to drinking water, so controlled access was granted and peace prevailed.

Now the emu hunter had once found a great big leg bone of the now vanished race of much taller people who had been there in the distant past.

He'd kept it in his camp.

The race whose bones they were had 'walked along and as he walked he probed the ground so that the earth opened up'.

They went and found the rest of the skeleton which had been buried with its head pointing towards Port Augusta. This was between Port Lincoln and Cape Spencer. Later, the ploughed land became too muddy and for a long time were only increasingly brackish marshes and lagoons with isolated thickets of scrub. They were rich, abundant lands for hunter/gatherers. But the slow inundation continued and the sea at last flowed into the lagoons and marshes and they disappeared completely.



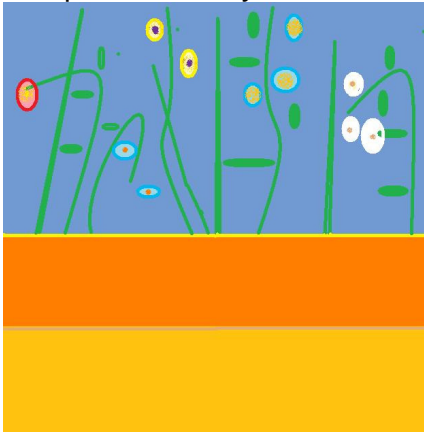
View of Port Broughton harbour across Spencer Gulf

*The race whose bones
they were had 'walked
along and as he walked
he probed the ground
so that the earth
opened up'.*

Kids Page

Junior Bards:

Imbolc is the perfect time to make a garden. Ask the fairies to help you. Not everyone is lucky enough to have a big back yard, but you can still grow a cool indoor garden in a flower pot or ice cream container. Make sure it has a few holes in the bottom, and scatter some gravelly stones over the bottom for drainage and fill it with good, damp, rich, sandy soil.



If your garden is outside, weed it when the soil is wet. Ask for some fertiliser to scatter over your plot. Dig it over and rake it smooth. Ask for some flower seeds. Make small furrows in the soil and sow seed in each one. Petunias are good if you've only got an icecream container. Put it where it can get sunshine every day.

Or you might want to grow something you can eat. Potatoes are great. Ask if you can have pieces of peel, with the eyes attached. Cover them lightly with soil. Mulch the soil with dead leaves and remember to water it every day.

Young Ovates:

Ovates like birds and little wild animals and they always treat them and the wild places they live in with respect. they also watch for them in gardens and parks, and they remember to give them energy by looking at them with kindness and feeling great love for them.



Birds are aware of things like that, and they will notice you if you talk to them in your mind. Next time you hear a bird sing, look in the direction of the singing, even if you can't see the bird straight away and thank it for its music by thinking to it. If you feel it sincerely, the bird will know, and it will remember you next time.

If you have a flute or a pipe or even a mouth organ, the birds will know when you are playing to them. They will listen to you when you sing too. Here's a song you can sing that will make the birds come to you. You can make up your own tune, or just chant it softly. Sing it twelve times over and then wait. They might not come the first or second time, but be patient and they will come closer and closer as they learn to trust you.

*Little birds come to me,
I will never harm you.
Sweetly sing in your tree,
Let my singing charm you
Green earth below you,
Blue sky above you,
You can always trust me
I will never harm you.*

Budding Druids:

In their search for perfect health and a long life, druids sought the elixir of life. They studied alchemy and herbalism, crystals and metals, and they searched for knowledge in books and on their travels round the world. But they also looked for health and wisdom in other ways. They lived healthy outdoor lives under the trees, breathing the clear forest air and thankful to nature for all that they had. They knew the importance of eating healthy natural food, and of drinking pure water, and healthful fruit drinks.



They knew that their people depended upon them to be clear-thinking, alert and intuitive, so that they could give the right advice to the rulers and make sensible prophecies and divine hidden things accurately.

Did they ever find an elixir of life? Perhaps, sometimes they did find special medicines that could prolong life and ward off diseases. They knew a lot about medicine. But perhaps more often they learned the value of healthy living in an unpolluted environment, of sensible eating and decent living. They walked the path of virtue and they lived according to the principles of peace and goodwill to all, and as you know, nothing is better at keeping us all healthy, wealthy and wise than sleeping the sleep of an honest person, on good terms with our conscience.