

Serpent Star

Samhain 2013

A newsletter for members of the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids in the Southern Hemisphere



Contessa von Dribble Fang, a.k.a Samhain

SerpentStar is a newsletter for members of the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids in the Southern Hemisphere. It comes out four times a year at each of the Fire Festivals; Imbolc, Beltane, Lughnasadh, and Samhuinn.

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or use Paypal
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Contributions are eagerly sought at the above addresses; email or post. Please make sure your contributions do not violate copyright laws.

Opinions expressed in SerpentStar are the contributors' own and not necessarily the opinions of the editor or of the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids.

Submission deadline for Imbolc issue: 29th July 2013 .

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<https://www.facebook.com/SerpentStarOBOD>

For information about the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids visit: www.druidry.org

From the editor's quill...

And so the Sun has set upon the year, dusk has passed and midnight now is here. Samhain, the time when the veil between worlds is thinnest, has a distinct mood. And without falling into stereotypes of black robed witches and blacker bats and grim faced pumpkins among blackish cats (though these are all fascinating and certainly have their place), I am enjoying my exploration of this time of year; I feel the energies of Samhain richer than in previous years. A time to reflect, examine, let go, to die symbolically, to bring wisdom to the fore by the fireside, and seek the council of those who are older or wiser than this world can hold on to.

I immensely appreciate all the contributions sent to SerpentStar. Keep them coming! Don't be afraid to overwhelm my inbox with your submissions. Remember, SerpentStar is by and for the OBOD community of the Southern Hemisphere, so please make use of this. Lady Cu' has also stepped forward with a challenge to all you bards in her poem—"the sword is drawn."

Several events seem to be brewing for Australia, and New Zealand. You can find details of these in this issue. With a visit from the Philip and Stephanie Carr-Gomm early next year both in New Zealand and Australia, and plans to sponsor another tour by Damh the Bard later this year in Australia, it's going to be an exciting time to come.

And there's a lot more poetry for this issue also, so maybe the bards have pre-empted Lady Cu's call. Still, I always welcome more.

But for now, things are becoming still. The darkness is growing and the nights gathering. Time to go within, to follow that ancient spiral path back to where we originated from; by the fire, telling stories, sharing with friends and family, laughing, remembering, and returning to what is important in life. Then at the winter solstice, rekindling life from there.

*With the blessings of Samhain,
Todd*

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Dragonwyst, Possum

SAMHAIN

When the veils are gossamer thin

Reilly McCarron

In the days leading up to last Samhain, I noticed we had a visitor. A small, black cat appeared to be hanging around. More than shy, in fact beyond skittish, this cat was nothing but a blur of shadow which streaked across the garden and disappeared into the shed when startled. As Samhain approached I decided to leave offerings to the ancestors for three nights in the form of milk over little pieces of bread. Not surprisingly the bowl was empty each morning, and while I never once saw who had devoured it, I had my suspicions.

After the three nights of honouring the ancestors, during which time stood still, it occurred to me that feeding a cat for three nights only would be cruel. So I continued to put out milk and bread, and if we had leftovers we now had someone to take care of them for us. Evidence of the cat's willing participation in this deal came in the form of the empty bowl, though still, we never saw more than its shadow.

Over the following weeks the afternoon sun became more and more precious as a settling chill foretold of the coming Winter months. I began taking the picnic blanket outside to sit and read or study in the sunshine. One fine Autumn day, I was enthralled by Eowyn Ivey's gorgeous book *The Snow Child*, a retelling of a Russian fairytale. In the book, a childless couple make a little girl out of snow and the next morning it appears she may have come to life. The couple yearn to know and love (and parent) the snow child, but the girl remains a wild spirit and lives in the forest with a fox as her only friend. Yet in time, with the help of food, warm clothes, patience, and a little doll, the couple earns the girl's trust and she ventures to make contact.

On the day I was reading this very passage, our little black shadow decided to make an

appearance. Sitting cautiously a few meters away, it hissed whenever I looked up, and so I ignored it and kept reading. Within about forty minutes she had decided curiosity would not kill her, and that what she would actually like is some affection. After a lovely long pat the sun had crept away and I packed up to head inside, but my new friend didn't seem to want me to go. In fact, once she'd broken the ice it seemed she couldn't get enough of human contact.



In the following weeks she began to follow me around the outside of the house, sitting below the nearest window, meowing. As I run my small business from home, and was madly working on a show I would later tour, having a noisy cat following me around the house all day and night was not ideal. I decided that feeding the cat for three days would have been just fine. My husband and I discussed it and decided to stop feeding her. We didn't want to be cruel, but we're renters and

owning a pet is not in our contract. Someone must have been feeding her before we started. Where did she come from? Perhaps she could go back there.



She was such a sweet and affectionate little thing, but she was also stalking me and I was starting to lose my mind. I phoned the RSPCA and they told me they might find a nice home for her, though there was no guarantee, and since we'd been feeding her we would have to pay \$60 to 'surrender' her. We didn't have a spare \$60 at the time, and didn't want to think what might happen if they didn't find a home for her. When we stopped feeding her it was in the hope she might find some other nearby saps who would be able to take her in properly. She didn't buy it. Rather, she began to climb the walls (well the back screen door actually) and to hurl herself at the front door.

I began to think about how and when she came to

us, and wondered whether she might have some ancestral connection with me. This was a painful consideration. I've lost some beautiful people who were very close to my heart, and prefer to think of them enjoying the bliss of the apple isle, not tormenting me in the form of a sweet but mad cat. Like most philosophical ideas, I remained open to, but not invested in, the idea. We began feeding her again and her level of craziness returned to simply stalking.

In June last year I set out on an interstate storytelling tour which lasted over five weeks. I asked my beloved husband Ben to call the RSPCA and tell them the cat had just appeared, and that we'd like to know if she was going to be put down, in which case we'd take her back. Ben considered this, and decided instead to start buying proper cans of cat food (rather than leftovers), because he has a soft heart, integrity, and is generally wonderful. During my tour he joined me on the road for a week and a half. We thought the cat might find a new home.

On his return Ben told me the cat was still wanting to be part of our family and that she looked healthier than ever. (My apology to any small birds and lizards which may have given their lives to this end.) I relaxed about the cat and focussed on my tour. During those weeks I learned so much. It was a hectic and creative time which included the launch of my show 'Sleeping Kingdom, Waking Beauty' at the Burrinja Cultural Theatre in the Dandenong Ranges (where I grew up) with my family and wonderful Druid friends in the audience. In that same time the cat must have had some life changing experiences as well. When I got home, she looked like a different animal. She was more mature and sure in herself, more solid and healthy looking, and calmer.

Since then, she has been content to laze around outside, accept regular pats and food, and does her own thing when we're busy. She's never too far from home, and though she'd obviously prefer to have inside access, she's accepted our compromise. She has a warm dry bed, fish for dinner, cuddles, and freedom, which I suspect she

values (just like the snow child). Whenever we spend time in the backyard, she's there with us; helping to hang the washing or gazing at the stars with us. (Unless we're mowing the lawn in which case she's back in the shed.) She loves to join in my ceremonies and connects with my journey staff as warmly as she does with me.

You may be wondering if we ever named her, or whether she's just 'cat' like in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. In fact, she has several names. She so loves a pat or belly rub she shows her appreciation with free flowing dribble, which led Ben to calling her James Dribble. She didn't seem too keen on that one though, so he changed it to Contessa von Dribble Fang (she has extraordinarily long fangs which you can see even when her mouth is closed). Yet if anyone asks we tell them her official name: Samhain.



SOME NEW ZEALAND NEWS

The *New Zealand Lughnasadh Druid Camp* will be held on the weekend of the 19th January 2014 (running for 4-5 days), at the Woolshed Retreat, Wellington. For details, visit <http://www.thewoolshedretreats.co.nz/the-seasonal-festivals/>

Dragonfire Grove

We are an open Grove in Auckland NZ, welcoming those who follow the Druid path. We honour the 8 seasonal festivals and support others in the celebration, study and journey of Druidry. With close links to OBOD England and other Groves within New Zealand we offer fellowship, a growing lending library, trips to other Groves and camps to name some of our activities.

The Druid Path is the Dragonfire Grove study group which meets fortnightly to share ritual, meditations, explore Druidry and fellowship. We welcome all those wishing to deepen their connection with Druidry and the wisdom of nature and this is a gentle way of meeting others and learning about Druidry.

Please contact Caroline Williams for details on 0210706343 or druidtherapy@gmail.com

Druid Therapy

Bringing the Druid Healer back into our modern world has been a passion of mine for over 10 years. I have trained as a counsellor and worked in the fields of addiction, anxiety, trauma and homicide for over 15 years and have always felt the need for a therapy which offers more depth and holistic aspects.

With my 15 years training as a Druid with OBOD I have been able to weave these two paths into a healing model which brings the wisdom and sacred knowledge of Druidry together with the underpinnings of psychology.

The magic of myth, druid oracle cards, the principles of connection, love and wisdom counselling is a journey into wholeness and change.

Visit <http://druidtherapy.blogspot.co.nz/p/up-coming-events.html> or contact Caroline Williams on 0210706343 or druidtherapy@gmail.com

The English Ale



• Singing •

• Dancing •

• Mumming •

• Guising •

• Making Merry •

• Masked Torch
Light Procession

• Petal,
Tannus & Rufus

- Giants of the Hills

- Burning of the Wicker Man • Hedgemonkey Morris • English Music Session •
- Hot for Joe Border Morris • Fayre Guisers Mummers Players • Bygone Error •
- Nikkie Nicholson • Preston's Traditional Punch and Judy •

• **Spiral Dance** •

Saturday 18th May 2013
The Mylor Hall and Oval, Strathalbyn Rd, Mylor.
1.00pm - onwards

Wear a mask
if you fancy and join
in the procession to the bonfire

\$20

concert entry : \$15 concession : \$5 children
enquiries: info@spiraldance.com.au or 8388 1011
www.theenglishale.org

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THE ENGLISH ALE DRUIDS OF OZ GATHERING

Mud, Blood and Spirit

Lucy Crawford Sandison is a practising architect and geomancer and has developed a deep interest in the windswept and magical henge sites and places of ancient mythologies throughout Great Britain and Australia.

Lucy's presentation will explore the ritual alchemy of earth and cosmic energies at sacred sites. Discover the ancient knowledge of energetic alchemy known through the wisdom of geomantic ritual principles, including sacred sound. An outline of the ley lines, henge and initiation sites on the Michael-Mary ley of Britain, and their relationship with the rainbow serpent of Australia will be included.

Louise Hewett has been travelling the highways and byways of pagan spirituality as a writer, artist, poet and priestess for the last twenty-five years. *Druidry, Shamanism, mythology and the re-imagining of the feminine divine* have been Louise's life long passion.

Explore with Louise how the 'heart's blood' of human experience acts as a bridge between the world of nature and the spirit-worlds, and how story and myth can help us to realise our relationship with all things.

Sarah Marshall has been a long-term member of the Rosicrucian Order AMORC and the Druid order OBOD. Sarah has been studying esotericism and spirituality for over thirty years and is also a teacher of the Tarot.

What is spirit? How do we define it, how do we recognise it and how do we work with it? Sarah presents an interactive workshop that looks at these questions and how they relate to the Druid pathway.

The English Ale Druids of Oz Gathering

Saturday 18th May 11am - 2pm

@The Mylor Hall, Strathalbyn Rd, Mylor.

Cost \$5 bookings essential

Email: info@spiraldance.com.au

*** Please note that the workshop starts at 11am sharp so please be there 15 minutes prior to register.**

The 14th Australian OBOD Assembly

24-28 January 2014

With special guests

Philip and Stephanie Carr-Gomm



This year's assembly will be held at Sine Cara rainforest retreat (<http://www.sinecera.org.au/>)

For further details contact:

Trudy: trudyrich21@yahoo.com
(before June 2013)

Elkie whitelk@bigpond.com
(between June 2013 - Feb 2014)

POETRY'S HAZELS

Sown low

Barb McFarlane, 2012

I am sown low
sunk beneath the crust
and grown into soil and worm
bound to spread sweetly, inexorably through
forest, around rock and mountain
pulling all beings in my wake
calling all life to follow.

Pushing up shoots to the sun
pouring life upwards
baring leaf to the moon
and fruiting to the day's delight.

Seeping into rivers
yearning tidewise
and falling at last into the lap of Mother Ocean

Enter deep by the fire

Todd William Dearing

Now we enter the dark time of the year, Samhain;
things are thin and not all they seem.

Memory will come to the fore; speaking not to
ignore old issues, far stories, ancient faces, by the
fireside.

There is a deeper comfort found as we circle
through this midnight time. Follow not that other
Halloween, mere sugar-ache and bent-costumes,
commercial, out of season here.

Dawn will rise from within the pool, silent and
deep; the forest is coursing through the world's
veins, on the other side now near.

Have you willed it? No, it comes regardless, so
where are you dancing while the mist is thicker
and the veils thinner here.

Lose not yourself, but find your heart within the
stillness, and memory will wake your soul.

The light pierces only once the darkness is too
much; when we lose our ego step and fall into our
shadow, to recall only who we are and so choose
to step towards ourselves more fully.

Thickly ebbs that shadow, thinly is the time, until
the Solstice comes, the dawn; a new beginning, a
new year.

Warnings from the Cailleach

Heather Jensen

I am the Cailleach
Mother of the Gods.
At Samhain,
I awaken from my slumber
and bring the storms of winter.
I bring death,
cold to all things living.
I bring snow,
I bring fog,
and with my storms
I bring rain.
Live-giving, renewing, re-birthing, rain.

I am here,
now,
early.
And I bring storms and rain and snow and mist,
and such catastrophes of earth and sea and sky as
never have you seen.
And I warn you of the dark times to come,
out of season,
for the planet.

Will you learn?
Will the dark times teach
the ignorant, the naïve, the foolish,
that the deeds of humans have effect
on the planet you call home?
When I bring again the life-giving rain,

the renewing, re-birthing rain,
will there be any humans left,
to see?



A poem for music

Kacey Guy Stephensen

Music flows just the same way water flows, and comes from the same stream exploding down through the ages in all its integrity, bringing forth the enchantment of this world, opening the beholders eyes to the magick inherent in nature.

Music is its all and encompassing self, it cycles seasons 1, 2 ,3 and 4 and is rain, the sun, the soil and the shore. Music is the memory, a boat drifting softly through our family lineage, morphing and shaping our whole lives, our whole experience. One can write a thousand different words to the same music, yet the words that are meant to be are the words that gently trickle onto paper, letting the fountain of knowledge open its waterways and flood the paper unleashing its silver words. Music reflects our deepest desires and deepest held secrets; music embodies our society at its time and is the mirror that holds us all in its powerful grasp.

For we are the music, the mirror and the observer of the mirror, music is the symphony that we never truly understand, for failing we would; to grasp its

never ending depths, for only a fool of the right mind would try to tame the master of the mastered.

And so it is that of which music and poetry hold and bring awe to the beholder, healing to the sick, love to the youth, release to the sad and realisation to the seeker. Its magick stretches beyond humanity's tongue and begins and goes back to the perpetual dance of natures song, the cracking, creaking, chirping, howling, blowing, banging, whistling, trickling music of nature.

No symphony of man's could ever be so sophisticated as that of the tranquil yet disturbing, beautiful and peaceful, fearful and loving symphony of nature. So one will hold out their hand and tip their top hat, one will sing and one will die, it is all the same thing - A song, a song that is everything we understand as human beings in the one same movement, the same composition, spanning over billions of years, changing its rhythm only by bar, changing its mood only by the verse.

Bards

Lady Cu', 2013

Hey
I would love to see
We have Bards
Do we not
Lets see
Lets see your work
Lady Cu' is tired
Tired of reading her own stuff
Lady Cu'
Would love to read
To read something new and fresh
The sword is drawn
The thrust parried
Draw the sword in reply
Come on all

SEASONAL RECIPE FOR SAMHAIN

Lillypilly and Lime Sorbet

Tiki Swain

There is more than one kind of fruit commonly called "lillypilly", all closely related and all usually edible. They're often used for ornamental plantings. The best known is the big tree covered in pink-purple fruit, but the smaller bushes used for hedging can be good too. They're chosen for their growth habit rather than fruit flavour, so trees can vary a lot in fruit quality, and any one tree can vary season to season depending on what rainfall's been like. You also get variations in sugar-vs.-acid and astringency levels as the season progresses, so if you find a local tree it's worth taste-testing a couple of times. In Perth lillypillies fruit approximately between Lughnasadh and Samhuin, and in Melbourne (where I developed this recipe) fruiting runs from Samhuin to the Winter Solstice. Conveniently, this overlaps with lime season.

Ingredients:

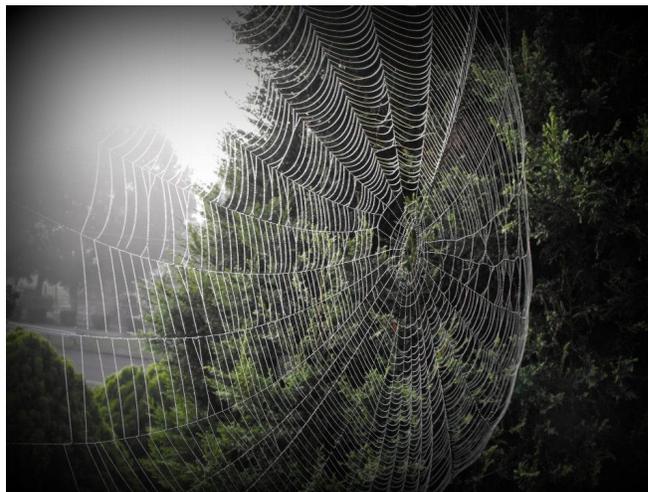
- Medium-large mixing bowl of halved and seeded lillypillies. (This takes around a 1.5 litre container's worth of fresh fruit to make. While halving and seeding them you might end up crushing them a bit but that's perfectly fine.)
- Juice of two limes
- Caster sugar to taste (I use about 3/4 of a cup).

Blend all ingredients together with a stick blender or food processor, but not quite so much as to lose all texture.

Put mixture in a food-safe container and freeze.

Yes, it's that straightforward. The texture of the resulting mix isn't "scoopable" straight out of the freezer, unlike the sorbets made with egg white, but it softens nicely. The balance of lillypilly to lime to sugar is something to experiment with for

your own personal taste - my preference is for more-rather-than-less lime plus earlier-season lillypilly which gives a more strongly sensuous result, I found very-late-season fruit to be a bit mild. But mild can be very nice too.



Dragonwyst, Catch the Misted Morning

SUBMISSIONS NEEDED

To nourish the growing Southern Hemisphere OBOD community, we welcome your contributions (we cannot publish without them).

Stories, articles, photography or artwork, news or events, recipes, reflections, or reviews, anything else druidically inspired. Keep in mind Imbolc is the theme for the next issue.

Let your inspiration flow this way.

Contribute to **SerpentStar**
(serpentstar.obod@gmail.com)
or via post (see details on the first page).

FOLLOW THE GLEAM: NWFYFRE

wyverne

Not all druids identify as animists, but many are, whether they know it or not. The word comes from the Latin word for a living being or spirit, mind or soul. Animism considers the entire universe to be alive and conscious, from atoms forged in the blazing centres of stars through biological life-forms such as the plants and animals of our own planet to the great celestial organisms we see as the stars in the night sky.

Many animists add that this all-pervading livingness makes itself intelligible to fey people through humanlike plant and animal spirit people, fauns, fairies, elves, angels, benign devils and daemons, elementals, dryads, aerial weather spirits, gnomes, pixies and the myriad nature spirits of many other cultures, the local native cultures in particular, who can help us to attune ourselves to the wider contexts of the extended network they help us to weave.

Science tells us that the material world is made of atoms, each one infinitely packed with structure and flow, like the organs of animals or the structures within a cell. They are all impressionable and responsive to stimuli, and capable of intricate proactive negotiation with their neighbour atoms in forming molecules or in their free states. There's a constant exchange of information occurring across the interfaces between subatomic particles, between atoms, molecules, cells, plants and animals, and between the celestial bodies comprising the galaxies and other great beings of the cosmos. In effect there is a network of communication which incorporates the food web and the human communications networks. What this means to a magician is that we are in continuum not just with those networks of the primitive contact telepathy of the social animals we still are, or the food-web and ecological systems; or the zodiac magic between us and the planets and stars; or the elemental forces of the material world all around us although

all of those are vitally important; but also to the networks we as a species generate: the culture, the mass media and the world wide web.

The sum total of impressions held in each aeons-old atom of earth is like a causal ocean, a 'Ceridwen's cauldron', a rich brew of events and qualities, principles and dimensions, garnered from myriad 'text-rich' events and encounters in deep space and deep within the atmosphere, on their way to becoming part of the earth and during their evolution ever since. Whatever is communicated across any of the interfaces forming this universal network is the result of much process, sorting of data, filtering, censoring, deleting, expending, filing away, etc, and the resultant emanation of meaning-replete patterns of flow and disturbance is nwyfre¹. It is mindfully controlled by the negotiation among all its parts. It can be the mere nuance of an awareness glimmering instantaneously in the heart of an atom as it comes into being in a distant galaxy not yet born; or the sights and sounds of the whole of a Hollywood movie; or the symphony of subtle, complex, deeply meaningful impressions we receive when communing in silent or chattery meditation with a tree or when reading a book. If, as I've said, this nwyfre forms a vital, mindful fabric of constantly changing stimulus and response, cause and effect, stasis and flow, not unlike the turbulence and flow of human experience, surely by understanding it we can learn to read it, manage it wilfully and use it magically to optimise our own personal experience and to practice good magic worthy of the name of 'druid' in our troubled world.

Just as our bodies are made of vast constellations of aeons old atoms, so our minds are constellations of knowledge, memory and thought, incorporating detailed impressions from a lifetime of experience, including all the films, books and music that enrich our lives, to say nothing of the people and animals and even plants that we include among our family and friends and wider social milieu. Any human being is a fountain of nwyfre. That's why ritual touching is part of life – part of the subliminal knowledge we have of each other. A

conscientious druid is able to harness and direct the nwyfre, extracting it selectively from consenting sources or learning to generate it and use it skilfully, in accord with a finely focused magical intention. This is what a well-constructed magic circle facilitates, extending and fine-tuning the magician's focus, power and influence in much the same way as an astronomer's telescope extends and specialises the vision of the star-gazer, or as a detailed map assists a traveller.

With or without a circle, it's fairly easy to learn to see a flow of nwyfre-rich energy using a wand or staff or a crystal with at least one good 'shooting' point, or just your fingers, at least to start with. You may just spontaneously happen to find yourself 'energised', exhilarated or vibrant with some exciting radiance from dancing or gardening or meeting with friends, or you may prepare yourself by casting a circle and doing a simple or elaborate light body ritual followed by three awens for attunement, or using chant, drumming or ritual dance.

When you feel radiant with power, hold your magical tool or your bare hands close to your solar plexus and breathe steadily, willing the nwyfre from your body to flow into the object and fill it. You might chant something like 'healing power in my hands (wand, crystal, etc), magic power in my fingers (etc), or just 'magic fingers, healing hands' or you might try a dramatic, commanding 'healing nwyfre flow!' Speaking words aloud or in our mind helps us be focused and articulate about our intentions, which helps the magic.

This flow is easy to see, especially against a dark backdrop. It is similar to the energy that can be seen flowing between your fingertips if you hold them an inch or so apart and bring them slowly together. In a healthy, energised system this radiance appears sparkling clear.

You can easily train yourself to see the radiant electromagnetic field, which is a major 'smart' carrier of nwyfre, especially surrounding your fingertips. It is at its brightest and most active when you are in tip top health, happy and confident and have optimised your relations with

your social, natural and magical environment enough to have the good will of most of your neighbours, since like it or not we are all contributing to a collective mentality and nothing is more empowering than the common consent.

Even a beginner can successfully charge magical items such as charms and amulets, or cast exquisite circles for seasonal rituals, fizzing with good exciting effective magic with a wand, hands, symbolic items or crystals or whatever charged in this way. Or it can be discharged beneficially into the life field of a sick friend or animal, plant, garden, city or town, or even the earth itself via whatever symbols you choose to attune for the purpose.

It is important to understand that the flow we see here is not 'in' everything, but is like a specific medium which carries nwyfre, and flows around the all material objects, even subatomic particles and vast galaxies, like the interstitial fluids that carry the biochemically coded information around the body of an animal or plant. It's real and dowsers can detect it, and it registers on scientifically designed sensors as real energy capable of having real physical effects. There are good reasons to believe it is not inert – not much in nature is – but interacts with the information it carries in a way that you might call 'smart', trafficking intelligently organised nwyfre about from one part of the system to another, from the atmosphere to the birds, for example, and vice versa, keeping us all separate but engaged in a kind of eternal conversation, in the loop, so to speak, in accord with the wisdom of the higher collectivities, the spirits, devas and angels, for example, in negotiation with the inner potential mediated through our genes and our humanity. Or from the tip of a well-crafted wand to a collection of symbolic items selected for inclusion in a druid's egg.

The interstitial fluids of a human being convey chemical information, while the electromagnetic field is rich in what psychics call psychometric energy. It's a confusing term, referring to the psychic impressions that certain gifted people can

gain bringing past scenes to vivid consciousness upon holding an object such as a ring or watch that once belonged to someone else. The psychic might see and hear actual scenes from that person's life, or from the past experience of the actual object held. So whether you are reading it or not, it is high resolution data which different beings can extract their own species specific experience from. This is as true of objects as of people. So the nwyfre channelled by the ring in the psychometrist's hand is the equivalent of a psychical experience or a dream or a vision in human awareness. Of course it is possible to argue that the ring has no consciousness of the experience flowing through it when a human being wears it next to the skin, within his/her electromagnetic field, but how could anyone know? For all our pride in human science with its most advanced knowledge of the biochemistry of thought and emotion in human beings, the 'seat' of consciousness remains a beautiful, totally elusive mystery.

As so often the case in magic, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Anyone who takes a few simple steps in developing a working interface with a properly enchanted magical tool risking little or nothing in a few moments of suspended disbelief now and then will observe without doubt that the tool responds as a responsible being in its own right. Wands communicate intelligently, crystals bond with you, druid's eggs call you and feed from you and need you to incubate them, and stranger things happen as you go deeper in. It is therefore customary to address your tools with great respect and treat them as kindly and considerately as you would a room-mate or dancing partner. Allow, for example, that they have minds of their own. They are constantly streaming experience and communicating experience-rich energy to everything around them, just like everything else. Experienced practitioners will agree that your magical life becomes deeper, richer, friendlier and more meaningful if you talk to your wands, show concern for their welfare and ask with pleases and thank yous, and give them treats: a song, a poem, incense, a ring.

Everything contributes impressions to the nwyfre circulating and percolating through the material world. It's like white noise, and like the colour white, can be made to show its inner spectra. Theoretically it should be possible to do this in an infinite number of ways, but nature uses a restricted palette, leaving a major part of the artistry to us.

Magic is a kind of metaphysical technology. It uses mind over matter to influence events using metaphysics, governing the flow of change, the shifts of emphasis, the management of morphic resonance etc., through symbols, ritual, metaphors, stories, myths, fantasy and folklore and the sentimental and practical poetic of everyday life. Almost all of this magic involves the management of nwyfre, so it is worth dedicating some time and energy to the study of it. A web search will show you how others are using the word, and how they make use of whatever they think it is. Keep adding to and enriching your sense of what it is by trying to maintain an awareness of it in everyday encounters. Meditation upon the word itself is sure to be rewarded by an enhanced sense of what it is. Advanced meditators should theoretically be able to penetrate to the collective sense of the word and thus intuit a deeper sense of its meaning, but most of us are not quite so advanced and besides, our co-operation in crafting new meanings for these old magical words is all part of the magic.

Naturally the most important magical tool is yourself, and the nwyfre you carry and communicate will pervade your magic, so let it be healthy, vital and smart, and may its radiance be for the good of all beings.

Notes:

- 1) Some people use this word differently.

A QUESTION, O LEARNED DRUID...

To keep going with the plant identification theme for now, can you identify these?



One of only a few in Adelaide City.



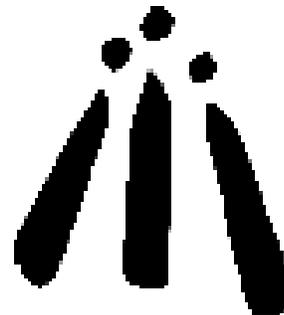
A vermifuge, and good for aching joints.



In Sanskrit this is named Vacha, वच.



In the foreground, but of a 'receding colour'.



CONNECTING COMMUNITY - LINKS AND EVENTS

DRUIDRY

The Order of Bards Ovates and Druids (OBOD):
www.druidry.org

Druidry Australia: www.druidryaustralia.org
*The website for The Order of Bards Ovates and
Druids in Australia.*

OBOD Druids New Zealand:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/OBODDruidsNZ/>

Druidic Dawn: <http://www.druidicdawn.org/>
*A large hub of resources, discussion and online
community for druids.*

Druidcast: <http://www.druidcast.libsyn.com/>
*A monthly podcast from The Order of Bards
Ovates and Druids. Many hours of excellent
listening.*

PAGAN GATHERINGS

Australia

NSW

Pagans in the Park
Pagans On The Coast hold a monthly *Pagans In
The Park* picnic in Budgewoi, 2nd Sunday of
every month, 11am to 3pm at McKenzie Park (at
the end of Lake Street), Budgewoi, NSW.
(More details at
http://www.pagangatherings.com.au/pagan_gatherings_nsw.htm)

QLD

Pagans in the Park
A Meet & Greet picnic for local pagans to network
and socialise. This is an open event, all trades
welcome. Family Friendly. This event is FREE, we
only ask you please bring a plate to share with the
group. BYO Alcohol. Last Sunday of the Month at
Dayman Park, Urangan (Hervey Bay)
Contact: Daina - fcpitp@gmail.com

SA

Pagans in the Pizza Bar
Meet on the first Tuesday of each month at
Marcellina's, 273 Hindley Street, Adelaide, 8pm.
Socialising and dinner from 6pm; guest speaker at
8pm. Gold coin donation for non Pagan Alliance
Members.
(Visit <http://paganalliancesa.drak.net/> for more
information.)

New Zealand

Visit this facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/OBODDruidsNZ/>

South Africa

Visit the South African Pagan Council:
<http://www.pagancouncil.co.za/>

South America

Visit The Pagan Federation International – South
America: <http://www.sam.paganfederation.org/>

The Pagan Awareness Network keeps a listing of
community events around Australia. If you wish to
advertise an event please let them know.
<http://www.paganawareness.net.au>

Thanks for reading *SerpentStar*.

We welcome all feedback.
Email serpentstar.obod@gmail.com

or write to:

v o wyverne
PMB2 Angaston
SA 5353
Australia

Next issue is Imbolc 2013.
*But for now, a warm fireplace is eagerly looked
forward to.*
Peace and Awen. Ed.

*Answers: taxus baccata (english yew), isatis
tinctoria (woad), tanacetum vulgare (common
tansy), acorus calamus (calamus)*