

SerpentStar



Magazine and newsletter of
The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids



Beautiful Ents at the 13th Assembly. Photo by Fiona.

Lugnasadh 2014

G'day people!

Welcome to the Lughnasadh issue of SerpentStar.

It's been a hot summer and some of us will be glad of the cooler weather as the summer heat declines into autumn.

We've had a very exciting three months since Beltane, with the South Australian Beltane Camp with Ðamh the Bard our illustrious Pendragon, and the lovely Cerri Lee in November followed by the Assembly in January, where many members were fortunate enough to meet and mingle with our chosen chief, Phillip Carr-Gomm and Stephanie. Read all about it in this issue. There's even a full copy of the ceremony of the Golden Grove, so even if you weren't there, you can still attune while reading through. Not the same as being there, but the next best thing.

Thanks and praise go to those who sent in the poems and pictures and articles that fill these pages.

Announcement: Owing to a lack of interest, the print copy will be phased out and there'll be no new subscriptions from now on. There are only two paper subscribers now, and their subscriptions will be honoured. Of course you can still subscribe on-line., and that's still free.

The wheel of the year turns and the sequence of the seasons continues. May you all enjoy the time to come.

In the peace of the grove.
Wyverne //



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13th Southern Hemisphere OBOD Assembly

The 13th Southern Hemisphere OBOD Assembly

Todd Dearing

Towards the end of January, 2014, at Lamington National Park, Queensland, druids gathered. Many came from around Australia, some came from New Zealand, and Philip and Stephanie came all the way from the UK (via New Zealand) – all to share in a magical and joyous four days in the most ideal tropical rainforest setting.

And ideal it was. Our gathering centred round a cosy wooden cottage, long ago built by a man named Groom for his family, and so called 'Groom's Cottage'. While there, the weather wove a tapestry of rain and wind and sun, of mist and cloud or clear moonless nights. It was perhaps colder than expected for the warmer time of year; the damp set in. Yet in the hearts of the loving community of OBOD members, the Sun was shining bright. Music was flowing like a river through time and occasion, arising as a mirthful spring to quench the ears and heart of listeners gathered round. Story was told, like fostering sunlight, ablaze with wonder to the innocent-hearted gathered round to hear, and deeply carved with wisdom. Insights and common words of daily living were exchanged as needed, gathering like dew upon leaf or lawn, replenishing both the ordinary and the magical ways of life that druids lead.

Ceremony was shared around the fire under the sky and wide-berthed trees, or within the lodge, or upon the peak of the powerful mountain surrounded by ancient Antarctic beeches. Archetypal roles of the circle, casting words in line to

weave the magic of the druid circle, to invoke the Awen, to come to fullness as individuals and community. The land and our living bond with it made clearer, more loving, more purposeful.

Understanding was shared through the collage of common hearts and minds, and resonance of belonging solidified in each and every tale of our beings. We walked alone to places in the nearby forest, or in groups, friendships fattened in healthy ways. There were lookouts to gaze from, and hill-trails to explore. There was food to honour the Earth's pleasures through. And there was time to reflect upon the meaning of it all.

The local ranger, Dean, opened the door for us to the story of the land, our eyes were widened by his heart and lore, wizened by his near druidic resemblance – we knew we'd met a kin-



All photos by Linda Marson, except where otherwise indicated.



dred soul. He showed us the local inhabitants; paddy-melons, and a pair of lethal spiders – Morticia and Wednesday – and we searched for a koala that was too well hidden. To Dean we offer many thanks, a living guardian of the land, doing worthy work upon the land.

Philip's triad of talks (one each day) was a delight and each full of insight. Like bright stars upon the pathless-path, inspiring like drops from the cauldron, with a dash of magic and a pinch of practice.

Bards were welcomed on the Bardic day, crafted into the growing lattice of Bardistry through initiations. The eisteddfod was a panorama of talent around the fire; entertaining, powerful, rich and evocative. Songs will continue to sound on their own among the waves of memory I am sure.

The Ovate day began. The women held their circle, as did the men, each group on one side of the cottage. Following that, the Ovates went to work their ways within the nearby trees. The divination cards came out that day, and the magic deepened. Threads of meaning wove together, began to sing and shine, and movement of another kind within brought forth that recognisable blissful sense of belonging.

We held our golden grove ceremony that evening: celebrating fifty years of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids. Brightness of golden bee's wax burning in the perfection of geometry, guided by keen eyes and hands to make a lasting symbolic memory. The history

Ngatina explaining her Grove plans to Michael in the light of the Awen. (Deb's plans in the foreground).



Elkie's photograph.

of our southern assemblies was given, leading to the present. Words of connection were spread from where we sat in circle to the wider world, memory and light and energy, linking the greater web of place and time.

Our ceremony shared in spirit with many lands. The future was considered, and clarified, and pledges made. Then we all shared mead, and music – golden indeed!

Dawn rose again, and either late or early, druids rose as well. Druid Grade day, so the Druids wandered up upon the hill for further ceremony. Meanwhile, others explored or relaxed or conversed or slept, or whatever else was to be done. That afternoon we gave audience for druids to share their passions, and they did. One by one, those who wished, spoke of their inspired ambitions, their gifts and works, their experiences and projects. There is such diversity among the community. No two druids are alike, each showing their uniqueness through their work, uplifting and healing to the world; gems of skill and gifts of many kinds. The evening set in, and singing and dancing and lots of fun again was shared, and the parting song, 'Wild Mountain Thyme'.



Then came the final day. A breakfast shared with much delight, and the closing ceremony for those four days. And the sweet sadness of goodbyes, and the anticipation of home. With long journeys and short, a continuation of life in all its richness.

And it is in the recognition of many, each in our own local lands, working our druidic ways, in the flow of season and of moon-tide, as time's story unfolds, that we see the way Druidry in the Southern Hemisphere continues into the 21st century. The Awen is nourished and grows. This tale is not yet fully told.



The Golden Grove



*13th Southern Hemisphere Assembly
Binna Burra, Queensland, Australia*



Golden Grove Ceremony



January 26 2014

8 p.m. at Groom's Cottage



The Opening



When everyone has found their place, Barb will play HEARTH OF BRIDGET, FIRE OF LIFE, SPIRAL NEVER ENDING on the recorder to signify that we are ready to begin.

Scribe: By the power of star and stone; by the power of the land within and without; by all that is fair and free, I welcome you to this Golden Grove Ceremony. Let us dedicate our every thought to the uplifting of humanity and the good of all beings.

Glenda: We have come from East and West, North and South to be here today.

Let us unite in heart and hand and take 3 breaths:

Everyone comes together and holds hands



All: Together with the Earth beneath us,
Together with the Sea around us,
Together with the Sky above us,
And with the blessings of Earth, Sea, and Sky may our ceremony begin!

Recorder: This is a unique occasion. Our Order was founded 50 years ago and so we are here today to celebrate the Golden Anniversary of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids and we are blessed with the company of its current Chosen Chief and Scribe.

Everyone returns to original places

East: *Calling to Spirit on behalf of all present:*

O Spirit of the Circle, O Spirit of this Place, O Druids, Pagan, Earthlovers, Healers of the past, present and future, and the founder of the Order, known to us as Nuinn, we ask for your blessings, guidance, inspiration and protection on this, our ceremony. May the One Great Spirit shine upon our Circle, illuminate our thoughts and give meaning to our actions.

Magician: Let us begin by offering peace to the quarters, for only when we are peaceful can the voice of Spirit be heard.

East: May there be peace to the East

North: May there be peace to the North

West: May there be peace to the West

South: May there be peace to the South



All: May there be peace throughout the whole world



Herald: In ancient times, Sacred Groves were places of sanctuary and worship for the Druids. Like a temple or chapel set within the natural world, they were places of spiritual refuge: places to calm the mind, refresh the spirit, and give comfort in times of distress. Druids today continue this tradition of seeking tranquil clearings in woods and forests, in which to meditate and hold ceremonies.

Knight: Let us sing the ancient word of the Druids – the Awen – and by so doing, invoke the spirit of inspiration into our Circle. We will sing it 3 times and in unison to bring the forces together.



All: Awen, Awen, Awen (*sung in unison*); we then pause for 3 heart beats

Ritualist: We may now cast our Circle, trusting in the clear vision that comes from inner harmony.

East casts the Circle, sunwise, whilst other participants visualize a circle of light being drawn.



All: Upon the circle of our horizon, of our lives and our lands, our years and our seasons, our birth and our growing, our dying and rebirthing, let us contain this circle within this time and place.

Ritualist: The circle is cast; we stand between worlds; united in love, light and peace. This is sacred time, this is sacred space

North: With fire and water, let us consecrate the circle we have cast.

By the Sacred fire of the perpetual flame, may this circle be purified and blessed

(Walking sunwise, the circle is purified in preparation for the Rite – words spoken 3 times)

West: By the Sacred water of the eternal spring, may this circle be purified and blessed

(Walking sunwise, blessing the circle with water, the words are spoken 3 times)

South: Let the 4 Directions be honoured and the Gateways of the Quarters be opened, that power and radiance may enter our Circle for the good of all beings.



All: *Face East*

East: In the name of the Ash and the tall flowering Eucalyptus known as 'Mountain Ash' or Regnans, we welcome the Spirits of the East.



All: *Endorse the East with music*



All: *Face North*

North: In the name of the Oak and the Wattle we welcome the Spirits of the North.



All: *Endorse the North with music*



All: *Face West*

West: In the name of the Willow and the Wilga, we welcome the Spirits of the West.



All: *Endorse the West with music*



All: *Face South*

South: In the name of the Holly Oak and the She Oak, we welcome the Spirits of the South.



All: *Endorse the South with music*



All: *Turn inward*

Ritualist: May the Harmony of our Circle be Complete.

This was my first Assembly and I can't think of a better introduction. It was truly a magical experience, from the setting, to the ceremonies, to the wonderful people I now call my clan. I'm sure I will always reflect on those few days with a smile in my heart.
Love and light,
Fiona.

A Golden Grove for the Southern Hemisphere

Guardian We will begin by placing the 12 assembly candles in a circle

The 12 candles are placed around the outer rim of the fire place.

They are then lit by the 12 people who represented our previous assemblies

We will then place the current assembly candle within our circle.

(not in the centre but ‘underneath’ east)

Murray to light.

Queen Inside this circle, we will create a second. This one will comprise 19 candles for Bridget. This will represent the 19 adult women at our assembly.

19 candles are placed inside the outer circle

The women light one candle each.

King And inside Bridget’s Circle, we will create a third. This one will represent the bright light of Lugh and the 11 adult men at our assembly.

11 candles are placed inside Bridget’s Circle

The men light one candle each.

Green Man We have created the 3 circles of the Order and the beginning of the Awen. Our task is now to build the Awen symbol in the centre of our 3 Circles. We will build it with our own visions and the visions of OBOD members not physically present but spiritually attuned to our Ceremony. We have lit 42 of the 50 beeswax candles that represent the 50 years that have transpired since the Order was founded. That leaves 8 and when the call went out, we received 8 responses from the Northern Hemisphere.

Chief Bard We will begin with the response from Italy and Il Bosco dell’Awen (i.e. the Awen Grove). It’s 9 a.m. over there and they have gathered together to be with us in spirit. Isabel sent us this verse to share:

“...Earth’s the right place for love:

I don’t know where it’s likely to go better

I’d like to go climbing a birch tree,

And climb branches up a snow-white trunk toward heaven...” - Robert Frost

Who would light a candle for Il Bosco dell'Awen in acknowledgment of our fellowship and add it to the Awen symbol?

Steve Wellz of the SW and Rhondda Dragon Grove also responded and is tuning in with us. He wrote: “we are southern in the sense of South Wales with a few links to New South Wales...quite a mixed heritage is our group. We have our eye on some derelict ground by the river and railway for a grove planting, or maybe a clearance first; there are some good hawthorns and oak there. Locals seem to prefer the eyesore to a Grove. Oh well...” It sounds like they could use some blessings from us to get their project underway. ***Who would light a candle for the SW and Rhondda Dragon Grove and add it to the Awen symbol?***

Will Glenn writes: “Thanks very much for the invite to participate. We are a new Seed Group in Georgia, USA, called ‘Whispers in the Wood’. Will has contacted community leadership to request permission to plant trees within the community.

Who would light a candle for Whispers in the Wood Seed Group and add it to the Awen symbol?

On the Isle of Man Billy Dickinson will be looking for a home for some oaks and a yew in memory not only of Nuinn but also Mona Douglas. ***Who would light a candle Billy and the Isle of Man and add it to the Awen symbol?***

Allen Howell of the Mystic River Grove in Boston, informed us that it is only 5 a.m. on the east coast of the United States and that tuning in with us would mean travelling in the middle of the night for them. And so they are sleeping as we conduct our ceremony but they did wish us luck and our ceremony has got them thinking. ***Who would light a candle for the Mystic River Grove and add it to the Awen symbol?***

From Glastonbury: Kate of the Appleseed Grove wrote: ‘Our private grove, surrounded by trees, is tucked away within the Aquarius (Phoenix) figure of the Glastonbury Landscape Zodiac, which incorporates Glastonbury Tor, Chalice Well, Chalice Hill, the White Spring, and the ancient oaks Gog and Magog. The trees of the grove often self-seed or have their fruits helpfully planted by the local squirrels. The seedlings which grow from these natural plantings are placed into pots and nurtured until they can be found suitable new homes. In December 2013 the latest batch of 12 young trees – 6 hollies, 1 hazel, 1 sycamore, 3 walnuts, and 1 fir - were rehomed to a young couple who are creating a small woodland area on higher ground in the Somerset Levels.’¹³



In exchange we received a huge bunch of mistletoe, still growing on a freshly-cut segment of apple bough, for use in our Alban Arthuan ritual on Dec 22 2013. We like to think that all the little seedlings which we give away take with them to their new homes the blessings of the Appleseed Grove'. And also from Glastonbury, Penny of Touchstone fame and the Ash Grove in Glastonbury wrote to say that they will be planting an oak grove in

spring, possibly next month; all blessings on their enterprise gratefully received.
(photo of Penny's homegrown mistletoe, first year with berries).

Who would light a candle for the Ash Grove and add it to the Awen symbol?

Also planning to plant two ash and one oak tree is the Light of the Oak Grove. Karen has friends in Australia and thus feels a connection with us.

Elkie: In an update from Karen, she has spoken to conservationists and decided to repot these 3 trees and keep them in her garden until they are a bit older. She was given two mistle oaks, our Golden Bough, seeded by her neighbour, the late great George Thompson, which she has passed on to JJ Middleway. He has taken it to Gloucester to plant as a gateway. She has sent us a photo of one of them with the shoots that are one year old...

JJ wrote that they will be planted shortly in the Slad Valley. 'The intention is to form a gateway to mark the portal to the Great Birthing which is taking place in our time, as we transition to a greater heart space and respect for the feminine. Very much in tune with Druidry and OBOD and fitting for the marking of the 50th anniversary too. I have provisionally named the trees Reverence and Mirth.'

Who would light a candle for the Light of the Oak Grove, JJ, and the mistleoaks and add it to the Awen symbol?

We are tuned in, as one, with the above groves and seed groups and we pause to feel the connection between us.

Pause

Stephanie Some of the words spoken in this ceremony come from the Golden Meditation planned for the Glastonbury Gathering in June. Just as in the



Southern Hemisphere, summer is now passing, so at the Northern Hemisphere gathering, summer will be approaching. There is balance and beauty in all of this. When the Groves and Seed Groups were invited to join in with us across the ethers, Karen James kindly sent the Golden Meditation that will be conducted at the Glastonbury Gathering. It is fitting that I offer this meditation to you here and now.

And so bring your awareness to your breath flowing in and out, and the gentle rise and fall of your belly and your chest...

Seeing and feeling your feet upon lush green grass of the earth...

You find yourself in a beautiful garden...

A glorious grove of the heart...

Take in the colours and sights...

Smell and taste the flowers and fruits...



Photo by Fiona

Sit beneath a tree and connect to roots, trunk, and branches
...touching the sky...

...feeling the light of the sun filtering through the leaves,
warm against your skin.

breathe in the all-loving, all-nurturing all-creative light of our golden sun and Goddess Bridget, and pass some of this golden light along to someone else,

without effort....it's time to return, ground, share and smile.

We pause here so that we can respond if we wish to..

When everyone who wants to has spoken...

Mabon Whilst we are still basking in the peace of the Golden Grove Meditation, let us speak about commitments to plant in the Southern Hemisphere. We will begin with James and Janet and we will ask their daughter, Jenn, to represent them. James sent me pictures of the grove they began planting on their property outside Cambridge, New Zealand and sent pictures...

Jenn, would you light a candle please for wonderful parents and our dear friends, Janet and James?

(please see separate article on The Howell North Grove)

Also from New Zealand: Yvonne of the Middle Earth Fellowship has written that they already have four groves: their original British Ogham tree grove, plus one of ash, one of native NZ trees, and a stone circle in a grove of pines. Yvonne will be doing restorative work to repair damage from her Highland cattle in the original grove and preparing more trees for planting in autumn in the native tree circle to replace those eaten by rabbits. Yvonne will also be planting a commemorative grove of 50 oaks on her land as a part of SH Imbolc Celebrations. She has only just realized that she had sufficient baby oaks in her tree nursery to do this and is grateful that she has sufficient room on her farm for this great planting.

And also in the Southern Hemisphere, we have received blessings from The Cradle Seed Group in Johannesburg who they are tuning in with us.

Much closer to home, we think of Cherry in Kingaroy. Cherry was unable to be here but sends her love and her contribution.

“Just thinking about the (above) I have realized that the poem was given to me because of the intent of the Assembly – honouring both Lugh and Bridget – and also it is an acknowledgement and celebration of the deep love which connects our order and our work for peace wherever we may be.” - Cherry



Willow Grove

Circle of silver

Spiral of gold

Hope of the future

Wisdom of old

Melding and weaving

The alchemy blends

The magic of ages

And true love of friends

Silver for moonlight

Gold for the Sun

Revealing the promise

Of peace that will come

By Cherry Carroll.

Also much known and loved by some of us is Wyverne who will be synchronizing the planting of seeds of citrus, carob, dog rose, olive, quan-dong and possibly pines in containers to be planted out around their farmlet as part of their food forest. In readiness, she will have blessed earths, compost, containers and water ready and a cold frame to protect them while they germinate. As we speak, Wyverne has cast a circle and entered in the light body meditation so as to share the energy of the Golden Grove and be a part of it.

Representing Western Australia are Brad in Geraldton and Tiki in Perth. We haven't met Brad yet but his intention to honour Nuinn and the Order is clear:

"I have decided to turn this venture towards restoration rather than creation of new groves; something within me senses that Nuinn would approve of this. While we celebrate occasions we can also strengthen that which is left behind in our path, that needs redefining for those journeys we face in our future. There are two groves close to where I live that have been damaged by recent local development. A grove of Sheoak that was an important part of my Bardic Grade has been desecrated and is calling to me to restore the energies of this sacred space. And a grove I planted a while ago when my daughter was born, of lemon flowering gum, the local council went through and mowed down the weeds and in the process took out three of the eight trees that I planted to constitute the eight points of the compass, elements, seasons, festivals, Celtic wheel of the year and so on. I will restore these two groves in memory of our previous chief and to celebrate the beauty and majesty of this awesome planet and her great depth".

A candle is moved into the centre for Brad aka Petrichor

We first met Tiki at the Albany Assembly and some of us have stayed in touch since. "I hope to see you all again and I will ask you to light a candle for Sparrow and Robin, both of whom are growing into quite magical children and whose paths may continue to intertwine with Druidry across the next 50 years".

A candle is moved into the centre for Sparrow and Robin

In Sydney Dragonwyst is tuning into us.

A candle is moved into the centre for Dragonwyst, Reilly, Carole and our other Sydney friends.

And from Jo in Melbourne: “I like the idea of connecting in an individual tree on your land if you can’t make it, especially as me and OBOD would seem to be of a similar age!”

A candle is moved into the centre for Jo and other Melbourne Grove members who are tuning in with us.

It’s our turn now: who among us will be doing some planting to honour Nuinn and the 50 year anniversary of the Order he founded?

- † The first to step up was the Macadamia Seed Group, based in Brisbane/South East Queensland. A macadamia seedling was integrated into the circle of lights, and macadamia nuts, wrapped in a cloth of sunshine (representing the Sunshine State!), were placed on the boundary, and provided to participants for tasty eating or planting. This beautiful sub-ritual represented the ‘rebirth’ of the Macadamia Seed Group.
- † As a part of the Golden Grove Ceremony and to commemorate the OBOD 50th Anniversary Corringal Grove, on the Eyre Peninsula, South Australia, committed to starting an Arboretum. From Rafayard: “The place has been picked out and we will now work on developing it over time with an opening blessing at the assembly here in 2016. The beauty of the site is that it is an old established garden that was let go. There is quirky infrastructure already in place including a Vesica Pisces. We are going to hold a winter solstice gathering here this year in 2014, where friends can come and we will get on with its development. If you would like to be involved in this project or would like to contribute suitable flora, you are most welcome. There will be a commemorative plaque made and all species included will be labelled”.
- † The Heartswood Spiral that Elkie began in 2009 will be completed this year as a part of the Anniversary Celebrations. The final 4 plants will be

homed in autumn at this beautiful location and you are welcome to participate. It could be significant that the ones that are left and will thus relate to this occasion are the Holly, the Hazel, the Hawthorn, and the Vine.

When everyone has spoken...

Let us pause to consider what we have created: the OBOD symbol and a world-wide Koad (old word for Grove)!

We pause once again to allow response.

West

Sacred Groves are not unique to the Druid tradition. They are recorded in the Classical world, and in the Middle East. And all over Asia, in India, China, Thailand, Burma and many other parts of Indochina, for thousands of years sacred groves have existed, and continue to exist. They act as sacrosanct areas, which are at the same time temples, places for spiritual retreat and meditation, wildlife sanctuaries, and places where medicinal plants can grow in safety. As you plant and care for your grove, you can feel how you are continuing this ancient and powerful worldwide tradition.

The Closing

East:

It is the hour of recall and the time to depart

What the eye and ear have gained, hold close to your heart

Holding hands in the circle, with East taking the lead –

All: We swear by peace and love to stand,

Heart to heart and hand in hand

Mark O Spirit and hear us now

Confirming this, our sacred vow

Filí

Let us sing 9 magical, cascading Awens each in our time and own way and then pause to feel their effect.

We each sing 9' Cascading Awens but no-one's counting!

Pause-Pause-Pause-Pause-Pause-Pause-Pause-Pause

Modron: Let the 4 Directions be thanked for their blessings:

South: *Turning to face outwards with arms outstretched –*

Spirits of the South, powers of Earth, we thank you for your blessings and presence in our circle.

All: *Endorse the South with music*

West: Spirits of the West, powers of Water, we thank you for your blessings and presence in our circle

All: *Endorse the West with music*

North: Spirits of the North, powers of Fire, we thank you for your blessings and presence in our circle.

All: *Endorse the North with music*

East: Spirits of the East, powers of Air, we thank you for your blessings and presence in our circle.

All: *Endorse the East with music*

Modron: May the Harmony of our Lands be Complete

Confidant: Let us recite the Druid's Prayer for Peace.

All: Deep within the still centre of our being, may we find peace

Silently within the quiet of the grove, may we share peace



Gently, within the greater circle of humanity, may we radiate peace

Pendragon: This Golden Grove Ceremony is now closed in the apparent world but its inspiration will live on, by our hands and in our hearts.

Beginning with East, we each walk sunwise around the Circle, pausing in the East to acknowledge Spirit, and then leaving via the Western Gateway. (East first...Scribe last)

After a photo has been taken...



Photo: the Awen Symbol in the Centre surrounded by the 3 Circles of the Order.

The Macadamia tree and nuts are in the foreground and the energy lines appeared of their own accord.

Everyone brings a candle into Groom's Cottage and places it on the altar.

Afterword:

We would like to acknowledge Shaun Hayes as Groves and Groups Coordinator who put out the call to support our Ceremony, Penny as Editor of Touchstone, Wyverne as current Editor of Serpentstar, and Todd as its former Editor, for their active encouragement.

Blessings to All.

The Howell North Grove

Cambridge, New Zealand

September 2013

We are enhancing the privacy of our home by planting a small grove that will thicken our existing north boundary hedge. The planting began in November 2012, and will continue as long as we have room. The grove space was created by fencing off a bit more than one and a half acres. To date, we have planted about 120 trees, 74 shrubs and 45 ferns on this tract. The planting plan is piece meal and is based on what we are finding in the nurseries of the plants we like, on blocking key views to the north and east, and on achieving contrasts in plant colours and shapes. This is what the grove looks like today:



Magnolias at Oak Tree Corner



Deodars, Pines, Bays and Others



Manukas



Maples and Baby Pines



By the Road



Renewal

Ancient Beeches

Ancient beeches, old and welcoming

Rafayard
29/1/14

Sighing, whispering,

Speaking to my heart.

Old, old, knowledge and wisdom,

There for those who heed the call.

I breathed in deep and listened intently,

Into the silence I discovered more.

I listened further, going deeper, deeper,

into a mindful awareness of coming home.

Tree of my heart name, tree of my soul,

I heard your story, I felt your call.

I walked in your forest, I sat in your splendor;

Amidst lichen, and stones, with rain drizzling

down.

I breathed in your essence of ancient

wonder,

And was filled and gifted with the

lore of old.



Through the veil

By Linda Marson

On gentle breeze did tinkling laughter come,
Down to the sun-bathed stream my spirit flew
To joy and love once felt did I succumb
Fire blazing hot my whole body through.

Poetry

With eyes blindfold I walk the Brodgar Ring
A rite of passage in these ancient stones
Fear and wonder, mysteries and blessing
Ah-oo-wen rings out in cascading tones.

From sleep did I wake in this sacred land
Awake to a promise made long ago
From heart to heart and hand in hand to stand
To help the ways of old to bloom and grow.

Scenes from lives long past, agents of healing
Enlightened ways of living revealing.

This one came through the fire, flowing as water may...

- At the gateway to hopelessness, I turn -
By Todd Dearing

Do not think, ever, that it is hopeless.

From eyes of temporal origin and small concerns
on this globe of ours, rolling blue-spirit-sphere sapphire
through an endless sea of Law,
do not tell me of hopelessness.

Are you not alive, to be reading this,
does your flesh not mirror the same
genius of all Eternal Truths?

So that when suffering strikes your flesh, the bones
are strengthened, the deep wisdom of your
ancestral heritage is brought forth with greater keenness.

That is not enough, you say. But when suffering wears upon your bones,
your nerves are strengthened,
the ancient-future is again mirrored in your lightning-radiant
impulses brought forth, carried by survivor
after survivor,
all the way from the first amoeba or protoplasm to Now,
to you, alive with that gift that has been and seen so much;
so much that you can recall.

And when suffering hammers at your nerves,
then the marrow, the vital sap of life,
comes forth.

The spirit of the Ages rises,
which only prior legends have been able to record.

But pushed further, the heart of suffering breeches life itself,
into the heart-of-being, the diamond heart of the woken-human-being
at once at one with All,
with deepening compassion
and you know
what you have always known, but only caught in glimpses half -
forgotten.

Your heart, the real-heart, cannot ache for itself for long, but quickly
it explodes like a cosmic reverberation, a fundamental movement to the
central prism of each and every cell,

awakening them,
and into the clouds, awakening rain
and into the fullness of the daytime Sun,
whose living face is full of ardour, having seen
it all before,
and who offers you the uncloaked exalted peak of Life -
call it pure and unbounded love, actualised
in diamond flow, concordant
like an angelic choir.

Let the wave of light rise,
while dragons stir deep
in the hollows of the Earth-Mother;
in the face of all oblivion,
know the song that is the pure
signature of Earth-Life.

And watch it all unfold:
watch the giants once again to stride upon the Earth;
hear the griffin's high above in shrill-peak calls,
circling the astral horizon, bringing forth the vaster dawn;
know the meaning of the rainbow
as it stretches from the oceanic depths into your heart,
beating all the while in its rhythmic song:
has-hope, has-hope, has-hope...
and tell me then that the rule of nature's law will let such wisdom fall.
 Houses of cards built on sand will come and go, but what remains, that is
 my chore...

The ancients knew the ancient law: know thyself, and all things in
moderation - that was the rounded golden-meanned Eagle's cry.
 And it stands still today, present to the core,
allied with the crystal justice of the Sacred Law
while monkeys-ignorant grasp at uncanny advantage and fill the dreary
pages of Darwin's misinterpreted score.

So I say this now:
Trust the deeper unfolding, as you play your chosen role,
and I say no more to hopelessness's lifeless call.

Awen //



The Beltane Camp

A Beltane gathering of about fifty

people sharing mirth, music, ceremony and magic in a woodland environment with all comforts and plenty of delicious

nutritious food is bound to succeed, but put Spiral Dance and an indomitable team of helpers in charge add in our beautiful Pendragon and the world's foremost bard Damh the Bard and his delightful ly charismatic partner Cerrie Lee, and you can bet you've got a romping good time.



Photographs from SA BELTANE CAMP PHOTOS <https://www.facebook.com/SABeltanecamp?ref=ts>, with Adrienne Piggot's kind permission.

Dancing The Maypole



We've done a risk assessment,
and it's bloody risky!

- Cerri Lee

Highlights included:

- ◊ Morning chanting lead by skilled chanters to start each day in harmony with the land and its spirits.
- ◊ Rousing concerts with Damh the Bard and Spiral Dance that had us all up on our feet dancing and singing along till late.
- ◊ Separate men's and women's rites in which the men were strangely transforming themselves into wild grunting beasts while we women were talking up our diverse femininity in a sedate and civilised way. :
- ◊ This was immediately followed by a rowdy, boisterous and even (gasp) vulgar Maypole Dance with lots of bawdy jokes and some very powerful very earthy Beltane magic straight from our pagan ancestry and positively rippling with fresh power and fertility for our lands in our times.
- ◊ Two very moving hand-fastings.
- ◊ Cerri Lee's ancestor workshop where we modelled ancestral skulls from clay and through them made vital connections with the powers of our ancestors and gave them our love.
- ◊ Damh's erudite and illuminating Ogham presentation.
- ◊ A Bardic Circle which gave us all a chance to share our songs, poems and performances in a safe and supportive atmosphere.
- ◊ Good food and drink, and good company, with plenty of time for mixing and mingling and getting to know one another.
- ◊ Solitary bush-walking and a chance for people with cameras to photograph the unique Adelaide Hills landscape with its beautiful rocks, abundant wildlife and impressive scenery.



pictures say more than words



music... magic... meditation





Kudos
goes to the planners
and organisers and
the kitchen staff and
other invisibles for a
well-run yet spontane-
ous, inspiring, magical
Beltane Camp!



Crystal Water Star-Speaking Temple

By Martin Samson

While Adelaide spent a week in January being the hottest city in the world Lucy and I were high up in the mountain ranges of Australia's highest peaks. It was not so hot there, but even so we decided to get up early in the morning and have our walking and bush escapades done before the full heat of the day. We had been invited there by a friend of ours who has worked in Kosciuszko National Park and feels called there to interact with the earth energies. She took us on a number of walks to some of her favourite sacred places.

Many years ago I had been here during a snow filled winter and as my memories flowed back I realised that I had been limited by the snow drifts and weather from actually entering into the heart of this wonderful landscape temple. Lucy had never been up here before and we entered into it with fresh eyes and hearts. Being hot season we didn't meet a lot of people and had many hours uninterrupted with the land, the trees and beings of the mountains. Lucy often found herself feeling like she was walking through a memory layer of silent drifts of winter snow in the same space as the etheric memory of the flames of the bushfires that had raced through the country a few years back. The waters in creeks reflected how both these extremes of snow and flame, were always brought together , released through rain and snow melt; a beautiful alchemy!



As we walked past guardian trees we stopped and made our prayers and invocations for guidance. Day by day we were let into deeper and deeper presence of this ceiling and portal to the great continent of Pamanyungan/Australia. On the first morning we decided to do a divination of its name and who might be the spirit of this place. We opened our minds to the question and began a quiet walk observing the signs. By the end of the walk we spent time standing on a rock that had a small creek running under it looking out from the centre of this great landscape chalice. We began to realise that the surrounding circle of mountain peaks, crystals and water of the land, along with the crows and the myriad of gentle star flowers were listening to the stars speak. It was only then that I remembered a conversation a year back in Canberra with Adrian Brown, the Ngunnawal elder we had visited to ask about listening and doing earth energy activity on the lands, telling us that the dream song-line of the Bogong moth followed the Murrumbidgee (the pathway to the elders) up into the mountains along the seven star mountains! We came to feel that we were right in the highest of these Temples and stood in wonder at the presence.

There are many wonderful sanctuaries, groves of trees, rock altars and sanctuaries and large hollows that their energy forms reminded us of Cader Idris, Glastonbury and other sacred sites we know around the world. We walked and sat and sang and meditated and spent time singing the Awen again in this magnificent land-

scape temple. One evening we decide to go for a swim in a river and began to feel our way into this place as a Mount Aux Sources. Not far from each other the Murray, the Snowy and the Murrumbidgee rivers have their source. So early in the morning we walked along one of the high river beds with icy water and took our shoes off and stood in the clear brisk flow and sang to the waters of this beautiful continent.

Another highlight was a particularly powerful site where we found a natural altar to the goddess with many rocks that were very lively and keen to have us participate in their sanctuary. We were led to know that the women approached from one direction and sat with the turtle rock to cloak themselves in a star garment before entering while the men approached from another direction and went through a strong place of transforming the warrior into nurturing manhood. Inside this tor many wonderful sites of human relationship bonding were found.



We left at the end deeply grateful to the mountains for inviting us in and guiding us through so many discoveries and accepting our nurturing of the earth together with the beings of place. We had a truly power filled communion with the crystal water star-speaking landscape temple and would love to return with a group of people to further our connection with the star source of the rivers of Australia.

A week before that we had spent some time with a group of people on the New South Wales coast close to Batemans Bay. During that time we were asked to spend time each day teaching people about earth energies. A group of twelve of us gathered at the edge of the woods and began a journey of discovery.

In the last Serpentstar issue (Beltane 2013) there was a report on an earth energies workshop run by Lucy in Mylor in South Australia, where etheric earth energy patterns were created by the group chanting into specific vortex sites within a landscape temple. Since then we have been working on these principles and discovering more about how a sacred site responds to the imprint of our sacred singing and ritual work

We took these principles and led the group to discover some of these effects for themselves. The first step was to find a natural underground water course with several vortices along the way. This required people to learn a certain amount of sensitivity to what an underground stream and a natural vortex feels like. It seems that when these telluric forces meet with the surface of the earth, interact with the trees and the various human interactions they begin to interconnect and create a series of energy centres that can be compared to the chakra system of the human body. It is well known that within a sacred temple or structure that we build these energy centres appear and were often constructed on blind springs, underground streams and other energy centres to enhance and support the prayer and ritual life of the rites of that temple. Many a sacred initiation site was constructed on ancient energy point. These energy sites and interconnected points are also in the landscape with-

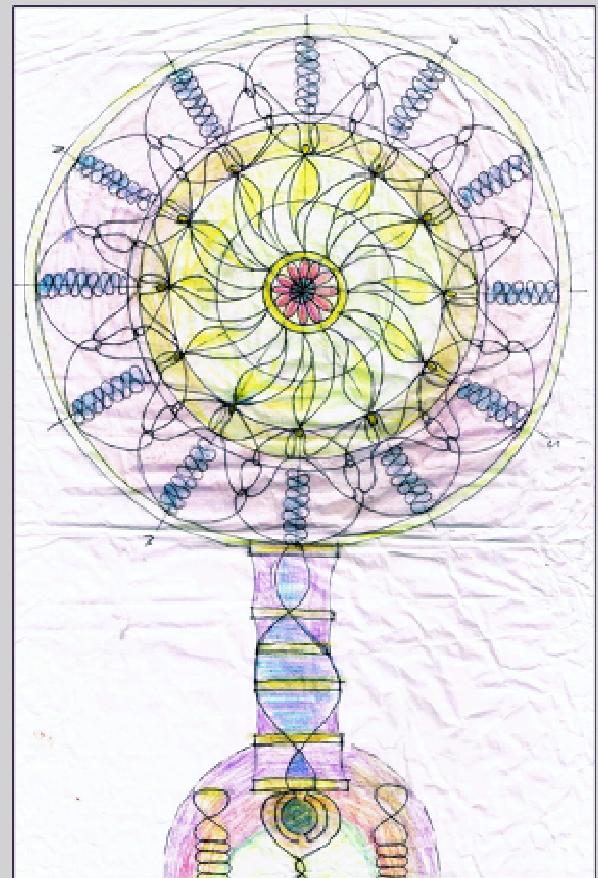
out the actual building needing to be there.

Once we map the sequence we discover which way the landscape temple is oriented and where the entry/feet and where the altar/ head aspect lies. An altar that lies at the west end of a landscape temple has a different energy and purpose to one that has its focus in the east or the north. We are discovering that there is a similarity between ancient temples and what we find as energy patterns in the land. We found a sequence of vortices that had the same alignment as the Hathor Temple at Dendera in Egypt and allowed us to perceive and imagine an altar space to the goddess. The altar site of the head chakra of our site was right at the feet of a very powerful and present grandmother guardian tree.

As a group we walked along the line of vortices entering the site at the feet and following the energy patterns we had perceived. While doing this we were chanting a peaceful druidic chant to allow our minds to slow to the pace of nature and announce ourselves to the beings of place. When we arrived at what might be considered the heart-throat area, whence the voice of a place arises, we began our activity of chanting into the etheric world of that place. We chose a very specific sequence of chants that allowed the energy fields at first to create an harmonious radiation within itself. After that we sang the sound of the sun and felt the concentric circles of energy begin to spin and come alive with fire petals. At the end of the day we gathered the drop of light created between us and raised it to our hearts and released it upwards into whichever dimensions it needed to go. Each day we entered the temple again with a calming attuning chant and added another type of chant after which we began to dowse the weaving patterns of the etheric jewellery appearing out of the listening earth.

As we experience more and more of our impact on the etheric world and the web of earth energies we have come

This very intricate and variegated piece of etheric jewellery appeared when two of the energy chakras, the head or high altar and the throat chakras, of our landscape temple began to merge together.



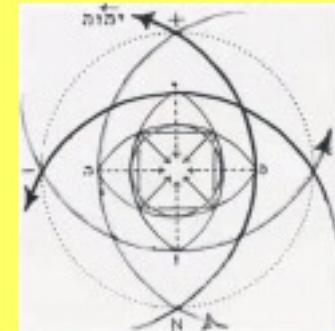
to perceive how wonderfully responsive the land is to sound, chanting and the word. The words of prayers, thoughts, meditations, rituals and conversations are all heard and the vibrational quality of a place is raised, or

depleted. These inscriptions into the etheric and astral worlds are like seeds that hold a pattern that through our presence can be heightened and also stabilised if done over a long period of time, as in a temple or sanctuary both of the natural and structured kind. We are deeply grateful to the nature allies and beings who help us unfold this knowledge and lead us in vitalising and raising the earth's energy in this way.

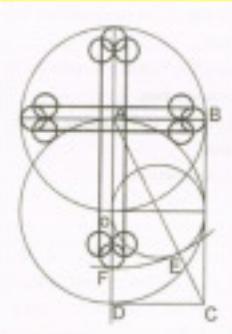
WORLD HARMONY SEMINAR

*Sr. Lucy Crawford - Sandison
and
Fr. Martin Samson*

present

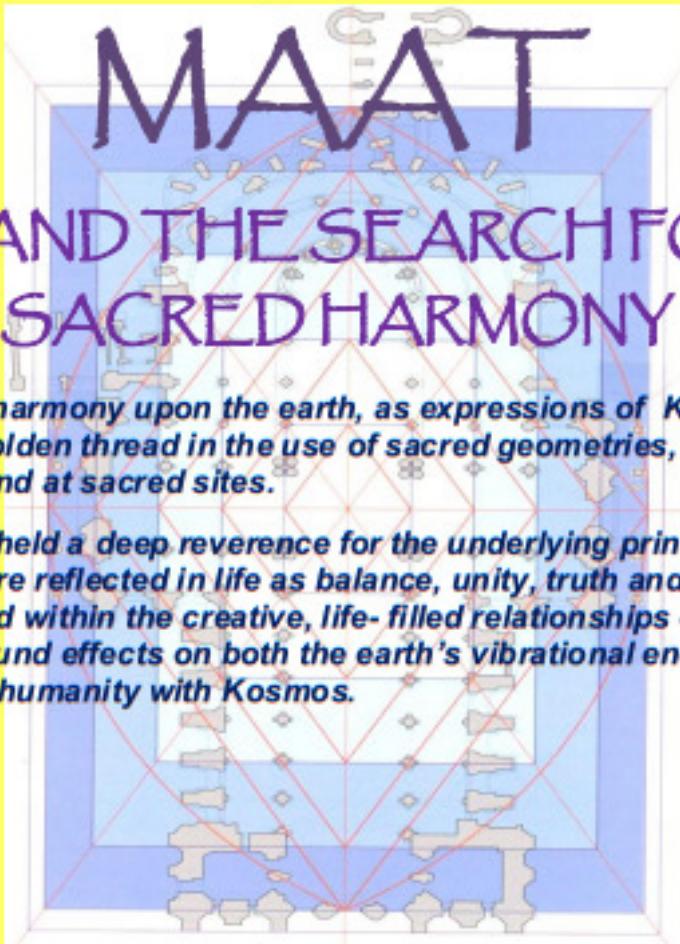


MAAT AND THE SEARCH FOR SACRED HARMONY



Expressions of sacred harmony upon the earth, as expressions of Kosmos, or cosmic harmony, has been a golden thread in the use of sacred geometries, resonant sound and sacred ritual forms found at sacred sites.

The Ancient Egyptians held a deep reverence for the underlying principles of the Goddess Maat, whose qualities are reflected in life as balance, unity, truth and beauty. When these principles are expressed within the creative, life-filled relationships of humanity and nature, they have profound effects on both the earth's vibrational energy fields and the mystical attunement of humanity with Kosmos.



This day long seminar will explore ancient and current worldwide archetypal expressions of Sacred Harmony from various mystical, cosmological, geomantic, scientific, and artistic sources, including a more detailed study of the vibrational aspects of the 'Temple of Hathor' at Dendera, and the 'Cathedral of the Chartres Mystery School'.

THIS PRESENTATION WILL INCLUDE EXPERIENCES OF THE PROFOUND EFFECTS OF SACRED SOUND, AND ALSO AN "EQUINOX WORLD HARMONY MEDITATION" TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS SACRED HARMONY ON EARTH.



Sat. 22nd March 11.00am-4.00pm

A light lunch plus morning & afternoon tea will be provided

*Non member \$40 Amorc members \$35
L/CH members \$30 Concession \$25*

Crossword Puzzle

CLUES ACROSS					CLUES DOWN					
1.			2.		3.		4.		5.	1. Bringing into accord.
										2. The ... between the worlds.
6.					6.					3. Rad light.
7.		8.					9.	10.		4. Wizard.
11.					11.		12.			5. English song bird.
13.						14.				8. Carver Doone's daughter.
15.					15.	16.				10. Dentition.
17.			18.				19.			11. Herbal brew.
19.			20.							12. Pinch.
20.										16. A number.
21.										18. Born and ...
										19. Defamation.

Lugnasadh Lore

Lugnasadh, Lugh's festival, Harvest time in Celtic tradition. Trade, games, athletic competitions, marriages, feasting, fairs and ceremony are all part of the fun.

We're not harvesting grain at this time of the year, but it's still a good time to look back on the year's material and spiritual harvests and celebrate.



SerpentStar needs you!

More of **A MAGAZINE** than a newsletter,

SerpentStar

comes out **4 times a year** at each of the **Fire Festivals**,
Imbolc, Beltane, Lughnasadh and **Samhuinn**.

All **content** comes from you—the readers.

Contributions are **eagerly sought**. Send your articles, poems and creative writing, cartoons, reviews, art and photography, info, events, news, links, and anything else to do with being **bards, ovates and druids** to **wyverne@gmail.com**.

Please make sure your contributions do not violate copyright laws.

Subscriptions Free on-line as a pdf file from:
www.serpentstar.wordpress.com .

I regret that the paper edition is no longer being offered, owing to a lack of interest.

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

Deadline for Samhuin issue: 30th April 2014

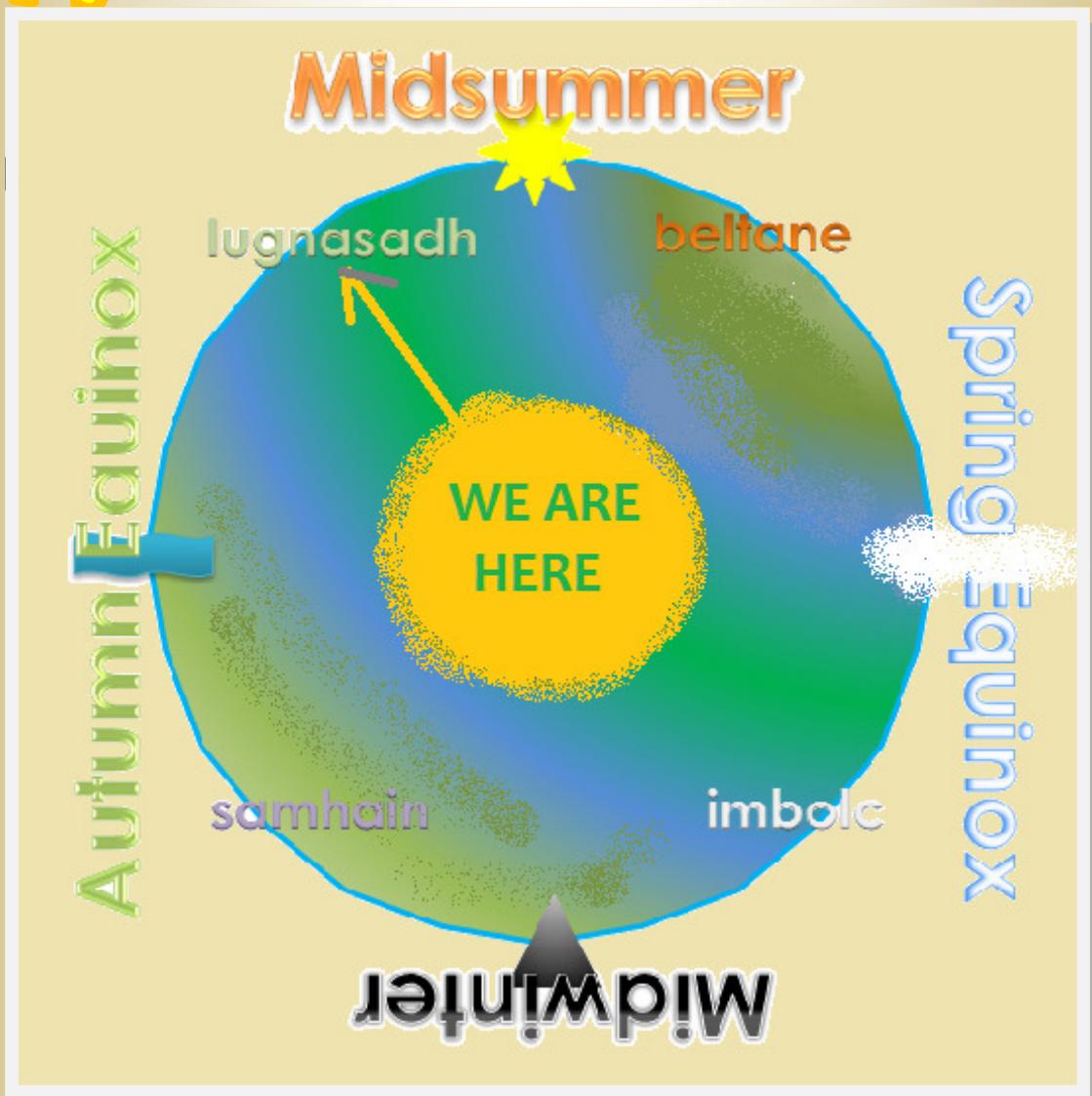


When contemplating the harvest, gratitude and awe are certainly in order. But all nature is listening and aware, so whether your harvests be from farm or gardens, or of mind and imagination, or of urban work and social interaction, think deeply about what you are getting out of your efforts and give the nature spirits honest feedback. Let them know when you're disappointed, and when you're pleased with what you get, don't hold back on joyful praise to Pan and the nature spirits.

Crossword puzzle

1	H	A	R	V	E	S	T	M	O	O	N
	A			E		A		A			I
	R			I	C	I	N	G			G
7			8						9	10	
M	I	L	L		L		E	T	C	H	
O	O			T	E	N		E		T	
13						11		12			
N	E	R	V	E			I	C	E	N	I
	I	N		A	S	P		T		N	
S	W	A	B		E			S	H	A	G
I			R	E	V	E	L			A	
N		E		E			U			L	
G	O	L	D	E	N	G	R	O	V	E	

Happy Lughnasadh everyone!



Have a Blessed Autumn Equinox!