

# SerpentStar

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



Artwork by Marigold Fairweather

Samhain 2015

## *Greetings everyone*

*Here is the next edition of Serpentstar. Another bumper issue with many wonderful contributions.*

*In this issue we have the final crossword puzzle that Wyverne , our former editor, has been producing for us over the years. Many thanks to her for the fun and challenge she has provided .*

*Due to my own changes in work, taking up full time work again, I need to pass on the editorship to someone else.*

*I have really enjoyed producing these newsletters but find myself not having the time or focus to do it justice.*

*Any offers? Or anyone want to suggest someone who can be approached. Please email me on [msamson@iprimus.com.au](mailto:msamson@iprimus.com.au)*

*From the Grove of Sheoaks  
Martin Samson*

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Love

Hold it close but let it fly

Marigold Fairweather

# Featured Artist

## Marigold Fairweather

Marigold Fairweather is an artist, and art therapist, living and working within a large, unruly mountaintop garden, with her canine assistant, Mr. Treadwell. Enfolded by acres of tall temperate rainforest, the ancient land whispers into her work...

Her stories, photography, sculpture, paintings and drawings tell tales of the Otherworld. She hand paints yarns reflecting seasonal colour changes, and magical eco-printed papers, imbued with the light of individual seasons, and stations upon the Wheel of the Year, as part of her spiritual practice.

"I work intuitively, letting the Arwen flow. Each piece comes through the veil by itself. As the artist, I metaphorically hold the veil between the worlds aside... Sometimes, I feel like a midwife, as they struggle to take physical form...

Working in a trance state, I respond to my inner guidance as best I can... Sometimes, the work manifests, morphs into something else, and then disappears entirely of its own accord: simply touching this plane momentarily is sufficient. Other times, the work remains, confirming my belief that every creative expression has its own inner Daemon, or spirit, with its own purpose.

I never know what a piece of art will have to say. Some convey the most extraordinary messages to quite unexpected people!

Because of this, it may be a Bardic responsibility, to respond to the call of the Arwen, using whatever means of creative expression is appropriate, to assist beauty to manifest in this world.

The Otherworld often reveals its secrets through the arts..."



## Druidry and the World Wide Wonder of the Trees.

The scene: a Druid conference where a fiery speaker encouraged us to own our Druidry, and quite right too. The interpretation of Druid lore is left to us, to craft a personally relevant path leading to magic and service.

But then the speaker gathered steam, ending her peroration of 'Who says you have to...(XYZ)???' with a roaring, 'Who says you have to love trees to be a Druid?' And that was my 'Whoa! Hold on there!' moment.

Of course Druids have to love trees. It's in the 'handbook' – those precious few accounts written by the Romans and Greeks. From them we know that our forebears performed rituals in Groves, and taught the mysteries of the natural world; that oak was present at every ritual, that they revered herbs and mistletoe... And I've met Druids from all over; from those who have only two seasons to those whose water goes down the plughole anticlockwise. Druids thrive from deserts to cold, wind-swept lands where only twisted scrub breaks the austere skyline. Regardless of local terrain, we all love trees: the instinct to make relationship with them seems too deep-rooted to be changed.

It's no surprise, really. They are like great, wise cousins, witnessing our shorter lives, yet living, aging visibly and dying, just like us: rooted in the ground, yet still moving; sharing with us a central trunk, limbs and a crown. They, also, stand on the earth and reach to the sky: are starkly individual, yet often in family groups. And intuitively we feel that we can communicate with them.

All Druids share that tree-understanding, but the hugely differing relationships with trees worldwide hadn't really clicked with me until I'd finished my latest book – at which point my American publishers mentioned that one of my three named trees, the yew, was unknown in a European form in the USA! ...Stunned silence... Then I got onto the OBOD office. Surely, if seminal tree attributes do not pertain worldwide, there would be a stream of correspondence, sheets of substitutions & so on??? Surely Druids would beat down the office doors for advice? Not a bit of it. And that's when I realized just how wonderful the ethos of OBOD Druidry is; and how well we students internalize it and respond to the course.

For if Druidry is about personal responsibility and crafting your own path within the guidelines of the egregore, the informing spiritual current, then of course, individual students will express the material depending on their instincts, age, mobility, orientation - and, pertinently to this article, depending on topography and locality. And without fuss, we do just that, in our thousands, taking the core tenets and adapting them; for Druid practice is a synthesis of person, time and place.

So, as an author with egg on my face (and a deadline) I naturally tapped up OBOD colleagues worldwide, to ask how they had adapted the tree-material. And, like tapping the birch in spring for its sweet sap, a trickle, then a stream of fascinating information came flowing. It was a heady experience, opening my mind to the myriad ways we make associations, and the emails could have formed the basis of another book. And it was humbling to realize just what little boxes of understanding we all live in, in that I'd never questioned the European associations, or wondered how on earth they could be interpreted in a very different terrain. One correspondent cited the energetic nature of trees and the relevance of the word 'flavour' - taste two varieties of apple, and you know, in spite of the differences, that they are unmistakably apples. So she found with yews in differing locations, whose lives carried different environmental and experiential knowledge – and therefore, even in the same genus, differing associations.

Trees speak of longevity and of eternity, so the regeneration of the yew is relevant in Europe where visiting a tree ancestor 1 – 5,000 years old is an option. But, where drought and fires destroy, specific tree-types express their resonance with eternity in other ways - requiring extreme heat or cold for germination; growing bark that can survive fire; developing an impenetrability to termites – the list is inexhaustible and mind-boggling. We remember JM Greer's comment that 'nature is the least opaque expression of divinity that is accessible to us', and just marvel.

Most correspondents balanced the tree-challenge with grace. 'My plan was to get to know the European plants, deeply, and at the same time to plant, observe, and learn about local plants.' But a point which, through my European blinkers, I had never considered - the historico/political connotations regarding the study of the Ogham - got my brain buzzing: that any imposition of the Ogham could be seen as a form of colonialism. This made me relieved, as well as proud, that OBOD has guidelines, not rules, and does not do a hard line in imposition! And one comment illustrates how antipodean Druids respond to the course with sincerity and integrity -

*'When I first received a letter telling me of the nine, or seven, or twelve, or however many it is, sacred trees of the Druids, I treated it as a historical curiosity. And so, I place it in the box that says, "this is of another country", and see if I can understand the thinking that led to it so as to understand the thinking of the course writers. I'm willing to understand this. But I cannot hold it in my soul as lived experience because it's too far removed from my world.'*

The more we consider, the more complex the messages of the trees become, the richer and more valuable as they become part of our spiritual vocabulary. Which, when we think of it, is exactly what the intoxicated wordsmiths who compiled the Ogham associations were hinting at in the first place. We get there by gosh and by golly but, if we persevere, we do get there!

Sincere thanks to all who answered my call, and who are acknowledged in the book, but in this article, let's unfurl with gratitude a ribbon of the trees that you mentioned as having resonance with the yew:

**Juniper, Totara, Koru, Cypress, Bottlebrush, Tree Fern, Sequoias, the Wollemi Pine...**

And, to conclude, this evocative piece might be used to point up the impossibility of a whinging pom ever understanding the S. Hemisphere mindset... I just love it.

*Have you ever felt the sky so bright that brightness itself was a weight pressing down on you, stretching you flat with light harsh enough to excoriate? As if the sun would burn you with a glance, but that there was no 'you', only endless space? Space and sky that had been there, and would be there, for an unknowable amount of time in one single unchanging instant?*

*Death here is not darkness.*

My response is, of course, no: and that, coming from a temperate isle, I am scared of extreme heat. But last week I stood under Mt. Snowdon, the home of the Welsh Gods, at deep midnight. The icy gale tore down, trying to scatter me to the edges of the landscape. A million huge, dizzying stars burnt through the blackness. The howling of hounds on the wind was like the Cwm Annwn, the hounds of the Otherworld, and I felt an insubstantial, momentary blip in the eternity of rock and brooding darkness. So, yes, we have differing connections shaped by our environment, but, beyond any experience allied to specific terrain, we have a global Druidic connection: deep awe in the presence of nature and the yearning to be an aware part of its terrifying wonder.

We are made greater by these experiences. By witnessing, by being an essential part of the whole, they enlarge us, whilst conversely their vastness gives us a proper sense of perspective. Druids are bonded by wonder that we have our place in 'the least opaque aspect of divinity'. It's a fellow feeling that makes an irrelevance of which tree means what to us. It gives us a grounded understanding of our place in the world. And if we periodically discover that we've been viewing through cultural blinkers? That's perfectly understandable and a part of the whole glorious process. Realising our previous limitations as our understanding expands once again, we wonder how on earth much further have we to go? And what a privilege to be part of such a great adventure of exploration!

*I googled Australian Ogham for fascinating info and blogs, but for starters, I can't end better than by directing you here...*

*<http://www.druidry.org/library/trees/australian-ogham>*

*From the magic of the Grove in all its myriad forms, Penny Billington A\*





Dryad 1  
A Visitor to the Studio  
Marigold Fairweather

## The Swan of Samhuinn by Gillian Kavanagh

Often we associate Samhuinn or Summers end with the Celtic New Year, Callieach, Morgana and the Raven. It is a time of death and renewal. A time for honouring our ancestors, and of letting go of those things which no longer serves us. It is a time of year where the veils between the worlds are thin, and spirits walk amongst us.

I use to always associate Samhuinn with the Raven, but recently due to synchronicities, I feel there is the Swan of Samhuinn. I stumbled across an old Irish tale for Samhuinn called the Dream of Oengus. I had heard of the tale before but did not realise it had an association with this time of year.



In his dream Oengus is given the vision of a beautiful girl called Caer Ibormeith, meaning Yew berry. Yew tree also being the symbol of death & rebirth. She is a shapeshifter and takes the form of a swan. Her father is King of the “Sidhe” the fairy, and refuses Caer to be wooed by Oengus. As Oengus is a god, his only choice is to shapeshift himself into a swan at Samhuinn, so he can be reunited with his love. They fly three times around a lake sending everyone into a sleep for 3 days and nights. The power of three, and the Celtic New Year is a 3 day festival, so Druidical, if there is such a word. In the Druid Animal Oracle Deck by Philip & Stephanie Carr Gomm, Oengus flies with Caer to his house, Brugh na Boinne, known as Newgrange in Ireland.

This got me excited as I am a Druid but also a dowser, and member of the British Association of dowsing, Earth energies being my special interest. So you often find me out on the land with rods and pendulum

visiting ancient and sacred sites. Finding out the sacred sites alignments, to the directions, stars and planets and discovering the earth energy lines, also known as ley lines or dragon lines, energy spirals and springs, trauma, and healing it.

Then I bought a book "The Spine of Albion" written by my friends Gary Biltcliffe and Caroline Hoare who are also dowsers. It is packed full of their 15 year research discovering a Ley line of 2 energies male and female that snake their way through the spine of Britain. They named the lines Belinus for the male, and Elen for the female line. At many important sites the leys meet, the Rollright Stones, Winchester Cathedral as well as Carlisle, named after the god Lugh which has links to Arthur and the Green Knight and all the way to the north coast of Scotland passing through many interesting places. The lines were aligned with Deneb, in the constellation of Cygnus, the Swan. Another synchronicity.

Since then I have discovered that many of our prehistoric sites in the UK, such as Avebury and Callanish in the Orkneys, align with the rising or setting of stars primarily Deneb, in the constellation of Cygnus, the Swan. It is situated in the direction of North (northern hemispheres) situated in what is known as the "Dark Rift" of the Milky Way, a dust cloud that stretches out into Sagittarius.

Many shamanic cultures around the world believed this unusual feature of the Milky Way represented a magical pathway to the heavens, the afterlife, and rebirth. They aligned many of their ancient monuments and temples to Cygnus. They believed the benevolent beings that lived there provided them with knowledge from their ancestors, in the form of ancient wisdom to live a more spiritual life.

So take this opportunity to honour our ancestors at this time, for without them we would not be here, and may the Swan of Samhuinn bring you a Blessed Samhuinn.

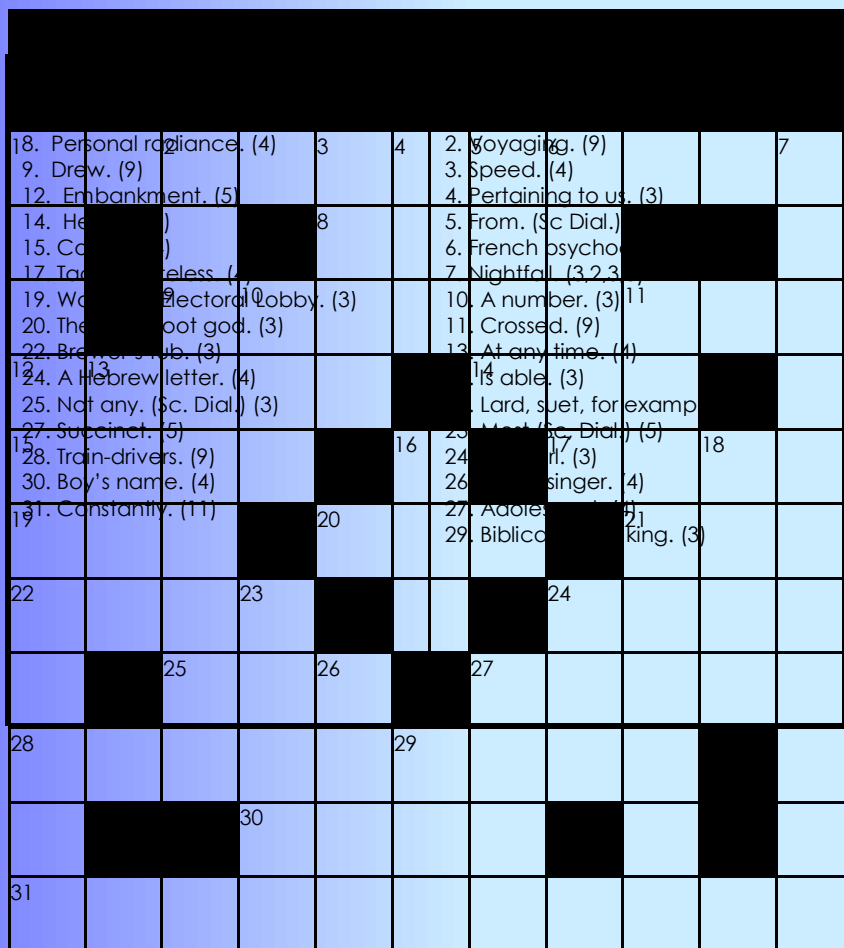
©Gillian Kavanagh 2015 *Facebook page:-* Druid Shaman Call of the Wild

*Gillian is a member of OBOD and the British Dowsing Association and runs retreats on Druid Shamanism, she is passionate about sharing her knowledge and encouraging others to empower themselves and connect to the earth in a sacred way.*

*(Image unfortunately I am unable to find out the artist to credit.)*



# CROSSWORD PUZZLE



## Clues Across

1. An elixir. (5,2,4)
8. Personal radiance. (4)
9. Drew. (9)
12. Embankment. (5)
14. Hearer. (3)
15. Cooker. (4)
17. Tacky, tasteless. (4)
19. Women's Electoral Lobby. (3)
20. The goat-foot god. (3)
22. Brewer's tub. (3)
24. A Hebrew letter. (4)
25. Not any. (Sc. Dial.) (3)
27. Succinct. (5)
28. Train-drivers. (9)
30. Boy's name. (4)
31. Constantly. (11)

## Clues Down

1. Weeping plants. (6,5)
2. Voyaging. (9)
3. Speed. (4)
4. Pertaining to us. (3)
5. From. (Sc Dial.) (4)
6. French psychoanalyst. (5)
7. Nightfall. (3,2,3,3)
10. A number. (3)
11. Crossed. (9)
13. At any time. (4)
16. Is able. (3)
18. Lard, suet, for example. (4)
23. Most (Sc, Dial.) (5)
24. That girl. (3)
26. Celtic singer. (4)
27. Adolescent. (4)
29. Biblical divine king. (3)



Leaf:

Hearts in Nature

Self portrait:

Me in my personal  
Grove. The heart ap-  
peared as if by  
magic, inspiring a set  
of drawings.







"Veg" - summer colour harvest from Marigold's garden.

"Eco Dyed Papers" These particular papers hold the energy of new growth, from plants harvested Spring Equinox 2014

"Yarn" - Autumn's intense colour is comforting to work with in warm yarns on cool nights.





# *The Prayer of Heart-Light*

*With each breath I take,  
may I enlighten the world  
with the song of my heart.*

*With each beat of my heart,  
may my blood release a flame of life  
to add warmth to my understanding.*

*With each waking moment,  
may the prayer of my Heart-Light  
illuminate my Spirit-Knowing.*

*With my life born by the Spirit of the Earth,  
may my beholding of Heavenly-Light  
enlighten within Earth-Light.*

*With each breath I take,  
may my Spirit-Knowing  
awaken future Earth's own Heart-Light.*

*Martin Samson*





- Masked Torch Light Procession
- Burning of the Wicker Man • Hedgemonkey Morris • English Music Session •
- Hot for Joe Border Morris • Fayre Guisers Mummers Players • Preston's Traditional Punch and Judy • Kacey Stephenson • The Timbers •
- Petal, Tannus & Rufus
- Giants of the Hills
- **Spiral Dance** •

**Saturday 16th May 2015**  
 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

**\$25**

concert entry : \$20 concession : \$5 children under 14  
 enquiries: [info@spiraldance.com.au](mailto:info@spiraldance.com.au) or 8388 1011  
[www.theenglishale.org](http://www.theenglishale.org)

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Mirror: take a good look at yourself: you are beautiful.

# Puzzle

## Crossword

1	W	A	2	T	E	3	R	O	4	F	5	L	6	I	7	F	E
	I			R		8	A	U	R	A							N
	L		9	A	10	T	T	R	A	C	11	T	E	D			
12	L	13	E	V	E	E		14	E	A	R						O
15	O	V	E	N			16	C		17	N	A	18	F	F		
19	W	E	L		20	P	A	N		21	V	A	T				
22	T	R	I	23	M		N		24	H	E	T	H				
	R		25	N	A	26	E		27	T	E	R	S	E			
28	E	N	G	I	N	29	E	E	R	S							D
	E				30	S	Y	R	E		E						A
31	S	U	S	T	A	I	N	E	D	L	Y						

# Answers



# Нарру



2015

# Samhuin!