



Newsletter for OBOD members Australia and New Zealand. Volume 1 no. 3

BARDS CORNER

Draw up the white light
Draw up the white mantle
Slowly encompass
From the tip to the toe

Draw up the white light
Draw up the white mantle
Like the womb long ago
Completely encased

Look down on the one
Look down on the one
In the midst of the grove
In the midst of the grove
Look down on the one
Encompassed in light

Draw up the white light
Be encompassed in white
Look down on the grove
See the one in the womb

The one into two?
The two into one?
One being here
One being there
Like ova and sperm
Waiting for light

Bill Huddleston

In the light
Of the morning
I feel
The warmth
I feel
The life

I see
The remnants
Of the night
And
Remember
And
Rejoice

Bill Huddleston

DARK TIME

ECHOS FROM INSIDE THE MIST,
VOICES WEAVE AND PLAY.
SHADOWS LOST IN DISMAL
CORNERS
THE SUNLIGHT PALE AND GREY.

HOLD YOURSELF, LOOK INSIDE
DELVE DEEP INTO YOUR SOUL
CHOOSE YOUR FUTURE, ACCEPT
YOUR PAST.

THIS DARK TIME PLAYS A ROLE
CADI

Alban Arthuan The Light of Arthur.

Our photo this issue is a photo of the fire in the Bardic Grove at the first Annual Assembly. It was this fire that kindled the fellowship of OBOD members in our part of the Southern Hemisphere. From this fire came Serpentstar and the beginning of the Second Assembly and Philips visit to Australian and New Zealand. Members from Qld, NSW, Vic, WA and New Zealand shared food, music, stories and laughter under the stars, and made invaluable links of friendship and affection. Now the one has become three It is hoped that the next gatherings in NSW, WA and New Zealand further quicken the growth of our beautiful Druidic spiritual path under the Southern Cross.

Blessings on your mid winter celebrations. In light Carole

The Light of Arthur

One day a land shall rise again
A long lost island from the sea
And there a man, with Golden hair
and Tunic of forest green
Shall stand and raise both arms
high
And all the sea shall be then
stilled
And in that moment we'll behold
The truth within the legends told
The Sword shall rise, and pierce
the sky,
And shall join our hearts and sing
Of prophecies, One Land One Kin
Maelwys (Solstice Greetings to
all members
from Heather)





Notice Board

First of all an apology for the spelling errors in the last Serpentstar. The truth is I crashed the computer twice during the printing and I finished at 3 am, when it became "publish or be damned". I would like to especially apologise to Carri Myriad, whose name was spelled in different ways.

Please note a couple of amendments to the notice board.

1. The date for the talk at the Botanical Gardens is on the 13th of September, not the 20th as previously stated.
2. People wishing to contact the Macadamia seed group should write to Joel Hopkinson at P.O. box 702 Holland Park
3. It is not too late for people wishing to book accommodation at Castle Mountain, please fill in the form on last page of the newsletter.
4. Full itinerary will be sent out, to members who are attending, closer to the dates.

News from the West; the Chosen Chiefs Visit.

Philip will be visiting West Australia from the 4th to the 10th of September on his "world trip". Philip will be doing an evening lecture on Friday 4th and a day seminar on Saturday the 5th at the University of W.A.

We are also planning for him to be involved in other public exposure, including A.B.C. talkback radio.

Philip will also visit the Perth based seed groups and be involved in their rituals prior to coming down to Albany to stay at Ganieda Sanctuary.

The Grove at Ganieda will be offering a workshop and ceremony to OBOD members as well as a SweatHouse Ritual. There will be associated festivities including music courtesy of Ravenswing. **For further details please contact David Myers on 08 9298 8368**

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Anyone seeing the Celtic Tree Oracle card pack and book, please let Serpentstar know, this is hard to find in Australia and copies are needed



letters

Dear Serpentstar readers and members,

Despite contact by regular mail, and the wonders of the internet, Australia still seems very far away to me, and now – after ten years of helping to run the Order I am so looking forward to travelling to Australia and meeting as many members as possible

In the wonderful synchronistic way that things often seem to happen in the Order, just after being invited to Australia, I received a similar invitation to New Zealand and California. I remembered a member inviting me a few years back to do some workshops in Hawaii, and so I added Hawaii into the itinerary, and hey presto! There was a round-the-world trip lined up in our tenth year.

I would love to carry with me a big bag of gold and silver glitter, so I could throw handfuls out of the plane as we circle the globe, but I think I might have some problems persuading them to open a window for me so high up!

Instead I shall content myself with meeting as many members as possible, and to participate with you in celebrating our lives and Druidry together



Yours by star and stone
Philip Carr-Gomm

Dear Serpentstar,

I would like to see something from people writing about their Special Places. There are some places in Kangaroo Island and the Flinders Rangers, which have been profound for me, as well as other places in England.

I would love to hear of others experiences
Keith MacNider S.A



(see SPECIAL PLACES)

Dear Serpentstar

Greetings from Iona, it is glorious day here on retreat with 15 other OBOD's

The sun is Shining,
the wind is gentle,
the gulls are calling, life is sweet.

Yesterday I received an inspiration

Re; our 2nd Druid Assembly in Australia and was hoping you could help.

I would like to collect and collate 100 songs, which could be shared at the Assembly and other meetings. I aim to make booklets called, "Sacred Songs and Other Favorites to Share by Fire or Candlelight"! I am inviting readers to send me their Favorite, Sacred or well-known song- with music, if at all possible and nicely presented for the photocopy machine.

I shared this inspiration with the group and the suggestion came forth to invite Groves, Seed Groups and individuals to submit songs, which in some way reflected where they live. This could be a long-term goal. For now I would be happy if Australian members would send me simply a song which they would like to sing around our Campfire

Please send to Heather Whitelk
17 Anderson St
FERNTREE GULLY VIC. 3156





Ganieda Grove has been in existence for nearly four years, emerging from the spiritual direction of Ganieda Sanctuary, near Albany, WA

Since 1993 when it was founded, Ganieda Sanctuary has been running weekly and seasonal sweatlodge rituals. Initially these were in the manner of the North American Indian tradition adapted for Australian circumstances, but have latterly been formulated as Sweat House Rituals based on the Northern European spiritual traditions and in particular the advent of the Grove and the material from the OBOD course.

The Sweat House Rituals are an integral part of Ganieda and are run each week and at festival times, accompanied by the appropriate ceremony at our stone circle on the Sanctuary.

Ganieda Sanctuary is a residential retreat, which we consider to be aligned to the druid tradition in structure and direction, together with a strong healing emphasis as evidenced by the personal and professional training of its directors and others directly involved.

Ganieda is in the process of developing residential retreat programs not only for the Sanctuary, but also to be run elsewhere within Australia and eventually overseas. These programs are designed to focus on health and personal development as a pathway to consciousness and spiritual evolution with the focus being particularly in our place in Australia and its spiritual development, as well as within the global village.

Brochures are available on demand, and the Sanctuary is available to accommodate visits from members of OBOD. A web site is available at <http://www.sunweb.net/kooka/Ganieda/Welcome.htm>

* **For details please call Gwydd on 08 9844 6393 or email: <gwydd@fullcomp.com.au>**
(Dr Tony Taylor, aka Drew Kahn: professional pseudonym) **or P.O. Box 1414 ALBANY 6330 WA**

N.E.ARBOR ASSEMBLY ANNOUNCEMENT.

IT IS WITH ENTHUSIASM that we announce that the Third Annual Australian Druid Assembly (1999) will be held in South Australia, to be hosted by Cooringal Grove. This will mark the beginning of the next phase of the Assembly in Australia – which was always envisioned as being an event which would move from state to state being hosted by Druid-Grade members (whether in a Seed Group, grove, or solo) to enable the widest possible membership to take part.

Moving of the Assembly from state-to-state also serves the purpose of sharing the burden/costs of travel, eventually it is hoped that all states will act in the capacity as hosts.

A formal handing-over ceremony, in the presence of the Chosen Chief will be a feature of the closing portion of this year's Assembly and will enable members to participate in ensuring that the light of Druidry which the Assembly has enkindled for us here will continue.

It is envisioned that any Druid Grade member, who is interested in hosting a subsequent Assembly in their area, will over time be able to do so. The responsibility to the members in acting as a host is quite apparent, is the need to be able to establish Groves, for all three grades to participate in and for these reasons the Druid Grade is perhaps best suited to serving as host. However Bards or Ovates who are interested, should not be excluded as they could organize an Assembly if they had a Druid grade member locally to assist them.

Any hosts for the year 2000? If you are interested, write a short note to N.E.A.Grove, who will serve to coordinate hosts as the event moves around Australia until some other arrangement seems more practicable.

If two or more members express interest in hosting the same year in the future we will put them in touch with each other so that they may decide who will act as host. Future plans regarding the Assembly will be discussed and decided during the Open Forum at this year's event. If you will be unable to attend but have a suggestion you would like to offer, please send it to Serpentstar for inclusion in the September issue. The primary goal of all of this is to maintain an Annual Event aimed at unifying OBOD members across this vast land.

* **All enquiries regarding the 1999 assembly should be directed to; Lesley Gentilin Cooringal Grove. P.O. Box 1446, PORT LINCOLN. S.A. 5606.**



MAGIC AND DRUIDRY

By Philip Carr-Gomm.

Druid Spirituality, and all of the gifts that it offers, is essentially magical - but magical in a way that is concerned not so much with changing the outer world or future events, as with changing the individual. Druidry teaches the magic of personal and spiritual transformation.

For simplicity's sake, we can say that there are two kinds of magic; Folk Magic and Spiritual Magic¹. Folk magic's purpose is to effect changes in the physical world - to alter the future. It includes weather working and healing: to bring good weather or to cure sickness. Sometimes, in the hands of unethical people, it can be used to curse rather than cure, to blight and hinder rather than encourage and benefit. Then it becomes 'black magic'. Spiritual Magic's purpose is the realisation of ideas in the world, through the spiritual and creative development of the magician. It offers ways of being of value to the world, of achieving wisdom, inspiration, knowledge, mystical union, and altered states of consciousness.

Although healing Folk Magic is used by Druids, the main focus of Druidry lies with Spiritual Magic. And although Druidry has some elements of shamanism and mysticism, and even psychotherapy within it, it is fundamentally different from these disciplines- it is in essence magical. Mysticism has as its goal union with the Divine. Shamanism has as its goal access to knowledge and help from the Otherworld, to heal and grow. Psychotherapy has as its goal the nurturing, healing and development of the Self. Druid magic has as its goals all these things, but something more too. It seeks conscious participation in the unfolding of life. At its heart is a way of discovering how we can co-create with life, of how we can open to our inherent creativity. This magic then becomes a way of 'making'- of making art, beauty, health, serenity, joy, ecstasy. It says we are not objects- to just be absorbed into the Divine, or healed, or perfected or improved. It says we are subjects-that we can consciously cooperate with life, with the Otherworld, with the Divine Plan. It says that we are unique beings, out of whom can flow new creation. At the heart of this kind of magic lies the search for our creative potential, the search for Divine Inspiration that will help us give birth to something new in the world.

Many people see magic as a way of controlling and changing things by using hidden powers and magical forces. But Druid magic does not seek to change the future or reality in such a scientific, manipulative way. It has a different approach - an approach that makes magic, not a quasi-science, by an art that is concerned above all with our creativity and our purpose in the world. Its aim is transformation, not manipulation.

¹ There are many different kinds of magic, but apart from the stage magic of conjuring, they can be broadly divided into these two categories, which are sometimes called High Magic (Spiritual) as opposed to Low Magic (Folk).

This kind of magic is more feminine than masculine. When magic is treated like a science, it works in a linear, causal way in an attempt to change the future. This attempt can easily become unethical, since it uses power to try to manipulate and control, and even dominate. But when it is treated like an art, when its power is used not as power-over but a power-for, then it works in a non-linear way – it works acausally, beyond time and logic, generating the power to make and mend, to heal, to grow, to transform ourselves and the world.

This kind of magic is a gift of the Goddess-a secret known to the Celts and their magicians, the Druids. This magic is about daring to live life to the full. It's about opening to the deepest level of our hearts and souls and bodies. It's about learning how to use the energies that flow through out beings, for our own good and for the good of others too. It's about changing the software that runs our lives, opening to the Bigger Story that is trying to live through us. It's about taking a quest – a magical journey through Space and Time that brings us knowledge and wisdom, health and strength.



Mt Tomah Report

By Kathy

The visit in April to Mt Tomah was wonderful despite the cold wind. Five of us enjoyed the day rugged up in beanies and, gloves and heavy coats. The magic of the turning season was on show everywhere we looked.

The gardens are vast and on this trip we really only found our bearings, but we enjoyed discovering stands of Holly trees, Elders, Oaks, Alder and Beech trees, and a magical area of Herb and Rose Garden reached by walking between a Cornish Elm and a European Oak.

An interesting find was an Irish Yew, and there were other Yew trees that hid from us on this occasion.

We have learnt however that we can request and obtain a map of the Gardens with the plots indicated to make the Questing easier, and this will be published as soon as we obtain it.

Would it be possible for other members or groups to obtain this information from their local gardens and we can have perhaps a Sacred Tree Register for all states, and also a Register of Australian trees that members find particularly magic in their area.? There must be some beautiful Cold Climate trees in parts of the Southern States, i.e. Canberra, Victoria and some others in northern states.





Ceremony for ANZAC Day

One of our younger members was amazed at what his school called a service for ANZAC Day before the school holidays.

The children at the school were instructed to take a wreath, turn around and walk to the back wall of the hall. Wait there for the count of 9 and turn around and walk back to the front of the hall. Young Eli was upset at the lack of any real and meaningful participation in the ceremony for his Ancestors who fought and died in the war, so he wrote his own, which was performed on ANZAC Day in the Machuld Haul Garrd Grove

We entered the Grove from the West and saluted the quarters in a sunwise manner. Standing in the East Eli asked the spirit of the Grove to bless the ceremony to honor the sacrifices made by all the Ancestors of this country in all past wars.

He then walked to the Southwest and lay sprigs of rosemary and other flowers on the Southwest stone, the place of the Ancestors in the Grove.

The following poem was read. It is about Arthur a Great Warrior. From The Island by Francis Brett Young.

Arthur is gone... Tristram in Careol
Sleeps, with a broken sword - and
Yseult sleeps
Beside him, where the westering
waters roll
Over drowned Lyonesse to the outer
deeps.

Lancelot is fallen. The ardent helms
that shone
So knightly and the splintered lances
rust
In the anonymous mould of Avalon:
Gwain and Gareth and Galahad all
are dust!

Where do the vanes and towers of
Camelot
And tall Tintagil crumble? Where do
those tragic
Lovers and all their bright-eyed ladies
rot?
We cannot tell for lost is Merlins
magic.

And Guinevere - call her not back
again
Least she betray the loveliness Time lent
A name that blends the rapture and
the pain
Linked in the lovely nightingales
lament

Nor pry too deeply, lest you should
discover
The bower of Astolat a smoky hut
Of mud and wattle - find the
knightliest lover
A braggart, and his Lily Maid a slut;

And all that coloured tale a tapestry
Woven by poets. As the spiders skeins
Are spun of its own substance, so have
they
Embroidered empty legend. What
remains?

This: That when Rome fell, like a
writhen oak
That age had sapped and cankered at
the root,
Resistant, from her topmost bough
there broke
The miracle of one unwithering shoot

Which was the spirit of Britain -that
certain men
Uncouth, untutored, of our island
brood
Loved freedom better than their lives;
and when
The tempest crashed about them, rose
and stood

And charged into the storms black
heart, with sword
Lifted, or lance in rest, and rode
there, helmed
With a strange majesty that the
heathen horde
Remembered after all were
overwhelmed;

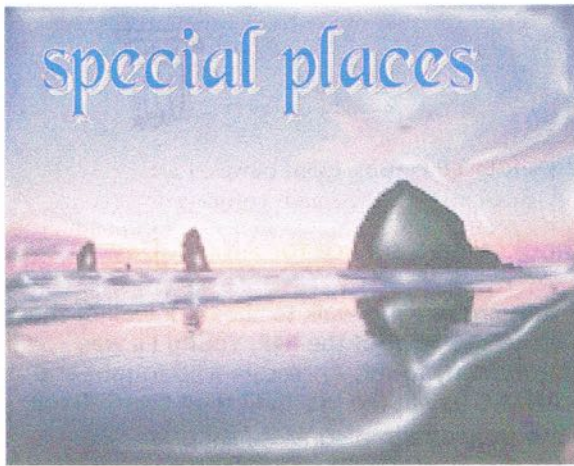
And made of them a legend, to
their chief
Arthur, Ambrosias no man knows
his name-
Granting a gallantry beyond belief,
And to his knights imperishable
fame.

They were so few..We know not in
what manner
Or where or when they fell
whether they went
Riding into the dark under Christs
banner
Or died beneath the blood-red
dragon of Gwent;

But this we know; that when the
Saxon rout
Swept over them, the sun no
longer shone
On Britain, and the last lights
flickered out;
And men in darkness murmured:
Arthur is gone..

Eli then declared this ceremony to honor the Warriors of this Country closed. May their souls be at peace. May we never forget





WHAT CALLS US TO ONE PLACE MORE THAN ANOTHER?

WHAT MOMENT MORE THAN THE OTHER?

IS IT SOMETHING "IN THE BLOOD"?

ALTHOUGH MOST OF MY FAMILY HAS PASSED ON, I REALISE NOW THAT WE HAVE SHARED SIMILAR INTERESTS IN SIMILAR PLACES, ALL DRAWN TO THE SAME TYPE OF TERRAIN, WILDER PLACES, QUIETER PLACES, UNCROWDED PLACES, PLACES BY WATER - NOT FOR US THE DRY DESERTS!

THESE HAVE BEEN PLACES OF QUIET EARTH-SPEAK, WHERE THE TREES INSPIRE, OR WHERE A COVE GENTLY NUDGES THE MOON WITHIN, WHERE WE MIGHT WANT TO REST AWHILE AMIDST ITS CURVES, OR RUSH AND SPLASH IN THE WATER, FREED INTO DESIRE, THE JOY OF FEELING FULLY ALIVE.

PLACES OF SOLITUDE, WHERE WE HAVE FELT LEAST ALONE

WHEN I WAS LAST IN ENGLAND IN NORTH DEVON, THE COUNTRY OF MY BIRTH - HAVING GONE TO ENGLAND TO PARTICIPATE IN A WORK SHOP WITH J RAMSAY - I WENT FOR A DRIVE WITH A DEAR FRIEND, AND WE CAME TO TWO STANDING STONES, QUIETLY OVERLOOKING THE SEA ACROSS TO WALES

MY LADY FRIEND AND I WENT TO SEPARATE STONES, THE ONE THE MALE, THE OTHER THE FEMALE, AND SILENTLY WALKED A SENSE OF PRESENCE AND PLEASURE, IN THAT TREELESS SETTING, A RHYTHM OF STEPS, IN AND OUT OF TIME, OF HISTORY, RENEWING, PARTAKING, BEING. I WOULD LOVE TO HEAR OF OTHERS EXPERIENCES.

KEITH MACNIDER.



MEDITATION TEA



And while we are speaking of special places, I would like to share experiences I have had using different herbal teas for meditations.

As a practicing herbalist I came across references of herbs used by Druids in "A Modern Herbal" by Mrs. M. Grieve. This was of course the first conscious step upon the Druid path for me, as I found that the herbs mentioned in the book, were herbs I often used in everyday practice. Having discovered their other attributes, I decided to use them as "meditation blends" and upon starting the O.B.O.D. course I found interesting variations.

I would like to discuss first Vervain, *Verbena officinalis*, this most sacred and magical herb. Those who have read "A Druid Herbal" will know that Vervain is gathered at Midsummer when neither the sun nor moon is in the sky, just before flowering. Verbena is the classical name, given by the Romans for 'alter plants' in general and for this plant specifically. The Druids used it in their lustral water, and it was used as a charm around the neck against headaches and venomous bites.

Although it has multiple medicinal values, I used it mainly in practice for areas of stress in and around the lungs. These days Vervain is called up and used for stress related asthma, it will strengthen the nervous system and relax tension and stress and can be used to ease depression and melancholia. Because breathing is the start of meditation (for me) I decided the relaxing effect on the nervous system and increased capacity of the lungs due to the anti spasmodic effects, could make this an interesting tea for meditation purposes.

Taking a dessertspoon of the dried herb, I infused this in a teapot with a cup of boiling water for 10 to 15 minutes and drank this before my body of light and grove meditation.

I can definitely say that the Vervain was an aid in reaching a beautiful state of CLARITY in my meditations and I am still working to define the quality of this plant in this situation. I will share more of these Herbal meditations in forthcoming Newsletters.

Plants not only look after our material needs by nourish our spiritual growth and when treated with respect will always reply in kind. I would be interested in hearing from others who maybe are following a similar path.

* Tip Always brew the whole herb, not tea bags, in a lidded pot or cup so that essential oils, which are often the active principle in the plant, are not lost in the steam

A Modern Herbal. Mrs. M. Grieve. The Holistic Herbal. David Hoffman. A Druids Herbal Ellen Everet Hopman

Carole Nielsen /A

Member's skill share.

Celtic Chess.

A full range of individually hand-crafted Celtic Gameboards and pieces of Indo-European Tafyl group including Tawlbord, Gwydbowl and Tawlbrdd are now available created by Joel Hopkinson. Any members interested in taking up these ancient Celtic games of the land and kingship, please write to Joel at **P.O.Box 7023 EAST HOLLAND PARK 4121 QLD**

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Serpentstar is an Australian and New Zealand newsletter for members of O.B.O.D.

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OBOD Web site <http://www.obod.co.uk/obod/>

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