

Alban Heruín



Serpentstar

Newsletter for OBOD members Australia and New Zealand vol 2. no 1. 1998

From Philip

Dear Members and friends,

Coming to Australia and New Zealand was a life-changing experience for me. I discovered a new world of energy and enthusiasm in both your countries, that seems just ready to burst into bloom. Quite how this will happen I don't know, but the Spirit of the future seemed to me to speak so strongly in your lands.

By opening to the power of the earth and sky, the stars and the animals, the plants and indigenous inhabitants around you, I believe you can all help the Spirit of Druidry flourish in new and exciting ways in your part of the World.

It's easy to think that Druidry comes from way back in time, and from way over the other side of the world in space. But space and time are far more malleable than we have been led to believe and every place and every moment—here (in Sussex, in Perth in Sydney, in Auckland) and now—can be a source-point for Awen to enter the world.

Have a wonderful Summer (while we plunge rapidly into a bitter Winter!)
Yours from a windswept hillside in Sussex,

Philip.



This issue has reports of the visit by Philip from Western Australian and New South Wales Groves

We also have an Astrologer in our midst, who will be regularly contributing to the newsletter. Welcome Alice!

Rosemary has offered to contribute information on the 13 Lunar Essences over the following year. Thank you Rosemary.

Bards corner is full and overflowing, as usual!

Heather has started Open Forummore discussion please!

Offerings from our cartoonist Bard Robin.

And Serpentstar turns one



Subscriptions are due for the coming years Serpentstar
PLEASE NOTE NEW POSTAL ADDRESS AND EMAIL FOR SERPENTSTAR

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North East Arbor Grove.

With the Assembly successfully over for this year, the Grove is going to devote some time to working with 'grassroots' aspects of the Druidic Path and to offering workshop afternoons and evenings on specific areas that members have expressed an interest in..

The first workshop will take place in an outdoor location , with a BBQ.

It will be on Saturday December 12th. Meet at 11.30am at the Paddington Gate at Centennial Park. We will drive to a shady picnic spot and examine areas of ritual work, often unclear to new members, and will rehearse the special Alban Heruin ceremony that was written especially for the Tenth anniversary Summer Solstice Celebration, performed at Galstonbury in June.
BYO lunch .

Alban Heruin Ceremony.NSW

Saturday, December 19th to be held at Royal National Park. Just 35 minutes south of Sydney. As we will be performing the special ceremony – different from the usual Bardic grade ceremony- intending participants should contact the Grove (or come to the workshop) *before* the day. For further details contact Akkadia or Zan (02) 9557-8495.

Alban Heruin Celebrations.VIC

Heather Whitelk would like to invite members to celebrate Alban Heruin with her and other members on Sunday 20th December at Noon.
So any members in Victoria, or who happen to be Melbourne way at that time please feel welcome.(see Open Forum).

House Sitter required.

Lisa, who was the cook at the Assembly is seeking a responsible member /s to mind her house during January while she cooks for 3 weeks for a women's retreat. No money involved. A cat and dog will be staying at home and will also need minding etc. An opportunity for a retreat in Katoomba for the right person. For further details contact Lisa (02) 4782 9619.

Congratulations and Blessings to members Liz and Simon who celebrated the naming ceremony of their first born daughter Indigo Rose, on the new moon.
this joyous occasion was celebrated with other members and about 30 friends and family. At the climax of the ceremony , Indigo Rose was crowned as Mabon. We wish her many blessed summers.

North East Arbor report

Philips visit was a wonderful time for us here and breathed new life into our journeys.

The talk at the Esoteric Bookshop was well attended, and the day at the Botanical Gardens was great. Many people came to here Philip share so well his love and understanding of Druidry. The last part of that day was spent under the Oak and the Boab trees, and all went home thoroughly satisfied, reconnected to their Celtic roots and spiritually enriched.

The Assembly at Wiseman's Ferry was a busy and lively affair. Members came from South Australia, Victoria, Queensland, and of course New south Wales. Those who came last year were quick to re-establish friendships and soon the cards were out and robin had set up his numerology corner, where he worked diligently all through the Assembly.

We opened with a ceremony in the Bardic grade, at which all participated and this was followed with a workshop by Philip. Following the Druid Path Today. Friday finished with good food and rowdy music from the Bards.

Each day was opened with a body of light exercise, and Lesley lead us in beautiful toning circles, which did much to bring us into harmony, physically and spiritually, through-out the Assembly. Our workshop on Druidry and Wicca, by our Wiccan Druid, (or is the Druid Wiccan) was fun and aroused a lot of discussion. Saturday afternoon brought Philips workshop Bright Knowledge and an Ovate Grove celebration and initiation.

Joel, Akkadia and Zan finished the night with a talk on the Southern Hemisphere stars and there was a discussion on Druid spirituality and Aboriginal spirituality, and whether or how these paths cross.

Sunday was the Druid Magic in a changing World workshop, which so many people found valuable and the Druid Grove celebrations. During this time we all made our masks ready for the feast and Celtic Heroes. This was a good night, with bards Robin and Carl both entertaining the group. poetry and stories, dancing and plenty of fun, and mead, form Mudgee to Lindesfarn.

Mondays Village market showed us Rosemary's Tree Essences and Joel's skills in making Celtic games, and Lesley's biodynamic herbs. Members shared massages and reiki, flower essences and herbs, a truly Wonderful occasion

Then our Alban Eiler Ceremony, which lead in to the Closing Ceremony to pass the light to Cooringal Grove for the next Assembly, which will be in South Australia at Alban Eiler 1999. This was a beautiful and moving ceremony and welded us together once more, before we left to go our separate way, enriched once again with friendships made and renewed, and the feeling that come from having spent 4 days celebrating our spirituality with fellow Druids. This was the first time, some of our members had shared ceremonies with others, and deep and lasting connections were made.

So on to the next Assembly. I am sure all those who attended thank Akkadia and Zan for their successful efforts to establish what now looks to be regular celebrations of Druidry in Australia, and thank also all those who participated in one way or another, especially the cook and the kitchen workers,



serpentstar

Well this ends the first year of Serpentstar, and I think we can confidently expect our newsletter to continue to grow and evolve.

We have had participants from all states in Australia, and wonderful contributions from Bill Huddleston from New Zealand.

I hope that this coming year, we will see more discussions in Open Forum around the difficulties and joys of following the Druid Path in our lands.

Judging from discussions I have had with members at the Assembly and other places, a lot of us experience similar feelings around Sacred Trees, some of us never having seen them, and the task of trying to equate native trees with Northern Hemisphere trees etc; And indeed whether we should do that or not....directions of circles.. and a lot of other things, eg practical things like finding the Celtic Tree Oracle.

Those of us who have been doing the work longer than others are able to share these experiences and offer our own experiences and insights, and it would be good to have these diverse range of expressions of Druidry shared in these pages.

There are many different opinions and expressions of Druidry and it is good for new members to be able to resource these.

Always remembering of course that in the end, we find and take our own steps upon our shared path of Druidry

Many members have suggested that an email or ICQ connection be set up amongst ourselves. Any one wishing to have their email address passed on to other members please email me and I will pass the addresses on. Any one wanting to st up a chat room please do so and let me know so I can pass the information on.

I would like to thank members for their support and encouragement throughout the year.

All the offers of help have been greatly appreciated. Together I am sure we will make the next year as valuable and informative as we can for ourselves and others.

Those wishing to receive Serpentstar for the following year, please fill in the form on the last page of the Newsletter at the end of Alice's Astrology article, and post it with you subscription fee to the address on the front page.

Blessings
Carole./\

DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES OF ALBAN ELUED IS THE 1ST WEEK OF MARCH.

Gary's Triads;

Three things by nature cause their possessor to err:

Youth,
Prosperity,
And ignorance.

Three possessions we value most take away pride from us:

Our money,
Our time,
And our conscience.

Three things resemble each other:

A bright sword which rusts from long staying in the scabbard,
Bright water which stinks from long standing,
And wisdom which is dead from long disuse



Ganieda report

5

Like the mighty Caesar he came, saw and conquered. It has only taken two millennia – a speck on the cosmic hour – glass – and druidry is retrieved; the circle complete.

Dord in hand, the antipodes are conquered and the invasion passed peacefully as the Australian population recognised the wisdom of the teachings. But what a contrast.

Dord for sword, humility for arrogance, and a gentle presence that inspired us all and made us feel at home with a company of people whom to many would have been scrawls on papyrus – or more likely text, email or ICQ.

How times have changed, but not so Druidry. Its timeless wisdom bringing us together; within, between ourselves and Spirit.

The dord was played at the stone circle of Ganieda with the assembled company of OBOD, marking a time of unity and wholeness. Then some gentle yet inspired teaching, and Philip was off; shape-shifting to a Qantas look-alike, and away to the other side of this vast continent.

What was achieved? Philip presented himself as the public face of Druidry at a lecture and workshop at the University of Western Australia. In accelerated fashion he was whisked from radio studio to studio, leaving a trail of tapes, fascinated interviewers and a legacy of interest that has brought Druidry into the limelight of the sleepy West.

He helped conduct a ritual at Sgiath an Fhithich and was then off from Perth to the Great Southern. At Ganieda Sanctuary most of the OBOD members in the West and a few who joined as a result, came to a three day gathering, with a sweat house ritual- Druid style!- seminars, ceremonies and festivities. Somehow things seem a little more real for us now. We have mostly met, sometimes come closer, sometimes drifted a little. But then that is the way of our traditional peoples as we remain united under our Way, toward a future that is the more tangible and grounded.

Much was discussed, and Australia seems part of the picture now. We are starting an exciting and ambitious project with Philip's approval and guidance; more next edition!

To our members in the East and NEA in particular, thank you for the initiative and the forging of stronger connections, and contributions of time and monies. This feels like the beginning

Kennan Elkman Ganieda Sanctuary.

Murray Barton, Philip & Kennan Elkman



Anjuli, Tristan & Philip.



Earth News Sanctuaries

From Kathy Turner.

A new development in the Blue Mountains deserves mention in our tree register and this is the Canyon Sanctuary. Canyon Sanctuary is to be on the Canyon Colliery Coal Lease site, near Bell in the Blue Mountains. It has been planned and developed as a project over the last 2 years.

It will be on the 900 hectare, recently closed coal mining lease site, which includes magnificent head waters of the Grose River Valley. The area is a combination of richly diverse rain forest, with ferns and tall tree canopy.

The plateau areas are a mixture of low-growing eucalypts with an impressive diversity of associated species of flora. The native animals, once richly abundant, are all but wipe out by foxes feral cats and 200 years of white European, hopeless and predatory land management.

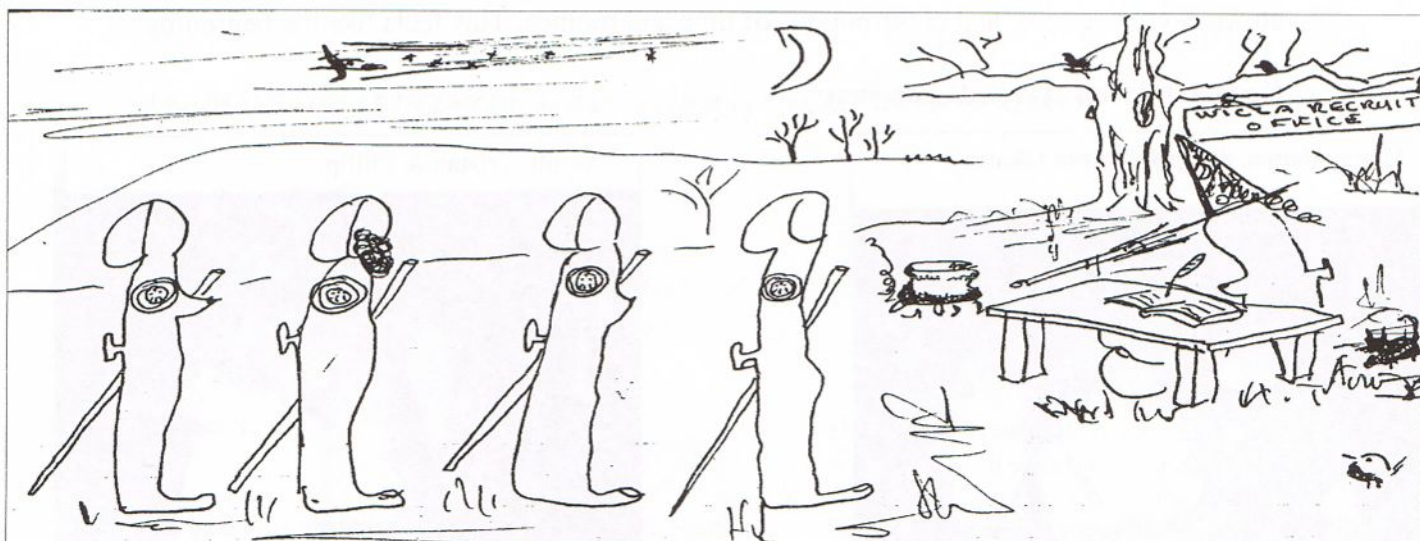
Feral predators will be excluded by perimeter fencing which will allow the native animals to flourish, will not impede the movement of natives, and will be virtually invisible in the spectacular, natural terrain.

The breathtaking sandstone cliffs, forming the canyons, dominate the landscape, just as they do in other parts of the blue Mountains including the Three Sisters.

To protect the fragile forest and canyon environment, and to ensure sustainable access, kilometers of raised boardwalk will be built, for ease of movement especially for elderly and disabled and ease of safety of viewing.

The native animals to be introduced to Canyon Sanctuary are all, and only, species, which belong to the area and are part of the rich bio-diversity which was present at the time of white settlement. These animals, including Bandicoots and Bettongs, Parma Wallabies, Brushtailed Rock Wallabies, Ring-tailed and Brushtailed Possums, Quells, Pademelons and Platypus will flourish again in their wild habitat in a dynamic, sustainable, balanced ecosystem.

Once plentiful Pademelons, grazed on undergrowth and leaf litter. The loss of the Pademelon heralded the start of big bushfires in the area.



AFTER A TALK GIVEN ON THE VARIOUS SIMILARITIES BETWEEN WICCA AND DRUIDRY AT THE 2ND ASSEMBLY THERE WAS A REMARKABLE INCREASE FROM DRUID RANKS AT THE WICCA RECRUITING OFFICE. AFTER A TA. THE STATEMENT BY THE WICCA/DRUID "IT'S SEX, SEX, SEX, SPELLS AND MORE SEX" SEEMS TO BE THE CATALYST! (Yl... didn't 'hear' the rest of it!)

More sanctuaries....Victoria,

From Jeanette Greve

Dear Serpentstar,

Have enclosed some information, which I though might be of interest.

I've been asked to write a play about 'conflicting cultures' and visiting these places was part of my research.

During my research I was fortunate enough to met an elderly woman who showed me places I didn't even know existed! It was a strange Odyssey.

During this time I was privileged to see some special stones A basket full of stones, which were in fact Aboriginal artifacts, possibly thousands of years old. One was about the size of a tennis ball and perfectly round. She said it was magic stone.

Yesterday we went to a place called Doolie Beal, the last gathering place of the depleted Wathawrong. This land.....so hard to describe, how it felt walking through this deathly garden. I don't think I'll ever be the same again. It was quite an experience. The trees seem to be weeping. Some of them look to be well over 100 years old.

Yollinko Park is truly beautiful. I used to play there a lot when I was a kid. Fortunately the Barwon River is alive and thriving..

Barwon River environmental Trail.

The Barwon river trail allows you to discover the biological cultural and heritage values of the Barwon River between Rocky Point and Yollinko Park.

The walk takes you through

1. Indigenous Grasslands which teem with reptiles, insects, small mammals and birds.
2. Rocky Point, a granite outcrop from a molten lava flow 2 million years ago.
3. Red River Gums, with new plantings to help with salinity problems and erosion control, as well as provide food and shelter for many native animals
4. Balyang Sanctuary, where water birds nest and pied cormorants and egrets roost in the trees at dusk, and lorikeets and sulphur-crested cockatoos abound.
5. Habitat plants
6. Aquatic Life including freshwater shrimp , mussels,
7. Sandhoppers, demesfly nymph are to be found
8. The Yollinko Wetlands are a treasure to be found and explored
9. Yollinko Park. At this ancient living site, you can experience the lifestyle of the Wathaurong tribe through sculptures and Aboriginal garden.

Yollinko Park Aboriginal Garden.

Here you can learn the history of the indigenous peoples of this area, and how they cared for and lived from, the land.

The garden is full of Bush Tucker, and is a good opportunity to learn about bush foods.

Victorian Aborigines used plants for the necessities of daily life. Australia wide there is over 900 species that are known to have been used for food, medicine, fiber, canoes, housing and all manner of implements.

Yollinko Park contains a selection of plants with a cross section of these uses.

All the plants have been collected locally and were once used by the indigenous people of the area, the Wathauron.

For more information on both sites contact
Barwon Water 61-67 Ryrie St. GEELONG. Tel
(03) 5226 2500
<http://www.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/>



News From New Zealand from Bill Huddleston

We have been celebrating the eight festivals here in Whangarei for two years. It all began after I had returned from Britain having completed the Bardic and Ovate grades, and was asked to give a talk on Druidry to the local Theosophy group.

From that session a group decided to join in celebrating the festivals. The first was Alban Heruin in December 1996. We held it at a local rural property. We began with a gathering at the base of the hill where I explained a little about Druidry and the festival and we all shared a little of ourselves. We then made our way up to the top of the hill for the ceremony proper. We have basically been following the alternative ceremonies with adaptations, but more on that in a moment. The ceremony includes an eistedfodd and we had a great time singing dancing reciting poetry and telling stories. We then meandered down to a stream and threw into it rose petals with our hopes and desires. At the completion we had a great shared feed and all received a shared gift. There were about thirty people present.

Since then we have varied in numbers. The least was 7 and the most 22. We have practicing Druids, Wiccans, Buddhists and anyone else who hears about us and wants to join in. Four of us have attended every ceremony and as we come to completing the second turning of these seasonal rituals, we are growing in a deepening of the great continuity of things. Three or four others have attended most. As you can see from this the group is, apart from a hard core of people, quite transitory. For us regulars this is exciting, as we never know what energies are going to come into the group each time.

We usually celebrate them in the country and have one property in particular where we like to go. The energies are building up in this place. It is easy to see how some of the sacred places I Britain connected with Druidry have such energies. Of course we have these places in New Zealand, as you will in Australia. Having been in Britain and being in some of these places I have personally been helped to know a little more deeply the specialness of these sacred places.

We have, of course had to adapt to the Southern Hemisphere. North/South orientation is reversed, as is the sunwise direction. We open our circles anticlockwise. We bring in references to our local place – plants etc. but have decided to keep some Northern Hemisphere references intact. These are in particular to do with some of the deep archetypal references such as the animals of the four quarters. This is, for us, a connection with our deeper spiritual heritage.

The wiccans in particular often bring in their own special things. So while we operate within the framework of the set ceremonies we do not adhere rigidly to them and certainly are not limited by them.

When we celebrate Alban Heruin on 21.12.98 we will have completed 30 complete circles. We will be holding it on a beach in Whangarei harbour. It is a special time as we are in that border place- the edge of the land and the sea. When we hold them in those sorts of places we feel special energies and are joined by many dancing 'people' who came to share in the joy and celebration of life we were enacting on the quiet beach.

As we have grown and developed our understandings of what works well, we have settled to making sure that each ceremony is structured in a threesome way. How this happens each time varies. We have also learned to make sure that every ceremony has the scope for every person to participate in ways that are meaningful for them. There is always lots of sharing, talk about things to let go, things to be going toward. There is always a place for these things to be enacted.

And of course it goes without saying we always end with a great feed.

I hope this has been of interest. I believe that it always helpful when we can share the things we are doing. Being a far-flung little group, sharing through communications such as Serpentstar must be encouraging and uplifting. I know I have begun to look forward to receiving Serpentstar as much as Touchstone.

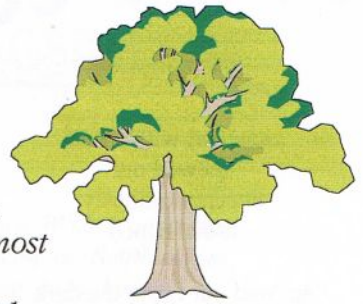
Arohanui, Bill Huddleston, Whangarei, NZ.



Open Forum

Dear Carole
Beltane Greetings.

Today, Kirsty and I celebrated Beltane, at my place, in Melbourne. At this incurgal event we were blessed with a beautiful day and the presence of a new Bard (David Lacey), an Ovate (Kirsty,) and a Druid (myself), plus 4 friends, who were most appreciative.



We used the Alternative Ceremony, as they ~~don~~ on Iona, with a few adjustments for Australia. For example, instead of sprigs of May, we gave away little Tea Trees for planting. These bloom at Beltane, like Hawthorn, have similar flowers and are a similar size and texture. Some are white, but these were a deep, rose-pink, indigenous to this area.

Also, it is the first time I have attempted to work sun-Wise Southern-Hemisphere, ie. Anti-clockwise, and it seemed to work well.

We plan to celcbrate the Solstice on Sunday Dec.20 at Noon, so if anyone happens to be in Melbourne at that time, please feel welcome; I have a pull-out sofa-bed if you need an overnight stay.

Also a couple of comments about music. Before, and after the Ceremony, we listened to a CD called "Time to Hela produced by Ravenswing, a group of folk from Sgiath an Fhithich Grove, in West Australia. We thought it was brilliant. If you want your own CD send \$20.00 PO BOX 356, Kelmscott. WA 6911.

Recently, they lost one of their Grove members- see Touchstone, and I know that everyone from Eastern Australia joins with me in extending our sympathy to all of Glen's friends and family.

At the OBOD Assembly at Wisemans Ferry, Lesley courageously offered to put together a CD of original songs from members, in time for the next Assembly. It's a great idea and I hope folks get behind it. I haven't been touched with inspiration yet, but I would like to say that Lesley's "Anu" stills rings in my head when I meditate. I like devotional chanting, it helps me into a meditative state, and I hope we can develop more. Until now, I have always turned to other traditions to satisfy this longing, but I realize now that it has a place within Druidry. As Philip said, mysticism, or one-ness with the divine, is part of Druidry. I have found it is better "bliss-out" than "veg-out" in front of the T.V.

Some people have told me that even though we are planning to create our own songs, they still like the idea of compiling our own songbook of "Sacred Songs and Other Favorites" so if you want me to do this, please send me your favorites.

One last point. Philip gave a talk called "Druid Magic in a Changing World". My tape ran out before it was complete. Could Serpentstar please publish the transcript of this talk for everyone's benefit? It was very helpful.

With Love and Blessings to All
At this time of Growth
Heather Whitelk
17 Anderson St.
Ferntree Gully 3156



Bards Corner

10



The Holly King and the Oak King



THE STONE

came out with a rush
spewed out
unceremoniously
transformed

spewed out from the dark
from the close caressing familiarity
into
a new world
exposed and open

unfolded

"I want to go back
Please,
I want to go back".

But then it heard the tui call
Just once
that clear pure call

and
Decided to stay

Bill Huddleston

It's the Summer solstice' the creatures cried, 'the battle
will be fought today'
And they raced to the forest clearing
To watch the proceedings make way.

The Oak King stood in one corner; his leaves all withered
and brown
The Holly King in the other,
Trying to stare him down.

"I will defeat you today' boasted the Holly King and a
cheer rose from the crowd
The Oak King didn't flinch
Indeed he stood proud.

Calm and peaceful the Oak King was, for he knew what
was his fate
He also knew in six months time
Came the day the Holly King would hate.

For the waning year was about to begin
The sun, now at its peak was soon to be fading away
And as King, Holly would stay.

But in six months time after the longest night
The sun would grow strong once more
And the Oak would rule the forest then, Holly, king no
more

For this is the cycle of life and death which repeats itself
each year
And as long as the cycle repeats its path
We will have nothing to fear.

Nagrie Egan

ASSEMBLY DAYS

Gently each dawn kisses our brow
The birds, chorus to the day
Softly we greet the morn
Our leader showing the way.

Each day unraveled as a rose
The petals soft and sweet.
Our minds as eager and open
As each flower and bee does meet.

Our leader, his threads are soft and
sure
We all weave alongside.
Many different strengths and colours
All looking on in pride.

And at the end of our craft
The cloth we made was good.
Softness of a silk worm, yet
Strength too, as it should.

Kirsty Roberts



**Plato was the butterfly
Whose terrible wings didst start the
hurricane**

**In the church of reason they gently laid our
cot
And suckled us from a chrom'ed breast.**

**Then reasonably they cut away our wings.
And the gentle lull of game show sang us to
our rest.**

**But what of the stag and the wind?
What of the tangential night?**

**Reason may build our walls,
But it will not give us flight**

Hayden Payne

Knotwork

I had an idea in my head that I would sit with my back to the city as a symbolic gesture. When it came time to sit, I discovered I was not yet ready or able to turn my back on the city. So I sat facing the South across the valley. To my left was the once wilderness of the John Forrest National Park. To my right, largely obscured by a convenient granite outcrop, was another kind of wilderness.

The city. A dangerous labyrinth where the people are afraid. Afraid of each other, afraid of nature, afraid of darkness. In their fear, they have built another wilderness. A place where you cannot walk the open spaces for fear of being run down by a car, truck or train. The water tastes of chemicals, and the air is dirty.

The gentle sounds of nature, birds, trees, a buzzing fly, are erased by the constant roar of the traffic as people rush from one sanctuary to the next. Afraid of open spaces, they build one on top of the other, crowding ever closer.

The ground which feeds them is covered over and sealed off from sun and rain, as if the growth of a plant is offensive unless cultivated and manicured in neat rows, trimmed and contained within its designated space.

There is a beauty in the randomness of nature which the perfect squares, circles, and straight lines of the city cannot touch. There is no balanced symmetry in the limbs of a tree as it responds to the sun's call and reaches ever skyward. The scattering of boulders on the hillside opposite is not laced evenly or in lines as the dwelling places they look out at. They cluster close together or spread out, a home for small animals, a place to sit and soak up the sun.

The tree moves gently in the breeze. It says to the breeze "I feel you, we are connected. I am moved by and with you. I would be less than I am without you". The breeze is cool and I shiver and think of warm places. I too am moved by the breeze. I rock back and forth gently, acknowledging it as the tree does.

I hear voices. Someone approaches. My quiet reverie is broken, my connection to wind and tree and earth fading. The men never arrive, the threat unmanifest but my reaction gives me food for thought. I am sitting enjoying the solitude/companionship of nature and I react with fear to men who are not even in sight. My fear speaks volumes of my own hurt and of society's greater hurt. Not only does the city and its institutions cut me off from the nature which sustains me, it also cuts me off from the other humans around me.

Who are my people, my tribe? The woman I share shelter and food with? The relatives I see only for weddings, funerals and "obligatory" visits? The people I work with? The men I sit with in the Sweatlodge? The people all over the planet I network with via computer and fiber optic communications?

All of these are my people, yet the connection with them is fragmented and tenuous, distorted and broken. My wife/husband relationship is strained by sex roles taught from birth and reinforced by society every day. The work place is oppressive and competitive—boss against not-boss; not-boss against not-boss. The train ride is fraught with rituals of isolation: you should not look anyone in the eye; you mustn't sit next to someone if you can sit apart from them.

The tree does not flinch and draw back when the crow stops to preen itself on an outstretched branch. The dried grasses which rustle together in the stream bed are not trying to avoid each other. The earth which gives birth to us, nourishes and supports us until it welcomes us with open arms at the time of our death.

I have a picture of a circle of standing stones on my wall at home. I imagine them to be a tribe dancing together hand in hand, until one of them steps forth and prophesies of the future; a future bleakwith

despair and aggression. A future people isolated from each other and their fellow beings, disconnected from the Earth and all that sustains them.

*The tribe is so shocked at what they see in this vision of the future they make a pact to stand together through time to send a message to each new generation that things can be different.
To remind us of the circle of our tribe, the circle of the seasons, the circle of birth, death and rebirth. To remind us of the interconnection between all living things. As they stand hand in hand, they remind us that our definition of "living" is too narrow, for even the stones are alive.*

So I sit on the hillside, and I become aware of another circle: a granite outcrop, a tree blackened by Fire, a grass tree, a lichen covered rock, some dry grass, a zamia palm, some kangaroo shit, an ants nest and myself. If I look further, I can see myself part of a larger circle containing a flock of galahs, a sky scraper, an animal track, a family home, a dry stream bed and an areoplane.

Murray Barton

Essences for the Journey

REALISATIONS.


I WROTE ABOUT THE Australian Native Essences by Sabian in an earlier Serpentstar, after presenting them in a workshop at the inaugural Southern Hemisphere Druid Assembly. At this year's Assembly I realised further their correspondences with Druidry – beyond the obvious, that they come from trees and are healing. Philip pointed out that Druids are lunar and stellar as well as solar. Although only the lunar range of essences is on the market so far, we also have a solar and stellar range, to bring us more and more into our light bodies, in a gentle progression.

And there are other connections. (Is there anything, really, but connection?) I sat next to Noel one morning at breakfast while he shared the wisdom of an oracle he had, card and a book. I glanced at the cover of the book and saw the word "Sabian". I almost grabbed it from him! We have named our essences after a group of beings who began communicating with us in the early days of our work, who identified themselves as the Sabian Management Trust. Noel's book was astrological and it happens that each essence has its astrological connections. The Sabians were a Mesopotamian esoteric brotherhood concerned with the wellbeing of the planet – evidently they still are!

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

There are exciting developments with the essences. We now have practitioner-distributors in four continents. A set of diagnostic cards has been developed by artist Penny Chesney, who is an essence practitioner. A sample set was on display at this year's Assembly; they will be printed, with an accompanying booklet/ They depict the various "kingdom collectives"- animal, bird, mineral or plant as well as the tree – that each essence connects with. Someone said they would be lovely for expatriates, so redolent of Australia!

They originated as larger pictures intended as aids to meditation, for groups working with the essences on a regular basis for plan healing. As diagnostic cards, they enable the creation of highly individual "combination" essences for people's particular needs, help us identify the particular kingdom collectives whose counsel is relevant for us at the time.
The book "Tree Essences for the Journey" which was available at last year's Assembly gives the counsels of the tree spirits and The new book to go with the cards lists the counsels of all the other kingdom collectives, who have been asking that their voice be heard.



*Dreaming the earth
leaning into the sky
and my eye wider than mind
Seeing at last the beginning
Of my keening
By the ocean as door
By tree as loom.
Beginning again, heart.
In sigh.
My partner, watching,
smiling quietly to herself.
Droplets of days
as we wander our lives.*

Keith MacNider.



THE PRESENT

For now, we make you a gift of the counsels of the tree. Each issue of *Serpentstar* over the next three issues, starting with this one, will give details of three essences, then the next issue will include four – as they follow the lunar months, 13 in all. It is most helpful to actually take the essences, which connect you very directly to all the associated kingdom collectives, and you receive their counsel integrated into your being on the energy level. If you want to do that, see contact details at the end of this Article.

Without physically taking the essences, you may nevertheless appreciate the words of wisdom from the trees. The devic counsel applies specifically to the waxing or active phase of the moon, during which the waxing essence brings things to the surface for healing; the tree spirit counsel to the waning or integration phase, in which the waning essence facilitates positive outcomes. There are also colour visualisations and musical notes, which help attune you to the energy – for these essences, involve all our senses.

For reasons of space, we are not including identification details for each tree, nor an in-depth look at the essences healing properties. For more information contact Judi Harvey on 03-9818 1968. Or email sabian@netspace.au or Sabian website www.adweb.com.au/sabian or Rosemary Nissen Wade (07) 5590-9344 or abalone@coolgold.com.au

Luna Month. 1. Blue Gum
(eucalyptus globulus)
Communication.

Musical chant (“om”) to the note of C. Colour: cobalt blue.

Adverse reactions (waxing phase): Uncommunicative, flighty, unsure, living in the past.

Positive outcome (waning phase): Clarity in speech, focused, sure, understanding.

Devic Counsel (Overseeing Deva Mee Mee):

We come to take you to the place of the inner knowing. Feel the essence of our heart and words, keep them safe! We talk to you of inner knowing. When you feel safe with our Communings, the visualise them. We want you to know that you can always use the knowings, so flow with this energy and know your truth will always flow.

Tree Spirit Counsel (Tree spirit Jabula):

Tall and proud, my counsel is of inner knowing. If you are in doubt. Keep trying to penetrate the illusion. This is the counsel. Being in true voice is the mark of profoundness. The counsel gives hope, in that there is work to be done on the self, and that the work done will be always to free Communication.

Visualise Blue Gum and self as one, standing tall.

Realisation: Knowing only the highest good will penetrate all illusion.

Affirmation: I stand tall and proud, penetrating all illusion.

Luna Month 2. Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) Growth.

Musical chant (“om”) C# Colour; golden Yellow.

Adverse reaction: Sluggish, no energy, lazy attitude, detached.

Positive outcome: Energetic, fulfilled, uplifting, connected to Universe.

Devic Counsel (Overseeing Deva Gi-Pai):

We are all connected forces, and we are the total, collective Devic energetic of the Golden Wattle. Feel our energy surrounding you. We create a cocoon effect around you, revitalising your whole structure. As the Sun is our creative life force, she has allowed us to pass this on to you at a level designed for your exposure. Allow us to bring her closer! This is the warmth we all long for, creating a new phase, so when you break from your cocoons of golden light, you will then be at one in the Sun's likeness. Feel us, see us, know us; this is all we ask.

Tree Spirit Counsel (Tree Spirit Tal-Te):

There are many cycles ending and starting, always moving us to a new cycle. Like a cocoon, draw on my energy. Feel the Sun streaming down, touching your face, showering you with golden light. Concentrate on what has come and what will be. Visualise this. When complete, step forward out of your cocoon, feeling new, revitalised and ready for the next cycle.

Realisation: We live in cycles.

Remembering this is my counsel. There is always a beginning and an end to everything.

Affirmation: I keep in cycle with all, and I feel the Growth and newness that comes.

Luna Month 3. Silky Oak. (*Grevillea robusta*) Self.

Musical chant (“om”) D. Colour Amber. Adverse reaction: Disconnected from the feminine side, lack of confidence.

Positive outcome: Connected to feminine energy and Earth Mother, intuition, promoting self-love.

Devic Counsel (Overseeing Deva Jai-Pow):

We come to express our femininity – that soft, gentle silkiness that you feel within your hearts, which is of the Silky Oak's Goddess-like essence. We look after this special tree, as she is sacred to woman's ritual or the feminine within. We bring into your hearts the warmth and wholeness that comes from believing in her. We help you to find your Selves, to feel your intuitive core within, your own Goddess-like essence.

Love and honour is what we impart to you, linking us all closely to the Great Mother.

Reach the Silky's Oak's heights easily, knowing you are mirrors of her beauty.

Take a journey of love with your own sacred Goddess energies, which always bring you homeward with love.

Tree Spirit Counsel (Tree Spirit Na-Be):

This is the essence of inner beauty. My counsel is Self: belief in yourself and all around. Allow me to take you into your heart, the source of all. Then allow me to take you to that intuitive core that lies within, showing you true Self. My counsel gives you the strength and beauty to recognise the God/Goddess within, taking us always homeward with Gaea.

Visualise this: Back to the self

Realisation: Know there are many mirrors around you, and seeing the true reflection takes love and courage. Remembering this is my counsel.

Affirmation: I love myself. I believe in my Self and its beauty.

Astrology from Alice.



On the 22nd December 1998 we celebrate one of the four great solar festivals of the year. Our Capricorn festival celebrates the longest day and shortest night of the year for the Southern Hemisphere. It is our summer festival of good living, relaxing and spending as much time at the beach or in the country as we can. Christmas was originally designed to celebrate the birth of the Sun God in the Northern Hemisphere as at this time it heralded the turning point of winter at the longest night and shortest day of the year. In the Southern Hemisphere, it is a very good time to celebrate the joy of life, and that is exactly what most of us do.

Capricorn is connected to the planet Saturn and in astrological language Saturn is said to "rule" the zodiac sign Capricorn. I have noticed that Capricorn and Saturn people in the Southern Hemisphere are quite different to those the textbooks describe for the Northern Hemisphere. They are often big, fair people, instead of little dark people, and their sense of humour is very finely honed indeed, they tend to be the best raconteurs of funny stories and jokes that I have ever met. They still retain the dry sense of humour, the deadpan delivery and the rather taciturn nature of the Northern Hemisphere Capricorns, but seem to enjoy life a great deal more.

I think this may be because the Sun is shining through the earth zodiac sign of Capricorn during the Southern Hemispheres high summer, when the weather is very warm, the air is balmy and everybody tends to be outside enjoying nature.

I remember my Capricorn son as a baby spent a great deal of time at the beach or sleeping in his pram under a tree. He was taken into the sea when I brought him home from hospital after his birth, so he learned to swim from about 10 days old. I did feel this was very appropriate for a Capricorn, as the sign carries a very special symbol of the "Sea Goat" or the Goat with the tail of a fish. In the Northern Hemisphere, babies born in the sign Capricorn are born at the coldest time of the year.

Until quite recently they were dressed in heavy clothes and covered in tight blankets to keep warm, hence being programmed with a feeling of restriction and limitation about life at a very early age indeed.

In very ancient days, Capricorn and the day of Saturn, Saturday, were considered special times to celebrate the joy of life and the Saturn festival was a very lusty one indeed! We still follow this pattern with our great Christmas/New Year festival and by having most of our parties and weddings on a Saturday. Our children have their long summer holidays all during the sign Capricorn, and go back to school when the sun enters the sign Aquarius. Saturn is the planet connected to the structures of our life and our body.

It has an affinity to our skeletal system, skin and teeth. Our skeletal system keeps us erect; our teeth grind food for us and our skin keeps our body together, so Saturn is a very important planet to our well being. If the structures of our life are wrong or unbalanced, Saturn will try to show us where they are wrong through bringing pain or difficulty in that area, if the structures of our life are built correctly, Saturn will bring considerable and lasting reward.

All the major solar festivals are derived from the time the Sun enters zero degrees of the Cardinal signs of Aries, Cancer, Libra and Capricorn. This is because the Cardinal signs are considered the beginning or activation of the seasons of the year.

The Aries festival is our celebration of autumn, the Cancer festival is our celebration of winter, the Libra festival the celebration of spring and the Capricorn festival the celebration of summer.

Astrologers calculate a chart for when the Sun moves to exactly zero degrees of these signs, at the location and place in which the astrologer is interested. This chart is then used as a prediction tool for that location for the following three months, until the next solar festival. The Aries and Libra festivals also indicate the time of equal length of day and night and are therefore called equinoxes. The Capricorn festival is the time of the longest day and shortest night in the Southern Hemisphere. The Cancer festival is the time of the shortest day and longest night in the Southern Hemisphere.

Australia has a particular affinity to the energy of Capricorn, as it became the Commonwealth of Australia on January 1 1901, when the Sun was about 10 degrees into the sign of Capricorn. For this reason the Capricorn Ingress chart is usually very important. I have calculated a chart for 12.57 PM daylight

saving time in Canberra, as this is the time the Sun moved to zero degrees of Capricorn in that city. We use Canberra because it is the capital of Australia and is the place used for all predictions about what will happen in Australia generally.

At this time and place the Sun in the most prominent part of the horoscope, in the 10th sector of the chart and conjunct the Midheaven. It is also making a powerful flowing connection to its ruler Saturn and is moving towards Venus. This should benefit Australia during January, February and March and we may find it playing a prominent role in some way.

The Sun is also part of a novile pattern involving Uranus and Neptune, so the number 9 will be important for Australia over those 3 months. The novile pattern usually means the end or completion of something in preparation for a new beginning, so I would expect news of our Prime Minister, the Governor of Australia, or a very prominent figure in Australia resigning their position, or completing something of importance. This pattern can also bring about sudden successes or a turn for the better for our country. As the major directions indicated for Australia during this period is South and South East, perhaps we will find the south and = southeast part of our country emphasised, or Antarctica may be in the news. This chart does not make any direct connection to Australia's birth chart, so we should not have any major events during this period, but can stimulate areas connected to commerce, communication and transport generally

If you are familiar with Astrology it is good fun to compare your own chart to the Capricorn Ingress chart for your location, as this will show where your major activity will be and whether it will be an important time in your life, or just general living.

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