

Serpentstar



Newsletter for OBOD members. Australia and New Zealand. Volume 1 no. 4

Welcome to the Alban Eiler edition of Serpentstar

At this time last year we gathered together from different states
and countries to celebrate our Druid path.

The Celebration of the Festival stimulated the energy of the path
in our respective countries and gave birth to our newsletter, the
organization of Philip's visit, and ultimately the Celebrations this
year in four different locations, in two countries here in the
Southern Hemisphere with The chosen Chief. .

It is appropriate that Philip is here with us at this time, the time of
balance, the pivot between the dark and light, and the beginning of
our dance into the heart of the sun.

Druidry in our two lands is entering a new phase, an opening up
of, and coming together on, the path for all of us. Whether we
are able to attend an Assembly or whether we spend the Festival
in distant places, the energy of the Ceremonies during this time
and through the lengthening days, will see the blossoming of the
light of Druidry in these lands, bear fruit in our hearts and
groves, as together in peace and love we stand, heart to heart
and hand to hand.

And so we join to welcome Philip to the lands under the
Southern Stars

and wish him joy and blessings.
And wish him the welcome of
The Ancestors of our lands.



AUEN





Office Board

Philips Tour dates.

West Australia from 4th to 10th September. Contact David Myers on 08 9298 8368.

New South Wales from 11th to 22nd September, contact North East Arbor Grove on (02) 9551 8495.

New Zealand from 23rd September, contact Nicola Campbell (09) 3789562 in Auckland or Caroline (03) 5481616 in Nelson..

Carri Myriad and Pam have just come back from a tour of Great Britain and the O.B.O.D. Lughnasa camp. Welcome back. we can't wait to hear a report.

Macadamia seed group contact address-J. Hopkinson P.O. Box 7023 East Holland Park 4121 Qld. Please contact Sandra Gosley (07 -3369 8297) or Joel Hopkinson (07- 3847 4732)

Victorian members should be aware that one of our members Jeanette Greve presents a radio program on Geelong Radio, which presents music and poetry. It is called Writers Forum and is heard on Saturday mornings.

Copies of the Celtic Tree Oracle can be found through Living Energies, in Westfields at Chatswood, Parramatta and Miranda in NSW...Thanks Lowell

NSW Assembly goers are reminded to bring along their copies of the animal oracle to the assembly for Philips workshop

Australian Native Tree Essences by Sabian.

The lunar essences, which were presented to our inaugural Assembly last year, will be available again at this years Assembly at \$15.00 per bottle.

Rosemary Nissen Wade will present a follow-up workshop to the one she gave last year, incorporating a new diagnostic tool, the Australian Living Heart Cards (not yet but soon to be generally available). This enables the creation of a very personal Combination Essence designed for your individual needs, and the specific counsels of the particular kingdom collectives whose messages are most relevant. These cards can also be used in problem solving. The essences themselves are now available in Britain, Europe, Asia and the United States. This workshop will be offered as an extra to the program, during the Village Market at the NSW Assembly

Rosemary Wade would like a lift to the Assembly please, from Linfield, where she will be staying just prior to the Assembly. Please ring her at her home in northern NSW if you can help, on (07) 5590 9349, or email abalone@coolgold.com.au . Rosemary will also need a lift back to

Late notes for NSW Assembly;

Don't forget the Botanical Gardens talk on Sunday the 13th. This is an opportunity for members to bring friends to hear Philip at his only public workshop in Sydney, and will be a good day.

After the talk we will be dining at the Green Gourmet Restaurant. All members are invited to attend so could attending members please contact the NEA Grove so bookings can be made. RSVP by the 11th PH: (02) 9557-8495.

(Beautiful vegetarian food, cooked by Daoists I hear)

Self Catering Assembly Participants are advised that there will be a \$10.00 charge for the four days for tea, coffee snacks to cover costs.

Day visitors are advised that a charge of \$30.00 per person per day will be required, this includes meals.

All outstanding monies will be collected upon arrival. Please remember that the Assembly is run on a non-profit basis, what we will receive will be balanced by what we contribute, so Abundance to all. All inquiries to NEA grove

Serpentstar would like to ask all members to send in reports of Philip visit and photos for the Alban Heruin edition. Please send by mail or email and please note new mail address on back page. Email the same CAROLE@CIA.COM.AU. I don't have a new phone number yet so please check with Telstra if need be. Items in by 1st of December at the latest, earlier if possible. Come on New Zealand, where are you?

SPRING HARVEST



WHEN YOUNG BORN SUN BEGINS TO CREEP
THROUGH CHILLY SHADOWS SOFT AND DEEP

ON ANCIENT PATH FROM TREE TO TREE
DOES DANCE THE SACRED HUMMING BEE

COLLECTING GOLD FROM CENTRAL SHIELDS
THAT SHINE FROM TENDER PETALS PEELED

BACK TO YIELD THE NECTAR SWEET
TO DRUMMING GOD WITH STICKY FEET

VIBRATIONS SENDING GOLDEN SHOWERS
IN SOFT CASCADES FROM SCENTED BOWERS:

GATHERED UP WITH HONOR DUE
FROM OHN AND OIR AND SOFT UR TOO

AND TAKEN WITH GREAT LOVE AND CARE
BACK TO THE HIVE AND BRICHID THERE

IN CLIMMERING ROBE OF CODDESS BRIGHT
TO BLESS THE BEE FOR GATHERED LIGHT

WITH VELVET STROKE OF ALCHEMY
DRAWS WARM SWEET HONEY FROM THE BEE

RON

Tree Register



The first tree in the tree register is a 150 year old manna gum in Torquays Deep Creek Reserve.

The South Coast Shire in Victoria will register and protect old and significant trees in its area.

They plan to get the whole community involved by filling in an Old Tree Registration form which will assist with planning and conservation of the trees as well as providing other details such as species and how old the trees are.

This could be a nice blueprint for other areas in other states. If anyone knows of similar schemes please let us know.

Keep sending.



Druidism in the Southern Hemisphere



By Joel Hopkinson

As members of a tradition that originated in the Northern Hemisphere we have a lot to adapt to in Australia and New Zealand. For a start our seasons are different, the climate, animals and vegetation are foreign and the spirit of the land is part of an Aboriginal culture. But does this mean that Druidism is irrelevant in the Southern Hemisphere?

The answer is of course no. If we go beyond the surface of the Druids, beyond the ancient Celts, the European environment and the Northern seasons we can see a spiritual system, which is able to adapt. Druidism is able to adapt because it is not weighed down by doctrine, and as a nature-based belief system is open to new interpretations.

A friend of mine once asked an Aboriginal Elder, "if you went on a long boat ride and arrived in a foreign land would you follow the customs and rituals of your people or would you change to the practices of the natives of that land?"

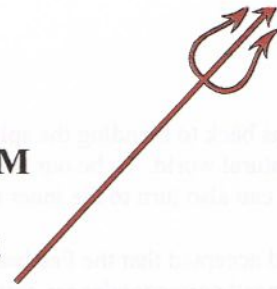
The Elder answered that she would follow the customs of her people but that she would do a ritual to ask permission of the land to follow her customs, and wait for a sign to indicate she had permission to continue. So my friend asked if she could do a ritual in which she would ask the land for permission and would the Elder stay with her to look for a sign. The Elder agreed.

So my friend designed a ritual and asked for permission from the land, for her to be allowed to follow the Druidic path in Australia. They waited for a few hours but finally the Elder pronounced that a sign had come. A certain bird in a certain tree, both of which were relevant to Aboriginal Women's Business and also bore some interesting correspondences to ogham. My friend had permission and now she practices as a Bard with the knowledge that it is in accordance with the spirit of the land.

Now we all do not have Elders which we can conveniently ask for advice regarding our own rituals but we can ask the permission of the land none-the-less. I suggest that in a quiet space in a circle, square or whatever ritual space you are used to using, perform a ritual of your own design to ask permission from the local spirits to follow your tradition in a foreign land. The ritual does not need to be elaborate but it must be sincere and it must be supported by intent. Be patient and do not conveniently state that the first thing you see is the permission of the land. Wait and see, listen or even try to feel what the land is telling you. If you are at peace then perhaps the land is agreeing with you. If your meditation is interrupted and gnats swarm around you with annoying bites I would suggest the land is telling you to go away.

Before you build a stone circle or put up a magical space I would also suggest the following exercise be followed through before any major work is done. Firstly assume a posture similar to the Magician in the Tarot or perhaps a variation with one knee on the ground and the other leg bent but with the foot still on the ground. The Magician is channelling energy from the heavens downwards so it is a good posture for talking to the Gods. Next raise your voice and say something like the following, I speak to the spirits of the land. Please forgive us for we do not know your rites or customs. I, (state your name), come to this place to practice magic with the Intent to (state purpose of ritual). I come with respect for the land and will leave it as I found it. Now wait and see if any loud crashes indicate disfavour with the land spirits. Lastly if you have Permission, try to give something back to the land, but do not litter. In fact your gift may be more appreciated if you pick up the litter at a site rather than leave anything behind. A libation of wine or some water on the local plants may also be appreciated.





PRACTICAL PAGANISM

STEVE HOUNSOME

Much has been written about the importance and significance of the annual cycle of Festivals in Paganism, outlining their significance, historical role and methods of celebration. As such, the 'wheel of the year' as it is often referred to, can be seen as the backbone of a good deal of modern Paganism. In festival ceremonies such as those staged by the British Druid Order at various sacred sites in the South of England, we can see something of the all too rare community role that these festivals can fill.

As such, festival celebration and ceremony, in whatever method or tradition they are celebrated, can provide an outer focus for our spiritual path. Practitioners of these ceremonies will be quick and quite correct to point out that there is an 'inner focus' too, which can be seen as the inner reflection or response to the outer, ritual action. During a ceremony, these reactions and responses can be felt, often with a great deal of force, and can carry with them a deep conviction and promise to the self to change our behaviour, attitude or whatever as a result of what has been felt.

All too often however, even before the Priestess has had chance to draw breath, the conviction and promise can be forgotten, often in the rush to avoid being the last to arrive in the pub following the rite and so not get a seat! By the time we are then midway through the following working week, the sanctity of the Circle and the heat of the energy that gave us our inner experience, is forgotten as the demands of the next customer/report/delivery and so on need to be met.

Indeed there is often such a pressure on our lives in these times that it can be difficult to combine the effort and dedication it takes to follow a pagan or spiritual path, as well as meet the demands of work and the needs of the family. How then can we still maintain a daily meditation and yoga practice, as in my case, (you may fill in your equivalent here) as well as be an office manager (again, in my case). How are we able to be in this world, fulfil our role effectively and yet still fulfil our spiritual needs? How also, can we make our spiritual lives something a little more than the weekly or monthly moot in the smoke filled, alcoholic haze of the pub back room?

This is a question I have been attempting to answer through my daily life for some time, but before I attempt to share with you the answer I have so far come up with, a word or two about spirituality.

When we come to Paganism, at any age, there is usually a period of 'settling in', where we might meet others, gain knowledge and experience and then find a niche in a tradition that fits us comfortably. While all this is happening, friends and family may be noticing a different person emerging, in attitude, appearance, speech and deed. After a time of this, our new role in life becomes a part of us and we are no longer the aspirant but the practitioner, proud and happy in the knowledge that we are a sacred being, living a life fulfilled physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. Aren't we?



To my mind, the spiritual life is one of complete and total dedication. Whilst there is much criticism of 'weekend Paganism' we should always look to ourselves before levelling criticism at others. The spiritual life, whether it be Wiccan, Druid, Buddhist, Christian, Mormon, or 7th day Adventist, is one that each individual has chosen and so must be honoured as such. How they do it is up to them, just like sexual orientation and practice. It is not ours to question why, apart from for ourselves and our partners. Do what THOU will, as the saying goes.

If then, we are to follow a spiritual path, it needs to include all areas of ourselves and our lives. We each need the inner realisation that we are as much the shaman while we are at work behind the desk or what(ever, as we are when performing our journeying, ceremony and meditation. There is a need to reclaim the sense of the sacred to our everyday lives in order to fully and completely live the sacred life.

Many very 'spiritual people' have jobs that they resent, as they feel they cannot fulfil their sacred wishes and devote their lives to healing etc. nor can they get a job that allows them to do this, and pay the mortgage. An answer here can be found in the Native American tradition of the 'Giveaway'. This was when a member of the tribe was in need and their tribesmen would give freely to them what they needed, since they recognised that if one in the tribe lacked, so did the tribe as a whole. Often what was given away was the most precious possession of their own. When time is so precious to us, we can view our work as a Giveaway, enabling us to live the way we want by the money we are paid in return. It follows that we should accept the job we are in and if we do not like this, change it, which can be done if the mind and heart are focused to the task. If you lack conviction of your own human power to do so, the gods will surely help you.

This brings us back to blending the spiritual with the practical demands of life. As ever, we can look to the principles and methods of the natural world. To be our teacher in this. We have already mentioned that annual cycle of festivals that many meet to celebrate, but we can also turn to the inner tides they represent for tuition in how to live our lives. '

It is clear and accepted that the Festivals mark turning points in the wheel of the year and as such we can build up a great many correspondences around them. In these correspondences we can find much that is of value in living a practical, spiritual life. Perhaps most obviously, we can look to the Elements, linked to the Festivals, for where to turn our attention as the year progresses.



This allows us to look to the needs of ourselves on the four elemental levels of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. During Winter, we can look to the needs of our bodies, ensuring we are getting enough rest to recoup lost energy and keep warm during the cold time. Also we can examine the needs of our body in the type of food we put into it. As the Government is now in word at least, in favour of organically grown food and with the horrifying advent of genetic engineering, now more than ever we need to reclaim the sense of the sacred in the view of our bodies that we have. When this has been done, we come to realise that what we put 'into our bodies is a form of energy; that same energy that all things in this Universe come from and are made. As such, we can make our weekly trip to the supermarket an exercise in reclaiming the sacred, by rooting out (pun intended!) organic fruit and veg, looking for food that is ethically produced and bothering to write to the supermarkets to tell them what you refuse to buy and why.

As the thaw of spring lives and especially in our stand atop a hill and draw deeply consider if you are contributing environmentally, can you walk where you once drove and can you really not give up smoking?



arrives it brings the fresh breezes that blow away the cobwebs built in our minds. As the energy of the year gathers pace and strength, so we too can of the fresh air. We need of course to be mindful of what is in the air, so unnecessarily to the pollution it contains. Can your journey to work be improved

The spiritual life and body needs fresh air to feed the mind and as we look to our needs at this level, we find the deep peace of meditation beckons. It need only take 15 minutes less sleep for a regular and meaningful practice of meditation, which once achieved is worth a couple of hours sleep in its physiological effect upon you. You will soon adjust and your spiritual self will be entirely different in a few short months.

In the heat of Summer we turn our attention to the needs of the spirit, or soul, within us. Now we can feel the powerful energy and yearning of all that is sacred within us, seeking to be reunited with its Creator, whatever you conceive this to be.



We each need to find ways of allowing our soul its expression of the sacred. This may be through dance, yoga, ritual, or myriad other things, but we can also express this in ways that are part of our daily life. We may begin to recognise that the food we cook is an expression of the sacred, as we do it with awareness that we are using the body of Mother Earth to do so. When we take a bath we are joining the blood of the

Mother with our own bodies, even reading this magazine you are in contact in some, all be it now distant, part of the Mother. Cast your view over your life and its materials and consider aspects of the sacred in all you do.

As the wheel turns and the colour of Autumn arrives, we can turn our attention to the flowing waters of our emotional needs. Perhaps it is just that that needs to occur - a flow of tears from a heart long hardened against others that we are being too proud to release the energy within. Sit by a stream, sigh and cry and let your cares flow away on Mother Earth's healing water. The sacred, spiritual life is one that encompasses all areas of our selves and lives, including those dark, furtive thoughts we all have when we are ready to fight to save our pride. We need to allow our hearts to be open and find ways to smile and forgive the person pushing ahead of us in the supermarket queue.



The examples I have given here are sometimes fanciful, but can be literal. There are a great many other ways in which we can reclaim the sacred in our everyday lives and in so doing find a deepening of our spiritual path, whatever the colour it may be. What is clear is that we have a need to find, within our lives and selves, a sense of the sacred that allows us to express our spiritual needs. In doing so we must also look to the needs of our body, heart and mind too and so make our spiritual path a complete one, that touches every aspect of what we and who we are and so the world we inhabit. For those who do not like the modern world with its commercialism, destruction, greed, violence and poverty, I would say that the best way to change it, is from within, rather than from the outside, just like ourselves.

I have explored these ideas further in my new book entitled "Practical Spirituality" published by Capall Bann (ISBN 1861630158 (10.95) This looks at the needs of our body, heart, mind and spirit, in an elemental context, as well as those of the earth. I have also recorded a series of meditation and development tapes. Readers may write to me for a copy of my mail order catalogue, at 27 Chalk Ridge, Winchester, Hampshire, England. SO23 0QW. A S.A.E. is requested or two IRC's if writing from abroad.



Book Review

The Magician's Companion

[A Practical and Encyclopedic Guide to magical and Religious Symbolism].

Author: Bill Whitcomb

Publisher: Llewellyn. at Paul. 1997

Cost: \$us 24;
\$oz about double that when
the exchange rate was
67c.oz/\$us

There's lots of it, nearly 600 pgs.

The book is very clearly set out in four distinct sections.

Part 1 includes definitions, suggested uses, a suggested course of study and the 12 axioms [laws, assumptions] - eg, synchronicity, reflection, duality, synthesis, knowledge.

Part 11 sets out 41 different models associated with esoteric and 'new age' belief systems.

The Models are organised by number systems [or numbers in systems], ranging from 0 -The Void, through The One, Duality, Trinities, ..Charkas (7), Qabalistic Spheres (10), Zodiac (12), Tarot (22), Runes (24) and onwards.

Trinities cover Hinduism, Zen, Taoist, Christian. The Celtic Trinity is listed as: Image: Virgin Girl, Mature Woman, Crone; Moon Phase: Waxing, Full, Waning or Dark; **Classical Associations:** Artemis, Aphrodite, Hecate; **Mythological Association:** Kone, Persophane, Demeter.

Model 20 is the **Druidic Tree Alphabet**. The **Ogham** is detailed together with a useful hand model [based on Graves] and correspondences for each letter of the alphabet. The seven sacred tree and days of the week correspondences and the 'unhewn dolmen' [with calendar references] are shown.

Part III looks at 'other systems' magical alphabets, talismans, herbs and plants, holy days and yearly cycle. Twenty-three alphabets are illustrated, including the Ogham and the five developments of the Runic alphabet.

In the section on Gods/Goddesses, Norse get a guernsey, but Celtic do not.

Part IV is a very handy dictionary of esoteric terms

The name of the book may put some people off, however, if you want a reference that gives some details about different esoteric belief systems, you may find it useful; I certainly have. It's the subtitle that tells it all.

In my readings, it has assisted in identifying similar correspondences in Runes, Tarot and Ogham. It saves a lot of reading time just to get a feeling for the basis of a belief system. Keep in mind, it is not a detailed reference in any one system.

In summary, a useful reference to esoteric systems - in populated areas, you may well have access to a bookshop that has it in stock, and thus you will be able to peruse it prior to purchasing. Gary Yates GDYATES@bigpond.com.au



Some Web sites:

The Druid Grove - 0130D

[http://. www.druidry.org](http://www.druidry.org). The site has detailed information and links to other related sites. Topics include Druid Tree Lore and the Ogham, Sacred sites, Sacred Tree and grove planting Programme, The Eight fold Year, Bards, Ovates, Druids, Rites of passage, Christianity and Druidry, Contemporary Druidry. With all of the links provided there is a wealth of information here. The online library had some 40 topics when I last checked it.

Druids in isolation

<http://www.uogefph.ca/~bmyers/druid.htm1> The Solitary Practitioner's Guide to Druidism and Celtic Mysticism - I found this a very helpful address. It is written for Druids in isolation - and in the Top End of Down Under that's me. Topics include a background paper, customs, lore, beliefs and traditions. There are links to a reading list, a bibliography and rituals.

Three goodly things among people: handicraft, husbandry, scholarship.

From DRUIDRY - a website.

BARDS CORNER

Kingship

words: Carrl Myriad & Lowell
music: Carrl Myriad

Stand close to me in the battle
You're my reason to trust
You are victory's symbol
Perfect and just
You're my reason for fighting
My comfort and blade
There's a metallic sound
And I look to the ground
My King is slain

My Lord, the one that I followed
My King my only belief
Is torn like a deer at the slaughter
Killed like some common thief
Crying out as his blood is spilling
"Fight on forever my braves"
There's that metallic beat
And I look at my feet
My King is slain

I weep like an incredulous Druid
When the Oaks were cruelly cut down
When the Roman bastards invaded
And cut the groves to the ground
I weep for the future of culture
And I dream of revenge for my race
I see a metal invader
Dressed like a crusader
And I'm wearing his face

Look right away and stop thinking
About what might have been
History's done and the other side won
And we're all very afraid

Flight.

Floating nay, flowing movements
Of liqueous nature.
Not on, but of the air,
Not around but flowing through
My Sleek feathered refined body.
The sum is indeed greater
Than the whole of it's parts.
A keen sharpened eye looks down
Upon the world with an apathetic mind
Thou hast never sailed, all ye who
Have never taken flight.

Kirsty Roberts.

So we leave our central heartland
We move to the edge of our land
Just like indigenous people
Now we are the missing clan
Tears dry into bright anger
As I taste the life of a slave
I feel metal slide
In my King's side
And I long for his grave

So I look for the place of the ritual
And I find the place of the dead
I go to the mound of the Skull Cave
And I exhume my King's severed head
I exhume my King's rotting body
I dress myself in his vest

His metallic bones
I encase as my own
I do what I must

I dance in the Moon in his star sign
I seek from his Book of Light
I look on his crown and his scepter
I lick his blood in the night
I cannot believe my own courage
I do what cannot be dared
I remember his words
As I take up his sword
And put the crown on my head:

*I am Merlyn
I am the ant
I am the great tree
And the smallest plant
I am the eagle high on the wing
And in this moment
I am the King*



The Harp that Once Thro Tara's Halls

The harp that once thro Tara's halls
The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as remote on Tara's Walls
As if that soul were shed.

So sleeps the pride of former days,
So glory's thrill is o'er.
Fond hearts that once beat high for praise
Now feel that pulse no more

No more to Chiefs and Ladies bright
The harp of Tara swells.
The chord alone that breaks at night
Its tale of ruin tells.

Thus freedom now, seldom wakes,
The only throb she gives.
Is when some heart, indignant breaks
To show that she still lives

Thomas Moore
Sent from Patrick Murphy.

I am the grain
I am small

I am the grain
That catches the light
In the morning dew

I am the grain
That reflects the light
In the wakening day

I am small
I am the grain

Bill Huddleston.

The Poets Prayer

The poet sighed in dismay;
They were going to kill off the forest
And slaughter the trees.

The creatures would die
And the birds would flee,
They'd have nowhere to live anymore.

There'd be concrete, tar and cement
Where the forest used to be.
Trucks and cars,
Noise – pollution,
A 20th century monstrosity.

The people gathered to halt the destruction,
And stood in the way of those gruesome
bulldozers –
But sadly nothing could stop them.

Women and children cried
As the trees began to fall
And the chainsaws roared-----

There was nothing left but desolation
Where the tall ones used to dwell.
It was getting harder to breath
And now the trees were gone.

The Poet Prayed
'God save our planet, before it's too late.'
He planted a seed
And the seed began to grow-----

Peace on Earth



Amen.

J. Greve.

Inspired by actual events.

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P.O.BOX1446 Port Lincoln. S.A.5606.ph 08-8684 2003

CELTIC CHESS.

A full range of individually hand-crafted Celtic Gameboards and pieces of Indo-European Taffy 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

HERBS Resins, incenses & Oils.

Pure and potent herbs and resins, suitable for Ceremonial uses, such as incense and oil making, are available.

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BARDIC OFFERINGS

Our two prolific bards Carri Myriad and Lowell have two CDs to wake the Celt within us. They are from the Ragged Band, and are called 'Up the sides and down the middle' and Distant Shores. Both these CD's are available from Carri at PO Box 1492 Potts Point NSW 2011.

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

For more information about O.B.O.D. write to O.B.O.D. P.O. Box1333, Lewes, East Sussex BN71, DX email-office@obod.co.uk or O.B.O.D. web site <http://www.drudry.org>.

Articles for publication in Serpentstar should reach C. Nielsen 3 Acacia St. WINDANG. 2528 NSW AUSTRALIA by November 30th for the Alban Heruinn edition.

Opinions and statements by contributors are not necessarily those of the editor or the Order.