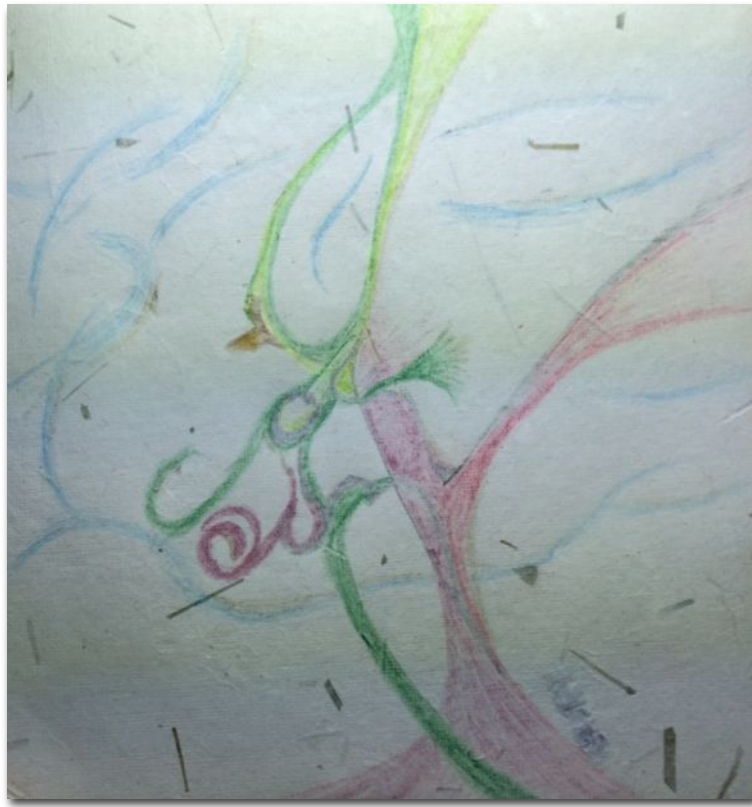


SERPENT STAR

A newsletter of The Order of Bards Ovates and Druids in the Southern Hemisphere



SAMHUINN 2016



Welcome to the Samhuinn 2016 issue of SerpentStar!

When the Wheel turns, boy does it turn! Since last issue my hubby and I have upped sticks and moved to the country, which brought with it all the usual madness you'd expect. We knew straight away it was the right thing to do though, and I write to you with the Samhuinn eve sunset spreading its fire across the land.

"Fire in the land?" I hear you say. "Wasn't that the theme of this issue?" Well yes, it is! The call for content has brought a very entertaining collection of poetry and stories on our theme. Plus Part 2 of Kacey's article, and coincidentally our 'Voice From HQ' this issue Penny Billington, give us food for thought on how we as Druids see Faith and Deity - one aspect of our 'Fire in the Head'...

As we approach the thinning of the veil, I'd like to make special mention of a strange trend affecting popular culture at the moment - the untimely deaths of an unusual number of very influential and respected performers. They are our modern Bards - weavers of our tales, capturers of our generation and reflectors of our culture. As they take their place with the Ancestors, I ask you to think about what has influenced you creatively - your favourite musicians, poets, authors and filmmakers....

And so the theme is set for the Imbolc edition - "*Honouring Our Modern Bards*". I look forward to seeing your submissions!

Peace of the Cailleach to all
Mandy /\

SerpentStar, Samhuinn 2016

SerpentStar is a free, volunteer-produced online newsletter for members of the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids in the Southern Hemisphere.

Front Cover photograph, editorial artwork and celebrant listing graphic by Mandy Gibson.

SerpentStar logo by Todd William Dearing. Watermark images courtesy freepik.com and druidry.org. All other images provided by the authors, unless otherwise credited.

Submission guidelines and subscription info are available from serpentstar.wordpress.com/about

Follow us on Facebook - search "SerpentStar"

Enquiries via email: serpentstar.obod@gmail.com

All opinions expressed herein are solely the contributors' own.

OBOD in the Southern Hemisphere

Groves and Seed Groups

Brisa del Sur

We are a Seed Group called 'Brisa del Sur' (Southern Breeze) from Rosario, Argentina, and we are writing to introduce our group and share with you and the Order the fulfilling experience and wonderful learning we have had as a result of our journey along the Druid Path. You can contact us at southernbreezesfellowship@gmail.com and you can see our profile on Facebook www.facebook.com/Southernbreezesfellowship

The Cradle Seed Group

The Cradle Seed Group is based in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Group currently has only one Druid and three Bards 'in the making'. One area of focus is exploring other spiritual philosophies and understanding the synergies. Other areas of focus are to 'convert' traditional Ogham into the indigenous South African trees and also to understand and use indigenous medicinal plants and trees. All the eight yearly festivals are celebrated, all in solo as we are spread through South Africa – Johannesburg in Gauteng, Haenertsburg in Limpopo. Full moon meditations are conducted for peace and harmony. Email debby@triskel.co.za for details.



The Golden Wattle Seed Group

For OBOD members in South Australia. We meet for the eight festivals of the Wheel of the Year, and for nature walks or other activities from time to time. Send an email to inquire: todddearing@gmail.com or kaceystephensen@hotmail.com

The Grove of the Summer Stars

The Grove of the Summer Stars (Pukerua Bay, Wellington, New Zealand) celebrates the eight great Seasonal Festivals throughout the wheel of the year. Each of these Druid festivals is held as a community festival and meeting point for diverse creeds and cultures to honour the turning of the year and give thanks for its abundance. The Equinox and Solstice festivals are open to all while the four Quarter Festivals are for Grove members only. We meet at The Woolshed/Grove of the Summer Stars at 11am on the nearest Sunday to the particular festival, except for Beltane and Samhain which are held at night. Lughnasadh is held on the Sunday during Druid Camp even though it is a little early, ie the third week of January (Wellington Anniversary weekend). Spring Equinox is celebrated at Stonehenge Aotearoa, an astronomically correct replica of Stonehenge Albion, in Carterton, New Zealand. On the day (or night) people can bring stories, poems, songs, dances, readings and insights etc to contribute to the theme. The ceremonies are followed by potluck feasting to which everyone contributes. Contact: pamela@thewoolshed.com

Macadamia Grove

Welcomes and is inclusive of South-East Queensland and Northern New South Wales OBOD members who wish to join in with any activities. We celebrate the eight festivals of the year, and organise other events depending on members' interests. As Brisbane is a central meeting point most of our events are held close to the city, often in the bushland of Mt Coot-tha. Non-members with an interest in Druidry are able to attend some rituals by prior arrangement. Contact Sandra: macademiagrove@hotmail.com

The Melbourne Grove

Welcomes all OBOD members (local, interstate and overseas) to its seasonal celebrations. Family and friends may also attend with a member and find themselves warmly welcomed. In 2016 The Melbourne Grove we will be celebrating the eight seasonal festivals on the following dates: Lughnasadh - Jan 30, Autumn Equinox - Mar 19, Samhuin - Apr 30, Winter Solstice - Jun 25, Imbolc - Jul 31, Spring Equinox - Sep 18, Beltane - Oct 30 and Summer Solstice - Dec 18. If you would like to join us please send an email to Elkie.whitelk@bigpond.com. Our website is www.themelbournegrove.org

Wollemi Seed Group

NSW Central Coast and Hunter Region. We are gathering on the fourth Sunday of each month at Buchanan close to the expressway. Anyone is welcome and we would love visitors, for details contact Rollick on 0423 626 290 or bonsaidruid@yahoo.com.au

Useful websites for SH OBODies:

www.druidryaustralia.org - A central online resource for druidry in Australia.

Druids Downunder - Facebook group - a closed group for druids of any path, in the Southern Hemisphere and Australia in particular.

Don't see your group or website listed here? Send a listing to serpentstar.obod@gmail.com and spread the word!

OBOD Worldwide

www.druidry.org - Official site of the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids

www.druidcast.libsyn.com - Direct download and shownotes for DruidCast (or subscribe via iTunes)

Facebook Groups - OBOD Friends (open to members and non-members, discussing general topics) and **Order of Bards Ovates and Druids** (closed group for members of the Order).

Publications

Touchstone (HQ) Sent free to all members taking the course, and once you have finished receiving course material you can subscribe separately. *Touchstone* is only available to members of the Order.

Druid (USA) www.druidmagazine.com

Dryade (Dutch) www.obod.dds.nl

Il Calderone (Italian) issuu.com/ilcalderone

Druidenstein (German) www.feuersprung.de

Menhir (French) issuu.com/obod-menhir/docs

Pagan Transitions

Pagan Transitions was created over 12 years ago to help pagans create meaningful and beautiful funeral rites which reflect the spirituality of the person who has passed through the Gateway, and offer support to the bereaved.

As well as templates that can be adapted to suit individual funeral requirements, and a selection of reading material and poems, there is also a list of Pagan Funeral Celebrants who can create and lead the funeral rite for you and arrange everything with the Funeral Director. Pagan Transitions is a volunteer-run free service.

If you are a Pagan Funeral Celebrant and would like to be listed please visit www.pagan-transitions.org.uk and complete the application form. Any suggestions on how the service can be improved are welcome.



7th Dryade International Druid Camp
(9) 10, 11, 12 June 2016 - Winterswijk, The Netherlands
www.obod.nl/dryade/camp

Dynamic Balance



'The Nature of the Gods' - Pt 2

Reflections on the nature of the otherworld, pagan faith and belief within modern Druidry.

By Kacey Stephensen

Before I started writing this article down I wanted to get a good understanding of what other Druids feel about the gods and spirits and one particular person who replied said she was a 'Functional Animist', which she defined as meaning that functionally she treats the world as if it's full of spirits, but that she honestly doesn't know. I think this is a very good point, if not simply for a practical reason, because if a view which posits the existence of spirits within all things actually helps to heal the planet and human kind then it serves a 'real' purpose: the myth of the magical world inspires and brings insight to people in the same way that poetry or art transforms the soul. Belief and faith transforms our world.

One doesn't need to literally believe in the spiritual beings to connect with them, to appreciate their symbols - though from what I've experienced if one is going to really connect and get advice from a deity or spirit, especially if you are doing it to help someone else, this assumes that we must have a certain amount of 'belief' or 'Faith' in their actual existence for them to give us advice that hasn't just come from our own minds. Another way of putting it would be an opening up to possibility, or to the essential nature of what belief is all about.

Belief is, in quite a literal sense, a natural force - it creates many layers to reality, it can conjure up the existence of beings who depend on our connection and perception of them (though also independent of us if we see them as their own realities). Faith I think is important to go deep into an experience because faith is the ability to take a jump, to leap into the sky or walk into the wilderness. I think the nature of faith is in itself unknown, and probably unknowable because it is in relationship with many of our most basic instincts. It just happens to be that we have faith in things, we need to. But I think there is 'religious faith', and a more metaphysical or mystical 'faith experience' which is more open to other ways of knowing one's perceptual experiences.

Remember that saying, "Take a leap of faith"? It is the one thing that keeps us alive half the time, I'm sure! But I also think one can have faith in the gods without literally believing in them, and this is where I need to explain what I mean!

So faith: what is it? Looking up the definition on Google, the first answer from the Oxford Dictionary describes faith as *the complete trust in someone or something*, the second says that faith is *the strong belief in doctrines of a religion based on spiritual conviction rather than proof*.

Ok, what about the word belief? What does it say about this word? *The acceptance that something exists or is true, especially one without proof*, a second answer defines it as *trust, faith, confidence in someone or something*.

So how do these definitions relate to Paganism and Druidry? I think the second definition of faith we can chuck out, because paganism and druidry are generally free of dogmatic doctrines and its people are generally always freethinking and independent. But what about the first definition? What does it tell us about our own relationship with our faith in spirits and gods? Well, it says for it to work at all one must have complete trust. Faith is the ability to let go of any judgements that are not necessary for the time - judgements and opinions that might hold us back from communing with spirit by being too critical and analytical for the moment. 'Pagan Faith' requires an opening of the heart, an opening of the mind to accept the possibility of the spirit world, not the simple act of blindly accepting ideas. Having 'faith' in deity and spiritual experience is basically, then, having faith in yourself - being open with yourself.

So, for faith to truly work, we must embody the qualities, powers and meanings of the gods in our own minds and in our own lives. For that reason Pagan Faith, in particular for Druidry, is very hands on - because the focus is rather an introspective and reflective relationship on our connection and reciprocity with the gods and nature. It is, then, a philosophy rather than simply a religion, and for many druids druidry isn't a religion anyway! But if it is, it can also be a philosophical journey.

As Philip Carr-Gomm likes to say, "In Druidry we are in the kitchen working with the ingredients, we don't just sit out in the restaurant waiting to be served. In other words, we live our spirituality and therefore we also live what we have faith in and what we believe in, instead of simply believing in something; we actually experiment and test our beliefs, to build upon them, to grow."

DRUIDS OF OZ AT THE ENGLISH ALE



Saturday 21st May
Mylor Hall Strathalbyn Rd Mylor
10.30am



Bev Lane will be the special guest at this years Druids of Oz Gathering.

All are welcome whatever path you follow!

\$10 entry and bookings are advised.

Bev will talk about how traditional European magic adapts to the Australian environment. The seasons are different, and it isn't a direct conversion. The plants are different, and their growth patterns don't fit even the adjusted seasons. Likewise the animals. How do we work out equivalents, and construct a new Table of Correspondences?

The distances are vast, and the land ancient. Even the stones and the land spirits are different.

The light is neither European nor Asian light, the water tastes different, and the moon seems upside down. The familiar constellations of the Northern sky are visible at different times of the year, or are never visible.

How do we adapt our spiritual practices and our magic to a land, which is so very different from where they developed? How to integrate the leys of Europe, or the dragonpaths of Asia with the songlines of Australia. Can we even do so? What about the parts, which do interconnect with the old world, such as the line that runs between Callanish and the Nullarbor, and the songs that call the same things in both places? How do we learn to listen to the land, to understand what is being said and to answer its song? Which of the traditional songs and techniques still apply and are effective?

We need to work this out, sooner rather than later.

Bev Lane is one of our respected Druid elders here in South Australia. She is a wild mixture of most of the Celtic races, with Irish as the dominant element. Music and languages run in the family, along with fishing, farming, magic, medicine, poetry and politics.

Bookings and enquiries: info@spiraldance.com.au

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

• Spiral Dance •

The English Ale

Singing • Dancing • Mumming • Guising • Making Merry •

Saturday 21st May 2016
 The Mylor Hall and Oval, Strathalbyn Rd, Mylor.
 12.00pm - onwards

Wear a mask
 if you fancy and join
 in the procession to the bonfire

\$25

concert entry : \$20 concession : \$10 children under 16
 Concert Tickets on sale at the hall from 4pm
 enquiries: info@spiraldance.com.au
theenglishale.org

The Ale is
 generously
 supported by
 AHC and Pagan
 Alliance SA



Druidry & the Big God Question

By Penny Billington

At a recent OBOD workshop I asked people to put up their hands if they felt uncomfortable about using the God/dess names in the OBOD ceremonies: and there were a lot, which gave me food for thought.

I wonder if we just feel shy and embarrassed about Deity? Or feel that the Celtic pantheon is irrelevant? Or perhaps we have murky sediment around organised religion, and mention of the 'G word' will stir a pool we'd rather remained unruffled? Certainly in the UK many of us bring the baggage of an imposed Christian bias of schooling and wider society, so when we feel the call from spirit we would rather shelve thinking about Deity: it's too uncomfortable.

We start the OBOD course in the same way that we learned to make bread from our elders: by doing. It is only later that by questioning we gain an understanding of the natural-magic of yeast action. And so it is with our spiritual journey - but eventually our 'feeling' experiences will be augmented, as our intellects kick in and begin to ask why we go along with particular forms to express aspects of divinity.

John Michael Greer (Chief of the AODA) said that Nature is the least opaque form of divinity we will find, and we go out into the landscape to learn that the sentient life force of the planet has myriad ways of expressing that mysterious quality called 'life': that there is a commonality within the diversity. There is a pattern that can be intuited by our subtle senses as we observe that each living thing develops in accordance with natural laws dictating its size, shape, reproductive system and so on. The logical end to these observations is that there is some governing principle to the whole.

But, of course, all nature lovers might agree without calling themselves Druids. As Druids, we are deliberately donning the mantle of ancient indigenous priests, on whatever landmass we find ourselves; we research to understand the mindset of the ancient forebears, of how human/natural world relationship works, so we can live in a way that comes from a deep understanding of the land. And as we are all potentially wanderers around the globe, we can make connection far from our place of origin, and the spirit of the land will welcome those who have the instinct to do that.

This land connection is key to our choice of God/desses.

Wherever we live, we have clues to ancient spiritual thinking, via archaeology and monumental remains and the whispers still singing through our earliest writings – poetry, history and myths. We ask, "What did this type of offering say about ancient beliefs? What are the lessons of the oldest mythic animals? How and why did ancient builders and artists reference the patterns of the sky?" With study, conjecture and practice we pursue an experiential path.

And as we do that, we also study the gwers and the OBOD rituals, with their many references to Celtic deities. What are we doing when we invoke them and ask for their gifts? In making the ritual circle, we are going beyond being witnesses. We are consciously making a 'space between the worlds', a safe and sacred interface between human and the larger forces of the cosmos; a place where we can contact a sense of Divinity that lies beyond our rational understanding. I see it as the ultimate creative force that gives our universe coherence: an essence that has an overwhelming urge to express itself in millions of diverse ways.

So do we as Druids really need to clothe this feeling with names and attributes? My answer is yes, simply because our brains are programmed to work with image and story. Trying to explore great mysteries such as 'Does God exist?' and 'How can we comprehend Divinity' by rational argument is like wandering in the mists of the ancient Druids without a compass. That which exists in the realms of deep mystery is forever unknowable, yet our instinct to engage with mystery is hardwired into us: and imaginatively is the only way we can do that. Through the imaginal realms, we make a significant relationship with the cosmos, the many worlds which co-exist; the rhythms of our world and our lands.

So do we need to give the God/desses names? Well yes, very carefully... We should, for speaking aloud is a magical act, bringing creative thought into the concrete world, hence the ancient belief that knowing someone's name gives one power – a power we can interpret as 'ability to make connection.' The care comes because we know that naming might lead to defining, confining, thinking we have the only right way to communicate: and Druidry is above all expansive and open.

"I've had so many names that only the wind and the trees can pronounce," says the Classical god, Pan, who is interesting in being impossible to confine with our stories; he is simply too ancient. So it is with all land deities; and it seems to me to be quite in order to call them simply Lord/Lady of the Forest/of the Green/of the volcano/ the desert. But in deciding, it is more to the point to remember that as Druids we should go out into the land and listen to the opinion of the landscape, instead of coining terms arbitrarily.

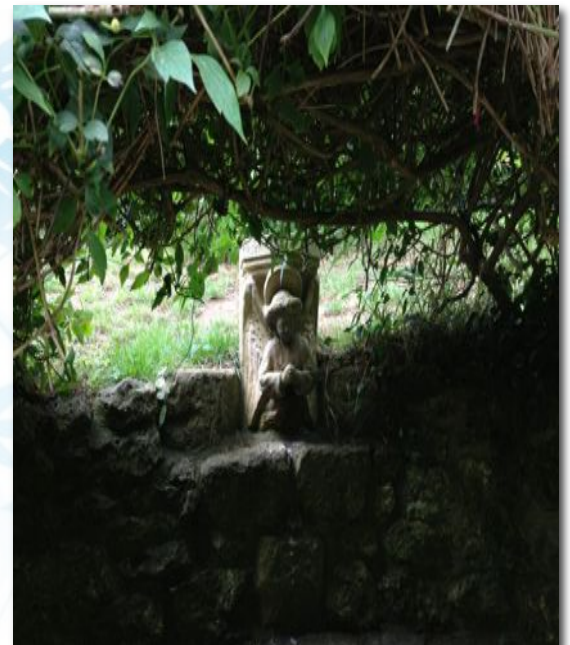
What is the first thing you do at a party? Introduce yourself, and then wait for a response. It's called good manners, whether in a social or spiritual context. Those names we arrive at, spoken with sincerity and intent, will be understood and responded to by the natural forces. In places where cultural misappropriation is a very real issue – and as Druids wander the world, this will always be an issue - it is one way of being authentic in forging our spiritual connection.

Dion Fortune, an influential occult teacher of the last century, says that, "the Gods are lenses that wise men made to focus the currents of the universe." I like this. It reflects my Druid world, and accords with what I was told years ago; that the Druid God/desses in our OBOD ceremonies personify the seasons. So, in the UK, of course Bridget is the shy maiden - peeping, offering the promise of spring and then disappearing. Why? Because that's the English spring experience! (I'm writing just before Beltane, and hail is drumming on the windows!) And so on throughout the year, with Green Men and Flower Maidens until we come to the Cailleach's scouring winds and wait for the rebirth of the magical child. It makes perfect sense from a Northern Hemisphere point of view. If it didn't, I would change and adapt stories, not from my 'head space' but from what emerged from my relationship to my land. Our ceremonies allow us to do something that no other life form can: we consciously witness and honour the natural world at the turnings of the year, with profound gratitude that we are a part of the larger whole.

So am I saying that the God/desses are not real? No. I might view them as personifications of the seasons, but that doesn't mean that they are not real in a totally different imaginal context. We know that the Celts believed in parallel worlds, and God/desses can also have an objective existence in a mythic world, which we may perhaps enter through our practice. Who is to say? Not the great religions of the world; not any modern spiritual system. The ideas are just too big. Groucho Marx famously said that he didn't want to join any club that would have him as a member. Similarly, I wouldn't want to acknowledge any God/dess that can be confined and defined by my tiny brain. These forces are immense, and we will learn to live with the not knowing, in trust. And not only live with, but be reassured by that experiential knowledge that even though bad things happen to us, the underlying pattern and the great harmonious cosmic forces will support us.

From our experiences we develop an understanding of the patterns of the universe, springing from a coherent creative impulse (God/dess) that, as a cosmic reflection of nature, may manifest in more than one way. And when we act as if the Gods exist, events in our world seem to respond as if that is true. We are not fantasists; we do not confuse events in the world of the five senses with those of the imaginal realms; but, within the boundaries of accepted physical reality, most of us have stories of wondrous synchronicities, occasionally enormous but mainly small, incrementally building up a body of understanding to support a world view of a pattern, a coherence, and a beneficent, diverse energy from which all springs. And for one small Druid, that's enough to be going on with at the moment.

As Dave Allen - whose Irish Catholic upbringing provided material for a lifelong career in comedy – used to say, 'Goodnight, and may your God go with you.'



Pic by Mandy Gibson



Samhain

*The Moon shines bright over the Southern Lands
The Air is clear and the view is grand
The darkness grows longer as the veil thins
The doorway opens to let the Ancestors in*

*The Cailleach walks the Land with ease
The Earth needs food so she strips some leaves
If you ask she may take what we no longer desire
And transform them into what we require*

*The ground grows cold as she wields her staff
The children hide from her wicked laugh
Time fades as past, present and future become one
Our dearest departed walk amongst us, try not to run*

*We can talk to our Ancestors on Samhain Eve
And learn from our past, if we believe
It is a time to honour and remember those who have passed
Treasure this moment, for not long will it last*

*Celebrate divination and our psychic abilities
For now is the time where there is a blur in reality
Take on a disguise to avert those who are evil
So we can walk without fear of an upheaval*

*If you listen really close as the veil thins
You may hear soft music drifting in
This music is the beautiful song of the Fae
Who on this night may also visit our way*

*So let's protect ourselves while we open our hearts
To the ghosts of the dead, our dearest departed
Then ask of the Gods to protect cattle and harvest
So we may survive the coming winter without any hardship*

by Chris Parker

Being a Druid Firey

By Tina Merrybard

A short, fat, slightly-over-middle-aged Druid in a Treehugger t-shirt is not what you expect to see among the burly Volunteer Fire Fighters at a bushfire. But if you go to fight a fire in the Mundaring Hills east of Perth, chances are you will indeed see one: Me.

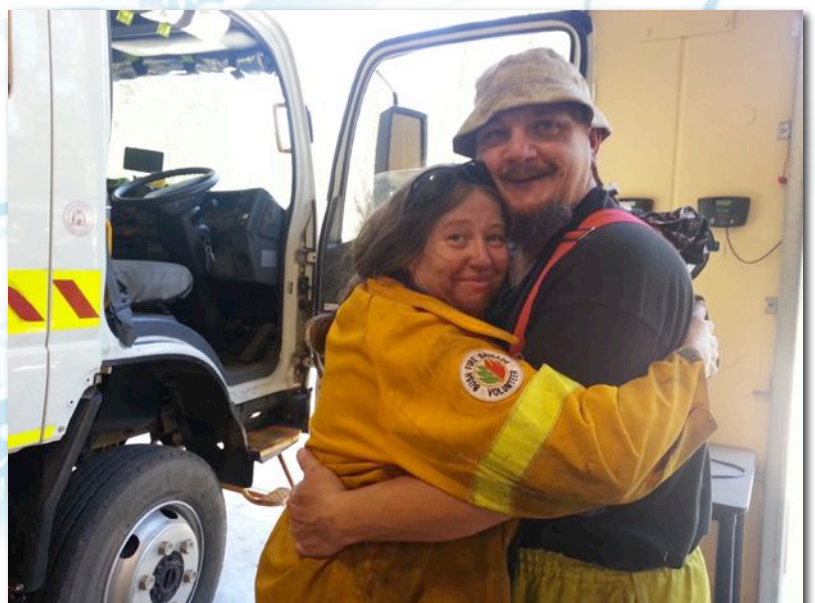



It's not necessarily where you expect to find someone who loves trees and communes with many gods and guides, though I am certainly not the only Pagan you will find on a fire-ground. It's hard for us, though, for us and for all those of us who love nature. Fires are often scenes of great environmental destruction. Plants and animals have been burned. Firebreaks are crashed through the bush to stop the fire's advance, and tall flaming 'stags' must be knocked to the ground to stop them casting burning embers to the winds. It is a sight to hurt harder hearts than mine.



So why do I do it? I do it because the sight of the stark, dead trees along the path of a severe bushfire near here is a daily reminder of what happens if a bushfire gets away. I do it because of the animals who flee the fire and would be caught if it got onto its toes and really ran. I do it for the pets and livestock who might be killed or injured. I do it for the people who might lose their home. I also do it because I have a warrior spirit tucked away in this little old lady's body, and to do community service by taking someone shopping or making meals on wheels is not my path.

Above all, I do it for my beloved trees. For the Jarrah, Marri, Persoonia, Banksia and She-oak that live in our dryland forest and cradle my home in their gentle wisdom. Mostly, at a fire, I am too busy and it is too noisy for me to connect to them. But just last weekend I was alone in the dark with my hose, bent over playing water into the base of a giant old Jarrah whose bole had been smouldering. That tree sent me a clear message of gratitude and relief that I had come to stop the slow burn that would have eventually toppled it over and taken its life. It warmed me right through, and in that moment all the dirt, the exhaustion and even the fearful moments became worthwhile.





Golden Wattle – A Magnum Opus

Prologue

*Sleep seed through night, enduring
In sweet soils of resurrection,
Until the Light of Arthur shines,
The past in golden balls of joy dispersed.*

An Acacia and the Alchemy

Born of fire in the land,
Soft suns burn in winter's hands,
On pompom flower fluff is laid,
Such stuff as Spinebill dreams are made.

With blossoms of Leviathan's Cross,
The attar of a soul, embossed
On wings of Yellow Jewels, to fly,
In fairy-glow, go flutter by.

Breathe deeply of a sunbeam's scent.
The currency of seasons, spent
And carried on a cooling breeze,
Through gilded, whispering wattle trees.

Epilogue

*For drops of solar rain shall face not fear the flame,
When the world in perfumed gold enfolds,
Sun-honey soaking green and sickle leaves,
Transformed in citrinitas.*

By Peter Bull



Fire In The Land
from Aotearoa New Zealand
by Pamela Meekings-Stewart

At Imbolc in the Grove of the Summer Stars, a time when we honour the Celtic Fire Goddess Brighid, we also tell the story of the Maori Fire Goddess *Mahuika*.

Mahuika is the Maori mother of the fire. Since the beginning of time, humans had obtained fire directly from her and had kept their campfires burning so that they would not have to go to the underworld and encounter *Mahuika* again. She is associated with caves and is responsible for forest fires. She married *Auahi-Turoa*, a comet who carried with him the seed of fire and together they had five children who, living in her fingers, are said to be the first rays of light that shoot over the sky at dawn.

According to Maori legend there came a time when fire was almost lost to the world. It seems that *Maui*, the trickster, had decided to extinguish all the fires on earth. His mother directed the servants to go and ask *Mahuika* to give them fire to cook with, but the servants were all terrified and refused to obey her. So *Maui* offered to go himself. His parents told him not to play any tricks on *Mahuika*, and he promised to be careful.

However, upon reaching her abode and obtaining what he asked for, he couldn't resist playing a trick on her by extinguishing the fire once he was out of sight and then presenting himself again saying, "I'm so sorry *Mahuika* but I tripped and the fire fell into the lake." *Mahuika* held out her hands and plucked the nail of her little finger and handed it to *Maui*. And each time, *Maui* extinguished the fire and each time *Mahuika* tore off a nail. Finally, *Mahuika* became very angry and threw the last fingernail on the ground. Fire poured out and laid hold of everything.

Maui managed to escape by changing himself into a hawk, but by now both the earth and sea had caught fire. The God of Storms intervened to extinguish the fire, but before fire was lost altogether *Mahuika* saved some sparks and threw them into the kaikomako and a few other trees...where they are still cherished. Hence, to this day men rub portions of the wood of these trees together when they wish to ignite a fire.

Some Info on the 15th Southern Hemisphere OBOD Assembly

By Sandra

How time has flown! It's only six months until the Southern Hemisphere OBOD Assembly, which will take place Friday 14 through to Tuesday 18 October 2016 on Bribie Island, Queensland.

This long weekend provides a wonderful opportunity to spend time with like-minded people, celebrating and participating in workshops and OBOD rituals. Assemblies enable us to share music, inspiration and gain wisdom while we form new friendships or become re-acquainted with old friends. Each Assembly is different, and every Assembly is special in its own way.

Although a perfected program is still in development, here are some of the activities planned for the 15th Southern Hemisphere Assembly:

- Beltane ritual, which will most likely be on the beach
- Presentations by OBOD members of different divination tools
- Eisteddfod/Bardic Circle, which is the ideal time to share your musical or bardic talents
- 'Academia in Druidry' session, which features presentations by home-grown OBODies as well as our guest OBOD member from England.
- Pre-breakfast Yoga/contemplative activities
- Concurrent Bardic, Ovate and Druid level workshops
- Initiations (arranged on prior request)
- Men's and Women's Circles
- Marketplace – an opportunity to sell and buy druid-y items (there is no cost to reserve a table)
- Talk by local traditional land custodians (Gubbi Gubbi people)
- Divination session - a dedicated time to hone your divination skills, or receive a reading at no cost



The Assembly will, of course, feature time to swim in the nearby ocean (1 block walk away) or waft away and spend time by yourself in the natural bushland which immediately surrounds the venue. If you'd like to be more involved, we are seeking OBODies who would like to facilitate the Eisteddfod, Women's Circle and Druid-level workshop - please email Sandra if you are interested.

Thank you so much to those very organised and wonderful people who have already registered and paid their deposit (or full payment) – this helps so much with organisation. Also a heads-up that ***the full amount must be paid in full by Monday 12 September***, as we will need to provide total numbers and payment for food/accommodation to the venue a few weeks in advance.

- For further information, or to request a booking package, please contact Sandra via macademiagroove@hotmail.com
- Please return completed booking forms with your deposit (or full payment) to Cherry via nimueart@bigpond.com

The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids

15th Southern Hemisphere Assembly



BRIBIE ISLAND

Golden beach, native bushland, close to Brisbane, Queensland

Please join us on this beautiful Island

**Friday 14th October to Tuesday 18th October
2016**

Hosted by Macadamia Grove

Cabin accommodation or camping

Catered or self catered

For further information contact Sandra - macademiagrove@hotmail.com

For bookings contact Cherry - nimueart@bigpond.com

Druidry-related Events & Businesses in Australia

TODD WILLIAM DEARING

WRITING AND ART

*Original art
Paintings
Digital art
Writing
Publications
Commissions
Services*

www.toddwilliamdearing.com



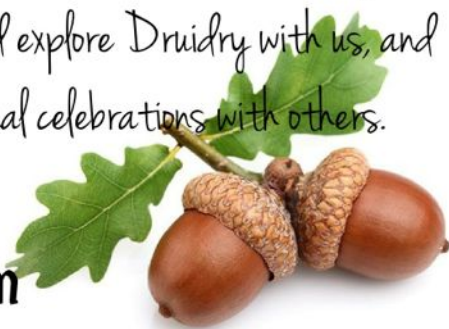
DREAMING TREE GROVE

perth - western australia

We are a small independant Grove located in Perth - Western Australia, whose membership includes members and students of OBOD & the BDD. We welcome those who wish to take part in our Introduction to Druidry Program, as well as those who wish to join and explore Druidry with us, and those who would simply like to share in seasonal celebrations with others.

For more information visit:

DREAMINGTREEGROVE.BLOG.COM





Welcome to the YVONNEDRUID on-line store.

Are you having trouble finding your Druid related items in one place, especially in the Southern Hemisphere? Well you have come to the right site. We are constantly sourcing items for you to browse through and find for your Druid needs. To enhance your journey, we have added some items relating to the Green Man, the Sacred Hare, Shamanism and Celtic products. There are many products in stock, from books to jewellery, wands to clothing and all sorts of exciting things to make this your one stop shopping experience.

If there are any items we haven't stocked, and you are interested, please email us and we will endeavour to source them and let you know. We are also interested in quality handmade items, on consignment and accepted at management's discretion, to be added to the product list. Contact us for further information.

Join the mailing group and receive a monthly short newsletter with updates of happenings.

www.YVONNEDRUID.com
sales@yvonnedruid.com
readings@yvonnedruid.com

I put this store together to try and make it a one place stop for our Druidic requirements, as I found it so hard and time-consuming trying to get what I wanted, and still want, throughout my Life's Druidic Journey. I hope this will help you too, and I will be adding to it all the time with more products as I source them.

Bright Blessings to all....Yvonne

CARD/BOOK GIVEAWAY

Helen has several items looking for new homes (tarot cards and books). She is happy to give them away free of charge to any SerpentStar readers, however she would appreciate a contribution to cover postage. She is only offering them through SerpentStar, as she would like them to go to new homes where they will be used and valued.

The tarot cards have been treated with respect. The Will Worthington decks are in 'as new' condition. The Rider Waite deck cards are in excellent condition but as the set is now over 20 years old the edges of the box are worn.

Helen has listed the items on LibraryThing <http://www.librarything.com/catalog/OCobhthaigh> and will delete items as they find their new home, or add any other items she may find.

For more details email helen.ocobhthaigh@gmail.com



Like the look of SerpentStar? Looking for someone to create your marketing materials or newsletter?

Your faithful Editor is available for paid work in layout, editing and proofreading of anything from flyers to course materials, and even whole books. I am not a graphic designer, so cannot do logos or other artwork. What I do have is professional experience in editing and proofreading of fiction and non-fiction books, information brochures and web content. I also do layout work for flyers, newsletters and banners.

Give me your content, I'll give you a professional, easy to read, printable PDF or image file.

Reasonable hourly rates based on the work required, Paypal/EFT and tax invoice with ABN available. Email Mandy via ajgcelebrant@optusnet.com.au for details.

*Celebrancy Services available in Melbourne
Legal weddings, handfastings, commitment
ceremonies*

Contact Elkie - whitelk@bigpond.com



I am a marriage celebrant living on the beautiful Sunshine Coast in Queensland. I have studied with OBOD for the last six years and will soon complete my Ovate studies. My aim is to help make your ceremony meaningful and memorable.....

*OBOD Member Celebrants
in Australia*



Fully qualified civil/funeral celebrant, and authorised marriage celebrant, with a professional background in customer service and publications writing/editing, and a personal background in performance and community education. If there is any skill needed to write, deliver and make your ceremony special, you can be assured that I have it...or can make it happen.

My gift as a celebrant is a passion for creating a beautiful experience – each ceremony will be individual to your needs and personality, including research into special moments and traditions that you and your loved ones will remember for years to come.

Based in Tamborine, QLD but willing to negotiate travel. If you'd like to know more please don't hesitate to get in touch.

ajgcelebrant@optusnet.com.au

0413 593 609

ajgcelebrant.wordpress.com

www.facebook.com/ajgcelebrant



Amanda Gibson

Qualified Civil Celebrant

Weddings, Commitment Ceremonies, Vow Renewals, Baby Namings/Blessings, Funerals and Life Celebrations, Home and Business Blessings, Life Transitions and Women's Circles





Need some time out from your day to day life?

**Want to escape the city and experience the Outback Heart of
our ancient land?**

**Interested in helping with a permaCulture self-sufficiency project
and learning new skills?**

Experienced WWOOF host, and OBODie Ngatina, and her family, would like to invite members seeking a time of retreat to consider their home in the Northern Flinders Ranges (SA).

- The stunning ancient landscape and vast starry or moonlit nights are perfect for contemplation and fostering a connection with Spirit of Place.
- Experience living in an heritage listed small town (pop. 20) in a remote location
- Private accommodation in an historic inn first built in the 1870s
- Visit places of significance in the deeply powerful Flinders Ranges
- Help with an arid lands permaculture project – learn skills for self-sufficiency
- Flexible arrangements – either WWOOF for full food and board or be more autonomous as suits your needs.

For more details about our home and project visit <http://casaindomitus.wordpress.com> or contact Ngatina on wwoof@sylvanius.net or 0429795002 to discuss options.



And finally...



Artwork by Sandra

Samhuinn...was a time of no-time. Celtic society, like all early societies, was highly structured and organised - everyone knew their place. But to allow that order to be psychologically comfortable, the Celts knew that there had to be a time when order and structure were abolished - when chaos could reign. And Samhuinn was such a time.

Time was abolished for the three days of this festival, and people did crazy things - men dressed as women and women as men. Farmers' gates were unhinged and left in ditches, peoples' horses were moved to different fields, and children would knock on neighbours' doors for food and treats...

But behind this apparent lunacy, lay a deeper meaning. The Druids knew that these three days had a special quality about them. The veil between this world and the World of the Ancestors was drawn aside on these nights, and for those who were prepared, journeys could be made in safety to the 'other side'.

*The
Wheel
turns...*



Artwork by wyverne ogma vryyan

The Druid rites, therefore, were concerned with making contact with the spirits of the departed, who were seen as sources of guidance and inspiration rather than as sources of dread.

The dark moon, the time when no moon can be seen in the sky, was the phase of the moon which ruled this time, because it represents a time in which our mortal sight needs to be obscured in order for us to see into the other worlds.

The dead are honoured and feasted, not as the dead, but as the living spirits of loved ones and of guardians who hold the root-wisdom of the tribe.

Text sourced from Druidry.org

**The deadline for contributing to the Imbolc issue of SerpentStar is 25 July.
The Imbolc 2016 issue will be released on August 1.**