

Serpent Star Alban Elued

NewsLetter for Australian & New Zealand Members of O.B.O.D. Vol 4. no 2 March. 2001

THE FIFTH AUSTRALIAN ASSEMBLY IS DEFINITELY ON !

Beginning Tuesday June 19th and concluding Friday June 22nd, we are gathering to celebrate the Winter Solstice and Solar Eclipse, which will both be happening on Thursday. We will walk around Uluru on Tuesday and select a place where we can honour this unique time and place.

In Touchstone May '97, Chris Turner wrote about this solar eclipse, which takes place at the longitude of Stonehenge. Chris predict that it would herald a monumental change in the direction of Druidry

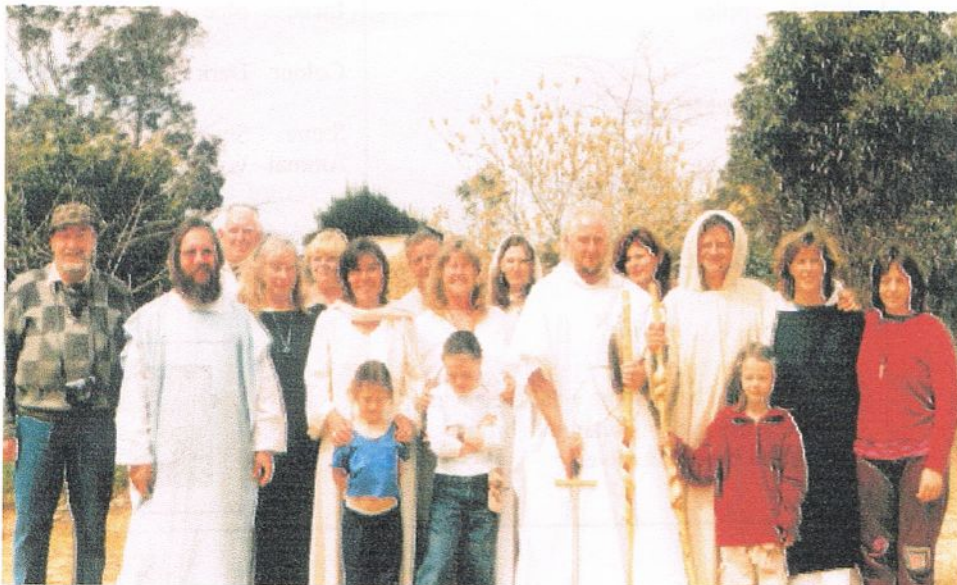
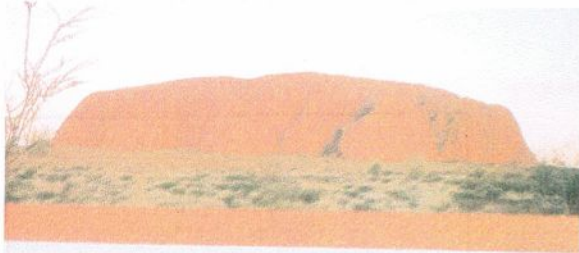
"This is a portent of no less than the rebirth of Druidry, no longer confined to a country or a culture, but as a great force of Light to shine amongst all peoples in all parts of the world" (this coincides with the new course for the Bardic Grade.) The Solar eclipse will take place on Thursday

On the day before (Wednesday), we could visit Kata Tjuta and those with later flights on Friday may like to visit Mt Conner in the morning.

It is twice the size of Uluru and only four feet shorter. Unknown to most people, there are 3 Tors in Central Australia - all aligned on an East-West axis within 1 degree of each other! Yet they were all formed at different times and in different ways Mt Conner (Artilla) is the oldest and is shaped like a flattop mesa, Uluru is a monolith, most of which in underground and Kata Tjuta is a conglomerate of 36 domes.

In order to make the most of the time we have, people are booking the earliest flights for Tuesday and the latest flights out on Friday. We have secured 2 cabins at the Ayers Rock Resort Campground. There are still a couple of vanant beds. If you want on please send me a non-refundable cheque for \$100 as quickly as you can. Of course you can pitch a tent if you want to. There are places to set yourself up quite close to the cabins . Just let us know that you are coming so that we can book a big enough vehicle.

Please make cheques to Heather Whitelk and address 17 Anderson Street, Ferntree Gully, 3156. Enquiries will also be received at whitelk@telstra.easymail.com.au



ALBAN ELUED 2000

Correspondences for the Blue Mountains New South Wales Australia.

Sunset Garden Grove

Sunset Garden Grove is a private grove in the Blue Mountains of N.S.W. just west of Sydney. It is approximately 15m back from a cliff edge, & faces west The grove is approximately 1050m above sea level.

This is a small insight into the grove as the year turns. I hope it will convey to those living elsewhere an idea of this place as I walk around it, & of the local associations I have given the festivals. This is how it is when the festivals are celebrated in this small part of the world.

July, August and September will be covered in the next issue.

Bright Blessings ,Kathy

Samhaine April.



Conception - and the Lady enters a time of waiting- the year ends - the sun dies - the new sun is conceived.

Direction south West
First or New Moon - Earth Festival.

Herb - Rue
Flower - Rosemary
Tree- Old Man Banksia (Banksia serata)
Stone - black opal
Incense _ Myrrh
Colour - Purple
Animals _ Snake
Spiders
Gang gangs Parrots
Rosellas Magpies Currawongs

Few Insects

Food - Fruit cake
Drink - Ginger wine

Flowering
Cosmos, cotoneaster Potato vine, rose, rosemary, Crowea, Lavender, Dahlia, Daisy, Nasturtium, Berberis, Camellia.

Weather Days - 14-18oC
Nights 4-10oC
A chill In the wind.

Vege Garden
Pumpkin, Bean, Beetroot, Broccoli, Peas, Spinach, Parsnip, Turnip, Brussel Sprouts, Apples.



MAY

Life seems quieter; thoughts turn inward
Weather.
Days 8 – 15c.
Nights 3 – 5c.
occasional frost

Flowering
Chrysanthemum marigolds daisy
bottlebrush violet correa native fuchsia
camellia azalea

Vege. Garden
onions peas spinach cabbage turnips
shallots apples

June Alban Arthuan

Solar Festival, Midnight

Death - Birth.

Direction South

Some trees are bare, some wear their winter colours- green, yellow orange & brown tipped with bronze & silver

Weather
Days 5 – 9c.
Nights -1 – 5c
clear & cold
light snow

currawongs magpies rosellas

feverfew geranium azalea wattle
bottlebrush
pineapple sage pigface wormwood
protea holly & cotoneaster berries

Herb sage
Flower heather
Tree acacia terminalis

Stone sunstone
Food stew
Drink port
Element earth

Incense pine

Colour Dark Green

Stone Sunstone
Animal Wombat

Vege. Garden
Lettuce
Onions Leeks Shallots



The Green Fire

Part Two

by Vivienne

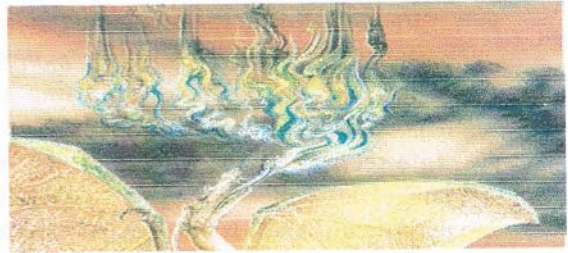
In Part One, I isolated a dragon and used it to identify the teeming millions and billions of dragons whose roiling, writhing, gliding, soaring, slithering, dancing and cavorting bodies are woven together intricately into patterns of enormous complexity to produce the fabric of existence. I have located its mouth and succumbed to the greatest danger there and been swallowed by the beastie while examining her throat for the details of her fire-producing organs.

It's now time to risk another singeing to reach up that throat from within her and seize her two front fangs, her eye teeth, those that drip the volatile venom into the hot breath, to be instantly ignited there. I'm convinced that if I pulled back hard enough on those front fangs she wouldn't be able to keep on swallowing me without swallowing herself headfirst after me, and she'd pass through her own entire digestive system along with me, and there we'd be with her inside out and me walking about on her back..

Then I would see that this dragon is a veritable landscape, fully detailed and firmly formed, and that the venom she drips is the pain of existing and knowing you exist. The hot breath is the joy of finding oneself with a will to enable one to arise from the pain and participate in the creation of being. The fire is life itself.

But then I see that the venom is the dragon's tears, and the hot breath is her passion: her rage, her pity, her indignation and her prayer.

I say to her, "Tell me about the green fire." She says, "I will, and about all its siblings. They are all the children of the white and the black. The white is all-light. The black is no-light. Together they produce the infinite spectra of which all experience is woven. A dragon is an experiencing.



The dragon's mouth is the present, the everywhere present, the every when present, the ubiquitous, eternal present.

Out of her mouth comes a spectrum of colours of flame – every dragon has a different spectrum - colours beyond our imagining as well as all those we know as the sounds and sights and scents of existence.

Wildly they're woven, her fine filaments of fire. Her colours are lives lived, the world sieved through a bee's brain, the goat's incipient sense of humour, race-memories of moon-silvered wavelets lapping on a long lake's shore. What she doesn't weave of these fiery filaments doesn't exist. She weaves the evolutions of beasts, souls and gods, and of beings beyond our ken.

"What are the green flames," I ask her then, stroking the shining scales of her back,,upon which I am still sitting. I see the thrill of iridescent green, the phosphorous, emerald dazzle of pure green fire run fleeting before my fingers, for she has caught it in her scales and wears it there, elusive, like the glimmer of starlight under the surface shine of water in a pond.

I stare deeply into one of these scales and find that my hand penetrates to the scene within the scale, as if I trailed my fingers in the waters of a stream and can touch the pebbles and feel the flash of fishes below the surface. There I find that my own eyes are burning up the beauty, ablaze with a fire of love – a colour we seldom see this side of a dragon's skin. Sun and power and mechanical heat from the churning of facts, atoms and relationships makes life go leaping through all space, all possibilities, all magnitudes of complexity and every simple thing as well.

This leaping sets life afire, and that is love.

- Life set afire by the leaping of atomic particles is red. It is called the *material* realm. It is hard, uncompromising and dependable.
- Life set afire by the leaping of idea and image is yellow. It is called the *psychical* realm. It is eager, willing and responsible.
- Life set afire by the leaping of form and relationship is green. It is the biological world. It is proliferation, access and achievement.
- Life set afire by the leaping of thought, feeling and anticipation is blue. It is the intellectual realm. It is clear-sighted, firm of purpose and compassionate.

From these, between white and black, all things that exist are woven. According to their quota of each, and the intention in the weaving of them, things have or haven't got voices, odours, souls, minds, bodies.

But my focus is on the green fire. I look up from the waterside where I am still trailing my fingers and I see a gateway made of hewn stone, oghamed, an ancestral skull or two nestling in lichen niches watching me. And I am stopped on the point of passing through by a tall man aglow with a soft shine of vegetal green, fierce, and perhaps a little indignant. The guardian of the gate. My tongue finds his names. Luis. St Luke. Lughaid. The priesthood of Lugh. The quicken tree of the ancients.

How dare I try this gateway? What insolence is in me? Trembling I show him my dragon hide landscape, and the three dragon fangs which I find I have acquired in my deadly struggle with the beast.

"I have just slain this dragon," I tell him. "I recall from some ancient story, possibly Germanic, that the possession of these fangs entitles me to 'marry the princess'. Now if that isn't symbolic of winning access to some deep treasures of the mind, spirit or soul, that is rightfully the dragon-slayer's prize, what is it symbolic of?"

As I speak I see through the grey trilithon the clear, flame-like luminosity of a deep and

mystical emerald, into which I feel I could possibly fall, and perhaps must fall, because it has the power to draw all things into it. Yes! It is a kind of fountain, which is constantly drawing all things that are alive (and all things are) through it, and all things are constantly being purified and enlivened by it. It is only possible to know this when you have drawn your dragon inside out.

"Let me go into the fountain of emerald fire," I say, but Luis sniffs, tugs at his tawny moustache, and looks resentful.

He's a peevish type. The rims of his eyes are pink, as if from crying. His face is pale, with red spots, even a pimple or two, as if he's careless about his diet. Unwholesome, he looks. "You are in it," he said. "It is in you. Have you no manners?"

For the first time I glance into his eyes, which had seemed unremarkable till now, and I see that they are deep pools of emerald fire. "You are the guardian of this gateway?"

"I am," he says, pleased, and leaves off chewing his fingernail to reach into his pocket and pull out a paper bag. "Would you like a sandwich?" They seem to be corned beef and mustard on white bread. No wonder he looks anaemic.

I say, "Thank you." It tastes all right, but as soon as it gets into my system it panics. Its atoms belong to dragon realm, and mine belong to Earth. The dragon-realm atoms want dragon-realm context, and my body is induced, by the power of their wish, to comply.

My mind, soul and spirit tumble into conformity with it like a stack of dominoes. I go dragon-realm. I love my shining scales. I love my emerald luminosity. I am a dragon of the green fire.

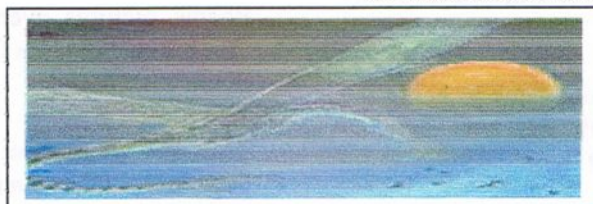
I breathe in nothing, which is deep and potent, and I breathe out life – a wild, leaping that takes hold of atoms and twists them into lively strands of inter-relative awarenesses, themselves tinily, infinitely intricately, inwardly structured, until they begin to understand what they are and to grasp some of the implications of it.

I flash my fins in green water, awash with flame. It is magical water, surely, to be awash with flame like that – but no, it's ordinary water, all water, the common water we drink and shower and wash our clothes in, that our bodies are mostly made of, experienced through a dragon's senses.

I push away a bank of green air under the forest trees with my wide leathery wings, and I'm aware with a dragon's awareness that the air too is a manifestation of the fire.

I push with my dragon's horns against the rock of the trilithon. It is a pillar of green fire to my fiery horns.

Luis says to me, "Can you see that thing, there, in the centre of the fountain, that ball of tangled many-coloured threads? Take it."



I reach for it but it is suddenly a puff adder about to strike and I pull my hand away. It becomes a smooth, white egg. When I reach for it again, it glows red-hot with an angry crackling sound. I imagine a mechanical claw attached to my wrist, and I reach for it with that. It instantly becomes a shimmering globule of quicksilver, with a glow of emerald fire about it. I laugh, suddenly understanding. I imagine myself as another globule of greenish-coloured mercury, and we merge.

As I and it return to my own form, Luis says, "You could at least have offered me a gift." He has a French accent, and resembles a young Louis 16th.

"Oh, all right," I say, and I give him an oghamed wand, drawn from my imagination. He's satisfied with that, though I'm vague as to what oghams are on it. When I put it into his hand a great shudder passes through him, and he is changed before my eyes into a magnificent

angel, smiling, beautiful, with a pair of shining wings and a king's crown upon his head.

And I'm standing there with this cool, hard emerald suddenly in my left hand, three dragon's teeth in my right, and my feet on my dragon skin terrain, feeling a little over-awed.

"Please, Sir, I thank you for showing me all these strange things, but I still wish to understand what this green fire meant to the ancient Druids."

Luis shape-shifted smoothly into a Druid: long, white and soft were his hair and his beard, bald as an egg the bright, shiny dome of his head. "Green fire, now. You have that in your hand. It is the flow of one thing to another: the giving of gifts, the making of bread out of flour, of cider out of apples, of honey out of flowers and of mead out of honey and dreams out of mead.

"It is the changing of foals into horses, seeds into trees, images into metaphors. It is light dancing on the grass, laughing at the sun, it is a bird turning queer flavours into tuneful snatches of song.

"It blazes forth in the eyes of dragons, in the songs of birds, in the power of wild stallions, in the beauty of all beings. It is Bealtaine in Lughnasadh, the moon setting among clouds, the ship going down and the sailors thrashing about in the waves in the throes of rebirth.

"If you take all the things that are, you can trace their infinitudes in red or yellow or blue. Where yellow and blue meet, you have green. You must know both yellow and blue in order to have green. Between the yellow earth and the blue sky we have the green biome.

"Child of the yellow of earth and the blue of air, green is the future always, because it issues forth from the dragon's mouth which sips eternally at

the ever-flowing fountain of now, drinking its nourishment deep into its past all the way down to its tail.

"Take the emerald. Let it instruct you. If you are humble and honest it will make a magician of you. If you are selfish and proud it will deride you and scoff at you. It will praise you for your virtues and sneer at you for your vices. It is as cold as it is hot. It is as real as it is imaginary."

"Okay," I said, and waved my sandwich wrapper about enquiringly.

He pointed to a green metal rubbish bin discreetly almost hidden behind one of the standing stones of the trilithon. It had "rubbish bin" written on it in oghams. I disposed of my litter.

When I turned back he'd gone back to being the unwholesome-looking youth and was chewing his fingernail again. I left with nothing more than a smile of gratitude.

I won't tell you how I got back home – suffice to say I did. But the emerald? The three dragon fangs?

Not trusting my own ability to get the things back to the material world as solid objects, I dropped in to see my anam chara, Phaidin, on the way home and left them with him. Who knows, one day he may teach me to teletransport them into my hand by magic, and if I'm not wrong, it'll be by a process which borrows the transformative power of life itself from living systems to effect change in non-living systems, according to the will of my imagination.

In other words, it will be by the power of the green fire itself!



S O S !!! Southern Hemisphere Ceremonies

Bill, and Libby, are the OBOD webmasters who look after the OBOD website. They are putting up ceremonies for the Fire Festivals and need input from the Southern Hemisphere

He has sent us the following message

"Beltaine is coming for us and Samhain for you.

Would it be possible for someone in NZ or Australia to gather and send us content.

Poems, pictures, events, essays, local tradition and lore that is pertinent to a festival would be very interesting I think.

This way we can put up both a Beltane and a Samhain page and remind everyone we have 2 hemispheres and that OBOD is truly international."

If you are a member of NOBOD please send your contributions directly to Bill. or to Libby at libby@druidry.org through the Creative suggestions and Criticisms: section of the OBOD Website (www.Druidry.org)

If you aren't on line you can send them to SerpentStar and I will send them on until I get a more direct snail mail address....

Also please give some thought to the SerpentStar website for these ceremonies. While I am more than happy to upload members submissions, I don't want to write for the whole site myself. It is our Southern Hemisphere grove and I would love all members to plant their creative efforts and watch them grow and change over the years.

Blessings Carole/\

Bards Corner

A Bard's Winter Journey

I traveled afar
To Northern lands-
Bursting with traces
of Imbolc,
footsteps of Olwen
white star flowers
in snow covered grass.

Now I have welcomed
Lughnasadh
Under southern skies
Where the Sun still burns
Strong and unyielding.

And it feels as if
Earth
Has spun around me
3 times

While I dreamt
A wonderful dream
Of working
Amongst the splendor
Of ancient cities,
Tracing
The footsteps
Into broken temples
To their forgotten Gods,
Hearing
The voices and cries
Of old Pagan Rome.

Stepping
Back in time
To Celtic Pagan Spain
Where Dolmens, Menhirs
And round stone houses
Still line the wooded hillsides.
Entering,
Can take you
Past the veil of time

Running
With rapid springs
In France,
From deeply within
The cool earth, never ceasing
To flow.
Walking
In total awe
Through silent citadels
Or ochre
Laced
With saplings of oak in
Brightest green
On burnt orange
Deep rust and sun
golden yellow.

Flowing
With Father Rhine
In Germany
Playing at being
"Lorelei",
the sad but beautiful
water sprite,
while listening
for echoes
of early Celtic tribes
settling within the
mountains and valleys

Climbing
Icy track ways
Within the alps
To a jewel like grail castle
A memory
To a dead young King
Who loved peace
And the white swans...
and who's footsteps
Can still be heard
Within
The painted hallways
As he prepares
For his midnight sleigh ride

Lady
You took me
On Ravenswings
Through gorges
With clefts like ravines
Into valleys
Where lavender scent
Still sweetens the winter air
Go to snow covered mountains
Silent sentinels
Who keep eternal secrets
Past the green sea
With many faces
Still, glass like,
Playful, blowing kisses
With white crests on rolling waves,
Or pounding in stirred up fury
Like a crazed cauldron
On to the shore.
Into winter forests
Where sleeping dryads
Share their dreams,
By quiet, deep lakes
Shrouded in icy mystery

And now you have
Brought me back
Home to my garden
Where Saille awaits me
With green willow arms
And whispers
Of new tomorrows

Bran-Wen 20th February 01.

The Well of Fire and Water

Where has the well of fire and water
gone?
Junky that I am
And hedonist to feel again
Lungs filled with fire,
Fire in water,
Water in fire.

Spent, at the end of a creative bender,
Aground again as flood recedes,
The spirits have gone to other partners
Less besotted with their afterglow.

There is a plea as old as time.
Every poet knows the ritual words,
"Come back, it is You not I,
That scribes the song I sing.
Come back, I honor the ground
You walk on, the air You breathe.
Come back, I ache to dance with You
The ancient dance
That creates new worlds."

And the ritual answer is silence.

In that silence,
I stand before a maple tree,
Large and four-branched.
Middle age has not soured her spirit.
We touch and a great peace passes,
Forehead to trunk,
While hands trace bark
Like a child's caress.

Somewhere beneath the tree,
The well of fire and water lies,
A mantic spring,
Waiting for the will
Of it's own moment.

On the ground,
Back against the tree,
I light a candle in expectation.

David Miley



WINTER SOLSTICE ECLIPSE

The Winter Solstice Eclipse will be on the longitude of Stone Henge in the Southern Hemisphere on June 21st this year. This means that the Eclipse will start in the Atlantic Ocean off the west coast of Africa and pass over Africa and finish in the Indian Ocean. Because of the time difference, we will not see this event, it being around 10pm Australian EST.

Right now Leo and Virgo are high in the sky at midnight, and around the second week of April, look for Scorpio on the Eastern Horizon at sun set. It will rise as a huge constellation!



The Waterlily

Waterlily – colour –
beauty;
water - floating - serene;
petals – open – nature;
peace – calm – quiet;
joy – love – light;
sunshine – wind – rain;
sky - clouds – thunder;
lightning – dark- night;
still – moon – stars;
dawn – clear – sunrise;
waterlily – colour –
beauty.

- Raelene Taylor (2000)

Poututerangi

Poututerangi (the post that lifted up the sky)

Southern hemisphere
standing still,
one moment in time,
light and dark suspended in
harmony
moving slowly
peacefully
back to the darkness,
the womb
where all began
and all return again.

For one moment
the balance remains.
In that moment
I find peace.
The peace of the summer
spent,
the return to the quiet of
the winter,
the return to the water, to
hinemoana
the goddess who dwells in
the depths
the light slowly leaving the
land.

Poututerangi
the shadows slowly creep
into the land
as crop is lifted
and laughter shared
knowing the goodness of
the Goddess
carries us safely, gradually
back to her womb
to continue the spiral of
life.

peace from the bottom of
the earth
Kirsti (NZ)



SerpentStar is an Australian and New Zealand newsletter for the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids.
For more information about O.B.O.D. write to
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office@obod.co.uk or look at the O.B.O.D. website <http://www.druidry.org>

Articles for publications in the next SerpentStar should reach C. Nielsen
P.O. Box 44 WINDANG 2528 NSW AUSTRALIA, by the last week in May.
Phone number (02) 4295 4213 or email carole@zipworld.com.au

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

Remember, this is your Newsletter.
Please contribute freely and often to foster closer ties and understanding
between members in the Southern Hemisphere

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More Wisdom and Healing from the Trees

by Rosemary Nissen Wade



In past issues of SerpentStar I've shared information on Australian Native Tree Essences by Sabian, developed some years ago. Now, following the pioneering work of Dr Edward Bach and our own Ian White who created the Australian Bush Flower range, many more people are discovering the amazing power of essences with their subtle yet profound healing qualities.

My friend Raeline Brady-Kuligowski, an Australian Reiki Master now based in Poland, has travelled the world in the service of her special mission as a planetary healer. She has been guided to make a range which she was instructed to call soul quintessences. So what is the difference between an essence and a quintessence? I'll let Raeline explain it in her own words, taken from an article she wrote for the Australian and British Flower Essence Association:

'SOUL QUINTESSENCE SYSTEM - Spiritual Voyager Essences

'A quintessence creates an alchemical transference that allows the right climate for spiritual elements to join with material elements. They are described in ancient scriptures as the pure, highly concentrated essence of a substance, and that which gives our spiritual essence, from which we have in varying degrees become dissociated. It is known to the alchemists of old that after the elements, namely fire, air, water and earth are balanced, a fifth and highest essence, known as quintessence, is created, which is thought to be the substance of the heavenly bodies and latent in all things.

This is understood to be a highly refined medicine, not only capable of healing the elements within one's physical, psychological and emotional bodies, but aligning them with the healing qualities of the soul.

'The focus and intention in making remedies in such a way is to awaken, activate and stimulate the original soul coding of a living entity, whether in a subtle or gross form, to that soul's constitutional potential. This is a dissension process, inasmuch as it accesses the topmost spiritual elements, capturing them in quintessence so they can be showered down at a level we can assimilate and absorb. This is triggered by the spiritual elements infused within each remedy. The aim of quintessences is to address the imbalance from a spiritual perspective, rather than only addressing the body, emotions or mind. When the focus for healing is at a soul level, all other aspects of self are also included in that healing.

'When the first three essences of this system were made, namely Pine, Birch and Heather, I was told by my guidance that they were co-created as quintessences and that these were not to be called essences. The source went on to say that these quintessences would not only lend themselves as part of an essence system, but assist humans in awakening and retaining their own soul quintessence, as each plant in their quintessential state has a unique function in activating purer states of consciousness in life. Each quintessence was created using either the leaves, flowers, fruits, roots or bark of forest flora with their very specific healing qualities - e.g. roots deal with deeply rooted, core issues. The making of a quintessence also involves specific ingredients such as sacred waters, crystal, ritual, invocation, mantra and mudra.'

Birch

'Nature provided us with a natural calendar for co-creating quintessences - all were made during moon cycles, Solstices, Equinoxes, major outer planetary conjunctions and alignments, on sacred dates, or at power points in nature. This brings unique healing qualities to each quintessence. For example, Birch in Quintessence was created in a particular power forest in Poland which houses a dimensional doorway that leads directly to the brain of the earth, thus allowing us to be fed with the consciousness of Gaia, our dear Earth Mother.

'The function of Birch trees in that forest is that they assist us in understanding our bodies as a vehicle for the soul, and link up the eco-systems. Their bark holds codes that record data that is fed to the brain of the Earth. Birch

Birch quickly sends a message to the brain of earth when the environment is not in balance. Humans are also a part of this link-up when using Birch Quintessence and are balanced to the natural rhythms of Earth. This is sent as waves in a figure eight pattern through the left and right hemispheres of the brain.'

Oak

Of particular interest to us as Druids is the message of Oak.

'Voice of the Oak deva:

"I restore your harmonious link with the divinity in nature, the unfolding of greater unity and eternal relationships."

'To which Raeline adds:

'Father Oak is the protector of the gatekeepers of the planet; his energetic purifies and unifies the kingdom collectives. His roots carry the secrets of time and are firmly grounded in the earth core centre's oracles.'

Some of Raeline's guidance is via channeled information. e.g., speaking of the "thick band of muck" that has gathered around our cities, she was told:

'The forests are the answer to this dilemma. Go to the forests. Ecosystems are able to feed the pure vibration held in quintessence's through the song lines.'

What if you don't have much access to forests? Again I'll quote from Raeline's article:

'Not all of us have the good fortune to reside in a natural setting. Large majorities of humans live in jungles of concrete and steel and may very well ask: "How can quintessences help in affecting myself and my environment?" Almost every major city in the world has flora and waterways surrounding or flowing through it, whether it be a park, garden, forest, river, lake, bay or ocean. Humans living in cities and taking the quintessences are positively affected by the vibrational intensification stimulated when quintessences find their way to these places. In other words, humans cause an impact on their environment first, which in turn influences their well being.

'As this is working in a macro-to-micro process, the effects can be far reaching. The spiritual elements contained within the quintessences can be transferred through a subtle substance known as liquid light which serves as a medium and has a protective function for transporting them. Enveloped in liquid light, they are being carried through human fluid waste to waterways, and local flora via our auric body. Nature then records and absorbs the spiritual elements and activates a cleansing and neutralisation process. In this way, we, through the use of liquid light, become instrumental in fulfilling our role in Re-spiritualising Global Harmony.'

Raeline concludes:

'It is essential that we as humans re-spiritualise ourselves, that we make our lives meaningful by seeking out who we really are, becoming aware of the now dormant abilities held within us, and finding our individual roles in healing the Earth. It is nature and the Earth herself that can activate from within us, with the necessary keys in guiding us on the magical voyage we are now undergoing, realising the meaning of purpose and reaching our eternal destination safely and successfully. Essences play an integral role in that awakening.'

Like every range of essences, specific ones contain remedies for specific ailments. E.g. Oak is good for the nervous system and helps with such things migraine, anxiety and fatigue; Birch can be used for skin problems, headaches to do with the digestive system, structural alignment and poor memory.

Raeline will visit Australia in late February and early March- unfortunately before the release of this issue of SerpentStar. I am the editor of books she is preparing on the Soul Quintessence range, the first of which has just been printed. I also distribute and dispense Soul Quintessences, and will be attending her Australian workshops to deepen my understanding.

So, if you would like further information, you may contact me at 205 Upper Duroby Creek Road, Nth Tumbulghum NSW 2490, ph 07 5590 9349, fax 07 5590 9350, email

ewade20@scu.edu.com or you can email Raeline at soulquintessence@interia.pl



Bardic & Healing Workshop

Jay Ramsay will be coming to New Zealand in August and September and will be traveling through Australia at around the same time. As well as being a well known and highly respected member of OBOD Jay is trained as a psychosynthesis psychotherapeutic counsellor, and also a healer trained with the NFSH here (National Federation of Spiritual Healers)

Anyone who would like to attend a workshop or run a work shop could you please contact me (Carole) so we can organize it.

The weekend runs from Friday night to Sunday afternoon, late. This workshop is a must for all Budding Bards.

The Sacred Space of the Word

Finding & Celebrating the Poet in you—with Jay Ramsay, Founder of Chrysalis—The Poet in You, Poetry editor of Kindred Spirit magazine

'I think you have much to give, especially in your power of delighting and inspiring people with a love of poetry, of awakening and warming people's hearts'—Kathleen Raine

Is there a voice in you aching to speak ?

Do you dream about writing the way you feel ?

This weekend, facilitated by an experienced poet and therapist, guides you into poetry and poetic writing through the imagination and feeling, in an atmosphere which nurtures, stimulates and contains.

It explores the creative process in seven sequential stages using a whole range of accessible and original exercises—including visualization, drawing and movement as well as writing.

It aims—through bridging inner and outer worlds—to show how we can begin to support our own creativity, and resist aborting it.

The emphasis of the workshop is more on the experience than the 'end result', though participants have often been amazed at their own ability, and the voice they discover is their own.

What you can gain from it

- greater confidence as either a beginning or more mature writer
- a series of useful tools to support and sustain a writing practice
- enhanced awareness of the imagination and how it speaks to us
- a deeper contact with yourself and your own unique experience
- greater clarity about your strengths and weaknesses
- sensitivity to both language and the forms of poetry
- meeting kindred spirits who can encourage you on the path
- finding your voice in also speaking and sharing poetry aloud
- follow-up support through Chrysalis and other workshops

'Poetry here is performing its true duty, restoring us to the innocence at the heart of our experience and celebrating its rites'—Lindsay Clarke

Members Skill Share Request from "Ruisseart agus Ceit"

We are using a new marketing technique for "RavensWing", and I was hoping I could impose on you to help. All it takes is a little time on the net whilst you are logged on, and it will cost you nothing.

The way it works is:

- 1) go to <http://www.mp3.com/Ravenswing>
- 2) click on "listen to all tracks LoFi Play" and just let them run through.[once per day per email address only]
- 3) MP3.com pays us in their "Payback for Playback" program - it's that simple.

Thanks Ruisseart agus Ceit

THE GODDESS IN DRUIDRY

(Originally given as a talk to 'Secret Chiefs' in London, Jan 2001)

I once gave a talk about Druidry after which a lady came up to me and said "I had no idea that the goddess featured in Druidry." Surely, it can't be that the old idea of Druidry as solar and masculine still exists? Maybe it does in some cases. However, the Goddess most certainly does feature in Druidry, but there are crucial differences between Her relationship with Druidry and other neo-pagan traditions, especially Wicca.

The difficulty of setting out any ideas about the goddess, is that one's experience is so uniquely personal. For much of my life I simply lacked the religious framework to explain the experiences I was having, putting it down to adolescent fantasy and, later, artistic longing. When I left Art College and went to film the dowser and healer Hamish Miller, and it changed my life. I came down from the Merry Maidens (in Cornwall) carrying the camera legs, hopped over the style and turned back to look at the stones. It was at that point that I realised I'd been in education all my life, yet knew nothing!

I subsequently discovered modern paganism, so that in February 1987, when the next major experience came my way, I knew exactly what was going on. I was called and I answered. On that day I offered myself to the goddess. It was perhaps my longing for knowledge, more than my distaste for what I experienced of Wicca, that drew me to Druidry. Ten years on and I've learned a lot. What has become apparent to me is that whilst there are a huge amount of similarity between the two, the lack of understanding of the differences means that tensions exist that few understand.

So to start with, it is important to outline the recent history of our approach to 'the goddess', to show how our theology (or thealogy if you prefer the correct female Latin) has evolved. For those of you who have read Ronald Hutton's "The Triumph of the Moon" much of what follows will be recognisable.

In the ancient world goddesses were usually patronesses of different things such as cities, love, learning, justice, war, handicraft, home/hearth, and agriculture. It was the same for the Celts, although not a city based society, they seemed to remain loyal to a local, tutelary goddess. So generally, the goddess was associated with the highest achievements of human civilisation or human personality.

Around 300BC (don't quote me on that) the Deuteronomists triumphed in Judaism removing all reference to female divinity, to the extent that the goddess is still referred to in the bible as "the abomination". In Christianity one of the Fathers of the Church, Augustine of Hippo, set the Church on an anti-female course (The author of Elements of Celtic Christianity referring to Augustine as a "misogynist"). Even today in Islam, the practise of witchcraft carries the death penalty and the open discrimination against women under Sharia law, and the Taliban, is well documented on the news.

The most famous, and possibly only, aspect of any goddess to survive is through the Virgin Mary, the virgin

mother, exalting the chastity and purity of the Maiden, and honouring motherhood, whilst carefully avoiding even the slightest commendation of your actual sex.

So, to all extents and purposes, and for this article, female divinity is dead. There are no surviving practises of any ancient goddess worship left in the western world. By the time we get to the 18th century we find our very own revival of things Celtic, including the revival of 'Druidism'. During the 19th century the Celts came to be seen as a bit 'savage' (thanks to theories of evolution), and scholars turned instead to the classical world. The Romantic revival is also accompanied by a post-industrial, romantic memory of the rural countryside, a sort of lost rural idyll that found its expression through art and poetry. Nature starts to become personified as 'Mother'.

It is important to understand that educated Victorians were both artist/poet and scientist. So poetic ideas could easily influence scientific ideas. This seems to be what happened in the emergent science of archaeology. In 1849 a German classicist suggests behind all these different Greek goddesses lay one great goddess. By 1900 it's almost as though all UK academics have become convinced that a pan-European Great Goddess existed. They looked at the archaeological evidence coming in from all over Europe, and concluded that it was evidence that had all evolved from a single original practice.

In 1903, Sir Edward Chambers (a civil servant and scholar) suggested that this great Earth Mother had been worshipped in two aspects, that of creator and destroyer. An academic called Jane Harrison points out that many ancient goddesses appear in partnerships of three, so maybe this great Earth Mother was worshipped in three aspects. She suggested that the first aspect was that of the Maiden, who ruled over the living, and the next was the Mother, who ruled over the Underworld. Unfortunately she never named the third aspect, but this was the first time the idea of aspects defined by relative female age appears.

In 1907, Sir James Frazer joins the debate by saying no, the Great Goddess was worshipped in two aspects, but yes, they were Maiden and Mother, as exemplified by Demeter and Persephone. By the 1930s evidence of goddess worship in pre-history had turned up in many other areas, to the extent that She wasn't just pan-European, She was pan-global. Such was the impetus to find evidence of Her existence, that one archaeologist even faked a find at Grimes Graves in 1939.

So academia constructed an idea, then attempted to find evidence for it, but, by the war, had been unable to fully unify it as a theory. The, at the end of the 1940s, Robert Graves brings out his now famous book *The White Goddess* and suddenly we have a theology of the 'Old Religion'. The Great Goddess was worshipped in three aspects, Maiden, Mother, Crone, which were also associated with three of the aspects of the moon, waxing, full and waning.

Hurrah!

But, where has this come from? What is the link between an academic like Jane Harrison and Robert

Graves? Believe it or not, the answer is Aleister Crowley. In 1929, in his book "Moonchild", Crowley describes the threefold nature of moon

"For she is Artermis or Diana, sister of the sun, a shining Virgin Goddess; then Isis-initiatrice, who brings to man all light and purity, and is the link of his animal soul with his eternal self; and she is Persephone or Proserpine, a soul of double nature, living half upon the earth and half in Hades.... And thirdly she is Hecate, a thing altogether of Hell, barren, hideous and malicious, the queen of death and evil witchcraft."

For Crowley these are also the natures of womanhood...

"Artemis is unassailable, a being fine and radiant; Hecate is the Crone, the woman past all hope of motherhood, her soul black with envy and hatred of happier mortals; the woman in the fullness of life is the sublime Persephone."

Ok, so great if you're in the fine and radiant flush of youth, or in the fullness of life, but a bit of a bummer if you are a mature woman!

Thus it was that "the Crone" becomes the third aspect of the goddess, and Crowley's views on womanhood, the goddess and the moon, go on to influence Robert Graves and, of course, the founder of modern Wicca, Gerald Gardner. Wicca then arrives in the United States in time for the 60s, and a radical rethink of everything. It goes on to influence feminism, and in the 1970s writers such as Mary Daly and Andrea Dworkin talk about the witch trials, not just as crimes against women but as suppression of the Old Religion, the last great obstacle to patriarchy.

Weighty stuff indeed.

The trouble is that, whilst everyone is reading the new feminist literature, no one is reading the crusty old academics who are systematically disproving all ideas about a pan-European Great Goddess. (If She never existed, then she couldn't have been worshipped either as maiden, mother or crone.) Instead, feminism leads to feminist theology, and feminist theology leads to writers such as Starhawk, and her inspirational book *Spiral Dance* – well I was inspired. This new material brings Wicca, and witchcraft generally, into mass culture. Wiccan theology becomes the dominant neo-pagan tradition, and as the 1990s ended, a source for a large number of films and TV series.

Er, Houston? We have a problem!

Crowley's view of older women is not nice. He seemed to value women solely for their ability to arouse him. He must have recognised that motherhood was a fairly important role for the future survival of the human race, but that was it. The mature woman has no divine equivalent, or role model. The trouble is, when we look at our female pantheons, in whichever tradition, they don't fit conveniently into his simple three-way categories of maiden, mother and crone.

The solution seems to have been to broaden the definitions. Thus, in Wicca, there seems to have been a

complete redefinition of Crone as Wise-woman. This seems to have worked for Wiccans, but in Druidry it has started to produce some mighty clashes. Those of us trying to follow a specifically Celtic pantheon find we have to squash deities into this so called 'three-fold goddess' idea. Even beloved writers such as RJ Stewart are guilty of goddess squashing.

OK, some deities might seem quite happy to be redefined or re-emphasised, but others aren't. Take the Cailleach for example, (Kai-e-och, if you're from the islands). Here's what the writer Mara Freeman has dug up on Her.

"In Scotland, Samhain ushers in the reign of the Cailleach Bheur.... Her name literally means 'The Veiled One,' – an epithet often applied to those who belong to hidden worlds – but which later came to mean simply 'Old Wife.' Bheur means 'sharp' or 'shrill,' because she personified the cutting winds and harshness of the northern winter, which came to be known as 'Cailleach weather.' She was also said to be the daughter of grianan, the 'little sun,' which in the old Scottish calendar shines from Samhain to Bride, followed by the 'big sun' of the summer months. As the weather-spirit responsible for the gales that lash the northeast, local fishermen gave her the ironic epithet of 'Gentle Annie.'

*She was terrible to behold:
... her face was blue-black, of the lustre of coal,
And her bone tufted tooth was like rusted bone.
In her head was one deep pool-like eye
Swifter than a star in winter
Upon her head gnarled brushwood
like the clawed old wood of the aspen root.*

The Cailleach Bheur lived in a cave below Ben Nevis, the 'mountain of snows,' in the Scottish Highlands. Dressed all in grey, a dun-colored plaid wrapped tightly about her shoulders, she leapt from mountain to mountain across the arms of the sea. When an unusually heavy storm threatened, people told each other: "The Cailleach is going to tramp her blankets tonight," for at the end of summer she washed her cloak in Corrievreckan, the whirlpool off the west coast, and when she spread it out to dry, the hills appeared white with snow. She wielded a magic rod or hammer with which she struck the grass into blades of ice. In early spring, she could not bear the growing light, and would fly into a temper, throwing down her wand beneath a holly tree, before whirling away in rage."

The Cailleach is not nice. She was feared. She brought winter's death. She actually does fit Crowley's description of the Crone. Unfortunately, Crowley's definition of the Crone is no longer acceptable. Remember, for many pagans Crone IS Wise-Woman. So how do you reconcile Crowley's crone, as embodied by the Cailleach, and the Wiccan crone/wise-woman? I have actually read and heard my fellow pagans attempt to redefine the Cailleach as a nice cuddly old wise-woman, at whose feet one might sit, catching her pearls of wisdom as she tosses them around like a bunch of autumn leaves. Very poetic, but crap.

I'm sorry but this sort of tinkering with divinities to fit them into modern ideas of how people think they should be, is just offensive. Anyone who has spent any time

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with the Cailleach will know that what She brings is Death, not the distilled essence of wisdom! If you want a wise woman try Sophia! The Cailleach is the Crone, yet she defies the redefining of the term, because she is most certainly not wise-woman.

And what of her name? "The Veiled One". Does this suggest that she hides her face? Has anyone put two and two together and figured out why She might also be referred to as The Hag of the Dark Moon? Yes! Another problem! We have a Crone, but she's not a Wise-woman, nor is she associated with the Waning Moon. Oh Dear!

So, you see, anyone trying to follow a Celtic path is going to get into trouble with this Crowleyesque idea of a 3-fold goddess associated with a 3 phased moon. The Goddess simply doesn't fit this simplistic pigeon-holing. She appears in many different forms.

One such form, still making regular appearances is Brigid, particularly as goddess of inspiration. The Romans equated another, Sulis, with Minerva, with similarities to Brigantia. And which modern sovereign goddess is still depicted holding her shield and spear? And who would admit to still worshipping her? Britannia – the Sovereign Goddess of these lands!

That's the problem, She comes with so many different faces throughout the turning of the year.

as **fostermother** to the young sun,
as **inspiration** carrying **seeds** for our future
with **passion** with the gifts of **harvest**
as sovereign **queen**
with the **wisdom** of the ages
and sometimes as **death**

In preparation for this article, I dug out some old Druid ceremonies, looking for references to a three-fold goddess, but in Druidry the goddess seems to have remained seasonal. I did discover a reference from the 1970s, in a leaflet published by Colin Murray for the Golden Section Order Society, entitled The Triple Goddess, where it says:

"The Triple Goddess gives life through the passing year – rising in February, loving in May and giving us food for the year in August."

Unfortunately, in the very next paragraph the writer blows it, saying:

"Now comes a change – Dark Winter from November to February is ruled by another Goddess – the Morrigan."
Oh dear, even when trying to embrace a triple-aspected goddess, and trying to get on board with the rest of modern paganism, Druids have a problem! She is still part of our 4 seasons, and is still, rightly or wrongly associated with 4 phases of the Moon, not three. The tension in modern Druidry has come about because so many people are coming to Druidry from with Crowley's definitions already in place in their head. What to do?

Time will tell. As has been pointed out to me, it may be that this 3-fold idea was exactly what was needed at the time: i.e. for Her revival to take place in the last part of the last century. It seems to have made the goddess accessible to an enormously wide audience, and the tribute for this must go to Wicca, not to Druidry. It has also been pointed out to me that a pre-requisite for modern pagans is the ability to hold 5 mutually contradictory beliefs in your head at any one time!

Whilst traditionalist Druids like myself might reject this Crowleyesque doctrine based on his derogatory view of older women, and strongly call for the re-instatement of other ideas of the role of mature woman, we can nevertheless, unite with other pagans around this new idea is of a living planet.

You see, even though, by my own argument, I have shown that a Great Goddess never in fact existed, I still refer to Her – the goddess – as though there is only one. Why might that be?

Maybe it has something to do with what has happened in our recent past that had never before happened in the whole of human history. We've seen our planet from space. When the Apollo missions went round the dark side of the moon for the first time, there was a lot of excitement about what they might see on the side that has always been hidden to the dwellers of planet earth. Of course what they saw was the now famous Earth Rise. The far side of the moon was as grey and dusty as the visible side, but the sight of the Earth rising above the lunar horizon was the sight that stunned everyone. Our fragile little home floating in the expanse of space gave humanity a new view of itself. Coupled with the Gaia Hypothesis ten years later, and suddenly we do have a new concept of a Great Goddess.

Don't let it be forgotten.

On a final note, I offer this reading from OBOD's new Lughnasadh ceremony. It is spoken by the Earth Mother:

As you walk upon my back, tread gently,
As you eat of my fruits, share them with others,
As you breathe of my air, speak softly my name,
And I will nurture you.

As you drink of my waters, feel me inside you,
As you gaze at my beauty, be part of me,
As you listen to the wind in my trees, here my call,
And I will comfort you.

As you rest against my body, I will support you,
As you walk my many paths, I will be with you,
As you are my child, I will raise you
And I bless you.

Gwalchwen. Feb. 2001