

# Serpentstar



## Alban Arthuan

Newsletter for members of OBOD in Australia and New Zealand June 2000 Vol. 3 no.3.

Hello!

We've been in the Southern Hemisphere five months now, and what an experience it's been! It took about three months to get over that strange exhilarating feeling of being on 'the other side of the world' - and now we feel fully settled and are starting to feel really at home here. The girls are getting Kiwi accents, and we've bought a telescope and star maps to get to know the Southern skies.

We're looking forward to visiting Australia for the Assembly in September. As I write this about 160 members from many parts of the world will be gathering for an Assembly at Glastonbury, and for ceremonies on the Tor and at Stonehenge. Apparently they're having some Australian weather over there - it's 30 degrees this weekend. I know there won't be quite as many of us in Albany in September, but we're looking forward to meeting many members, and celebrating beneath the stars - within the stone circle at Ganieda.

Here, up the coast from Wellington, I've nearly completed the revision of the Bardic Grade, and one of the additions I am making is to include in each Gwers a section on the Triads - one of the great resources of our tradition. Here is a sample, which recounts an experience I had when I was in Sydney in 98. When my friend read out the third triad, the hair on the back of my neck stood on end!

With many blessings at this time of the Winter Solstice,  
Yours in the Peace of the Grove,  
Philip /\

### The Triads A Storehouse of Wisdom

*You can use the triads to help you gain insight into a moral predicament, or a problem you are trying to solve. Sometimes it can be helpful to consult a triad of triads - three of them - to give a range of ideas as food for thought. One way to do this is to write the triads down on pieces of paper and then to select three from your collection, as you might select three oracle or divination cards. As you learn more triads, you can add to your collection, or you can even choose to add other kinds of aphorisms or quotations of sage advice taken from your reading. The three selections chosen may not always prove helpful or apposite, but sometimes the advice will be startling in its relevance and helpfulness. Take this example, taken from a real life experience of the Chosen Chief in Sydney, Australia:*

"A friend once came to me, worried that his son had been caught lying at school. 'How should I deal with this? Should I have a heart to heart talk with him, or should I deal with this in another way?' He wondered. I suggested that we look at three Triads, and this is the advice they gave him:

The first one read: **'Three things from which never to be moved: one's oaths, one's Gods; and the truth.** An open mind and an open heart are great blessings. Be steadfast in your promises, in your love of the Spirit, and in your love of truth. Opinions and understanding need to grow and change, but the truth lies like a compass, beyond facts and words, in the centre of your heart.'

Clearly, this Triad gets straight to the point, and told my friend that his son's happiness depended upon him resolving this matter. He then turned to the counsel of the second Triad chosen: **'Three sureties of happiness: good habits, amiability, and forbearance.** If the habits and routines of your life promote, rather than damage, your health; if you are friendly and tolerant of others' failings, your happiness is assured.' After a little thought, he understood that he could explain to his son that since his lying is getting him into trouble, and causing him unhappiness, then it is clearly a bad habit that he has fallen into - one that is hurting him. This removes any need to moralise. Simply by pointing to cause and effect, he can show his son the damage lying causes.

Finally, he read the third Triad: **'Three occasions for one to speak falsehood without excuse: to save the life of one who is innocent, to keep the peace among neighbours, and to preserve the Wise and their crafts.** It is not wrong to lie to save the life of an innocent person, to promote peace amongst warring factions, to protect wisdom and those who teach it.' This struck straight at the heart of the difficulty of reprimanding children for lying: they see adults lying. They sometimes hear their own parents telling 'white lies'. So when they are told not to lie, it seems like hypocrisy. But this Triad is saying that sometimes you can tell lies, to protect people or keep the peace. This pragmatic approach is far more likely to work with a child than dogmatic and judgemental moralising, which they see betrayed whenever an adult lies himself or herself.

Once he had read these Triads, my friend knew how he should approach his son. He should have a heart to heart talk with him, explaining that lying most often makes people unhappy, and that it is a harmful habit to get into, but that lying in some cases can be used to protect people. With the help of the Triads he was given ideas that could help him explore the issue of lying with his son, without having to rely simply on the dictum that all lying is wrong. He was able to inform his discussion with his son with more depth, compassion and wisdom."





## Notice Board

### SerpentStar on line!

Well at last it has happened. SerpentStar is online at [www.serpentstar.org](http://www.serpentstar.org). The site contains a special area for the newsletter and plenty of other areas for members to fill with poems, writings, artwork and whatever on their favourite Celtic Gods, Goddesses, Mythical Heroes and Heroines, Fire Festivals and Solar festivals, Trees, Animals and anything else that is relevant to Druidry and the Southern Hemisphere. The site is still evolving, and hopefully always will be.

The site will have pages open for the general web surfers and pages that are password protected for members only so PLEASE! Make sure you indicate where you want your articles poems etc to go. Simply mark **For General viewing, OR Members only** when you send in your contributions.

Members who are not on line can access the site from the computers in their library and for those who want to contribute and don't have ANY access to a computer, don't despair! I will print the web page so you can see how your contributions look online, and send it with the newsletter.

Kathy from the Blue Mountains has sent in the seasonal correspondences for her area, these will eventually also go on line. Any members who want to add to this collation of local seasonal lore, please send it in, with pictures if you have them. We are starting to build up a good picture of the areas we live in, so we can go on to increase our understanding of the land as a whole.

### STORK TALES!



Kirsty gave birth to a beautiful boy in April,  
Congratulations Kirsty and Craig and little Grant, hope to see him at an Assembly soon.

Also on the stork front, the irrepressible Sandra Gossley is also expecting a little one from the 'otherworld' some time in August. Guess we wont be seeing her at this Assembly, but I guess the next Assembly will have to organise child care !

### ROBINS QUEST.

For those of us who know Robin from Nimbin, I had email from him this week. He is in the UK and is going to meet his son next week, who he hasn't seen for 28 years.

This is of course a very special time for him, and he has chosen to share it with us.

He is also hot on the trail of his Uncle who died in the Second World War, flying somewhere over France. This has been an ongoing drive for Robin, and one I am sure, that he will be glad to finish.

I am sure I can speak for those of us who have shared numerology, unicorn dreams and many good times with Robin at the first two Assemblies, and wish him well in his endeavours.

### MEMBERS SKILL SHARE

It has been some time since I have had any updates for Members Skill Share, could members please re submit details, so I can update that page. For the information of new members, Skill Share is a page where members can offer to sell or share resources with in the membership, e.g. incense, music, herbs.....please included all contact details

The next Newsletter will have to be out by the first week of September, as Wayne and I are driving across to WA which will take a few days, so please send in you articles early.

Serpentstar is a newsletter for the Australian and New Zealand members of OBOD. Opinions and statements by contributors are not necessarily those of the editor, or the Order. All submissions from members are welcome. The deadline for the next newsletter is the last week in August. Please send them to Carole Nielsen. P.O. Box 44 WINDANGE NSW 2528 or email [carole@zipworld.com.au](mailto:carole@zipworld.com.au) or phone (Australia) 02-4295-4213.  
Yearly subscriptions \$10.00 Australian payable to Carole Nielsen.





REPORT: ON THE VISIT OF EMMA RESTALL -  
 ORR, JOINT CHIEF OF THE BRITISH DRUID ORDER,  
 SYDNEY STAGE OF HER AUSTRALIAN VISITS.  
 (March 30<sup>th</sup> - April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2000) by Akkadia Ford

*A personal account* - I hesitated to write any reports of this visit, least the power and beauty of the Druidry, which Emma shared with us, not be adequately conveyed.

Emma visited our Grove and both herself and her son Joshua stayed with us during the week. Needless to say, both late- night and early morning discussions of Druidry flowed around the public events of her visit, the extremely well attended talk at the Theosophical society (over ninety people), the Saturday workshop and Tuesday evening talk and the climax of her visit, the ceremony shared with a small close-knit group of members on Sunday. But more about that experience later.

To say that Emma's visit refreshed my Druid-spirit is not an understatement. What a relief, to finally connect with a Chief Druid who is unashamedly magickal, wild and wise and who is unafraid to present Druidic teachings, devoid of contemporary Christian and psychoanalytic overtones, which are so alien to ancient Druidic thought and so unnecessary to its contemporary practices. Emma called in the spirits of Druidry during her visit: the ancestral, the earthly, the otherworldly; but most keenly felt was the point in the ceremony on Sunday when we avowed our Druid bond and closed the Druids Prayer with the "Mark of Spirits.....", acknowledging that there are many 'spirits' which over light and inspire the work, rather than there being just one.

On the Sunday, the ceremony was held in the beautiful National park, South of Sydney. Facing the elements (it rained heavily before we left for the venue, but was miraculously dry for the rest of the day!), we gathered, heart to heart and shared a beautiful ritual; we drank deeply of Awen that day and Emma graciously opened up new areas of Druid ritual for us.

At the culmination of the ceremony, Emma presented a Druid 'gold' to both Zan and myself, to thank us for hosting her Sydney visit, in an intensely moving exchange witnessed by the other ceremony participants.

It was with sadness that we waved Emma and Joshua farewell and hope that they will visit Australia again soon.

At this point, we would like to express our thanks to Ruiseart and Ceit, of Sgiath an Fhithich Grove in Perth, for their generous spirits in imitating Emma's visit to Australia and for being such a pleasure to work with on this shared tour.

We send goodwill to you both and know that the unity experienced from this tour will have lasting benefits for Druidry in Australia

In the Druid Bond  
 Akkadia.

## RECONCILIATION

No wonder it's called Rosella Tomato Sauce - they're that red, lined up on the wide rail. But their yellow-green wings can't be compared to any tree or grass, or even the ferns crowding up and over the high verandah.

They are unique, and have their own colour. Bright. Bold. In your face like the big Reconciliation badge I wear: red, green and yellow, black and white.

"Walking Together," it says. And we sit together, a circle of Australians, indigenous and non. We sit together talking, even after the last light strikes the opposite hill in a sudden blaze. We're dreaming up a monument, a reminder of who came first - something to touch, like the rock or tree that has always been the place to speak to ancestral spirits.

We dream it could heal all hearts. We invent phrases, like, "Walk with this spirit."

Somebody mentions earth. Grey beard, gentle eyes, brown face, a man of measured words.

"What do you mean exactly when you say earth?"

I ask, flushed and earnest, wanting to get it right.

"Australia? This bit of land? Or the whole planet?"

For the first time, he stammers. "All that. The earth supports us. She is our Mother!" His eyes fill with tears.

We fall silent. On the rail, the Rosellas jostle.

The forested valley begins to grow dark. We sit together, sipping coffee, watching one green patch of shared, beloved earth.

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Previously published in Footsteps: Newsletter of Australians for Reconciliation

### EMMA RESTALL ORR, JOINT CHIEF OF THE BRITISH DRUID ORDER'S VISIT TO SYDNEY.

Emma's first public appearance in Sydney was on Thursday the 30<sup>th</sup> of March, at the Blavatsky Lodge, Theosophy House. About 100 people turned up, only a handful from OBOD itself. The talk was titled 'Drinking from the Holy Grail,' and was an introduction to contemporary Druidry.

On Saturday the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, Emma held a full day workshop, from about 10am until 6pm. It was titled "Druidry - the Quest for Inspiration" About 15 people attended all helping to create a very memorable day. Over her time here, Emma spoke about the Druid tradition as she sees it.

It was very different to the ideas that are found in OBOD, both in the teaching material and the members with whom I have spoken. My impression of Emma and the BDO is that the focus is more on the quest for inspiration, and the tradition is more raw and earthy. Wild-wisdom. If anyone didn't get the chance to meet Emma while she was here, I would highly recommend one of her books that I have just finished reading, 'Spirits of the Sacred Grove'. Emma is an inspirational and passionate Druid, I hope that her visit to Australia helps to kindle more of that passion here.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank North East Arbor Grove for their time and effort in organising Emma's visit to the area.

Tom van Dooren.



## samhuinn on-line and a little bellydancing

I guess I got tired of having to celebrate the seasonal ceremonies alone. I wanted to share the experience with other Druids.

I have shared ceremonies twice with other Druids, at two of the Australian Assemblies, but most of the time I do it alone.

I have been a part of NOBOD, OBOD's electronic newsgroup for about five years now, almost as long as I've been following the Druid path. They celebrate the ceremonies on-line using the internet, but the problem is, most of them live in the Northern hemisphere so that doesn't really work for me. Then I thought "well, if they can do it, why can't we!" And last night, we did!

Well, two of us did anyway. A few others were invited, but didn't make it. So Carole and I met up using a program called MIRC. This was the first time either of us had done an on-line ritual, so we didn't know what it would be like. It turned out to be an amazing experience!

We followed the Order's alternate ceremony, each taking the parts of two elements, and typed in the words. As Carole typed, I could hear her voice speaking what she wrote! I closed my eyes and could see a vision of night, a circle with a roaring fire in the centre. I could feel others with us around the circle. When we finished, we gave each other a big virtual hug, and got out a bottle of virtual mead!

There was such a feeling of connection and ceremony that I hadn't expected to feel, after all, we were just typing words into two boxes of electronic wires. It was a very enjoyable (not to mention entertaining!) experience and I can't wait to do it again!

Carole and I were hoping to have on-line ceremonies for all of the festivals and also to start up an electronic mail-list for anyone who is interested in keeping up to date with OBOD and other events around the country. If anyone is interested in either, or both, of these please email me at: [negan@tpgi.com.au](mailto:negan@tpgi.com.au)

BTW, does anyone know if Phillip can bellydance? Can anyone reading this bellydance? I ask this as I am learning and was wondering if there is anyone else who can who is going to the assembly. Perhaps we could do a dance.

In the words of Carole, "Happy Samhuinn dreaming" everyone!

With magic,  
Sionnach (aka Ngaire Egan)

## SAMHUIN IN FERNTREE GULLY

Our Samhuin Ceremony began with the opportunity to offload.

The fire had been lit and each person had put some emotional effort into casting off whatever it was they did not want to carry with them any more, onto a strong stick selected for the purpose.

One by one we approached the fire and dispensed with our sticks and all that they signified.

This was done privately while the rest of the group sat around the table.

As each person emerged from the fireplace, they washed their hands and rejoined us. To fill the void left by this purification ritual, someone gently placed their Reiki-charged hands on them, thus balancing the energy and flooding the space with love and light.

When all felt ready we did the beautiful ancient ceremony for Samhuin, sharing our feast with the loved yet departed through the agency of the fire.

We even had two faithful old pets join us, which delighted their former keepers.

Afterwards we sat together and sang and told a story and then sang some more. It was windy but we were not at all cold.

From all of us in Melbourne, we hope that the rest of you had an equally blessed Samhuinn and have a New Year filled with wonder.

The date of our Winter Solstice Ceremony will be June 24, if you happen to be in our area.

Heather



## FOURTH NATIONAL O.B.O.D. DRUID ASSEMBLY GANIEDA SANCTUARY September 15

Philip Carr-Gomm will be our invited guest to the Assembly, and will be participating in the Healing intensive directly after the Assembly.  
(See below)

Assembly Theme: RECONCILIATION AND THE LAND

**We are druids.** Underneath our feet is an ancient heritage of wisdom and its magical expression looking out to distant horizons. We are called to reconcile this vast panorama to meet the challenges of time and place, holding to our wisdom yet allowing its expression to be both contemporary and visionary.

**Being druids in Australia.** The demands of the land appeal to an authentic and mature understanding of our tradition in Australia. The process of reconciliation calls for our attention not only between indigenous and migrant peoples, but also within druidry itself. Too often our contemporary tradition is beset by issues of power and politics, betraying secular views and restricted beliefs, which also ask to be addressed.

At the Assembly we will explore these issues with intelligence, humour and creativity. Ritual, ceremony, song, dance and discussion will be our means of expression. Be invited!

Cost: \$150 Deposit: \$25 (payable to Ganieda Sanctuary) Place: Ganieda Sanctuary, Albany, Western Australia Time: September 15th - 18th, 2000

\* All bookings by July 31<sup>st</sup> \* All participants are invited to offer presentations ...and following...

HEALING RETREAT and ESTABLISHMENT of the O.B.O.D. DRUID COLLEGE OF HEALING

**Immediately following the Assembly will be a gathering to explore healing as expressed within druidry.** We will review how current modes of therapy and medicine flow from our ancient shamanic roots and magical traditions, and what is relevant for a contemporary picture of health and healing within druidry.

**This will bring together to establish the O.B.O.D. DRUID COLLEGE OF HEALING of our medicine ways, ancient and modern with Philip here to preside over this Inaugural Gathering of Healers for the College and attendant Ceremonies.** From this basis and the existing Healing Network and practitioner directory, we will develop courses of teaching and training in health and healing practices.

This retreat is not simply for health practitioners. Healing is a metaphor; a search for quality, depth and meaning in life. Our understanding of such a Druid College is that it be for Visionary Practitioners of whatever persuasion; spiritual, philosophic and artistic.

For more details, please contact:





# The Wyeuro Circles

Carole was talking about the isolation of members from one another, and the funny expectations that you have of people you know only through Touchstone and Serpentstar.

You suddenly find out that, that something or other grove that you've envisaged as comprising at least a dozen people all regularly meeting together at every festival and birth, death, marriage and any other event, of community or cosmic interest, among majestic stones in wilderness so spiritual you could cry, are two people sharing a flat and doing ceremonies in the lounge room with the coffee table for an anchor stone.

It comes as a blessed relief when you do find out, and even leaves me a little surprised to find that the bigish ring of real stones I've been "Bard, Ovate and Druidising" in for the past four years, ranks as opulent (in a humble way) even though few stones in it are much larger than a human skull.

This being the case, Carole asked people at the Assembly last year, to send Serpentstar a description of their circle, which I'm now doing, so that we'll get a better sense of ourselves as a community, and be less anonymous to each other.

My circle consists of 12 smallish limestone rocks, some smooth, oolitic and clean which I suppose are feminine and others crumbly, amorphous and lichenized, which seem to be quite magical sometimes. They were collected from surrounding limestone flats in an attitude of respectfulness and care. There is one stone at each of the quarters, and two at each of the doorways between them. There is a largish female stone at the centre as the anchor stone, and two fires, one at the North and one at the South.

The whole circle is about ten paces across. There are outliers marking the solstices and equinox sun rises, and a smaller altar presided over by a small but superb male stone that serves as a focus for the spirit of the circle. I've recently added a large male stone in the South East, just out of alignment with the solstice stones on what appears to be the highest spot in the fairly level terrain inside the ring.

I'm currently fine-tuning this circle for work with the past and future, and with origins and fulfillments. Helen and I celebrate the eight fire festivals in this circle. We also celebrate a peace meditation every first Sunday in the month, to which we invite the spirits of the local area, and whoever else, to pray, meditate and commune together for the cause of world peace.

Since seeing, touching and working with the wonderful paramagnetic stones at Cooringal Grove last Alban Eiler, I've made a small ovate circle using stones brought from the nearby Barossa Valley – quite small stones, but very well energized and arranged as they are with a male and female (sandstone) stone in the centre (named Crom and Maith) they generate quite an amazing amount of a magnetic-like energy, which I am learning to direct for healing and reconciliation between systems in conflict.

I also use it for my ovate work in acting as a contact point for the beings of parallel worlds above and below us, and in contacting my spirit guides. I also do my mirror work there, contacting specific beings or just scrolling through, or else being contacted and instructed by the Sidhe and other guides.

Lately it's been my favorite place for just sitting in the sun; I talk all my sedentary activities out to it and sit beside it, Crom especially emanates an undeniably mindful energy towards me that feels like nothing if not love. He's also astonishingly beautiful in detail.

With the opening rains in April, Helen and I held a Blessing of the Plough ceremony there, each reading our parts from hand written scripts. A copy of the script follows. There was a real sense of the blessing flowing, but the really magical thing was an indescribable sense of contact, and a counter blessing that is still flowing into us from those we blessed, for blessing them.

That's our circles, until I get inspired to build a Druid Circle. As for our practice, we're fairly casual, we don't wear our robes, or dress up, we read our parts in the opening and closing etc. I normally bless the circle with fire, water, earth and air, using incense, river water, garden soil or red ochre, depending on my orientations and a pelican feather. (Pelican is a steadying influence on me, and a powerful medicine for my whole being) or an owl feather. (Owl is Helen's dreaming. Both were given to us by the spirits) to draw power from the air. The scripts for the eight festivals are the short versions supplied with the Bardic Gwersu; we divide the parts between us. I

I'm cautiously feeling my way towards modifying them for our local environment, without losing the specific magical qualities of the original. I do a lot of work in both circles alone. Helen likes to work mainly on the inner plane without too much reference to her surroundings in the apparent world, and so doesn't use the circles much for solitary work.

The trees surrounding us are mostly sandalwoods, melaleucas, wattles and waterbush, with patches of mallee, with wild olive (cattle bush) quandong and hop bush as well, sparse over the limestone and denser in the mallee.

Kangaroos, wombats, emus (now and then) and all kinds of birds, reptiles mammals and monotremes live out in the scrub, and often visit the circles.

The spirit world is very close here. It brims over with magic anyway, without any Druidic help. Turbulent and quarrelsome as that necessarily is at the moment, with our two main cultures, the European and the Indigenous Australian, in collision, there is a rapidly increasing feeling of great progress being made towards reconciliation and goodwill on that level.

Aboriginal spirit people often participate in our festivals, and made a magical contribution to our peace cauldron at our last peace meditation.

May the blessings of the spirits of our rings be on yours, the blessing of the Limestone, and of the Mallee and of the Mopoke Owl.

Vivienne ...





# Blessing of the Plough:

*(For two or more people)*

*Enter from the North. Make a gift to the Spirit of the circle and salute the South.*

- A.** I ask the Spirit of the Grove to bless this ceremony for the Blessing of the Plough.  
I bless this circle with earth (sprinkle topsoil)  
I bless this circle with fire (smudge circle)  
I bless this circle with water (sprinkle water)  
I bless this circle with air (pass feather over circle)

- B** Let the quarters be blessed:  
May the South be blessed; may the blessing of the Great Bear of the Starry heavens be on our ceremony for the Blessing of the Plough.

- A** May the North be blessed; may the blessing of the Great Stag in the Heat of the Chase be on our ceremony for the Blessing of the Plough.

- B** May the West be blessed; may the blessing of the Salmon of Wisdom, swimming in the Sacred Pool be on our ceremony for the Blessing of the Plough.

- A** May the East be blessed; may the blessing of the Hawk of Dawn, soaring in the Pure clear Air, be on our ceremony for the Blessing of the Plough

- B** Let us now say the Druid's Prayer.

*(Together say the Druids Prayer followed by three AWENS)*

- A** The rain has fallen; it has soaked into the earth and the farmers are ploughing the land, preparing the soil for this year's crops.

- B** May the soil and power of the resting earth be released into the living topsoil at the cutting in of the plough; may the ploughed earth be blessed.

- A** May the blessing and power of the fiery sun, the radiant light of the stars and the inner fire in the atoms and the slow, organic fire of the living soil be released into the earth; may the topsoil be blessed.

- B** May the blessing and power of the newly fallen rain, now within the soil, and of the water held chemically in minerals and organic compounds in the soil, be released into the new-made seed-bed at the falling of the rain and at the rise and fall of the diurnal tides in the soil solutions. May the germination of the crops be blessed.

- A** May the blessing and power of the air within the soil be released into the living soil ecology at the vibration of the farm machinery moving over the land: May all resonances be harmonic; may the structure of the soil be blessed.

- B** In all operations, may the opening of the season, and the opening of the rains, and the opening of the soil by the plough be blessed.

- A** Bless the plough!  
Bless the opening of the furrow!  
Bless the preparation of the ground; purify and heal it!  
Bless the sowing of the seed; purify and heal it!  
Bless the growing of the crop; purify and heal it!  
Bless the flowering of the crop; purify and heal it!  
Bless the pollination of the crop; purify and heal it!  
Bless the ripening of the crop; purify and heal it!  
Bless the harvesting of the crop; purify and heal it!  
Bless the cultivation of the land.

- B** Let the wind bless it, let the rain bless it,  
Let the sun bless it, let the moon bless it,  
Let the stars bless it.  
Let it be blessed from the earth and sky,  
From the air and from the waters.  
Let the spirits bless it, those of the land,  
Those of the air, those within and without.  
The Wanjinna, the elementals, ghosts and faerie,  
The devas, the gnomes and the gods in all worlds.  
Let Gaia bless it, and Satyrn  
Let Brighid bless it, and Bres  
Let Demeter bless it, and Pan  
Let Jesus bless it, and Selene  
Let the blessing flow!  
Let the ploughing of the land be blessed.

- A** Gods, Goddesses, and spirits of the land and sky,  
We pray that there be prosperity and healing and a renaissance of agricultural wisdom throughout the lands of the planet earth, for the good of all beings.

**A&B** AWEN, AWEN, AWEN.

- A** I give thanks to all spirits in all worlds who participated with us in our ceremony of the Blessing of the Plough, which I declare closed in the apparent world

*Unwind circle*







By Keith MacNider

Erich Fromm wrote in the 1950's that symbols were the 'forgotten language' of our civilization (then).

Well, since those day much has changed.

There has been renewed interest in intuition, in earth based traditions, in a sense of the Earth as something living, to be nourished and honoured and not just exploited.

Druidry forms part of that revival. Indeed, it seems very much a way of remembering - our roots through our ancestors - and, to borrow a phrase from John and Caitlin Matthews, a way of remembering the future.

Images and symbols go hand in hand; they form part of that language over which Fromm so perceptively mused.

Symbols are entrance points for working with images; the images provide the texture and terrain of and for deeper meanings, other layers of expression, some obvious, others hidden.

The rock paintings in France are rock paintings, yet much more; they invite us into the depths, the darkness - we must travel along and down into the recesses of the earth to view them.

The walk is a journey, a pilgrimage, an initiation.

The images found there stir us; in the flickering light of a flame they dance before us - light and shadow, mystery and uncertainty, edging us.

Do they - would they - have the same impact if we saw them as photographs in a book? Or as an image on a Tarot deck?

Meaning takes on context and context supplies meaning.

If we see a photograph of a Manhattan skyline, it might act as a symbol of our understanding of modern city architecture; or, especially, but not necessarily, if only American, our hearts might flutter as we look for the Statue of Liberty in that scene; or we may feel anger if we have been studying the history of indigenous peoples and lament the historical and savage transformation of a pristine landscape into a congested, polluted, noisy urban sprawl.

In other words, what we see tells us as much about us as anything else.

We, the viewers, are in turn opened for viewing.

We must enter into the image; again, the doorway is the symbol. It is also the point that marks transformation.

We can look at an image, a picture; we are - or can be - transformed somewhere along the way by a symbol.

When we work with images we are also working with and on ourselves; part of our history enters into the dialogue we establish between image and ourselves.

In working with the Celtic Tree Oracles, for instance, we can accustom ourselves to knowledge about tree types, habitat of tree, type of leaf and seasonal changes; that can be our book knowledge, if you like, but we can also enter into the tree, feel along the contours of its bark, the ribboned inside of its sap flow

When we look at the card (for example) we may notice a rigidity to its structure, or a shadow upon the trunk; we have to be alive to the contradictions we might find, as well as the points of congruity.

Working with images means developing and honouring our imaginations.

To return to the sap of the tree. We can't see the sap when we look at the Celtic tree cards; it is hidden. Most times we can't see tree sap, unless the tree is cut or sap weeps from a particular spot.

So generally we have to listen within for the sound of the sap, to sense how it may be flowing. Something of the picture of the tree might help.

Does the tree stand straight? Upright? Angled? Bent? We have to imagine what it may be like inside that tree.

Just as in our own lives, our deepest feelings rarely show (in most societies/groups), and how we really feel may be quite different to how we present our feelings (politeness). Often there is some self-censoring taking place. When we look at the picture/card of the tree, we can look here for shade, for shadows, for blemishes even, on the trunk of the tree (for example).

We can also learn more from looking at the structure of the image.

To return to the tree.

Several things immediately come to mind. Take, for instance, the leaves.

Are they sharp? pointed? rounded? thick? sparse? green? other colours? how are they in relation to the tree overall? in regard to a particular part of the tree? how much balance is there?

Do the leaves seem happy? are they hollowed? flat? angular? shaded? in the sun?

Do they point inwards? outwards?

Are they so shiny as to be reflective?

**Structure is vital**, not only for understanding the intrinsic energy of any particular object, but also for a sense of relationship.

Structure invites consideration of other, of relationship, of the link between one thing and another; or the opposite, the sense of apartness.

Trees are good metaphors for understanding this here. For they have the hidden - the roots (generally), the key part - the trunk; outlying features - the leaves or branches - all keys to working with images.

With the Celtic Tree Oracle and other systems of divination based on tree wisdom, we have a type of society, an ecology of groups, as it were; different terrain, different species, but all linked.

Apt metaphors for our own lives.







# BARDS CORNER

## Moon Time

OH MERLIN, IN YOUR CLOAK OF STARS

Oh Power! O Merlin in your cloak of stars!  
Your palms are zodiacs  
In your eyes lie snakes. In your ears  
Eternal winds. Your nose  
Filters the scents of heaven out of chaos  
Your tongue tells the wisdom of the worlds.  
Sieved through the zodiac webs of your  
palms  
Like fishes through nets.

How can I take them down to my wounded  
and cross-hatched palms, those stars? How  
can I step down my Satan's howl to a chining  
dream of hope or crown with a loving  
garland of healing herbs my well trained  
dragon,  
schooled in the ache of wisdom and  
the flowering death in which it's power is  
born?

Look how small I stand, Wandjuna, in the  
circle here.  
I am my craels.  
Look how the grinning west and the near,  
tears east and the menacing north  
Breath fire, sigh air, splash water in,  
And the stone-sullen south it is who captures  
me,  
Who pins my wings to the zodiac points of  
The wizards palm.

Vivienne

**Maiden moon**  
Young and innocent  
Shining timidly  
Not knowing her potential  
What she is to become  
She grows stronger each day...

**Mother moon**  
Full, pregnant, powerful  
She shines strong  
She knows her power  
Knows her strengths and weaknesses  
Knows what lies ahead...

**Crone moon**  
Wise, experienced, majestic  
Her light not as bright as it once was  
For her power is within  
Teaching those who seek her guidance  
Knowing that the end is but the  
beginning...

(I have to thank the person, not sure who  
it was sorry, who suggested the  
following chant to the full moon:)

**Full moon**  
**Crone moon**  
**Maiden, Mother, Crone**

I have been using this when I go to greet  
the full moon in all Her glory.  
It was partly the inspiration for the poem  
too.

**With magic,**  
**Sionnach**

## Magpie

Black and white feathers  
Soft beneath my fingers  
I hold you  
Our hearts beating faster  
Yours out of fear  
Mine from elation.

You flew into my window  
Stunned, you allow me to hold  
you  
A rare privilege  
I hold you close  
Calming you.

Around us, others wait  
To make sure their  
child/sibling is safe  
I assure them, and you  
That I mean no harm  
They call to you in loss.

My hands open, I let you go  
Flapping wings, you let me go  
too.  
(Claws holding fingers tight!)  
To rejoin your clan  
They gather around you in  
welcome.

I watch, happily  
You will live another day  
And I have experienced  
something special  
The touch of a wild creature  
In the morning, I will listen  
for your song.

Sionnach



## MEAD ALERT!!!!!!

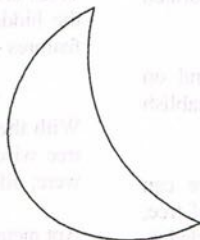
**Erratum re; Mead recipe in last Serpentstar.**

**Between steps 1 and 2 insert:**

**Step 1(A): Let stand overnight, covered!**

The honey soaked nuts are delicious. Our  
experiments with horehound and elder flowers have  
been resounding successes: make a strongish tisane  
of the herb and strain it - include about a litre of this  
in the water at step 1.

We'll be trying wormwood and tansy maybe, and  
some wall germander too if I can get hold of it - it's  
a lovely untamed herb that one. And then there are  
some fascinating wild flowers out in the scrub the  
mallee, the melaleucas the mistletoes....Vivienne



## WATER

**Water - the essence of life;**  
**Cool - crystal - flowing -**  
**floating;**  
**Dreaming - drawn to the moon;**  
**Immerse your body - relax;**  
**Mermaids - fish - creatures of**  
**the deep;**  
**Coral - shells - sand;**  
**Stepping out onto the rocks;**  
**Leaving the mysteries below;**  
**The wonder of water;**  
**The essence of life**



# Chosen Chief Celebrates Alban Arthuan in New Zealand

ALBAN ARTHUAN Aotearoa version  
OPENING

South, East, West and North outside room. South enters, lights candles and addresses assembled company:

## INTRODUCTION

South: By the power of star and stone,  
By the power of the land within and without,  
By all that is Fair and Free, We welcome you to this rite of the Winter Solstice in the Grove of the Summer Stars.

East, West and North enter

W: We - all of us - come together from East and West, North and South to be here today now, together. We stand strong here.

E: O Goddess, O Spirits of the Land, and of the People, and of this special place, we greet you and honour you, as we come together in this circle to celebrate this time of the Winter Solstice: Alban Arthuan in the Druid tradition, Hikumutu in the Maori tradition.

S: Let us mark out this circle our sacred space - with symbols of the season. (Children sprinkle seeds, and leaves in circle sunwise around participants while E says:

E: The circle of our horizon of our lives and lands, of time and of the year, of seasons and of goodness, of birth and of growing, of dying and of rebirth.

W: And now, within this circle we stand. Within this small circle that by magic has become the larger circle of our world, let us fill this realm with the power and the energy and the beauty of our love.

All hold hands and chant nine Cascading Awens

N: And may there be peace in every quarter:

Harp music as:

S: (turning to face outwards and raising right palm) May there be peace in the South.

N: (as above) May there be peace in the North.

E: (as above) May there be peace in the East.  
(All four then turn inwards)

W: (as above) May there be peace in the West

All: May there be peace throughout the whole world

N: May our realm be blessed by power of sun and moon! (One person takes candle around circle sunwise, while another sprinkles water around circle, counter-sunwise)



S: May our lands be blessed by Matariki Little Eyes the stars of the Pleiades, and by Puanga the bright star Rigel, and by Takurua, the dog-star Sirius.

W: And may the four directions be honoured that power and radiance might enter our circle for the good of all beings.

N: (turning to face outwards and raising right palm) With the blessing of the great stag in the heat of the chase and the inner fire of the sun, we call upon the powers of the North.

W: (as above) With the blessing of the salmon of wisdom who dwells within the sacred waters of the pool, we call upon the powers of the West.

S: (as above) With the blessing of the great bear of the starry heavens and the deep and fruitful earth, we call upon the powers of the South.

E: (as above) With the blessing of the hawk of dawn soaring in the clear pure air, we call upon the powers of the East.  
(Pause, all then turn inwards):

S: May the harmony of our circle and of our lands be complete.

## THE WORKING

West: We are met here in darkness on the longest night of the year to celebrate the birth of new light, the Sun Child, the Mabon in the Druid tradition. We come together to honour a great mystery - and to celebrate the beauty of light reborn.

East: The sun which has warmed and lighted us through the Wheel of the Year seems to stand still for several days. This is a time of living darkness.

South: We may feel this darkness permeating many areas of our lives, through fear, doubt, or loneliness. And yet in the still darkness, we become aware that the inner sun will rise again in our hearts, through the symbol of the birth of the Young One, the Mabon, who has been called Mithras, Christ, Arthur, Taliesin - those born at the time of greatest darkness.

North: Let the Sun shine upon Earth, that the Sun of Light may be reborn.

West: Let the Sun reflect in Waters, that their blessings be redoubled.

East: Let the Sun shimmer in Air, that breath may bring new life.



South: Let the Sun fire our minds, warm our hearts and light our spirit.

North: Let us witness the birth of the Youngest One, the Mabon, who from the womb of the Great Mother is born in silence and weakness as the smallest of lights.

West: But first there must be darkness.

East: Let the darkness of the longest night be felt. *(All candles are extinguished)*. Only out of darkness does light arise. *(Darkness for 5 or so minutes)*. With Meditation:

We allow ourselves to sink into the depths of the earth, deep into the darkness, where the crystals shine like stars in the night sky, where we let go of all our fears and anxieties, all our ill health and worries, resting in the warm dark earth that feeds and holds and nourishes us. Then we become aware of one tiny light in the darkness, in the centre of our being, the centre of the Universe, the galaxy. The light begins to shine.

South (lights central candle and says): I proclaim the rebirth of the sun in the Mabon of the year.

East: I proclaim the creation of all things, the revolution of all that is past towards a new good.

West: The child is born that grows into the great Og.

North: Twelve labours shall this child perform, and in the cradle their strength is already as the strength of seven.

West: Behold the halcyon bird sits many-coloured upon her floating nest. For fourteen days the seas run calm and she hatches her egg.

South: Sul, the mate and mother of Og, is as a ship in the sky awaiting him. She carries him upon his first pale voyage.

Mabon (picking up central candle): I come to this place as a child of future generations. My gift is the gentle flame of hope that each new life brings into this world. I, and those who follow me, ask that those of you who gave us life protect this sacred flame. You who are the earthly guardians of wisdom, unite together in peace and harmony to protect this planet, our home.

Mabon & Assistant: This we ask for the children of the world.

East: The great Yule of life is relit. Let all your lights be lit.

*(Mabon walks around the circle lighting each candle from his/her own flame).*

Harp plays.

North: See how from the one source of all Life, Light and Love, our own tiny flames have been kindled. Feel the strength of those flames united.

Within our daily lives, let us unite our thoughts and our actions with all those who work for peace in this world - with all those who work to build a safer environment for the generations to come. Pause

South: Here in Aotearoa, at this time of hikumu, or te maruaroa o te hotoke, the time of the changing of the sun takanga o te ra - the sun is returning to land, to dwell with the Summer Maid. The Sun God Ra begins his journey back to his Summer Wife, Hine-raumati. He has spent half the year with his Winter Wife, Hine-takurua, far out in the ocean. Now he returns to land, to Summer Woman once again, and we will soon feel his warmth on our backs and faces.

East: In celebration of this time, let there be Eisteddfod!

#### EISTEDDFOD

#### CLOSING

East: It is the hour of recall. As the fire dies down (here, if there is a fire, extinguish a brand; or extinguish candles, or let the lights be somewhat dimmed) let it be relit in your hearts. May your memories hold what the eye and ear have gained.

*(All hold hands in the circle. Pause for attunement, then East leads, all saying: "We swear by peace and love to stand, heart to heart etc." three times. Then 3 "Awens" are chanted.)*

S: Let the spirits of the Four Directions be thanked for their blessings.

E: In the name of the hawk of dawn and of the element air, we thank the powers of the East.

S: In the name of the great bear of the starry heavens and of the element of earth, we thank the powers of the South.

W: In the name of the salmon of wisdom and the element of water we thank the powers of the West.

N: In the name of the great stag and of the element of fire, we thank the powers of the North.

*(Pause. Then the four face into the circle again).*

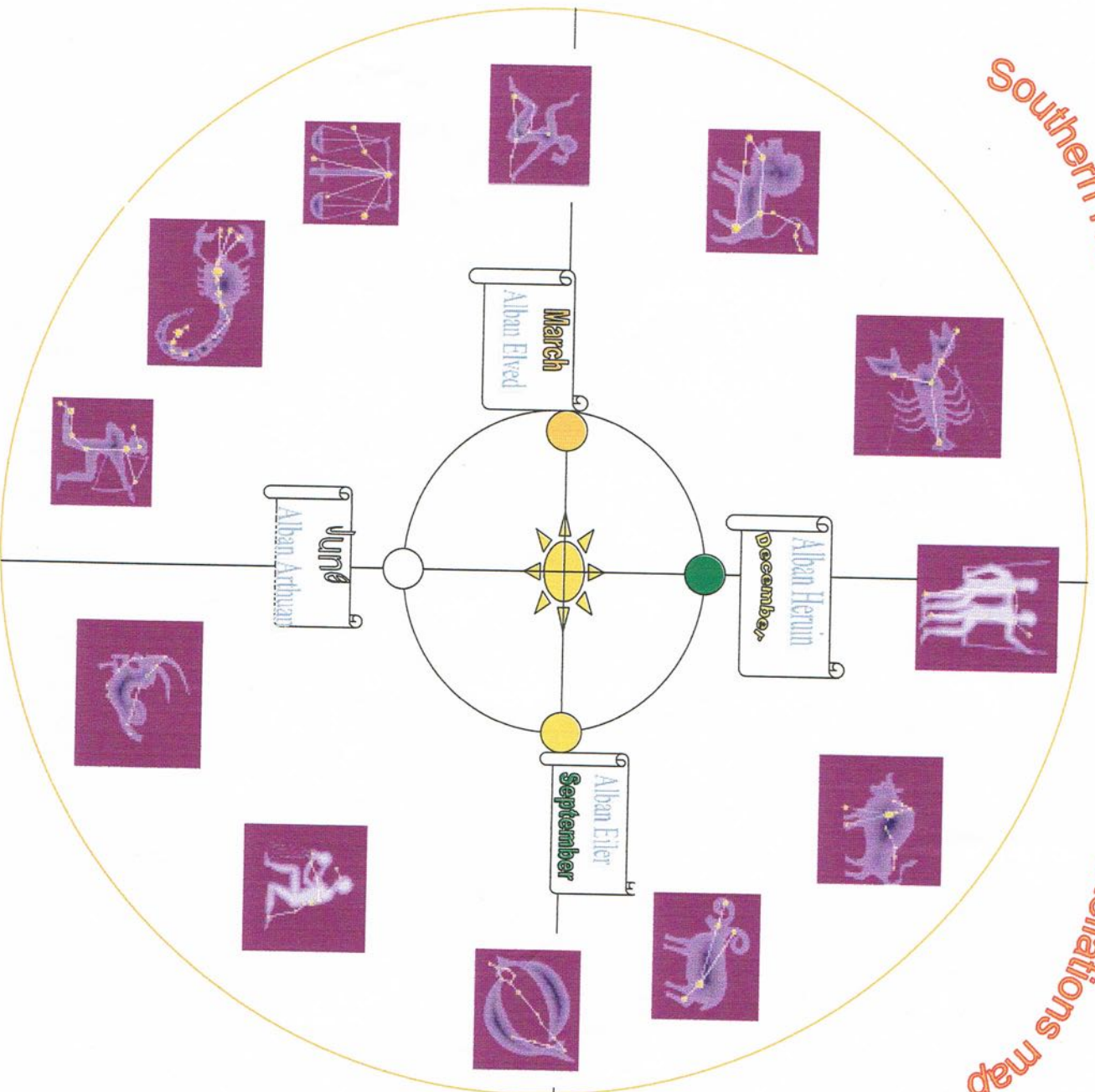
W: May the harmony of our circle be complete.

E: I now declare that this Festival of the Winter Solstice in the Grove of the Summer Stars is closed in the apparent world and in this Circle. May its inspiration continue within our beings.





# Southern Hemisphere seasonal night sky constellations map



## The July Luna Eclipse.

The eclipse is on then night c Sunday, July 16<sup>th</sup>. It is startin at 8.46pm. This will appear a partial dimming of a section of the Moon caused by reduced sunlight. The full eclipse start at 11.02 p.m. and continues until 00.49 a.m. in the early morning of the 17<sup>th</sup>.

During most total eclipses of the Moon the most spectacular views are the changing colour of the Moon, which can vary between orange and deep red, and usually the Moon never completely disappears. This is because even though the Earth blocks out all sunlight – as seen from the Moon- the glow from the Earth's Atmosphere, way beyond the edge of the Earth is sufficient to cause a colourful glow on the Moon. However, since totality lasts so long on this occasion, it is possible that the light from the Moon will completely disappear, find the Moon well before mid-totally at 11.55pm or you may not see it until post eclipse.

Carole/1