

# serpentstar



## Alban Eiler

**Newsletter for members of OBOD Australia and New Zealand Vol 2 No 4 1999**

**Hello everyone,**

Warm greetings from Cooringal Grove. It's not long now until the assembly and preparations are well under way for the event. Those of you who have registered would have received a rough demo tape and words to the songs that we are going to record for the CD. Please keep singing. The more familiar you are with the material the better. If you are planning on coming and have not yet registered in a written response, PLEASE DO IT NOW !!! It is extremely hard to organize catering and equipment when numbers are unknown.

\* The cost of the assembly is \$150 in total and is payable by the 15th of September. Those who have made a deposit, the balance is due also by this date.

On the replies for workshops - Everyone seems keen to make some herbal medicine. One week before the assembly I will dig up, chop and steep a big pile of Comfrey root so that we can make some ointment.

I am looking forward immensely to everybody coming here to Cooringal. Community is such a big part of Druidry and we have much to discuss and share as we discover the differences of working in the Southern Hemisphere. For most it is a solo journey due to the vast distance between us all here in Australia. The National Assembly aims to promote unity. For when we stand together in ceremony the day to day cloaks are shed and we unite in spirit with those who are walking the same path. Opinions, perceptions and judgments are irrelevant. We are one with each other and the universal and in this lays strength and the purest form of joy.

With Imbolc the energy changes. Everything starts to move in a natural flow. Over winter we hibernate and go within. This gives us the inner strength to then put forward our intentions in the spring. There is a sense of renewal, a sense of joy and of colourful movement. We only have to look around us and see the gardens, hear the birds to know there is this urgency to spring forth! Here at Cooringal Imbolc evolved beautifully. On a Sunday afternoon musicians gathered and played. We played the songs of OBOD. We jammed the spirit of spring and a group was formed to put down beds for the recording. It was magical.

The local people are looking forward to meeting more Druids. I am sure they are wondering, are they all like me. I haven't the heart to tell them ANYTHING !!! So this recording project brings also the feeling of the different ambassadors of Druidry coming together and demonstrating to part of the local community what we represent and a small taste of who we are. Through song we shall all form one voice. Druids and non-Druids alike, all creating sacred sound and having a good time along the way.

**See you there.  
Lesley**

***So here we are again, moving back into the light,  
and feeling again the warm mantle of spring  
creep across the land.***

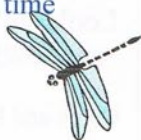
In Western Australia wild flowers spring out of the desert to carpet the earth. In NSW the Wattle is moving along the coast. Wattle is everywhere. As the fresh air of spring moves across the land, so does the Assembly. And this year the Assembly moves from the East to the Center of Australia to draw together members to meet once again or for the first time, in Druid community.

In such a big country as ours sharing and organizing such an event can be difficult. It may be that we will never be all together at the same time, but as the Assembly moves from state to state we will all have a opportunity to meet members, share ceremony and take part in initiations and celebrations.

For those who will not be able to attend, you will be remembered in ceremony, as we swear by peace and love to stand, heart to heart and hand in hand.

I see we now that we have a member in the Northern Territory, so that only leaves Tasmania as a state without a known OBOD member.

It also seems that we have another member from Briton is coming for a visit to Australia next year.....more about that inside...Carole/\







## GROVE EVENTS

### SGIATH AN FHITHICH

Hallo a h-uile duine (Hello everyone),

I decided that it's about time that I contributed something in regard to "Sgiath an Fhithich Grove", as we have been receiving rather a lot of e-mails lately requesting info.

"Sgiath an Fhithich" is an Independent Grove, affiliated to the British Druid Order, as well as the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids, and was founded by Ceit and myself about ten years ago. In the early days we were heavily influenced by "Wicca" and "Devon Craft", both of which we had been initiated into and practiced for many years. Our main interest however had always been Celtic/Druidic, and so that was the direction that we evolved into.

Our particular brand of Druidry has a distinctive Gaelic flavour (Scottish Highland language and culture being an integral part of the Grove), however we view this as a starting point, not a restrictive boundary, and people of all racial backgrounds are welcome. We believe, as do most modern Druids, that Druidry is now global, and therefore isn't restricted to people of Celtic descent. With this in mind, we have adapted our rituals and practices to suit the Southern Hemisphere, and Western Australia in particular, whilst maintaining our link with Gaeldom.

With regard to our practices, we celebrate all of the eight festivals, as well as holding regular Bardic, Ovate and Druid Grove meetings. Whilst our meetings are usually private, we do on occasion perform public rituals in an attempt to give those interested an opportunity to share in our tradition, and from time to time we give talks and interviews via the media.

In March, 2000, we will be hosting Emma Restall-Orr (Joint Chief of The British Druid Order) who will be doing a tour of Australia. She will be conducting workshops and seminars across the country, and anyone who is interested in attending any of these events should book early.

Well that's about it for now; anyone who would like to know more about "Sgiath an Fhithich", the B.D.O., or Emma's visit, feel free to contact Ceit or myself.

Beannachdan oirbh (Blessings on you),

Ruiseart,

Chief of "Sgiath an Fhithich Grove"

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## Ganieda Grove

## HEALING INTENSIVE

December 5 - 12

Place: Ganieda Sanctuary, WA

Philip Carr Gomm and Kennan Elkman are running a Healing Intensive at Ganieda Sanctuary in December.

The Intensive anticipates developing a network of retreats globally with their specific use for all aspects of healing work. In addition the Intensive is going to be a crucible for further courses in OBOD, particularly with relationship to druid shamanism.

Look out for details in the forthcoming Touchstone, or contact Kennan on [<elkman@healthquest.com.au>](mailto:elkman@healthquest.com.au) or 08 9844 6393.

Come and be part of the future!



# Brighid & the Fires of Love

Akkadia Ford 1999

## *There is a special place in my heart for Brighid-*

perhaps it is the ancestral call of her ancient fire blazing, that potent ashless fire tended by both female druids and by the goddess Herself, which reawakens in me an ancient urge to create. It is true that the lore surrounding the goddess' important ceremonial time of the year at Imbolc my sometimes be difficult for city-dwellers of the late Twentieth Century and in the Southern Hemisphere, to really grasp how our ancestors felt about that time. What follows is an attempt to harness some of the inner meanings of the outer symbols associated with Brighid and to reawaken the goddess' ash less flame within each one who also hears Her call.

Brighids' festival of Imbolc was traditionally celebrated during the month of February, under the auspices of the Ogham Luis (Rowan) and the fixed astrological sign of Aquarius. It is most important to take into account both the terrestrial and stellar lore associated with each of the festivals of our Druidic heritage.

Each one of the ceremonies of the Wheel of the Year is dynamically placed so as to take full advantage of powerful surges in energy, both upon Earth and in the Heavens and it is in the varying energies which each Festival present, that enables conscious renewal of participants in ceremonies in honour of these times

Due to our being in the Southern Hemisphere and because our seasonal cycle is at odds with the cycle in the Northern Hemisphere, many newcomers to Druidry and to other branches of the Celtic path such as Wicca, may have a tendency to want to celebrate all the festivals in the reverse of the Northern Hemisphere cycle, but without talking into account the subtle energies associated with the times.

Whilst reversing the Solstices and Equinoxes presents much less of a difficulty due to these ceremonies being conducted under the Solar ambience; the more subtle nature of the energies associated with the solar 'Cross-Quarter days' - what OBOD calls the 'Lunar-Fire festivals'- such as Imbolc do not so readily lend themselves to simple reversal of season

This due to these Festivals being aligned, not only to the cycle of the Sun, in its waxing and waning, but more importantly, to the stellar aspects associated with the constellation which the Sun is passing through at the time of the ceremony.

Each one of the four Lunar-Fire festivals is associated with one of the four fixed signs of the Zodiac: Imbolc - Aquarius; Beltainne-Taurus Lughnashad-Leo; Samhuinn-Scorpio.

When viewed in this light, it becomes more readily apparent that much of the symbolism associated with these four ceremonies is as much drawn from (and disguising) stellar meaning, in addition to the more apparent Solar import.

By simply reversing the timing of these ceremonies the inner stellar connections are most definitely broken and in some cases, the festival perhaps becomes inappropriate- an example being the difficulty of honoring the Goddess in Her ancient and death aspect (Scorpio) under the auspices of Her fecund and sexual aspect (Taurus)- which is precisely what happens when Samhuinn is celebrated in May.

A similar disjunction and disruption of the flow of stellar energy into a ritual takes place when Brighid's rite (usually an Aquarian influence) is celebrated in August (Leo).

From ongoing discussions with members of all Grades over the years and last two Assemblies, and also from discussions with practitioners of other magical traditions, one of the major questions, if not the first that gets brought into discussion, is whether to reverse the ceremonies or not to reverse them'.

This of course is entirely up to each individual and it is hoped that by such discussions and by different members sharing their knowledge of Druidry via articles such as this, that a deeper insight into potential answers may be uncovered.

As Druid Zan Hammerton, Co-chief of North-East Arbor Grove said in a recent conversation- "a decision we need to individually make, is whether we keep that direct connection with our ancestors and continue to perform ceremonies that were performed by them for the same reasons that they performed them- which may not have any direct relevance to our lives today- or, do we re-write the ceremonies so they have absolute meaning for us here and now?"

It is very important to the continuing development of an individual's esoteric understanding of the symbolism associated with the ceremonies that an attempt to explore the less obvious is made.

It is also true, that its because the Sun is so bright that it obscures the more subtle stellar lore from view - and this is rightly so- at first\_ and whilst it is appropriate to acknowledge the Solar aspects of the ceremonies, this should not be to the detriment of acknowledging and working with the related aspect.

It is perhaps because we celebrate all our public ceremonies in the Grove of the Bards - a Grove particularly related to the Sun (i.e. Outer aspects of Druidry), that members may not work with the more subtle stellar aspects.

With the growth of Ovates and Druid grade members in Australia, the time is now presenting itself to initiate discussion of more inner ways of working with the ceremonies and understanding of their symbolism, fully in accordance with the energies and teachings of the Ovate and Druid groves of the Order and our ancestral Druid heritage.

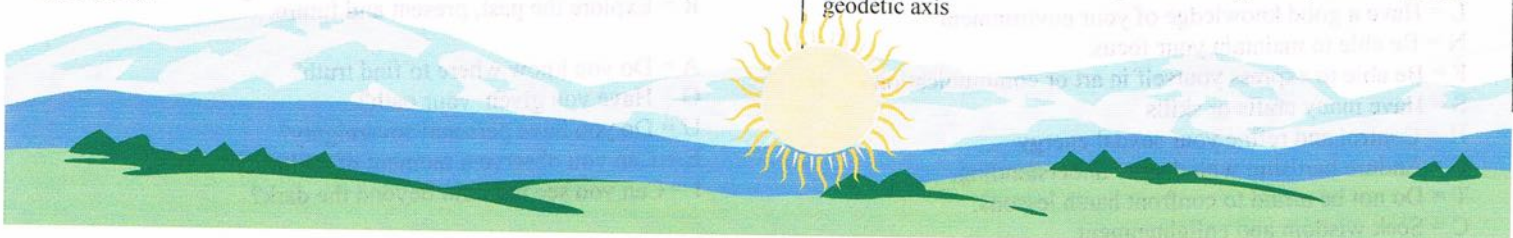
Which brings us back to Brighid and Her lore.

It was anciently said that Nineteen Druid Priestesses tended the eternal flame of the goddess at her sanctuary at Kildara in Ireland, also called Cilla Dara 'The Church of the Oak Grove' (from Cill 'Church' & Dara or as we would, Duir, 'the Oak')

The name of Brighid's place resonates strongly of its ancient Druidic importance and the current St. Brighid's Cathedral is built on an ancient axis of the Midwinter Sunrise. "there her cult took its Christian form on a prehistoric foundation. Out side the North Wall of the Cathedral, the substantial footings of her cell, a Christian fire church, are preserved, where the 'eternal flame' which survived until 1530 opens" (1). Brighid's flame has been relit in Kildara by two Christian nuns in recent years, who obviously feel the Goddess warmth in their hears,

Importantly, this midwinter Sunrise axis continues on and thirty-seven miles later cuts into the south side of the tallest mountain in Leinster, called Lugnaquilla (2)

That this is a mountain associated with the harvest Sun-God Lugh and the opposite festival of Lughnasad is apparent, as is an ancient geodetic axis





**That nineteen Druid Priestesses tended Her flame is significant.** It was said that for each of the nineteen nights one of these dedicated women would stand guard in sacred vigil over the flame, to prevent it dying out; but on the twentieth night, they would all gather and offer a prayer to Brighid. "this is your night Goddess to keep alight your hearth". (3)

Within this number, movements of both the Sun and Moon are symbolized. The Chosen Chief, Philip Carr-Gomm alluded to some of the significance of the number nineteen esoterically at the Second Australian Druid Assembly, in his talks on the lore of Taliesen and the Cauldron of Cerridwen. Suffice to say, the seemingly genteel activity of tending an ashless fire, has other more dynamic implications.



This becomes much more apparent when the ancient Irish Gaelic lore and language surrounding the sacred occupation of Smith craft is taken into account. It is perhaps not coincidental that the work for sword, colg also may be translated as a phallus. (4). Through extended meditative research, and through guidance of the Lady Herself, I have come to the conclusion that part of the ancient Mysteries of Brighid, that have been 'lost' due to the break in oral transmission, have to do with tending a fire of love.

The art of Smithcraft, of which Brighid is Patroness-Goddess, is the outer and secular form of the ancient alchemical art. Thus the 'sword a life-blade in its literal sense, was 'forged' in the 'hearth' of the Goddess Herself.

When considering an ancient Celtic custom, that the woman armed the young male with his weapons ( an example being the tale of Arianrhod and the arming of LLeu in the Fourth Branch of the Mabinogion); one begins to detect perhaps, an ancient lore concealed beneath: of an initiation into manhood of a far more inner kind, whereby the lore of life of the eternal flame of the Goddess passed from an older Druid Priestess to a younger initiate.

It is not coincidental that those responsible for giving birth to each generation were also in charge of instructing the sons in how to defend that generation. Those who give life are more reluctant to take it. Perhaps this is also one reason why the nineteen female Druids dedicated to Brighid lived in seclusion; to maintain the sanctity of the 'flames' and thereby potentise them.

That Brighid's fire is ashless is worthy of meditation in this regard. It is notable that amongst the 'fires' we revere in contemporary druidry is the 'fire of creativity' and anciently Brighid was also considered to be the patroness of creative activities such as the Bardic Arts of poetry, music and song. This brings consideration of the role Brighid plays with regard to all the arts associated with language in general, including speech the magick of invocations and works of evocation, spell-krafting and oath-taking.

This is particularly important, for the satire of the ancient poets contained a baleful magic, much as their beneficial songs gave forth magical blessings. The interlocking of the two areas of inner fire and outward expression are thus seen to be harmoniously balanced with the lore of Bride.

### **Thirteen Useful Skills for a Bard. By Loel MachOlbin.**

- B = Learn how to sustain yourself, survival is the first barrier
- L = Have a good knowledge of your environment
- N = Be able to maintain your focus.
- F = Be able to express yourself in art or communication
- S = Have many crafts or skills
- H = Control and refine your sexual energy
- D = Endure hardship with deeper understanding.
- T = Do not be afraid to confront harsh lessons.
- C = Seek wisdom and enlightenment

The celebration of Imbolc, connected as it was to the birth of new spring lambs and fresh milk following the first rains after winter, reveals the aspect of Brighid connected to the renewal of life and also, her connection to fertility magic.

This aspect of the goddess was celebrated by the decoration and adorning of local wells and the giving of offerings of new milk and white cloths left outside to collect the dew on the Eve of Imbolc. It is through such ancient offerings, that part of the symbolism of Imbolc and the connection to the sign of Aquarius and Ogham Luis is revealed.

From Babylonian times, the sign for Aquarius has always been a human figure holding a large urn, or vessel of water, from which the waters flow forth freely. In ancient minds what this symbolizes was also seen in a humble well - a source of life-giving water for the living. This connection to water is also evident from the song of Amergin, where the time in which Imbolc falls is called 'I am a wide flood on a plain'. (5) Interestingly, we still use the ancient Egyptian hieroglyph for water as the glyph for the sign of Aquarius.

This connection of water and wells, milk and dew, all live giving fluids of both element, animal and plant, find their symbolic counterparts within the human body. the connection of Brighid to human fertility is most apparent in the continuation of the custom of honoring women who have just given birth through the lighting of candles (Candlemas).

However, Imbolc falls under the auspices of a celestial vessel and stellar waters. These are the waters of wisdom and a key to the connection of Imbolc to this sign, is that what the individual receives through the tutelage of Brighid is to be given forth freely to benefit others.

Brighid, Patroness of many arts : both Bardic-smithcraft music, poetry and song: Ovate - in the use of healing plants and tinctures, and Druid - in the understanding of the appropriate use and direction of life energies; can thus be appreciated as a wise and beneficent Goddess, whose lore brings birth joy, healing and indeed, ancestral wisdom for modern-day practitioners.

Her protective influence around the path may be felt through the Rowan Ogham and similarly, the 'weapons' we are armed with in Her service.

- 1 DAMES, Michael 'Mythical Ireland' Thames and Hudson Let. London, 1992.p.231.
- 2 Ibid.,p232
3. Teaching From a contemporary Australian Priestess of Brighid within the Fellowship of Isis, 1993
- 4 DAMES,op.cit. p110
5. NICHOLS, Ross. the book of Druidry. the Aquarian Press, London, 1990, p290.



- M = The Bard's knowledge comes with divine inspiration
- G = Uphold the living law
- NG = Sacrifice what is necessary for the common good
- R = Explore the past, present and future.

- A = Do you know where to find truth?
- O = Have you given your oath?
- U = Do you have personal sovereignty?
- E = Can you observe a moment of stillness?
- I = Can you see the light beyond the dark?



## Solar System by Alice Portman



To most astrologers, the solar system appears to be one entity, with the Sun as the nucleus or heart and the planets similar to the chakras or glandular points we have in our bodies.

The solar system is not made up of just the planets. There are a number of comets, the asteroids, the moons of each planet and great flows of tidal energy, just like the flow of blood in a human body.

If you think of the Solar System as one entity, then it is not going to be difficult to realise that each of us on earth are going to be very strongly influenced by everything that goes on in the Solar System, because we are a part of the Earth, probably the 'conscious' antennae of the Earth. The Earth is a part of the Solar System and everything that affects our planet affects us. As the Earth (and us) vibrate and respond to the activity in the Solar System, the Solar System vibrates and responds to the activity in the galaxy, because the Solar System is also part of the larger flow of the galaxy.

For many centuries astrologers have recorded how the planetary and star energies work in the differing cultures on earth. There has been written, or recorded, information about astrology way back to the Sumerian culture - the earliest culture of which we have any record. In every culture, in every part of the world, in different ways, shapes and forms, these records have been kept. Even our own Koori cultures have a very profound knowledge of astrology, which they record through their own symbology.

When we are born and take our first breath, we are imprinted with the energies on earth and in our Solar System and indeed our galaxy. Astrologers feel that the imprint is received through our blood and glandular system. On that first breath we are sensitised to that moment and are magnetised to certain energy patterns.

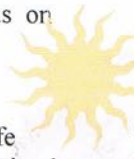
This pattern is like a seed which is ours to use and grow with and develop through our own creative energies. How each individual chooses to develop their own "seed" of energy depends upon the nature of their eternal soul and their own individual choice, but the type of life will be set at the first breath.

For example, if you are imprinted with an overall dynamic energy pattern, you will lead a very active, dynamic and somewhat aggressive life, and if you are imprinted with an overall flowing energy pattern you will live life in a harmonious and cooperative way. How you choose to use your dynamism or how you choose to use your harmony is really your own decision.

For this series of articles I will cover each of the planets in our solarsystem and how they are likely to affect us on earth in our particular culture of Australia.

### THE SUN

The Sun is the centre of our Solar System. It is our life energy. Without the Sun we don't live. There is no life in the Solar System without our Sun burning merrily away.



The cultures of the world record the Sun differently according to whether it is in a hot climate, like India or Arabia or whether it a cold climate like Europe. In the hotter climates the Sun is considered a malefic (i.e. bring problems), because the Sun just burns, and burns all day and it gets extremely hot and uncomfortable.

In the colder climates the Sun is considered a benefic (it brings benefits and good fortune), because it brings warmth and freedom to cold and icy environments. The temperate climates like the Mediterranean, Australia and New Zealand have a happy, balanced and pleasant view of the Sun. So one of the first considerations in looking at an astrological chart and deciding how that person's Sun is working, is to determine whether the person's ancestors came from a hot country, a temperate one or a cold one.

The other important factor in working with Sun energy is to determine whether you are born in the day or the night. If you were born after the sunset you may have a more contemplative nature. If you were born during the day with the Sun is sitting up there in the sky, you will need to go out and shine in your own right.

The season you were born into is also very important. For example, if your were born at night in the summer in a very hot country, The Sun would still have a pleasant feel for you, because the evenings would be cooler. If you were born during the day in the winter in a very cold country, you would also benefit from the Sun as it would bring a little more warmth.

The Sun is considered the ruler of Leo and the 5th segment of the chart. In the northern hemisphere, the sign Leo is in high summer and brings much needed warmth to many countries. In our own country of Australia, the sign Leo is in winter, so it has a different effect on us. The difference in the way the signs of the zodiac work in the northern hemisphere and the southern is very interesting and may be the subject of a future article.

The Sun is at home in the sign Leo - this is called "dignified" in astrology. It works beautifully in Aries and this is called "exalted". It does not work so well in Aquarius because Aquarians tend to be group or community oriented people, and does not work at all well in Libra as Libra wants to cooperate all the time and the Sun likes to be the centre of attention. It will not bring harm to Aquarius or Libra, it just means that the nature of the Sun does not work very well in these two signs and does work well in Leo and Aries.

Though because the sign Aquarius is in high summer in the Southern Hemisphere and Libra is the beginning of spring, I don't think there is anything like the demarcation that there is in the northern hemisphere; many Aquarians "shine" very well here.





After they overcome their initial shyness, most Leos and Sun people will gravitate to prominent positions in society - my eldest son started early, being captain of his team at school for most of his primary years.

You will find the monarch or ruler of a country fits the solar energy well, as do theatrical and movie stars. Interestingly, doctors, surgeons scientists, writers and poets also have a strong solar energy, particularly those who are noticed and given honours. It is a very creative sign and planet.

Their best qualities are leadership, warmth, loving, generous, devotion, loyalty. They want love and will give love and if you give them the attention and love they want they will be totally loyal to you. They have to shine. They are inspirational people, have tremendous courage and are very, very creative. They will never forgive you if you make fun of them or put them down in public.

If the solar energy is malfunctioning it can become very nasty. The person becomes haughty, narrow minded, insensitive, dominating, very vain and short tempered. They can also lack vitality. Solar people will be noticed one way or another, either for their nastiness and bad temper or for their creativity.

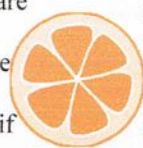
The physical appearance of a person is usually determined by the rising sign (ascendant). However, people with a strong Sun or the sign Leo often have honey-coloured eyes, a large or round face, their nose is often like the shape of a lion and they have lighter coloured hair. If they are born with darker hair, they will lighten it. The hair often looks like a mane. They have a very dignified walk - there is no slouching with a solar person. They love jewellery and furs if they are a woman, they will wear synthetic furs if they can't wear those stolen from animals. The body is usually very strong, though only of average height. Some southern hemisphere Leos are small and dark in colouring.

The heart is the physical organ that will need the most care, and it is important to the Sun and Leo to be loved and loving. They will get heart attacks if they are not loved or not having any enjoyment in life. They will also need to take care of the spine. One of the smaller signals that the life is not working properly is biliousness. They will burp and have indigestion if life is not happy. The Sun is also connected to the right eye of the male and the left eye of the female.

The Sun and all the planets also have numbers, colours, gems, herbs, countries and cities etc that are particularly resonant with them. Of course, the number of the Sun is number 1.

The colours that resonate with the Sun are all the colours of the sunset and sunrise, and particularly gold. There are the beautiful oranges, reds, magentas, pinks, etc. Perhaps you remember the Orange People, who only wore the colours of the sunrise and sunset.

I always felt they wanted to bring the life energy back to the earth, as the earth seemed to have lost all its joy and spontaneity and had become stuck in a very rigid community kind of set.



If you feel you are also lacking in joy and life, it is a very good idea to wear the colours of sunrise and sunset as this will encourage the fun and joy of life. It is very important to have your personal solar energy working well. Without it there is no joy in your life, you don't see life, its energy, all you see is duty. You must have the enjoyment of life to live. Otherwise you just become a copycat.

People who use their solar energy well are warm, others are drawn to them and flock around them as though they are little mini-suns shining. If the solar energy is not used well people will ignore you or sometimes actually run away from you, because they can feel your rejection of life.

The Sun's vitamins are A and D. You will find all those lovely glowing vegetables like carrots, pumpkins, sweet potato etc all have lots of vitamin A in them.

The Sun's gemstone is Ruby. This is the case in both tropical and sidereal astrology. The reason why you use gemstones is that if you are wearing it, aurically the stone makes you reflect the colour of the planet.

With the Ruby, your aura will reflect the gold of the Sun, which draws the life energy to you. If you can't afford rubies, purchase ruby coloured cellophane, wrap it around a jug of clear glass filled with water and put it outside to catch the rising sun's rays. Drink the water before breakfast. The water with the sun's rays going through that ruby red will increase your ability to enjoy life. You can also wear garnet as that too can increase your response to the sun.

The flowers of the Sun are all the golden flowers that follow the path of the Sun e.g. sunflowers and marigolds. It is always fortunate to have these lovely golden flowers growing in your garden, your eyes are enlivened by them whenever you look at them. Trees are orange trees, lemon trees (and their fruits). Palm and Laurel trees. The best foods to enliven the sun in you are honey, grapes, citrus fruits and red and gold vegetables.

Countries and Cities: Well the whole of the middle and eastern side of Australia has a Leo Midheaven with a Sagittarian Ascendant. The western side of Australia has a Cancer Midheaven with a Scorpio scendant. So much of Australia resonates to the signs Leo and Sagittarius and is one of the reasons we are called the "lucky country".

Other countries that carry a strong Leo energy are Southern France, Italy, Romania and Sicily. These people can really have fun. They will have gatherings and parties at the drop of a hat and have a wonderful time. Most of these countries are of a temperate climate with plenty of sunshine. Los Angeles is a Leo city, as is Rome.

The day of the Sun is Sunday. This fascinates me as I was supposed to write this article yesterday (Saturday), but circumstances made it impossible, so here I am writing it on the day of the Sun.

If you know your astrological chart, the sign and house the Sun is in is where your life force resides. It is important to find enjoyment and pleasure though these placements or else the whole of the rest of your chart will not work as well.



## Essences for the Journey.....4 and final



Here are the counsels for the last four months of the lunar year.

### Lunar month 10

Giant Honey Myrtle is for the Counsel of Clarity

Colour: Cream. Musical chant ("Om") A

This essence connects at our 10th Chakra and 6th or third eye chakra of our physical body, situated in the centre of the forehead and associated with perception, discernment and clairvoyance.

Physical connections: pituitary gland, left-brain hemisphere, central nervous system.

Imbalance is linked to nervous upsets, eye and vision problems, headache, sinusitis.

Psychological influences: clarity and insight, interest in spiritual issues.

Imbalance is linked to confusion, poor memory, inability to focus, paranoia, detachment from reality and, in severe cases, schizophrenia.

Astrological connection: the planet Neptune, which represents both the spiritual urge and the escapist urge; it represents your wish to fool yourself and your creative and intuitive capacity.

Devic counsel (Waxing/active phase)

Overseeing Deva: Hi-Ante

We draw out all negative energies, rather than bringing these energies up for you. We allow you to perceive things from a greater angle, with tremendous Clarity. We always work towards truth, harmony and peace. So go with us little ones of knowing, lightness of being, and strength of character. You know this, but often you allow other influences to impede your view. Trust in all but above all trust in yourself, for this is Clarity.

Tree Spirit Counsel (Waning/integration phase)

Tree Spirit: Iti-Ate

I am the one who gives you free thought, space to move, Clarity to be. My counsel is this: we all need to switch off from our roles and commitments. I can help you to go within and find yourself as you never dreamed you are. We are all here for the one goal, and that is to be as one in the Mother's image. Then you can find that Clarity from within.

Realisation:

Visualise my wonderful cream hue. Ask for immense space around you, drawing you closer to your innermost feelings. Be aware of another around you, overseeing and guiding you. Wait for the words to come; feel their comfort and trust. Knowing your self is a journey of trust, and from your self you will always find Clarity. This is my counsel. Go in peace.

Affirmation:

I trust in my self; my goals are Clear.

### Lunar month 11

Silver Banksia is for the counsel of Protection

Colour: Deep Cadmium Yellow. Musical chant ("Om") A#

This essence connects to the 11th chakra and relates to the 3rd or solar plexus chakra. Situated above the navel, this is the seat of the emotional personality.

Physical connections: adrenal glands, solar plexus, spleen, stomach, pancreas.

Imbalance is linked to nervous stomach, anorexia, diabetes and blood glucose problems, anaemia, allergies, obesity, as well as liver, adrenal and spleen problems.

Psychological influences: feeling empowered and being in control.

Imbalance is linked to addictive and compulsive behaviour, excessive anger and fear, manic depression, sleep problems and all kinds of psychosomatic conditions.

This essence attunes and aligns to the higher, finer vibrations of the 4<sup>th</sup> dimensional energy flow, thus allowing connection to our creative soul-self

Astrological connection: the asteroid Diana, giving us connection and the capacity for survival and self-protection. This is a transformer energy between the lower octave planet Mars and the higher octave planet Pluto, the universal principle being Power.

Devic Counsel (Waxing/active phase)

Overseeing Deva: Silvi-Ton

We help to keep your energetic at just the right frequencies for healing and balance.

We are known as the Light Workers, sending out light frequency not only to you but to help all elements call in the colours they need for growth.

We are a positive force, always working with the total picture. We allow pure vibrations to help those who are blocked, releasing fear, hurt and pain arising from trauma of all kinds.

This gives you Protection whilst releasing these feelings. We allow you to "see the light"! So visualise us surrounding your aura in silver so you can ingest positive thoughts.

Tree Spirit Counsel (Waning/integration phase)

Tree Spirit: La-Ge

I am the one who creates a safe environment for those in my kingdom by making a balanced and healing space for growth. Draw me into your very being, hold me close to your heart, allow my leaves to cover you from head to toe in silver glow. I am the one who allows Protection and safety to come.

This is my counsel. I can keep you safe as you open your heart and soul to our kingdoms. You may feel uncomfortable doing this at come. This is my counsel. I can keep you safe as you open your heart and soul to our kingdoms. You may feel uncomfortable doing this at times, so remember me.

Realisation:

I can give you the feeling of cleansed newness. I use my brush to sweep your aura with downward spiralling motions. I can clear and Protect.

Remembering that clarity and balance can only arrive when you feel totally safe to be, allow me to create with you the Protective force of light and newness, to work with nature. Visualise this.

Affirmation:

I feel safe and Protected in my own space.





## Lunar month 12

River Red Gum is for the Counsel of Lightness

Colour: Ruby Red. Musical chant ("Om") B

This essence connects at our 12th chakra while relating to the 7th or Crown chakra. Situated at the crown of the head, this is the seat of consciousness.

Physical connections: pineal gland, right-brain hemisphere and the ancient mammalian brain.

Imbalance is linked to migraine headaches, pituitary problems, epilepsy.

Psychological influences: intuition, to be open and have faith, connection to higher energies or realms.

Imbalance is linked to being gullible, having nightmares, having multiple personalities, being spiritually closed off.

This essence attunes and aligns to the higher, finer vibrations of the 4<sup>th</sup> dimensional energy flow, thus allowing connection to our creative soul-self.

Astrological connection: the asteroid Icarus, the Liberator, giving us the capacity or liberation and risk-taking. This is a transformer energy between the lower octave planet Mercury and the higher octave planet Uranus, the universal principle being Wisdom.

Devic Counsel

Overseeing Deva: Gy-Go

We are here to help Lighten your way. When you feel confused or weighed down, we allow you to draw laughter and Lightness to yourself, so that clarity arrives. Lessons should never be a burden, so stop, go within, and allow your emotions to rise with humour and Lightness. We are always imparting wisdom that is at hand for you to use. We ground you, but we give you strength to face yourself and your issues. Always keep an open view and never feel afraid to laugh at yourself!

Tree Spirit Counsel (Waning/integration phase)

Tree Spirit: Gam-Bo

Weightless joy arrives through me. I can see you as you truly are. I now show you Lightness. My counsel is remembering that you are so Light really, but your thoughts tend to weigh you down. Find the humour in things. Opportunities will arise if you draw my energy to you.

Realisation:

Call me when it is tough, for I am the wise one who has seen, and knows nothing should be that serious or hard. I will bring you to your real senses by the laughter from within. I am grounding yet confronting, as you will truly find. Give yourself a gift of joy, and in the Lightness comes wholeness. Visualise this.

Affirmation:

I feel Light and full of joy.



## Lunar month 13

Victorian Christmas Bush is for the Counsel of Union

Colour: Leaf Green. Musical chant ("Om") C'

This essence connects at our 13th chakra while relating to the 7th chakra or Crown Chakra, situated at the crown of the head: the seta of consciousness.

Physical connections, psychological influences and imbalances - as for Lunar month 12.

This essence attunes and aligns to the higher, finer vibrations of the 4<sup>th</sup> dimensional energy flow and more, thus allowing union with our Soul-Self and Source.

Astrological connection: the Planet Uranus and the universal principle of Wisdom.

Devic counsel (Waxing/active phase)

Overseeing Deva: So-Haw

We bring you the gift of eternal life, where there is no beginning or end, just one continual flow. This is our gift for all of humanity to enjoy.

We help you to focus as One, remembering that you are all gifts and that you have a lot to share with all your loved ones and all living things. Keep this in mind when you are feeling lost or alone, as the gift is ever-flowing. There is no way to turn it off. We help you to build your goals and strengthen your soul's focus. Know that you are never alone and that you are supported by all, in all that you think, say and do.

Tree Spirit counsel (Waning/integration phase)

Tree Spirit: Jal-Ute

My tree is of great enthusiasm, in that it keeps you nurtured – reassurance that there is protection, security, and all the things that make you feel full of wellbeing. This is what we want you all to concentrate on, being able to draw on the energy of my tree. To do this, focus on that place you go to for serenity. Visualise your garden or beach, or even the womb, wherever you are safe. Imagine you are greeted by someone or something that is special to you. Allow them to take you on a journey through the nature kingdom. Now you are home; familiar people, places, things to greet you. You do not speak, but all are able to know just what you are thinking. You are related to many living things on this earth.

Realisation: Remembering this is the gift: that you are all separate and whole. Give yourself that chance to call all your friends to you at that safe place that is home. Know that there are others too from many worlds sharing in this, and that the universe is always flowing within your very being. Go as gifts, sharing and caring in humanity.

Affirmation: I am One with the All That Is.

NOTE.

This is the final installment of the Essences for the Journey. I am sure we would all like to thank Rosemary for making this available to use through our Newsletter. As Rosemary has indicated in an earlier Serpentstar, for reasons of space, the identification details for each tree have not been included, nor an in-depth look at the essences healing properties.

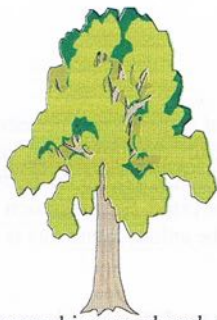
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# Druidry: Inspiration, ancient & modern

By Emma Restall-Orr

**A young man**, his eyes closed, sits on the thickened gray roots of an old beech tree. His head is tilted a little to one side, swaying as if to a rhythm he hears inside. He frowns, tensing, moving a little forward, as though hoping to hear more clearly the subtleties of a melody, and a smile touches his lips. Half opening his eyes, he reaches into the pocket of his jacket, moving his feet an inch or so, his walking boots digging very slightly into the muddy ground, and he lifts the tin flute to his mouth, closing his eyes again, breathing in as if he were preparing to sigh. He starts to play, and as the notes rise in the soft autumn sunshine another leaf comes drifting down, almost weightless in the hint of a breeze.

**An image of a Druid.** Let me offer another, of a fire burning, orange gold flickering in a large wide iron-black dish, open to the night's dark sky, flames only occasionally breaking through the crust of ashen wood, a lick of yellow heat reaching up the edges as if surreptitiously playing, as three women move without a sound, their bodies swaying, twitching, tensing, then floating again as if the chill wind were warm dark water. Around them are stones, chunks of rock; some lying some standing, each one watching, listening to the women, to the humming, the toning that seeps from their soul, as they invoke through their reverence the dark mother of creation, their goddess of winter.

**On a burial mound some miles away**, some hours later in the half light of dawn, a man wrapped up in a cloak of wolf pelts and damp and sparkling weight of dew, his eyes open wide, his arms reaching for the skies, alone relives the pain of an ancestor long dead, calling silently through his exhilaration for some divine guidance, as words tumble from his lips. A buzzard glides through the valley below, gazing with such focus, held on the wind. Crows pass by beneath the pale grey sky. The story must be told, whoever is listening.

**In the daylight, before work**, a woman walks out into her garden, her feet crunching in dry leaves upon the grass. Her fingers brush against the foliage of the yew, as if with affection, as she makes her way towards the altar. A bundle of dark red flowers are clasped in her fingers. She bows as she approaches; "Hail spirits" she whispers.

A frown she is barely aware of creases the skin of her brow. Laying the blooms on the old granite plinth, the flower maiden smiles her stone face adjusting its focus to peruse the energy before her. The woman feels it. For a moment she closes her eyes and makes her prayers. On her way back to the house, she picks a blackberry from the hedge, squeezing it between her fingers, touching her smiling lips with its dark red juice.

**Four images of Druidry.** None of them the more commonly perceived view of men in white robes, bearded, with ornate staff and golden sickle, tucked into the belt. In fact, this image of the Druid in white is one little more than two hundred years old created during a period of revived interest in the tradition when one picture from the classical literature of two millennia ago was chosen from many; Pliny's image of the Druid cutting mistletoe from the sacred oak. If Strabo had been used, the stereotype might be rather different, but his Druids – in red, adorned with gold – had not perhaps the dignity and nobility that was needed.

With travelers returning to England with stories of primitive cultures in the Americas and Africa, interest in our own heritage was tumbling over itself for facts and tangibility's; out of a weaving of Non-conformist Christianity and antiquarianism (early archaeology) emerged a new kind of Druidry.

It was patriarchal and hierarchical, a system of learning within educated male society, and monotheistic in that it perceived the ancient Druids as having worshipped the sun as the 'highest light' and a forerunner to Christ.

The teachings of these Druids still hold and influence certain Orders and groups today. One Order even wore false beards until earlier this century, those same beards now hanging in a cabinet in their offices. The image is certainly still fairly strong in our culture. However, in the main, Druidry as it is practiced today differs quite significantly from what emerged out of that eighteenth century revival.

Although there are many within the tradition who will still create for themselves (mainly of unbleached and undyed natural cloth) there are many others who dress in greens, blues, reds and purples, even black, finding within the colours connections to the hew of the environment within which they live. Beards are now far from compulsory, I'm pleased to inform.

**The archetypal image given us** from that revival period, however, does still have its place, though only perhaps if we look beneath the robes. For here is an elderly man, gentle and wise, his eyes shining with life, perhaps even mischief; the glint of knowing.

Fragile with old age and his extraordinary experience of both pain and power wielded, of seeing within, he is at the same time both vulnerably human and utterly invulnerable through his consciousness of spirit.

Indeed, whether he is the old British mage Merlin, the mythical bard Taliesin or the Irish Amergin, or more like Tolkien's Gandalf or the French cartoon Getafix, it is this figure that is responsible for drawing many into the tradition.

## But what is tradition?

While historians used to say that the Druids were the priests of the Celtic people, the ancient 'Celtic' race was also the creation of the revival period, provoked by English political assertion and romantic ideals at a time when both Scotland and Ireland were struggling under London's rule.

It is now more clearly understood Iron Age Europeans had no homogenous culture, nor were there invasions of these so-called Celts; instead what spread was a knowledge of iron-working and all the associated advantages and prosperities.

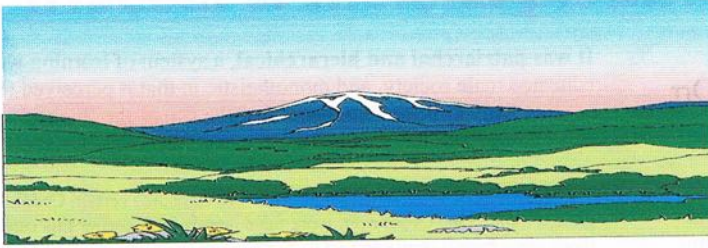
The people encountered here by Roman historians and the writers two thousand years ago did have a clear spirituality and their priests were known as Druids. How long the priests had actually been called 'Druids' is a matter of linguistic evolution and is for the most part in the tradition today quite irrelevant. More importantly, Caesar, the only writer to have met a Druid himself, tells us that this tradition had its origins in Britain.

**Druidry is a native spirituality** of the British Isles. Like any native spirituality that is rooted in the land, its foundation is that of the earth and the ancestors, through which are honoured the powers of nature. In honouring the earth, the soil that feeds us, the sun that gives us light and warmth, the source of our water the plants and animals, we honour our external environment.

In honouring our ancestors and all who have made us what we are, we honour our internal environment. It is this weave that gives pagan traditions a good deal of their potency.







**Every indigenous tradition** evolves with the colours and textures of the environment within which it lives. So, while there are similarities between Native American, Aboriginal, Huna, Maya, Shinto, Maori and other ancient spiritualities, they differ significantly because of climate and landscape. Druidry emerged out of the rocks and forests and rain of Britain, and its very nature is wrapped in the beauty, power and shifting stories of all Britain has been over many thousands of years past.

**Druidry is the practice of honouring** the life force as it thrives, lives, dies and gives birth again within these lands. Yet the flow of life energy is ever changing, and that is especially obvious in a temperate island climate. Spring leaf buds burst open, soft in the cold rains, stretching out in the summer sun before turning gold beneath the harvest moons, then letting go and dancing free in the icy winds of winter. It is in this understanding of life like a river flowing that we are given the focus of Druidic practice "Awen" an old British/Welsh word which literally means 'flowing spirit',

**Awen is understood** to be divine inspiration and it is this search for inspiration that is so important a part of the tradition.

Awen is the power, the water of the sacred spring or milk of the mother goddess, that is found in the holy grail. Awen is the liquid inspiration and essence of all knowledge that was (or is) brewed in the cauldrons of the old gods, the cauldrons of rebirth.

If, simplistically perhaps, salvation can be seen as the key quest in christianity, then inspiration is the quest of Druidry. As animists, understanding that all creation is imbued with spirit, matter and physicality being the creativity of spirit, the Druid knows that it is in relationship, spirit to spirit, that inspiration is found.

**Sitting on the cliff top** watching the sun slide into the ocean, our spirit recognizes the essential power and beauty that is spirit, and we are inspired. Holding a pebble that sparkles with crystal, we touch and are touched by the spirit of the stone, its nature, its history.

**Feeling the energy** of the trees in the forest, the vitality of the seedlings we transplant in the spring, and strength of the horse that responds to our shift in weight and changes direction, feeling the silver veils of the moon on bare skin, we are inspired.

In recognizing the spirit of some aspect of creation, be it elemental, plant, animal, rock or human, we are given the opportunity to know our own spirit, to respond from our own spirit, and it is this consciousness which gives us the power perceived in the old archetypal Druid: the blend of vulnerability and invulnerability. For in Druidry there is no desire to transcend physical reality.

**The Druid explores** the tenderness and beauty of flesh and blood, playing with its potential, expressing her creativity through physicality and through matter, discovering the beauty of the world around her, ever aware of its impermanence and state of constant change, every aware of the spirit energy which is eternal and invulnerable.

Where spirit touches spirit, where there is communion on this level and the energy of life is exchanged, awen flows. It is the lightning that reaches between earth and sky, between lover's eyes.

Yet simply breathing in the beauty of inspiration is not enough. It is then the Druid's responsibility to ensure that this energy continues to flow, spirit to spirit, for energy which is held in the body or soul stagnates and swells with sickness or pride. So inspiration must be expressed, the energy inhaled must be exhaled, and this is done through the Druid's creativity.

**There are three main facets in the tradition as it is practiced today**, the Bardic, the Ovatic and the Druidic, each of these having a different focus of divine inspiration and expressing creativity.

**The Bard's craft** is learnt by the skill of truly listening, discovering the stories and songs, the histories and mythologies of the land and the ancestors, of the culture within which he lives. His power is in the magic of words, sound and music, and he tells the tales of the rocks and the soil and the people, evoking emotion, empathy, laughter: inspiring those who would listen to him.

**The Ovates craft** is learnt through the skill of clearly seeing. The philosophers of nature, the Ovate sees the patterns of life and death that lie deep within, and uses her knowledge in the creativity of effecting healing, or easing of change.

**The Druid**, having learnt the crafts of Bard and Ovate, walks between worlds. She is a builder of bridges, some of which others may use, others for her own use only. She mediates between groups as counsellor, peacemaker and judge: Druids in pre-Roman Britain were judges to the tribes and nowadays Druids often work in areas of conflict. She mediates between knowing and not knowing as a teacher, between the god and the people as a priest.

**However, Druidry is not a religion** in itself. It is a spiritual philosophy, a perception and a way of life which focuses on reverence and respect for the land and the ancestors, for the flows of life, inspiration and creativity. In practice what this means is that within the tradition are people who search for relationship with very different gods and concepts of deity, from those who are philosophical monotheists, through pantheism to radical polytheists.

It allows there to be Christians within the tradition, as well as those honouring gods such as the old British Rhiannon and Ceridwen, and old Irish Brigid and Dagda and Lough, or Saxon gods such as Woden or Freyja, or those of Classical or Nordic pantheons.

At a gathering of my Grove (the collective term for a meeting of Druids) at the festival celebrating the beginning of summer at May Day, of 45 there were 6 Christians, including a Church of England priest, a Moslem, a good few Buddhists, a number of Wiccans and Witches, together with those who would call themselves nothing but Druids, the point being that this was not an interfaith gathering; it was simply Druidry.

**As a tradition based on inspiration**, land and ancestry, and an oral tradition as are most indigenous spiritualities where the sacred text is the landscape within which we live, it is not surprising that Druidry is immensely diverse in practice.

The words I write here are my own experience and perspective, as a Druid priestess, teacher, ritualist and writer. As mentioned earlier in this piece, there are Druid Orders who still find a good deal of their inspiration in the ways of eighteenth century revival Druidry, there being orders which are entirely male and others which are wholly Christian.





**There are other groups,** Groves and Orders who find their inspiration in the medieval literature, its poetry and mythology, or in their later expression as folkloric tales, legends and ballads. Others still go further back, finding inspiration in Saxon or Romano-British culture, or in pre-Roman Britain, from the eras during which were built the stone circle and tomb shrines or our ancestors.

The practice of each of these individuals and groups is textured and coloured by the source of their inspiration both in terms of era and location, as well as the characteristics of the gods they revere, the nature of the landscape within which they live and work, and their ancestry.

**The three images of modern Druids** often seen in the media display this diversity well, if not usually in a coherent way owing to the media's time constraint or specific agenda.

The small but strong eighteenth century Order often seen making serene ritual at Stonehenge or Primrose Hill in London, in neat long white robes and wimples (head dresses) is one picture.

The hippies with colourful names who have been campaigning noisily along the fences at Stonehenge are another small group with an entirely different energy, a fringe remnant of the days of the free festival banned a decade ago after problems with drugs and violence.

**The other major Orders** in the tradition today hold two very different areas of ground. One is the men's Order which does a great deal of charity work, has a long documented history and connecting threads into Freemasonry and the Christian Church. The other is made up of a number of Orders, large and small, who celebrate much as I have expressed, an eclectic spiritual philosophy of reverence, inspiration and creativity. Occasionally images of people, such as myself or members if the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids, find themselves talking to the media offering another image of the tradition.

**Finding their way into Druidry** through glimpses caught in the media, books discovered and devoured, through snippets of conversations and clues followed, most people who come to us express an amazement at the feelings of having come home, of having found a sense of spiritual belonging. Druidry, as the native tradition of Britain, offers a spirituality which feels somehow extraordinarily natural to people living in these islands or whose ancestors lived here.

As such it proves an extraordinary force for healing and empowerment, offering opportunities for accepting the abuses of ancestors, for renewing potential for creativity, self-expression and soul truths, for reconnecting with the land and nature, finding its inherent nourishment.

**Its language is that of the deciduous forests,** the ancient oaks, the heather-tinged moors, and meadows of grass lit with buttercups and daisies, the long dark winters that creep into the ones, the laughter and dance of chilly May evenings. Its path has been trod for many thousands of years by those who found inspiration in the beauty and fertility of these lands, who found the energy of rage dealing with its kings, ministers and invaders, the power of love, of death, of birth beneath its cloud-patterned skies. A tradition with most ancient roots, it evolves with each new sun rise, each new tale that is told.

**Emma Restall Orr is Joint Chief of the British Druid Order and a tutor in the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids.**

Author of "Sprits of the Sacred Grove" and Principles of Druidry' both published by Thorsons, and two volumes of poetry 'Black Lizard Forest' and 'Tides of Dying'.

Her new book 'A Druids Guide to Life, Love and Inspiration' will be out in May 2000. Emma is touring Australia in March 2000.

**A detailed itinerary of Emma's visit will be printed in 'Touchstone' and 'Serpentstar'.**

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P.O. Box 92 Newtown NSW 2042

e-mail [rentilia@ozemail.com.au](mailto:rentilia@ozemail.com.au)



## Bards Corner

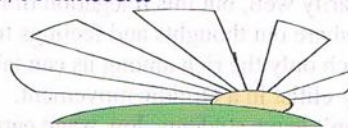
### BRIGHID

Soft and gentle  
White feathers stroke my soul  
With silvery grace of the moon  
Watching me unfold.

Subtle presence, she brings  
Light into my day  
Her smile beaming deep within  
Mere words cannot portray

My hands aflame with a ball  
Tenderly burning bright  
At the centre of my fire  
Stands Brighid in all her might

Keeper of the hearth fires  
Healer of pain  
Goddess of the bards  
Spring bids you welcome again  
27/7/99 K.Roberts



### WELCOME FATHER SUN

Once a shadow of thy former self,  
Salutations unto you we bring.  
Re-born to full glory,  
Herald of the spring.

Thy power has returned oh sun,  
In full might and majesty.  
Triggering the aroma of,  
Buds flowers and trees.

For indeed winter was your trap,  
A prison to your might.  
Up there in spirit only,  
You did not burn so bright.

But re-appearing once again,  
Young for now but wise,  
Knowing your rays' will strengthen  
That summer force our patience' prize

K.Roberts 31 Aug 99





# LETTERS

Dear Carole,

Woah! Back a bit! I've lost the plot! I'm delighted that 'Serpentstar' has a Web site- it's proof that Australian OBODry is thriving- but unfortunately, not having a computer, or the money to buy one, or access to anyone else's I'm concerned about the way you're planning to use it.

\*I can't find any notice in previous "Serpentstar"s about your intention to shift 'Bards Corner' (which I enjoy and consider vital, because poetry is what happens when our souls speak) or the letters ( which what happens when our minds speak) out of 'Serpentstar", which we can all access easily, to the new web site which only those of us who have PCs can access.

\*You say that most are happy with this, but who are they? web site visitors? I don't remember having been offered an opportunity to give my opinion on the subject which is hardly fair. So much for the round Table concept, anyway!

\*I hate to whinge because you are doing a difficult job extraordinarily well, but this relegation of the means by which we share out thoughts and feelings to the electronic media which only the rich among us can take for granted is offensively elitist in a Druidic movement.

\*Please don't leave students, low wage earners and the wageless out in the cold with nothing but a list of events that the electronically empowered elite have arranged for us, without our participation in the planning; and articles by experts which , while interesting and valid, do not invite discussion, participation or any but a passive , spoon feedable attitude for the readers.

Those things should be there, certainly, but there needs to be a lot more scope for the reader input.

Please give us more discussion, or just plain chat room in 'Serpentstar', give us back 'Bards Corner' and invite readers into the planning process and into the making of decisions that will profoundly affect OBODry in Australia.

For a start, why not print this letter in 'Serpentstar' - or your web page for that matter - and get some other opinions.

The power and love of Brighid be with you.!

Vivienne !!!

## REPLY

Dear Vivienne,

The purpose of the web site is to have a presence in OBOD from Australia, that members in other countries, who have computers, can link up with.

These links also give Serpentstar the opportunity to access more information that can be channeled to the Australian membership, via the newsletter. The site is not up yet, and will not be up until after the Assembly has discussed this further.

The web site will be an edited version of Serpentstar, as is Touchstone on the web, with only those articles appearing that the member has indicated he/she would be happy to have there.

No where has it been suggested that the 'electronic' Serpentstar will replace the newsletter that is sent to all those who contribute. This is an assumption on your part.

\*There is no notice in previous Serpentstars about shifting Bards Corner because that is not going to happen. The reason Bards Corner didn't appear in last months Serpentstar is because no sent in any poetry. The same for Open Forum and Letters.

\*It is unfortunate that you don't remember being offered the opportunity to voice your opinion on the subject of the web site. In the Alban Elued edition of Serpentstar, on the last page where I put my comments, you will find a section that says " I would appreciate readers letting me know their feelings about this ( the web site) so I can accommodate everyone's needs".....and' All ideas and contributions are welcome , and may thanks for the offers of help, they are all appreciated.' On the front page of Alban Heruin members are asked for more discussions.

\*The newsletter is a reflection of the membership and not an electronic elite, I find that assumption offensive. I simply compile what is sent to me and send it out to the members who contribute. I purposely keep my comments to a minimum so that the newsletter can have its own character. which is created by the members, not an editor creating agendas.

\*" A list of events prepared by the Electronically Empowered Elite" I can't comment on, as I have never seen one.

\* All ceremonies listed in Serpentstar are organized by the individual members or groves and have always been open to all members. Assembly sites have been decided on by those who attend.

\*Any member who is feeling 'spoon fed' has only to pick up a pen and balance consumption with contribution.

Any reader is free to send in an article, as in fact they do. It is a forum for all members regardless of income, age or class and always has been.

- The articles have been written and sent to me by members who have been happy to contribute to and support our local newsletter, on a regular basis.
- The only planning process that happens in Serpentstar is how to format the pages of the news letter, members decide what affects Druidry in Australia and New Zealand.

As you would realize, everything has it's own rhythm, and Serpentstar ebbs and flows like everything else That is why we have large newsletters like the Elued edition and smaller ones, like the last edition the Arthuan, when not many contributed (winter hibernation maybe?)

\*Everything that is sent to me is printed in Serpentstar, nothing is withheld or regulated.

\* No one has been stopped from contributing to the newsletter, and I am happy to publish your letter. I am sure it will start some discussion, and healthy and informed discussion is always welcome. It may also clear a few assumptions

In the light..... Carole/\





## Court House Busselton Forthcoming Exhibition

### Exhibition: *Dance of the Earth Goddess*

**Venue:** Court House Gallery,  
Busselton

**Dates:** Saturday 2/10/99 - Sunday  
17/10/99

**Artist:** Valarie Coventry

*Dance of the Earth Goddess* is an exhibition inspired by one woman's exploration of her spirituality through the tracing of her Celtic heritage.

It features paintings, mosaics and photographs from a journey taken up Saint Michael's Line, a ley line running across Southern England on which lie many sacred sites.

This quest to discover her Celtic ancestry took her through England, Wales, France, Ireland, and the Scilly Isles where she explored ancient burial chambers, standing stones, secret underground caves and churches built on original pagan sites.

Following her return to Australia, she moved to Dunsborough in the South West in search of a more simple lifestyle.

*Dance of the Earth Goddess* represents the integration of Christianity with its early pagan roots and several works are inspired by places drawn from Arthurian legend. It also makes a link between the state of the Earth's environment and the spirituality of its people and asks that we respect the land and look to our own spirituality if we are to save the Earth from destruction.

#### Contact details:

Valarie Coventry

P.O.Box 495

Dunsborough WA 6281

Phone/Fax 97567441

## Isis Afrikan Queen By Akkadia Ford.



This book is being released by Capall Bann publishing this month and will be of interest to anyone keen to explore the Egyptian magikal tradition in addition to Druidry.

It presents a comprehensive exploration of the origins of Isis in Afrikan ritual and tradition, examining what the Goddess' ancient identity, powers and formulae were, as worshipped in ancient Egypt, and ways of approaching Her as a means of power by modern minds.

Price will be between \$25-30, postage extra. You can order direct from Capall Bann Publishing Freshfield, Chieveley, Berks, RG 20 8TF England, or From your local esoteric/ specialty bookstore. Distributed in Australia by Gemcraft Books, Victoria.

Later in the year a limited number of copies will be available signed by the author, with a personalized hieroglyphic blessing. Write direct to P.O.Box 92 NEWTOWN NSW 2042

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Pure and potent herbs and resins, suitable for Ceremonial uses, such as Incense and oil making are available. Range includes Olibanum resinoid, Galangal, Galbanum, Sandalwood. Current price lists are available, quantities range from 150g to 1 kilo.

Please send a S.A.S.E. with your inquiry to **Studio Neter Botanica; P.O.Box 92 Newtown. N.S.W. 2042.**

**Carri Myriad** and the Ragged Band offer great Celtic music on tow CDs, Up the Sides and Down the Middle, and Distant Shores. Both of these are available for Carri. Cost \$2-5. Each or \$2 for \$40. Handling cost of \$5.00. P.O.Box 1492 Potts Point. N.S.W. 2011

**Ravenswing....** For the CD Time to Heal. Beautiful Celtic tunes from the W.A. Grove of Sgiat h an Fhithich. Cost \$20.00 P.O. Box 356 Kelmscott. W.A. 6911

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**The cut off date for articles for the next newsletter is 30<sup>th</sup> November 1999.**

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For membership inquiries contact the above address.

OBOD web site< druidry.org>