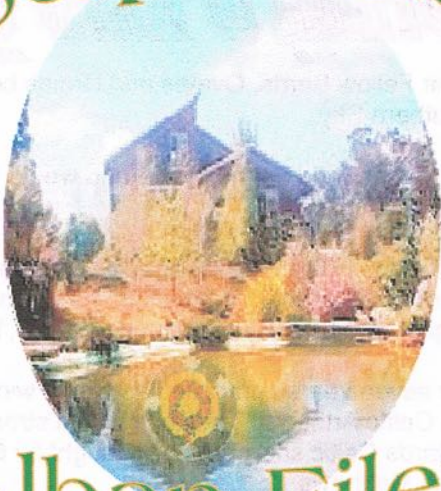


Serpentstar



Alban Eiler

Newsletter for Australian & New Zealand members of O.B.O.D. vol. 3 no.4. Sept 2000

Well we have just celebrated the 4th Australian Assembly this time on the South Western coast of Australia.

Albany is a wonderful place where the sea rolls in from the icy Southern Pole and the Southerly winds are keen and fresh. I will have to admit that when I read about Kennans Sanctuary in the newsletter I couldn't believe that the place could be as beautiful as it sounded. It was of course Better.

Ganieda is a wonderful place, full of spirit and magic and I am sure that all those who were there, would join me in saying that Kennan is the custodian of a very special place on the land.

It was good to see people from the Eastern states, and catch up with Druids that we see only at these Assemblies because of the great distances we all must travel. It was also wonderful to put faces to names and the emails of the Western Australian folk who attended

This Assembly was created around Healing and the Land. We participated in Sweat Lodges, which Kennan ran with great wisdom and caring, helped by Brad we had our faces molded in clay.

We had wonderful affirmation ceremonies every morning, and went to sleep with wild Celtic strains weaving through the night.

We talked a lot, as a group and individually, usually around the fire in the kitchen or in the beautiful bush that surrounds the Sanctuary and as it was at the last Assembly, a fire was burning in the hearth through out the Assembly and Healing retreat that followed, a warm and wonderful reminder of Bridget, who seemed to be very much a part of this Assembly.

Kennan talked about healing, and led us through some powerful processes, Philip had some wonderful meditations, poems and quests to share with us all.

I will never forget Philip and Wayne doing Egyptian Dancing or Murray's poems, or the songs and dances and poems by the children at the Eisteddfod

Heather walked us through Divination by Place, Vivienne shared her insights into the land where she lives, and sang for us all. Kennan and his family, Jan and Kerry and David and others from Western Australia joined to make us all feel welcome and shared much of their spirit and love of Druidry with us all.

It was good to see Noel and Pat again, Noel interviewed everyone there, perhaps we will have some quotes in the next couple of Newsletters



At the Alban Eiler ceremony, Kennan joined the earth sent by Cooringal Grove to the earth in the Grove at Ganieda and we all added more to be sent to the next Assembly. It was a very powerful moment.

All in all it was a wonderful, spiritual and amazing time and I think it drew us together a little more as we come to know and love the expression of Druidry in Australia, and the people who come together in celebration

And the food was great!

Carole/\



REPORT: ON PHILIPS WORKSHOP
GRAIL QUEST
SYDNEY DOUGHERTY CENTRE CHATSWOOD

We gathered at Chatswood on Saturday morning for a day of searching, seeing, experiencing and learning

It was good to see a few Sydney Druids and some from the country as well. It was a wonderful opportunity for those who couldn't get to the Assembly, to gather with Philip, hear all the latest OBOD news and get to know each other.

Philip walked us through a wonderful workshop, looking at the many levels woven through the Grail Myths and Arthurian tales

One of the meditations really took us all away. We think it could have been partly caused by the room we were in having a pyramid roof, I'm sure it helped.

The Grail Quest was a wonderful experience, and with Philips guidance we explored those times of our lives, when we leave the home of Camelot, go out into the desert, and find our trials and tribulations, working through them, back to our Springtime of renewal and strength. It was a great metaphor for our Druid work, timed in with the Wheel of the year and the cycle of the seasons.

It was a pretty lively time, and at times Philip couldn't get a word in!

We finished the day with a walk to the park, where we sat and talked amongst the trees and shrubs of things Druidic and feeling the earth beneath our feet.

CONGRATULATIONS SANDRA!

Sandra Gosley has given birth to a wonderful baby boy!

He weighed 7 lb and according to Sandra is apparently liking it here, as he is no trouble and sleeps a lot!

Getting to Know You

Dear Fellow Bards, Ovates and Druids beneath the Southern Sky,

I am a "new kid on the block" and would like to introduce myself.

My name is Sue Basso, aged 47, I am a Druid Wife! Married to Stephen, a beautiful, gentle 'natural pagan'. We have 4 children aged 27, 25, 15 & 14.

For seven years I practiced as a solo wiccan within the Celtic Arthurian Tradition, with a strong leaning towards Celtic shamanism as taught by Caitlin and John Matthews.

Druidry was always in the background - including a special fascination, usually centered around Merlin, King Arthur and the Lady of the Lake deities.

It wasn't until a trip to the UK and Europe in Oct 98, that I really felt the 'Call of the Eagle' deep within. This occurred when visiting the ancient, sacred sites ie. Stonehenge, Avebury, Silbury Hill, Earthmounds on Anglesey/Wales, as well as in Brittany, France with the Carnac Alignment Stones and Parts of the magical Forrest of Brocéleande.

I was already reading Philip Carr-Gomm's book *The Druid Way* and, when returning home, it seemed only right for me to get in touch with OBOD in England. I finished my Bardic Grade in April and have enjoyed it immensely. Thank you, especially to my patient and wise mentor bill, for dealing with my letters and my long poetry.

Having just spent 6 months in the wildwood, like Merlin, and found out what it really feels like to be a Bard.

I will hopefully start my Ovate Grade in February 2001.

The closeness of the Druid community has moved me deeply, and as I now say, I once was a lone Wiccan but I will never be a lonely Bard!

Recently, I was inspired to take on a Druid name - my animal guardian is the Raven, its Gaelic name being Bran, I have added Wen as Daughter of the Raven (Bran-wen)

Deep Peace and Bright Blessings to everyone and thank you for listening!

Sue

A Druid Path in New Zealand

When I commenced my bard studies I was confronted by a powerful choice; do I follow the instructions in the *Gwersu* and use Northern energies or do I follow the rhythm of this land, my home, Tiri o te Moana - the Gift of the Sea.

New Zealand, Aotearoa (Land of the Long White Cloud), so I walked a path through my Bardic studies that is like a railway line; running side by side, connected by the sleepers, two ancient ways.

I would like to share some of the knowledge that I have found with you.

New Zealand is unique. It begins with sea and ends with sea. But the islands of New Zealand are not truly oceanic. They are part of what is left of the great continent of Gondwanaland.

"These islands
the remnant peak of a lost continent
roof of an old world, molten droppings
from earth's bowel, gone cold;
ribbed with rock, resisting the sea's corrosion
for an age, and an age to come."

A.R.D. Fairburn

Some of the world's most ancient flora and fauna have persisted in these islands; some going back 170 million years, and some like the tuatara, belong to the age of the dinosaurs.

This land, my home, has not known any human footprint until after the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, until after the death of Jesus.

Its spirit is untamed, new and powerful, so the people who have settled here had to be ready to accept change and challenge.

New Zealand is sometimes spoken of as the last frontier of the New World; the last frontier on the planet. A place to try again.

"... their touch was light; warm in their heart holding the land's
image, they had no need to impress themselves. Like conquerors, scarring it
with vain memorials. They had no fear of being forgotten."
Charles Brasch

But in reality, the land has taken possession of all who make this place home.

New Zealand today is a land which has known hunger, wars, hardship and sacrifice by all its peoples. We have had the very best and the very worst come from among us. It is a land which now knows peace and quiet prosperity; where it is still possible to imagine oneself back to the time before the first people; to walk quiet beaches or follow animal tracks into the bush to find a special place to be. A land where man cares for the good earth or perishes.

Now is the time to let the land itself speak and listen :

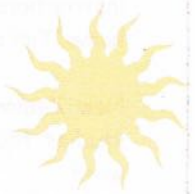
" The fairest earth ...
let us come to you
barefoot, as befits love,
as the boy to the trembling girl,

touch of soil and wind and rocks,
frost and flower and water,
the honey of the senses."

A.R.D. Fairburn

Man seeks answers to that which he can't comprehend. Such eternal questions as:

- " Who am I? "
- " How came I here? "
- " What am I? "
- " Where do I go? "



By a process of soul-searching or by what he may believe to be revealed truth, he eventually gathers about him a structure from which he can draw the answers he seeks.

The peoples who have come to New Zealand had such structures and brought them with them where parts remained unchanged; parts adapted; parts forgotten and parts added.

The basis of Maori belief concerning the beginning of things; the ordering of the universe and the world is ancient.

"There was Te Kore; the Void, emptiness, which was followed by Te Po, the Great Night, the long night in which developed Papa-tu-a-nuku (Earth mother) and Rangi-nui-e-tu-nei (Sky father). Together, in the pall of the primeval shade they shaped their children and the children longed for light. Using their power they tried to separate their parents until Tane Mahuta, Lord of the Forests and its inhabitants, succeeded.

In the light of the new swung sun there was created all manner of things animate and inanimate. Tane clothed his mother with his children tress etc. And then climbed up through the twelve heavens to collect stars to adorn the body of his father and gain the baskets of knowledge for mankind, which he created by taking Hine-nui-ahu-one (the Earth formed maiden) to wife. Thus is mankind linked with Earthmother and the universe."

The three baskets of knowledge contained wananga - sacred/occult and esoteric knowledge:

- Kete tuauri - ritual chants of all things connected to earth and sky.
- Kete tuatea - all things evil from all things and control of all things/elements.
- Kete aronui - love, compassion, peace-making; knowledge of art and all things seen by man.

In all the arts of peace and war, in all occasions of the community the tohunga played a full and vital role, as did the Druids in their lands.

Their tradition was oral and they received a long and arduous training; as well as being a trained expert and teacher of beliefs, arts, history and the stars, many were expert in practical affairs such as canoe building, carving, tattooing etc.

At the heart of their instruction/religion were the incantations, karakia, for every occasion. To miss or forget a word was a very bad omen.

In the grey-light of dawn the people wait. Before them stands a grey bearded man, their tohunga, one hand raised high, chanting. As the first rays of Te Ra (the sun) strikes the kumara gardens the first mound is carefully broken open. The first tuber is taken, raised on high and placed at the base of an upright stone. The tohunga has offered the first fruits of the harvest to gentle Rongo, god of husbandman and agriculture, and so were the first items of each activity, season, and occasion offered to the appropriate god; fish to Tangaroa, god of the sea, birds and fruits of the forest to Tane and the heart of the first fallen enemy to Tu, god of war.



Both, the first known settlers "the moa-hunters, a peaceful people, and the later Maori, whose warriors glorified in battle, had no temples. Their worship was of Spirit. Under the laws of tapu (more than sacred/prohibition) and rahui (a form of tapu like a game law) a building would become so steeped in spiritual influence if a tohunga used it regularly, that it could quickly be put to no service at all.

Therefore shrines and altars, as were used, were set outdoors; the most important ones were usually set in secluded spots so the tapu surrounding them could not be contaminated.

Altars could be made from stone(s) set on end, or a cairn, or a mound of earth into which earth from another shrine is mingled. A carved post enclosed by a fence was occasionally set up for the same purpose.



Observing the changing star patterns was/is very important to the Maori as it was their calendar, as it was for the Druids.

Traditionally the dawn sky held greatest importance, but the passing of the night was determined by the position of the Milky Way - Te Ikaroa (big fish) or sometimes called Uruao, Te Waka-a-Tama-rere-ti (the canoe of Tama-rere--ti, who is credited with voyaging towards the South Pole and seeing Aurora Australis - Nga kurakura-o-Hine-nui-te-Po.

The stars, ra riki, were placed in Uruao to protect them from their elder siblings, Te Ra, the sun, and Te marama, the moon. Te Ikaroa/Uruao is the great division, Tuahiwi, of influence between Te Ra and Te Marama.



"Te Po tutanga nui o Pipiri" refers to the long night of winter solstice when the star Pipiri marks the turning of the year.

The appearance of the open star cluster of the Pleiades, in the morning sky, Matariki,, little eyes, marks the celebrations and rites to bring in the new year. This was also a time to remember the dead, the names of those who had departed the previous year were called out to the stars, the dances and songs were held to commemorate them.

Tirohia atu nei, ka whetuirangitia Matariki, Te Whitu o te tau e whakamoe mai ra! He homai ana rongo kia komai atu au - ka mate nei au I te matapouri, I te mataporehu o roto I a au!

See where Matariki has risen over the horizon, the seven of the year winking up there! They come with their message that I may rejoice - here I am full of sorrow, full of sadness within!



When Canopus, Autahi, appears in the sky, it is time to plant kumara, sweet potato. Autahi is a tapu star, so when it rises, tapu food, uncooked food, is offered to it and appropriate chants sung. If its rays shine south, rain and snow will follow, if its rays shine north, the season will be mild and warm.

Scorpius, , Muri-Rangi-whenua (the fish hook made from Maui's grandfather's jaw bone, with which he fished up the North Island, Te-Ika-a-Maui, is hailed as the bringer of warm weather as it appears above the horizon in the Nov, Dec, morning skies.

Antares, the brightest star in Scorpius, is Rehua, "Ko Rehua whakaruhi tangata." Rehua, the enervator of man.



The appearance of Vega, Whanui, told the people that harvest time was imminent so gourds and kete, baskets, were made, kumara pits cleaned and relined and storehouses cleansed.

When the tohunga looked into the cold winter early morning sky in late June and July and saw Orion, Tau Toru, rising and Sirius, Takarua, following he would tell the people that spring was coming and the winter soon gone.

When stars and constellations were high in the body of Rangi-nui, they had different roles or meanings. Rigel, Paunga, is the guardian for the seasons of growing and harvest. Rigel is the principal star of Orion, Tau-toru; a Maori warrior sharing kereru, wood pigeon.

Rigel, Pauranga-rua, is the berries, Te Pua. The other three main stars Bellatrix, Salph and Betagause form the elbow, Te Tuke, and arm, Te Pewa, of the snare. Orion's belt is the true Tau-toru - settled three.

On a clear night tiny kereru, nebulla in Orion, can be seen winging to Pua of the snare of Tau-toru.

An interesting aspect I found in my journey/search was that due to the earth's long term "wobble" about its axis, called precession, stars seen in the northern hemisphere in ancient times are now viewed in the southern realms.

At present the south celestial pole is in a rather boring patch of sky.(astronomers point of view) with the nearest star, a dim member of Octans. Ten thousand years ago the bright star Vega, Whanui, marked the pole.

In the late 11th century CE, Arabic astrologer Al Birni noted from Lat 30 N in India, a southern asterism was visible known as Sulk, the crucifixion beam.

Daunt, early 14th century, refers to the Crux, Southern Cross, in his Divine comedy:

"Setting me to spy
that alien pole, I beheld four stars
the same the first men saw and since no living eye."

The Crux was just visible from Jerusalem in the era of Christ and disappeared from view from northern latitudes after the death of Christ.

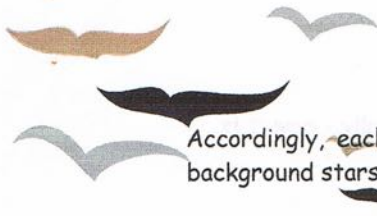
Classical astronomers identify the Crux/Southern Cross as part of Centaurus, the southern Centar-Chiron, a wise and benelovent healer. The Southern Crux/Cross is seen in the southern night sky all year round; an important reference point in locating other constellation. To the Maori it is Te Putea-iri-a-Tama-rere-ti, the finely woven basket of Tama-rere-ti. The pointers, Alpha and Beta Centauri, Te Taurira-o-te-punga, anchor rope and the coal sack, a dark nebulla is Te Punga, anchor stone.

The four stars known to ancient Mesopotamia as Royal stars or heavenly watchers were recognised by the Maori as the four sacred directions and Holders of the World.

Regulus in Leo, Pari-rangi, cliff of the heavens, Antares in Scorpius, Hira-utu, fish by the land, Aldeburan in Taurus, Paninuku, cliff by the earth, Formalhaut in the southern fish, Hira-tai, fish of the sea.

The stars are constantly shifting because of precession; in the year 15000 AD the Southern Crux will be visible in Europe.

The sun's apparent path across the stars, the ecliptic, also shifts, and this shift has occurred since the zodiacal constellations were first named; since the henges etc were aligned, thousands of years ago.



Accordingly, each year as the sun returns to 0 Aries, March equinox, its position against the background stars will have slipped back 50" of arc = 1 in 72 years.

At the dawn of the third millennium, now, this motion has produced a discrepancy of nearly a whole constellation. Our modern day Aries now falls over the stars of Pisces, symbolism of the great ages. As we are now in the closing era of the Age of Pisces, we will soon follow the March equinox point backwards into the Age of Aquarius.

" But now there are no more islands to be found. And
the eye scans risky horizons of its own in unsettled
weather, and murmurs of the drowned haunt their familiar beaches -
who navigates us towards what
unknown. But not improbable provinces? Who
reaches a future down for us from the high shelf of
spiritual daring?"

Allen Curnow

I have acknowledged the changes faced by my forebears; Northmen descendants who came to this land to build ships and sail in ice-free waters; a Scot, a laird who came to be free of the class system and a woman with the gift of fey and healing; all seeking a new way. Each changed and adapted, learning from the people and the land, living whole long lives.

Through their relationship with this land; coming to terms with the wildness and living at ease with this land they inherited; myself, my parents, and some of my grandparents are as native to this land as the kiwi - tangata whenua - people of the land.

In my lifetime I have observed the
once I planted vegetables in August,
if I want my plants to succeed.



changes within the changing seasons -
now it is September even early October

I feel, when working with the elements/seasons that I must work with what is NOW. The past; the knowledge from the gwers; my heritage and what I have discovered for myself on my life's journey is only a guide, something to learn from; to help to understand the present moment, but not to be religiously adhered to just because it is what our ancestors did.

It is often no longer appropriate for this moment in time, so, I have adapted it so it flows smoothly and harmoniously with the land and sky, seasons and energy.

For example, this year autumn came early; we had a drought at summer's end so the trees etc decided to shed their leaves early to conserve moisture; berries ripened quickly and a cold souwester blew halting further growth. So I celebrated Samhuin in late April - winter will be long and hard this season, especially for the birds and animals as some of their food sources are gone already. In May 4/4 was the Grand Cross in Taurus so I joined the Dances of life for two days to celebrate the energy generated by this celestial event.

Each event acknowledged in its natural time/space, not slotted into man-made time, but in the true rhythm of the Universe.

So I walk my talk connected to both my spiritual/land energy and my heritage/Gwers energy and I share this knowledge - understanding with others so they may find peace within themselves and with this land.

For this is a land we must cherish, not only for ourselves, but also for future generations.



This is still a land, a home of warrior and poet which people may have claimed physically - now it is time for the land itself to claim us in spirit.

Never shall I forget the utter loneliness of the prospect ...
the vastness of mountains, plains, bush, river and sky
the lack of spirit in the faces of people I pass by

But now, there is no loneliness ...
I am the vastness of mountain, plains, bush, river and sky.
And I see the spark of light in each soul I pass by.

Tamzin Rae, 2000

Simply by sailing in a new direction
You could enlarge the world.

Allen Curnow

From my heart to your heart

Tamzin



Alban Arthuan Ceremony- Whangarei --21.6.2000

We held the ceremony at our house this time. Mainly because we incorporated into the ceremony the dedication of a little restful 'Japanese' type garden area. The organisation was a bit chaotic. In the middle of the afternoon I received a call from Carole in Australia trying to get our E-mail address so she could send the copy of a New Zealand version of the ceremony that Philip had written. We don't have E-mail and Jenny's work E-mail had crashed. Eventually, after two attempts, Philip faxed me a copy. This left little time to duplicate it and get it all organised.

I usually go to a meditation group on a Wednesday but this time they joined us for the ceremony. With the usual mob who celebrate the ceremonies we had 12 people.

We held in our back yard. The flow of the ceremony was not as good as usual but the energies were not affected. The meditation people were quite surprised. They thought we ran around naked and did all sorts of naughty 'pagan' things.

In the middle of the circle Julie from the meditation group 'saw' a huge tree, well anchored with a shaft of light streaming down beside its trunk from high above. When I explained about the Bardic, Ovate and Druid grades she saw the sense of it.

So Alban Arthuan this year was a quiet, stilling time with some deep knowings being reinforced for a few of us. Of course we had the usual great feed afterwards mingled with much verbosity of varying degrees of intelligence.

We thank Philip for the great contribution - bringing the Northern Hemisphere and New Zealand connections a bit closer.

Bill Huddleston
Whangarei, 22. 6. 00

Bards Corner

Gates

I sing a journey, and it is an open gate
between za and re. Between
clairseach and lute, between
bare soles and well-buttered boots,
more gates stand open. Scarlet
are the dancers veils. They wrap
me in a shawl of singing, dance
my blood through the veins
of my being.

Each one visits my heart
bringing roses.

by Vivienne.



We were lost in transit once

In Silence

And in silence we looked at the archways and they were caves
And we looked into the caves and they were doorways.
And in each doorway was a single

Sound

And each sound was a single
Flower
In silence.

Tiki

Spring Equinox Assembly2000
Ganieda.

Currarong Dreaming

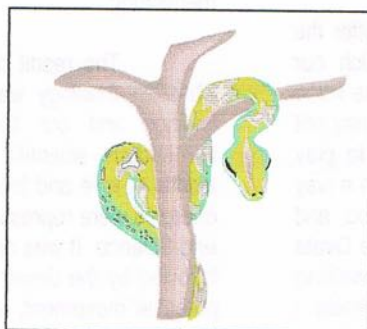
No wind in my sails
No waves on my beach

Drifting and dreaming
Nobody in reach

Becalmed and becoming
Pearly gray in the sky

Watching and listening
To distant gulls cry

Carole



NEW STATUS

Skin peeling, sliding away,
Dawn thru different eyes.
New ventures ahead they lay,
Life, an unknown surprise?

Watchful gaze from on high,
Self, the now distant observer.
Witnessing the dawn rise
Wondering what lay further.

A fork in the road, old life washes downstream
New canvas lay below.
A fond smile for what has been
From remnants the new sapling grows.

An entire chapter written,
The episode draws to a close.
The author, more open and wizen,
New chapter, new paper new prose.

Awen

A breath
A faint scent on the wind
A thought
Fleeting
I almost grasp it
It is gone.

It is there
Something I feel
But cannot explain
The breath of life
Of inspiration
Brigid, Oghma, Taliesin, Amergin
The ancient gods of our
ancestors
And of ourselves.

The breeze that plays
Around a stone circle
A giant on a hill
A sleeping king
A white-robed Druid
Greeting the morning
The birds welcoming the sun
A poet writing the music of
words.

All around us
It is everywhere
In everything.

Awen
It is life.

Sionnach

Kirsty Roberts

Wild and Wise



We are all filled with a longing for the wild.'

Clarissa Pinkola Estes *Women who Run with the Wolves*

Over the centuries, Western culture has created a separation between our desire to be wise and our need to be creative and close to Nature. In education nearly all the focus is on gaining intellectual knowledge. Very little stress is placed on developing our own unique creative potential. Hardly any time is spent teaching us how to live in the world of nature.

Ask yourself what gives you the most happiness. For many people the answer is being out in Nature, being healthy, being creative, having good relationships, enjoying sexuality. Though these are central concerns for most people, none of these are really addressed in any depth in most schools. Instead the stress is on how to know more, how to work with machines, how to gain knowledge. And so what happens is a part of us gets separated, goes underground. The needs of our mind are split away from the needs of our hearts and bodies, and as a result we feel restless, unhappy, frustrated and unfulfilled.

The goals of the Bard, Ovate and Druid offer the opportunity to awaken and fulfil these needs which our education has denied. The voice of the Bard is like the voice within us that says "Yes, I do want to be creative. I may not ever become a famous poet or artist, but I want to play music, or write, or paint, or build a home, or cook, in a way that is unique to me, and which makes me feel good, and helps me to express who I am." And the voice of the Ovate is like that part of us which says; "Yes, I want to go walking in the forest. I want to know about the trees and animals. I want to feel at home in the world, not separate from it in a world of concrete and metal." And the voice of the Druid speaks from that part of our soul which says "Yes, I want my love of life and the world, and my body, and other people, to be in harmony with everything I know. I want to find wisdom and a spiritual way that doesn't deny the beauty and the power of these things."

One of the reasons why we have become split people, with the needs of our hearts and bodies

subordinated to the needs of our minds, is because we have experienced two thousand years of religious and philosophical thought which has taught us that Spirit and Matter are opposed. Christianity, Judaism and Islam have promoted the idea that Spirit, the Mind, Goodness, Heaven, and God are somehow ranged in opposition to the Body, Evil, Matter, and by inference, the Earth and Woman. Over the millennia, our world has been split into these two divisions. And the greatest battleground of this split has been in the human being: we have been told that within us writhes the serpent of lust and desire, and if we are to be 'good people' we must slay this serpent and confess our sins. We are born with 'original sin' according to most Christian theology, which means we cannot trust our bodies or our longings.

Druidry, in common with Paganism and nature religions worldwide, has a completely different view: it says we are born 'originally blessed' - that our bodies and their needs are not evil, and that to become mature, wise people we need to listen to the wisdom of our bodies, to learn to trust our bodies once again. Wayne Dyer suggests that to seek wholeness we must 'first be a good animal' - in other words, we need to trust our bodies and their needs, rather than trying to subordinate them.

In the seventeenth century, Christianity started to lose its grip on the intelligentsia of Europe, and a movement towards understanding life, freer of religious dogma, was born, and became known as the Enlightenment. But even the Enlightenment philosophers were so conditioned by the split in the human being, engendered by Christianity, that their creed became 'I think, therefore I am.' (The famous 'Cogito Ergo Sum' of Descartes). Few people realised how absurd this was: that it would make more sense to say "I am, therefore I think." And no-one stood up and shouted "What about feeling and acting as well as thinking?" Out of the trinity of mind, heart and body, that makes up the human being, Descartes had separated out the mind and placed it so high above the heart and body, they were not even worth mentioning.

The result of Enlightenment philosophy following Christian theology was disastrous. The gulf between our feelings and our thoughts widened, so that we had tremendous scientific and intellectual progress, but the worlds of love and feeling and desire were neglected. Their energies were repressed in favour of the powers of the mind and Science. It was only with the pioneering work of Freud, followed by the development of psychology and the human potential movement, that there began the long process of healing the wounds of desire separated from thought, that had been inflicted on the human soul over the previous two thousand years.

Rapidly, in the fifty years following the end of the Second World War, as people got in touch again with their desires, wildness found its way back into our lives: wildness appeared in art, in music and in fashion. Then, more recently, as the final decade of the millennium opened, this need for wildness was explained psychologically and

recently, as the final decade of the millennium opened, this need for wildness was explained psychologically and soulfully by two American writers, who - like contemporary Bards - are poet and storyteller. With his book *Iron John*, the poet Robert Bly awoke men to the idea that they should contact the Wild Man within them, and the story-teller and Jungian analyst Clarissa Pinkola Estes with her book *Women Who Run With The Wolves* awoke women to the passion and creative power of the Wild Woman.

Now that we can appreciate wildness culturally and psychologically, we need the energy and the intense sense of aliveness that it brings in our spiritual lives. We need wildness in our spirituality. This is the most pressing issue of our times: to create a love for, and a fostering of wildness and wilderness to compensate for the predominance of civilization in our lives and the world. Now, as human civilization threatens to overwhelm and destroy the Wild, we need to encourage wildness both in ourselves and in the world around us.

The wildness in ourselves is that part of us that longs to live in a way that allows us to holler and run across the grass, and swim naked in a river; to lie beneath the sun, sensing the deep earth beneath us, and feeling the cool breeze across our skin. This part of us is 'The Wild Self' - the part that has been denied for so long by a culture terrified of instinct and feeling. When denied, this Wild Self becomes violent and dangerous, but when accepted into our lives, it transforms itself into a source of creativity and healing. Druidry encourages this Wild Self out of hiding. Sitting in a *Tigh n'Alluis* - a Druid sweat-house - or performing a ceremony beneath a full moon in the forest, or at sunrise in an old stone circle, allows the power of the Wild Self to flow again in our hearts and bodies. Slowly, centuries of repression begin to lift.

When repressed, our wildness expresses itself in violence and destruction. Robert Bly, in speaking of the Wild Man, stresses the fact that we should not confuse wildness with savage cruelty and destructivity: "The distinction between the savage man and the Wild Man is crucial...The savage mode does great damage to soul, earth, and humankind; we can say that though the savage man is wounded he prefers not to examine it. The Wild Man, who has examined his wound, resembles a Zen priest, a shaman, or a woodsman more than a savage."

As we open to the Wild Man or Woman within us, we also need to become aware of a complementary aspect of our Being: the Sage - the Wise Man or Woman. We need to balance the Wildness in our natures with Wisdom. There is a part of our being that seeks understanding, knowledge, spiritual depth, maturity and clarity. This Wise Self needs expression just as the Wild Self does, and the figure of the Druid symbolises these two parts of our Being beautifully. The Druid is both wild and wise, at one with the powers of Nature, but also the archetypal sage, the wise philosopher studying the stars and natural law, drawing conclusions and attempting to fathom the mysteries of Life and Death.

Wild and Wise, Natural and Civilised, 'Primitive' and 'Sophisticated', the Druid combines all these qualities: she is seeress by the fire, healer with herbs, crouching low on the earth, at one with the world of plants and animals. But she is also astronomer and sage, counsellor to kings, philosopher and teacher.

The very word druid combines these two qualities of Wildness and Wisdom: 'Druid' means 'wood sage' or 'one with the wisdom of the oak'. The oak, the forest, is synonymous with the Wild. The sage embodies Wisdom. Just as a tiny seed contains within it the entire blueprint for a mighty tree, so the word Druid, even though it is made up of only two syllables, contains within it the entire blueprint of Druid practice, and shows us the two key ingredients we need to transform our lives. The first syllable 'dru' comes from the word for 'oak' (Irish *daur*, Welsh *derw*) and the second syllable, 'id' come from the Indo-European root *wid*, which means to know. From this root comes the Sanskrit *veda*, and the English words *witness* and *wisdom*. Placed together, these two words tell us to unite within us the qualities of Dru - Wildness - and id - Wisdom.

May the path of Druidry open us to these two qualities within our Being!

Philip.



Serpentstar is a newsletter for OBOD members. Opinions and statements by contributors are not necessarily those of the Order, all submissions from members are welcome.

The deadline for articles for the next newsletter is the last week in February.

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