

# SerpentStar

Newsletter for the Australian and New Zealand members of OBOD

## Alban Elfed, March 2004

From the chapter *'Autumn'*

*The earth is but one pearl  
in a necklace of stars,  
gracing the beauty  
of mother sky.*

*The ocean is but many raindrops  
dripping from the leaves  
reflecting many images  
of one flower.*

*'Songs of the Seasons - A Collection of Len  
Poetry and Paintings' - Stephen Cassettari*

Night's Fragrance in My Garden -  
A Parting at Twilight -

At sundown  
She rises,  
Her face still aglow  
From the warmth  
Of His golden light  
Upon Her.

She stretches  
Her graceful limbs,  
Now treading softly  
On dew covered grass.  
Leaving behind  
Only shadows  
Upon the land...  
Rigatona -  
Great Queen of the Earth.

His languid rays  
Play longingly  
Around His love  
As He bids Her "Stay",  
Before He drowns  
Once again  
In His twilight  
Ocean of rebirth.

Silver crown  
On raven hair  
She walks  
Moonbeams  
Through the gardens,  
Caressing lovingly  
Herbs, flowers and trees,  
As the gentle night wind  
Blows shimmering  
Silken garments  
About Her  
Like a bridal veil  
Of mist.

So silently  
I watch you  
My Lady...  
A haunting shadow  
Bathed in pearly moonlight,  
As you  
Pass through the grove  
Feeling  
Your presence  
When your perfume  
Suffuses my senses  
Until I  
Drink in deeply  
The sweet, spicy fragrance  
Of cool night's Earth.



### A JOURNEY OF DARKNESS

I have walked through  
The darkness of my soul.  
That time of quiet,  
Clouded silence.  
I've wandered  
The caverns, old.  
Each stage of my journey  
Lay now after  
The footsteps of my feet.  
Nothing is in vain  
Despite despair and pain.  
Yet I appear now,  
Alight again somehow.  
Yes, the sun cometh  
Although there were times  
When thoughts that this  
Would not be so.  
Still, I should have known.

This light,  
Always will I carry it  
Within me.  
Just as the mabon  
Is able to relight the  
Whole world  
From one tiny flame,  
So too can I heed  
That in my life.  
And see with new eyes



### The Planet

As the sun goes down  
The moon comes out to  
Play and shines down on  
The groves of man. And  
On the beings who inhabit  
them.  
In their glory.

The elements we to admire.  
The forces of the planet  
Our home of plenty.  
The planet has no price tag.  
To ask for

Nature in the wild  
Uncontrolled by man  
But we can enhance  
By our actions and  
Efforts to acclaim  
What is ours, our planet.  
Of man.

Patrick Murphy







## StormWolf's Ramblings



Hello everyone!

I hope this issue of SerpentStar finds you well!

The more astute of you may have noticed that the postmark on the envelope says Western Australia. I am currently over this side of the country, on a journey of discovery, both of this country, and of myself.

Over the last few weeks, I have met, stayed with, celebrated, and adventured, with some of you!

I spent a wonderful Lughnasadh with Melbourne Grove, have experienced my first sweatlodge, been to a full moon drumming circle, and, when you get this, will probably be at a meditation retreat!

I have seen so much of this amazing country, and met so many lovely people. I have been to places I have never been to before, been down into the belly of Mother Earth a few times (there is something wonderfully calming about being in a cave), swam on an (almost) deserted beach, seen new birds and plants, and have experienced the fun of getting a flat tyre on the Nullarbor!! It has definitely been a learning experience!

Anyway, enough about me! This issue of SerpentStar is absolutely packed with wonderful contributions!

There is more news on the Assembly for this year, a Taliesin play by Keira, as well as some of her thoughts on Lughnasadh, and lots of poetry!

Enjoy!

*StormWolf*

**Southern Echoes**, a book of poetry and prose by Druids living in the Southern Hemisphere, can be ordered by sending a cheque or money order to-

C/- Southern Echoes  
24 Torquata Blvd  
Helena Valley WA 6056

Cost is \$12.50 Au + postage of \$3/copy in Aust.  
\$6/copy international  
Cheques should be payable to Murray Barton.

Part proceeds go to the Wilderness Society  
WildCountry campaign.

[http://members.iinet.net.au/~muzzadruidry/southern\\_echoes.html](http://members.iinet.net.au/~muzzadruidry/southern_echoes.html)

## Websites

[www.druidry.org](http://www.druidry.org) - Website of the Order of  
Bards, Ovates, and Druids

<http://members.dodo.com.au/~stormwolf>  
- My website!

## No Dogs Allowed

*Offered at Winter Solstice, Pukerua Bay, 2001*

Build the earth into order  
replace the tree  
with wooden posts  
and the metal  
into poles and pieces  
of construction  
constructing another jungle  
where man hunts man  
and there is no room  
for dogs

only the sounds and shapes  
of you, and I am not you,  
I don't want my world to  
reflect anything  
but itself.

In ten thousand moons  
will your inability  
to appreciate, and need to impose remain?

Will people come together  
to worship in the relics you leave?

The moon, I have found  
is just fine

and thankfully noone...yet  
had changed it, except for  
the cosmos itself.

Tread warily my friend  
you must give back, for what you take  
and the greatest gift  
is to leave it as it is,  
and learn what it has to say.

*Unikorn*

## Disclaimer

Opinions published in this newsletter are not necessarily the opinions of the editor or the Order.

## Submission/Subscription Details

Subscription is \$10 per year for four issues, or free via email. Email format is Adobe Acrobat (.pdf). Please let me know if you require a different format.

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# The Tale of Taliesin

Adaptation by Keira Lyons.

Adapted for performance from the story found in OBOD Gwers 2 (revised edition).

*Shadow puppets of the transformed animals have been created to aid in the telling of this tale.*

Ceridwen: Modron  
Afagddu: South

Gwion & Taliesin: Page  
Elffin: Knight



**Herald:** The great Druid Merlin once said, 'Since I, Merlin, am second only to Taliesin, let my words be heard as truth.' For this reason some say that the secret name of the island of Merlin, is Taliesin's Isle – the isle of poets and dreamers, and seekers of wisdom.

But I have forgotten my place and begun at the end. If it pleases you my friends, journey forth with me and we shall seek to find a beginning....

Once, long ago, before the great battle of Camlan, at which King Arthur died, there lived a Lord and Lady in a great castle by Lake Bala.

**Ceridwen:** The Lady was none other than the Goddess Ceridwen, queen of the harvest and of the sickle-moon. With her flowing red hair, deep blue eyes, and fine, broad shoulders, she inspired awe and devotion in some, fear and loathing in others.

**Herald:** Lady Ceridwen and her husband Lord Tegrid bore two children. Lord Tegrid treasured his daughter Creirwy, but he could hardly bear to look at their son Morfran, whom they sometimes called Afagddu - Utter Darkness - so repulsive was his face.

**Guardian:** Determined that if her son could not be handsome, then at least he could be inspired and illumined, Ceridwen made the journey to the secret city of Druid alchemists known as Dinas Affaraon, to discover from the Pheryllt (as these alchemists were called) the formula for the creation of Awen.

**Scribe:** The Awen! The magical elixir of the Druids that would bring enlightenment and joy to whoever tasted but three of its drops.

**Recorder:** The Pheryllt agreed to her request. And upon her return she began at once the preparations for making the brew which would bring the Awen to her son.

**Ritualist:** In the moonlight on the lakeshore, Ceridwen stretched her arms out to the lake and began to lift them up gently to the waxing moon.

*All members sound the Awen underneath Ceridwen's incantation. Afagddu begins crouched as tightly as possible in front of his mother. As she chants he slowly unfurls and rises, radiant, arms stretched skyward – glowing with inspiration.*

**Ceridwen** (chants 3 times):

'Out of the womb, out of the boundless to the world of time, out from the deep I ask you to come, O vision of mine, desire of mine, yearning of mine.'

**North:** The Book of the Pheryllt had told her that she must prepare a cauldron, (*Herald places cauldron in centre*) filled with fresh water, into which she must strew herbs and roots, gathered at special times of the day and night. All were to be boiled for a year and a day within the great iron cauldron.

**Guardian:** Ceridwen had engaged Morda, an old, blind man of the forest and his guide Gwion Bach (Little Innocent) to tend to the brew as it cooked through the seasons. She warned Gwion and Morda, for the ninth time:

**Ceridwen:** (*addressing all members of the circle but finishing on Gwion*)

Do not taste the brew to which you tend. The first three drops bring the Bright Knowledge that I seek for my son. The rest of the brew brings only Balcful Knowledge, and misery to all it touches. Those first three drops are for my son alone.

**Herald:** The year passed slowly. With only one day before Afagddu was due to receive the three sacred drops, Ceridwen and her hapless son returned to the cottage, and seated themselves beside the cauldron. As midnight approached, they both fell asleep. Morda sensed the fire dying down, and ordered Gwion to toss more logs beneath the cauldron. As he did so, the mixture spluttered and boiled over. Three drops flew on to Gwion's thumb, scalding it, and without a thought he sucked them from his burning skin.



**Herald:** In that instant, Gwion knew everything. He knew that in a second Ceridwen would awake, and that in her fury she would seek to kill him. He ran.

**Gwion runs on the spot. Ceridwen awakens and screams with rage. She chases Gwion (running on the spot behind him, slowly stretching out her arms, her fingers to his throat).**

**Herald:** In minutes, Ceridwen, spurred by a mighty rage was within inches of seizing Gwion by the throat. She stretched out her arms and just as her long fingernails began to press into the flesh of his neck, he transformed himself – with just a thought – into a hare.

**Gwion & Ceridwen return to their places**

**Herald gives NORTH the hare and EAST the greyhound.**

**North:** Darting from Ceridwen's grasp, he soon had the advantage.

**East:** But Ceridwen was not to be outwitted. With the power of the goddess of the changing moon, she turned herself at once into a greyhound, and the chase continued.

**North:** She rushed forward with snarling mouth, but as the dog's sharp teeth were about to sink into the terrified creature, both animals found themselves rushing headlong into a fast-flowing stream.

**The Herald hands SOUTH the salmon and WEST the otter.**

**West:** Gwion transformed himself into a salmon, and within seconds he was downstream. But Ceridwen, within seconds too, had transformed herself into an otter, and continued to relentlessly pursue her quarry.

**South:** And just as her otter's claws reached for Gwion's silver skin, he changed into a bird, lifting his body out of the water and high into the air.

**The Herald hands PENDRAGON the bird and MODRON the hawk.**

**Modron:** But in a moment she turned herself into a hawk, and was soon soaring high above Gwion.

**Pendragon:** He spied a pile of winnowed grain and decided that he would become a grain of wheat.

**All:** Surely she would never find him there!

**Mabon (taking the bird & sending it into the wheat pile):** He plummeted down from the sky and, as his bird-body hit the soft pile of grain, turned himself into one tiny wheat-seed.

**Ritualist:** Ceridwen flew to the ground, and with icy determination skin-changed once more into the form of a large black, red-crested hen (*Ceridwen transforms into the hen*).

**Herald:** With uncanny precision her beak thrust its way into the pile, and picked and swallowed the one grain among thousands that was Gwion Bach.

**Ceridwen (stepping forward with child):** But the seed quickened inside her – Gwion had become a babe once more – and for nine months he grew inside the womb of the goddess who had tried to destroy him. When the baby was born, the child was so fair and beautiful she could not find it in her heart to kill it. She held the child close until it was time to release him to his destiny. She placed him in a bag of leather, and cast it into the sea.

**Members hold material upon which the baby bag floats.**

**Elffin:** After nine months in the Ocean womb, the bag was snared in the salmon-weir and found by Elffin, son of Lord Garanhir. Elffin lifted the bag out of the water, raised his dagger to it, and slit it open. In wonder he gazed at the baby before him.

**Elffin (holding the baby high):** Behold, a radiant brow – Taliesin!

**Taliesin:** And the baby boy within the bag sat up, and smiling, gazed directly into Elffin's eyes, saying 'Taliesin it is!'

**All:** Taliesin it is!



## 7th Australian OBOD Assembly

Hi everyone! Denis and I would like to invite you to attend the 7th Australian OBOD Assembly at our property in Kingaroy Queensland on the weekend of 25th September 2004.

We have a small slice of heaven on 160 acres which we would love to share with you all. Part of the land is under cultivation and the rest consists of grazing country which has some beautiful bushland interspersed with light forest. There are some wonderful trees, including several species of ironbark, eucalypts and bloodwoods, crows ash, pines and more. Mount Wooroolin rises to the North behind us. This is a long extinct volcano which radiates its energy across our land, creating a deep sense of peace and tranquillity and so there are some very special spots around the property. It is a small mountain but from its summit there is a wonderful panoramic view for miles across the surrounding district.

The land abounds with wildlife and is a bird lover's paradise with about 140 species identified now, many of which are daily visitors for "take aways and spa facilities" in our garden. We are just working on "Willow Glenn", which is an area of over 70 bird attracting shrubs and trees close to the house. It is designed as a small, dense maze and we hope that it will encourage our finches and wrens to nest closer to our home, once it has matured. We are fortunate as we have some dense scrub areas, the open forest plus a dam (when it has water!) so we do get a diverse selection of birdlife. Grey kangaroos, wallabies, possums, sugar gliders, echidnas, frilly lizards, goannas, blue tongue lizards, many other lizard species, and snakes, make up our native animals. Very occasionally we get a visit from a solitary koala. There is also a flying fox colony, at certain times of the year, in the heavier forest that borders us at the base of the mountain. They hang in the trees like giant overripe fruits during the day but, at night, the sky is black for over half an hour as they pass overhead.

We have several walking tracks around our land to enjoy these blessings from nature.

Kingaroy is famous for Sir Joh Bjelke Peterson and the peanut! The latter of which is arguably the best in the world. The area also grows navy beans and other grain crops and a more recent endeavour has been grapes, with several vineyards and wineries emerging - complete with tours.

The South Burnett has so much to offer that some of you may like to linger for a while as the Assembly will be held in the school vacation period for most states. Kingaroy is central to many interesting destinations.

The popular Sunshine coast (Noosa) and Hervey Bay, which is famous for whale watching, are only two and a half hours away. Whale watching season starts in Sept/Oct. The beaches are beautiful, fishing great. Fraser Island, the largest sand Island in the World, is an enjoyable day trip from Hervey Bay, with incredible scenery on the Island.

The Bunya Mountains ([www.bunyamountains.com](http://www.bunyamountains.com)) are about an hour due South. This is a beautiful temperate rain forest with walking tracks, waterfalls, and massive rock formations, spectacular look outs and very tame parrots. There are some spectacular strangler figs, plus the massive Bunya pines from which the mountains get their name. The Bunya nuts were a very important food source for the original inhabitants of this land. They would meet every three years to gather the nuts, carving steps, which can still be seen as scars, into the trees to climb up. Corroborees were held to celebrate the harvest. Some trees also bear scars in the shape of the canoes which were carefully cut from their bark. It takes an entire day at least to do justice to the Bunya Mountains. There is a very good camping area or cabins available for a prolonged visit.

Cherbourg aboriginal settlement is 45 minutes away from Kingaroy. The community runs an emu farm which is open to the public and they also have an interesting visitors centre with art and craft for sale. ([tourism.southburnett.com.au/towncherbourg.htm](http://tourism.southburnett.com.au/towncherbourg.htm))

Kingaroy has a Bora ring only a few minutes out of town, which is of interest.

Proston gemfields are about an hour away. Fossickers can expect to find, jasper, agate, bloodstone, petrified wood, amethyst, carnelian and garnets. Leura Joy gemfields run a camping area for visitors.

A little further afield, at Kilkivan, one and a half hours drive, is a working goldmine, Prophet Goldmine, where visitors can try their hand at gold panning.

Further information on any of the above and more attractions can be found on the website ([tourism.southburnett.com.au](http://tourism.southburnett.com.au)) which is very comprehensive.

Our property has unlimited camping space and "Bear Cottage", where I create my teddy bears, ("Cherry bears"), will have a limited number of camp stretchers, available on a 'first in best dressed' basis. In case of a downpour we have Denis' shed, which could bed down an army at need. We live only 3.4 kms from town where there are several motels, hotels and a caravan park which has villas, cabins, vans and camping grounds, so there is a wide variety of accommodation available.

If you have any queries regarding travel arrangements, or need any other information please contact us. Expressions of interest would be welcome, even at this early stage so that we can get a rough idea of numbers.

Hoping to hear from you and perhaps meet you on the 25th and 26th September.

Bush blessings,

Cherry and Denis Carroll

Contact - PO Box 17, Kingaroy Queensland 4610

Assembly website:



# LIGHTHOUSE

## Journal entries - Keira

The candle ignites - it is nearing the end of its wick.  
As the last of its supportive wax flows forth - out and around - the flame leaps and flares - hissing - burning higher than ever it has done before.

The end charges us. The end provokes a fight.  
But in the end, we can but surrender and let the fire go  
As we become the light itself.

~

We of the world keep each other balanced.  
In the North, they are reflecting - internal.  
Here in the South, we are action - external.  
And so we continue around, balancing our beings -  
alas, thinking how unimportant and small we are in the scheme of things.

If only we knew.  
If only we knew...

That the ocean we fear to drown in  
The air we fear will be taken away  
The sun we fear will scorch us  
The earth we fear will someday reclaim us

Is us.  
So mighty.  
So strong.

Fear it naught my children.  
Fear it naught.

~

As a child I lay - grinning in oblivion of the cause - with my belly on the ground of my Mother.  
Her grass gently brushing my face, tickling me (more grinning) and my ear open wide -

Listening.

Shhhh - there - Her heartbeat...

Can you hear it?

So strong. So constant.  
A rhythm to aspire to. The resounding vibration pulsing through my tiny body.  
Giant's footsteps within me.  
A giant's journey to prepare for.

And no need to worry  
For I had trust  
In my Mother  
In the sky above me  
In the sun and the stars  
In myself.

As I grew up, my need to resist increased.  
The human desire to push up and off. To push against. To contest... That grew too.  
And I found my head neither in the clouds or of the Earth - just lost in space. Brushing through residual webs of words, of fear, of darkness and death.

I did not listen to my feet - so firmly planted in Mother.  
I did not listen to my self.  
Just, to the words.

Sometimes spoken to me - sometimes silently. And sometimes I spoke them too.  
So much noise on such a different frequency to that of Mother's voice (which I then strived to tune out - scared of Her honesty, Her love, Her overwhelming confidence in me)

But still, She was there.  
Still, She loved.

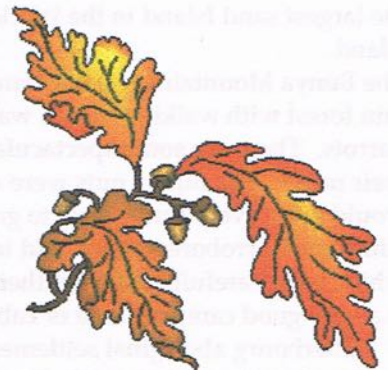
Until I stood still, and listened.  
And I heard Her, calling me home.

—

One day Mother, I shall return to you completely, and I shall be consumed into your embrace.  
But until that day, I shall walk this Earth and remind my brothers and sisters of our heritage, and strive to unblock our dams - holding back the love that we foolishly fear will sweep us away from ourselves.

Fiercely afraid to let go.  
To surrender.

I hold my white flag high Mother,  
I wave it with pride  
And an oblivious grin...  
I let you into my home, until it is time for me to visit yours.  
I let you in.  
I let you in.





## The Lady of the Lake



High up in a hollow of the Black Mountains of South Wales is a lonely sheet of water called Llyn y Fan Fach.

In a farm not far from this lake there lived in the olden time a widow, with an only son whose name was Gwyn. When this son grew up, he was often sent by his mother to look after the cattle grazing. The place where the sweetest food was to be found was near the lake, and it was thither that the mild-eyed beasts wandered whenever they had their will. One day when Gwyn was walking along the banks of the mere, watching the kine cropping the short grass, he was astonished to see a lady standing in the clear smooth water, some distance from the land.

She was the most beautiful creature that he had ever set eyes upon, and she was combing her long hair with a golden comb, the unruffled surface of the lake serving her as a mirror.

He stood on the brink, gazing fixedly at the maiden, and straightway knew that he loved her. As he gazed, he unconsciously held out to her the barley-bread and cheese which his mother had given him before he left home. The lady gradually glided towards him, but shook her head as he continued to hold out his hand, and saying:

Cras dy fara,            O thou of the crimped bread,  
Nid hawdd fy nala,    It is not easy to catch me,

she dived under the water, and disappeared from his sight.

He went home, full of sorrow, and told his mother of the beautiful vision which he had seen. As they pondered over the strange words used by the mysterious lady before she plunged out of sight, they came to the conclusion that there must have been some spell connected with the hard-baked bread, and the mother advised her son to take with him some "toes," or unbaked dough, when next he went to the lake.

Next morning, long before the sun appeared above the crest of the mountain, Gwyn was by the lake with the dough in his hand, anxiously waiting for the Lady of the Lake to appear above the surface. The sun rose, scattering with his powerful beams the mists which veiled the high ridges around, and mounted high in the heavens. Hour after hour the youth watched the waters, but hour after hour there was nothing to be seen except the ripples raised by the breeze and the sunbeams dancing upon them. By the late afternoon despair had crept over the watcher, and he was on the point of turning his footsteps homeward when to his intense delight the lady again appeared above the sunlit ripples. She seemed even more beautiful than before, and Gwyn, forgetting in admiration of her fairness all that he had carefully prepared to say, could only hold out his hand, offering to her the dough. She refused the gift with a shake of the head as before, adding the words:

Llaith dy fara,        O thou of the moist bread,  
Ti ni fynna.          I will not have thee.

Then she vanished under the water, but before she sank out of sight, she smiled upon the youth so sweetly and so graciously that his heart became fuller than ever of love. As he walked home slowly and sadly, the remembrance of her smile consoled him and awakened the hope that when next she appeared she would not refuse his gift. He told his mother what had happened, and she advised him, inasmuch as the lady had refused both hard-baked and unbaked bread, to take with him next time bread that was half-baked.

That night he did not sleep a wink, and long before the first twilight he was walking the margin of the lake with half-baked bread in his hand, watching its smooth surface even more impatiently than the day before.

The sun rose and the rain came, but the youth heeded nothing as he eagerly strained his gaze over the water. Morning wore to afternoon, and afternoon to evening, but nothing met the eyes of the anxious watcher but the waves and the myriad dimples made in them by the rain.

The shades of night began to fall, and Gwyn was about to depart in sore disappointment, when, casting a last farewell look over the lake, he beheld some cows walking on its surface. The sight of these beasts made him hope that they would be followed by the Lady of the Lake, and, sure enough, before long the maiden emerged from the water. She seemed lovelier than ever, and Gwyn was almost beside himself with joy at her appearance. His rapture increased when he saw that she was gradually approaching the land, and he rushed into the water to meet her, holding out the half-baked bread in his hand. She, smiling, took his gift, and allowed him to lead her to dry land. Her beauty dazzled him, and for some time he could do nothing but gaze upon her. And as he gazed upon her he saw that the sandal on her right foot was tied in a peculiar manner. She smiled so graciously upon him that he at last recovered his speech and said, "Lady, I love you more than all the world besides and want you to be my wife."

She would not consent at first. He pleaded, however, so earnestly that she at last promised to be his bride, but only on the following condition. "I will wed you," she said, "and I will live with you until I receive from you three blows without a cause--tri ergyd diachos. When you strike me the third causeless blow I will leave you for ever."

He was protesting that he would rather cut off his hand than employ it in such a way, when she suddenly darted from him and dived into the lake. His grief and disappointment was so sore that he determined to put an end to his life by casting himself headlong into the deepest water of the lake. He rushed to the top of a great rock overhanging the water, and was on the point of jumping in when he heard a loud voice saying, "Forbear, rash youth, and come hither."

He turned and beheld on the shore of the lake some distance from the rock a hoary-headed old man of majestic mien, accompanied by two maidens. He descended from the rock in fear and trembling, and the old man addressed him in comforting accents.

"Mortal, thou wishest to wed one of these my daughters. I will consent to the union if thou wilt point out to me the one thou lovest."



Gwyn gazed upon the two maidens, but they were so exactly similar in stature, apparel and beauty that he could not see the slightest difference between them. They were such perfect counterparts of each other that it seemed quite impossible to say which of them had promised to be his bride, and the thought that if perchance he fixed upon the wrong one all would be for ever lost nearly drove him to distraction. He was almost giving up the task in despair when one of the two maidens very quietly thrust her foot slightly forward. The motion, simple as it was, did not escape the attention of the youth, and looking down he saw the peculiar shoe-tie which he had observed on the sandal of the maiden who had accepted his half-baked bread. He went forward and boldly took hold of her hand.

"Thou hast chosen rightly," said the old man, "be to her a kind and loving husband, and I will give her as a dowry as many sheep, cattle, goats, swine and horses as she can count of each without drawing in her breath. But remember, if thou strikest her three causeless blows, she shall return to me."

Gwyn was overjoyed, and again protested that he would rather lop off all his limbs than do such a thing. The old man smiled, and turning to his daughter desired her to count the number of sheep she wished to have. She began to count by fives--one, two, three, four, five--one, two, three, four, five--one, two, three, four, five--as many times as she could until her breath was exhausted. In an instant as many sheep as she had counted emerged from the water. Then the father asked her to count the cattle she desired. One, two, three, four, five--one, two, three, four, five--one, two, three, four, five--she went on counting until she had to draw in her breath again. Without delay, black cattle to the number she had been able to reach came, lowing out of the mere. In the same way she counted the goats, swine and horses she wanted, and the full tale of each kind ranged themselves alongside the sheep and cattle. Then the old man and his other daughter vanished.

The Lady of the Lake and Gwyn were married amid great rejoicing, and took up their home at a farm named Esgair Llaethdy, where they lived for many years. They were as happy as happy can be, everything prospered with them, and three sons were born to them.

When the eldest boy was seven years old, there was a wedding some distance away, to which Nelferch--for that was the name the Lady of the Lake gave herself--and her husband were specially invited. When the day came, the two started and were walking through a field in which some of their horses were grazing, when Nelferch said that the distance was too great for her to walk and she would rather not go. "We must go," said her husband, "and if you do not like to walk, you can ride one of these horses. Do you catch one of them while I go back to the house for the saddle and bridle."

"I will," she said. "At the same time bring me my gloves. I have forgotten them--they are on the table."

He went back to the house, and when he returned with the saddle and bridle and gloves, he found to his surprise that she had not stirred from the spot where he had left her. Pointing to the horses, he playfully flicked her with the gloves and said, "Go, go (dos, dos)."

"This is the first causeless blow," she said with a sigh, and reminded him of the condition upon which she had married him, a condition which he had almost forgotten.

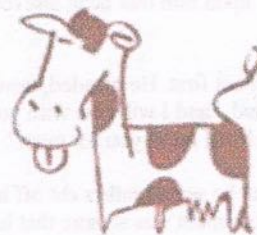
Many years after, they were both at a christening. When all the guests were full of mirth and hilarity, Nelferch suddenly burst into tears and sobbed piteously. Gwyn tapped her on the shoulder and asked her why she wept. "I weep," she said, "because this poor innocent babe is so weak and frail that it will have no joy in this world. Pain and suffering will fill all the days of its brief stay on earth, and in the agony of torture will it depart this life. And, husband, thou hast struck me the second causeless blow."

After this, Gwyn was on his guard day and night not to do anything which could be regarded as a breach of their marriage covenant. He was so happy in the love of Nelferch and his children that he knew his heart would break if through some accident he gave the last and only blow which would take his dear wife from him. Some time after, the babe whose christening they had attended, after a short life of pain and suffering, died in agony, as Nelferch had foretold. Gwyn and the Lady of the Lake went to the funeral, and in the midst of the mourning and grief, Nelferch laughed merrily, causing all to stare at her in astonishment. Her husband was so shocked at her high spirits on so sad an occasion, that he touched her, saying, "Hush, wife, why dost thou laugh?"

"I laugh," she replied, "because the poor babe is at last happy and free from pain and suffering." Then rising she said, "The last blow has been struck. Farewell."

She started off immediately towards Esgair Llaethdy, and when she arrived home, she called her cattle and other stock together, each by name. The cattle she called thus:

Mu wlfrech, moelfrech,	Brindled cow, bold freckled,
Mu olfrech, gwynfrech,	Spotted cow, white speckled;
Pedair cae tonn-frech,	Ye four field sward mottled.
Yr hen wynebwen,	The old white-faced,
A'r las Geigen,	And the grey Geigen
Gyda'r tarw gwyn	With the white bull
O lys y Brenin,	From the court of the King,
A'r llo du bach,	And thou little black calf,
Sydd ar y bach,	Suspended on the hook,
Dere dithe, yn iach adre!	Come thou also, whole again, home.



They all immediately obeyed the summons of their mistress. The little black calf, although it had been killed, came to life again, and descending from the hook, walked off with the rest of the cattle, sheep, goats, swine and horses at the command of the Lady of the Lake.

It was the spring of the year, and there were four oxen ploughing in one of the fields. To these she cried:



Y pedwar eidion glas,    Ye four grey oxen,  
 Sydd ar y ma's,    That are on the field,  
 Deuwch chwitho    Come you also  
 Yn iach adre!    Whole and well home!

Away went the whole of the live stock with the Lady across the mountain to the lake from whence they had come, and disappeared beneath its waters. The only trace they left was the furrow made by the plough which the oxen drew after them into the lake; this remains to this day.

Gwyn's heart was broken. He followed his wife to the lake, crushed with woe, and put an end to his misery by plunging into the depths of the cold water. The three sons distracted with grief, almost followed their father's example, and spent most of their days wandering about the lake in the hope of seeing their lost mother once more. Their love was at last rewarded, for one day Nelferch appeared suddenly to them.

She told them that their mission on earth was to relieve the pain and misery of mankind. She took them to a place which is still called the Physician's Dingle (Pant y Meddygon), where she showed them the virtues of the plants and herbs which grew there, and taught them the art of healing.

Profiting by their mother's instruction, they became the most skilful physicians in the land. Rhys Grug, Lord of Llandovery and Dynevor Castles, gave them rank, lands and privileges at Myddfai for their maintenance in the practice of their art and for the healing and benefit of those who should seek their help. The fame of the Physicians of Myddfai was established over the whole of Wales, and continued for centuries among their descendants.

From: The Welsh Fairy Book by W. Jenkyn Thomas [1908]

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/celt/wfb/index.htm>

## Full Moon on the Beach

*Waves cascading against the sand;  
 Full moon glowing  
 sending shimmering rays across the water;  
 One bright star – then two – then three  
 appearing in the darkening sky –  
 Just magic!*

*Dark clouds now looming below the moon,  
 threatening the tranquil calm of the night;  
 The crescent of the ocean horizon touching the sky;  
 creating a mystical dome;*

*We cast long shadows across the sand –  
 We dream our dreams;  
 each to their own;*

*Bright night lights of the city behind us,  
 where life is full of glitter and glitz –  
 rush and bustle;  
 unreality;*

*We sit her in our own world;  
 our own reality;  
 Feeling the joy of the full moon rising,  
 higher and higher  
 on its journey in the ethereal world;  
 Complete wonderment and  
 awe at all creation.*



## Seasonal Recipes

### Irish Soda Bread



1 lb plain flour  
 ¼ lb butter  
 ¼ lb sugar  
 pinch of salt

1 teaspoon cream of tartar

½ lb sultanas

2 oz chopped peel

½ pint (generous) sour milk (to sour milk, add some lemon juice to it and sit aside for an hour)

1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda

1. Sieve dry ingredients together
2. Rub in butter until like fine breadcrumbs
3. Stir in sugar and fruit
4. Add the milk and mix to a soft dough
5. Knead slightly
6. Place in a greased loaf tin and bake in a hot oven for one hour, turn down heat to moderate and bake for further ½ hour
7. Cool before cutting. Slice and butter

### Cornish Syllabub



4oz castor sugar  
 Juice of two oranges  
 1 pint cream  
 4 tablespoons cider  
 Juice of two lemons  
 Pinch of cinnamon  
 4 tablespoons brandy



1. Grate the peel off the fruits and squeeze the juice.
2. Mix with the cider and brandy, sugar and cinnamon and leave overnight.
3. Next day, mix in the cream and chill.
4. Serve with fresh fruit in small glasses

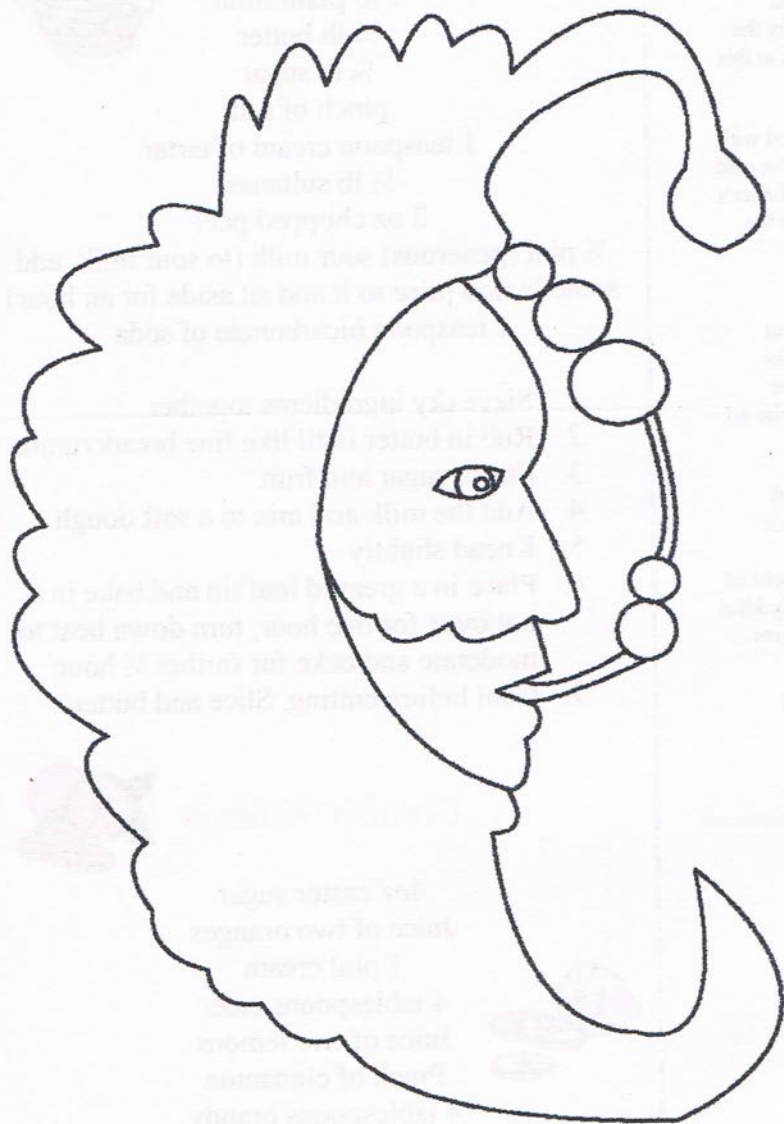
From 'Celtic Cookbook' - Helen Smith-Twiddy

### For anyone travelling to the Assembly:

You are welcome to spend a night or more at our property at Inverell in northern NSW, if you come through that way. There are many lovely National Parks and things within an hour or three's drive.



# Children's Page!



From the Greenman  
Coloring Book  
by  
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[ravenfox@sacredspiral.com](mailto:ravenfox@sacredspiral.com)

D C G W Y D D I O N A X L D Z  
P R Y D E R I G L R D L U P L  
P W Y L L Q F O L H A N G P C  
L K S O L L E C U S U N H M F  
M A B A L O R A B B N O P C M  
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N A C T J G U S A E A E D R I  
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A E D L L M H G D H I M U U V  
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A L R E Y S C E I D X L C N R  
N T A W R T H A E I L E B O R  
U H C I A U R C M M O R C S A

## CELTIC GODS

AENGUS MACOG	DONN
ARAWEN	FINVARRA
BALOR	GOIBNIU
BELI	GWYBIDION
BRAN	LLEW
BRES	LLYR
CARADOC	LUGH
CERNUNNOS	MANNANAN
CROMM CRUAICH	NUADA
CULHWCH	OGHMA
DAGDA	PRYDERI
DIANCECHT	PWYLL
	SUCELLOS