

# SerpentStar

Newsletter for the Australian and New Zealand members of OBOD

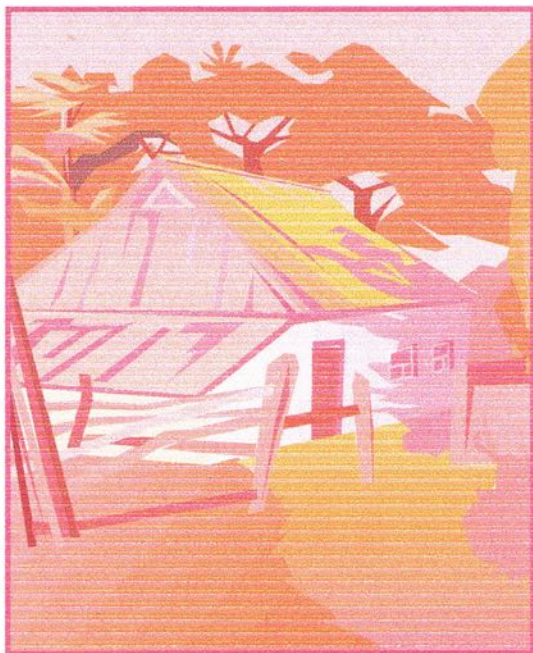
**Alban Hefin, December 2005**

From the Chapter: *'Summer'*

A full moon,  
a warm night.  
The crickets sing  
lullabies for the  
flowers.



Songs of the Seasons: A Collection of Zen Poems and  
Paintings – by Stephen Cassettari



*Somewhere there's a little house  
amongst a grove of trees  
A narrow dirt track meanders through the scrub  
leading to a friendly open door  
Simple – homely – gentle*

*Somewhere there's a little house  
Open verandahs on all sides  
A pot-belly stove so warm and cozy  
A cauldron of hot soup bubbling cheerfully  
Wafting – enticing – welcoming*

*Somewhere there's a little house  
A vegie garden out the back  
Roses and pretty daisies nod their heads  
Sweet Jasmine fills the air at night  
Stars blink brighter in the darkest sky  
Ethereal – stillness – awesome*

*Somewhere there's a little house  
Chickens scratching freely  
A little dog for company  
Somewhere there's a little house – for me  
Calling – waiting – longing*

*Someday I'll find my little house  
amongst the grove of trees  
I'll find that meandering narrow dirt track  
and the dog for company  
I'll smell that welcoming cauldron bubbling  
Contentment – peaceful – inspiring!*

- raelene taylor

DANCE THE DRAGON SEE IT WEAVE,  
TWISTING THROUGH YOUR HOPES AND DREAMS,  
FEEL THE POWER EBB AND FLOW,  
UNDER ERIDANUS' GLOW.

DANCE THE WAVE, SURGE AND SIGH  
DANCE THE WAVE, THE DRAGON'S CRY







## STORMWOLF'S RAMBLINGS



Hi everyone,

As you have no doubt noticed, this issue is incredibly late! lol

At the beginning of December, everything was under control and SerpentStar was nearly finished. Then, to my horror, it was Christmas day, then New Year, and the newsletter still hadn't gone out! Doh! I just don't know where the time went!

Ah well, it is out now, better late than never as they say!

The Assembly in October was great! See the review next page, as well as the dragon chant on the first page, and the Syd song in the next column. Animals are wonderful. Syd seemed to know just what to do during the ceremonies!

There was also a Druid camp in New Zealand last year, so hopefully there will be a report for you next issue.

We have had some welcome rain up here in northern NSW. After a few weeks of 35°+ we are now having hot days, and stormy afternoons. We even had a day last week that was only 26°!

The garden is growing well, especially the vegie patch. The pumpkins have just about taken over!

So far we haven't had too many bushfires this season. At least this year we have had some rain, so the threat is less. I just hope it stays that way.

It is sad to see the violence that went on in Cronulla last month. We think here in Australia we are away from all that, but apparently not. The thing that is the worst though is that people always want someone to blame. Can't they just accept it has happened and try to work together so it doesn't happen again? Why does there always have to be a scapegoat. Is it because people don't want to admit their own guilt?

I'll get off my soapbox now, enjoy the issue! ☺

*StormWolf*

### 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.

Submissions can be sent via email:

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Syd

## Syd the Bard

Syd the Sea Dog from down Jervis Bay,  
With the Clarke Gable look and the winning way,  
Walks the circle with a step so proud,  
Just happy to be with the Druid crowd,

*Chorus:- Dog days, good days, here's to Syd,  
To friendship and laughter and the things we did.*

They made a bard of this gentle soul,  
And he drank the water from the scrying bowl,  
With a lift of a leg the circle was blessed,  
Then Syd The Bard took his place in the West,

*Chorus:- Dog days, good days, here's to Syd,  
To friendship and laughter and the things we did.*

He danced the spiral at the Dragon's side,  
To the rhythm of the drum and the crashing tide,  
And he gave to the Earth at the Southern gate,  
While the Druids formed a queue in the West to  
wait,

*Chorus:- Dog days, good days, here's to Syd,  
To friendship and laughter and the things we did.*

So raise you glass and give a cheer,  
For the old Sea Dog that we all hold dear,  
And sing

*Dog days, good days, here's to Syd,  
To friendship and laughter and the things we did.*

*By Cherry Carroll*

## Websites

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

<http://camps.druidry.org/> - OBODs website of Druid camps. Feel free to send any pics etc. from previous



## **The Eighth Australian Assembly held 28<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> October 2005 at Currajong, NSW**

We arrived at Carole's on Friday around lunchtime, myself and my travelling companions who I had managed to get lost on the way down! Luckily they didn't throw me out, and we spent a nice night in a pub at Picton.

There was no-one about at Carole's house, but we soon spied a notice on the stairs to phone Carol for directions to our 'Druid House'. Our guide arrived and we were taken a few blocks away to the little holiday house we would be sharing for the next few days.

After many hugs and hello's, we settled in. Throughout the weekend, we all took turns preparing and cooking meals, with each person helping where they could. The whole weekend was filled with a wonderful sense of community. There was plenty of time for walks along the beach (and finding I'm not the only one who collects shells and rocks), and during the day music would spontaneously spring up and we would find ourselves singing along. There are so many talented musicians among us. Unfortunately, due to flying to the assembly, Lesley couldn't bring her collection of musical instruments for us to play. Instead we had Carole's guitar and Trudy's banjo.

The ceremonies were held in the back yard of the Druid House, beginning with the Beltaine ceremony on Friday night. It was the first time I had performed a ritual in a semi-public place, and was a bit nervous about what the neighbours may think! That soon changed as I fell under the spell of the weekend.

On Saturday, we began creating the water dragon for our Dragon Dance. A cardboard box and garbage bag soon became the dragon's head, with the body being a lovely piece of rainbow material Cherry had created. A quick trip to the local newsagent for some crepe paper and glitter, and the dragon was finished! We had a trial run in the back yard, but then it began to rain, so we stowed the dragon under cover and went in for lunch.

In the afternoon, we held the Bardic and Ovate groves. We performed a Water-Weaving ceremony as part of each grove, so participants could feel the change and focus of power between the grades. During the Ovate grove we were blessed with a group of seven pelicans who flew overhead.

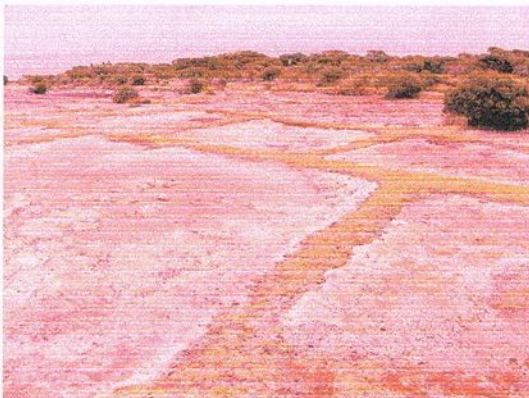
That evening we chatted about stars and constellations, and how starlore fitted in with the Druid path. We spoke about whether we in the Southern Hemisphere need to find our own starlore, as the stars we see are different to what Northern Hemisphere Druids see, and to what our ancestors saw.

Sunday morning we held the Druid grove, also including a water-weaving ceremony. Whilst we were holding the grove, the Bards and Ovates went down to the beach and created a labyrinth with seaweed and shells. Then we all went down, along with the dragon, for the Dragon Dance! We took turns dancing in the dragon, and playing music, whilst chanting the newly created Dragon chant. The dragon held up quite well, but became a bit soggy by the end as all of our water-weaving had had an unforeseen side affect... lots of rain!

We held our closing ceremony in the labyrinth on the beach, then made our way back up to the house for packing and goodbyes. Some of us stayed over until Monday morning, so we had extra time to spend chatting and laughing.

Once again, a very powerful weekend. Like many of us, unfortunately, Assemblies are the only time I get to spend with other Druids, and they are always special times for me. It is good to meet people I have only been in contact with via the computer, and to catch up with old friends! I am already looking forward to the next one, which is to be held at Lesley and Dean's property near Port Lincoln! Look forward to seeing you all there!

*StormWolf*



The rocks at Point Perpendicular

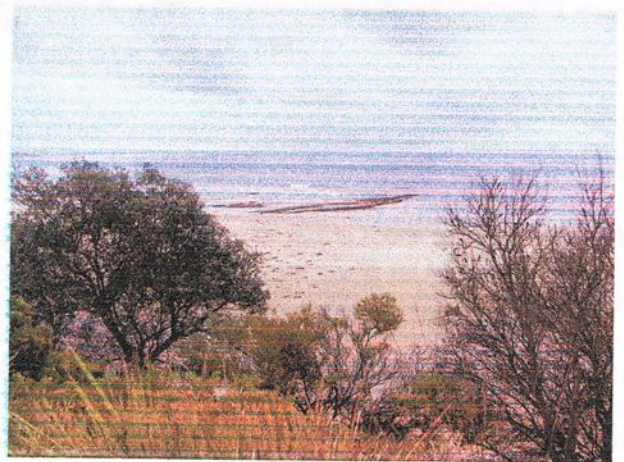


The tree in front of the Druid House





The view from our 'Druid House'



The ocean at Currajong



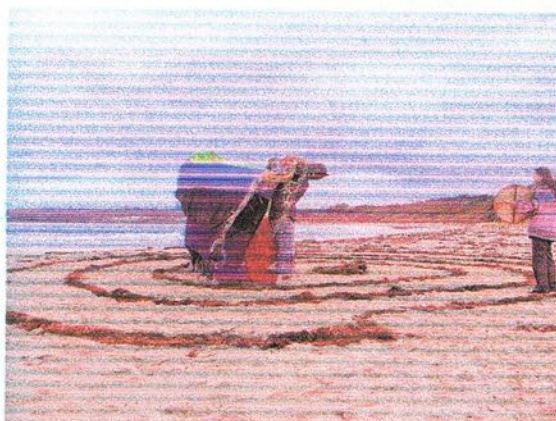
The creation of the dragon



The labyrinth made by the Bards and Ovates



The centre of the labyrinth





## Forest Lord of Untamed Beauty

Myriddin  
Spirit of the forest

How can I contain  
your wild soul?

Your eyes shine  
With deep compassion

Yet untamed mischief  
Lend them sparkle

Cornflower blue  
They twinkle

Inviting me  
To join  
In your chase

A flame-like mane  
Your hair

Host to living  
Leaves and sticks

Seeds of grasses  
And flowers  
Of rare beauty

Your feet traverse  
Your world

Not clad with shoes  
But with the swift step  
Of the deer

Proudly  
Amongst your kingdom

Wild stag of my dreams  
Anam chara of my heart

Your forest  
Is my sacred grove

It echoes with  
Your laughter

Let it be  
My temple  
My refuge



Words and drawing by Branwen, Dec 2005

I recently received a letter from Tamzin in New Zealand who wrote:

"I have often wondered what other OBOD's do with the knowledge and understanding they gain from the OBOD course?

For myself I have found the ability to listen with compassion and yet be detached; to give counsel but always respecting (the counselled's) right to free will.

In the nature realm, seedlings are potted-on and moved to new homes in the gardens of friends which I often help to create; also giving plants/ trees to revegetation projects and being involved in conservation and recycling programmes.

Introducing people to natural medicine and wellness in their lives, helping people to take responsibility/ control of their own lives, makes being of service a joy.

Knowledge is useful only when it is used and shared to the benefit of all beings."

Myself, I guess I have found the most valuable thing is understanding myself, and why I react to certain things the way I do. This, I believe, allows me to understand others better, and so I try to be more patient when dealing with others. It also makes me think more about how what I do and/or say will affect others.

So, would anyone else like to contribute as to how they apply OBOD's teachings to the wider world?





# Connla and the Fairy Maiden

CONNLA of the Fiery Hair was son of Conn of the Hundred Fights. One day as he stood by the side of his father on the height of Usna, he saw a maiden clad in strange attire coming towards him.

"Whence comest thou, maiden?" said Connla.

"I come from the Plains of the Ever Living," she said, "there where there is neither death nor sin. There we keep holiday always, nor need we help from any in our joy. And in all our pleasure we have no strife. And because we have our homes in the round green hills, men call us the Hill Folk."

The king and all with him wondered much to hear a voice when they saw no one. For save Connla alone, none saw the Fairy Maiden.

"To whom art thou talking, my son?" said Conn the king.

Then the maiden answered, "Connla speaks to a young, fair maid, whom neither death nor old age awaits. I love Connla, and now I call him away to the Plain of Pleasure, Moy Mell, where Boadag is king for aye, nor has there been complaint or sorrow in that land since he has held the kingship. Oh, come with me, Connla of the Fiery Hair, ruddy as the dawn with thy tawny skin. A fairy crown awaits thee to grace thy comely face and royal form. Come, and never shall thy comeliness fade, nor thy youth, till the last awful day of judgment."

The king in fear at what the maiden said, which he heard though he could not see her, called aloud to his Druid, Coran by name.

"Oh, Coran of the many spells," he said, "and of the cunning magic, I call upon thy aid. A task is upon me too great for all my skill and wit, greater than any laid upon me since I seized the kingship. A maiden unseen has met us, and by her power would take from me my dear, my comely son. If thou help not, he will be taken from thy king by woman's wiles and witchery."

Then Coran the Druid stood forth and chanted his spells towards the spot where the maiden's voice had been heard. And none heard her voice again, nor could Connla see her longer. Only as she vanished before the Druid's mighty spell, she threw an apple to Connla.

For a whole month from that day Connla would take nothing, either to eat or to drink, save only from that apple. But as he ate it grew again and always kept whole. And all the while there grew within him a mighty yearning and longing after the maiden he had seen.

But when the last day of the month of waiting came, Connla stood by the side of the king his father on the Plain of Arcomin, and again he saw the maiden come towards him, and again she spoke to him.

'Tis a glorious place, forsooth, that Connla holds among shortlived mortals awaiting the day of death. But now the folk of life, the ever-living ones, beg and bid thee come to Moy Mell, the Plain of Pleasure, for they have learnt to know thee, seeing thee in thy home among thy dear ones.

When Conn the king heard the maiden's voice he called to his men aloud and said:

"Summon swift my Druid Coran, for I see she has again this day the power of speech."

Then the maiden said "Oh, mighty Conn, fighter of a hundred fights, the Druid's power is little loved; it has little honour in the mighty land, peopled with so many of the upright. When the Law will come, it will do away with the Druid's magic spells that come from the lips of the false black demon."

Then Conn the king observed that since the maiden came Connla his son spoke to none that spake to him. So Conn of the hundred fights said to him, "Is it to thy mind what the woman says, my son?"

"'Tis hard upon me," then said Connla; "I love my own folk above all things; but yet, but yet a longing seizes me for the maiden."

When the maiden heard this, she answered and said "The ocean is not so strong as the waves of thy longing. Come with me in my curragh, the gleaming, straight-gliding crystal canoe. Soon we can reach Boadag's realm. I see the bright sun sink, yet far as it is, we can reach it before dark. There is, too, another land worthy of thy journey, a land joyous to all that seek it. Only wives and maidens dwell there. If thou wilt, we can seek it and live there alone together in joy."

When the maiden ceased to speak, Connla of the Fiery Hair rushed away from them and sprang into the curragh, the gleaming, straight-gliding crystal canoe. And then they all, king and court, saw it glide away over the bright sea towards the setting sun. Away and away, till eye could see it no longer, and Connla and the Fairy Maiden went their way on the sea, and were no more seen, nor did any know where they came.



# Starlore

## Crux - The Southern Cross

The smallest constellation, this compact cross of four bright stars, lying across the Milky Way, makes a striking Southern figure. From middle-Southern latitudes southward to the pole, it is circumpolar. Its midnight culmination is at the end of March. A line through its major (vertical) axis, from Gacrux ( $\gamma$ ) to Acrux ( $\alpha$ ), points roughly toward the Southern Celestial Pole, some  $25^\circ$  away. A line through the minor (horizontal) axis, from  $\delta$  to Mimosa ( $\beta$ ), points westward to the  $\beta$  and  $\alpha$  of Centaurus, Hadar and Rigil Kentaurus.

### MAJOR STARS

$\alpha$  - Acrux, 0.8, blue-white.

The name, a compound of "alpha Crux", was probably coined in the early 19th century by the American astronomer Elijah Burritt.

$\beta$  - Mimosa, 1.3, blue-white.

This star is a Cepheid variable (see  $\beta$  Cep, p.66).

$\gamma$  - Gacrux, 1.6, red.

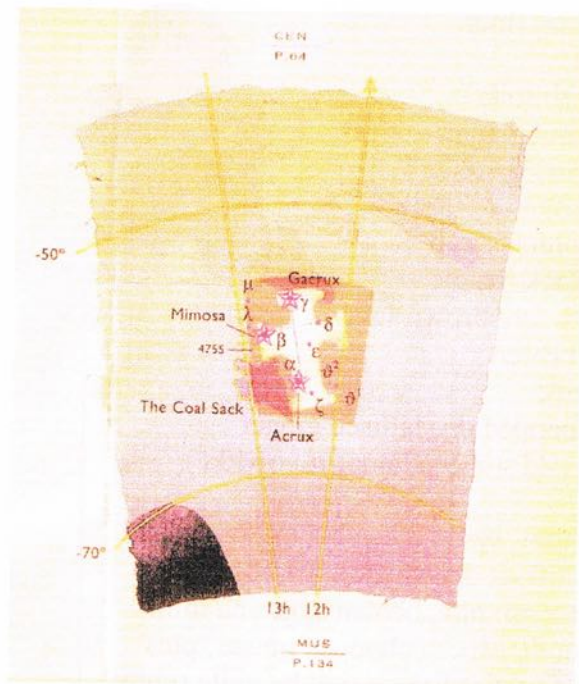
This star was also probably given its name by Burritt ("gamma Crux").

### The Coal Sack

Lying between Acrux and Mimosa, this is a dark nebula, 400 light years away. Covering more than  $30^\circ$  of sky, it is easily seen silhouetted against the Milky Way.

### NGC 4755 - The Jewel Box.

Also known as the "K Crux cluster", this is a group of more than 50 stars lying 7,600 light years away. With the naked eye it appears to be a single, fourth magnitude star.



The classical authors seem to identify the stars of Crux as part of Centaurus, the constellation by which it is surrounded on three sides. The Victorian scholar RH Allen, in his 'Star Names', drew attention to evidence of an earlier tradition that saw the cross. The 11<sup>th</sup> century CE Arabic astrologer as-Biruni noted that from latitude  $30^\circ$  North in India, a Southern asterism was visible, known as Sula, 'the Crucifixion Beam'. As Allen suggests, this may give us a clue to a reference in Dante's 'Divine Comedy' (early 14<sup>th</sup> century). Passing into Purgatory at the entrance to the Southern Hemisphere, Dante declares that "setting me to spy/ that alien pole, I beheld four stars/ the same the first men saw, and since no living eye" (Purgatory, Canto 1:22-4). The stars of Crux can no longer be seen in the Northern hemisphere. The 'first men' are the first Christians, as Crux was just visible at the latitude of Jerusalem in the era of Christ. Dante, who was clearly aware of the effects of precession (see below), refers to a godless age after the death of Christ, when Crux had gradually slipped out of view at this latitude.

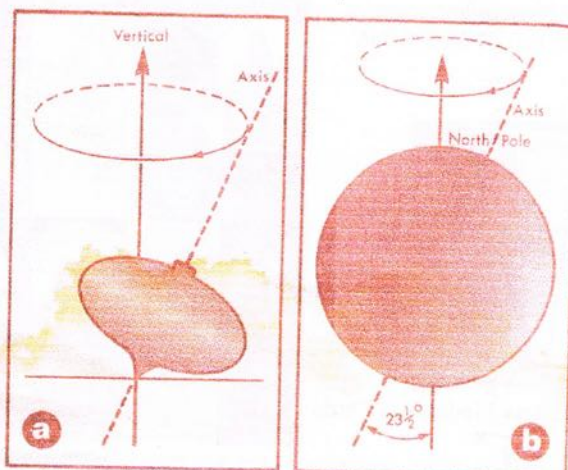
Crux is not seen as a cross in all cultures; in central Australia the stars have been called 'The Eagle's Foot'.

From: 'The Starlore Handbook' by Geoffrey Cornelius (ISBN: 1-85732-899-X)

## Precession

The zodiacal sign of Aquarius is now almost entirely in the constellation of Capricornus, 'the goat'. This is due to *precession*, which is a slow wobbling of the Earth's axis, like a spinning top which is slowing down. The Earth takes 26 000 years to make one complete wobble, and in that time the position of the South Celestial Pole in the sky moves in a great circle. This changes the apparent positions of all the stars, so that in the year 15 000 A.D. the Southern Cross will be visible in Europe.

From: 'The Southern Sky' by MJ Miller



(a) Spinning top showing precession. (b) Spinning Earth showing precession.

Both items submitted by Tamzin Rae





## Spirit of the Seasons Diary

Description:  
One week to an opening A5 diary with denim cover and elastic closer.

Features:  
Perpetual - start or refill any month of the year for a full set of 6, 12 or 18 month diary pages, 8 Celtic festivals and 12 monthly markers  
Made in Australia, for southern hemisphere use  
Gift vouchers and return-mail ordering service

Plus dates and times for:  
School terms, school vacation and public holidays, sun's entry into the 12 zodiac signs

Plus exact degrees for:  
Sun's rendezvous with 2 solstices and 2 equinoxes  
Moon's monthly phases of full, new and quartermoon  
8 Celtic seasonal festivals (inc. Bealtianne, Alban Arthurán etc)

Plus information on:  
12 month markers with history, activities, recipes and decorations  
Celtic seasonal goddess archetypes for use in your meditation, ritual or shrine.  
Key ideas for phases of the moon in zodiac signs.

RRP: \$25 +\$5 postage and packing.

Diary covers, Goddess meditation cards, A4 and A3 giclee art print sets, greeting cards and notebooks can be purchased separately.

Goddess textiles and posters, Celtic 3D figurines, Celtic Astrology Supplementary Booklet and *Spirit of the Seasons* Gift Book will also be available in future. Ask for a catalogue. Order Forms are at the back.

Address: Jessica Blythe: Thomas Waters Rd, Tallebudgera Valley QLD 4228  
Email: [jessica@iotc.com.au](mailto:jessica@iotc.com.au)  
Phone/fax: 07 55 338 256



Goddess Meditation Cards



Spirit of the Seasons Celtic Goddess Archetypes

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## Seasonal Recipes

### Cherry's Rich Sticky Gingerbread



225gm plain flour  
pinch salt  
1 tsp bicarb soda  
2 tsp ground ginger  
1 tsp mixed spice  
115gm butter or margarine  
115gm golden syrup  
115gm black treacle  
55gm soft dark brown sugar  
2 eggs - beaten  
120ml milk  
115gm chopped crystallised ginger  
(you can add some sultanas if you like)

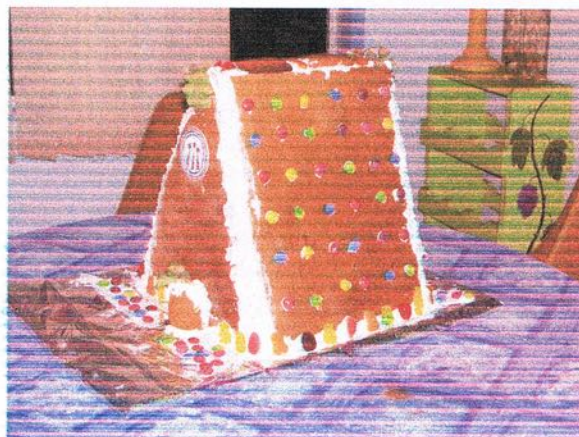
Melt butter, syrup, treacle and sugar. Cool slightly. Sift all dry ingredients, then mix with butter mixture, beaten eggs and milk, until smooth. Mix in chopped ginger, plus sultanas if used. Mixture will be quite runny.

Grease and line an 8" square cake tin. Pour mixture into tin and bake about 1 hour at 180°C. Cool in tin for 5 minutes before turning out.

Can ice if required.

Simple icing:  
115gm icing sugar  
4tsp lemon juice.

Enjoy!







## Beach treasures

There are lots of things you can do with the treasures you have collected from the beach. You could make a display tray to show them off, create attractive paperweights or decorate boxes and picture frames.

### Display tray

#### You will need

A large pizza box  
Newspaper  
A craft knife  
Thin white cardboard

Used matchsticks  
Felt or coloured paper  
A pen  
Sticky tape



1. Fill the pizza box with crumpled newspaper. Tape the lid shut. Tape round the corners of the box as well.



2. Glue coloured paper or felt to the top and sides of the box. Cut several pieces and join them neatly.



3. Arrange your collection on the box. Mark several dots around the edge of each object with a pen.

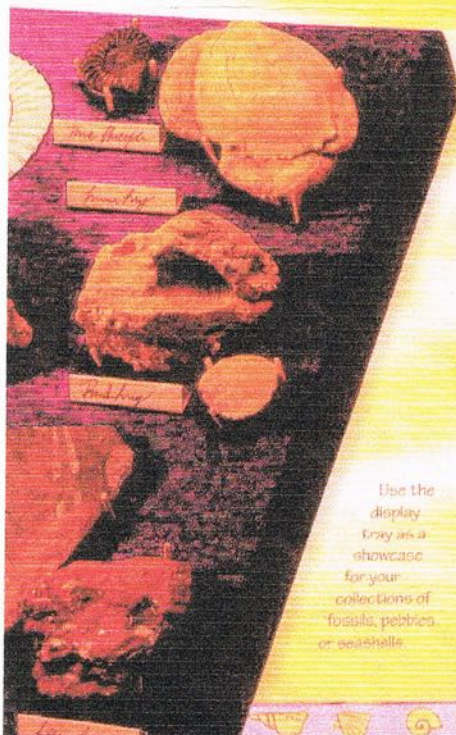
4. Remove the objects from the box. Carefully cut a tiny cross over each dot, as shown, with the craft knife.



5. Push a matchstick into each hole, with the used end down. Leave about 1 cm (1 in) of each matchstick showing.

6. Put the objects back, so the matchsticks hold them in place. Make a card label for each object.

Use the display tray as a showcase for your collections of fossils, pebbles or seashells.



### Decorating things with seashells

#### You will need

Different-shaped seashells  
Box lids, picture frames or hair clips  
PVA glue  
Clear varnish  
A paintbrush

1. The surface you want to decorate must be clean and dry. Arrange some shells on top of it.

2. Glue on the shells. Pick up one shell at a time, dab glue on it, and press it in place.

3. When the glue has dried, paint the shells with varnish. Let it dry, then paint a second coat.



Lid decorated with shells that have been glued one on top of another.

Shells glued to a picture frame

Use small shells to decorate a plain hairclip or hairband.

### Painted pebbles

#### You will need

Large, smooth pebbles  
Poster or acrylic paints  
A thick paintbrush  
A thin paintbrush  
Clear varnish



Cat paperweight

Patterned paperweights

Keep unpainted pebbles in water to make them look bright.



1. Wash each pebble and let it dry. Paint it all over with a thick coat of white paint and let it dry.



2. Paint the pebble with whichever colour you want to use as your base. Let the paint dry again.



3. Paint a picture. Do the outlines first and let them dry. Then add details with a fine brush.



4. When the paint has dried, paint a coat of varnish over it and let it dry. This protects the paint.



Funny face pebbles

From 'Book of the Seasons' by Angela Wilkes, ISBN 0 7460 4221 3, published by Usborne



## Maps for southern half of world

These maps show the stars that people in the southern half of the world can see in summer. Facing north, the easiest constellations to spot are Orion and Canis Major (the Great Dog) and over to the east you can see Leo (the Lion).

Sirius (the Dog Star), one of the stars in Canis Major, is the brightest star in the sky. Orion was a great hunter in Greek mythology and the famous constellation named after him contains many bright stars. Look out for the three stars that form Orion's belt.

