

SERPENT STAR

A newsletter of The Order of Bards Ovates and Druids in the Southern Hemisphere



LUGHNASADH 2017



Welcome to the Lughnasadh 2018 issue of SerpentStar!

Hullo everyone!

Not going to be too wordy this issue myself, as I've been laid up recovering from surgery. And anyway, this lovely bunch of contributors can well and truly speak for themselves! Happy Reading!

Also stay tuned for the Samhuinn issue, which will include the announcement of SerpentStar's 'next big project'.

Oh also also, in the 20th Anniversary issue I neglected to credit Danuta Raine, who took the lovely photo of Michael Vlasto that accompanied his contribution. Thanks Danuta!

With love
Mandy /|\

SerpentStar, Lughnasadh 2018

SerpentStar is a free, volunteer-produced online newsletter for members of the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids in the Southern Hemisphere.

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Submission guidelines and subscription info are available from serpentstar.druidryaustralia.org/about

Follow us on Facebook - search "SerpentStar"

Enquiries via email: serpentstar.obod@gmail.com

All opinions expressed herein are solely the contributors' own.

OBOD in the Southern Hemisphere

Groves and Seed Groups

Brisa del Sur

We are a Seed Group called 'Brisa del Sur' (Southern Breeze) from Rosario, Argentina, and we are writing to introduce our group and share with you and the Order the fulfilling experience and wonderful learning we have had as a result of our journey along the Druid Path. You can contact us at southernbreezesfellowship@gmail.com and you can see our profile on Facebook www.facebook.com/Southernbreezesfellowship

The Cradle Seed Group

The Cradle Seed Group is based in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Group currently has only one Druid and three Bards 'in the making'. One area of focus is exploring other spiritual philosophies and understanding the synergies. Other areas of focus are to 'convert' traditional Ogham into the indigenous South African trees and also to understand and use indigenous medicinal plants and trees. All the eight yearly festivals are celebrated, all in solo as we are spread through South Africa – Johannesburg in Gauteng, Haenertsburg in Limpopo. Full moon meditations are conducted for peace and harmony. Email debby@triskel.co.za for details.



The Golden Wattle Seed Group

We are a group of OBOD members living in South Australia, with a few members from different druid backgrounds. We are open to interested people who would like to experience or learn about Druidry within our seed group, or in general, and we hold group rituals for the Equinoxes, Solstices and Celtic fire festivals. We also work magic together for world peace, environmental issues, political issues etc. We put emphasis on reciprocity and hospitality in ritual to reaffirm our reverent and respectful relationship with nature, with the spirits of place, the ancestors and deity; offering libations and natural foodstuffs to the earth mother during ritual. Any interests, questions or enquiries you can email Kacey Stephensen at bardofthegreenwood@gmail.com or William Rattley at wildra2003@yahoo.com.au

The Grove of the Summer Stars

The Grove of the Summer Stars (Pukerua Bay, Wellington, New Zealand) celebrates the eight great Seasonal Festivals throughout the wheel of the year. Each of these Druid festivals is held as a community festival and meeting point for diverse creeds and cultures to honour the turning of the year, and give thanks for its abundance. The Equinox and Solstice festivals are open to all while the four Quarter Festivals are for Grove members only. We meet at The Woolshed/Grove of the Summer Stars at 11am on the nearest Sunday to the particular festival, except for Beltane and Samhain which are held at night. Lughnasadh is held on the Sunday during Druid Camp even though it is a little early, ie the third week of January (Wellington Anniversary weekend). On the day (or night) people can bring stories, poems, songs, dances, readings and insights etc to contribute to the theme. The ceremonies are followed by potluck feasting to which everyone contributes. Contact: pamela@thewoolshed.com

Macadamia Grove

Welcomes and is inclusive of South-East Queensland and Northern New South Wales OBOD members who wish to join in with any activities. We celebrate the eight festivals of the year, and organise other events depending on members' interests. As Brisbane is a central meeting point most of our events are held close to the city, often in the bushland of Mt Coot-tha. Non-members with an interest in Druidry are able to attend some rituals by prior arrangement. Contact Sandra: macademiagrove@hotmail.com

The Melbourne Grove

Welcomes all OBOD members (local, interstate and overseas) to its seasonal celebrations. Family and friends may also attend with a member and receive a warm welcome. In 2017 we will be celebrating the seasonal festivals on the following dates: Lughnasadh - Jan 28, Autumn Equinox - March 24, Samhuin - April 28, Winter Solstice - June 16, Imbolc - July 29, Spring Equinox - Sept 23, Beltane - Oct 20, and Summer Solstice - Dec 23. If you would like to join us please send an email to Elkie at whitelk@bigpond.com or Fiona at Fiona.mulholland@bigpond.com

Song of the Eastern Sea Seed Group

Situated on the Central Coast of NSW, we invite OBOD members and guests to join us as we celebrate the eight festivals of the Wheel of the Year and explore nature and Druidry together. We have a number of projects in the planning, including a Sacred Grove planting, working on environmental issues as a group, and supporting our local community. Contact Chris at chris@druidryaustralia.org

The Windharp Seed Group

Based in the Adelaide Hills in South Australia and named after the She-oak or Casuarina, also known as a Windharp. She-oaks are known as windharps because of the mystical sound they make when the wind breathes through the knotted leaves - a soft music like that of the Aeolian Harp. We are a learning group who gather to celebrate the eight seasonal rituals of the wheel of the year and study together. We also hold various shared events and ceremonies that non-members are able to attend. Contact Tamzin Woodcock or Adrienne Piggott windharpseedgroup@gmail.com



Wollemi Seed Group

Nestled between the mountains and the sea, Wollemi Seed Group covers Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and the Greater Hunter Region. Rich with flowing rivers, fields and natural beauty, we meet fortnightly to explore the depths of the Bardic and Ovate paths. We meet for each of the festivals, and invite all interested in Druidry and the love earth to join us. For information, contact Rollick on 0423 626 290 or bonsaidruid@yahoo.com.au

Useful websites for SH OBODies:

www.druidryaustralia.org - A central online resource for druidry in Australia.

Druids Downunder - Facebook group - a closed group for druids of any path, in the Southern Hemisphere and Australia in particular.

Don't see your group or website listed here? Send a listing to serpentstar.obod@gmail.com and spread the word!

OBOD Worldwide

www.druidry.org - Official site of the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids

www.druidcast.libsyn.com - Direct download and shownotes for DruidCast (or subscribe via iTunes)

Facebook Groups - *OBOD Friends* (open to members and non-members, discussing general topics) and *Order of Bards Ovates and Druids* (closed group for members of the Order).

Publications

Touchstone (HQ) Sent free to all members taking the course, and once you have finished receiving course material you can subscribe separately. Touchstone is only available to members of the Order.

Druid (USA) www.druidmagazine.com

Druidenstein (German) www.feuersprung.de

Dryade (Dutch) www.obod.dds.nl

Il Calderone (Italian) issuu.com/ilcalderone

Menhir (French) issuu.com/obod-menhir/docs

Ophiusa (Portuguese) www.obod.com.pt/ophiusa.htm

Pagan Transitions

Pagan Transitions was created over 12 years ago to help pagans create meaningful and beautiful funeral rites which reflect the spirituality of the person who has passed through the Gateway, and offer support to the bereaved.

As well as templates that can be adapted to suit individual funeral requirements, and a selection of reading material and poems, there is also a list of Pagan Funeral Celebrants who can create and lead the funeral rite for you and arrange everything with the Funeral Director. Pagan Transitions is a volunteer-run free service.

If you are a Pagan Funeral Celebrant and would like to be listed please visit www.pagan-transitions.org.uk and complete the application form. Any suggestions on how the service can be improved are welcome.



2018 OBOD Assembly

*Proudly hosted by the
Golden Wattle Seed Group S.A.*

When: 10th-14th of August 2018.

Where: Glenhaven Park Campsite, Stockport S.A.

**For more information and bookings please head
to the website at:** www.druidryaustralia.org/assemblies

Email us at:
golden.wattle.seed.group@gmail.com

For all other inquiries ring:

Tracy Hamilton-Breed - 0447878688

Vision Story by the Beltaine Fire, 31/10/17

By Michael Vlasto

It all began last week, as the influence and intelligence of the Great Scorpion became manifest; even he who stung the hunter as he followed the black hound over the vault of jewels. There was a gathering in the high green hills of home, around the great tree of three fruits...

Figs fall in profusion

All eat of the illusion

Dancing in plenty

While bees buzz, laden with golden nectar

to their city within

And the birds sing on every

leaf, twig, branch, and flower

Plenty for all, no grabbing for power

The sky gathers its purple cloak and throws frozen cricket balls over all; the great ones swinging stone axes and hammers, roaring on the winds as they gallop over the tree tops; 'change is coming' and tiger cat sneezes in agreement; people dance and sing with rhythm and joy; the goddess of green healing stoops, a mouse whispers in her ear. And so it comes, across the sky of rose pink edged with mauve. The star boat, the ark, the Argo, Prydwen; the boar emblazoned on sail of red; the dragon eyes upon the prow; blazing shields along the sides; oars move in unison. It hovers over us, ropes of glimmering stardust looping down. We reach up a hand, grasp a rope; are drawn effortlessly up to sit shoulder to shoulder with giants, heroes in black leather, swords across their backs. "Keep in time," the gold-torced one beside me growls.

We move slowly away over the tossing sea of green; ripples appear in the air; the ground, shimmering, blurring, merging into fast-flowing; stars; velvet darkness that cracks into grey, pink, golden. A red ball oozes up, bounces on the whale's back before leaping free and up. A golden youth. Below a great plain of grass stretching endlessly in all directions; little ponds, lakes, blaze forth in that first ray of Og.

Ahead a small round hill, with a crystal city resting on it. The city of wonder, the capital of Lemuria.

Curved towers spiral up; great gates of ancient polished black wood; arches of intricate design; the capstones carved with the cat o' nine tails; the dragon of seven eyes; the man of five limbs; the pyramid of three faces; and the one dot. Yet though all looks solid, the city quivers like a dream, a mirage. The boat settles on glowing cobbles, in a marketplace. Stands of rainbow cloth, fruit, vegetables, flowers glimmering. Tall, elegant people; slant of eye; large curved noses; round bellies; breasts peeping; tips of tails showing beneath flowing robes. Others dark of hue; swart of shape; round shoulders, shambling; eyes hooded; sliding glances across the cobbles, up my leg to touch my head briefly.

I jump to the ground and skip, nimble as a goat, up a lane to a round door of red wood; a large nose of white; bronze with a ring in it. I sieze and twist; it opens into a garden of greatest beauty, fountains singing, trees whispering, flowers wafting, subtle scents to all corners.

An old man sits quiet by a tree of golden apples, each as big as a watermelon. He slices one, slice by tiny slice, upon a glimmer in a wooden box, layer by layer by layer. The box full he hands it to me, with a tiny golden key; he smiles as I bow; then I lock the box, turn, run back through the door, along the street to the market, grasp a rope of glimmer and float effortlessly back into the boat. We rise watching the towers of spiral dwindle. A ripple in the clouds, the scene changes; darkness, light; ocean, trees, hills; and there the fires of a festival, music rising; ropes descending; people rise, others descend, some sit silent.

So we all stand

Heart to heart

Hand in hand

As that ship of starfire dissolves into a cloud; and a lady robed in white upon a unicorn, no saddle or bridle, just one tiny golden bell sweetly sounding, rises effortless as a dandelion seed over the tops of the trees.

"Give slices to all", that is her call, as the horn sounds far away.

So I do, and the box is still full.

Ross Nichols and the Ancient Druid Order, Pt2

By Chris Pingel

It had taken a long time - from the Druid Revival several hundred years previously - for Druidry to reclaim its essential focus and its source material. The pre-occupation of eighteenth-century revivalists with seeing Druidry as a precursor to Christianity, and of nineteenth-century Theosophists and Universalists with seeing it as yet another manifestation of the Perennial Philosophy, had obscured the unique and dynamic qualities that Druidry offered the modern world. (The Perennial Philosophy is a perspective in modern spirituality which views each of the world's religious traditions as sharing a single, metaphysical truth or origin from which all esoteric knowledge and doctrine has grown. In terms of religion, in a broad sense, universalism claims that religion is a universal human quality.) It was these qualities that Ross perceived and which he introduced into modern Druid practice.

Ross introduced into the world what one scholar now calls 'Traditional British Druidry' at a time of massive cultural ferment - the 1960s. Gerald Gardner, with the help of Ross, had introduced 'Traditional British Wicca' to the public a decade previously. Both men drew on folklore, mythology and the Western magical tradition to create new kinds of spiritual practice rooted in the pre-Christian traditions of the British Isles and Ireland. While Gardner roamed far and wide in his search for the ingredients for his Wiccan practice, Ross concentrated on Celtic mythology and on a study of bardism for his articulation of Druidry.

After the death of Gerald Gardner, the Five Acres Country Club change into new hands and Nichols discontinued his membership. Still in need of a nature retreat and a place to relax away from his hectic life, he bought himself a few acres of woodland in Hambleden, South Buckinghamshire. There he built two wooden huts and furnished them with camp beds and stoves. As a retreat he could retire there alone or with friends and live a simple life in touch with nature, chopping wood for the stove, fetching water, walking in the woods, reading, writing and painting.

As the chosen Chief of the new OBOD, Nichols reorganised the ADO's teaching structure and introduced the three grades of Bard, Ovate and Druid, conforming to the Celtic grades still practiced in France and Wales. The Bard grade teachings focused on Celtic mythology and the power of song and poetry, the Ovate grade teachings at that time included medical knowledge, Ogham and healing, while the Druid grade was centred on spiritual and religious teachings connected with the land. Nichols also introduced the full round of eight seasonal ceremonies to be celebrated as oppose to only three recognised by the ADO. His writings ignited interest in megalithic astronomy, ley-lines and contributed to the development of Glastonbury as a major centre of modern mysticism.

Nichols also reintroduced the practice of publicly celebrating the solstices and equinoxes that make up the eight main festivals of the Pagan Year. Organised rituals and ceremonies were regularly held at Parliament Hill in London and at Glastonbury Tor in Somerset. There, attending Druid Companions could be identified by their grade colours: Bards dressed in blue tunics, Ovates in green and Druids in white.

In the final decade of his life Nichols travelled widely promoting Druidism. All during this time Nichols had continued with his writing and had been working on a history of Druidry, which he finally completed as *The Book of Druidry* in 1974. However, on the 30th April 1975 and before it could be published, Nichols died of a heart attack while staying at a friend's house in London.

So sudden was his death, there was no one ready to take over as his successor and next Chosen Chief of the OBOD, as such the Order went into a decline. After a hiatus of 13 years, one of his early students Philip Carr-Gomm became ready to take on his role, and in 1988 was asked to re-form the Order as its Chosen Chief. Under his leadership the OBOD once again flourished. Later while searching through his mentors writings, Carr-Gomm came across the original manuscript of *The Book of Druidry*, which in 1990 was finally and posthumously published.

Just a little more about the Ancient Druid Order. This quote, containing many unsubstantiated statements, was contained in a booklet published by the ADO:

"A Brief History:

The Druid Order traces its origins back to the Pherryllt who were alchemists. They were the teachers and guardians of the Druid mysteries of Ceridwen at Cor Emrys on the Penmaen ridge of Snowdon. The Pherryllt had a Druidic Grove at Oxford prior to the founding of the University and were associated with the outer movement of what is now known as the Celtic Church. They were great mystics and strong in spirit. In 1166 The Oxford Grove of Druids were persecuted by order of the Bishop of Oxford of the Roman Church. Their records were burnt but their memory remained.

Haymo of Faversham gathered around him those who still held the Druid philosophy and laid the foundations of an order. After his death, Philip Brydodd called a conference of companions and established the Mount Haemus Grove at Oxford in 1245.

This grove continued through the centuries and in 1717 delegates from Oxford and other Druid centres in York, London, the Isles of Man & Anglesey, Cornwall, Scotland, Ireland, Wales & Brittany united to form An Druidh Uileach Braithrechas, the Mother Grove of the Ancient Druid Order. The inspiration for this came from John Aubrey of the old Mount Haemus Grove through John Toland who was elected Chief of the reconstituted Order."

Many questions have been raised about the validity of such statements as this. For example, if records were completely destroyed and no primary sources exist how is it possible to accurately determine events as long ago as 1166? As several authors have suggested, at the very early days of the druid revival could such diverse groups from so many locations actually be organised enough to vote for delegates and then fund them for collaborative meetings in London?

In fact, Professor Ronald Hutton in his book *The Druids* writes that the Druid Order in its current form started around 1909 or 1912 - when George Watson MacGregor Reid (1862?-1946), who was Robert's father, led the group.

In *The Book of Druidry*, Ross Nichols wrote of the same sequence of events as the history of the ADO. This had been told to him by Robert MacGregor Reid amongst others. It was also claimed that John Aubrey, the eighteenth-century antiquarian, revitalised the Mount Haemus Grove, founded in Oxford in 1245. The claim of Toland and Aubrey as members of any druid order is thought now to be unlikely from a historical perspective.

Ronald Hutton, in his book *Blood and Mistletoe: A History of the Druids in Britain*, takes the lineage prior to George Watson MacGregor Reid to be merely part of the legend of the order's origins.

John Toland was a freethinker who liked to challenge the establishment. He may even have been a closet pantheist as some of his writings seem to suggest in a veiled way. But there is no evidence that he was aware of contemporary Druidry.

John Aubrey recorded (often for the first time) numerous megalithic and other field monuments in southern England, and who is particularly noted as the discoverer of the Avebury henge monument. He wrote of Avebury and Stonehenge as being built as druid temples. He was also a collector of folklore. He became a member of the Royal Society. He may have been a Freemason but there is no evidence that he practiced Druidry.

As a final note here are some thoughts by John Michael Greer:

"Archaeologists and historians... have been able to show... that the Druidry of the Revival was a modern spiritual movement, not an ancient one. Many Druids refused to accept this. By the early twentieth century, some Druid orders claimed unbroken lineages back to the ancient Druids. Such claims became hard to defend. Once made, however, they were even harder to give up. Thus Druids, even as serious and intellectually capable as Ross Nichols, clung to historically unlikely claims of a continuous tradition as if the spiritual validity of Druidry depended on them.

It took many years for Druids to realise that the historical roots of a tradition don't affect its spiritual validity - that Druidry's relevance depends on the gifts it has to offer here and now. As a living spiritual tradition with three centuries of achievements to its credit, Druidry can stand on its own and has no need of [so-called] ancient lore to prop it up. By the dawn of the twenty-first century, the most influential Druid revival orders had come to terms with their own history and abandoned inaccurate claims about the past."



The Mythic Tale

Myths of the First People

Join Michael Vlasto and Dr Danuta Raine for a weekend immersed in myth, storytelling and story writing. The roots of the mythic tale rest in our earliest memories. They reveal what it is to be human, what it is to be alive. They tell us why things exist.

The Myth of the First People recognises the attributes of any animal or object, equating that to the being who first personified it. First People myths take us to the heart of what it is to be alive, to be sentient. They take us to the core of what it is to be ourselves, and how to engage with nature and the elements. UFirst People myths are central to indigenous storykeepers of the worlds: druids, shamen, medicine men, and songmen.

In this two day, non-residential course, Michael Vlasto and Dr Danuta Raine will be taking you through Myths of the First People, empowering you to discover and share First People tales. We will end the weekend with a story circle, where you will share the story you have discovered and composed during the course.

Forging and protecting our connection with mother earth is the primary reason why we share myth.

Michael Vlasto, Druid and storyteller, has travelled the world telling stories for over 40 years. An expert in the telling of mythic stories, Michael has a deep love of gathering and share the insight that can only be found in mythic tales.

Dr Danuta Raine, Phd (English-Creative Writing). Her long love of myth has suffused her life and work, as she sees the heart of creativity lies in the deep secrets that only myth reveals.

When: 9am-5pm, Sat, June 16- Sun, June 17, 2018

Where: Miriam Gardens, 59EK Ave, Charlestown, NSW

Investment: Very Early Bird--\$250 (until April 5), Early Bird--\$300 (until May 5), \$350 there after. \$80 deposit required on booking.

As we wish to adequately nurture everyone in storytelling and story writing, the course cater to no more than 15 participants. To ensure attendance please book early.

To book, contact Danuta at danuta@danutaelectra.com.

If you feel the pull to do this course, don't let cost hold you back. Payment arrangements can be made. Limited partial scholarships are available on request.



Inspiration, wisdom and blessings from New Zealand

The header image for the Aotearoa section of SerpentStar has been created by Glenn Conroy, who writes: "The image is comprised of several elements that are of special meaning to members of the Grove of The Southern Stars; Matariki, (seven sisters constellation), pounamu, (greenstone), ti kouka (cabbage tree), and of course Kapiti Island."

2019 OBOD Southern Hemisphere Assembly in Aotearoa New Zealand

Thursday 17th January - Tuesday 22nd January 2019



Anglesey-Abbey

Silver wand

Entrance to faerie

Roots entwined in the hair of Maeve

Arms to Marama

Silver Moon

Silver Sword

Pierce mind, heart and womb

Faerie gateway

Faerie gift.

Pamela Meekings-Stewart, on meeting a Silver Birch

The Wheel of Segais



Pamela Meekings-Stewart

Exciting News!

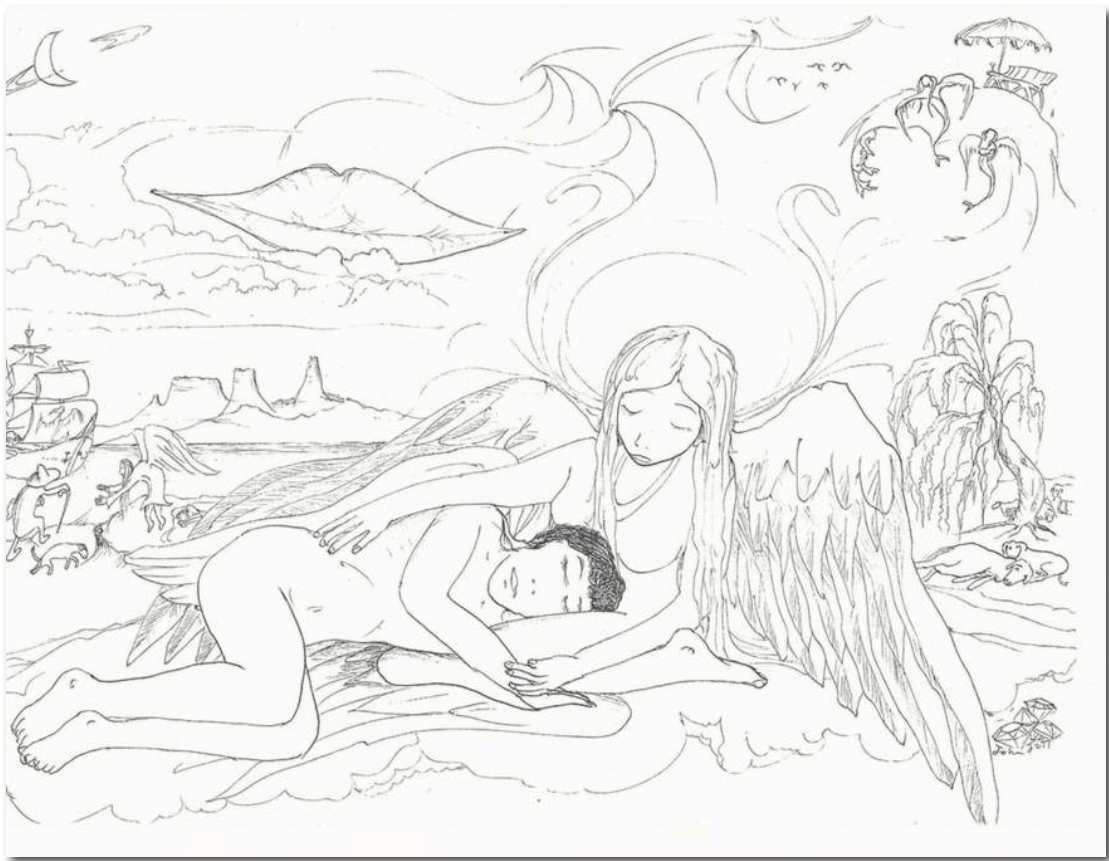
In order to help you become familiar with the wisdom contained in the Wheel of Segais, I am putting together a personal reader kit. This will consist of an A4 copy of the Wheel of Segais on which to do your casting; a Salmon of Wisdom book of meanings; and nine seeds for casting (plus a couple of extras in case you lose one or two!). I have finished the book and have put the Kit out to 12 people, two of whom are well-known OBODies, for feedback and review. Once the feedback has been received and incorporated, The Wheel of Segais personal reader kit will be available for sale. Hopefully, November this year will be the launch. Stay tuned!

If you would like to be informed of when the Wheel of Segais Personal Reader Kit becomes available, please contact me through The Wheel of Segais website below.

The Wheel of Segais is a simple but profound template for understanding the innate nature of the universe and our place within it. It allows us to perceive all that we are and all that we need as we experience the turning of the wheel of the year - the Four Seasons, the 12 streams or stages and the Well of the Salmon of Wisdom, the Well of Segais itself, in the centre. If you would like a personal reading, you can contact me at pamela@thewoolshed.com, 0272068876 or 2399234. Cost: \$40

Out of town or in another country? Book an on line reading through my website – www.wheelofsegais.com





The Ocean's Baby

*There's a happy baby curled up asleep
In crystal tubes of the waves that crash
On Mermaid beach down the Gold Coast.
If you go surf there in silk blue deep
You'll see it, reborn in every fragrant wash,
Looking up at you, beholding you the most.*

*It was laid there by Tiddalik, the giant toad
Who swallowed all the ocean's foam
And laughed it up when he saw frilled lizard's prance
Whose home came from all rivers that e'er flowed.
And if you can touch the baby's bobble nose
You'll find a secret and come home to join the dance.*

*And you'll perceive at heaven's gate
The branches of Yggdrasil, the world tree
Whose roots hold all and branches frame the sky
The branches red and yellow, when day is late
Like veins reflecting your retina, you'll see
When the sun shines sideways through your eye.*

*Because you are that tree, the universe a holograph
In all the one, in one the all, like cosmic genes
You carry everyone's hopes and dreams to go
Like beams of light connecting, and it makes you laugh
With joy to understand the ever-changing scenes,
Because it's the only thing you'll ever need to know.*

John Jordan



"Through deepening our relationship with the natural world we unfold the messages of life and meet with our own peace."

Rosemary Yates and friends offer gentle 4 day walks for a small group

"Walk with me to the cherished temples of these ancient lands. Discover the spirit and wonders of this extraordinary country."

We will be walking on our magnificent 968 acre forested property situated in a unique, serene forested location. This land is a protected conservation property with some 29 threatened species of plant and animal, a genuine biodiversity hotspot with extraordinary spirit. We will also venture into surrounding forests, streams, rivers and valleys to enjoy our vast local wilderness country.

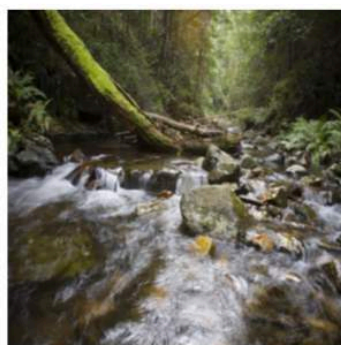
"Our natural environment has proven to be our best teacher, and has helped open our hearts to recognize the ancient wisdom that closeness to nature brings, closeness among humanity and all living beings." Rosemary

Rosemary is a long term custodian of this land, having been involved with many aspects of raising environmental awareness about biodiversity and our connection to the natural elements. She has a long history in exploration of inner and outer landscapes.

We will be blessed to have Linda Marson who is an extraordinary woman sharing her gifts with the Tarot to share with us. Please have a look at her work:

<http://www.tarotjourney.com.au/>
<https://globalspiritualstudies.com/>

There will be some friends, who have great knowledge on the subject of ecology, plants and animals come and visit us for walks.



Costs: \$480 includes all meals, share accommodation in our private home

Where: Starting and returning each day to our home Mt Hyland, 43km NW of Dorrigo NSW

Meals: We will be enjoying delicious meals from our large organic gardens and locally sourced produce. Fresh, healthy abundant meals and snacks, all home made with loving hands and hearts.

When: March 23-26, 2018
 For enquiries and bookings
 Phone: 02 66578049
RosemaryYates@gmail.com
 Web: mt-hyland.com

Join us in discovering the pure beauty of lush landscapes while exploring our inner connection of intuitive knowledge and wisdom that connects us deeply to the natural world.

DAMH THE BARD

2019



SPONSORSHIP FOR DAMH THE BARD

Plans are afoot to bring Damh the Bard and Cerri Lee back to Australia in April 2019.

There will be a Sponsor's concert in Adelaide as well as a weekend camp over the Easter Long weekend 2019.

We are looking for 120 people to donate \$50 each so if you would like to be a 'Damh the Bard' sponsor and be part of bringing this amazing couple back to our Great Southern Land you can either donate via Paypal or direct debit.

Paypal login address for sponsorship is
sponsordamh@spiraldance.com.au

or

email us for direct debit details
info@spiraldance.com.au



Ayurveda and The Druid Tradition

Dr S. Ajit would often tell us Ayurveda is not a culture, and it is not a healing modality, it is a philosophy of life. It is a way of being, and an art of living, that is adaptable to each individual ever born in whatever circumstance she might find herself. Ayurveda is a systematic and intelligent reflection upon the whole person, including health and wellbeing, that has sustained its understandings and processes through many thousands of years.

Philip Carr-Gomm, in his book *The Elements of the Druid Tradition*, looks at the origins and practices of druidry, what we know of it through archeology and classical scholarship to the way we can see it understood and practiced today. He describes druidry as an all encompassing understanding of life, and that each of the three orders - Bard, Ovate and Druid - all apply these deep understandings of life holistically to bring about a harmony of both self and society within the environments they occupy.

While the revelation of a philosophy that brings deep harmony to our being may be at the root of many traditions, Druidry and Ayurveda offer many startling similarities in both practice and process. Both rely on strong heritages of oral tradition, in which the great secrets of understanding are revealed through the humble relationship between teacher and student. While there are parts of the tradition that are written or publicly recorded, such as the tale of Taliesin and parts of the Rig Veda, much of the true understanding of each tradition can only be comprehended through a close mentoring relationship, a long period of training and personal observation, and a transpersonal experience that reveals the deep nature of life. As Iamblichus wrote, "The first and oldest of things illuminate the last; and the immaterial principles are present in material things." (*Carr-Gomm*, 6) Further, Philip Carr-Gomm writes, "Each of us carries a physical, genetic inheritance and a non-physical, spiritual inheritance of the combined experience of our previous lives. In the same way, a spiritual current, such as Druidry, has both physical and transmissions of traditions and spirituals ones." (20)

The key to both these traditions is that health and wellbeing are judged on a much more refined level than our current medical traditions tend to consider. It is the whole person in the whole society as a part of the wider environment that are the focus of both Ayurveda and Druidry. And in each case, the concept of the whole person includes body, mind and soul as manifest in the present but with an appreciation of the influences and experiences gained not only in this life, but in all other lives.

Both traditions require a subtle understanding of the self in the world to bring life into balance, and to reveal the true purpose of one's existence in this time. This requires a deep appreciation of the energies of life as manifest in nature—in plants, animal, herbs and spices, crystals, colours and the elements that formed these things.

Starting with simple practices, we are empowered to become aware of our world and our place in it. We begin to understand how our body works, and the sorts of sensations it has, and how we interpret these sensory experiences. We learn about the value of proper digestion and excretion, not just at a bodily level, but at emotional, social and transpersonal levels. We are taught behaviours that make us stable enough to receive the deeper mysteries of life, and then how to use those mysteries to bring harmony to the world.



Dinacharia—The Daily Routine

The daily routine is the bedrock of Ayurvedic practice. What we do each day is what builds our life. Through simple, routine practices, we can bring stability to our life, gently heal many of our ills, and avoid many of the complications that other people suffer.

The daily routine should be a harmonious practice, much of which is repetitive. At the most basic level, most of these practices have to do with optimising digestion, cleansing the body, and excreting waste.

Morning practice is the key to good dinacharia. What we do as we wake can set us up for the whole day. Last article, we looked at the practice of tongue scraping, which should be done within the first three minutes of waking. This article, we will look at the morning drink.

How to Make the Morning Drink

Many people take a morning cleansing drink. In Ayurveda, standard dinacharia would include a lemon, ginger, honey tea as a morning drink. This drink assists with the drawing and expulsion of waste from the body after the repair and maintenance cycle that occurs while we are sleeping—optimally during the Pitta hours of 10pm to 2am. Here the ginger scrapes the toxins, the honey binds them ready for excretion, and the lemon flushes them.

Repeating this practice daily results in better digestion throughout the day and a gradual release of toxins from the body. Long term practice has been known to stimulate regular bowel movements, even though this tea is not a laxative.

Each ingredient has a specific purpose, so none of them should be left out of your standard practice, unless you are given a different formulation specifically by your Vaidya (Ayurvedic doctor).

There are seasonal adjustments and adjustments according to your dosha or doshic imbalances. Simple adjustments include the addition of ½ tsp fennel powder in summer for cooling, or ½ tsp of fenugreek in winter to add warmth.

The morning drink should be made and taken as soon as possible after brushing your teeth and scraping your tongue. It should be just above tepid (38-40C).

Lemon Ginger Honey Tea

- 1 C boiling water
- ½ tsp fresh ginger
- ½ tsp fresh lemon juice
- ½ tsp honey

Add ginger to boiling water.

Allow to cool to about 40C—warm but not hot.

Add lemon juice and stir.

Add honey and stir until dissolved.

Drink.



Amber Priestess



A Creative Writing Course in Four Parts

The Bardic Grail

During 2018, I will be presenting a series of articles to assist folk with developing a writing practice. Anybody who writes as their profession knows it requires discipline and determination—not in the harsh way of mean teachers and boarding schools, but in the gentle way of moulding a life that holds a space in which the heart and art of a writer can naturally develop.

It is fitting that we begin this course with Lughnasadh, as it is the meeting place of the spear and the grail. Lughnasadh, the first harvest, is the festival where the sun's heat merges with the cooling waters of the pool of the ancients, where passion meets the emotional intellect. It opens us to exploring the art of writing as the result of creating an impassioned grail, where our desire to create a literary work motivates us to alter our practices so that we become the receptacle of our own art form.

It took me a long time to pursue writing as a career. I always felt inadequate. The daughter of a Polish migrant, I required intensive remedial English work as a child. When I finally got into university, I was too scared to study English. I wrote bad prose and even worse poetry. I had a poor sense of literary craftsmanship and, although I loved words and read widely, I lacked skill.



Plough ahead about eight years. I was in my mid-twenties with a young son. I had studied mathematics, science and philosophy in stops and starts, and something inside me felt broken. There was a writing group down the hall from one of my lectures. I wandered by, popped my head through the door, and saw a long table with about half-a-dozen people around it. There were biscuits. I smiled and an older gent, one of the English staff, nodded at me to sit down. He pushed the plate of biscuits toward me.

“Hi,” he said.

I took a biscuit and started chewing so I didn't have to speak.

Even as we harvest our first fruits, there are seeds that fall to the ground. That biscuit may have been the fertiliser that my creative-self needed, but my desire to write had finally been planted under the shade of strong creative trees—the birch of a well-respected Australian poet and the oaks of the literary tradition and a sound academic education. These great gate makers gave me insights into the literary craft that years of dabbling at the edges never provided. The wood of these powerful trees formed the grail of my writing self.

Amber Priestess



Fashioning your Grail

My mentor once told me that great writing occurs when a mature intellect meets developed skill. When we talk about developing the grail of your literary self, we look at developing both the heart and intellect of the artist and the skill of the craftsman.

This can be achieved in a number of ways, but one simple process we can all begin with is as follows:

1. Commit to regular practice.

Like any discipline, we need to commit to regular periods of practice. Can you commit to 45 minutes or an hour a day, preferably split into three 15-20 minute practices? Think on this and make that commitment. Put it in your diary. Fit it in to your life.

2. Develop the intellect

Develop the heart and mind of the writer by committing yourself to reading for 15 to 20 minutes each day. Read literature. Read well-crafted work. Ponder the way it makes you feel. You don't need to read much, but you do need to let it penetrate you. So be open, sit in the work. Don't force it to do anything, just let the practice plant its seed in you.

3. Develop the skill of writing

For 15-20 minutes each day, do a technical English language activity. Join Dictionary.com and learn a new word each day. Buy a grammar book and work through the exercises. Borrow a book on poetics and work through it. Read an etymological dictionary and dive into words. Again, don't force things. Don't make it a rush. Over the course of a year, 20 minutes a day becomes more than 120 hours of study.

4. Develop the practice of writing

This is one of my favourite activities. Take a notebook and a pen and write for 15-20 minutes straight. Then close the book.

Try to do this at the same time each day. Plan for it. Take your notebook if you have to go out, and sequester yourself in the loo if you have to in order to get it done.

Finally, for the moment you are not to reread or edit this work. You are not to turn this into something. You are not to force anything about this writing. Just pick a time you can write each day, and write.

In the Bardic Grade we open to what it means to be living on the earth with the ability to be creative. Although this is the first stage of Druid training, its purpose reaches to the very heart of Druidy, which is the development of a mastery of the powers of generation. At the Bardic level this involves the generation of creative works—of music, song, poetry and art in all its forms. In the Ovate and Druid work we relate to this power in the same way but we also become concerned with generating healing and love, ideas and light. The Bard's knowledge of and skill with the power of the Word becomes magical with the Druid: understanding the creative force of sound, the Word is used to generate seeds of light that echo through creation.

Philip Carr-Gomm, *The Elements of the Druid Tradition*, 49.

Amber Priestess



Lughnasadh

by Michael Vlasto



One of the oldest ideas of man was planetary magic: how the spirit of the planets and stars affect the affairs of men. Rituals done at the correct moment could work wonders, belief or no belief. Although the Inquisition put a stop to this in the 1300s, claiming it to be heretical, the ritual use of circle around a square persisted. Above all, the farmers and the village community kept traditions going that had existed before the Assyrians, Ancient Greeks and Egyptians, who had all made circles around deities to call them up.

The context of drawing down power from heavenly bodies into matter was understood very early. Those known as celtic/anglo-saxon people would draw circles around wounds or affected parts of the body to heal and contain infection. They dug around plants to concentrate the good in them. They stood in circle to pray for rain and sun. The shape of the pentagram was used for this as well, being a person standing in the middle of the circle and square.

Further, European humanity was highly mobile during ancient times. Even as early as the 1100s, many were writing down their experiences of what was in full flow, and had been for over 600 years. All the soldiers, pilgrims, merchants and scholars going back to the Bronze Age, if not earlier, carried the knowledge of what was happening in India, Babylon, Troy, Greece and Africa along with tribal migrations. This filtered up through Europe and the tops of the Hebrides Isles, while the wisdom and healing practices of the Druids flowed back the other way. That's why we see the knowledge of mathematics, astronomy, astrology and astral magic written in Latin, Greek, Arabic and Cuneiform, while the great myths of why things happened were held orally by those who could not read or write. These included farming practices, mining, fishing, and making of objects, such as swords or plough shears, pots and clothing.

These festivals were ancient, and were held right across world. The universal practice involved the exact measurement of the precise time of when to do each ritual for the wellbeing of the community: when to plant, tend, harvest, store and kill; when to expand, or contract. These rituals were given meaning by the stories and myths that went with them: who to call on to dissipate or make grow. Hence the great tales grew, the warrior in one place could turn into a farmer in another, the princess here became the crone there—so the shapes could and did change.

So, we come to the Harvest Festival, which in reality was the most important time of the year and the time of most concentrated hard work, as survival of the community rested on getting the harvest in. The god who ruled this time was none other than the sun itself, causing ripening, and determining the time to cut and store the grain.

The stories circle around: "Don't mess with him! Get in his good books! Call to him, yet be polite to the rain and storm's old crone, mature lady of the harvest, because she too can trash the whole lot, and you will starve and die."

Then, of course, there is the story of the grain itself, no mould means no illness in the people, a large crop means plenty of babies. Finally, there is the art of changing for the better, as we change grain into bread. The seed swallowed by the great black hen creates new life.



All this was the wild energy of bringing in the last load, and of the last sheaf being offered as thanks, so if this was not the best excuse for a party, what was? The moon goddess had held off her rain and wind, and there was plenty for all. Safely stored, so thanks needed to be offered to the Lords of Luck. The sun lord, Lugh, had conquered, and persuaded Chaos and Misrule to hold their hand. Yet the goddess just bided her time, so you needed to keep her in a good mood, too.

My own memories of harvest time as a child in Devon were getting to ride up to the barn on the last load, in having a chance to throw a hook at the last stalk, and the huge feast on the village green where everyone came. We kids would always have battles royal. Sticks and stones, I seem to remember, were banned by the parents, but it always was on! While adults danced and had the great tug'o'war across the pond, we fought gangs against gangs, and all the time snuck cups of cider from the big barrel when on-one was looking. From what I can see in my imagination, it was boys and girls racing against time, plunging into the golden age of innocence because, as well we knew the very long summer holiday was almost over. Next week we would be back to school: some in the village; some to be driven back to boarding school. There was the bitter sweet knowing of the end of summer coming for all of us. It would be dark pre-Christmas frost, winds, sleet and indoor time when next we were free to roam. This did create an urgency.

I remember Dad among the farmers, organising who needed to help with harvest next.

I remember stalks of barley on the threshing floor, chickens scratching around the edge, gobbling, pecking a grain here, a grain there. Mum calling, "If you don't stop, I'll change you to a grain and a Big Black Hen will eat you!"

All this now has a greater significance to the Myth of Gwion Bach, but we were living the myth at the time, not reading it. So even now, I can see the huge Black Hen approaching, the orange eye seeing me where I was hiding, and the blackness and nothing. We all were living the myth, which nowadays has retreated so far away into intellectual images, yet to those who now follow a mystic path, these are the images which hold the clue: the spear of midsummer meets the cup of the equinox.

So, I leave a question... What happens when fire meets water? When the spear enters the grail of Lughnasadh? The key into the chapel of understanding, the altar of memory, and all in the North West.

This is the season where the seeds of the last six months are harvested. Do you remember Imbolc? The importance of this festival is in sorting the fresh seed for the coming planting season, and to discard any that are mouldy or damaged. The seeds of thoughtlessness and selfishness ought to be cast aside, while the seeds of honesty, goodwill and generosity need to be carefully stored, because the seeds of hurt do not give a good harvest. This, to me, is how we achieve a greater reconciliation with Lady Sovereignty and the tribe. We keep the best grain, as this will always make the path down to the depths of the self easier. As the fairy queens says to True Thomas, "And see ye not yon bonny road/ That winds about the fernie brae?/ That is the Road to fair Elfland/ Where thou and I this night maun gae."

Bringing this back to Lughnasadh, we must at this season stand on a high place in our sacred world and look six months ahead to Imbolc. Have we the food, shelter and fire to get us through to spring? Are we a part of the untorn fabric of the tribe? Are all supported and protected? Because, believe me, the seeds of this harvest will sprout next year. You need to clean your barn out, clean your mind out, because now is the time to look ahead.

When we look to ritual, it is the inner vision that needs to be cultivated. All the learning of books fades away in the heat of experience. And that experience needs to be consciously nurtured so that we reap what we need in order to thrive.

*I am poetry, son of Reflection.
Reflection, son of Meditation.
Meditation, son of Love.
Love, son of Research.
Research, son of Great Knowledge.
Great Knowledge, son of Intelligence.
Intelligence, son of Understanding.
Understanding, son of Wisdom.
Wisdom, son of Bridget.*

**Advance Notice
Druid Camp 2019
Friday 19th April - Monday 22nd April
(The Easter Long Weekend)**



**The Wind Harp Seed Group of South Australia is excited to announce
a 4 day camp over the Easter Long Weekend in 2019 with :**

Damh the Bard - England

Cerri Lee - England

Kristoffer Hughes - Wales

The Camp will be held in the Adelaide Hills.

More info coming later this year!

Expressions of interest please email info@spiraldance.com.au

Please note this camp will be open to anyone interested in Druidry

Introduction to the History Project

by Elkie White

The Australian Druidry History Project was launched at the Assembly. The catalyst for this project came from Josie Winter, who instigated the successful Pagan Collective of Victoria (PCV) which I have recently been given the honour of joining as a representative of OBOD.

Josie was asked to write an article for *The Wild Hunt* on *'Druidry in Australia'*, and needed my answers pronto. The first question was, "Tell me about the history of druidry as a spiritual practice in Australia?" Obviously I could not do justice to such an important question in 24 hours and so I offered to create a questionnaire for the assembly, with the view that if the interest was there, we could then extend it to other groups and individuals.

Well the interest was there, and I thank everyone at the Assembly for their support. I took four completed questionnaires home with me and have been receiving a steady stream of them since. A delightful trend has already emerged in regard to the question, "What do you think is distinctly 'Australian' in regard to druidry?" The responses have embraced not only the physical distinctiveness of Australia (soil, seasons, animals, plants etc) but also its emotional/spiritual distinctiveness (equality, tolerance, light-heartedness, humour, mateship etc). It will be fascinating to see how this develops.

Josie has decided to mostly leave the history question on the back-burner for now, but intends to put together a more thorough piece at a later date. I sent her a draft questionnaire to her for comment, and in response she alerted me to the need for facts and figures for the history nerds, and so I pass on her request, to you, for names, dates and places, wherever possible. I also sent a draft to David Waldron, who is a history lecturer at Ballarat University. David replied that it was a good questionnaire, and asked whether druidry was worth seeing as distinct to other pagan groups. And so I have included that query in the questionnaire. I sent it to OBOD HQ seeking their support and Philip suggested that we advertise it on the OBOD Facebook page, and in Touchstone, in order to reach more people. I also wrote to Mandy seeking permission to include her idea for a special edition of *Serpentstar*, which she kindly gave me.

For those of you who weren't at the assembly here it is, and you are invited to participate - please do! You can print the questions as here presented or, better still, write and ask me to attach the questionnaire to an email. It is in Word and thus very easy to edit, according to your needs. My address is whitelk@bigpond.com and I hope to hear from you.

Towards a History of Druidry in Australia: The OBOD contribution

Preliminary notes:

Welcome to the Australian Druidry History Project! The catalyst for this project came from several sources including Josie Winter's article for *The Wild Hunt* and Julie Brett's book on Australian Druidry. Through this questionnaire, you are invited to include your story and perspective. You do not need to answer every question but just the ones that you feel comfortable with or that you feel are important. It is only out of our personal stories that an authentic understanding of druidry in Australia can emerge. To save paper, the questions have been packed into one sheet of paper (**the next page**). To write more, simply cross-reference to additional sheets. If you prefer, send me an email and ask me to send you the questionnaire in Word format as an attachment. That way you can answer straight into the document.

Please return, with your responses, to Elkie: whitelk@bigpond.com by (date has been extended to) December 2018. Thanks.

Your name:

Email contact:

- Are you happy to be contacted in regard to this project?
- Please describe where you live: city/town/district/State/Territory/general ecology
- What is your local indigenous language group/cultural tribe?
- Do you have any contact with them?
- Generally speaking, do you support the idea of writing a history of druidry in Australia?
- What value might it have?
- What should it include?
- When did you join OBOD?
- How far along the course are you?
- Why did you join? Why not some other druid group? What do you like about OBOD?
- When did you realise you were a 'druid'? And how did that feel?

- This project ties in with the 20th Anniversary of SerpentStar, a newsletter for OBOD members living in the southern hemisphere. You can write the answer to this question and also submit it for inclusion in the special edition of SStar coming out in summer this year. The question is: What was your first OBOD experience in the SH? Or, here's how Mandy put it: At Alban Hefin 1997, our very own SerpentStar was born. To celebrate there will be a FIFTH issue this year, released at Alban Hefin, our official 20 th birthday. For this special issue I am seeking special content, and the theme is 'My first OBOD experience in the Southern Hemisphere'. As always, stories, poems, photos, artwork and musings are welcome.

- As a possible starting point to the above: when did you first meet another druid or member of OBOD? Describe that encounter.
- What do you know about the history of druidry in Australia? *This is a key question and so please answer it to the best of your ability. Single sentences and full essays are both welcome, and everything in between. Point form is also okay, but for the history buffs please include names, places, and dates wherever possible.*
- Would you be willing to research the history of druidry in your local area for this project?
- Are you involved in any other groups (related to your druidry or spirituality – including historical societies, other spiritual groups, environmental groups, social justice groups)?
- Do you see any link between the druidry that you practice today and the druidry that was practiced by the United Ancient Order of Druids in the early years of European settlement?
- Why do you think druidry is becoming more popular in Australia? What do you think people are looking for? Has this changed over the years?
- What do you think is distinctly 'Australian' in regard to druidry?
- Where do you see druidry in the future of Australia? Or, what do you vision for us in the future? Where would you like it to go? Can you relate your ideas to what druidry in Australia has been in the past?
- If someone asked you to specify what a druid is in 3 sentences, what would your 3 sentences be?

As members of OBOD we are not asked to be anything other than that. However some people attach the following words or phrases to druidry, hence the question: How comfortable are you with the following words? Please rate each from 0-10, with 0 being the least comfortable, and 10 the most comfortable.

- druid
- pagan
- eclectic (druidry)
- home-grown (druidry)
- "nature-based spirituality"
- the word 'religion' (in regard to druidry)
- Related to the above, do you think that druidry is worth seeing as distinct to other pagan groups?
- What further questions would you like to see included in a questionnaire about the history of druidry in Australia?

If your own story is not included in the above questions please feel free to write it on as many extra sheets as you like.

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THE GREEN ALBUM and all the artists on this compilation project are proud and honored to announce our association and partnership with this wonderful organisation. 25% of all (That's ALL 14 artists) sales proceeds from this project will be donated to Rainforest Trust! This amazing group so profoundly echoes the sentiments of this project, and has been putting them into action for 27 years. PLEASE spread the word and get involved!

<http://www.thegreenalbum.net/about.html>

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Located within the Perth suburb of Banjup, Western Australia, Dreaming Tree Grove is a nature-based spiritual group grounded in Druidry, inspired by a "shamanic worldview" and a love of being immersed in natural surroundings. We view Druidry's journey through bard - ovate - druid as a creative and experiential journey, one that explores not just the Self in nature, but the nature of Self. For us, our spiritual path is one of integrity and service, of celebrating life and recognising the interconnection of all things.

Although we are affiliated with the British Druid Order, and while we acknowledge the traditions of our path, and the mythic cycle that weaves its way through our tradition, our connection to place is here within the bio-regional movements of nature that create this part of the Southern Hemisphere. So we explore our spirituality and practise through these sacred lands here in the south west of Western Australia, and therefore our approach reflects this.

To find out more about the Grove, about joining us, and our training program, visit our website:

<http://dreamingtreegrove.wixsite.com/dreamingtreegrove>





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Advertising in SerpentStar is free for all OBOD members in the Southern Hemisphere. If your business, event or club is related to our druidry practice, you can advertise on these pages for as long as you require. Submission guidelines are available from

serpentstar.druidryaustralia.org/about





Anam Cara Soul Space

Readings, Tarot, Astrology, and Sacred Plant Essences with Fleur Grant

Greetings and Kia ora, my name is Fleur Grant and I am a student of OBOD and a practising tarot reader, astrologer, and sacred plant essence practitioner.

My connection to Spirit has been active for as long as I can remember. I have always been blessed to receive messages, and this ability has been passed down my family line from my Anglo-Irish grandmother, who possessed second sight. I have good reason to believe my Irish ancestors, who left Ireland after one of the large famines, were descended from ancient Druids.

The land of my birth, Aotearoa New Zealand, has provided me with a deep appreciation of the native forest here, and my communion with nature has been further developed through training as a plant essence practitioner. Plant essences contain specific healing properties that shift emotional and traumatic patterns. There are even essences that can shift DNA patterns that have travelled down family lines. This is an exciting area of work, as it ties into the scientific discovery of epigenetics, which is confirming what ancient cultures have always known, that trauma can be hereditary. For instance, there may be a pattern of betrayal and heartbreak in relationships that have travelled down the ancestral bloodline. As Druids, we work with our ancestral inheritance, and it is now possible for us to clear negative hereditary patterns and receive our divine inheritance.

Astrology is an ancient tool which allows us to map the potential of a soul and look at key strengths and challenges. Most people are familiar with Sun Signs, but you are more than just your star-sign! Based on your time, date and place of birth, natal astrology explains the map of the Zodiac for your individual birth, and the position and relationship of all the planets and signs that make up your personality and potential. I also provide updates of full moon and other major astrological patterns for New Zealand and Australia on my Facebook page.

Tarot (I use Rider Waite and the Druidic Tarot) is an amazing tool for Divination. Tarot is my first port of call for questions about relationship insight and decisions.

Anam Cara is an old Gaelic term which means 'soul friend'. Here, at Anam Cara, I work with you in integrity, openness and non-judgement, using the ancient tools of tarot, astrology and sacred plant essences to help you make decisions, clear emotional and hereditary blocks, and move forward with confidence.

Consultations are available at my practice in Auckland, New Zealand, or from anywhere in the world using Skype.

Please visit my page
www.facebook.com/anamcarasoulspace/
for more details.





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I am a marriage celebrant living on the beautiful Sunshine Coast in Queensland. I have studied with OBOD for the last six years and will soon complete my Ovate studies. My aim is to help make your ceremony meaningful and memorable....



Fully qualified civil/funeral celebrant, and authorised marriage celebrant, with a professional background in customer service and publications writing/editing, and a personal background in performance and community education. If there is any skill needed to write, deliver and make your ceremony special, you can be assured that I have it...or can make it happen.

My gift as a celebrant is a passion for creating a beautiful experience – each ceremony will be individual to your needs and personality, including research into special moments and traditions that you and your loved ones will remember for years to come.

Based in Tamborine, QLD but willing to negotiate travel. If you'd like to know more please don't hesitate to get in touch.

ajgcelebrant@optusnet.com.au

0413 593 609

ajgcelebrant.wordpress.com

www.facebook.com/ajgcelebrant



Amanda Gibson

Qualified Civil Celebrant

Weddings, Commitment
Ceremonies, Vow Renewals, Baby
Namings/Blessings, Funerals and Life
Celebrations, Home and Business
Blessings, Life Transitions and
Women's Circles





JENNETH GRAHAM

Priestess Celebrant Bard Witch



As a registered Marriage Celebrant & passionate creator of ceremonies, I craft unique & beautiful rituals to help you celebrate the important times in your life.

Ceremonies are available on the Central Coast, Sydney & Newcastle Areas. Nationally & Internationally upon request.

Handfastings ~ Weddings
Civil Ceremonies ~ Vow Renewals
Maidenhood ~ Motherhood
Blessingways ~ Baby Namings
Cleansings ~ Cronings
Divorce ~ Funerals
Transition & Initiation Rituals

www.WiseCrafting.com.au
welcome@WiseCrafting.com.au
0415 158 941





Anne Conroy

REGISTERED CELEBRANT

My celebrancy is heart centred for those looking for someone who can genuinely support individuals and families when the need arises, in a relaxed and caring manner, in the Celtic tradition.

Regardless of the type of ceremony and its level of complexity, you can be assured of respect, empathy, deep listening, compassion, and creativity, along with a healthy dose of humour.



www.ritualcelebrant.co.nz
Ph: 021 781 873
E: anne@ritualcelebrant.co.nz



Member of the Order of
Ovates Bards and Druids



Member Celebrant's
Assn. of New Zealand

Creating meaningful ceremonies and lasting memories

Pamela Meekings-Stewart

Registered Marriage and
Civil Union Celebrant
New Zealand

I offer Druid, pagan and alternative spirituality marriages, hand fasting and civil union ceremonies working with couples to create their own unique ceremony.

As a Druid and committed to a spiritual life, the work is important to me. Couples continue to ask for my services and very much appreciate the gentle spiritual aspect of the ceremonies I help them put together.

I am also able to arrange contact for weddings and civil unions at Stonehenge Aotearoa in the Wairarapa with myself as Celebrant.

Marriage and Civil Unions are the only ceremonies that require a legal, registered Celebrant. However, I also craft and perform many other forms of ceremony and blessing:

Namings (children and change of name); Birth Blessings; Vows of Recommitment; Entering The Wisdom Years - Croning (women) and Sageing (men); House Blessings; Blessings and Invocations For Passing Over; Funerals and Burial Blessings



Tying the knot

Two lives entwine

Tying the knot

Two families entwine

Binding our futures together



Contact: pamela@thewoolshed.com

Thewoolshedretreats.co.nz

Tel: ++64-4 2399234



Need some time out from your day to day life?

**Want to escape the city and experience the Outback Heart of
our ancient land?**

**Interested in helping with a permaculture self-sufficiency project
and learning new skills?**

Experienced WWOOF host, and OBODie Ngatina, and her family, would like to invite members seeking a time of retreat to consider their home in the Northern Flinders Ranges (SA).

- The stunning ancient landscape and vast starry or moonlit nights are perfect for contemplation and fostering a connection with Spirit of Place.
- Experience living in an heritage listed small town (pop. 20) in a remote location
- Private accommodation in an historic inn first built in the 1870s
- Visit places of significance in the deeply powerful Flinders Ranges
- Help with an arid lands permaculture project – learn skills for self-sufficiency
- Flexible arrangements – either WWOOF for full food and board or be more autonomous as suits your needs.

For more details about our home and project visit <http://casaindomitus.wordpress.com> or contact Ngatina on wwoof@sylvanius.net or 0429795002 to discuss options.



And finally...



Artwork by John Jordan

The
Wheel
turns...



Artwork by nyverne ogma ryvyan

...we come to the time of **Lughnasadh...** which marks the beginning of harvest time. The hay would have been gathered in, and the time for reaping the wheat and barley was due. It was a time of gathering together, of contests and games and of marriages. The marriages contracted at this time could be annulled at the same time the following year - offering the couple a sensible 'trial period'. In some areas a flaming wheel was sent rolling down the hillside at this time to symbolise the descent of the year towards Winter, and in the Druid ceremony a wheel is passed around the circle in symbol of the turning year. The Christian version of this festival is Lammas, which has recently been revived in some churches. The word Lammas comes from blafmasse - 'loaf-mass' - since bread is offered from the newly harvested grain.

Text sourced from Druidry.org

The deadline for contributing to the Samhuinn issue of SerpentStar is XXXXX. The Samhuinn issue will be released on XXXXXXXX.