

# SERPENT STAR

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



BELTANE 2019





## Welcome to the Beltane 2019 issue of SerpentStar!

Happy Beltane!

At Imbolc, we say "Come back to us Lady, and bring the Spring." And she doesn't mess around. Spring has most certainly sprung and things are coming back to life even despite the strange and sometimes wild weather especially in the southern parts of Australia.

For me, Spring came in the form of a tree I rescued from the "this is basically dead" pile, pruned back hard, mulched and fertilised and sang to for weeks until out of nowhere the leaves just started to pop out all over it. I shared this pic on Facebook, to which one of my friends responded "Life always finds a way." And so it does. x

This issue carries some great articles from our members' travels - events that speak to the soul and land, and some wonderful poetry.

In peace  
Mandy /|\

## SerpentStar, Beltane 2019

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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Follow us on Facebook - search "SerpentStar"  
Enquiries via email:  
[serpentstar.obod@gmail.com](mailto:serpentstar.obod@gmail.com)

All opinions expressed herein are solely the contributors' own.

A reminder to everyone that SerpentStar now has a YouTube channel, which is hosting the DDUDE talk series from Druids DownUnder. I'd like to see other videos from OBODies on there as well though - they can either be linked to ones already on other channels, or we can arrange for you to send them to me for upload. Get in touch if you have a bardic video or a short doco you'd like to share in SerpentStar.

Search 'SerpentStar OBOD' on YouTube to subscribe!

# OBOD in the Southern Hemisphere

## Groves & Seed Groups

The following are groups currently listed on OBOD's official Groves & Seed Groups List for 2018 and have consented to have their information included in this list. Other groups run by OBOD members are listed in the Advertising section.

### 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](mailto:southernbreezesfellowship@gmail.com) and you can see our profile on Facebook [www.facebook.com/Southernbreezesfellowship](http://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](mailto:debby@triskel.co.za) for details.



### The Golden Wattle Seed Group

The Golden Wattle Seed Group are an OBOD Seed Group in Adelaide, SA. We hold ceremonies for the Wheel of the Year, nature walks, meditations and other rituals for peace and for the land. If you would like to get in contact with us, email us at [golden.wattle.seed.group@gmail.com](mailto:golden.wattle.seed.group@gmail.com) or connect with our Facebook 'Friends of' page: search Friends of the Golden Wattle Seed Group (OBOD).

### 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](mailto: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](mailto: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. We now have a public facebook page: Friends of The Melbourne Grove.  
FFI contact: [Elkie, elkiewhite@gmail.com](mailto:Elkie, elkiewhite@gmail.com)

### Middle Earth Fellowship Seed Group

Tauranga, NZ. Also Medieval village, Medieval craft camps, Medieval dance and Border Morris dance.  
Contact Yvonne [yjames@balnacoil.xtra.co.nz](mailto:yjames@balnacoil.xtra.co.nz).

### Silvereyes Seed Group

Perth Hills & members throughout the South West. Email: [ghrianacu@iinet.net.au](mailto:ghrianacu@iinet.net.au)

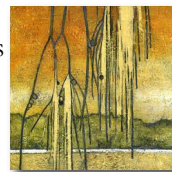


## Song of the Eastern Sea Seed Group

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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:bonsaidruid@yahoo.com.au)

## Useful websites for SH OBODies:

[www.druidryaustralia.org](http://www.druidryaustralia.org) - A central online resource for druidry in Australia.

*Druids DownUnder* - Facebook group - a group for druids of any path in the Southern Hemisphere, Australia/New Zealand in particular.

*Don't see your group or website listed here? Send a listing to [serpentstar.obod@gmail.com](mailto:serpentstar.obod@gmail.com) and spread the word!*

## OBOD Worldwide

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

[www.druidcast.libsyn.com](http://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.

Contact Penny [touchstone@druidry.org](mailto:touchstone@druidry.org)

**Druid** (USA) [www.druidmagazine.com](http://www.druidmagazine.com) (publication ceased 2018, back-issues still available)

**Druidenstein** (German) [www.druidry.info/das-magazin-druidenstein](http://www.druidry.info/das-magazin-druidenstein)

**Dryade** (Dutch) [www.obod.dds.nl](http://www.obod.dds.nl)

**Il Calderone** (Italian) [issuu.com/ilcalderone](http://issuu.com/ilcalderone)

**Menhir** (French) [issuu.com/obod-menhir/docs](http://issuu.com/obod-menhir/docs)

## 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](http://www.pagan-transitions.org.uk) and complete the application form. Any suggestions on how the service can be improved are welcome.





# Council of all Beings - Bunya Mountains Qld

Sept 13 – 15 2019 Pt 1 - By Cherry Carroll

I still have no idea what prompted me to hold this gathering. I remember following a link that Philip had shared on one of his blogs about the Council of All Beings and the next thing I remember is booking the venue! Awen at work!

When approaching the Bunyas from the North the road becomes gradually steeper and twists serpent like upwards until, without notice, almost stealth like, it narrows and the trees close in from the sides. The buttresses of huge strangler figs, festooned with vines and tree ferns stand guard and the rainforest envelopes one.



*Pic by Chris Parker*

A mantle of peace and a sense of unworldliness overcomes the traveller on this road. For me this is always a moment of surrender. It is as if time stands still and the mundane concerns of life can be left at this portal.

Further along the many wallabies watch boldly – this is their territory. A flash of brilliant crimson and iridescent green announces that the King of parrots is holding court and the forest comes alive with coloured wings and birdcalls. This is the Bunya Mountains. A sacred land of majestic trees which was for centuries a traditional meeting place for indigenous tribes who would gather to share the bounty of the Bunya nut harvest every five years. The gatherings were also times of interaction, trading and corroboree. Today immense broad scars are visible scaling up to the top of some trees where footholds had been cut many years ago to enable the climbers to reach the prized nuts.

What better place to gather for our Council?

On our first evening we watched a video of the film 2040, which Liz had kindly brought with her. This set the purpose for the weekend – the quest for ways to help our ailing planet. An inspiring film with so much information and hope. It gave us encouragement that even as individuals we can do much. We also began to search our souls to decide what is being lost from our planet that we feel most deeply about. This we would be sharing in the Mourning Ceremony on the following day.

The next morning greeted us with one of the mountain's beautiful misty dawns. Ghostly shapes hopped beneath the trees, with the bolder of them begging for breakfast at the back of the chalets! The Sun pierced through the mist to outline the scene with bright halos. Orbs hovered around our grove of Bunya pines. The forest blessed us with its beauty. After the morning meeting and a brief meditation we ventured into the forest to wander alone and find the being that we would speak for next day in Council. The magic of the mountain wrapped around us as we walked in silence surrounded by the ancient wisdom of the trees. Strangler figs stood in contemplation while thick vines coiled around their massive buttresses and ferns jostled for attention about their feet. A trickle of water whispered from hidden streams. The waterfalls sadly silenced by the drought. A giant among figs feigned disinterest as humans walked right through its centre. It has watched them with amusement for so many years – mere children playing hide and seek among its roots. How bizarre that these infants of the planet should now hold the power of life or death over the land.

We were all claimed by a sentient being during our forest walk. Some experienced a deep mourning, perhaps a healing for circumstances in their own lives. Whilst walking we also searched for a token to represent what we most grieve the loss of. This token would be presented when we spoke of our feelings during the Mourning Ritual later in the day. We returned from our walk and made our way down to our grove which nestled under the protection of three venerable Bunya pines, whose lower branches swung down to form an arched entrance in the West. We arrived to the soft beating of drums and the cleansing smoke of white sage. Here we celebrated our opening ceremony.



Our circle was consecrated with the element of Air as we asked that the atmosphere of our planet be free from pollution.

Then by Fire, asking that humankind be aflame with the desire to protect the planet.

By Water, asking that the oceans and waterways be purified and blessed.

By Earth, asking that Mother Earth and all her beings be protected and blessed.

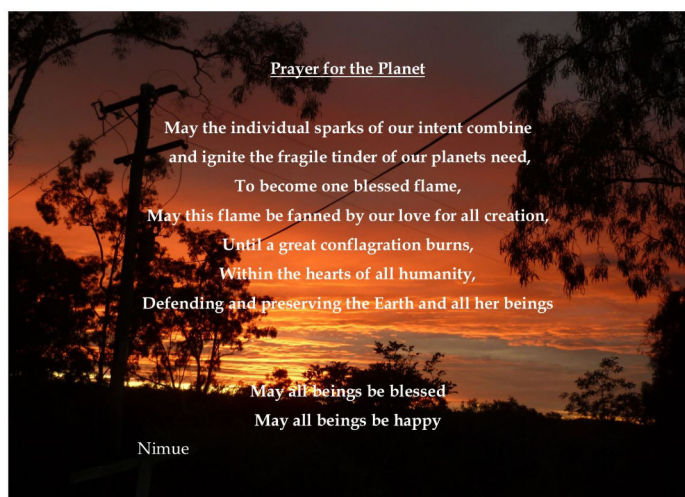
We read aloud the Invocation which was written especially for the Council of all Beings by John Seed who co-founded the ritual in 1985 with Joanna Macy. This powerful piece asking for the presence and inspiration of the spirit of Gaia. At the close of the ceremony we asked that we truly remember that we are inseparable from nature and our catch cry for the weekend resonated around the grove - "We are one!"

We returned to the chalets to make masks. These would be worn when we spoke as our allies on the following day during the actual Council of all Beings ritual. In silence and with reverence we created our masks, asking that they be imbued with the spirit of the being that had claimed us and that we might speak well on their behalf. After lunch we gathered once more under the protection of our Bunya pines to mourn what is being lost from our planet. This was not a time for hope, but a time to express our emotions. Here, in a safe and supportive atmosphere, we could share the grief, anger and fears which we may have been suppressing. A time to identify what we most deeply mourn and honour that loss. We began the ritual by reading out the names of just a few of the Australian creatures who are critically endangered and asking that they be protected and blessed.

The Ceremony then continued, with each of us naming what we felt most deeply about and placing its representative token in the centre. We spoke of our sadness and fears. Tears flowed, some voices raised in anger, some trembling as deep emotions bubbled up to the surface. The others in the circle supporting us by saying "We hear you," as we finished. After all had spoken we placed our hands on Mother Earth, connecting with her life force, sharing her pain and realising that her fate is our fate. We have no independent existence. "We are one!" We drummed and began the chant "Ancient Mother we hear you calling, Ancient Mother we hear your song, Ancient Mother we hear your laughter, Ancient Mother we taste your tears". A young wallaby appeared, at the Western gate of the grove and sat watching and listening intently to our song.

Wallaby – Traditionally wallaby represents progression, moving forward to take risks and never to look back with regret. Onwards and upwards. What an encouraging message he came to share!

At day's end we went up to a lookout on the top of the mountain. So high that we looked out onto the conical tops of the massive Bunya pines which dominate the forest below. From here we had panoramic views and we drummed as we watched the spectacular sunset from this vantage point. When the last rays of the sun dipped below the horizon we turned to the East to greet the full moon and she rose majestically to greet our enthusiastic welcome. A magical experience which preceded our call for peace, during which our tokens from the Mourning Ceremony were cast to the East with prayers that the Earth and all beings find peace and protection. We ended with prayers for much needed rain for areas in extreme drought. Rain to quell the fires raging throughout the land and those ravaging the Amazonian forests.



Our drumming and chanting rang out,  
echoing across the forest floor below.

And so ended the first full day of our gathering.

*(Stay tuned for Pt 2 in the Lughnasadh 2020 issue...)*



## Queensland Ogham Poem (Pt 3)

*Elder = Weeping fig*

*Weeping fig is good for shade and is great for climbing  
wide*

*Aerial roots hang down to support broad beams  
Profuse small figs bring the birds that cheep inside*

*Soft Birch (P) = Pine*

*The pine has needles evergreen and grows both fast and  
strong*

*Makes wood for harvest, furniture and home  
Its cones burn well and at Christmas gives its crown*

*White fir = Macrocarpa*

*The Macrocarpa's sturdy cypress of scaly leaf of evergreen  
Beneath the boughs a bed of spongy brown  
The small round cones like fairy footballs strewn around*

*Gorse/Broom = Bougainvillea*

*Bougainvillea's paper flower grows on hardy vines where  
climes are wet*

*And warm, the thorny vines climb over fences, walls and  
trees yet  
Always seem supported, though through their thorns you  
cannot get.*

*Heather = Banksia*

*Banksia's a shrub or tree of sweet and tough cylindric  
flower*

*That leaves a hard and duck-billed cone of grenade power  
In gumnut stories they are the big baddies of the bower*

*Poplar = Poplar*

*Poplars stately soldier's lines windbreak the fields and  
roads*

*With silvery leaf that twinkles brightly in the breeze  
Some called aspen, are better climbing, with so coloured  
leaves*

*Yew = Fig*

*Figs the mighty kings and queens of tropic jungles,  
massive shade  
Buttressed, curtained or strangled other trees to make the  
glade  
Of supporting columns or waving walls between them a  
home is made*

*Ea = Cadaghi*

*Cadaghi trees with barky stockings over smooth green bole  
Drop many nuts and yellow hairs, and bees take home  
Their waxy flume, yet sooty rust will stain those near their  
loam.*

*Gold = Pohutukawa*

*Pohutukawa's bottle brush of red with stringy bark of  
fibrous root  
A Christmas tree that shines in kiwi's lands so true  
Grows sideways out of cliffs and cobs hard nuts for fruit*

*Elbow = Wattle*

*The wattle or acacia is the elbow of boomerang's hard  
stock  
Golden flowered with medicine contained in bark and  
tasty gum  
A tough old tree with cheery flowers like pom pom*

*Pine = Casuarina*

*The Casuarina of iron wood fame goes by the name  
Sheoak  
Has seeds like mini hand grenades with jointed needle  
leaves  
A weeping whispering tree with lovely wood for tiles and  
eaves*

*Double c = Black bean*

*Black bean tree ever green with toxin in pod of egg sized  
bean  
Unless you roast and cut and leach and mash and cook  
again  
As done for thousands of years on this wide brown land*

By John Jordan





## Into the Light of Action

The turn of the year from the dark half into the light half at the spring equinox has always been a time when I consider the role of activism in my life, and this year I have embraced that like I never have before. I've travelled to learn about different ritual practices, I've gone to places where issues I cared about were actually happening, I've spoken to many people about problems and how we can and should address them, and I've had opportunities to share and teach on these subjects too.

Shifting into the light half of the year, the inspirations that have been brewing from Imbolc start to come into being. The ideas brewed in the inner focused dark half of the year form into actions as we move into the more outwardly focused light half. The plans start to be acted out. Spring is a wonderful active and hopeful time all round. The seeds of hope awakening to their promise.

Through the winter months I had been learning more and more about concerning environmental issues happening all over the world. The climate strikes; the mismanagement of the water systems of the Murray-Darling River; the fish kills at Menindee Lakes; the demand of coal mines and oil drilling across the country threatening local communities and the environment; the overwhelming amount of plastic and chemical pollution and our inability to deal with our own waste responsibly; the bleaching of the Barrier Reef; the forests burning in Alaska, Siberia and the Amazon, and the deforestation here in Australia...more and more issues were coming up every day. It was overwhelming.

With these mounting concerns I was excited to learn of The Council of All Beings event that was to happen in Queensland's Bunya Mountains in the spring. It was organised by fellow OBOD member Cherry Carroll, and other OBOD friends made up about a third of the number of the gathering. Through the winter months I took some time to read *Thinking Like a Mountain: Towards a Council of All Beings* by John Seed, Joanna Macey, Pat Flemming and Arne Naess who initiated the idea of the council. I was pleased to see so much cross over with Druid philosophies in the book and the ritual practices outlined, and after experiencing the gathering I know that there is much that these two paths of connecting with the spirit and needs of nature can share with each other.

The main action of the ritual processes was for us to initially take some time in the beautiful, though drought affected rainforest to ask for an ally for whom we would speak for on the council. This was a process I enjoyed so much I could easily have done it for a day rather than just an hour. We then made masks to represent our allies in the circle. During the council ritual we each took a turn to speak to the humans as our allies, and the insight and wisdom that was brought through was heartbreakingly poignant. Their voices were stern, honest and direct, but never without love, or awareness that change could come. It was a beautiful thing to be a part of, and through the solidarity not only with nature and our allies, but with each other through the process, I felt a greater strength to continue in any work that would help the planet.

The following weekend I was able to celebrate the Spring Equinox with The Living Nemeton, run by Rebecca P and Lisa N. We took some time in nature alone on this camp too and I enjoyed feeling the shift into the light half of the year there as we shared a feast and songs and stories around the fire.







The following week I started a trip out to see the towns affected by the mismanagement of the rivers. The Yaama Ngunna Bakka Coroborree Bus Tour went through Walgett, Brewarrina, Bourke, Wilcannia and the Menindee Lakes to see the degradation of the rivers, to experience storytelling, song and dance in Coroborree each night with local and visiting Aboriginal dance groups, and to hear about the issues first hand and learn what could be done. It was incredible on so many levels. The wisdom of the Aboriginal people and the clear necessity that their voices be heard in regards to the maintenance of the river was key. Seeing it first hand was incredibly moving too. The way the songs and stories started to sink into our minds and memories over the days, the way they shaped the landscape we travelled through, and the depth of knowledge that they held showed how important they are to the health of the land.

I went on the trip knowing no one, but by the end I knew I was among life-long friends. It was a moving experience, and despite the sadness of the issue, there was a great sense of community, solidarity and love in the friendships that were forged. I am still processing the experience, but know this meeting the issue first hand is incredibly important and if you ever get the opportunity to do it, I hope you take it.

After the tour I was able to visit Adelaide to see some of our Druid mates there. I held a ritual called 'The Earth Gorsedd' where those gathered were invited to share their experiences of environmental grief and loss, and to share Bardic performances that helped us to process those emotions. It was wonderful to be able to share this and particularly after such a moving experience as the Coroborree tour was, I'm incredibly grateful. Thank you so much to everyone who came along and shared from your hearts about these important issues.

I was also pleased to be able to share a workshop while I was there about the Gorsedd ritual and how it can be used in different ways with unique intentions. I hope that those who were able to attend will continue to share this kind of ritual in their own ways. The solidarity created in coming together in a shared intention, whatever it might be, can be incredibly healing, both in ritual or in meeting with others in a shared cause in any sense.

Blessings for the light half of your year. May it awaken change in your world.

**Julie Brett** / | \





## SOUTHERN ECHOES II

A second anthology of Southern hemisphere Druid writings is being planned  
to succeed the first one, which was published in 2003  
High time for another !

We are seeking submissions of your best and most exciting work.  
Poetry, prose, articles, short stories, photography, art work.  
These need to highlight the challenges, the spirits of our lands, the love, joy and tears  
that we experience as we practise our Southern hemisphere Druid traditions.

### **Conditions for submissions**

Author must be a Druid living in the Southern hemisphere.  
Only six pieces may be submitted per person.  
The work must have been executed by the person submitting it.  
Poems can be up to 100 lines plus title.  
Prose, articles and stories can be up to 3000 words.  
All submissions must be received by 31st January 2020.  
Submissions should be sent by e-mail to [nimueart@bigpond.com](mailto:nimueart@bigpond.com)  
with the subject being Southern Echoes

## *Grey Smoke of Awen*

*No one speaks of the slinky mist, weaving between the feet of the cauldron.*

*The temperamental playful pawing by the grey wisp nudges the stirring servant.*

*The entity dancing above the cauldron, a tendril of vapour curling into the air.*

*Bubbles purr to the surface, the urgency of inspiration.*

*The creature of many states, slipping from solid to liquid and into thin air. A potent mixture bringing magic and change.*

*The unseen interloper, the true creatrix of transformation evaporates to mist, circles thrice and retreats to a soft place.*

*Anonymous*



## Reporting on Saturday of the Combined Covens Spring Camp (Or, "A Druid in Fairyland.") by Tina Merrybard

I first heard about this camp from fellow Druids, Jenni and Lily, who have attended many times over the years. I wasn't sure about going at first. I mean, "Some of my best friends are Wiccan," but it wasn't called the Combined Covens and Groves Spring Camp! How were they going to feel about me showing up in my white robes for the open ritual on Saturday night? How many jokes about human sacrifice was I going to have to field? Did I own enough cats to fit in?

All jokes aside, I did feel a little trepidation when heading off to the camp for the Saturday day and evening that I felt I could be away from the needs of my mother and puppy. I needn't have worried. First I was met and welcomed by the wonderful Gatekeeper, Kendra, and soon enough I was hugging my beautiful Druid friends, Dusty, Jenni and Lily, and from that moment I didn't feel awkward at all. The day is something of a blur so I will write of moments and memories rather than chronologically.

A talk on candle magic, cleverly shared by the members of a Coven. Feeling how close they were, a family, and learning new things about candles, and the lovely gifts they put together for us to bring home. The flower pin we were given to wear for Quercus, who had died last year and who was so fondly remembered. So many people come back year after year.

Talking to Gina about writing, and her passion for her magical work with glass, as we each decorated our stars ready for the evening ritual. Did you know, being a glass worker is a natural progression from being a zookeeper, because both jobs require knowing that an animal, and also glass, can only be pushed so far beyond their own natures? Fascinating group discussions about where we found the magic inside ourselves, the results of which we then put up onto a board all together and it made the shape of a llama! Guess, what, a Druid would have fitted right in there with what was listed.

The conversation table, where you could sit if you wanted to talk to all comers. A very good idea. The beauty and peace of Bickley reservoir, which has been fenced off to the public for decades, and which I miss so very much. The sound of pobblebonk frogs beginning to call as the sun set over the water. Sitting with my 'brother from another mother', to watch it and talk all things puppy.

The fire twirler, just so beautiful and skilful, and how she took special time to make sure the kids got to have a go. A feast cooked by yet another coven with amazing skill and pride. Talking to so many people about how they came to their path and what it entails. Damh the Bard and Spiral Dance coming on the shuffle in the common room! Flirting, oh lots of flirting, and love of body, and adorning that body, and how wonderful it is to meet people who rock their gorgeous selves in so much variety and style!

Regressing to a ten-year-old and sneaking in a couple of 'Druid Cool' signs during the group photo! (See cropped image, pixelated to protect the guilty.)

Singing in the ritual. Oh yes, that gave me ideas, that did! The beauty and earnestness of a coven all working together to give us that experience. (And as a Firey with anxiety, worrying that their diaphanous wraps might catch fire as they danced around the flaming cauldron, and planning on rolling someone around to put them out if so!)

I think it is the hard-working attitude that has stayed with me most. Everyone there was aiming to be inclusive and to give all comers a great experience. They were a very multifarious group. More different than, say, a group of Druids coming together would be, and yet the willing attitude and open-heartedness made for a really great experience!

Twenty-one years this camp has been running, and I can see why it is so enduring. Many thanks for your kindness and welcoming approach, Combined Covens Social Club. This Druid will be back! (Human sacrifice jokes notwithstanding!)





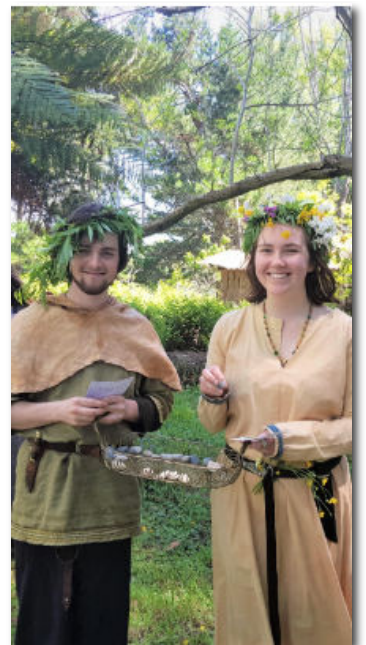


The header image for the Aotearoa section of SerpentStar has been created by Glenn Conroy, who writes: "The image is comprised of several elements that are of special meaning to members of the Grove of The Southern Stars; Matariki, (seven sisters constellation), pounamu, (greenstone), ti kouka (cabbage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

As usual, Middle Earth Fellowship is celebrating Beltane over NZ's Labour weekend. We generally share this time with Medieval living historians, who also join in the activities. These include laughter yoga, Beltane ritual with our lovely young May King and Queen, jumping the bonfire, and of course Maypole dancing. If the weather is truly awful with our continuous rain, we might retire indoors to watch the original Wicker Man movie.

As I tear up strips of old sheets from the op shop and sew them for the Maypole ribbons, my ponderings take a legal turn. My local city council has banned all fires and now tells me I have to apply for (and pay for) a resource consent which may or may not be granted as religious activities are a prohibited activity where I live. Meanwhile I am claiming existing land use rights as a farmer, and my right under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and NZ's Bill of Rights Act, to freely engage in not only my religious and cultural activities, but anything else that does not cause harm or nuisance to others.

Has anyone else had such experiences? We are in Tauranga, and it is a bit much to expect us to apply for a resource consent each full moon so we can meditate for peace, when the council is favouring the activities of the industrial developer on three sides of my farm, who has been allowed to spray polymer flocculant on his land and put it into waterways that flow into the Wairoa River just 200 metres from the nearest part of his land.



Blessed Be

Yvonne James, Middle Earth Fellowship Seed Group





# The Wheel of Segais

## The Wisdom of the Four Seasons as a Divination Tool

A big thank you to all of you for your patience while we did our second production run for the Wheel of Segais Personal Reader Kit. The reprinting took somewhat longer than we had anticipated but the good news is (trumpet sounds)...

**The Wheel of Segais Personal Reader Kit is now available again! The printing has been checked, the fabric Wheels, hazelnuts and pens tested, the boxes packed and we are all ready to receive your orders once again.**

If the **Wheel of Segais Personal Reader Kit** is unfamiliar to you, there is lots more information on my website - <http://www.wheelofsegais.com/> - and you might like to check out this wonderful divination tool by having an online reading with me to get you started.

And if you would like to learn a little more about how this seasonal metaphor and 'thinking like a tree' can be used to understand the cycle of all things, be it a project, an intention, a goal, a life purpose, a relationship, a business etc, you might like to take a look at this live video I did for 'Tea with a Druid' a couple of weeks ago which I call, 'Living Treefully'. It includes a short meditation that you might enjoy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sphYwzcmfM>

## THE WHEEL OF SEGAIS READER TRAINING

The Wheel of Segais Reader Training already has a number of students and Graduates in America, Australia, the UK and New Zealand.

If you are interested in taking the **Wheel of Segais Online Reader Training** you will first need to purchase a Personal Reader Kit.

If you already have a Personal Reader Kit then you can purchase the Reader Training course straight away and start your Reader journey. Videos and more information about the Reader Training and its content can be found at:

<https://www.wheelofsegais.com/be-a-reader/>

You can sign up for the Training through Global Spiritual Studies – <https://globalspiritualstudies.com/product/the-wheel-of-segais/> . **Prices are in \$USD.**

- Download seven recordings to your device: **\$279**
- Seven recordings stored on a USB flash drive: **\$290** (includes postage worldwide)

**If you are a New Zealand resident**, the good news is that you can save on international currency transfer fees by paying in \$NZD. Email me for \$NZ prices and bank account details – [pamela@thewoolshed.com](mailto:pamela@thewoolshed.com)

*As the seed is nurtured and the Wheel of Segais unfurls its tendrils around the world, I hope you will consider taking the next step with me to becoming a Wheel of Segais Reader. Let us use the wisdom of Nature to grow our dreams and the dreams of others from Seed to Harvest.*



# WHEEL OF SEGAI'S COURSES

In New Zealand I run one-day facilitated workshops for up to 20 people and also run ongoing monthly courses following the 12 streams that flow from the Well of Segais: Transformation, Openness, Affinity, Passion, Commitment, Alignment, Identity, Discrimination, Ripening, Healing, Harvest and Reflection.

The next one-day (10-4) workshop will be on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2019 here at The Woolshed and from there I will ascertain when is the best time to begin another series of monthly workshops. These will be in addition to the Reader training although they will use much of the same material. I am also exploring the possibility of making these monthly workshops available online for those of you in other countries or out of town.

In the meantime, I will be travelling to Australia in April 2020 and the UK and Europe in May/June 2020 and I am keen to run one-day Wheel of Segais workshops while I'm away. If you would be interested in attending one of these please register your interest. If you would like to organise a one-day workshop for me (promotion, venue, admin, etc) then I would be happy to offer you a place for free.

I look forward to hearing from some of you very soon.

Yours on behalf of the Salmon of Wisdom.  
Pamela

*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 reading or a life coaching session in person, you can contact me at [pamela@thewoolshed.com](mailto:pamela@thewoolshed.com), 0272068876 or 2399234.*

*Cost: \$40*

## **Out of town or in another country?**

*Book an online reading or Life Coaching Session through my website – [www.wheelofsegais.com](http://www.wheelofsegais.com)*





# Spiral Dance's latest album 'Land and Legend' is now available.



Goddess of the Southern Land	A Piggott
Serpent Energy	A Piggott
Wickerman / Landlord's Daughter	A Piggott / P Gooding
Song of the Trees	A Piggott
The Sheringham Mermaid / Bay of Soles	A Piggott / P Gooding
The Children of Lir	A Piggott
Soul's Gateway	M Adamson
King Orfeo	Traditional
Dark Days and Heys / Tampered Twilight	A Miller / P Gooding
Elen of the Ways	A Piggott
Mallee My Mother	Wyverne Ogma Vyvyan

## Featuring:

Damh the Bard on Track 1 & 11  
Wyverne Ogma Vyvyan Track 11

**To order go to :**

**<http://www.spiraldance.com.au>**

**or for more information :**

**[info@spiraldance.com.au](mailto:info@spiraldance.com.au)**



# THE GREEN ALBUM

Tuatha Dea and Nightsong Studios Presents:

THE GREEN ALBUM is a collaborative concept album featuring Tuatha Dea, Wendy Elizabeth Rule, SJ Tucker, Sharon Knight, Winter Jp Sichelschmidt, Celia Farran, Bekah Kelso, Ginger Doss, Damh The Bard, Kellianna Girouard, Spiral Dance, Spiral Rhythm, Murphey's Midnight Rounders, Brian Henke and Mama Gina LaMonte.

It's a musical plan of action. An Independent musical compilation created by a consortium of like minded Muses, Musicians and Songbirds from all over uniting as a global Tribe to raise awareness, celebrate and give something back to Mother Earth! All these amazing artists will be offering one gift of song, either NEW or never before released specifically for this Album, and themed toward the universal concept of 'Green!' All of the Artists have banded together, and partial proceeds from every album sold by the collaborators will be donated to Rainforest Trust, a Global Green Charity doing amazing work around the world!

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>

<https://www.facebook.com/greenalbum/?ref=hl>

Direct downloads available from <http://www.thegreenalbum.net/home.html>

or you can buy a physical album via

[http://www.spiraldance.com.au/?CDs\\_and\\_Downloads\\_\\_\\_Ordering\\_Spiral\\_Dance\\_CDs](http://www.spiraldance.com.au/?CDs_and_Downloads___Ordering_Spiral_Dance_CDs)



## RAINFOREST TRUST® *Hero*

### The Green Album

donated a gift to protect

**1,817 Acres of Balanga Forest Reserve  
in the Congo**

This gift assists Rainforest Trust and our local Congolese partner to establish Balanga Forest Reserve, safeguarding crucial habitat and providing a future safe from poachers for the Congo's magnificent and threatened wildlife, including the African Forest Elephant, Okapi, and Bonobo.

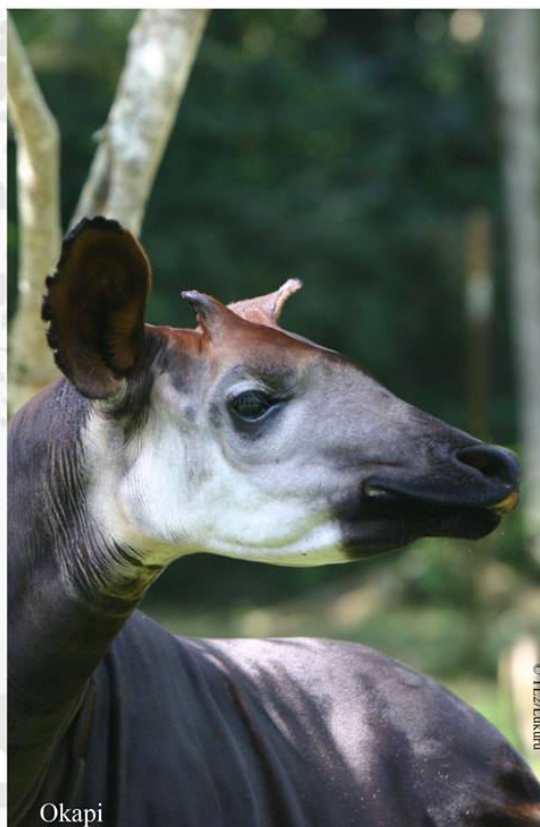
Issued June 20, 2016

*Thank you for your commitment to biodiversity.  
Together we are saving rainforest acres, forever!*



RAINFOREST TRUST®

*Dr. Paul Salaman*  
Chief Executive Officer



Okapi

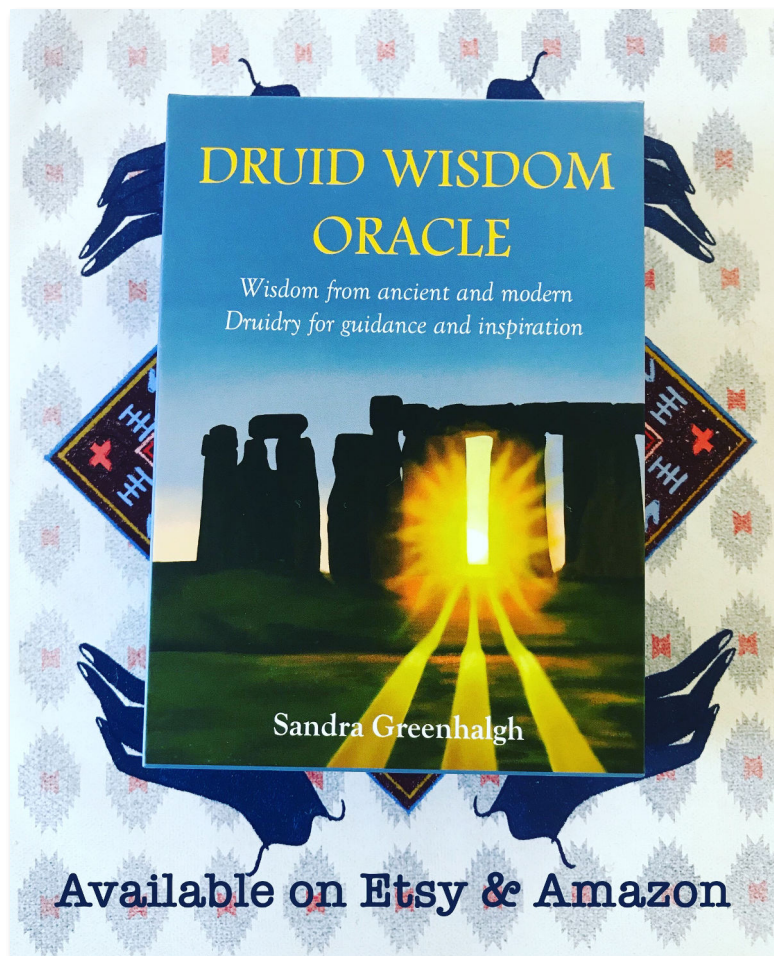
TUATHA DEA	CELIA FARRAN
WENDY RULE	BRIAN HENKE
SJ TUCKER	MAMA GINA
BEKAH KELSO	MURPH'S
GINGER DOSS	MIDNIGHT
KELLIANNA	ROUNDERS
DAVE THE BARD	SPIRAL RHYTHM
SPIRAL DANCE	
SHARON KNIGHT/ WINTER S	



© T12/Lakuru



## Member Businesses, Groups & Retreats in Australia/New Zealand



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](http://serpentstar.druidryaustralia.org/about)

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[www.instagram.com/ForestSpiritJulie](https://www.instagram.com/ForestSpiritJulie)





## 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.

Readings are available in person in Auckland, New Zealand, or from anywhere in the world using Skype or Messenger.

Please visit my website [anamcarareadings.com](http://anamcarareadings.com) and follow my Facebook [www.facebook.com/anamcarareadings](https://www.facebook.com/anamcarareadings)







OBOD Member  
Celebrants

Australia & New Zealand

Celebrancy Services available in Melbourne  
Legal weddings, handfastings, commitment  
ceremonies

Contact Elkie - [whitelk@bigpond.com](mailto:whitelk@bigpond.com)



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](mailto:ajgcelebrant@optusnet.com.au)

0413 593 609

[ajgcelebrant.wordpress.com](http://ajgcelebrant.wordpress.com)

[www.facebook.com/ajgcelebrant](https://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.

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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](http://www.ritualcelebrant.co.nz)  
**Ph: 021 781 873**  
E: [anne@ritualcelebrant.co.nz](mailto: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 **Saging** (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](mailto:pamela@thewoolshed.com)

[Thewoolshedretreats.co.nz](http://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
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For more details about our home and project visit <http://casaindomitus.wordpress.com> or contact Ngatina on [wwoof@sylvanius.net](mailto:wwoof@sylvanius.net) or 0429795002 to discuss options.





And finally...

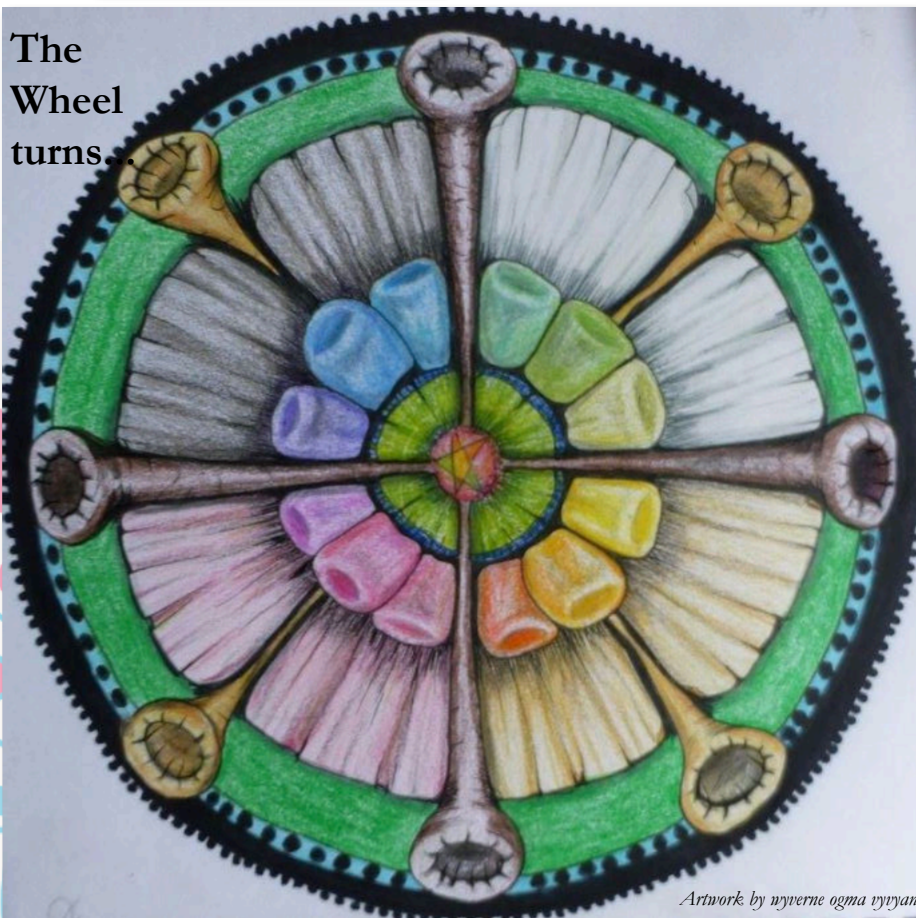
**The 19<sup>th</sup> OBOD Southern  
Hemisphere Assembly  
UPDATE  
By Elkie**

The Melbourne Grove is hosting the 19<sup>th</sup> OBOD Southern Hemisphere Assembly, from Friday April 24 to Tuesday April 28, 2020, at Gilwell Park, Gembrook.

All places are currently full but if you want to come please send me an email ([elkiewhite@gmail.com](mailto:elkiewhite@gmail.com)) and I'll let you know when a space becomes available for you.



**The  
Wheel  
turns...**



*Artwork by nyverne ogma vryjan*

**Poem to Brighid**

*Lady of the healing hands, inaspire us.  
Never lose our way to the Well  
The blue flame licks the sacred opening of your temple's still waters,  
The wave of fire, the flame of creation  
Teach me to bear the fire and hold it high  
Aid thou me in mine unbearing, and loose my tongue to craft words of joy  
O Woman of Skillful Means  
You are the cauldron, now in our grove; Wise Woman inspire us.  
Each day and each night we call you to descend, oh Brighid.  
Remind us how  
To kindle the hearth, to light the forge and bend blood of iron  
Heart to heart, vein to vein  
into the hearts of men and women like a flame upon dry grass  
Vouchsafe to us, thou silver branch,  
An island in the realm of peace,  
Seal Hope, the Anchor that becomes our Sail  
And come and dance with us,  
Like a favourite toy in a child's hands.  
Until we are all worn away through love.*

*John Jordan*

**Beltane**...marks the time of our adolescence and early wo/manhood. Spring is in full bloom, and twin fires would be lit at this time, through which would be passed the cattle after their long winter confinement, or over which those hoping for a child or good fortune would jump.

We see traces of the Beltane celebrations on May Day (in the Northern Hemisphere), when dancing round the maypole celebrates the fertility of the land and creates an echo of the ritual circle dances that must have been enacted in stone circles throughout the country.

*Text sourced from Druidry.org*

**The deadline for contributing to the Lughnasadh issue of SerpentStar is 25 January 2020.  
The Lughnasadh issue will be released in the week of 1 February 2020.**