

SERPENT STAR

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



SAMHUINN 2020

Welcome to the Samhuinn issue of SerpentStar!

Greetings All

Dare I say it again - there isn't much I can say that hasn't already been said about the last few months, although we now face challenge as a worldwide community even more so than before. When the Wheel turns she doesn't mess around, it would seem.

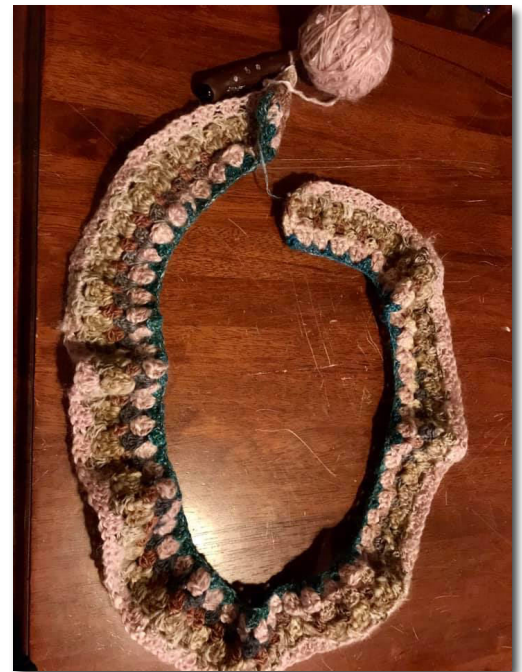
Such suffering, confusion, challenge, isolation and uncertainty can only lead in the direction of solve et coagula - a principle we all know well. Certainly in my part of the world we've experienced equal measures of both, and with that comes a strange combination of grief and hope.

At the end of April we were to have gathered in Victoria for the Southern Hemisphere OBOD Assembly - a treasured event into which a great deal of work and weaving is poured. Like so many other events of its kind, Assembly was not to be this year. But with ingenuity and dedication an amazing group of people pulled together the first SHOBODO - an online ten day event which included ritual, talks, readings, markets, bardic circles, conversation and even Eisteddfod! From where I stood, everyone who participated was so grateful for the opportunity to be together - some even in attendance for whom the original Assembly would not have been possible for various reasons. Many of the contributions for this issue come from the experience and blessing that was SHOBODO.

That said, I have an announcement to make - Macadamia Grove in Queensland, who were down to host the Assembly in 2021, have agreed to proceed with plans to resume the face-to-face event. We have looked at our options and other tentative plans for next year (the lifting of restrictions permitting), and have decided on Imbolc 2021 as the time when the next Assembly will be held. Stay tuned for details on dates, venue, costs and booking as they are finalised.

May healing continue for all of us, in all ways
Mandy / |\

PS - how gorgeous is this issue's cover pic!? Sandra joined the Macadamia Grove Assembly planning meeting, held via Zoom, from our ritual space and then shared that amazing selfie afterward. It perfectly captures how we druids roll in a pandemic!



SerpentStar, Samhuinn 2020

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

SerpentStar logo by Todd William Dearing. Cover image by Sandra Greenhalgh. Watermark images courtesy freepik.com and druidry.org. All other images provided by the authors on the corresponding page, unless otherwise credited.

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.

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 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

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 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

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. We now have a public facebook page: Friends of The Melbourne Grove.
FFI contact: 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.

Silvereyes Seed Group

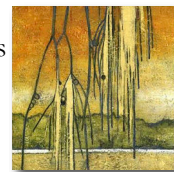
Perth Hills & members throughout the South West. Email: ghrianacu@iinet.net.au

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

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 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 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.

Contact Penny touchstone@druidry.org

Druid (USA) www.druidmagazine.com (publication ceased 2018, back-issues still available)

Druidenstein (German) www.druidry.info/das-magazin-druidenstein

Dryade (Dutch) www.obod.dds.nl

Il Calderone (Italian) issuu.com/ilcalderone

Menhir (French) 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 and complete the application form. Any suggestions on how the service can be improved are welcome.



Diary of a Digitally-Challenged Druid

by Elkie White

When Danuta first contacted me with the idea to host an event for us on-line, my brain went into double-freeze: the shock of having to cancel the Assembly was still raw, and what she was proposing to 'replace' it terrified me. All I managed to utter was something like, "It's a foreign language to me but please, proceed with my blessings." Fortunately that was enough, and fortunately I gradually became more coherent. Over the ten days of SHOBODO I would learn sufficient new skills to participate in this ground-breaking event.

Diary: SHOBODO, Day 1: What a wonderful Opening Ceremony! I got far more out of it than I ever imagined was possible online. Within Eimear's meditation I was taken immediately to my Inner Grove, where I saw many of us gathered and holding hands. I was gathering water from my Inner Well and laying out cups for everyone. Thankyou Trudz, Kacey, Beck, and Jez, and Eimear, and of course Danuta and Ady. Pure magic!

Day 2: I got up too late for Jez's 'Morning Ritual for the Everyday Druid' but when I opened Facebook there it was for all us sleepyheads! I took in Beck's video-explanation of how the Divination and Marketplaces were going to work online and was struck by a once-and-future feeling: that I was 'back' in university but with a modern twist – that this was the world my grandchildren are growing up in, and the world that I may re-enter in another life. Clothes on the line, coffee in hand, I was ready and waiting by 10am for Kate's 'Identity through Connection to Mother Earth'. And then the dishes washed and hair combed, I was into Lisa & Beck's 'Exploring the Power of the Nemeton' at 11am. Personal stories are such a treat! I always feel so privileged to hear them and enriched by them.

Day 2, PM: I've learned a lot this afternoon. First up, Ady & Danuta's 'Druidry, Pilgrimage and Psychopomp'. My favourite quotes include "being willing to travel alongside somebody", which I think OBOD does really well, and "sometimes you don't need to get involved...sometimes it's about witnessing", and "being a person with a presence - a nemeton - allows other people to take the steps that are right for them". Ady spoke about a friend who wanted a Wake before dying. I'm adopting that as a guide for life! I like to think of Psychopomp as Self and Pilgrimage as the Path of Self.

Gemma came next with her talk on Science and Druidry, which most definitely took me back to university days! The concept of "agreed reality" struck a real chord with me. And "alternative narratives of explanation". I agree with you Gemma that despite all that we have gained from science, which is huge, we must not lose our sense of wonder and joy!

Then at 7pm Philip talked about Samhuin and said "In the midst of Samhuin is Beltane" and "the kernel of joy in sorrow". He told us that Nuin had included the words "May the Design of Good be Brought into Being" in the OBOD Samhuin ritual...I need to make sure that those magical words are still in TMG's Ceremony.

Day 3, AM: Fielding questions from people who are wanting to view talks etc, but who are struggling with the technology, which would have to be the epitome of the blind leading the blind! But swiftly as always, Danuta, Beck and Julie were there to provide the help I needed...so when SHOBODO is finished all things that can be made public, with permission from presenters, will be made public via the YouTube channel.

Day 3, PM: Rollick's Pendulum Basics - sadly I couldn't see you Rollick but it was nice to hear your voice - as you know I've been attending Victorian Dowser's meetings a long time but I got more out of that 1/2 hour than all of those! Today I used Julie's crystal as my pendulum (per photo). I set it on the index finger of my right hand and got a clear Yes in a clockwise direction but the No was unclear. Then you told us to use the non-dominant hand for the pendulum and the dominant hand to write the question and answer. This gave me a clear Yes, as before, but this time a clear No also (back and forth). I asked if I had COVID-19 corona virus and got a vigorous NO! I then said to the crystal "I really like working with you. Do you like working with me?" and got a clear clockwise circle.



Day 4: A quieter day today, which gives me time to catch up with yesterday's reflections. There was so much happening over the weekend – I couldn't possibly attend it all – that it took a while to fall asleep in the evenings. One of the talks that I hope becomes available on YouTube is Linda's "Me and Mugwort". It was so packed with information that I need to watch it again, and again. Meanwhile, I'm going to see how my rosemary, lemon balm and thyme are doing – and my rather unruly mugwort.

Day 4, reflections on yesterday, continued: After Linda's talk we were given the pleasure of listening to Eimear talk about Druidry in Ireland. I think we could have listened to her beautiful accent all day! As well as the talk, Eimear agreed to a Live Q & A in the evening, and it was lively! I reckon we probably wore her out. Two hours – one question after another – is not something I would want to face. It was good though. It felt like we had gathered around the fire, “while the sun follows its course”, listening to someone share the wonder of their lived experience. I know we are all looking forward to the supplementary gwers Eimear is planning.

Day 5: This morning I'm preparing for Trudy's 'Ritual for Earth Connection' this afternoon. There are many things to gather. I could make it easy on myself – there are multiple representations of the 4 Elements around here – but I want to make it as relevant to this Event as possible.

I used my free time yesterday to have a good look at the SHOBODO Readings and Divinations Page. I took notes of the SHOBODO Readings by Sandra and Julie. I undertook a Reading myself about six weeks ago with the question: should the Assembly go ahead? It was a very positive reading, which I would come to understand had multiple layers of meaning. I need to re-visit that this morning in the light of SHOBODO. Readings are seldom 'black and white' even when you need them to be (or think you do).

Day 6: Cerri Lee's 'Stirring the Cauldron' certainly stirred me up. It is apparent to me that once we tap into the 3 Cauldrons and they start 'speaking' to us there is no turning back. They become central to who we are and what we do as Druids. I included the Cauldrons in the Course of Druid Mysticism that I taught a few years back. The Cauldrons of Poesy started instructing me about ritual then and I was therefore thrilled to hear Cerri say that they are also drive her ritual-thinking. At the time, I was receiving information about including 20 parts in my rituals – one for each Ogam – which actually doesn't stray far from the OBOD format. The Melbourne Grove were prepared to go along with me but when I 'received' the idea that each of those 20 parts could have three segments – one for each Cauldron – I might have gone too far! For example, the Opening Part: segment one: some music to call us together & signal that we are ready to begin, segment two: the words of welcome, and segment three: the 3 breaths. Not that I would ever want a Celebration to be tightly scripted but I do believe these parameters are magical and that we can be creative within them. I liked how Cerri emphasised the dynamic nature of the Cauldrons: “They represent the macrocosm brought into the microcosm”, and “We direct the power and potential of the Universe through the Cauldron”, and “They are wellsprings which we can draw on...like batteries that self-charge”.

Day 7: Up early this morning to join Lisa in the 'World Wide Weaving of Awen and Light'. For years OBOD has advocated sending out Peace at the time of the full moon, and this morning we did it all over the Southern Hemisphere. Lisa added the Auslan sign for Received Inspiration. So, we lit our candles and sung 9 Awen. I sung 3 into each Cauldron, because that's what I like doing. It was during the last 3 that my Third Eye opened to the Ady and everyone else who was participating. Then...I found Jez doing the same thing from his place. “To lift the world's energy beyond borders and orders,” as he put it. So I sung another 9 Awen. Then...there was Danuta with Trudz, Jenni, Rosemary, Gnicklin, and Louise doing their bit. That made 3 times 9 Awen for me – what a way to start the day!

Day 7, a reflection on last night's Samhuin Ceremony: What I witnessed last night was the confidence of Southern Hemisphere druids, and holding that thought in my mind (post-ritual), I went outside to say hello to the big moon. What struck me then was that the whole of SHOBODO has expressed that confidence: that willingness to cast aside doubt and have a go. The Ceremony was traditional OBOD at its best. I love it when people really and truly own a ritual. When each participant puts heart and soul and individuality into it. And how grand are we when the Groves and Seed Groups combine!

I appreciated the endorsing of the 4 Directions with music. Rather than skipping from one Direction to the next without time for thought or integration, we were able to pause and think about what we doing. I appreciated the clear instructions given to cast and uncast the Circle. Again, it ensured it was done thoughtfully. I appreciated the way that each ritual leader was mindful of including us in every step. Often engaging the senses – and not just the visual sense – but the sound of the fire crackling, the raven's call, the sharing of food both traditional and unique to each person's family ancestry. You could almost smell it. And Trudz, I reckon the Cailleach was cackling with you!

Within The Melbourne Grove we conduct meditation to facilitate attunement to the place hosting our ceremony. We can't do that right now, but last night the meditation facilitated our connection to our inner-place. It must have taken many hours of loving labour to put all of that together for us. My gratitude knows no bounds.

For me personally it set my heart and soul at ease to be a part of this Samhuin Ceremony. Unable to conduct it at the Assembly or within The Melbourne Grove, this Ritual more than compensated. It was creative, beautiful, and sincere.

Weaving together Druidry and Christianity – with Matt Stone: Thanks for beginning your talk by showing an interest in our stories. Several people responded to you but, as usual, I was a bit slow off the mark. I have fond memories of my C of E childhood. Going to Sunday School and joining in the hymns were a part of my weekly routine. In her later years mum would confide that she didn't believe in anything except that this was the right thing to do for me. I enjoyed some of the stories and some of the hymns and before I lost her completely to dementia, I told mum that I appreciated that she had done that for me. State Schools were also Christian-orientated in my childhood. It was part of the social fibre. However this God was remote, judgemental, and outside of myself, and I struggled to relate to Him. What I would discover in adulthood, and largely through druidry, was the polar opposite to that.

Day 7, PM: This afternoon Ady shared the story of his Journey with OBOD & BDO. Thanks Ady! A point of interest for me was that you and Philip Shallcrass crossed paths when you were a child on the bus with your grandmother. "He's all right" she said! I wonder how many of us can look back to a person that we have crossed paths with early in life and then later on that person became significant in our life. I certainly can.

Day 8: This morning I had a chance to catch up with Druid Storytime with Julie. Lugh is a lucky lad to have a mum who can tell such tales to him. As a grandma, I'm certainly feeling inspired! I particularly like Julie's Aussie-take of the Tale of Taliesin. Jordana was planning to incorporate it in a Play for the Assembly, which is still a good idea for some time in the future.

I wonder what story-books everyone is reading during isolation. I don't know why but I've read four good historical fictions on Edward IV & Richard III, each from a different person's perspective. (hmmm). I've also made a start on Elly Griffiths' Dr Ruth Galloway Mystery series: based in Norfolk, my paternal landscape.

Day 9: Today I'm going to try and present something on SHOBODO Zoom – another leap forward for a person intimidated by on-line platforms (a lovely Reader in Adelaide did pull the "Stretch" card for me yesterday)! Gratefully, Danuta has called it 'Weaving Our Events, Divination of the SHOBODA in the light of SHOBODO', because I couldn't think what to call it. It's not a Q&A – I doubt I'll ever be ready for that – but a discussion about the signs we've received over the past eight weeks around the 19th Assembly & SHOBODO. I'm hoping it will cast some light into our future.

Day 10: It's the final day of SHOBODO and I'm going to miss it! I managed to join a few of the Bardic Circles and even contributed to a couple of them. I miss the campfire setting of the Assembly but these Circles are warm, friendly, and lots of fun nonetheless. It is wonderful what we have created in a short space of time. Adrienne and Tina: all praises to you for organizing the Bardic Circles, with their different themes, and the Eisteddfod! I wasn't able to see it all last night but what I did see was brilliant. This morning I heard you talking about making the Bardic Circles a monthly event – well, I think that's a great idea, and I hope you do!

Post-SHOBODO: I'm trawling through the conversations and indications that went along the lines of 'Where to from here?' There's much to consider. Online events like this are not free. We were fortunate that Danuta and her family, and also Chris, were able to gift this to us. It's a whole other essay but the gist of what I've gathered is that there is a need for both – a SHOBODA and a SHOBODO – and numerous possibilities in between, some of which are already moving between intention and manifestation.





Photo by Wen

The Three Realms

*This is a weaving poem
Of Land of Sea of Sky
This is a weaving poem
They ground they float they fly*

*They weave the world around
Combining three to form
Three within our universe
They are the perfect storm*

*No one without the other
We are a mix of all
The balance always changing
We are wrapped within their caul*

Liluri 2019



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."

At this Earth time as we move toward Winter Solstice, I offer this ritual that I received a number of years ago in conversation with the Earth Mother, Papatuanuku. I have found it really helpful.

Blessings

Pamela

To Heal a Hurt

This ritual can be used to heal hurtful thoughts, heartaches, anxiety, physical pain or wounds of the spirit or psyche.

Find a stone that will fit easily into the palm of your hand.

Prepare a bowl of water, a small fire or candle flame and tongs.

Sitting quietly, holding the stone in your hand, become aware of where in your physical body the hurt resides and hold the stone to that part of your body. Find where the hurt exists physically even though the wound may be emotional, intellectual or spiritual. Take time to really experience the hurt and send it into the stone. When you feel that the stone has fully absorbed the hurt, take it in both your hands and offer it to the healing of Air by blowing on it and speaking to it of the hurt and your desire to be rid of it. When you feel that is complete, offer it to the healing of Water by washing it in the water bowl and visualising the cleansing of the hurt. Then, using tongs to hold the stone, pass it through the healing of Fire (either an actual fire or candle flame) and watch the steam rise as you feel the hurt burn away. Thank your stone for being such a wonderful 'poultice' for drawing out your hurt and then surrender it to the Earth Mother by burying it.

You can use this spell for big hurts and little hurts, for recurring hurts and nameless hurts.

Papatuanuku gave me this ritual and it works!



SHOBODO20

"Wow; Magical; Transformative; Full of laughter; Amazing discussions; Generous time given by Philip and Eimear; Wonderful Bardic Circles; Creative and collegial Eisteddfods. Inspiring Opening and Closing Ceremonies; Thoughtful and well run Workshops etc etc. "

The above are just some of the words that spring to mind after experiencing 10 days of SHOBODO20. Thank you to all the hard working OBODs who pulled this event off (you know who you are). Thank you to those who made donations to the Broadband that was needed for 10 days of Zoom time, so we could see it in our bedrooms or living rooms.

I had booked to go to the Southern Assembly in April and when the 'virus' took off, the three NZ OBODs myself, Linda and Nicola had to cancel. To make matters worse, the 'virus' forced everyone to 'stay at home and be safe' and to put a Teddy in the window for 'We're not scared.' But inside we were, we saw the news from around the world and we were watching cases rise in our own countries. We felt as if we were living in a Sci Fi movie or a dream. If we woke up, things would be back to normal and we could see our family and friends again - but, no it was to last for weeks. What were we to do?

The 'Rahui' - (spiritual time I like to think) had many positives, we didn't need to go out all the time, we donated our petrol money that we would have spent to the Foodbank so others could eat. We learned to cook and bake, learned new songs, listened to meditations and enjoyed Philip's 'Garden of Flowing In Perpetual Happiness' talks and meditations.

Then SHOBODO20 took off with a Zoom (A word I hadn't heard about before the 'virus') into our vocabulary. I became so good a Zooming that I could host, schedule and participate in Zoom sessions. Last Friday night, I had two computers going on at the same time, for two concurrent Zoom meetings. Why? So I wouldn't miss my music sessions with friends around New Zealand and the Eisteddfod with my OBOD friends at SHOBODO20.

Special consideration that made this event successful was that...Danuta gave daily reminders of what was happening and where the events were happening ie the Green Room or the Blue Room. Chris sorted a very good way to get into Zoom, from the timetable with Zoom links to each event and the correct room.

SHOBODO20 was running on Facebook as well as Zoom. So if like me, you had occasional Zoom brain and couldn't remember how to Zoom, you could watch events 'live' on Facebook.

I loved the Bardic Circles and Eisteddfods as a way to mix and mingle over drinks, chats and songs with like minded OBODs I had met and meet new OBODs on-line including Marcello from Brazil. The Ceremonies were well thought out and planned. Kacey's meditation in Samhain was wonderful, as he added music to the guided meditation.

Philip's talk was inspiring and he went longer than anticipated; answering all our questions. Eimear was also very generous with her time, even when she said she had something else planned afterwards. We talked so much that we had to stop and take a toilet break. Nobody wanted to stop the discussion but we needed to 'go' then return with a glass of wine while Zoom hummed on in the distance. After our quick interlude, questions were asked and answered - with a Eimear's sense of humour.

I found myself on the computer more than ever during this time. My work as a teacher had gone online and I was having online professional development in the afternoons with Zoom, I was having Zoom meetings with my kids and families and staff in the mornings, Zooming with friends when I could, and Zooming with my Assembly friends after dinner and at weekends. Was I Zoomed out? Only once, last Saturday night. Luckily I recorded my song to be played at the Eisteddfod later, so technically I was still there - in spirit and virtual space.



Inspiration, wisdom and blessings from New Zealand

On Sunday, I was sad SHOBODO20 had come to the end. Not wanting it to finish, I found myself returning back to the Green Room, having drinks and reflecting on what a success it had been.

Ten days of magic and transformation. I had a fantastic time. Not too busy with plenty of choices.

Many thanks to those who thought of putting this together and those that pulled it off, others who gave their time, the audiences who popped in and out when they could, the musicians, storytellers, speakers, technical bods, and anyone else that I have missed off the list.

Out of three drops of 'Awen' miracles can happen.
Not even a 'virus' can keep us apart.

A New Zealand Druid's thanks to SHOBODO20

Blessings on the heads that thought of it.
Blessings on the hands that created it,
Blessings on the sponsors who paid for it,
Blessings on the Broadband that delivered it.
Blessings on those who gave their time.
Blessings on the OBODS that watched.

SHOBODO20 indeed weaved my world.

Blessings be, blessings be, blessings be.

Charlene Hillyard
Grove of the Summer Stars



Inspiration, wisdom and blessings from New Zealand



Wow. I know there will be a lot of wows. SHOBODO was fabulous. Most fabulous in that many who would otherwise not have been able to attend were able to attend. Some who might not otherwise have presented could present. It is wonderful that the talks will still be available for people to listen to for another couple of weeks or more. With the time difference to New Zealand there were few that I managed to see live.

It was lovely to have the opportunity to present. I was less embarrassed about my dodgy internet connection once I saw how many others pre-recorded their contribution including our UK chiefs (incoming and outgoing). Of course when I came to do the Q&A live my internet just failed so we gave up. I was in awe of Pamela doing her talk live. My favourite part was when I dialled into the crafty chat room one day and found Tina and Julie there. It was great to just sit and chat and do craft together. That made it truly feel like we were together. My other favourite part was having a reading with Ben. It was so kind for people to be generous with their readings. When we met and did three breathes together wow – I was right there with Ben, we were in the same room. The reading was so accurate too as if he had really connected with me even via the internet.

In Adelaide I had roomed with Ben and Julie and I had my Druid initiation with Tina. I think that made those connections so special. I can understand that we might not make initial friendships via the internet as easily as in person. This is from me who was married well before internet dating of course. Someone told me that our brains work so much harder via video links. Our brain tries to add the other parts of our usual in-person awareness and it is difficult to do this via video connection.

Well done with the Bardic circle organisation. No easy feat in person; just like herding cats I'm sure. Amazing job to do it all online. Here is a link to the Lost Words Spell book that Rosemary and I both quoted from in the Bardic Circle. OK; Rosemary sung from and I talked from <https://www.thelostwords.org/book/> Charlene from New Zealand won one of the Bardic prizes; well done Charlene.

When there is an in-person Southern Hemisphere gathering again I really recommend that people attend if they can. I found the Adelaide gathering broadened my feeling of connection with a wider group of OBODs. It will be lovely in future to maybe have an in-person gathering plus some talks available online.

Probably the most amazing thing is the small team that worked so hard to bring this to us in such a short time.

WELL DONE TEAM SHOBODO.

Linda Caddick



Inspiration, wisdom and blessings from New Zealand

From Dawn....

On ANZAC day

*'Last post' played
Lest we forget.
Cold morning air
On the doorstep.
Guitar strapped on,
Amplifier on loud.
Music score
Flapping in the
Wind.
'Last post' played,
Lest we forget.*

Joy bubbles

*Blowing bubbles
in the garden
Watching the
rainbows float
away. Flying free
like a seagull
For a moment,
Then...
Gone.
Joy bubbles,
Bubble joy.*

Lockdown

*It's a lockdown,
I'm not locked up.
I'm doing a 'be kind,
Stay at home'
Kind of lockdown
For humankind.*

Slow Zoom

*Tai Chi on Zoom.
Breathe in,
Breathe out.
Move and focus.
Slow Zoom.
Deep Zoom.
Tai Chi on Zoom.*

Dawn and Tom (aka Morfran!) are working together on a wonderful Poem-A-Day project this year. Here is a selection of their recent work.

From Tom...There Be Rain Poems

Day One

*The rains came today
Then they didn't.
Just a drop or two
Not the heavy rain
The land needs around here.
Maybe tonight they will fall
Heavy and Drenching
Wetting the Dry Lands.*

Day Two

*The words no sooner written
Than down came the rain
With a Clash of Thunder
Flashes of Lightning
Heavy rains fell
Soaking Deeply into the land.
Still the clouds heavy with rain
Flow Over head
Allowing more rain to fall
Then a break
Before the next arrives
So the land soaks it up
Now wetted not so dry.*

Day Three

*Rain continues to fall
In bursts it comes
Hail with heavy rains
Still the land soaks it up
Further North on these Isles
Drought rules supreme
Rain falls not at all
May this rain move North
To Fall where it is required.*

Day Four

*More Rain was to come
Did not happen!
Day dawned clear and cold
Sun shone all day
Cold South Winds blew
Made for a cold sunny day
In the sun, Out of the wind
Beautiful and warm
In the Sun, In the wind
Beautiful and Cold.*



Inspiration, wisdom and blessings from New Zealand

SHOBODO Weaving Our Worlds

Beneath the Scenes

By Danuta Raine

Well wasn't that a gas?

When we decided upon a 10-day event, I don't know if anybody had an inkling of what we were in for. It has been a ride, with so much generosity of spirit and coming together of community, I was amazed every moment of each day. Six weeks after the idea of a SHOBODO - Southern Hemisphere OBOD Online gathering - I am exhausted, joyful, and still in awe of what we have begun to construct.

There was a lot of work behind the scenes, but I think the most important parts of SHOBODO happened beneath the scenes, in the constant work of a group of dedicated OBODies applied to creating something of merit that truly would weave together our worlds as SHOBODies, right across the Southern Hemisphere. It was a hope and a vision different to any that could have been achieved inside our experiences of Assemblies. Some things we could not do online, like initiations, and somethings were now opportune, like being able to draw together folk from right across the Southern Hemisphere and engage with OBODies who are not able to travel to Assemblies.

Almost every day, for weeks, Michael would ring me from Dorriggo. He would ask what was going on, and I would discuss how we were travelling as a team, and the vision that was growing. He would ask what he could do to help, and every time I would say, "Walk the circle, and weave our worlds."

This was the Otherworldly influence of this event that was pivotal to what we were doing. As OBODies, we need to decide whether we believe in the reality and tenacity of what we are doing. And if we do believe those things, then it is amazing to see what can happen when the power of our Order's disciplines is woven together to create something new.

Every day, Michael walked the circle, scythe in hand. Every day he threaded the symbols of our gathering across the sacred land of his top paddock.

But Michael was not the only one. I think there were a number of us doing things to ignite a wonder. I walked the circle created on the land that sings me. Ady did offerings. I know that there were others who rested in ritual and sight to bring together something beyond the vision that any of us foresaw. I heard of long walks that revealed new inspiration, new Arwen. I heard of the stirrings of imagination that were forming across our OBOD community.

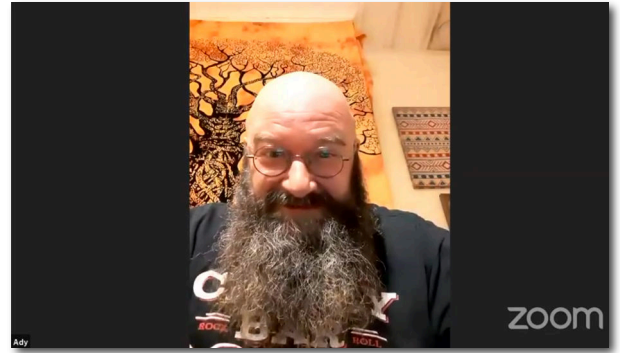
There are so many things that could be said about the SHOBODO - Weaving Our Worlds, but I think the thing that sings to me is the beautiful weaving of our SH OBOD community, and the beginning of something that is quite different from Assemblies. In our need, we wove our worlds together, and it is a wonder.

You can still join with SHOBODO - Weaving Our Worlds through the FB Group: SHOBODO - Weaving Our Worlds. As of June 1, some of the presentations will be available through the Shobodo YouTube Channel.



FIRE WINGS OF CELESTE

*Watch the rats scurry, scramble, eager to desert a Mary Celeste,
thoughts eyes, awaiting for oaken hull on salt sharpened rock to
crack asunder. Empty words on a winter's wind, biting, cutting
airs, like blue cold cadavers, floating bloated on tides of slate grey
brine. A pilgrimage of hidden hearths once warm, forgotten, ash
upon stone slab.*



*Yet the Phoenix may still to rise from embers dust? Burnt in the furnace of what was, is, thresholds of possibility.
Upon flaming feathers landscapes to behold, yew at the crossroads eons has stood, the way of ways, the breath of a
wing beat, a weave within the web, fire of rage, fire of desire, fire of hope, fire of pyre...?
Golden hues, autumnal leaves fall, blown by western winds to find rest & decay, flesh of root & leaf.*

Ady Chapman



*Waking on an April Morning
Pale gold sun, leaf shadows grey;
Dancing across dusty window panes,
Birdsong rises, silence broken,
Earthy layers of April morning growing.
Chilled breezes and muted days
Start of fresh season not far away.
Dark branches, dull greenery not to last,
Changes of eternal autumns past.
Nature at leisure, waiting on the cold,
Unfolding signs and changes to behold
Strange sensations in the air
Now time to slow, reflect,
Prepare.*

Brooke Palframan

My Reflections of Samhain 2020

By Pete Blake



I appreciate community greatly, I think it's an important part of who we are as people and social beings. Although I already had a formal relationship with Druidry, having been initiated into an Order 20 years ago, having ran a Grove for several years, and having completed all the BDO training as an Order member, it was the desire for community that had me decide to join OBOD and begin their program of study. That said, while others may be taking their practice online and sharing their many skills and talents with friends and like-minded folk, which I admire greatly, this time of self isolation has made my footprint smaller. So although this edition's theme was about people's experiences taking their Druid practice online, that's not something I feel drawn to do. I've come to recognise the individuality of my path, and having evolved personally, I even sometimes ponder if I still have place within Druidry, as my spiritual needs and practice has evolved and I've moved further away from what others experience and speak of as Druidry. But I guess if Druidry is anything, it's diverse.

It's the thread of Ovate that resonates with me the most, feeling more at home in the liminal spaces of those fertile edges and ecstatic experiences that don't quite translate as well into an online presentation. When I look back at the more profound experiences in my life it's been at places like the dark, almost subterranean-like temple of the White Springs in Glastonbury, drawn there unknowingly by the luring but nurturing presence of Gwyn Ap Nudd to just sit and chant before his shrine as the flickering light of candles reflect against the dark, cool walls. It's been sitting in the darkness that is the womb of the sweat house ceremony, caressed by the dragons breath, the hot rising steam, and a scent of herbs strewn over red glowing stones, ancient beings, while positioned in an ecstatic posture like that of the Cernunnos figure on the Gundestrup Cauldron. It's been while spending time with English witches, herbalists, engaged experientially in learning and experiencing about the herbs and plants of European folklore and myth. It's been while wandering landscapes, local and far away, exploring new places, feeling boundaries expand and fade away, pilgrimages, where I've been gifted with the sense of my own deep cultural resonance. It's been stories and images of wild men and antlered folk of the forest, like Suibhne Geilt or Alan Lee's amazing drawing of Merlin. It's been the folk magic practices of Cunning Men and shamanic healers. All these things capture my imagination and spark my inspiration because they resonate with who I am. I relate more with the stirring of a cauldron, so to speak, that the reciting of an ancient bardic tale to a captivated audience.

While I still venture out solo onto local hiking trails, my place of practice has now predominately become my garden. Within the cooling Autumn mornings and those occasional rains hinting at winters return, the season of Samhain is offering renewed growth and greenery. My garden is now where my relationship with the wild world has come home. What may appear as a kitchen garden, just outside my door, is now my magical place. It's perimeter is no longer just potted herbs, seasonal greens and a culinary collection of rosemary, thyme, parsley and sage, but a container of intentional magick where I come to commune. A place to greet each morning, to meditate and contemplate, to drink my tea and to be in gratitude. A place to sit on the earth under the filtered sun, now soft with a carpet of fallen leaves and pine needles. A place to lie, to breath, to allow my soul to reach deep into the soil, where my inner wild man gets to play. A place to listen, to recharge and reconnect with the deep beating and rhythm of the earth's heart. Then a place to bask in the darkness of night, where my primal self, sometimes clad only in sky, gets too bath in the warming flames of my sacred fire, just as my ancestors of blood and tradition before me would have done.



As I sit in my magical circle of garden plants, I watch it become so much more. The little things now finding my sight. The miniature wild creatures poking out their heads. Random seedlings now pushing upward through the ground cover, offerings from past harvests whose seeds were caught on the wind and found themselves lodged dormant, till now. Little diggings and scratchings in the dirt from the Bandicoot, as they snuffle around on their night time rounds looking for bugs and fungi to eat. The round peppery leaves of nasturtiums now growing, each leaf to become a perfect little fairy cup to catch the jewel-like droplets of rain and dew, while the flowers will find their way into my salads. Mugworts are now lush and green, perfect for inner-sight inducing tea and the purification of saining smoke. The silvery foliage of White Sage offering a wonderful almost mandala like appearance, while brushing against it's resinous leaves gives off it's intoxicating scent. I bind both into bundles of homegrown herbs, now hung and drying in my hearth, my kitchen of both culinary and magical preparations. Leaves of Comfrey are large and full, tempting the appetites of slugs, now marked with their silvery trails. While nearby the Calendula are in bud and revealing wheels of golden petals. I harvest them regularly, enticing more to grow, their medicinal properties to be infused in oil, which will find it's way into handcrafted healing balms. I noticed this morning that the holy basil was in blossom, and that the lions tail was quickening in growth. More potions and creations to come.

Each morning I brush away the weeping grass-like foliage of the lemongrass and talk with Nate, my special little Mandrake. He came to me a couple of years ago, after a chat I'd had with a local grower of rare herbs. He was the only one to be adopted that year and I've looked after him ever since. It took me a turn of the wheel to get used to him retreating back into the earth over summer. The first time I was sure I'd killed him, but come autumn and I noticed a protruding of green shoots again as he awakens within the dark half of the year. This year he has a flourish of greenery. I love the earthy smell of his leaves. I'm contemplating digging him up once he goes dormant again to see what his naked twisted root of a body looks like. I have a love of the poison plants, those beautiful plants of the Witches tradition, with their folk stories and their myths. They have woven their way into my spiritual practice, their inspiration another drop of Awen now stirring my cauldron. I carefully tend to seeds and patiently wait to greet their growth.

Within the centre of my garden, my magickal space, are three large water bowls which serve as focal points holding my gaze, reflecting the sky. Maybe they serve as a gateway to the otherworld, as well as an offering to those spirits of this place, along with the predatory insects, the birds, the tiny sunbathing lizards and those nocturnal native creatures which find there way out in the comfort of night. Sometimes I play my drum, or one of many instruments I seem to have collected, loosing my Self in a rhythmic play of resonance as it reverberates inwardly and outwardly. Sound is so fundamental to my practice, music speaks to my Spirit, and often I wonder if this is my way of weaving the Bardic with the Ovate. I find ritual most transformational, most profound, when weaving the interplay of sound and the ecstatic. Black Cockatoos in the tall trees around me seem to have gathered, they join in, calling, I love their spirits at play, then their red fiery tails flashing across the sky.

Maybe that's why I find it's the mystery of the Ovate that calls to me the most. Having one foot in this world and one foot in another isn't something a lot of people can conceptualise to understand, or want to experience, and it's certainly not always comfortable. Maybe that's why I find a sense of tribe, for me, can be elusive. I've come to understand that these experiences are a part of my mud and blood experience of Druidry, my re-wilding, and Samhain by it's very nature is a reminder of that for me. The seen and the unseen, communing in my garden, my wild place, where my personal and situational nemetons now overlap.





The Beginning

Rising from grief and loss
 A new idea taken up
 By many willing hands
 New seeds nurtured
 Into a forest of connection
 Roots feeding roots
 Branches weaving joyfully
 Together toward the sun
 Always with respect and love

Home grown experience
 And far flung ideas
 As we hear new ways
 Of being, of doing
 Wise words falling gently
 Upon open ears and minds
 Words flowing as strong and deep
 As the whales, and rising
 In flashing breaches of realisation
 For each listener

Ritual pace and solemnity
 Circles weaving into circles
 Lights across our lands that
 Burn in warm fellowship
 Linking us to the past
 To present and future
 Journeys of the mind
 When journeys of
 the feet are stilled

The steady and calming feel
 Of spoken poem after poem
 Deliberate voices speaking beauty
 And thought-filled words
 Old songs and new songs
 Woven together into nights
 Of enjoyment, tears and rapture
 Awen flowing through all
 And beyond to inspire
 New words and music
 Into the future

Peaceful talk and laughter
 As heads are bowed to the
 rhythmic work of the hands
 We weave our threads
 Learning the lives of others
 Waving at pets and partners
 Showing of hand-made treasures
 Connecting to each other
 and to our ancestors

Technology and old ways
 Connecting in a new dance
 Learning and laughing,
 Singing and weaving

SHOBODO is born

Tina Merrybard

Taking on Titans

by Tom Byrom

His hands grip mine so tightly that they hurt. His wide eyes fill with tears and I'm sure mine do too. It doesn't usually go on for this long. The windows rattle and the clock falls off the wall, shards of plastic flying into the air in slow motion. I can't remember if I disconnected the gas after dinner last night. I always do it, but what if tonight I didn't? I can't get up to check, my body isn't doing what I want it to. It's been over 20 seconds now, but it feels like a lifetime. The walls rumble and the glasses rattle on the shelf as if a freight train is coming through our apartment. We can't move to get under the table or the doorframe. It's like I am watching two other people, frozen in that room. The rumble gets louder and louder as our things start to fly off shelves, like we'd upset some emotionally volatile teenage mutant in a bad Marvel movie. Our hands squeeze tighter as we wait for the climax. There isn't one. It fades out as we sit in shock at the reality of what had just happened. The earthquake was over. We were ok. We started to laugh. We needed a drink.

This wasn't the first or the last earthquake that I experienced during my years living in Asia. It was one however that behaved very differently to the others. It's one that I will never forget. It went for longer than most I have experienced, and it definitely made a mess of my tatami floors, but it certainly wasn't comparable to the quakes that my friends and family have been through at other times. A few homes were damaged, but there were no fires, no fatalities, and no fear of the tsunami that so often follows major quakes in Japan. This event though, humbled me.

As someone who lives with an animistic worldview, I often view the world through the lens of the classical "elements". I see study and learning as enriching to the "air" in someone, the expression of creativity as enriching to the "fire". I see these elements outside of myself too, in the cleansing crash of the ocean waves, or the stability and grounding strength of the granite boulders that I grew up in the shadow of. Connecting with these energies, these concepts, these beings, has enriched my experience of the world like nothing else ever has. For many of us who follow "Earth based" traditions, the Earth is not only our Mother, from whom we were born, but also our foundation, our stability, and our strength. This earthquake, back in 2014 was the first time that it hit me that the Earth wasn't there for me, that the literal ground could shift, and I could lose everything.

This didn't "shake my faith" in any way, but it did give me a sense of humility. As a modern person, I find it hard (as I am sure we all do) to step outside of my own reality and realise that I am not the main character in this "story" called life. It's hard to remember that my personal struggles or those of my friends, family, nation, or even species are just small ripples in a greater story. The Story of Life as a whole. And that story goes on, no matter what we hope, believe, or desire.

A simple earthquake, something that millions of people experience year after year, hit me with the understanding that "Nature doesn't care. It just is". As an animist, I didn't like this idea at all. I make offerings and talk to the Earth and the trees. I don't litter and I eat ethically produced food. How could the Earth put me in danger like this? It didn't matter what character I thought I was playing in the story. In the end, I am just another extra. Like all of us.

These feelings have risen again since the world has been engulfed in the virus we are calling SARS-CoV-2. I see people online arguing about the "correct" name for this entity, but ultimately, it doesn't matter. The virus doesn't care about us and our drama and our naming conventions. It doesn't care about anything at all. It just needs to keep moving.

I'm not the flavour of animist who particularly believes that the West Wind has a personality, or that crystals carry human traits like "kindness and love", but I am the flavour who believes that energy is moving through us all. That energy displays itself differently based on the nature of the being it flows through. The nature of the mountain is stillness, the nature of water is to flow, and the nature of the virus is to move.

There is nothing inherently good or bad about this, but on a personal (human) note, its particular method of movement isn't doing us any favours. It moves from cell to cell as quickly as possible and uses the energy of that cell to reproduce, something that it can't do on its own. If its new cell-home fills to capacity, it will break like a dam wall, and the viruses burst out, looking for new cells to enter into.

Unfortunately for us, the breakdown of cells isn't particularly comfortable, and the way our bodies attempt to defeat these invaders often isn't very effective. Many people are sick, and many people are dying. I am humbled again.

There is nothing inherently good or bad about this, but on a personal (human) note, its particular method of movement isn't doing us any favours. It moves from cell to cell as quickly as possible and uses the energy of that cell to reproduce, something that it can't do on its own. If its new cell-home fills to capacity, it will break like a dam wall, and the viruses burst out, looking for new cells to enter into. Unfortunately for us, the breakdown of cells isn't particularly comfortable, and the way our bodies attempt to defeat these invaders often isn't very effective. Many people are sick, and many people are dying. I am humbled again.

Interestingly enough, the more we learn about this virus, the more we learn about ourselves. We now have a new understanding about how much air and water is spread into our surroundings when we speak, sing, and scream. We have a new understanding about how much of each other we breathe in and metabolise in a day, and we have a new understanding of how painful it can become when we are unable to do that. As much as the notion of breathing in your neighbour might turn your stomach, it is an integral part of being a living being. We are in a constant state of flow.

At this point in the story though, the world is inhabited by a "being" that causes us pain when we join its flow. Like a river that is moving too fast, and we are swept away. Or the ruins of ancient cities covered by molten rock, this is not a flow that we want to be a part of. Our dreams, our desires, our plans, must be put on hold. We cannot trust the Air and the Water anymore. We cannot trust the Fire of our desires or the Earth of our instinct. We need to be humble. We need to wait.

It goes against everything we understand about life. Culturally we are told that we aren't allowed to stop moving towards our dreams. Spiritually we are told to "trust and let go" or "let go and let God", but right now is not the time for hubris. I say hubris, because the gods (however you see them) also carry their darker aspects. Aphrodite carries the herpes lesions of Her former lovers. Ares' glories are the cause of His rage and PTSD. Brigid writes Her poetry messily, Her fingers burned and swollen from Her work at the forge. This virus is different though. More like the Titans or the Giants so feared by our Ancestors - the wild insatiable beings whose very nature causes destruction to our species.

We need to remember that as individual humans, we can't take on the Titans. We can pray to the gods of our homes and lineages to help keep us safe, and trust in the new "gods" of science and medicine to create the talismans we need to ward off this "being". But we cannot take on the Titans.

I write this today to remind myself that there are beings that I can take on. Those that with my own strength, and the support of my Ancestors, Spirits, friends, and family, I can beat. These demons have been known to us since before humans had names. Boredom. Loneliness. Anxiety. Hopelessness. The need to be "exceptional". The need to feel "free". These shadows plague us all in one way or another. Persistent, nasty creatures that trap us in whirlpools of mirrors and cruel laughter. Creatures that tell us that we are worthless. Creatures that cause us to feel sometimes excruciating pain. Just because we exist.

I feel that for most of us, these foul little beings have swollen to become stronger and more powerful since we have been isolated from nature. The world that feeds us is outside now, and we are inside, confused and alone. These demons seem to be unvanquishable, and all powerful.

But they aren't. I promise you.

These, we can conquer and exorcise. The Titan outside, we cannot. So light your candles, carry your crystals, bake sourdough with your Dead Grandmother, call your best mate at two in the morning, or drink wine before lunch time. Whatever you need to do to beat your spiritual parasites. You can do it. You have the tools.

Just don't let these very human demons get enough control to chase you outside into a very non-human Titanic shit storm. None of us were born with the tools to survive that.

Member Businesses, Groups & Retreats in Australia/New Zealand


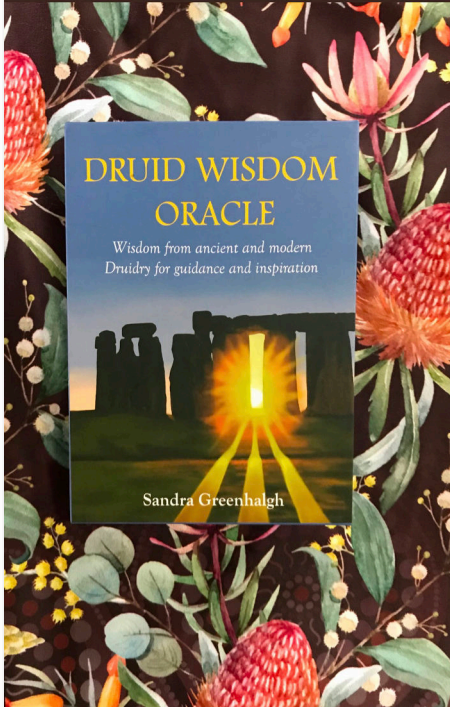
Advertising in SerpentStar is free for all OBOD members in the Southern Hemisphere. If your business, event or club is related to our druidry practice, you can advertise on these pages for as long as you require.

Submission guidelines are available from serpentstar.druidryaustralia.org/about

DRUID WISDOM ORACLE CARDS

ONLY \$45 (INCLUDING POSTAGE)
FOR AUSSIE SERPENTSTAR READERS -
PLEASE EMAIL
DRUIDWISDOMORACLE@GMAIL.COM

ALSO AVAILABLE ON ETSY & OBOD



Forest Spirit Jewelry

Magickal and spiritual amulets
inspired by the beauty of nature, the spirit of the forest.

www.forestspiritjewelry.com
www.facebook.com/ForestSpiritJewelry
www.instagram.com/ForestSpiritJulie

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

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 2nd 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, 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



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

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



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	





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.

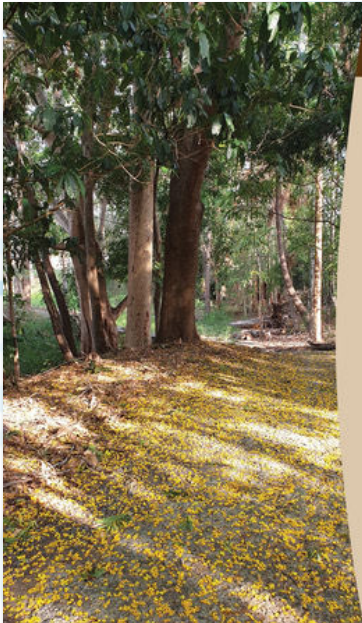
The land of my birth, Aotearoa New Zealand, has provided me with a deep appreciation of the native forest here, and my communion with nature has been further developed through training as a plant essence practitioner. Plant essences contain specific healing properties that shift emotional and traumatic 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, and follow my Facebook www.facebook.com/anamcarareadings




Go deeper...

Respond to life's challenges and illuminate your inner and outer worlds with holistic counselling and psychotherapy.


Tina's primary approach (Process Oriented Psychology) honours your path and embraces your soul, spirit, mind and body.

Based in Ipswich, Queensland.
Online sessions available anywhere.

W edgewiseicp.com
E tina@edgewiseicp.com



Tina Bramley,
Holistic Counsellor
and Psychotherapist





OBOD Member Celebrants Australia & New Zealand

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

Contact Elkie - whitelk@bigpond.com



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...

Nine Awens

*Awen, breath of sacred air, that moves the trees above
Awen, breath of sacred fire, of those who've gone before
Awen, breath of sacred water, wisdom, grace and love
Awen, breath of sacred earth, the far and promised shore*

*Awen, breath of sky above, simplicity we know
Awen, breath of ground beneath, stability we learn
Awen, breath of seas around, may peace and healing flow
Awen, breath of space within, to which we all return*

*Awen, breath of Spirit flow to each and every hand
The Lady spread her woven cloak of light upon our land*

Mandy Gibson
Samhain 2020



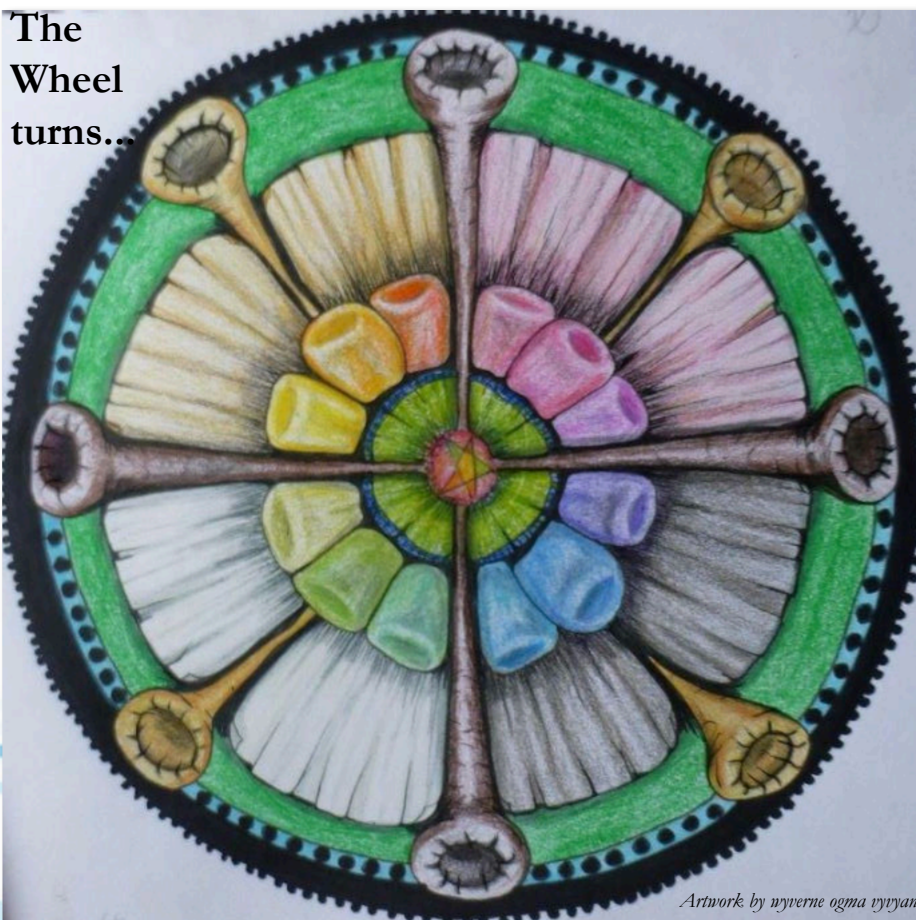
Samhuinn......was a time of no-time. Celtic society, like all early societies, was highly structured and organised – everyone knew their place. But to allow that order to be psychologically comfortable, the Celts knew that there had to be a time when order and structure were abolished – when chaos could reign. And Samhuinn was such a time. Time was abolished for the three days of this festival, and people did crazy things – men dressed as women and women as men. Farmers' gates were unhinged and left in ditches, peoples' horses were moved to different fields, and children would knock on neighbours' doors for food and treats in a way that we still find today, in a watered-down way, in the custom of trick-or-treating on Hallowe'en.

But behind this apparent lunacy, lay a deeper meaning. The Druids knew that these three days had a special quality about them. The veil between this world and the World of the Ancestors was drawn aside on these nights, and for those who were prepared, journeys could be made in safety to the 'other side'. The Druid rites, therefore, were concerned with making contact with the spirits of the departed, who were seen as sources of guidance and inspiration rather than as sources of dread. The dark moon, the time when no moon can be seen in the sky, was the phase of the moon which ruled this time, because it represents a time in which our mortal sight needs to be obscured in order for us to see into the other worlds.

The dead are honoured and feasted, not as the dead, but as the living spirits of loved ones and of guardians who hold the root-wisdom of the tribe. With the coming of Christianity, this festival [as celebrated in the Northern Hemisphere] was turned into All Hallows (commonly referred to as Hallowe'en on October 31st), All Saints (November 1st) and All Souls (November 2nd). Here we can see most clearly the way in which Christianity built on the pagan foundations it found rooted in these isles. Not only does the purpose of the festival match with the earlier one, but even the unusual length of the festival is the same.

Text sourced from Druidry.org

The
Wheel
turns...



The deadline for contributing to the Imbolc issue of SerpentStar is 25 July 2020. The Samhuinn issue will be released in the week of 1 August 2020.