

Serpent Star

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



SAMHUINN 2021



wyvern's words

Welcome to the Samhuinn issue of SerpentStar

"The circle of our horizon, of our lives and lands, of time and of the year, of seasons and of goodness, of birth and of growing, of dying and of rebirth..."

At the beginning of March, the Southern Hemisphere bid farewell to one of our beloved Elders, Wyverne Ogma Vyvyan. Wy was a presence of deep communion with the land, a true bard and a vital part of SerpentStar's history. Seventeen of the past 23+ years of this publication have seen Wy serve as editor or contributor (or both), and it truly would not be what it is today without her.

Although we communicated via Facebook and email, I was only able to meet Wy in person once - at the 2018 Assembly in South Australia. It's a memory I treasure, and I will remember her with joy as she goes to join the Ancestors.

This issue is a tribute to her life and contribution to SerpentStar, and to her OBOD community. In the course of compiling the issue, I went back through the history of SerpentStar, and had a giggle when I cropped the watermark for this issue (below) out of her editor column and labelled it "wyswords" - wise words indeed!

Included in this issue are tributes from Philip Carr-Gomm, Susan Jones, Cherry Carroll, Janine Cobb, Elkie White and Kacey Stephenson.

Towards the end you will find a few timely updates on local events, and also the soon-to-be-released World Druidry Survey book (four years in the making), but the rest is given over to a huge collection of of her SerpentStar contributions sourced over many years. This is by no means a complete collection, as much of her work appears to have gone uncredited by her - there are so many pieces in the issues she edited with no name on them, and the task of confirming whether or not they were hers was sadly beyond my capacity. The quality is also variable, as many are from scans of original hard copies, and in some places the text is quite small so you may need to zoom in on your PSF reader. Where I have included an editorial column, I'd encourage you to check out the full issues on the SerpentStar website for more.

Unless otherwise credited, all photographs have been supplied by Maria Sol, who wrote *"My fondest memories of Wy are her absolute peaceful presence, her immense wisdom and serenity, her ability to walk between worlds, her deep connection with mother Earth, her humbleness, her cheekiness, her profound intelligence, so many things! I love her and miss her so much!"*

So do we all.

In peace
Mandy / |\



SerpentStar, Samhuinn 2021

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

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

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Enquiries via email:
serpentstar.obod@gmail.com

All opinions expressed herein are solely the contributors' own.

wyverne's words

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.

The Blue Mountains Seed Group

The Blue Mountains Seed Group holds regular public gatherings in Katoomba at the Blue Mountains Organic Community Gardens for the eight seasonal festivals of the wheel of the year. See our Facebook group for more information. This is open to anyone to come along, not just OBOD members. There are also private OBOD members only gatherings, but please come to the public gatherings to get to know the group first.

Email: thebluemountainsseedgroup@gmail.com, Facebook: Friends of the Blue Mountains Seed Group
www.facebook.com/groups/friendsofthebluemountainsseedgroup/

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 two new Bards and one relatively new Bard. 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, and we will be holding our first group Alban. Full moon meditations are conducted for peace and harmony. Email Debby at triskel@web.co.za for details.



Druid Pilgrim Grove

We are a grove of wayfaring and friendly OBODies who are happy to support those seeking to engage with pilgrimage as part of their druid practice. We have members around Australia and NZ. A number of us are happy to meet up with pilgrims as they travel close to us. Contact danuta@adruid.com. FB: Druid Pilgrim is a Facebook group that engages with people interested in exploring pilgrimage and druidry. It also acts as a 'Friends of' space for those interested in connecting with Druid Pilgrim Grove.

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: Trudy - 0409 186 316, moondancer@outlook.com.au

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

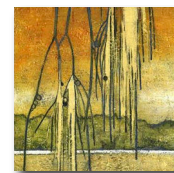
Perth Hills & members throughout the South West. Email: ghrianu@iinet.net.au

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 - includes info/booking for the annual Southern Hemisphere OBOD Assembly.

Southern Hemisphere Order of Bards Ovates & Druids Online (SHOBODO) Community - Facebook group - a private group for Order members living in the Southern Hemisphere.

Druids DownUnder - Facebook group - a group open to 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)

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

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

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



Pagan Transitions

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

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

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



Taking the Plunge

by vyvyan ogma wyverne

To my great disappointment I had to miss the first Druid assembly, but I looked forward all year to the second one in 1998 and to my delight everything conspired to make that possible for me. Absorbed in building my life on a little farmlet in a remote backwater of Murray Mallee, I had begun seriously to lose touch with the outside world. OBOD was providing me with a way back in through the teachings, magic and enchantment of the druid path. It's true I was captivated and very much wanted to meet other people similarly enthusiastic about magic, ritual, healing and creativity for the good of all beings. I had completed all three grades and was a tutor of Bards and Ovates at the time.

Especially exciting was the fact that the event was being hosted by my Ovate tutor, Rafayard, (Leslie) and Dean Gentilin, at Cooringal Grove in Port Lincoln, just two easy bus trips away. I took my old guitar, after considering leaving it home because it was too battered. But old guitars tend to cling and when you're planning a trip to where there are likely to be campfires around which songs might be sung, some guitars are just plain cussed and will not be left at home. Dean picked me up from the bus, and took me out to Cooringal Grove where excitement was mounting as the show began. There weren't many of us in those early days and small groups create a special magic that never really fades away. I made bonds of great affection during that weekend that will never fade.

Cooringal Grove is a seriously beautiful place, carefully tended for optimal magical living, set in magnificent grounds rich in natural fauna and flora, with geology that is pure poetry in stone, crystal and morphology. The great Southern Ocean is not far away. In rainy seasons, surface run-off water flows in a deep creek past the house and gardens, where the still-haunted native scrub shades into the exotica planted to meet the needs of the family. Rocky slopes dense with sheoak one side of the

When were you editor of SerpentStar?

I took over the editorship of SerpentStar in Beltane 2007 from Stormwolf and I was editor for three years, handing over to Lady A (Kimmy Austin, now Kimmy Morley) at Beltane in 2010. Kimmy handed it back to me at Imbolc 2012 to keep it active while we waited for Todd Dearing to come along and take over, which he did with panache at Beltane in 2013.

What inspired you to become part of SerpentStar?

Living on a remote farmlet with limited access to transport and animals to care for was making it hard for me to attend OBOD events, so editing the newsletter was a great opportunity for me to participate, stay informed and maintain contact with fellow OBODies. It also gave

me a chance to improve my publishing skills and learn a lot about the internet.

What was your favourite part of being editor?

I loved seeing Druidry taking hold and growing, with more and more people beginning to strike up the courage to send in their contributions – poems, articles, stories and thoughts – that revealed along with their amazing talents and wisdom the steadily evolving spirit of Druidry in the southern hemisphere. I've also enjoyed watching SerpentStar going from strength to strength under the masterly editorship of three splendid OBODies, firstly Todd Dearing, then Martin Samson, and then Amanda Parry (aka Mandy Gibson) who has really brought it right up to standard as a newsletter to be proud of.

bridge, broad green camping grounds on the other, shaded by big fragrant trees with birds of all kinds thronging their branches. The flower garden is full of fairies, the herbs, the veg and the crystals, stones altars and shrines placed with gentle inspiration here and there. And through it all you hear the pipes of Pan...and the intermittent fly-over of roaring planes headed for the airfield hard by – because they had happened to time their big jamboree to coincide with ours. Undeterred we resigned ourselves good-naturedly to them and got on with the assembly with a right good will.

Rafayard is an inspiring music teacher and Dean is a keen muso, and their kids are all proficient and enthusiastic musicians too, so music carried us through. But Dean and Raf are also natural born hosts, and very much involved in their community, so with great food laid on, we partied with the locals! It worked very well, generated much joy and goodwill and we made that valley ring! That was truly good medicine for me.

For me the most invigorating, life-focusing things were:

- my first experiences of formal ceremony with fully initiated fellow Bards, Ovates and Druids, which thrilled me then for the first time as it still does all these years later.
- the experience of singing in a kind of loose bardic circle, which ignited my delight in singing to small audiences, my battered guitar notwithstanding, and I've since become addicted to bardic circles and campfire sing-alongs.
- my first sally into any kind of human society after years of living intensely in isolation almost alone with nature as a recluse. It was an unqualified success for me. It kick-started a major healing process, set a lot of things right in my life and lifted me right out of the rut that I was in danger of stagnating in. Though I was not immediately able to put my finger on it, as time went by it became clear to me that I had found my tribe – and they had accepted me.

20th Anniversary Serpentstar - Alban Hefin 2017

wyverne's words

Letters from Wyverne to Elkie 2001-2003

Shared by Elkie White

It was sometime after the Assembly at Wyeuro, and the Naming Ceremony we conducted for her there, that Wyverne told me that she was born on October 23, 1951, at around noon, in Waikerie, South Australia. Her original name was Vivienne Manouge, and yes, she is distantly related to those two more famous song-birds, Kylie and Dannii Minogue. I first met Wyverne at the 3rd Assembly, at Cooringal, Port Lincoln, in 1999. Later, we shared the Assemblies in Albany, WA, and Yulara in the Red Centre. Only a handful of folks attended the latter and I have fond memories of Tiki and I walking through Kata Juta. Wyverne declined the walk because she was suffering from vertigo but didn't waste time in the carpark. She started up a conversation with a couple of tourists from Israel and invited them to our Winter Solstice Celebration that evening. They were thrilled that people like us were praying for peace in places like their homeland. What follows are extracts from the correspondence we shared; selected because they shed light on our fascinating Druid sister.



Oct 27, 2001: "My book's already out. It's already for sale in America. I'll send you a copy. It's under the old name for a good reason I think. I had to write the book and then shed the personality that wrote it like an old skin, so that my new one, which has definitely been emerging, could grow into its new forms and expressions. But it was the old one that wrote the book, so it's published under her name."

Nov 11, 2001: "I constantly think of myself in terms of landscape, with my mind a kind of map with many branching pathways, some through rich, verdant lands, and some through rather barren or neglected places, some polluted with trivia or unwanted rubbish but most of it, healthy enough. My moods and emotions are like climate. Perhaps I'm an eagle flying above it. But usually for me animal, focused always on some Other, the great No-Me, all full of providence and threat, danger and promise, comfort, and treachery, and with it all, my friend, my mother, the womb I'm in. Maybe you could call that wily. My mother used to call me 'vixen' when she was cross with me. She may have been right! Just intuiting my totems. After all, in Aborigine society it is the woman's task to discern the totem of her child.

...I've made a wand out of a small, slender mallee branch and 'decorated' it with a length of kangaroo gut from a female kangaroo I found killed on the road. Her murrup stayed with me while I skinned it and cut it up to dry for the dog and she gave me the gut. It represents a dreaming path with parallels in the landscape, in the stars, and in the mental world of the planet, and has spiritual value I have not yet grasped..."

Dec 10, 2001: "Wyeuro is the name of our acreage and means Kangaroo Spirit (sort of).

I've been to the big, horrible city down there and changed my name officially to Vyvyan Ogma Wyverne...It's certainly made a difference to me, giving me more direct access to my own inner truth, and allowing me greater integrity than before. I would never have believed it could reduce pain to such an extent.

...Bright blessings from the heart of the harlequin mistletoe on the sandalwood of Wyeuro"

Jan 3, 2002: "Thank-you for reading my book and for your comments on it. Kennan has read it...but so far, no one else except my mother has said anything, and she was thrilled just because it was mine, I think. She made no comment on the subject matter. She knew in advance what it was about and had known for years that I had 'the family madness' of seeing 'little people'.

I'm making the most of my free time between now and the start of the academic year. I'm still wavering between doing two subjects or four this year. And I'm working on half a dozen other books, one of them a kind of etymo-archaeological dig into the ancient history of the Celts before Roman Conquest, three of them novels, two of which are finished except for revision and the third about half written, and another on herbs, of which I write only the odd paragraph now and then as the spirit seizes me, and some children's fiction in various stages of revision...They're such fun to write. Between shearing the goats and getting the fruit on the drying racks, into the jams and marmalades, and made into wine, and of course, eaten (!) we're kept pretty busy at this time of year.

wyverne's words

But I'm still finding time to stretch out and read for pleasure now and then! I'm into *The Tennant of Wildfell Hall* which I've never read before – good 19th Century hard-core radical feminism. Now I know why Anne Bronte never achieved the acclaim of her less thistle-in-the-cushions sisters. All three had to publish under masculine pseudonyms. I'd probably have missed the point if I'd read it when I was younger, and thought her a timid, predictable sort of feminist, not seeing how lucid she really is. And not less now than when I was Vivienne, I'm still reading half a dozen books at once, too: two on Arthur, *The Celtic Encyclopaedia*, the *Three Musketeers*, Virginia Woolf's 'The Years', and Caesar's *The History of the Gallic Wars*, and I've just finished *Conan's Revenge* (magnificent stuff!) and the second *Harry Potter* book. This confession is an exercise in liking myself. I'm usually ashamed of my lack of focus and lack of apparent purpose and direction, but I gave my bookshelf to Osiris a few years ago, and the books call me when they want to be read, like flowers in a garden that call the bees when it suits them and have nothing to offer them when it doesn't. And I find myself buying the most extravagant array of books for it. I used to deny myself books precisely because I love them, as if they were too many lollies or something. Now I'm trying to see it as a wholesome and varied diet for my mind.

...I'm not really into the calendar year, which is why I'm so vague about things like the New Year. It's wonderful here, when you only have to get the mail down on time three times a week and can live by the sundial for the rest of the week...I'm making my own that has 13 months because it makes no earthly – or even lunatic – sense to have only twelve when the moon counts out 13 so nearly exactly.

January 10, 2002: "I'm doing Women's Studies and Anthropology this year, and possibly also Myth and Ideology...My spirit mother Mala spirit of the mallee tree, which is the woman tree of the world is making me do women's studies...and my aborigine spirit teacher Yerrnnglru told me that I must take all the learning available to me in my own culture respectfully and ardently before I would be let to go on with my aborigine learning. To learn the respect first is the point; and then the teachings will come to you, because there are mental dreaming paths...and these flow naturally into the minds of the respectful.

...I suppose I feel my own soul sad and afflicted in the fetters and chains of the world, though brave and determined to be joyous, and I need to be strong enough in my grimness sometimes to carry my soul through the rough patches...

...I've yacked on again and now the goats are bleating for their morning hay".

February 4, 2002: "Lughnasadh certainly galloped up on us this year. I'm wasting time gloriously here, starting projects and cancelling them, organising things one way and then discovering I should have been doing it the other way...Ironically, getting the calendar done is what I'm continually stopping and starting at, but I'm sure I'll pin it down!"

March 29, 2002: "I've been off-line for a few days, with no electricity. The goat kids got into my solar power system and wrought havoc, and I made it worse by trying to rewire it back to front, which did in my wiring and damaged my inverter, but the new one has arrived and all's well now.

...Your equinox celebration sounds spectacular...Ours was a quiet one again – quiet in one sense, though spiritually noisy. All sorts of energies and beings seem to enter our circles at these times, and we tend to let them be there. Sometimes our two-person ceremonies feel like a very chatty crowd! Of course the animals are always wandering in and out too."

August 2, 2002: "I feel it's a sad thing that there isn't an OBOD assembly each year, but it's hard to arrange with everyone so scattered. Helen and I envisage being able to hold one in a couple of years' time when we've overcome some obstacles here and can build a round-house, but even then we couldn't offer accommodation.... We have no hot water on tap, no mains pressure or flush toilet, and no refrigeration except our Coolgardie safe, so there'd be logistical problems, but not necessarily unsolvable ones. There's no one local who could cater but we could all pitch in as we did at Uluru..."

And in November 2003, pitch-in is exactly what we did - and it was incredible! Elkie



Superb setting, near perfect weather,

wonderful, wholesome food, great music, some organized, some spontaneous, all bound together with Lesley and Dean's relaxed hospitality: the ingredients for a great assembly – which it was!

Everything seemed to flow smoothly and unhurriedly bespoke meaning – yet there was no rigidity or feelings of cold efficiency; everything was done quietly and calmly in their proper times.

The kids were well behaved and delightful, participating in events with dignity and inspiration – real little Druids in the making.

One of the best features was the way Dean and Lesley had involved the local community – not so much that they took over, but just enough to keep things from becoming intense among us OBODs. OBODs only ceremonies were very intense, with the trees, the rocks, the birds, lizards and kangaroos, responding most magically – all heady at times.

I shall never forget the Alban Eiler ceremony in Lesley and Deans magnificent herb garden, among the huge rocks, overgrown with herbs of fragrance, medicinal and magical power, and beauty. The paths were filled with people:

Lesley and Deans friends and family, their children, the Choir, other members of the local community, and of course, us OBODs resplendent in our robes and tabards, not to mention a crowd of at least as many non-material beings too, who also made their presence felt. It was beautiful.

For me at least, the weekend was an unqualified success. Congratulations, Dean and Lesley! Many magic moments will stay with me for the rest of my life.

The recording session was exciting; I look forward eagerly to hearing the results of our labours.

Vivienne

Gates

I sing a journey, and it is an open gate
between za and re. Between
clairseach and lute, between
bare soles and well-buttered boots,
more gates stand open. Scarlet
are the dancers veils. They wrap
me in a shawl of singing, dance
my blood through the veins
of my being.

Each one visits my heart
bringing roses.

by Vivienne.



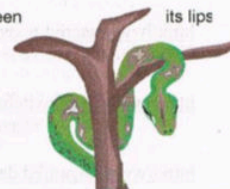
Wrens' nests

In the most encircling
worlds' words
I find ears.
I flee.

There are three thrilling things about worlds:
wrens' nests containing eggs, wren's eggs and wrens.

When you say or think or write or type 'wrens' nests',
grasses are plucked and lightly and easily
twisted into wry wiry dry wrens' nests,
and your teeth are afraid you might break the eggs,
or a snake might come hissing with its tongue between

I've felt this with the fingers of my ribs
which,
like the twigs of a thorn bush,
might as easily hold
a wrens' nest as a heart.



Vyvyan



OH MERLIN, IN YOUR CLOAK OF STARS

Oh Power! O Merlin in your cloak of stars!
Your palms are zodiacs
In your eyes lie snakes. In your ears
Eternal winds. Your nose
Filters the scents of heaven out of chaos
Your tongue tells the wisdom of the worlds.
Sieved through the zodiac webs of your
palms
Like fishes through nets.

How can I take them down to my wounded
and cross-hatched palms, those stars? How
can I step down my Satan's howl to a chining
dream of hope or crown with a loving
garland of healing herbs my well trained
dragon,
schooled in the ache of wisdom and
the flowering death in which it's power is
born?

Look how small I stand, Wandjuna, in the
circle here.
I am my crails.
Look how the grinning west and the near,
tears east and the menacing north
Breath fire, sigh air, splash water in,
And the stone-sullen south it is who captures
me,
Who pins my wings to the zodiac points of
The wizards palm.

Vivienne

Eagle Manifestation

I was seeded in the womb
Of vision, in the dream of sleep
I woke. I am the light.

I am the mothering eagle,
The eagling mother, the gyre
Of seeking, the seeking gyre

Of finding, the winding gyre,
The gyring wind, the lift of a wing.
The wing. I am the
manifestation.....Vivienne



Bards Corner

The Birth of Lough – Lambfada

I saw my god's hand lift an earth – swathe
Fold of a valley of her dress. She stepped
A laughing, impatient step, and I saw
Every atom dance, every cloud swing, every
Stone stand up, every star swirl I space. I saw
Spring forth from stones, springs uncountable.

Every atom laughed, each aeal locus was
Effusive with the laughter! Sweet was the sound.
He came forth from every smiling stone!
So dancing the air! So singing the water!
The sculpting earth! The easy and urgent
Blossoming drama of fire.

Oh where you stand, bright Lough, though I
Know only your name, and the sky of your eyes,
And the steps I take, laughing, towards you,
Dancing stone that I am, red – eyed elf of a
Planet of war that I am, our won sad sister
That I am, where you stand, Lough, my love, my
Shining truth, there is logos, there is locus
There is love

Vivienne



The Wyeuro Circles

Carole was talking about the isolation of members from one another, and the funny expectations that you have of people you know only through Touchstone and Serpentstar.

You suddenly find out that, that something or other grove that you've envisaged as comprising at least a dozen people all regularly meeting together at every festival and birth, death, marriage and any other event, of community or cosmic interest, among majestic stones in wilderness so spiritual you could cry, are two people sharing a flat and doing ceremonies in the lounge room with the coffee table for an anchor stone.

It comes as a blessed relief when you do find out, and even leaves me a little surprised to find that the bigish ring of real stones I've been "Bard, Ovate and Druidising" in for the past four years, ranks as opulent (in a humble way) even though few stones in it are much larger than a human skull.

This being the case, Carole asked people at the Assembly last year, to send Serpentstar a description of their circle, which I'm now doing, so that we'll get a better sense of ourselves as a community, and be less anonymous to each other.

My circle consists of 12 smallish limestone rocks, some smooth, oolitic and clean which I suppose are feminine and others crumbly, amorphous and lichenized, which seem to be quite magical sometimes. They were collected from surrounding limestone flats in an attitude of respectfulness and care. There is one stone at each of the quarters, and two at each of the doorways between them. There is a largish female stone at the centre as the anchor stone, and two fires, one at the North and one at the South.

The whole circle is about ten paces across. There are outliers marking the solstices and equinox sun rises, and a smaller altar presided over by a small but superb male stone that serves as a focus for the spirit of the circle. I've recently added a large male stone in the South East, just out of alignment with the solstice stones on what appears to be the highest spot in the fairly level terrain inside the ring.

I'm currently fine-tuning this circle for work with the past and future, and with origins and fulfillments. Helen and I celebrate the eight fire festivals in this circle. We also celebrate a peace meditation every first Sunday in the month, to which we invite the spirits of the local area, and whoever else, to pray, meditate and commune together for the cause of world peace.

Since seeing, touching and working with the wonderful paramagnetic stones at Cooringal Grove last Alban Eiler, I've made a small ovate circle using stones brought from the nearby Barossa Valley - quite small stones, but very well energized and arranged as they are with a male and female (sandstone) stone in the centre (named Crom and Maith) they generate quite an amazing amount of a magnetic-like energy, which I am learning to direct for healing and reconciliation between systems in conflict.

I also use it for my ovate work in acting as a contact point for the beings of parallel worlds above and below us, and in contacting my spirit guides. I also do my mirror work there, contacting specific beings or just scrolling through, or else being contacted and instructed by the Sidhe and other guides.

Lately it's been my favorite place for just sitting in the sun; I talk all my sedentary activities out to it and sit beside it, Crom especially emanates an undeniably mindful energy towards me that feels like nothing if not love. He's also astonishingly beautiful in detail.

With the opening rains in April, Helen and I held a Blessing of the Plough ceremony there, each reading our parts from hand written scripts. A copy of the script follows. There was a real sense of the blessing flowing, but the really magical thing was an indescribable sense of contact, and a counter blessing that is still flowing into us from those we blessed, for blessing them.

That's our circles, until I get inspired to build a Druid Circle. As for our practice, we're fairly casual, we don't wear our robes, or dress up, we read our parts in the opening and closing etc. I normally bless the circle with fire, water, earth and air, using incense, river water, garden soil or red ochre, depending on my orientations and a pelican feather. (Pelican is a steady influence on me, and a powerful medicine for my whole being) or an owl feather. (Owl is Helen's dreaming. Both were given to us by the spirits) to draw power from the air. The scripts for the eight festivals are the short versions supplied with the Bardic Gwersu; we divide the parts between us. I

I'm cautiously feeling my way towards modifying them for our local environment, without losing the specific magical qualities of the original. I do a lot of work in both circles alone. Helen likes to work mainly on the inner plane without too much reference to her surroundings in the apparent world, and so doesn't use the circles much for solitary work.

The trees surrounding us are mostly sandalwoods, melaleucas, wattles and waterbush, with patches of mallee, with wild olive (cattle bush) quandong and hop bush as well, sparse over the limestone and denser in the mallee.

Kangaroos, wombats, emus (now and then) and all kinds of birds, reptiles mammals and monotremes live out in the scrub, and often visit the circles.

The spirit world is very close here. It brims over with magic anyway, without any Druidic help. Turbulent and quarrelsome as that necessarily is at the moment, with our two main cultures, the European and the Indigenous Australian, in collision, there is a rapidly increasing feeling of great progress being made towards reconciliation and goodwill on that level.

Aboriginal spirit people often participate in our festivals, and made a magical contribution to our peace cauldron at our last peace meditation.

May the blessings of the spirits of our rings be on yours, the blessing of the Limestone, and of the Mallee and of the Mopoke Owl.

Vivienne ...



Bards Corner

Ceridwen, Woman of Earth by Vivienne Manogue.

Ceridwen Cerianwen, I see you, a strong, tough, hard woman nearing forty, plain of face, hot tempered, a woman of earth, like me.

You were ambitious for your son, ugly as he was, hatchet faced, ginger-headed, rough-handed, perhaps, like you.

You worked with your herbs, you were advanced in magic, you studied, you advanced, you brewed for your own son three

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------|----------|
| careful | drops. | |
| love all beings | love all truth | love all |
| virtue | passionately | |
| reverently | and tell | |
| valiantly | | |
| and do | no lie | |
| and say | to any | |
| no harm | | |
| no ill | | |
| to any | | |
| of any | | |

Ceridwen, your jealous passion for your child's birthright!

How you flung yourself through forms, enraged, dismayed, grief-stricken, crying out in your birds' voices, and your beasts' voices, and your fishes' voices And your plants' voices.

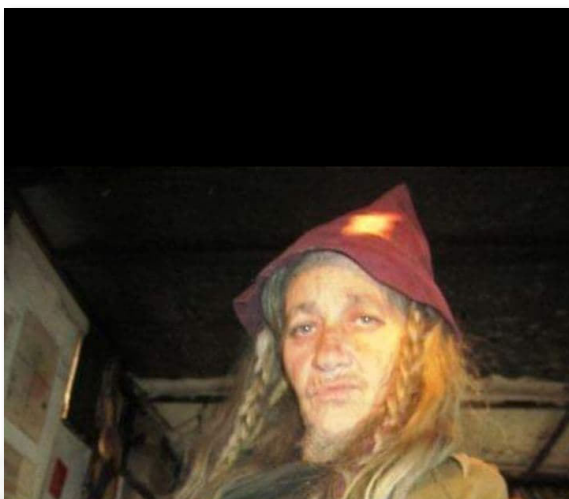
Sobbing, exhausted with the seed in your beak - what victory is this?

Doped, duped and defeated you were, by the warm charm of new womb-life.

Mother of two sons, my love goes out to you, piteous mother of anyone, of everyone, for the sake of your ugly son, for whom you were ambitious, whose birthright you could not defend...

and for the sake of the beautiful usurper, your second son, in the light of whose radiant brow you are bewildered, I think, and humbled a little, like me.

ends



THE MAGIC OF HOME BREWED MEAD

Druidic celebrations seem to go so much better with a glass or two of home-brewed mead. Here is the recipe Helen and I use to make our mead. It is based on a recipe I found in Kisma Stepanich's book 'Faerie Wicca Book 1', for what she calls 'Irish mead'.

It's the simplest and probably the most authentic recipe I've seen – no added chemicals, no sophisticated apparatus required – and reliably (for us, anyway) turns out a very good brew that tastes just like the commercial meads, but with all the benefits that go with lovingly home brewing your own.

- 1 sachet dried yeast or one tablespoon fresh.
- 1 gallon water (about 4 lit)
- 3 1/2 pounds of raw honey (about 1.5 kilo)
- 2 dozen shelled hazel nuts.

- 1 Bring the water to the boil, stir in the honey, simmer for 45 minutes.
- 2 Remove nuts, sprinkle yeast over surface, cover, let ferment at room temperature 4-10 days, until fermentation has all but ceased.
- 3 Bottle and seal. Wait 3 months before tasting – by 4 months it's at its best.

Notes

- 1: Don't use a metal vessel or utensils, except stainless steel if you must. Stoneware seems to imbue it with a special pleasantness.
- 2: Rainwater or spring water are probably preferable, but I've used our (additive free, but not, by any means pure) Murray River water with good results.

3: I've made it without boiling the water, with variable success. The best of these unboiled brewings produced the most magical drink I've ever had – utterly beautiful, wild, fey and whimsical. The worst was rather flat and tasteless. You might find it worth the risk as I occasionally do!

4. I fermented one lot in close association with an active vat of Kombu Cha – the result: several bottles of the finished mead had plugs of healthy Kombu Cha culture in their necks and the flavour was horrible. They were our only failures.

5. Any good brewers yeast will do, but at a pinch I've used baker's and wine yeast and both brews were acceptable – in fact, the bakers' yeast gave good flavour and the best head in the glass. Regarding which, see not 6 below.

6. Crown seals may be used, but be warned, they sometimes explode, especially within the first week of later during hot weather. The mead in the surviving bottles tends to be superior to my taste, with a satisfying head on it. Fermentation must be almost completely finished before the mead is bottled if you are using crown seals.

Using corks is safer and the flavour just as good, but the end product tends to be less effervescent, and even quite still. Still a good mead though.

Helen is currently experimenting with variations, adding herbal infusions to the water before adding the honey, yeast and nuts. We'll let you know the results in a later Serpentstar.

Blessings on your brewings.

Vivienne



In Druid tradition, bees come from the paradisaical world of the Sun and of the Spirit. Finely attuned to the position of the sun in the sky, it is the bee who brings the sacred solar drink of mead as a gift to humanity.

Beach (bee) invites us to celebrate. You may have a special reason for celebration or you may simply need to celebrate the wonder and mystery of being alive. You may like to enjoy a glass or two of mead, which – if it has been brewed in Scotland – will carry the scent of heather, and will bring you closer to the highlands. (Or if in Australia, closer to the spirit of the place it has been collected and brewed) (1).

In the Druid tradition there are occasions to celebrate every six weeks or so. As human beings we need to have times when we can come together to enjoy each other's company. The bee tells us that we can live together in harmony, however impossible this may sometimes seem.

By being at one with the natural world, by paying homage to the sun, by centering our lives around Spirit or the Goddess, we can work together in community.

Mead is one of the most ancient alcoholic beverages in the world. Made from honey, water, malt and yeast, it has almost certainly been brewed for at least six thousand years. It was and still is often drunk at the celebration of the eight Druid festival times, with the mead circling the participants until the last drop is consumed.

At the royal court of Tara, the assembly hall was known as Tech Midchuarta, the House of Mead Circling.

The sun in the Druid tradition can, from one viewpoint, be seen as a manifestation of the Goddess, since in Celtic languages the word for sun was originally feminine – in Irish and Scottish it still is (Grian or Griene.) the goddess Brigid is a goddess of the sun and of fire, as well as of wells and water. The firewater mead is therefore a most fitting drink to honor her.

"The Druid Animal Oracle. Philip and Stephanie Carr-Gomm" (1) addition M.Dordblower



Bringing It Home

by Vyvyan



Druidry is a flexible system but it has its constants, and ancestors, archetypes and mythic heroes, sacred places and deeply venerated historical events are all more or less essential to Druidry.

We know Druidry as a Celtic thing and, while it was eclipsed on the European continent and in the Middle East and northern Africa, and its magi, scholars and philosophers, and its ruling classes forced to take refuge in Britain's wild and inhospitable extremes and further west in Ireland, we know that the Celts were not originally exclusively Irish, Scottish, Welsh, Cornish and Breton. Celtic traditions have their roots in a thousand or more years of worldwide Celtic venturing before the rise of Greece and Rome, and in those ancient times they made significant cultural exchanges with indigenous peoples on every continent.¹

In those days the Celtic tradition was not so much the cherishing of a particular canon of 'Celtic' tales about 'Celtic' heroes and gods as about the selective acquiring of new tales and the subjecting of them to characteristically Celtic treatments in order to sanctify them, so that they might mediate their magic into the culture via the resultant myths. They selected according to specifically Celtic criteria, and from them, through their mythic treatment of them, elicited the forms and qualities of enchantment and magic that still draw people like us to Druidry.

Cultures are shaped inwardly by their traditions, by the heroes, gods, ancestors and other identities whom individuals are encouraged to contemplate from early childhood to old age. Their institutions, values, morals, emotionality, religious attitudes, modes of reasoning, patterns of thought, responses to other, concepts of normality, attitudes to birth and death, erotica, warring, and models for love, beauty and truth and much much more are derived from and maintained largely by the power of the mythology, history and fiction carried in the minds of its individuals.

Now in the case of legends and myth, as distinct from fables and fiction, there is usually some historical truth evident or obscured within it. There was a Fionn MacCumhaill – okay, he was probably a whole, centuries long military tradition, but he represents real people who lived and fought, feasted and brawled, loved, worshipped, married and died way back in the ancient past, and whose genes, replicating generation by generation down through the ages, are the material inheritances of millions of their descendants who are alive on Earth today. There was a Rhiannon, a Merlin, a Guinevere; and if we asked them to, no doubt they could show us the reality of their gods and their dragons.

They belong to Europe, and if you go to their ancient haunts you can connect powerfully with them, I'm told, in a way that just can't be done from this hemisphere through pictures in books. The same is true of Celtic sacred places such as Iona and the megalithic sites. But, as Bard, Ovates and Druids, we respond to their enchantment, and we need to use their specifically Celtic way of eliciting, transforming and sacralizing the magical power of place, of our own antipodean culture heroes, and of some of our more potent cultural memories.

¹ For an account of evidence of ancient sustained Celto-Phoenician and Celto-Egyptian presences in Australia, complete with descriptions of astronomical bearings and other arrangements and alignments of standing stones, read *Mysterious Australia* by Rex Gilmore, Nexus Books.

The roots of our Druidry are in Europe, but it begins to flourish here exuberantly as we recognise, vitalise and consciously utilise the spiritual soil of our own cultures. We Southern Hemisphere Druids are finding legitimate ways to be nourished from the myths continually being generated by the deeds of our own hero men and women, the fraught, passionate and still sometimes painful engagement between our human cultures and the land and the elements, and the potent events of our respective comings into being as multicultural nations.

The indigenous peoples and the pre-Historic Asian and European colonists who appear to have preceded the modern Europeans here have responded to this imperative as it applies to them in their own ways, and while a European shamanism can't just 'plug in' to theirs, it is part of the Druidic tradition to respect and even collect new cosmologies, knowledge systems, and magical practices, wherever they may be found, and to integrate them into a specifically Druidic worldview. Many of us, reading or hearing the indigenous sacred lore of our lands and discovering its native animals and trees are finding it possible to welcome its archetypal beings, spirit people and culture heroes into our own Druidic pantheons, mead halls, and groves, and as spirit friends, into our homes and our daily lives.

Naturally, our 'Celticism' is being influenced by this, acquiring Oz, Kiwi and other Pacific accents and flavours, just as the pre-Roman Gauls of Galilee, the Helvetian Gauls and the Gauls of ancient Britain all brought their own distinctive accents and flavours to their nevertheless genuinely Celtic paths.

We are importing sacred lore and wisdom from the Old World into our countries along with those of other exotic cultures as we choose them or they choose us, but it's natural and empowering for us to be looking for our own countries' well-springs of mythic power as well.

It's no accident that when I try to think of Australians who have a place in my personal unedited pantheon, the list bristles with Celtic names: Ned and Kate Kelly and the whole gang, and a whole string of bushrangers: Jack Doolan, Bold Jack Donahue and Captain Starlight with his grief-stricken Aileen. There's the malevolent Captain Logan of Moreton Bay, Bourke and Wills and Captain John MacDouall Stuart, Sr Mary McKillop, Johnny O'Keefe, Chips Rafferty. As potent myth we have Rafferty's Reef, Buckley who had no chance, and despite having Murphy's Law to grapple with, we live the life of Riley. When it rains, Hughie it is who "sends 'er down". Celtic mythology produces Celtic heroes.

But there are also people like Benelong, Ludwig Leichhardt, Albert Namatjira, Thistle Thornton, Bobby Sykes, Germaine Greer, Wylie, Dawn Fraser, and Yvonne Gooloogong – not necessarily Celtic, or not obviously so, but all heroes in the best Celtic sense.

Celebrated in song and verse we have wry-backed shearers and blue-bellied joes, jolly swagmen, camp cooks, jillaroos and drovers in abundance, and any number of identities and tales that offer themselves as magical ingredients in our personal Druidries. These are all Australians, but New Zealanders and others will be conscious of their own.

To be continued next issue.



Bringing It Home (Part Two)

by Vyvyan



Less obviously, those places, activities and institutions within our own cultures that resonate with ancient Celtic traditions are calling for our kind of reverence and honour. Universities, hospitals and banks all housed in sublimely inspired or sadly dysfunctional architecture are the sacred haunts of spirits of learning, healing and prosperity, of Ogma, of the women of Avalon, the Dagda. Politics and government also are the manifestation of divine spirits, and it is the essence of Celtic wisdom to reverence those spiritualities.

In this world they're presided over by the human manifestations of the Wounded King, and are affected by the general discordancy that troubles our whole planet. It isn't that we should idealize them unnecessarily, but it does make good magical sense to bring a solid, well-grounded, hard-headed Druidical realism to our attitudes to them.

They are the glands, the veins, the brain, the muscles and organs of our planet. It does them harm to revile them or despise them, and it does them good to honour them, as Gaia's best efforts to manifest her organs of understanding, intellect, organisation and self-defence under difficult conditions. Though we may see her as thwarted and crippled by her own diseases of greed and vanity, or as distorted by human misconceptions of her (such as those that arise from thinking of her as all 'Nature' while we 'mindless humans' in our 'greed' and 'stupidity' evolve our nasty 'unnatural' lifestyles in contempt of her), and as crippled by her own peoples' unwillingness to honour her choices as she calls people to their places within the structures of law, government, finance, religion, scholarship, the military, etc., we should nevertheless offer her our magical support in ritual ceremony and meditation.

As Druids, Ovates and Bards, we can contribute to their healing by including their spirits in our personal pantheons and working with them via shrines, icons, divinatory cards, or whatever feels right. Establishing a dialogue with the divine spirit in them it's possible to debate with them in a controlled, healthy way whatever differences of opinion or clashes of ideology we might have with them. Even if there is enmity between us and a particular institution or practice, say, the wood-chipping industry, strategies for giving due respect to all individuals concerned, whether 'goodies' or 'baddies', can be worked out in the grove context, while interfacing with them via some sacred representation of them under the supervision and guidance of the Sacred Grove.

Of course, this turn of the spiral we now have a greater global awareness than ever before, so we may regard ourselves as citizens of the world and festoon our pantheons with the spirit beings of all cultures, past, present, and for those of us who can crack it, the future too.

Even certain fictional characters, such as The Sentimental Bloke, The Gumnut Babies, or Ginger Meggs may represent inspiring archetypes worthy of a shrine, or at least an occasional mead or flower sacrifice – and I personally have had excellent responses from respectful meditation on The Magic Pudding, upon whose richly begraved 'slices' I was raised as a child.

(I'm currently consulting with the thieving possum whose spirit is so creatively manifested in that story, concerning some not so desirable 'possum magic' perpetrated in the Wyeworth orchard lately, involving the demanifestation of significant portions of several almost ripe apples.)

The Silver Brumby is another fictional character that captures magnificently the spirit of a great Australian archetype, one that 'speaks' to you from the spirit of the horse. The only thing that matters is that they capture the imagination and that we address the divine in them, and listen respectfully and sensitively for their responses, whether they come as inspirations, dreams, fantasies or omens that carry unmistakable references to them.

Sacred times and sacred space can be seen in similar ways. Druids hold the eight festivals as sacred times, and there are the four monthly lunar Sabbaths, the two half moons, the full moon, and the dark moon, and most of us have at least some investment in some of the official 'holy' days – even if it's only the Melbourne Cup. But our countries are situated under skies not often seen by the ancient Celts, and by reference to the stars we can, in our distinctively Celtic way, as the indigenous cultures do in their way, observe the rising of significant stars and the passages of the planets in our Southern skies in Druidic ways, and celebrate them too.

As a nation we Australians are called sunworshippers (I'll be in that) and all beaches are sacred. It's easy enough to respond to the sacredness of Aboriginal sacred places, but I myself am only just waking up to the reasonableness of sacralizing for myself the cities that contain most of our people, the farmlands that support us, and the roads that carry us from place to place. I'm not only referring to the statues, memorials and monuments, but also to streets, parks, arcades, parking lots and shopping centres. They all have a spiritual potency that shapes our nation's spirituality, and our attitudes determine the precise nature of that spirituality. Wise attitudes and respect heal it, and fear, hatred and disrespect harm it.

Druidic magic can concentrate healing energy into an earthly system and in doing so can help it to heal itself. This is true even of institutions like the wood-chipping industry, Monsanto, the World Bank, or whatever. Druids may feel a responsibility not to direct hatred, even if not augmented magically, into any organisation, but to deal with anger as one's own problem. Without hate we deal more effectively with dysfunction.

Druidry offers an animistic view of the world. Every atom is a divine being, a centre of creation. Every moment in time is replete with the numinous. The realisation of this is the sacralization of the universe. It starts with the love of all existences. As Earthlings, we can touch even the stars, even the gods, with healing, just by contributing through our magic, conscious or sublime, deliberate or casual, to the structuring of a healthy destiny for this community of Earthly beings.



When Stephanie and I heard about Vyvyan's death, we were at first surprised and then very sad, but then - as we reminisced about the times we had spent with her - we could feel a growing sense of peace and acceptance. She seemed so wedded to the land, to nature all around her, we could almost feel the Earth and the nature spirits she lived so close to, welcoming her transformed amongst them.

We looked again at her book 'Entering Faerie', which is a marvellous read. I hope it might be published again in her honour. Vyvyan asked me to write the preface all those years ago, when she spelled her name more conventionally as Vivienne, and I'd like to share a bit of this with you now:

Here is a deceptively brief book - an autobiography - an account of a spiritual odyssey - that has an enticing directness. It deals with one of the most romantic areas of life here on earth - an area that lures many of us, that tantalises children, that inspires artists and poets. And yet despite the romance of its theme - the existence of faeries - this book shows the author determined to be straight with us, determined to recount what has happened to her without distortion. I believe her life depends on this - on her honesty - because to deceive herself or us would plunge her into a world of insanity she has so very nearly entered in the extraordinary adventure she has undertaken.

This adventure has been nothing less than exploring the nature and identity of faeries. As a child Vivienne asked herself the question perhaps every sensitive child asks: "Who and what are 'faeries' exactly?" But whereas most of us give up asking this question, she didn't - or the faeries didn't let her. And as you shall discover as you turn the pages of this book, the consequences of her holding this question in her heart for so long has cost Vivienne her health, and I sense has nearly cost her her life and her sanity.

She was able to preserve her sanity and her life in the end by applying her own advice: "People who are seeing them [fairies] must give as honest and complete an account of what they see as they can, to anyone who seems likely to give it intelligent and open-minded attention. Not only does this pave the way for a further thinning of the veil, but it will also turn some people's attention to their own psychic perceptions, and help them to focus on the faeries in their own lives so that they may improve their rapport until the communion becomes conscious for them, too." By recounting what she saw and felt and was told, she has been able to give to others the gifts of faery-knowledge she obtained at such cost over so many years...

The answers she found to the questions she asked are not perhaps the ones you might expect. She found herself conversing with a very specific kind of Being - and learned how they come into existence, where they come from and what their function is.

Vivienne writes: 'We humans tend to think of ourselves as great lumps of materiality, slow-witted, dull-sensed, unmagical, and powerless, at least compared with faeries and elementals and their ilk. In fact, we are every bit as magical as they are, if only we could wake up to it.'

I think Vyvyan was one of those lucky people who have woken up to their magical nature. She led a life that was authentic, unafraid to be seen as 'different', and fully committed to her ideals. She was a treasure for us all in her incarnation as Vyvyan, and it wouldn't surprise me at all if she is seen by many in the future – leaning against a tree, bathing in a brook or dancing in the moonlight with her faerie friends.

We have heard how difficult it was for her towards the end of her life, but also how her friends in the Order were able to support her in her last days. How moving and heart-warming to know that she was not alone and that she was cared for in this way – in the way she cared for the life around her.

Dear Vyvyan,

May your journey to the Isles of the Blessed, to the fields of Bliss, to the land of freedom and splendour, be swift and sure.

May the Light be your guide on the journey.

May the blessings of the Spirits of the Tribe and of the Ancestors, of Time and of Place and of the Journey be with you.

May the blessing of the Spirits of North and South, East and West be with you.

*May the blessing of the Lord and Lady of the Animals and the Woods,
the mountains and the streams be with you.*

May the blessing of the Uncreated One, whose child is the Created Word, and of the Spirit that is the Inspirer, be always with you.

By the beauty of the fields, the woods and the sea, by the splendour that is set upon all that is, we send you our love and blessings.

Philip & Stephanie Carr-Gomm xxx

Druid Timescapes

Vyvyan

*'Oh hear the voice of the bard
who present, past and future sees...'*

Stories of time travel, prophecy and time warping experiences abound in Celtic legend and myth. In other cultures too, timescapes alien to our current daily experience of time have been described and aspired to. Within our linear conception of time as a fixed factor of our reality, we normally interpret all our sensory data according to a notion of past first, then present and then future. But philosophers dealing with problems of time have always found positions, and explored whole systems of experience in the midst of which our time line is but a thin stream of limited experience something like a narrow road or channel through a rich and various timescape through which any number of pathways can be traced. Transcendental meditation, carried to heights of perfection in extant Yoga traditions, was also practised in various forms by druids, and is practised by shamans of all cultures, sometimes using chant, dance, rhythmic drumming or flute-playing, sometimes alone, sometimes in groups and often in ritual within magic circles or other sacred spaces. Transcendental attitudes are at the basis of Australian Aboriginal 'Dreamtime' (Alcheringa, or Tjupurka) theo-cosmology, which easily and regularly transcends our linear conception of time.

Holographic conceptions of the universe are based on the realisation that our sensoria interpret data according to logistics which are, while not exactly arbitrary, determined by our particular, species-specific physiology, which is determined by our genes, which in turn, derive their logistics and the qualities and experiential modes arising from them from their atoms, whose infinitely complex, multidimensional inner structures are slowly yielding to scientific enquiry at this time in our planet's history. (Perhaps atoms are aware of this and are responding with enquiries of their own!) The logistics through which the sensoria of a dog or cat interpret reality, i.e., the time/space continuum with all its effects, are no doubt as different from those of humans as their basic bodily features are. Those of birds and fishes would be different again, and even more so, those of trees, flowers, mushrooms, amoeba, atoms, stones, crystals, landforms and whole landscapes, planets, stars, starscapes etc. Shape-shifting from one animal form to another, where animal means any being in possession of an anima, i.e., an experiencing 'soul', would be another way to access non-human temporal modalities.

Insight into what time is comes from studying our

logistics of experience to data selectively processed through our sensoria so as to give rise to the time/space continuum, which constitutes the reality in which our universe is manifest. Paradoxes abound in such studies. What are we perceiving that gives rise to the data from which our sensoria select to form our awareness of reality, of the page or screen you are now reading from, of the words you are reading and their meanings? Could they exist without time? Are they not rather processes than objects, a flow of energy, of data, of... what? Could time exist without objects, even if we decide that objects are sustained processes. Is time only sequence? Sequence of what? Meditation on these questions may provide the druid with the key to transcendental time experiences.

All objects have memory. All atoms are ancient. All objects are composed of evolving complexes of memory, as ancient as the universe itself. It's a truism that they are all made of 'god' and that 'god' is all-pervading, all-creating, all-sustaining mind. But atoms are not humans and each type configures the logistics of its own experiential system. For any given non-human experienter this does not have to include a linear conception of time, or anyway, not the same linearity as the one humans normally select. Some substances have greater affinities with humans and are easier to commune with, to experience through than others. Examples are those traditionally used, and cultivated as magical companions by generations of magicians in the past, present and future: amber, crystals, gold, silver, gemstones such as jade, onyx, jasper, and humbler substances such as clay, glass, and plastics. Some of these are useful aids in time-transcending activities in magical practice, and we pagans are building a real science here.

Some processes or patterns, though not exactly objects, are nevertheless sufficiently sustained to engage a deva, and so function as living beings in the way holy icons do. These include tartans and other weaving patterns with names like monk's path, friar's girdle, etc; knitting patterns such as the magical stitches used in Aran and Hebridean, Fairisle and Scandinavian knitting, and the traditional stitches of embroidery, in sacred and everyday sewing worldwide, and the designs of folk art, carpet weaving and other traditions. Carpets in particular have a mythos bristling with magical energy and are raring to go. Mandalas, knotwork, runes, sigils and other

magical patterns have also traditionally assisted time travel, time-transcending remote viewing, and prophecy.

And talking of mandalas, in our magic circles, as we affirm them by frequent use in ritual and ceremony, we have a veritable time machine all set up and champing at the bit. The major quarters, East, North, West and South, are respectively gateways to the beginning times, to the heydays, to the declining times and to the times of incubation and dormancy of all things, if we only know how to gain admission. There are guardians at these gates, and we can learn as we open our minds to psychic communion with the Sacred Grove guardians, to receive tuition from them into their mysteries, as the old Druids did, thus eventually gaining passage through the gates into

THE POWER OF AWEN

Vyvyan

1

In the mystic blooming of my soul
are brooded, hatched and fed my fledgling dreams.
I watch their petal wings like skies unfold
to take swift flight through rapturous cosmic streams...

2

In vision-cradling caverns of my mind
wild dragons fleshed of thought and reason dwell.
Explosive power in every revelation -
they guard a wisdom too profound to tell.

3

And in the soaring magic of my spirit
breaths are words, words names, names powers great.
Fleet the image, sure the manifestation,
quick and light as thought, yet fixed as fate.

4

In the scintillations of my body,
crafting the fine molecular weave of flesh,
mountains are my ribs, my blood is stars -
light is the weft and radiant life the mesh

5

I am the soar of spirit, the magic of mind,
I am the starry flesh, the shimmer of soul,
I am the breath, the fire, the flow the form,
I am the fleeting gleam, the eternal whole.

6

Somehow it means something, some vital thing,
somehow to enhance, to heal, recharge, renew,
by the touch of a hand, a gesture, a word of love?
Power of AWEN in everything we do!



serious space-time-transcending experiences. Situated between these gates are four others: in the northwest, that of our descendents; in the northeast, that of the ancestors; in the southwest, that of the past, including times before the advent of humanity or even life itself; and in the southeast, that of the future. Work with these in ritual and ceremony will win through eventually to easy communion with the past and future. There are people in the future trying to reach us, on 'roam' as it were, for circles of our time reaching out to theirs. Truly, we build a Tardis when we consecrate a magic circle as Bards, Ovates and Druids!

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VYVYAN'S WORDS



Credible Druidry



A druid is someone who at least intends to learn to be a druid, whatever he or she might think that means. That intention seems to be hardwired into the mindscape in which druids learn and assimilate the wealth of healing and magic that surrounds us. Not everyone who does a course in druidry wants to be a druid. It's legitimate to add-in knowledge about druidry to another magical system, or to synthesise one of your own from selections from many systems of magic. But for those for whom being a druid is a driving, central *donné*, there are major issues which need to be dealt with standing between us and credibility and things would flow better if we acknowledge them.

Blind faith (itself proof of the power of enchantment if we hadn't already been convinced by things like TV advertising, the wiles of kittens and the socio-psychology of human courtship) sustains some of us sometimes, but before we can begin truly to manifest genuinely druidical magic in the apparent world, we need a credible basis for our beliefs; not just to arm us against challenges from the mainstream, but also for the sake of our own self esteem and for the healing power of standing on firm ground, all of which are needed before the *nwyfre* will flow in the channels ordained for it by the wizard's spells.

We have very little hard knowledge of what druids were, but a fairly well developed sense of them pervades magical fantasy and fiction, which gets its themes and images from a perhaps planetary consciousness that remembers clearly what we of the apparent world have forgotten. We instinctively approve of Tolkien's Gandalf, of Getafix the Druid from Asterix the Gaul, of Harry Potter and his companions, and of T. E. White's Merlin in *The Once and Future King*. Conan's landscape rings true, and the good/wise and evil/power-crazed wizards of genre fantasy thrill and chill us because they are true to life in some way - or our instincts tell us so, even if we're in denial about it. There is so much consistency in these images that it is fairly easy for any individual to conjure up an image of a druid, or of a range of types of druids, and to incorporate a selection of its features into his or her own being. But these attributes only have credibility, the power to heal and set a disordered world to rights, and the ability to weave the creative forces into new substances, fictions and realities if they are themselves real within the context of the apparent world.

In this series of articles I want to examine some of the powers commonly attributed to druids, to ask what they are, how real or unreal each one is, and if real how can we as druids access and apply them as manifest magic in the apparent world. I will be helpful to critique fairly carefully the philosophy that is emerging as 'druidic' in the New Age, feeling honestly for its weaknesses, its instances of what Sartre called *mauvais foi* and those tender areas around which we tend to pussyfoot because of embarrassment about the apparent gaps between the fantasy and any possible reality that it might engage with - and for fear of the allegedly terrifying power of the druid should it engage! We have to be tamed ourselves before we can tame the dragon energy!

Our OBOD or other training is a seed. Its genome is a fabric of myths and ideas and fragments of folklore, scholarship and archaeological traces and the pervading image of the druid in literature that we start out with. The soil is the knowledge of the real world around us. Once sprouted, the seed utilises the seed material in forming a root, which enters the soil and finds nourishment there instead. My aim is to mobilise the powers latent within these seed myths and fragments by unpacking them, deconstructing them a little and seeing how their power and logic can be creatively employed for magical effects in the 21st century druid.

Here are some of the attributes I will be looking at

- Druids are animistic.
- Druids talk with animals, birds, trees, rocks, and the stars with mutual understanding.
- Druids shapeshift.
- Druids time-travel.
- Druids prophesy.
- Druids cast enchantments, charms and spells.
- Druids control natural phenomena such as weather, fertility and tectonic forces.
- Druids have close friendly relations with space people in UFOs.
- Druids can speak to the dead through skulls, stones or other foci.
- Druids can commune with beings, human and unhuman, on many dimensions.
- Druids can magically affect the health and vitality of all manner of systems, from individual people to whole planets for good or evil.
- Druids walk and talk with the gods.
- Druids have bilocal experiences in which they visit other worlds, other dimensions, and transcendent realities.
- Druids use enchanted objects such as cauldrons and cups for healing and conjuring.
- Druids brew magic potions.
- Druids preach the transmigration of souls.

I'll be looking at some of the factual sources of belief in druid magic in literature, saga and song and in histories old and new. I'll also look at the mythos, most of which arises from the factual accounts through errors of interpretation and the tendency to fabricate sections of verse that cannot be recalled and all the other means by which the truth becomes cryptic in oral traditions. And I'll also be looking at those branches of mysticism that deal with metaphysics and the worlds beyond the apparent world, the parapsychology of shamanism and other aspects of pagan belief and the materialistic sciences of the west. Because I believe it really is possible to take the historical image of the druid, and through a genial relationship with all these systems of magic and knowledge, make of the mythic splendour a splendid reality; prophetic utterances, magic tricks and all!

Blessed be!

vyvyan / 1 \

The Australian Druid Assembly 2003 by Moonfox

This is one story, there are many others.

The 6th Australian Druid Assembly was held at Wyeuro Grove, near Swan Reach 130kms from Adelaide in South Australia. Wyeuro is aboriginal, translating loosely as "kangaroo spirit place". Our hosts Vyvyan and Helen have been its keepers and guardians for the past 24 years. Without the conveniences of electricity, mains water and sewerage that we take for granted they live in the druid retreat all year round that most of us struggle to manage for one week a year. They produce most of their own food; they keep chickens and goats, 5 cats and a dog and grow a range of fruit, vegetables and herbs.

Fourteen OBOD members made the journey from as far afield as Western Australia (2600kms) and Queensland (1500kms) though the award for extraordinary commitment in travelling goes to tutor coordinator Susan Jones and her husband Ian who made the trip of over 16,000 kms from the UK. As an indicator of the solitude of Wyeuro grove this gathering was the first visitors in well over three months!

A number of hardy souls erected tents whilst others opted for the comfort of cabins at nearby Pynarloo caravan park on the banks of the Murray river. Most of the Wyeuro land is on an ancient sea bed and the limestone rock is very close to the surface not allowing the placement of tent pegs; finding a spot to pitch a tent was a job for an Ovates dowsing skills. Vyvyan directed us to a place which was once an ocean blow hole and where the soil was deeper. Despite some worry, and much joking, no tents were blown away through the night.

For the first time ever all the Australian tutors were gathered in one place and they had their own mini-convention sitting on straw bales in the shade of the orchard. Whilst the tutors were meeting a Bardic grove was held, we shared the talking stick, spoke of everything from our druid journey to past lives, death and reincarnation. Then we joined hands in the centre of the Wyeuro grove and chanted the Awen and sang chants to the Goddess and to the land.

Lunch was a gourmet affair cooked in the home built cob oven, Helen has amazing culinary skills and her banana cake is the best in the world. After lunch there was a raffle of three wonderfully hand crafted bears by Queensland member Cherry, the bears were named Gandalf the Grey, Sedda the Qanuk & The Dream Weaver and came complete with poems of their mythology. The bears were donated by Cherry to raise money for the RSPCA the lucky winners were Jenny, Aysha and Vyvyan.

The Assembly also held the launching of Southern Echoes, an anthology of druid writings from the Southern Hemisphere. The anthology was launched with a reading of the introduction written by Philip Carr-Gomm and readings from Ngairé, Vyvyan and Murray and high commendations from Susan who had read it on her flight over.

The afternoon was spent in the Bardic grove. We called and welcomed the spirits of place, the spirits of the dreaming. The spirits and powers of the quarters in Wyeuro format; Eagle, Kangaroo, Murray-Cod and Wombat. Four new bards were welcomed to the Order including the youngest bard initiated into OBOD, Aysha Gentilin, who is nine. There were few dry eyes by the time the ceremony was complete, and I am glad to report that the future of Druidry is alive and well and walking the circle with pride and confidence.

In the evening we gathered around the fire. Lesley was the Bardic anchor of the ceilidh with a repertoire of songs to touch and inspire us all. Vyvyan showed herself to be a capable singer/songwriter and musician and her duets with Helen were a favourite, their years without

television had obviously been put to good use. Every-one joined in with spontaneous percussion and singing, assisted no doubt by the application of some Wyeuro brewed Elderberry wine.

We rose early Sunday morning, the wind was still blowing strongly though we were grateful for the cloud cover- quite a few of us were looking a sun burned from the day before. The Bardic grade members gathered once more around the campfire for a discussion group whilst an Ovate grove was held. Whilst there were no Ovate grade members present, we took the opportunity to celebrate the Ovate grove, and rejuvenate our connection to its energies, to connect deeper with the land of Wyeuro and to send healing where it was required. Wyeuro has had compassionate guardians and it responded in kind to the Ovate grove; the wind swept sun hardened circle is a powerful place to vision seek and to work healing magic.

After morning tea the Druid grove was opened for two very special ceremonies- a Druid initiation and a naming ceremony. Initiations are special events not only for the candidate but for all who participate where they can reconnect with their own initiation and receive the initiation again. It was our honour and privilege to welcome Stormwolf, Serpentstar's dedicated editor, to the Druidic grove. It was also our honour to bear witness to the naming of Vyvyan Ogma Wyverne and hear her commitment to the land and to the tradition in her naming rite.

Helen and Lesley again worked wonders around the fire producing a lunch of ingredients grown on the property- a remarkable feat when you consider that the average annual rainfall in the area is around 10mm/year. After lunch was a free time filled with spontaneous discussion groups, and lazing in the shade. A few of us made the trek the half a mile to see the Wyeuro office, a small hand built limestone building about the size of three telephone booths and big enough to hold the telephone, a chair and a bench for the laptop where Vyvyan and Helen come to make contact with the rest of the world.

We closed around the hearth fire which had been our centre for so much of the weekend. Thanks and blessings were offered and a few tears shed in honour of the new friendships formed. We had come together across vast distances and for many of us this will be our only physical contact with other Druids until the next assembly. Cherry has offered to host the next assembly at her property in Queensland, I am sure she will appreciate every-ones support in bringing that to fruition!

Our thanks go to every-body who attended bringing their warmth, friendship and wisdom. Thanks to Susan and Ian Jones for making the journey from the Lakes District in England to outback Australia, Susan your quiet eloquence, your grace and your enthusiasm contributed to every-one and has made a lasting difference to Druidry in Australia. Lastly, and most importantly, our warmest thanks to the Assemblies hosts Vyvyan and Helen and the Wyeuro grove, your generosity of spirit, dedication to the earth and commitment to the path is an inspiration and a blessing to all of us.

Some words from Vyvyan regarding the Assembly!

Thanks to everyone who attended the Sixth Annual OBOD Assembly at Wyeuro last month. Everyone contributed so much to make the event the success it was. In the aftermath, Helen and I were truly impressed by the respectfulness everyone had shown for our place - not a stone out of place, not a glass broken, not a single piece of litter left behind - and it took us only a couple of leisurely hours to get the place back to normal after everyone had gone.

Special thanks to Kiera and Aysha for the love and healing they gave to Dora, the little newborn birth-injured kid. They might be pleased to know that by Monday afternoon, she was standing and walking normally, and by Wednesday she was running and jumping just like any normal kid, with both front hooves, perfectly straight.

In the Peace of the Grove

Vyvyan

Bard's Page

And did I bleed? Was being born a wounding? Yes, I bled my evolution down the long, repeating white crest and dark trough of circle-spinning time. I am a reed of circled time yielding to the lips of life. I am a ringed reed, nibbled by fish. I am a stone thrown into the water. My rings spread out forever.

I am water, spinning circles, widening rings I spin. They are spun out of shocks, the shocks that shakes out the circles of time, of some ancient impact, the shock of my own source, the glimmer of my glimpse, the circle of my awareness, the shock of my own, perhaps violent birth.

And I am time, stepping lightly like flowing from one newly created cosmos to the next. I spin out threads of self. I weave forever. And is any step lost? any thread erased? any cosmos ever gone forever? No. The past vitally receives the light I throw back, and even now my future's light throws shadows over me.

Is each atom then a many-cosmosed sphere, woven of shockwaves that are spun like mine, like planets', like suns' like stars' continuously outward, and drinking continuously inwards the nwyfre of time sprung of shocks spun circling, spinning out from its own shock-generated and shock-violent birth?

The Earth's alive! Gratitude at last I feel. I can lie down quietly on the mould and I can look up calmly through the branches of the trees. I can lift up through my tnelong veins the milk of my mother the earth. The sky is mindful of me. I can drink down through my nerves the shine of my father the sky.

I can be the new child, the mabon, the new-eyed, the new-tongued. I can sing the magical songs of my ancient childhoods. I can be the wild and sky-eyed woman with the ripple-of-sunshine hair. I can be the engaging man laughing, with the firebrand in his hand.

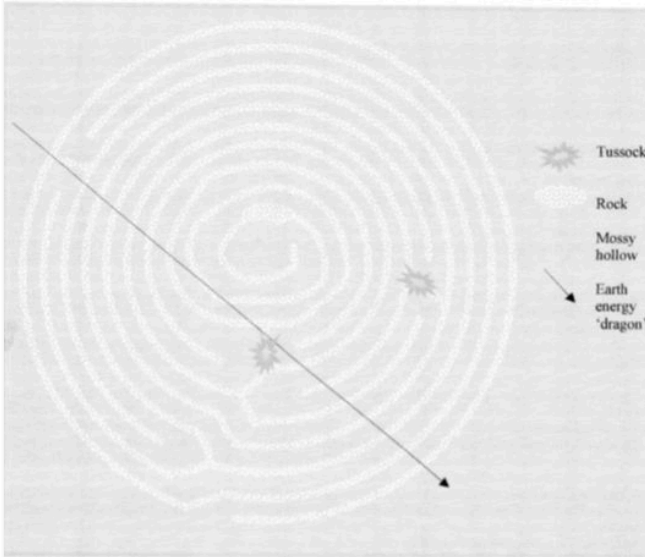
I can carry my eagle mother in my sky the whole long way of my journey. I can craft my path, sow mountains, plains and rivers, seed my sky with stars. I can wear my rivers like veins, my roads like nerves, my many-oghamed forests like a robe, weaving of my thread the eaglet in the egg, the I of me.

vyvyan



LABYRINTH

by Vyvyan



During the Assembly last year, Moonfox suggested that building a labyrinth. I was surprised. I had wanted to build one ever since reading about them in Touchstone a few months earlier. I'd kept coming across references to labyrinths without even looking for them and my appetite was truly whetted. I'd looked about for suitable sites and had narrowed it down to two, and had a fairly clear idea of what its size, shape and appearance would be. Someday I'll research labyrinths and see if I can design one, I promised myself, but I'd never got around to it. So Moonfox's idea hit all the right buttons. I had intended to propose the idea to the assembled OBODies but it was late in the weekend and there were other things going on, and nearly everyone had left before I had a chance.

But Moonfox, who was staying an extra day, returned to the idea after everyone had gone, and having done all the necessary research, confidently took charge. I knew for sure it had all the right magic driving it when without any prompting he went straight to one of my two possible sites and suggested it would be ideal. It was flat, roundish, and strewn with white stones with few bushes or tussocks. I had almost rejected it because there was a small hole not quite in the middle of it with a mound of dirt beside it remaining from an attempt I had made years before to plant a tree, but I'd had to abandon it because I'd hit bedrock only six inches below the surface, and I'd never returned to it to fill it in. Now dry, shrivelled, black moss lined the hole waiting for winter rains to turn its fronds vivid green again, and spear grass matted the little mound beside it. I suggested filling it in, but Moonfox seemed delighted with it. In fact he was a-buzz with enthusiasm and totally possessed by the spirit of the thing, so I let him work his own magic, and away he went.

First he drew a ten metre diameter outer ring, the first of seven concentric rings about a foot apart, and within them a small spiral into what had naturally and logically now become the 'centre' - the hole I had thought unsightly, now a pleasingly off-centre focal point of the maze. A large weathered belichened old limestone rock immediately found its way - I honestly can't remember how! - to the top of the small mound of earth beside the hole, making an ideal residence for the spirit of the labyrinth, and the spiral led with a smoothly flowing sweep right into the little mossy hollow as naturally as a snake to her hole or the rabbit to his burrow. It was already beautiful.

Next we worked out an entry point, in the south, and then marked out the rings and spiral with small stones. Moonfox and I both felt a powerful Feng Shui current running into the circle from the west north west to the south west, about a metre and a half wide with a strong drag to it. Moonfox placed a complex double turn in the outer circuit at the place where it entered, and at once it seemed to staunch the flow, redirecting its powerful energies into the labyrinth itself, where it became part of the labyrinth's own energy system, its life force. Without any foreknowledge on the part of either of its builders, the labyrinth had located itself right on a vital and inexhaustible supply of nourishment and power, which in its raw undirected form had been wreaking energetic havoc in one corner of the Wyeuro gardens, where the trees were embattled and nothing would grow among them. It had found and captured its own dragon!

Other turns were dictated by tussocks of grass growing in the pathways - these we respected, building them in. We added others to balance the whole, and we began to fill in the outline with larger stones, about as big as an orange on average, some smaller, some larger.

By then the labyrinth was alive and raring to go. We performed an impromptu ritual to invoke the deva of labyrinths, the goddess, and the powers of earth, and to give thanks for the great gift of the labyrinth and all its blessings, and then we each took a turn to walk it. Already it was powerful experience. At each turn there was a new feeling, whole new attitudes, new ways of thinking, turn again and there's a new way of feeling time flow; turn again, and feel the shapes of thoughts in a whole new way. Peace in one section, laughter in another, rapid thought further in, vitality and healing all the way. In places your mind is filled with animal thoughts, elsewhere, you are hyper-aware of the subtle scents of the earth and grasses and the flow of animal bodies along their habitual tracks.

When you spiral into the centre it all speeds up and you go almost spinning into the mossy hollow to confront the rock in which the spirit dwells. It's an intensely personal connection.

Moonfox had to leave, so I kept filling the lines with buckets and wheelbarrows full of stones. When Stormwolf arrived after Lughnasadh I'd completed only three of the outer rings. Over the next couple of days we filled in another three. Stormwolf was the third person to walk the labyrinth. Now that it was gaining coherence with successive walkings and the filling out of the rings, we were both noticing significant psychological effects. Stormwolf saw me in the maze as a small child, and I saw shackles being removed from her feet and swallowed up by the hollow in which she stood facing the spirit rock.

It's quietly alive. Kangaroos with their joeys are drawn to it. One of my cats goes straight to the centre and sits there, communing with the rock. I'm often drawn there at sunset, to walk the maze in the most meditative time of the day.

It is a gift, not just to Wyeuro, but to all beings. I am thankful to be a part of it.



Water

I know now, listening deep,
water's note. I feel it cold
like a bell. I see it sleep
like a spirit aeons old.

Then the bell's yelp of speaking,
waking air up into lapping
leaps of water breaking
into ripples is like clapping

meaning down. I feel it glisten
and hear structured in water
sense, truth, and I listen.

I am the child, the wedding's daughter

and my mother is a sea.
Like an ocean she holds me.

vyvyan.





How to See Fairies by Vyryan Ogma Wyverne

*"When silver moon looks out and the day has fled
A little elfin man in a coat of red
Calls to all the faeries near
Telling them they may appear
All the mortal folk are asleep in bed."*



1. Get basic. It is a sensory perception, involving sensoria whose optimal functioning depends on the same sound health principles as any of our other sensoria. Get yourself in peak physical condition, for maximum performance from all your sense organs, including those specialised for the seeing and hearing of faeries.

2. Get less humanocentric. We are their 'faeries' as much as they are ours. This corrects unbalanced views of our world as a primary one with peripheral worlds that are somehow less real or less complete than ours existing in an inferior relation to ours. I am a guide to many faeries wishing to access our world, just as you are, or will be when you open your life to them. There are faeries who will guide you to their worlds. But in general faeries are not our helpers. They have rich full busy lives of their own and need our worlds to interface effectively with theirs for reasons of their own that we have yet to learn.

3. Get confident. There ain't no such thing as a 'muggles'. You are magical. You are constantly sensing and interacting with faeries. You can become conscious of this interaction and get more in control of it. If you're not aware of it, you may be losing critical power-struggles between you and beings of other realms, resulting in subtle disadvantages that could detract from your full enjoyment of life. Conversely, you may be unconsciously using your subconscious magic to repel, harm or manipulate innocent faeries, or to foil your own attempts to see them.

Where to start? Meditate. Practice austerities (but not so that it's no longer fun). Dance – ballet, for example, requires you to manage your energies elegantly for the benefit of the flying fairies of the air, jigging helps you loosen up and lighten up for the Celtic-style faerie, clog-dancing clears the way for conversation with pixies and earth faeries, the dwellers in hills and mountains. Sing or play a flute or lute. This combines controlled breath-work with the sensitizing of your own life-field to the aerial faeries' presence. Aerial faeries include many nature spirits, elves, human beings evolving on the aerial plane and many others. Corroboree brings in the Aborigine Tuckonies. Yoga, trance, tai chi: your own soul will know which methods are best for you.

'Faeries' is a term covering a wide range of beings who are not normally visible to most people. Their diversity appears even greater since many beings are able to project from great distances holographic faerie images which are actual ephemeral beings in their own right. Some of these are quite idiosyncratic, ranging from cartoon-like characters to visions of great beauty and saintliness, with myriads of varieties in between. So the perception of them must be highly selective – you decide which faeries you want to see and craft your lifestyle to incorporate your quest for them - or you can optimise the functioning of all your dormant sensoria to enable you to see as many different kinds as possible. They're not all fond of us, so this way is strictly for the foolhardy.

An easy and safe way is through atonement with nature and simultaneously with faeries, using the stereotypic faerie glen of children's literature as a focus. I call this the Dingly Dell method, and recommend it for its fun and safety. That's the method I'll be describing here.

The first thing to do is find a place or make one at least a square metre or so in area and tell the faeries it is theirs. Imagine a Tinkerbell-like faerie – she's not a bad icon for the type she represents, and will tell the others. Then work with this space while focussing on faeries.

If it's a pretty outdoor place with moss and wildflowers, water, sunshine and bushes full of birds surrounding it, or in a garden, that is wonderful. Expect to see them there, or feel them or hear them, and you'll be surprised at how quickly you begin to do so. Look for a peculiar sparkling quality in the sunlight or the air, an uplifting ambience full of happiness and pleasure.

Don't get too close too soon – let it be wild, and then the shyer types will feel safe there. This place will attract Tinkerbell-like faeries, elves of two or three kinds (all diminutive), pixies, gnomes, brownies, and many other kinds, including tiny human beings and many degrees of hybridism between them and the stranger types of faeries.

If it is inside you may feel inspired to decorate it. Be whimsical – they are. I made three 10" – 18" high papier maché mushrooms for three little men, identifying as a brownie, a leprechaun and one I know only from German folklore as *das M'annlein wer steht im Walde ganz still und stumm* (the little man who stood in the forest quite still and silent, who corresponds to 'the little elfin man' in the song quoted at the head of this article) who insisted on coming inside although I'd given them their own shrines outside, and it's one of the most active magical areas on Wyeuro. They are demanding, hilarious, gruff, grim and totally, profoundly good.

I started by yielding to whimsical impulses to give them coffee every morning when I make mine. I made a cauldron out of clay and fired it in my hearth. They showed their gratitude with an audible and visible display, one morning as I filled it for them.

"No, I tell you," declared the brownie after the first few times. "It just *does* happen. You watch." The others stared at the

empty cauldron intently. I glimpsed them just as I touched the cauldron, and heard them all gasp and exclaim as I lifted it out of their sight. They shouted excitedly when I put it down, freshly filled, among them, and then fell silent and awestruck, looking at it. Then they dipped in their cups and drank happily.

They take it for granted now, but the brownie is demanding his fresh clean linen shirt, which he says he's entitled to each year at Alban Athena, and I suppose I will have to make him one. He's earned it.

I often see them playing chess (or hear them fighting noisily over it), and *das ma'nlein* helps me with my comparative philology, speaking a quaint little ancient patois which is totally idiosyncratic and sometimes utterly hilarious.

With these, if you want fun, they'll give you that, crafted to suit you personally. If you want to understand them in a scientific way they'll help you with that. They become major benefactors in a shamanism that includes them. They are enlightened beings wise enough to be that versatile. Not all faeries are. Perhaps most importantly, they'll act as your guide and protectors in your exploration of the other realms of our planet. In traditional lore they are the wise counsellors. Refer to them if ever you feel out of your depth or afraid.

To see plant spirits you have to hang loose, be able to lose yourself in your gardening, study of botany, or enjoyment of nature, and engage as totally and innocently as a child with individual plants, leaves, flowers, and grains, focussing on plants you love, especially any are special to you from your earliest childhood. Wild-plant faeries are wild and sometimes hostile, but rarely dangerous. They may accuse all humans equally of poisoning our shared worlds and can be persuaded to listen while you teach them that some humans are loving and respectful and want to reverence their herb – thistle, bramble, thorn, whatever it might be. Gifts of small crystals, tiny plastic toys, silver tokens or coins, etc, buried or placed beside their plant, usually help to appease them, as they signal our willingness to care about them.

Plant spirits range in size from vast to tiny. Landscape spirits may shapeshift or project an archetypal animation representing a gigantic human, animal or dragon form. Forest, grassland, or dune spirits may appear as giants, antlered, hooved, or winged, or shapeshifting among many forms, as the Australian Aborigine spirits of place do. Trees as single species or as individuals, may project a variety of forms – blossom fairies, elf-like knee high diminutive, high-strangeness wood spirits and dryads like those often depicted in 19th Century art, or beautiful maidens and youths, modrons and men, crones and hoary old men full of laughter, or grim, loving or stand-offish according to the spirituality of their tree.

Laughing old hags coming out of bushes to clutch your arm and hug you are less scary than they sound. You come to love them as you get to know them. You come to sense the shyness of the leafy youths, the distrust of the pixies, and the fear of the tree woman, who holds herself visible for you with the utmost, heroic courage and leaves you awed and reverent with gratitude. And you get better at recognising their love, joy and gratitude, too.

Then there are the tiny ones, spirits of herbs, flowers and weeds. Fat-hen enchants you with a kindly fraternity and then suddenly reveals his tiny inner warrior, in shining armour, engaged in the deadly biochemical and spiritual warfare with other plants that takes place under and above ground in a garden. Comfrey schemes malevolently against couch grass, and lavender envenoms the soil around her roots to drive out invading neighbours. Nasty they are, but thrilling, because they are utterly, uncompromisingly real, and expressed in forms taken directly from images of human warfare, until you can no longer deny the connection and the importance of our understanding it. It's also Gaia's way of ensuring there is an interface across which ideational exchanges will be mutually intelligible. They're harmless to us because their nastiness is contained within their own contexts and their warriors are only illustrations or symbolic interpretations of their biochemical characters.

These help with gardening and are easily accessed by gardeners or botanists, working intently with plants. They begin to break through to us when we recall that despite their conflicts with human needs, weeds are worthy of respect. They reach us more freely when we allow at least some weeds and garden plants their fullness, not lopping off 'dead' flowers to prevent them seeding, or hocking them out when they go to seed. They like weedy untidy gardens and fill them with flowers, food, and beauty for those who like wildness.

For those who don't, clipped hedges, manicured lawns and disciplined weedless beds of gay annuals are just as full of faeries of other kinds. Elegant winged faeries help to perfect specimen blooms, having their own interests in their perfection, queenly nymphs glide among well tended shrubberies and little cosmic elves love strict mathematics and fussily tended knots and arbours, and even help to make the worst garden chemicals safer and more effective. Concrete and gravel spaces draw their own kinds of faeries, witches and gnomes as well.

Gnomes need help to focus themselves in your garden, and will take up residence in any stony structure that resembles or suggests to you the shape and character of a gnome. Profoundly wise cosmic beings, they are easily trapped in coercive relationships with people and so are shy. Treat them with great respect and kindness, and they will suss you out over a few years before slowly, sensitively beginning to become more active for you. Two or three are happier than one.

So, install your faerie shrine, dedicate it to faeries generally, and service it regularly, preferably every evening of the full moon. Spill clear water over a stone, place flowers or crystals in a dish of water placed so as to catch the moonbeams, or leave a hearty feast of cakes and coffee, mead and bread and butter, or cheese and bickies, distance yourself from it a bit, and watch what happens!

Vyvyan by Susan Jones

It was impossible to tell how old Vyvyan was, and perhaps it didn't matter. We were certain she was wise and ancient, and yet also a young girl, singing with a clear high voice and writing with a delicate rounded school-perfect script. To us, she was timeless and ageless. Perhaps she recognised this herself, but she also marked the milestones of her personal journey and in 2004 she wrote "The end of my forty-ninth year was like a death, and to celebrate my subsequent rebirth, I have taken my new name to allow myself to manifest my new spirituality, which has been profoundly changed by Druidry."

I knew her from when I became Mentor Co-ordinator in 2000 when, as Vivienne Manouge, she was already an OBOD Mentor. She soon extended her hand of friendship through her letters, always in that curly handwriting, often written on the reverse side of the paper from which she had used to make a handmade envelope, sometimes with a photograph of life on the mallee, perhaps of a tree, with its name.

Another certainty was that she was of the land she lived on and with. She was born and raised in Australia, a Druid, and also a Karadji, having taken initiations with Arundta Dreaming Spirits. She was of the Goanna moiety, and her main dreaming was the Western Grey Kangaroo. She enjoyed the company of the gods.

In 2003, I was to make my first (and only) visit to Australis, to attend the memorial in South Australia of one of my husband Ian's oldest colleagues and friends. Vyvyan was due to host the OBOD Australian Assembly that year, and very kindly changed the dates so that we could attend both. We had been told that it was worth going all the way from the UK JUST to meet Vyvyan, who was one of an already strong community of OBODies in Australia, many of whom I had got to know through mentoring. We were so keen to meet them all. We were also told that Vyvyan had a beard, just in case we were surprised. My husband has a long beard, and this proved relevant. Arriving at the address for the Assembly, five miles 'off the tarmac', then a bumpy ride down a deeply rutted rocky track, we found a small caravan with a broken window, a tin shed a little larger than a telephone box, another tin shed which was the size of a telephone box because that is what it was, it housed the solar-powered internet, and one chair. Not a person to be seen. Doubtful we were in the right place but where else could there be in the miles of empty mallee? From around the larger shed appeared a person with long hair, few teeth and yes, a beard. She smiled, walked up to us, said hello and immediately patted Ian fondly on the chin, saying 'I like your beard'.

The tin shed was the library where she pursued a life of independent scholarship. She had an avid interest in myths and the oral traditions generally. She was doing an off campus BA, with majors in Literary Studies and Religious Philosophy. She wrote essays and articles on oghams, poetry (occasionally published) and, of course, Faeries of the Wild Wild Moon, published the following year. Everything she wrote about the faerie realm in that book I have found to be true.

Vyvyan took Ian for a walk into the mallee, where she introduced him to eucalyptus and sandalwood trees, and other shrubs, with their medicinal and spiritual properties. She had a conversation with each one. She had a great knowledge of traditional medicine. Ian remembers the walk as if it was yesterday.

Her form of minimal consumerism combined with a 'love of all existences'. She kept a herd of mohair and dairy goats, and described the connection with each one as a love relationship. Gardens were not planted but tended from the plants which had found their way there. Animals were free to come and go. Except for a magnificent cockerel who was confined to a pen in the orchard. "I keep him only for his beauty," Vyvyan explained. She didn't mind that she often had to rebuild her tall mudbrick bread oven because 'Big Ed', a kangaroo, regularly mistook it for a challenger for his territory. The way Vyvyan lived was not so much a lifestyle choice as an adaptation to being the spiritual being she was. She continues to inspire me and many others as we navigate our own ways of living and being on this earth.

Vyvyan (right), with Keith MacNider, Susan Jones, Elkie White and Rafayard, in Vyvyan's orchard at the 2003 Australian OBOD Assembly. In the picture Vyvyan is without one of her handmade wool pointy bats. One of her last Facebook posts was about how the fairies kept stealing her bats. She will be able to claim them back now.





wyverne's words

G'day, Southern Hemisphere OBODies!

In this issue we give an ovation to our retiring editor, **Stormwolf**, who took over the job from **Carole Neilson** all those years ago. Carole established the original **SerpentStar** during the 1990s and Stormwolf has kept it vital and alive. It's a mighty act to follow, and I'll need all the help I can get from you, the readers - and that means **contributions!** We've already got nearly a hundred eager readers, ravenous for your insights, so get 'em down and **keep 'em coming!** Articles, poems, rituals, news, artwork, reviews of books or films, recipes, photography - anything of interest to **Bards, Ovates and Druids**, of all ages. If you've got an idea for a series of articles or a regular column or similar, email me at wyveuro@bigpond.com or snailmail to PMB2 Angaston SA, 5353 Australia. Also of interest are the urls of **good pagan websites** with details about them.

This issue bristles with goodies. Tiki sends us a story from the future, Carole begins a brave new column, and there are poems and articles for us all.

The serpent energy is rising, and **SerpentStar** wants to spread out wide its starry wings and fly!

wyvyan ogma wyverne

willy wagtail



welcome, pretty dancer,
with your flit and flutter of feather
and fanning of tail -
fantastical fantasy bird!!!!

did ever a sixties twister
cut and shuffle more sightly?
did ever a shimmy-shiny flapper
charleston as crisply as you?

charming your courteous curtesy,
dainty the curl of your claw,
flirty and flighty, and flouting
the staid laws of clerks -

what larks!

welcome and welcome again,
you fine-feathered flibbertigibbet,
wild dancer of aerial
joy-spinning sky dances,
spirit of gaiety

chirruping dance-charms
into the ear of the sky.

who could resist you
and not long to dance
and long to be joyful like you?

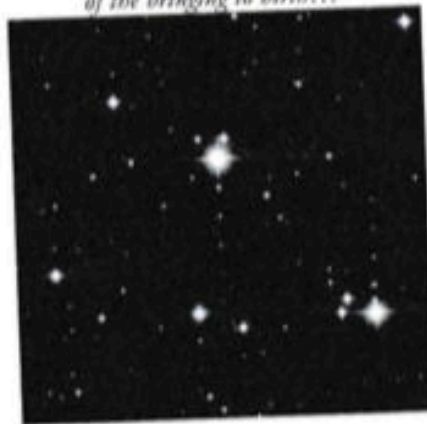
spirited, sprightly and spry -
welcome wild wagtail, i cry!

wyverne

sometimes we suffer...

sometimes that ache that howls
through the long cold echoing
corridors of space,
like the roar of the yawning birth
of our starry, streaming,
strenuous Dreaming,
opens our mouths to be born,
pushes like a feisty fist into our lives
in order to become...

it rages in ritual and rhythm and rut
corrupts our best efforts
deforms our fond phantoms of dignity and truth
cripples our bodies and thwarts our desires
until everyone shares -
atom and galaxy, beast, soul and spirit -
in the pain of the bringing to birth of the pain
of the bringing to birth of the pain
of the bringing to birth...



and in the out-of-our-control, incomprehensible,
rammed-jammed-packed-full immensity
of even the emptiest spaces
comes yelling down the tunnels of time
of its own engendering
all the ringing triumph of the gladness
of the mother in travail

therefore we carry our sacred pain
like a child of a mother,
and in our participation,
when we are in pain,
we are both mother and child.
even when whimpering, craven and surrendered,
we are most numinous,
potent, mysterious and strong.

wyverne

verne's words



wyvern's words

G'day, Southern Hemisphere OBODies!
Welcome to the Lughnasadh issue of *SerpentStar*. And what a Lughnasadh! With drought in the south and flooding rains in the North of Australia, it's been an interesting start to the year - plenty of work for us Druids to do. In the olden days, Druids were expected to be able to moderate the weather, optimising conditions for crops, and ensuring that all went well in the land, so if you're actively working magically in your circles for the healing of the climate, in groups or alone - keep up the good work!

SerpentStar is growing, servicing the whole of the Southern Hemisphere now, not just Australia and the Pacific, so we're looking forward to hearing more from the rest of this half of the planet.

We've got a bumper crop of contributions this time, with articles, poems, and news from all over. Carole's column is a knock-out! Cherry invites us on an exciting Shaman quest, and Elkie gives us a thoughtful review of a book that might deepen our understanding of the ogham. Poems, puzzles and pictures and something for the junior bards, odates and druids as well.

Thanks to everybody who took the time to write up their thoughts to share with us all - and keep those contributions coming in!



wyvern's words

G'day, Southern Hemisphere OBODies!
Welcome to the Samhuinn issue of *SerpentStar*, and a dry, dusty Samhuinn it is in this part of the world, where the drought-stricken Murray is in a critical condition. It could easily survive such droughts, which have always occurred cyclically, were it not for the pollution - but many positive changes are happening in our land and resources management, and the many improvements, are worth contemplating. Worldwide it seems to me, especially at the community level, where much greater tolerance exists among groups of people with widely differing opinions about land-use, people seem to me to be getting better at getting along with each other. And I don't think I'm looking at the world through rose-coloured glasses.

Samhuinn is the beginning of the old Celtic Year and a time to take stock and look over our resources, count our blessings, farewell the past, deliver up our blessed dead and prepare to face the darkness and coldness to come. Turning inwards, along with the energies of the earth, we are ready to contemplate the blessings and beauty of the night time of the day, winter of the year, which is now almost upon us. Spiritually we appreciate the cold, dark, still beauties of our mental, emotional and spiritual life as well. May yours be a blessed Samhuinn, with loads of good Halloween fun!

SerpentStar is proud to present a fine array of reading for us all again this issue: poetry and ritual wisdom from New Zealand, a splendid long poem to stir your soul, magnificent cover art, a ballad from the deep, dark past; news, scientific and sacred, interesting articles, all the regulars, and a Samhuinn feature, all full of the right spirit. So get stuck into it, and I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed putting it together!



Animism

by vyvyan ogma wyverne

There are two kinds of animism: one that might be called 'intuitive' animism, which intuitively the in-dwelling spirit or anima and of every material and hence its awareness, without worrying too much about how or why it exists; and one that might be called 'scientific' animism, which looks for ways in which awareness may be coded into the very structures of matter itself. Intuitive animism deals with dryads, devas, and the like, while scientific animism looks for sentient awareness in the fabric of the material universe itself. It is this scientific kind of animism that I'm going to consider in this essay. Established belief is changing as atomic research advances. Within atoms we find all the logic and energy necessary for both life and intellect. By considering the implications of finding them there, I intend to show that each object has its own form of awareness, however different from human awareness that might be.

Most current scientific debate about awareness, assumes that it belongs exclusively to biologically living beings, a product of metabolism, but no one can verify that. We have no map of mind; we can't map our own 'ego boundaries', and we can only deduce awareness in others from behaviour we can understand because it resembles our own. An insect flees danger, so it must be aware. Plants react biochemically, just as we do, so they must be aware; but stones, buildings, computers, statues, pots and pans? We can't measure their responsiveness, but are they aware? And if they are, what are they aware of and how does it register?

The answer might be found in the infinitely small, in the way matter is formed from atoms. Sub-atomic science shows that the atom is a complex, highly evolved being. The particles comprising the nucleus are themselves formed of richly detailed components. It is no longer possible to believe that complexity diminishes with smallness. The infinitely small is almost certainly infinitely complex.

Furthermore, atoms are immensely ancient beings whose evolution began in the very early stages of creation, steeped in a dense fabric of radiance rich in information about the myriad events that generated them. Over the aeons they have accumulated a vast array of impressions that are inherently 'meaningful', in the sense that they have logic and sequence. The repercussions or radiance of an event, say, a collision among neighbouring atoms, leave impressions that have an inner logic, encoding the cause-and-effect, action-and-reaction consequences of the event. In a sense, all radiance is an information-rich account of its own genesis.

Matter is dense, highly structured, infinitely detailed, stabilised energy. Perhaps it is the ever-increasing intensity of this aeons-long accumulation of impressions of cosmic events that creates density and then shapes the material energy of subatomic particles into such complex forms, with new events continually adding detail. But there's no reason to doubt that each atom contains in an organised way its memories of a whole universe's lifetime of cosmic and local events.

Psychologists acknowledge that ideas, especially memories, are energised, with memories of high impact events more highly charged than those of minor or commonplace events. As events vary in intensity and complexity so do the energy levels of the impressions they leave. So subatomic memories would behave like variously charged particles. In a complex memory made up of unequally charged details in logical array, there is something very like an electronic system activated and animated by potential difference, with logic channelling the flow. The energy of the most

ancient events is perhaps still restless within the atoms of our time, and restless energy is the very foundation of life.

The way the deep inner components of atoms are organised gives rise to the qualities of the material they form *en masse* - qualities our human senses interpret as colour, smell, taste, and texture, and the whole array of more subtle sensations, and which we measure as weight, density and radiance.

Naturally these qualities of atoms filter and condition new impressions in highly logical ways i.e., atoms too interpret their perceptions through the structures and qualities of their material organisation. These are intellectual processes, the very foundation of intelligence. Each particle of an atom is unique, and so are its memories. It is radiant and charged, and cannot associate with any other particle that hasn't a compatible radiance and charge. Like repels like, opposites attract, and many more subtle laws determine how clusters of particles form. This ensures that within an atom, organisation is logically determined, and it also ensures that whole atoms cluster together or repel each other in logical patterns. Their surroundings respond to them logically. The same strenuous logic twists and wrestles molecules into shape, and drives the formation of all the visible forms of matter from dust-motes to giant stars, or galaxies or even whole cosmoses - and everything in between. All are composed of tiny ever-evolving intelligences pooling their resources in organised, 'smart' ways. It is unreasonable to assume that they aren't alive, sentient and intelligent.

Medical science is currently focusing on new evidence of the consciousness of human body parts other than the brain. Our hands learn tasks, our livers respond intelligently to metabolic disturbances and the emotionality of our gut contributes to our pleasure in eating a hearty meal. More telling still, organ transplant recipients sometimes report that personality traits may be transferred along with the organ, including artistic or musical talent, or an interest in sport or politics.

Some species of fish and birds exhibit a shared intelligence in migrating, flying in formation, and in responding to new conditions and learning new patterns of behaviour. In this kind of intelligence, the animating thoughts occur outside the many widely separated bodies of the thinker - or in all of them simultaneously. The brain of planet earth's higher animals seems to be not so much 'the' organ of intelligence as a unique specialisation of the intelligence generated in the memories of subatomic particles. Other organs have different kinds of intelligence, not less; and other species, without highly developed brains, have different kinds of awareness, not accessible to us, but just as vital to the planet whose organs they are.

So there are good scientific reasons for believing in the intelligent awareness, however unlike our own, of every object, substance or place. Every quark or galaxy of matter is densely packed with sequentially structured, intricately organised memory impregnated energy, animated by logically channelled energies which are the foundations of intellect and life. Unique though we are, we can begin to believe in a ubiquitous mind which we share with the trees and the moon, the stones and the oceans and this magical planet we are part of.

LikelyLinks

GATA

The Goddess Association in Australia is a not for profit membership organisation which is committed to bringing women together, united in the timeless wisdom and lore of Goddesses
www.goddessassociation.com.au

NZ Spirit Web Directory
<http://magicalpath.nz/dir/pagan>

PAGANZ

A place to meet and talk with people, to find Pagan groups, Pagan shops, Pagan services, and other Pagan websites.
www.paganz.co.nz

PAN

Pagan Awareness Network

A not for profit educational association working to correct misinformation, encourage religious tolerance, and foster the growth of the Pagan community.
Contact: David Garland 0412427545
<http://www.paganawareness.net.au>



magic words

by Vyvyan Oisma Wyverne

It's the chief pride and pleasure of a good bard to use well-polished words, each like a gem so that every utterance, whether poetic, magical or mundane, will be endowed with the right kind of magic, spruce and clean and clear as the first daisy in spring! So how does one begin?

Break or cut a small branch off a tree (with the tree's permission, of course), or just imagine one. Choose a good straight stoutish one about as thick as your thumb and as long as your forearm.

Call it a stick. Look at it, its shape, colours and textures, touch it's bark or woody surface, smell it, taste it, tap it against your hand, against another small branch, against something hard, something soft, whilst it through the air and listen to the sounds it makes. How do you feel about it? Pleased? Or disatisfied? Neutral? Does it feel like a friendly stick, or a stern, punitive stick? What images pass through your mind as you hold, touch, smell, taste, tap and whilst it about in the air? Think about what uses might be found for it - nice ones, nasty ones...

Now call it a rod. Can you feel any difference in your subtle responses to this piece of wood now that you've uttered this new name over it? Does the 'rod' feel different, inspire different feelings, attitudes or ideas in you, or does it motivate you to find different uses for it? You might think of a craftsman's measuring rod, part of a machine or chair or wooden rack of some sort, or is it a rod of discipline as in 'spare the rod and spoil the child'?

What happens if you call it a baton, a staff, or even just a piece of wood, for that matter?

Whatever differences you notice in your response to that piece of wood in your hand, according to what name you called it by, are magical effects - the effects of the magical power of the words you uttered.

Now try calling your piece of wood a wand. Perhaps you can feel the subtle changes in the energy of the wand, the sudden access of awe that happens when you do. For most people this exercise demonstrates not only that all words are magical, but also that some words are 'more magical' than others.

Well, maybe 'more magical' isn't quite right if all things are magical.

When the magic of a thing, event, word, etc, sustains the prevailing or 'mundane' enchantment, it is scarcely noticeable, but nonetheless just as powerful in its own way as the magic of one that sustains a perceptibly extraordinary enchantment. School uniforms, fashionable hairstyles, conventional décor, mass media advertising, and myriad small details and broad trends sustain very different enchantments, but they are within the range we call mundane.

Normally it is not unmagical, it is only that we are used to it. We quickly notice any significant variation in the enchantment of everyday life, and we often go out of our way to bring about variations that people will notice - by our choice of decorations for our homes or the fashions we adopt in clothing and grooming, the slang we use, our lifestyle choices. Every detail of everything is magical.

And so of course every word is magical in that each utterance generates its own enchantment, mediates the enchantment of the utterer's inner personality and modifies the existing enchantment of everyday reality. Think again of that word stick. Let it have all its pleasant associations in your mind and all the unpleasant ones too. Think of words that sound like it but mean something else - to stick to something, to stick something into something, or to stick out, a stick of licorice, incense, out in the sticks, quick-stick! Chopsticks, digging sticks, musical claspsticks; and perhaps you had a strict school-teacher who was after all, not a bad old stick - and as many as you can find. Notice your own reaction to each of these associations, and also try to imagine what other's might be.

If they please you, let your mind roll on, explore the ideas and feelings, attitudes and inspirations that play about and feed and energise or weaken and distort your idea of a stick. Here you may begin to feel yourself instinctively crafting the magic of your word 'stick'. Everyone does this instinctively - it's just a matter of catching yourself at it, the process becomes much more effective as you consciously begin to participate in it.

Your word 'stick' will be quite different from anybody else's word 'stick', and the differences, while not important in ordinary conversation, can be major contributors to (or detractors from) the good enchantment you wish your word to cast.

If the associations don't please you, consider why. Enquire gently, ask the word, ask your own soul, ask the dawn. Perhaps you might quickly enough dismiss your fear of its punitive connotations - you know it won't be used for that. But feel the shift in the magic of the stick while it is in your magical hand as you reassure it, yourself, the dawn, and all those around you that 'this stick will never be used to inflict pain'. Actually say it out loud, in the words of your choice. This will take the potential subliminal threat from your word.

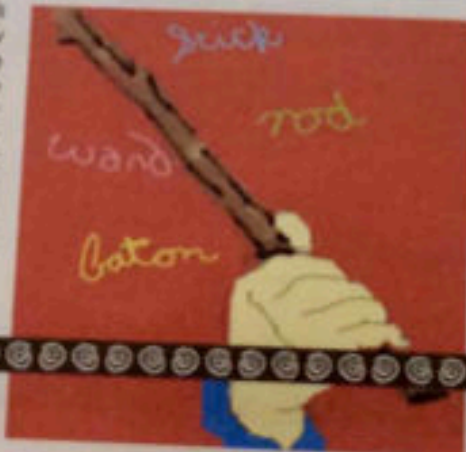
If some association of the word annoys you, and you don't quite know why or even what the association is, feel yourself pass the annoying part of the word's enchantment over to your subliminal wisdom, where your wiser self can deal with it in dreams or while you are preoccupied with other things.

You might visualise your annoyance, or the annoying part of the enchantment, or both if they seem to be inseparable, moving from one place on the altar of your being to another place, perhaps out of sight.

This will ensure that the annoyance will not distort the enchantment of your word, whether you are using it in mundane conversation or in a magical charm. It will also affect the deva of the word, so that it is that little bit clearer for everyone else who utters their own version of it, and ultimately brings a bright clear blessing, a pure and wholesome enchantment to the object it names.

That's just one glimpse of the magic of words. If you want to participate consciously in the crafting of your own vocal magic. You can vary this exercise so as to purify and heal and enhance the enchantment of any word that holds your attention - try words you use often, words you hear often, words that worry you, or get on your nerves, or stimulate and interest you, and new words that excite or thrill you, and before long perhaps you'll find that, after all, the words are listening!

If everything is magical, no one thing can be more magical than another. Just as everything has its spiritual dimension, so too everything has its magical dimension, its potency and power to act and react in relation to all other objects and events, and is magical to repletion.





G'day, Southern Hemisphere OBODies!
Welcome to the Beltane 2008 issue of *SerpentStar*. Beltane finds us still drought-stricken in this part of the world, with the River Murray at a low ebb and strict water rationing in place to take us - we hope - through the coming hot, dry summer. And yet there are flowers - like the one photographed for us by Carole at Wyeuro a month ago. May your Beltane be filled with the beauty and fragrance of flowers.

SerpentStar's in-box has been sadly quiet this time, but there's still plenty of reading in this issue. In particular, you're invited to join Carole, Wayne, Nellie and me at Wyeuro Grove for our first serious attempt to work in harmony with the aborigine spirit people, the native animals and plants, and the spirit of the land to bring about reconciliation and healing between the indigenous peoples and species and the exotic invaders. Not being willing to 'appropriate' aboriginal heritage 'inappropriately', we've been slow to make the necessary connections with this land's first custodians, conscious that aboriginal cultures are still deeply traumatised, though rallying admirably under difficult conditions. Now the elders are asking us to read and understand their stories, and interact in vivid and vital ways with their music, art and dance. So continuing the aboriginal theme, there's a traditional dream-time story as well.

SerpentStar needs your thoughts, talents and art works, photographs, snippets and anecdotes, quotes and quips - all are welcome. Email them to me at wyeuro@bigpond.com

or post to: vyvyan ogma wyverne,

PMB2,

Angaston SA 5353.

Have a BLESSED BELTANE!!!!



G'day, Southern Hemisphere OBODies!

Welcome to the Lughnasadh 2009 issue of *SerpentStar*. Our planet has traveled one more quarter of the way round her spiral path in space and her southern half has been sun-baking while her northern half chills out in the shade. When it's been too hot to work, I've been doing bits of both, topping up my tan and sipping cool drinks in the shade. After the latest heat-wave, I almost envy those of you who live further down in the cool south and spend your summers amid lush greenery! *SerpentStar* has some fine reading for you this time, and magic is afoot, because quite by coincidence(?) two of our articles are calling our attention to a very special sacred place in Australia: William Rickett's Sanctuary where two cultures meet in a unique and astonishingly beautiful way. There's a druid's look at our amazing planet, and there are some timely poems and wise and funny words, as well.

Talking of poems, it's a long time now since Southern Echoes came out, show-casing our best poets, artists, photographers and creative writers, and with all the talent that's out there, isn't it time for another anthology?

And what about music? More about that within! One reader has mentioned small errors occurring in the crossword puzzle clues, and as a result has been recruited to proof-read this and future puzzles, in order to remedy this. (Serves her right for complaining! ☺). Nellie and I hope crossword fans will find this one problem free!

Have a BLESSED LUGHNASADH!!!!

wyverne/1

The ghost brumbies

wyverne

Way up on the slope of the mountain high,
The stallion neighed his warrior cry,
No answer came to his challenge clear,
The mares stood quietly, tense with fear.

The wind from the east brought odours soft
And the evening clouds went by aloft.
Yet the stallion pawed the rocky ground
And neighed once more - the awesome sound

Was echoed again through the valley steep
Till it died away in the silence deep.
For it wasn't a sound or a scent or a sight
But the Sense of Danger that caused their fright.

They did not see in the darkening bush
Where, noiselessly should'ring their rifles to push
Their way within firing range five strong men
Homed in on the sound as he neighed again.

Five shots rang out, five mares fell dead,
Each with a bullet wound in her head.
Five more died ere the herd could flee
Then the foals and the colts and the stallion, hel

On a Samhuinn eve at the close of the day
You can find the place if you climb that way,
For you'll hear that stallion's warrior cry
And you'll see those mares go galloping by.

They cast no shadows, they seem to glide
No echoes resound from the mountainside
Though their hoof-beats pound in the twilight grey.
They wheel and they turn and they gallop away!

For the brumby spirit is wild and free,
Not vermin, but creatures of dignity,
And though they are persecuted still,
They have not gone yet, and they never will!

THE RITUAL AT WYEURO GROVE



Preparation: Meditation and research concerning an endangered species. Each participant is given a sprig of mycoporum (pictured left), a local native herb which promotes harmony across wide and difficult cultural boundaries.

Opening: - There is our usual brief opening section giving peace to the quarters, welcoming guests and attuning to the Sacred Grove and the Spirits of the Land.

(Ritual Begins)

South: I proclaim this Ceremony of Reconciliation and Calling Back the Animals in the Grove of Wyeuro.

East: We ask for the blessing of the Aborigine people and spirits whose land this once was, who are still here, our neighbours and friends in the Invisible Worlds.

North: For the love and respect and reverence we feel, we call upon the Black Crow, acknowledged to be a bird of power, wisdom and high authority, well-loved by us all, to bless and guide us in this ceremony of healing.

All (the incantation): Black Crow, Black Crow, Black Crow, Black Crow,

We call to you, we call to you, we call to you, we call to you,

Call you to our sacred circle, call you to our sacred circle...

West (dances a crow dance with wand while all others chant while playing on sticks and drum. West discharges wand's energy into altar stone.)

All others: Black Crow, Black Crow, Black Crow, WELCOME!

(Brief meditation.)

South: We are now going to call the Bearded Dragon. (Dances in the bearded dragon spirit while **All others** play on sticks and drum while chanting or singing above (crow) incantation modified for bearded dragon. Then **South** discharges wand into altar stone while **All others** chant the name of the animal and then cry "WELCOME!" **South** returns to place. Pause for a time of dynamic visualisation, in which you imagine the creature abundant in its habitat again, returning to its old homelands, finding them healthy and pleasant again. Try to smell it, see it, hear it, see its tracks, smell its scent, sense its traces, many of them, feeding, breeding, becoming plentiful again. Then **All** sing or chant the Sad song - appropriate changes are made for the Mallee Frog, Sooty Owl and Murray Cod when their turn comes. Begin slowly, speeding up, accompanied by digging sticks and bodhran.)

Sad we are, sad we are Bearded Dragon
Hear us please from your place in the stars
Hear us calling you, hear us pleading
Please don't leave us, sad we are!

Please come back, we are sorry, we are sorry
Please come back to your native lands
Please come back Bearded Dragon woman
Please come back Bearded Dragon man.

See the bikes leaving, see the land recovering.
Food is plentiful once again!
Safety too in the returning undergrowth -
Come back Bearded Dragon, come back, DO!

(chanting) Come back, come back, come back, come back, come back, come back, DO!
(Brief meditation, silently communicating peaceful, caring thoughts to the spirit beings.)

South: Thank you for hearing us. We offer you our blessings and goodwill.
(After all participants have danced in this way, the ceremony is closed in the normal way.)

THE END

The Red Wattle Bird

vyvyan ogma wyverne

A red wattle bird came and perched on a tree
In the garden so gay on a morning in spring
Though the weather was fine and the air fresh and free
Oh his song was as sad as a bird's song could be!

For he gave a great cry and his body was wracked
By the harsh, hacking sobs that came out of his beak!
Oh it gripped him, this grief, oh it wrung and it hacked
Till his whole soul was in it! I then heard him speak:

"Oh I see by your size and the set of your head
And your legs long and straight and your arms swinging free
That you are not a bird, you're a human," he said,
"It's a very good thing that you're listening to me.

For I want you to know, ye who sorrow and grieve,
That there's sorrow enough in this poor, suffering earth
And there's sufferer enough, if you'll only believe,
To shed all the tears that that sorrow is worth.

Do you see on each cheek these long wattles so red,
Running down from each eye for all people to see?
They are tears - tears of blood - that I constantly shed
For the woes of this world as I flit tree to tree.



They're the tears of the world, of the lonely and sad,
And the sorrows of lovers betrayed and forlorn,
And the pity and grief for the sick and the mad
And the tied and tormented, the tortured and torn.

So now you may rest - leave the sorrow to me,
With my constant red tears and my great racking sob,
I'm far better at it than you'll ever be
And what's more, I enjoy it - I should; it's my job!

Then he spread out his wings and he fluttered and flew
And he plundered the honey from blossom and bloom,
Then he sobbed and he cried and he bade me adieu,
And he stole - without asking - my misery and gloom!

So list to his song, O ye people of earth,
To his harsh, sobbing cries that so often are heard,
Our job's to be happy - all pleasure and mirth,
Leave sorrow and gloom to the Red Wattle Bird!



wyvern's words

G'day, Southern Hemisphere OBODies!
Welcome to the Samhuin 2009 issue of SerpentStar.

This is the time of harvest home, the third harvest of the traditional Celtic year. The first was the hay, the second the grain and the third the meat. Of course conditions in these far-flung lands that our ancestors' explorations and outward urges have brought us to are not always the same as the ones that existed in their cold climate homelands, and times have changed.

Most people are no longer in close contact with the primary sources of their food. The preserving of seasonally available produce is now done for most of us by the increasingly complicated food industry and food-related industries.

Our prayers, rituals and meditations can help to heal and prosper these industries. Hasn't it been proved scientifically that gratitude and love can powerfully affect the healthfulness of water? So wouldn't our attitudes, crafted lovingly for the good of all beings, benefit food, farming and the associated industries too? And isn't there room for improvement in these industries, in their ethics, their logistics, their values and their healthfulness for humanity and the environment?

It's time to invite and honour the dead as well, especially those who remain near us as ghosts. It's a fairly time too, so leave out bread and milk for them on Samhuin night. This isn't just for fun - we need to know our neighbours and they need to know us. Our gifts let them know that we are fairy-friendly people and they value us for it.

I've been whinging about the drought for the last year or so, and at last it has rained, at least a little bit, so hopefully we're on the mend.

We've got a packed issue for you this time. A photo story takes us to the beach, there's a wonderful study of OZ animal magic, Elkie shows us around the site for the coming gathering, and we have poetry, articles and items of interest for all.

Have a BLESSED SAMHUIN!!!!

wyvern/1

The Old Border Ballads

wyvern's words

Druidry in the southern hemisphere does two things - through ritual magic it connects us with the new lands we have come to and their spirituality, strange and yet familiar as that might be to us, and it connects us with our own tribal roots.

The Aborigine rock group Yothu Yindi told Australians in no uncertain terms that 'you gotta listen to your tribal voice' and although they were talking mainly to Aborigine people, these are words that apply equally well to non-indigenous people - perhaps to everyone in the world. In Druidry we hear our tribal voices speaking, often enough in Gaelic, or in the lilting dialects of Scotland the north of England, such as we hear in the border ballads.

For some of us, these are our race memories, coded in our genes, inherited from ancestors who were bards or knights or witches. For some they are soul memories, reconnecting us to past-lives that left us yearning for the old ways. For others their charm is in their value as memories, cherished for the enduring inspiration of their beauty, or as poetry or art, which indeed they are to anyone enthralled by the imagery and artistry of the tales they tell.

Here's one of my favourites.

Hear the melody at:

The Witch of the Westmoreland.

Pale was the wounded knight,
that bore the rowan shield,
loud and shrill the ravens' cries
as they feasted on the field.

Saying, 'Black water cold and clear
will never staunch your flood,
There's none but the maid of the winding mere
can save your dear heart's blood.'

He said, 'Course weel, my brindled hound,
and fetch me the mountain hare,
who's coat is like the west-water
or as white as a lily fair.'

It said, 'Green moss and heather bands
will never staunch your wound,
there's none but the witch of the westmoreland
can make ye hale and sound.'

So fly free your good grey hawk
to gather the goldenrod,
and turn your steed in to the clouds
above yon gay green wood.'

And dark was the paling moon
when the shadow passed him by -
high overhead the grey hawk flew
when he heard the howlet cry.

Saying, 'Why do your ride this way,
and wherefore come ye here?'
'I seek for the witch of the westmoreland
that lives in the winding mere.'

'Then turn, turn your stallion's head
till its red mane flies in the wind
and ride before the moon goes by
or the dark clouds fall behind.'

'Then wear ye by Aikwater,
by the bitter brake thorn way.'
Below the cleft o' the kirkstane path
the winding water lay.

He said, 'Lie down, my brindled hound,
and rest, my good grey hawk,
and you, my steed, may graze thy fill
for I must dismount and walk,

only come when you hear my horn,
and answer swift the call

for I fear ere the sun goes down this day
that ye'll serve me best of all'

And then down to the water's brim
he bore the rowan shield
and the golden rod he has thrown in
to see what the lake might yield

And withal she rose from the lake
and fast to him did steer,
one half the form of a maiden fair
with a jet black mare's body.

Then long, loud and shrill he blew
and the hound was by his side,
high overhead the grey hawk flew
and swiftly he did ride,

Saying, 'Course weel, my brindled hound,
and fetch me the jet black mare!

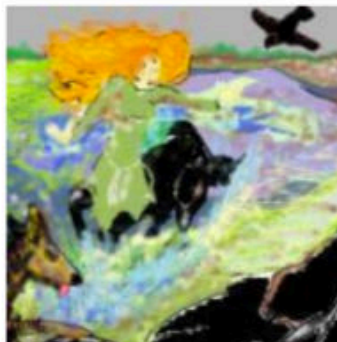
Stoop and strike, my good grey hawk!
Bring me the maiden fair!

She said, 'Pray sheath your sil'ry sword,
lay down your rowan shield,
for I see by the briny blood that flows
that you're wounded in the field.'

And she appeared in a gown of the velvet green
bound round with a silver chain,
and she has kissed him ainst and twice
and three times round again.

Then she bound his wounds with the golden rod
as fast in her arms he lay,
and he has woken hale and sound
with the sun high in the day.

She said, 'Ride with your brindled hound at your heels,
and your good hawk on your hand,
for there's none can harm a knight who's kin
wi' the Witch o' the Westmoreland'



wyvern's words

G'day, Southern Hemisphere OBODies!
Welcome to the Imbolc 2009 issue of SerpentStar.

Spring has sprung, the grass has riz - that's certainly true here at Wyvern! We've had a satisfying amount of rain at last and now the wild flowers are beginning to bloom. You can almost see the energy rising in the land, and feel the pulse of life quickening after the coldness of winter.

SerpentStar is starting to realise an important role it has begun to play in Southern Hemisphere druidry, in keeping us all aware of each other and where at least some of our collective and individual foci are. It's an exciting time for druidry as worldwide we seem to be actively seeking our identity, celebrating our diversity while nevertheless finding and confirming our unity, the coming into harmony of our many contributing parts. Being in the Southern Hemisphere does set us apart. Being druids unites us with druids worldwide. Being antipodean distinguishes us. In honouring both the distinctiveness and the continuity of our Druidries we can be aware of ourselves co-creating our collective identity as it comes into being. When we know who we are, we'll understand better what to do.

The one thing that makes SerpentStar such a help in understanding our identity is the reader input. In poems, our souls speak to each other, in articles we share what's on our minds, photo-essays and reports let us share visions and events, through links to interesting urls we share our wider interests. Let's hear more from you - email a paragraph, poem or idea to me anytime - just mention SerpentStar in the subject.

In this issue as usual we have poems and articles images and ideas to inspire and delight you and enrich your experience of life as druids, bards and ovates. Thank you everyone who was brave enough and generous enough with your time and energy to share your own personal magic with us all.

Have a BLESSED IMBOLC!!!!

wyvern/1

SerpentStar

Newsletter for members of
The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids
in the Southern Hemisphere.

Imbolc 2009



Early wildflowers at Wyvern



wyvern's words

G'day, Southern Hemisphere OBODies!
Welcome to the Beltane 2009 issue of SerpentStar.

Spring has sprung, the grass has riz - that's certainly true here at Wyvern! We've had a satisfying amount of rain at last and now the tiny but exquisite wild flowers are blooming. You can see the energy rising in the land, and feel the pulse of life revelling in the warmth.

As for our Druidry, it's a time for networking: suddenly Druids of all kinds are reaching out to find each other, make contact, compare notes and get together on projects and activities as they never have before. 'Get involved' is the watch-cry! Even if you can't physically attend, look for each other on-line. To help you, there's a new feature: a regular perusal of links and venues on-line. -see p3 (opp.).

SerpentStar is evolving. So is its editor. At the advice of our printer, the Librarian at the Swan Reach Area School, SerpentStar is now being prepared in Microsoft Publisher instead of Word. There's a big megabyte difference, and the ed is on a steep learning curve, but it's a much easier programme to work in and more flexible. SerpentStar's rather proud of this issue. We'd love your feedback.

Headlines this issue: whew, where to start???

Damh the Bard visits Adelaide. And guess what? I myself, yes, me, this lizard soul of mine, is appearing on the same programme with Damh, Wendy Rule and other big Pagan names. See p.7.

Australian OBOD member Billie Dean has made a wonderful DVD, featuring our chosen Chief, there's a timely warning from the Mayans, regular columnist Julie Mills invites us to share our rituals with the ancestors and we have our finger on the international Pagan pulse with a lively report on the immensely successful first International Celtic Gathering in Canada.

And much more more. Read and enjoy!!!!

Have a BLESSED Beltane

wyvern/1

Hope for a Miracle

Often a hunter in mountainous wilds, trained from his boyhood to feel like a man alone in the woods with his rifle still hot and a carcass before him still shuddering out its life with the blood welling out of its wounds, has gazed on a morning of beauty sublime when the sun as it rose made the deep valley glow back-lighting in splendour a single wild beast broad-antlered, wise-muzzled and proud in his stance who deeply communed with him there as he stood and held in his sights the most vulnerable spot in the flat of his skull right between his two eyes all ready to fire, his trigger-touch taut, but then paused, took a breath, and lowered his gun not firing, but standing admiring instead. . . And was it the sunshine, or was it the beast, or was it some spirit, some devil or faun, made him feel in his heart a miraculous change? till he swore on his rifle that never again would he hunt the wild creatures to kill them for sport and he knew as he vowed he was more of a man than any destroyer of wild dignity - and thenceforth became a protector of life in nature's wild places, and all her wise beings.

Australia's great forests have no noble stags, their wildlife too small for the game-hunter's sights. The birds fly away, they don't try to commune when the great roaring trucks with their chainsaws come through

devastating for profit, not kudos or sport, vast tracts of wild habitat. Trees have no mouths. Loggers see livelihood, work to be done, where tall forest giants whose bodies are wood whose blood is sweet sap, whose brains are bright leaves

whose guts are deep roots, whose fingers strive deep, are in their broad sights, fore-doomed to be pulped. they hear nothing plead, they hear nothing scream except their own chainsaws, their howling machines. The rare Tassie devils flee, now dispossessed, not valued and loved in their wild scenery but poisoned and sick in this vast devastation. The spirits of wilderness, fairies and fauns, Aborigine ghosts, and dryads and elves mere tricks of the light to those unseeing blades, for the people who plan this are too far away in their high office buildings or soaring jet planes polluting the air as they fly overseas to make their cruel deals to supply more wood pulp

for paper and products that just make more waste for out-of-touch cities to choke themselves on polluting their land and their waters and air. They can't see the dying, they can't hear the trees fall roaring like giants cut down in their prime, the cracking of limbs and the tearing of guts that spells the sad death of these wilderness gods.



Yet miracles happen: the man on the mountain has lowered his rifle, respecting the stag. The day might come, and it might come soon, that 'Guns' of another sort cease to destroy and learn to respect with a life-giving awe this noble intelligence, sacred and wise, that touches them, wakens them, makes them real men, who'll lay aside chainsaws and screeching machines forever, respecting, protecting the homes of the uncounted myriad creatures and plants from tall forest giants to small dasurids from yet unknown fungi to devils and birds and all the rainforests and wild places green will be for all time safe, protected and free.

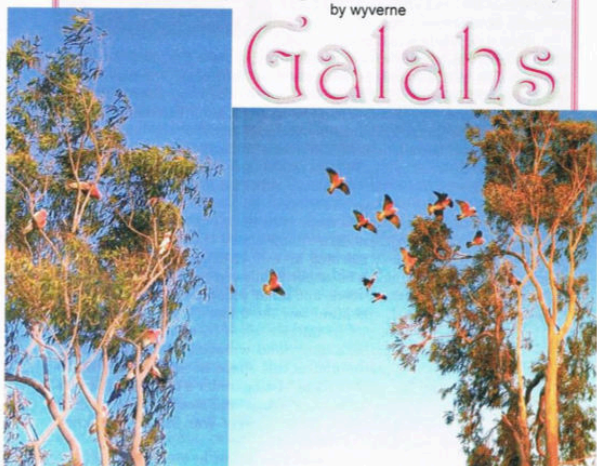
by vyvyan ogma wyverne

to the lemon scented gum
in the evening light they come -
the galahs! and just as sunset gilds the sky
there's a poignant sort of hush,
then a sudden rosy flush
stains each feather with a deeper, richer dye.

how they revel in the glow!
turning right and left to show
their exquisite crimson pink and smoky grey,
and they pose and make you laugh
as you take their photograph -
then goodnight! sleep well until the dawn of day!

by wyverne

Galahs



SerpentStar

A newsletter for members of
The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids

Samhuin 2010



Samhuin Visitor.
Photo by wyverne

Wyverne's words

G'day, Southern Hemisphere OBODies!
Welcome to the 2010 Lugnasadh Issue of
SerpentStar in this second decade of the
millennium.

Alban Herwin came and went, and if it
was cold in the northeren hemisphere, it was
nice and hot here in the southern! We had one
heat wave after another in South Australia,
and from what I've heard, we were not alone!

Time flew for me after Alban Herwin
this year--no sooner had i recovered from the
fun and magic of Midsummernight, and the an-
tics of Puck than Lugnasadh loomed large on
the horizon, sending this little lizard scamper-
ing into the shade to paste up, edit and fill
pages for SerpentStar.

We've got a beautiful feature article
about the Great God Pan in this issue, an excel-
lent preparation for everyone who will be at-
tending the big gathering of OBOB bards,
ovates and druids in the Dandenongs near Mel-
bourne his year. More information on page 11
and page 18 A Druid's Diary taking us deeper-
into the seasonal aspects of our chosen path.
And we have a couple of new regular fea-
tures--links and events to help us all to orient
ourselves in Southern Hemisphere Druidry and
in Druidry worldwide, on the net and locally.

And much much more. Read and enjoy!!!!

Have a BLESSED Lugnasadh

wyverne/\\

Wyverne's words

G'day, Southern Hemisphere OBODies!
Welcome to the 2010 Samhuin Issue of
SerpentStar.

The wheel of the year is turning,
and the light of the summer is dimming
in lands far from the equator. Is it still
significant to people up north? What
does Samhuin really mean to us as
unique, 21st century people?

If SerpentStar is a little late and a
little thin this time, it's because during
the past couple of weeks everyone was
busy preparing for, enjoying and recover-
ing from the weekend of magic and cere-
mony, friendship and connection with
the land of the Druid Assembly at
Cockatoo. This by all accounts was a
magnificent success. I was deeply disap-
pointed that I wasn't able to be there and
meet up with you all, having to cancel
my flight at the last minute for personal
reasons. Fortunately, all went brilliantly
well without me and you can read about
it inside, and we'd love to have more
about for next issue please!

Have a BLESSED Samhuin,

wyverne/\\

Wyverne's words

G'day, Southern Hemisphere OBODies!

Welcome to the Imbolc 2010 issue of Ser-
pentStar! Spring is definitely in the air
where I am. Green grass is growing, the
wildflowers beginning, and the proud
kangaroo mums showing off their pouch-
fuls. Important things are happening in
OBOD with the appointment of the very
popular Damh the Bard as our new Pen-
dragon. As many have said, it couldn't
happen to a nicer person. Damh is mak-
ing his second visit to Oz for the Druids
Dreaming event at Handorf in the Ade-
laide Hills this spring. Details page 7.

IMPORTANT NOTE: I've enjoyed my
stint as editor of SerpentStar and now
I'm ready to hand over to the next volun-
teer. Any offers? Page 3 for details. Re-
member, this is a great time to start
something new!

Inside we have pictures and poems, ar-
ticles and stories to bring us up to date and
give us something to think about. As
usual, thanks everyone who took the time
and trouble to contribute.

Have a BLESSED IMBOLC,

wyverne/\\

Three Things

- Vyvyan Ogma Wyverne

The magical work we do as druids and shamans is most successful when we truly understand what we're doing.

War, sickness, crime, corruption, pollution and energy-greed are serious problems for humanity, and addressing them is our business as human beings, whether druids or not. Traditionally, druids occupied top political positions and were expected to exercise some control over these things, along with climate, game, nature and the afterlife as well. We don't follow in their footsteps exactly, but we're usually druids at all because we feel we recognise in ourselves qualities that identify us as such, or else wish to cultivate them in ourselves because we value them. We trust and believe that our circle magic and shamanism can have far-reaching effects for the healing of our planet and thence our own species and our domesticated crops and animals.

When we practice magic, three things are involved: the actor, the act, and the acted upon.

The best magic happens when all three are well prepared for the rite, when all three are clearly understood by the actor(s), whether one person or a group.

i) THE ACTOR

For the magician, the obvious primary requirement is a good knowledge of him/herself, as a material, spiritual, emotional, aesthetic, physical, metaphysical, magical, moral, mental and psychical being – plus any other aspects that might seem relevant.



It's a good idea to 'brainstorm' your concept of a person, writing down all the words that come to mind as you explore yourself inside and out. No-one can be right or wrong about this, and everyone is different, so the old 'body+soul+spirit' division might not necessarily work for the modern druid. The important thing is to know your way round yourself, the map of your being, the logic or narrative, or interplay of meaning that gives your inner experience continuity, or defines or characterises you.

Most of the energy of the magic to be done comes from the person or persons involved. If the idea is to send healing energy, you will know how to draw on the magical resources – nwyfre – that you will have been concentrating and conditioning in your preliminary meditation on the spell to be cast, brewing them into the perfect elixir.

Of course, you need to be healthy enough to spare the energy, and internally balanced and clear enough to produce a pure elixir. Your spiritual, emotional, aesthetic, physical, metaphysical, magical, moral, mental and psychical health, purity and sanctity are prerequisites for good magic. This doesn't mean you can't do useful magic while sick or emotionally disturbed – you can sing with a sore throat, and walk with tight shoes on – but the magic will be better if you are in a state of ritual purity.

ii) THE ACT

No one has a monopoly on definitions of magic, yet most of us agree in the main with the 'mind over matter' idea. Whether you agree with this definition or not, what matters is knowing what you mean by it. Again, brainstorming can help.

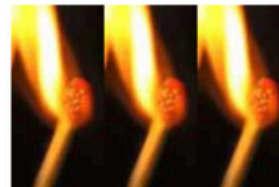


Even experienced spell-casters can benefit from closely examining their way of working in order to really know what they think they are doing and what assumptions they are making about it.

For example, if a wand channels my energy, how does it do it? If it modifies mine, adding its own nwyfre, how does it do this, and why? Obviously it is going to be a more effective relationship if I know my wand well: where it gets its power, the effects of any runes, crystals or other add-ons – even the glues and varnishes used, since they too contribute nwyfre. If I cast a circle, understanding my circle will greatly enhance the enchantment within. Whether indoors or out, I should know the environment well – its ambience, magic, spirituality, fairies, feng shui, soul, ghosts, fairies, its recent history, its current condition and its past. This is why magicians always take a few moments to orient themselves to a place before they begin work.

iii) THE ACTED UPON

The magic works best when the thing or person acted upon is clearly understood. If you wish to heal something, the more you know and understand its condition, the better your nwyfre will be conditioned for it.



Whether the object of your rite is a person or animal, a landscape, a city, an institution, a political situation, it helps to have a realistic sense of its place in the scheme of things.

My starting point is with Gaia. If I am moved to send healing to a population of traumatised people, I first get a sense of where they are within Gaia, whom I see as a living being, suffering from a stressed and traumatised humanity, which I see as comparable to, say, an inflamed tissue in a person.

Only then do I home cautiously in on the area, and always seeking permission at every step, enter into the communion with the situation that will permit the flow of nwyfre. If I probe in ignorance, I could cause pain. If I home in on corruption or crime, I address the souls of the people involved, who may be helplessly trapped in their crimes.

The more I learn about any situation, the more effective my magic will be.

A magician needs a good working relationship with Gaia. The better we know our world, the better our world magic will be!



Wyverne's Words

SerpentStar changes editors this issue.

As we welcome Kim (LadyA), our new editor, it's time for me to take a fond farewell of the delightful task of bringing SerpentStar to you each quarter. Editing SerpentStar has been an enjoyable job, a wonderful way of getting to know you all, and a stimulating and creative part of my life for three years.

I'd like to thank all those who contributed and the many who gave me personally kind encouragement and useful feedback and assistance and so helped to make our newsletter the success it is. As you all supported Stormwolf and Sooty Owl before I took it on, I know you will continue to give support, encouragement and, above all, contributions to Kim as she takes the helm.

Have a blessed Beltane!

vyvyan ogma wyverne



wyverne's words

The Magic of Wyeuro

By Cherry Carroll

I guess we all have stories to tell about how we came to know Wy. This is mine.

In 2003 and having been an OBOD Bard for only about eighteen months I ventured to S.A. for the annual Assembly which Wy and Nellie were hosting at Wyeuro. This was my first Assembly, my first experience of group ritual and my first meeting with other Druids. So many "firsts".

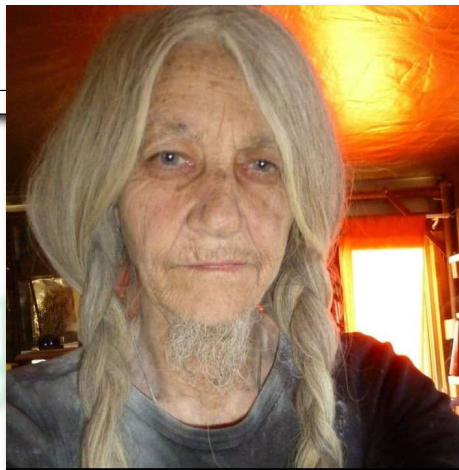
I was greeted by Wyverne, then known as Vyvyan, with a hug that almost knocked me off my feet. She held as much power as the land she lived on. A slight, wiry figure, but as strong as the mallee she loved. I admit that I was not expecting the beard and pixie hat but they just seemed "right" and perfect.

I was to celebrate my group Bardic initiation during the Assembly and it was during this ritual that I fell between the worlds and awakened to life fully. I wrote in my journal "I felt an urge to place my palms flat to the earth and melted into it. A great feeling of love encompassed me and I nestled safely in the bosom of the Mother. A song welled up from the depths of the earth and sounded through me." The wild country and the Earth Clan had claimed me. That Assembly will always be the closest to my heart.

Early the following morning Vyvyan took me for a walk to visit some special trees. Sandalwoods, mallee and a big old pepper tree - all bearing naturally formed images - faces, figures, animals, dragons, spirits, horses and gods - all staring from the trunks and boughs of those magical Brothers and Sisters. We halted by one mallee and Vyvyan pointed to a spot beneath it, smiled knowingly, bowed her head slightly and spoke one word "faeries". I glanced sideways and caught a shimmering glimpse of a shape, taller than I had imagined. It appeared to be sitting astride a sprawling root, but as I looked it faded to just two eyes watching me guardedly, before it withdrew from my sight.

Vyvyan grinned and strode on. We reached a wide, open area where she told me to walk out into the centre while she remained at the edge. When I did so I lost my balance and struggled to remain upright. I felt that I was being buffeted by long rolling waves. Vyvyan called out for me to move further back and when I did so I immediately regained my footing and felt a huge surge of energy, which, as I breathed deeply became like a whirlpool of water swirling around me. Vyvyan told me afterwards that she had seen huge waves crashing over me at this point. The ocean had once reached to this place and its power has not diminished.

I felt accepted by the magical land of Wyeuro and although I have never returned I can still feel its touch when I close my eyes. It played a significant role at a crucial time in my spiritual journey and Wyverne and I formed a bond over that wonderful weekend which never broke.



wy
s words

Brownies

People who want to make shamanic connections with the fairy peoples usually start by learning as much as they can from books, other seers and folklore. You learn quickly that there are many different kinds of fairies, and that they vary from culture to culture. Then as you become adept at seeing, your notion of what a fairy is usually undergoes a wild transformation. You begin to encounter the many varieties of fairies, elves, nature spirits etc, little and large, pretty and ugly, wise and silly, kindly and malevolent, sick and healthy, weak and powerful, friendly and hostile that the fairy sight reveals to you.

At this stage you may feel a need to focus on direct communion with just one kind of fairy at a time, usually using meditation and attunement techniques you may have learned as a part of a pagan, esoteric or new age teaching programme or similar. You set the scene with beautiful music, crystals enchanted for the purpose, and incense or aromatic oils, herbs and flowers. You centre yourself, you clear your mind, perhaps you might play a drum or a flute, and you open your eyes to the fairies around you. The fairies will be aware of your preparations and they'll crowd around to get a glimpse of you, and to let you see them. You get used to the fact that these are indeed people, albeit high strangeness people, indeed very high strangeness people and that some of them are intensely aware of you and are manipulating you with their powerful will to bring you into their view, sometimes competing with each other for access to you. This can be frightening, but don't panic. When it happens, you can always expect a Brownie to be there for you, to be your trustworthy guide and protector if you so ask.

Brownies are among the easiest of fairies for humans to commune with. They are saintly little people about eighteen inches to two feet high, sometimes appearing in hooded garments of soft brown, grey and mossy colours. They are usually surrounded by a kind of courtly retinue which includes the astral bodies of little girls in their brownie uniforms, and other earth kin. Probably the word Brownie was originally Brehonie, and referred to a pious and much-loved legal fraternity that was quashed in Britain in mediaeval times so completely that history seems to be repressing the memory of them. The Irish Brehons are still revered, though progress in translating their law texts has been slow. But folklore recalls the Brownie as an outlawed exile in wild places, sometimes protected by remote households for whom they very generously did useful work in exchange for nothing but food and clothing – taking offence permanently if offered payment.



In the old ballad Brown Adam he was banished into the woods where he lived by hunting birds with a bow and arrow.

Children's lore, often wiser and better informed than folklore, because children connect more deeply with the deepest myths, situates them deep in the wildest and remotest parts of the mossiest, most mysterious green woods, where they have become invisible to humans, diminished in size to about a foot high. As Brehons once were lawyers among the peoples of old Britain, Brownies are the wise law-givers, counsellors and peace-makers among all the wild woodland animals, birds and fishes, plant spirits, aerial and water beings, fire spirits and earth spirits of their new environment.

Brownies are accessible to us through contemplation of this highly developed, consistently recurring image. If you ask them to they are willing to work closely with you as guides and negotiators on your behalf. They aren't the only wise, human-friendly fairies you'll encounter in the early stages, but they are the ones who will help you to reorient yourself appropriately in our newly expanded reality. And they do appreciate their annual gift of a new linen shirt and a good bannock bun – and firewood, only tokens now but once so meaningful. Paradigms shift again when you realise that to the fairies, you are just one more kind of fairy. We are certainly giants to them, and if we think we're not magical, there's many a fairy, and many a quite justly aggrieved fairy, willing to prove to us that we're just as magically dangerous to them as ever they could be to us. Without some training in stillness and receptivity, our fear paralyses them, our distrust binds them, our mis-visions distort and deform them, our disbelief disables them. The brownies are not just our guides, but our 'handlers' as well, to prevent us from harming the other beings with our unruly, lawless magic.

Like many other fairies, Brownies remember being human, indeed many of them periodically incarnate as humans, and may even still think of themselves as human even though they have evolved since their banishment from human culture. They tell me their story as follows.

Banished during the Conquest from their honoured place in British society, the few survivors fled singly to remote wild places, hiding in the deep forest to evade the hounds that were used to hunt them. In remote wild lands they survived, but were soon forgotten, except in folk-lore. Others, driven deeper into the forest, found food in abundance there, but were intensely alienated, often utterly devoid of all human company, and dependent on prayer, fairy magic and the guidance of Gaia (who knew just what she was doing) for their sanity.

A kind of sensory deprivation along with the effects of breathing the fungal spore laden air and of eating the occasional dodgy mushroom made these fugitives, credited anyway with magic powers, psychically hypersensitive. They soon began to hear the whispers of the forest, to understand the speech of animals and birds. Sleeping in the moss, feeding on the mushrooms, bark, herbs, nuts and berries of the forest's bounty, drinking the dew and the heavy nectar of flowers, they soon fell under the spells of the forest fairies. Experiencing themselves more and more as being of their reality and less and less of this, they grew old and died, or they died through illness or the poison of a mushroom and so became part of the woodland spirit community.

Over the centuries, their mentality was greatly altered by their new environment, and they brought their legal expertise to bear upon the many problems that diverse and often competing beings encounter in their efforts to create a viable and harmonious community of spirits. Our world was becoming less and less relevant to them, but Gaia had plans for them and us, and in accord with these there emerged the Brownie movement, the organisation for little girls that focused the potentially magical attention of generations of eight-to-ten-year-old girls on just the kind of faired forest environment in which these highly-evolved souls now have their spiritual centres. Aided by I know not what guiding angels and fairies, during the twentieth century the brownies and these little girls effected a cross-dimensional hand-shake of great importance to our planet, and it was a handshake of such goodwill and delightfulness that brownies remain among the best-loved and most trusted of fairy characters in literature and lore. They are good little people, full of kindly charity and love, sweetness and joy, which they spread with the greatest ease wherever they go.

And nowadays they go about quite freely in all sorts of places, appearing in suburban gardens, Japanese parklands, city balconies and the Australian bush, and will appear in a well designated corner of almost any sincerely friendly, safe room if invited. They make charming use of those commercially available little toy doors that you affix to tree trunks, skirting boards and other likely places.

My Brownie guide 'haunts' or inhabits a 14 inch high paper-maché toadstool with a nine inch diameter top. He explains that he magically bonds with the paper toadstool in such a way as to become sensitive to the thoughts and emotions going on around it. Thus it acts like a remote sensory organ, to which he can bring his whole mind's attention at will, manifesting visibly beside it for me if he chooses. It's like having a mobile phone. His sense of humour is delightful, but he seems full of knowledge to impart as our relationship deepens. I service this shrine and others outside with gifts of food and pieces of shiny metal which they use for money in one of their new toyland-like realms. I suspect they'd find a use for anything if you offered it as a token of goodwill.

Toylands? Yes, because expert as they are at bringing peace and sanity into communities of diverse beings, Brownies have learned that a being is a being, whether a toy whose soul has been bestowed via the inarticulate love and magical fantasy of a child, or an angel spirit born triumphantly from the spent corpse of a dying human being, they are all sentient spirits, all worthy of their rights and responsible for their own karma. Between small children at play and all manner of fairies, new worlds of solid reality are being woven all the time from the fantastical logistics and creative imagery of play, and because these new worlds have need of good, wise, fair laws to integrate them into the greater reality, Brownies are invited to participate in the building of them principally as law-givers.

Rapport with Brownies is based upon a mood-sharing which manifests quite strangely to an adult, because it is much more in the emotional idiom of children, or of medieval Brehons. It's hard to put into words, except words so simple they might even sound facile, yet they possess all the more power for being so comprehensible. They teach that happiness is a medicine, something radiant and good that we infuse our surroundings with when we feel happy within. We have a duty to be happy, to emanate beams of radiant happiness for the healing and comforting of our sad and damaged worlds. They know it isn't always possible, but they urge us to make real inner happiness a goal, to care about making ourselves truly happy in innocent ways that harm no one. They urge us to cultivate an optimistic disposition, to carry us through the sad times, and to gravitate (should I say, levitate) back to happiness as soon as things improve. It doesn't have to be noisy happiness; you don't have to smile all the time. Just consciously begin to liberate all the natural joy within you. That will not only improve your health and well-being, your luck and your whole quality of experience, it will also make you a well-spring of healing for everyone in your environment.



Animal intelligence.

vyvyan ogma wyverne

The main objection that rationalists make to the idea of communicating with animals more meaningfully than most people usually do with their dogs, cats and horses is that the animals are not intelligent enough. Science has always claimed to know that animals' brains are simply not specialised for complex thought and they have no brain centres specifically designed for the use of language. This objection rests on two assumptions: that intelligence depends on a brain, and is proportional to the size and complexity of the brain, and that the communication of complex ideas is only possible between beings with human-like cerebral intelligence.

But both these assumptions have been challenged in recent research into animal intelligence, surprisingly, in research relating to animals with very simple brains or no brains at all. Echidnas have exhibited extraordinary intelligence in tests devised by animal behaviourists, although their brains are very simple. Many stories are told about octopus intelligence for which no scientific explanation can be given.

Kangaroos also show intelligence – reasoning and rapid learning ability – about the same as a dog, but they too have small, simple brains for their body weight and so are not given credit for it – except by people who live with them in close contact.



People who work and live in close association with animals such as cats, dogs, horses, sheep, cows, elephants, seals and goats do not doubt that the intelligence of their animals is much higher than present day science can account for. Whales and dolphins with their brains rivalling human brains in terms of size in proportion to their body weight and degree of convolutedness are admitted to be highly intelligent, but it is clear to anyone observing them that they use their brains in quite

different, non-human ways until called upon by natural or artificial circumstances to become intelligible to human beings.

Understanding this is the key to understanding what limits human ability to see into and appreciate the intelligence of other animals. What we must understand is that human intelligence tends to be fairly narrowly focused on human affairs, is species-specific and conditioned by nature and experience to block most of the vast spectra of event and effect that constitute the fabric of reality. Human intelligence makes intelligible to humans that selection of sensation and inspiration that combine to make our very specific kinds of awareness. It is vast and rich to us but tiny in comparison with the infinitudes of data in our environment, mediated as it must be through the brain, with its limited array of logistical acrobatics that make up human intellect.

A death-adder must intelligence which to a death-adder the not narrower sensation and limited array of that make up intelligence. The designed to support system that is tightly and complexly logical in very specific ways, and that necessitates a large much convoluted brain. The death-adder's body is designed to support an intelligence system that operates in ways ours does not, but there is no reason to suppose that it is more limited than ours.



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We are evolving specialised organs of thought which are located in our brains, and we're enchanted by what's going on there. Unencumbered by such a noisy apparatus, do death adders make all their sensations dramatically more intelligible to themselves through their whole bodies, or through organs we haven't yet understood, than we do our sensations, blotted out as most of them are by the higher-impact activities of our brains? Cerebral intelligence in humans, intelligence beyond our ken in death adders?

Many psychics experience direct knowing through their life-fields things which their brains routinely filter out – force fields, auras, telepathy, and much besides.

Furthermore, studies of migratory birds and fish show that they share consciousness far more than large-brained animals do, communicating over long distances, and spreading newly devised solutions to problems very rapidly throughout whole species. This also bespeaks non-cerebral, i.e., non-human intelligence.

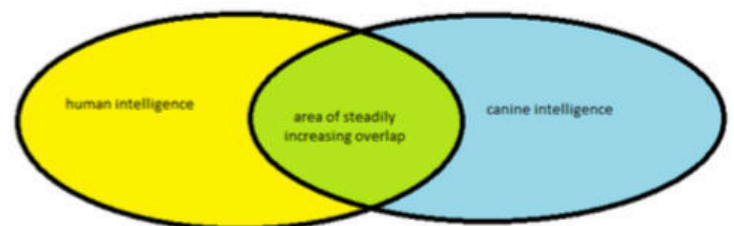
Any animal, human or not, can be seen as an individual, as a member of a culture or society – herd, tribe, localised population etc, and many societies make up a species. A multitude of diverse species make up our planet's biota, plant and animal. Event-sensitive beings (and even atoms are event-sensitive) are the experiential and intellectual faculties of our planet, and are therefore as diversely specialised for as wide and yet specific a variety of sensorial selecting as is necessary to constitute a planetary intelligence far greater than that of any one of its components and no doubt greater *in toto* even than the sum of its components.

Ant nests are examples of animals in which radically specialised individuals are inter-dependent in such a way that the colony behaves like a single animal made up of several hundred or more semi-individuals whose actions are concerted by the queen who is entirely dependent on them. Humans too can be seen in this way, although our socialisation may seem to be much more complex and flexible. The experience we mediate for the planet as individuals is mediated to her also by our cultures as a whole although it isn't easy for us to discern this as we are inside it. Our planet thinks, feels, dreams and experiences as much and as effectively through her jungles and buffalo herds as she does through her cities – but in vastly different ways.



We can communicate effectively with animals only to the extent that our experience overlaps with theirs. Look at the diagram. The yellow represents an unknown 'quantity' (some say

unfathomable). So does the blue. They may or may not be equal. The point is, we don't know. The green represents the area of overlap – of shared experience within which we can communicate.



Even if the overlap is small, we must question the arrogance that says that the other animal's intelligence always only extends as far as the green zone above and ignores the inevitability of there being a blue zone probably at least equal to our yellow one – and also the arrogance that says that only the other animal's intelligence has been extended by communing with ours. Ours is just as much extended by what we learn from them.

When we transcend this 'speciesism', we can begin to look for the animal's intentions to communicate with us, no longer imagining that all the intention is ours, the animal being passively receptive and responsive or not to our teaching. In their terms, we become a lot more intelligent!

wyverne

Croning: coming of age in the 21st century.

- vyvyan ogma wyverne

Old age is not a slow death unless your body is sick. We're so accustomed to negative images of 'crones' in folk-lore and fantasy, where post-child-bearing, independent females are portrayed as a crooked, arthritic, ugly old scolds, that some people are surprised at the idea of a 'croning'. Why would anyone want to be called a 'crone'? Shouldn't we seek positive images and archetypes and leave the old negative ones behind? We need ideals, but do we find them in archetypes generated in the past? Is that how we should honour our ancestors?

The archetypes preserved in folklore are interactive - do we need their power in our lives? They represent real people who lived in or before the middle ages, or during the renaissance or thereabouts. Our genetic inheritance comes from a population which not only included them, but fore-grounded them in story and song. The genes that determine our natures were hammered on the forges of their zeitgeist, just as we now find ourselves fine-tuning them in our 21st century interpersonal dramas. The crone of the middle ages incubated the spirituality of the crone of today, just as we are now shaping the nature of crones to come. It helps gaia if we maintain the continuity of such evolutions - it's a way of helping to repair the web of race memory, making subtle psychic connections between our times, allowing healing as in the repairing of damaged nerves.

Our ancestors had their own rightful place in the nasty past and are now fading from memory, while we live in the here and now, albeit consciously working towards an ideal future. Shouldn't we be imagining new role-models based on current experience? In the late 20th century, feminist scholars deeply explored the range of stereotypes generated by our culture, in the mass media, pop culture and in the popular imagination - many of these made use of Carl Jung's work on archetypes and the collective unconscious. They found themselves awed at the power of the archetype as the shapers of society, of society's response to individuals and their expectations of people who fall under their spell.

Some archetypes are distorted, like caricatures. They seem to exert a distortive power over the personality they misrepresent and over social situations involving them. Persistent images of independent old women have come down to us from a time when few people enjoyed long lives, and those who did were skinny, bent and rickety, with voices as croaky as that of the pet raven on their shoulder.



Full Moon in Capricorn - vyvyan ogma wyverne

it's a cold hand of fear
on the heart of my dreaming
this fear-held breath of the mind-wind
at the quaking of our shell-shocked planet

oh look! a most speaking moonrise
much heralded, bewitching, high-riding,
at moonset she snows a crisp glitter of frost
I watch it melt in the sunbeams shine
releasing the moonspeak to me

there is time. to every minute its wholeness
all its wealth and its full duration.
no moment is wasted: good work is riches
yes, even in rest there is re-creation.

if the gift be good it will be praised
in giving the giver is given to richly
and thus enriched we become the gift.
through giving we are given our godhead -
we are gaia's gift to the stars...

and the moon goes rolling over
the dark cold edge of the sky.
now day brightens, and I'm alone here
holding the memory.

Their faces are sometimes depicted as resembling death's heads, the skull all but visible beneath the skin - and indeed, they seem close to death. It is this image of the crone that people fear.

The focus is not always on her decrepitude. In many folk tales the crone presents the symbolic gifts at rites of passage, and there's usually nothing said of her other than that she is an old woman with high standing in the palace - at a time when a palace might be anything from a small populous city with a king and queen in residence to a lonely roadside cottage in the woods with a skeleton staff of one. This one is the dominant image in folk memory, and she still fascinates us. We continually create her anew, complete with rickety, toothlessness, croaky voice, distaff in hand and pet raven, but active pagans are more likely to up-grade her in the light of many generations of further evolution to a healthy, motivated, energised elder, rich in experience, a veteran of a lifetime of good living and ready for decades more of useful, dedicated work and enthusiastic participation in life.

Actors justly fear 'type-casting'. It exerts metaphysical, magical power that can lock them into expected patterns of limited and inappropriate character-acting, stifling their creativity and limiting their opportunities for advance. So powerful are stereo-types, often unrecognised though held in the popular imagination by most people, that the second wave feminists of the 1970s called upon the image-makers of our culture, the educators, mass media, and the general population, to revise our fixed notions about old women, to take a reality check, to close the sizable gap between what old women, for example, really are and what most people think we are, how we are represented in the media and how this affects us. This radical rethink resulted in broad changes to our culture which now offers enhanced life experience for all older people.

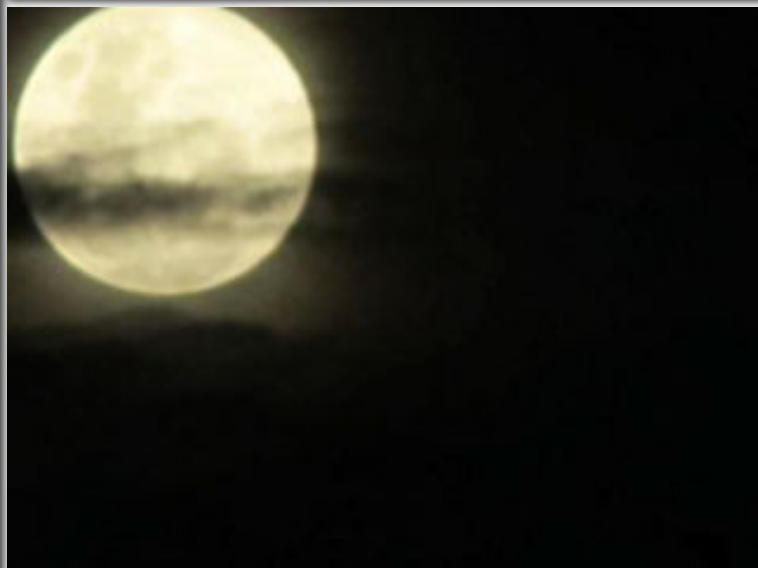
As the mass media is now aware, if the general populace regards old women as typically sick, requiring full-time nursing care, headed for alzheimer's and kept alive by up to 20 different kinds of designer drugs, they can magically swing it that way. Advertising exploits this power for profit. We can wield it for the good of all. If we foreground the increasing sanity surrounding aging in current medical research, and focus on the many fit healthy role-models we see all around us, we can adjust our image towards the reality and thus connect more effectively with the beauty and blessing of old age, the value of the contribution of the



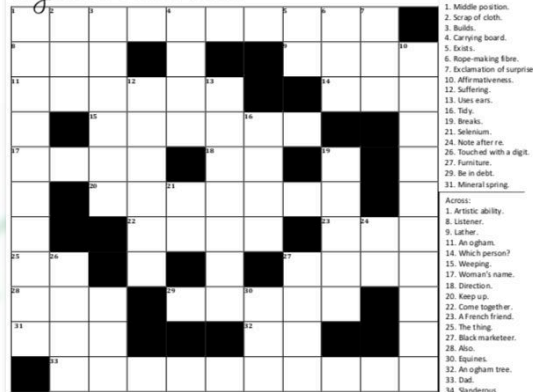
aged to our culture and the special gifts and talents and sweet rewards that come with the wisdom of years. Then we can begin to shift them towards our own consciously crafted ideals. Thus we get magical control of our own evolution. Learning to use this awesome evolutionary force, this 'force' that through the green fuse drives the flower' consciously, we avoid being distorted into the dysfunctional social situations that plague life today.

We can learn from the archetypes, recognising their flaws in us and filtering them out, selectively inheriting their goodness, tweaking their spiritual 'software' creatively, participating in the crafting of the archetypes themselves. The extent to which we resemble the archetype in question determines how much our spirit resonates with hers - or his in the case of a male. We can consciously avoid resembling an undesirable norm, the wicked witch who explodes in a jealous rage for example, while adopting features of the desired types, such as the chivalrous youth who marries the princess. Through the evolving crone archetype women maintain continuity between ourselves and the old women of the past, receiving from them the power of their enchantment, and giving to them the blessing of their descendants. But be

warned: when we conjure the crone from within our own beings, we might find ourselves with a friendly raven on our shoulder after all!



Wyverne's Crossword...



Tuckonies vyvyan ogma wyverne

Tuckonies are Aborigine fairy-like beings, extra-dimensional diminutives who take an interest in our world and play important roles in regulating affairs in the plant and animals realms of the 'dreamtime' worlds we share. At this time they are also helping to integrate the new fairy races, which came with the white settlers and are still arriving from foreign lands to become part of the rich rainbow-snake diversity of this ancient mysterious land.

The Aborigines knew them as little people, a bit like Mary Norton's fictional borrowers or Jonathan Swift's Lilliputians, in that they have the physique proportions of ordinary earthly people, but they're only six to eight inches tall. They resemble Aborigines, with ritual scarring on their chests, and sometimes ceremonial body paint and they often carry hunting spears and boomerangs. They are benevolent people, with wisdom beyond ours, and the freedom to travel further and do more, and they can be called upon in times of need to help our peoples with our problems.

Traditionally, they are thought of as actively promoting the health of the environment, in particular, having the power through their dancing and song (corroboree) to greatly increase the rate of plant growth, and Aboriginal folk tales include accounts of their miraculous power to turn tiny saplings into great trees in minutes with their magic.

Now, when anyone seriously intends to work with fairies in their lives, fairies know of that intention, and they help to bring on the fairy sight. Tuckonies are no exception to this rule, and because their reality is so closely interwoven with ours, they are fairly easy to see. I first saw them after years of developing my psychic ability in communion with (especially) the Aborigine spirits and ghosts of the land and the European fairies and spirit people.

My focus at the time was on the flower fairies of Jacobean England as they are now in our times, and I had been experiencing success communing with them and even seeing them. So the work I had done in that direction meant that I was primed to see the Tuckonies. What tipped the scales was the fact that I was experimenting with Aboriginal 'bush tucker', digging up and eating the roots and bulbs they ate, eating the flowers and seeds, sampling the herbs and chewing the medicinal bark of bushes and shrubs. This put me on their wavelength.

Also, I was spending long hours out in the scrub, studying the fauna and flora close up and communing with nature in the company of nature spirits who wanted to help me to see them. Under these conditions, accustomed as I was to communing with ghosts, I found Tuckonies very easy to see. I still find them easier to connect with than many European fairies. They have great charm and charisma, arising from their natural dignity, uprightness and wisdom.

Some authorities refer to them as nature spirits, but they're not really confined to the world of nature. Once you know them, they'll visit you inside your house, and draw your attention to them with great pleasure and courtesy, and they become very communicative. However, it is easier to establish first contact with them out in the wilds.

They haunt certain bushes and sheltered places in characteristic ways. The signs are subtle, but remember, they know you are looking for them and are helping you to home in on them. Look for the sort of feeling that you find in old churches, or cathedrals - a clear crystalline quality of the air, a feeling of sacredness or spiritual power, quiet, like a dome, holding everything within it safe and protected. It is similar to that which surrounds a bird's nest but instead of hiding from you, it calls you, and invites you to see it. Within that, or nearby, as you soft-gaze from a distance, not staring too sharply at anything, that's where the Tuckonies live. If you've been actively looking for fairies for a few years, they may build their pavilions in your garden.

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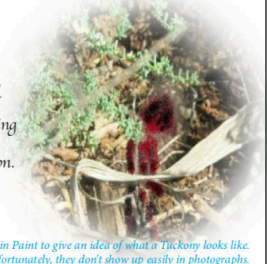
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As I turned back to the path, I saw him, an old man this time in everyday dress, a bit dusty, smiling and friendly, standing beside his wurley at the base of an erect bluebush. I have learnt over the years not to explode with emotion when these things happen, but I still needed a few moments to calm myself after this exceptionally clear vision. He remained visible, and when I was ready, he stepped to one side and showed me his wife, sitting inside the wurley, smiling broadly.

They seemed a little different from the first ones, which were taller and more charismatic and seemed to occupy a slightly different dimensionality. This old man and his wife were nevertheless inexpressibly moving and beautiful, their faces weathered and worn like those of old people on our dimension.

To be continued next issue.

This image was mocked up in Paint to give an idea of what a Tuckony looks like. Unfortunately, they don't show up easily in photographs.



Tuckonies - Part 2

vyvyan ogma wyverne

Tuckonies move very freely across the time-space continuum in more directions than are currently known to science. They go in and out of Koorie households, talking on subliminal levels with the kids as they grow up, sharing their headspace to watch TV, attend school or university, go dancing or surf the web, and they rather often incarnate. Their timescape allows them to incarnate for a long, busy lifetime while their Tuckony body is standing still in a sort of trance or reverie, observing the passage of their human incarnation's time as if it were just a few minutes. When the incarnation is over, the experience gathered there becomes a resource for the Tuckony, which they explain is like taking spoonfuls of something flavoursome and richly meaningful from a feasting bowl, or grail. Of course, they also value lifetimes of experience as animals, and no doubt as plants as well because they have an affinity with them. Like the Koorie star people, the Tuckonies are not confined to Earth - they have extraterrestrial and extradimensional access as well.

When I was just getting to know them, I often saw them walking along the narrow bit of 'book-shelf' the projected beyond the backs of the books. They were only a little shorter than the average paperback. More than once they drew my attention to one book or another, which they made to glow. Well not quite glow, but there was a definite radiance, not visible, but certainly discernible by some subtle sense very like vision. Then quite casually one would 'open' the spine of the book, as if it were a door, as if it had a doorknob and he'd turned it and opened it. Then both, there were usually only two, would enter the book, closing the spine behind them.

Once I saw them coming back out of a book that they had entered in this way. The 'door' appeared open still as I saw them emerge. Instead of pages of print, I saw that they had been walking among the things described in the book. I saw the landscapes the characters walked in, the houses and streets described in the book and the whole array of ideas and images, all set out like a veritable landscape unlike those of earth, but just as traversable. There were misty swathes where data was sparse as it is in our imagination when we read a book. The author can provide only so much detail, the reader then supplies the rest, and the book as a deva, or spiritual entity, comes to life. As a Dreaming it is enriched by what every reader brings to it. Over centuries, a book like Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice builds and maintains a rich, deep patina of layers of our love, our magic and our philosophy, all brought to it by generation upon generation of readers. Without reading the words, but reading what Druids might call the 'nwyfre', the Tuckonies connect with the subtle information available to them in this way to reconstruct the events and vistas described in the book, and they do this so well that they can enter the scene and find/ construe the characters and commune with them - and they bring back souvenirs of candles, books, ribbons and other small tokens of their visit.

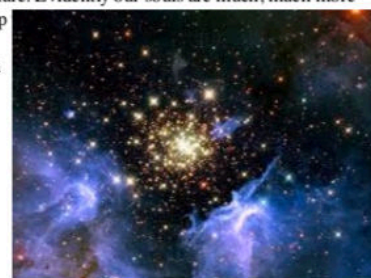
So they speak modern English and are in touch with human current affairs, especially as accessed by modern Koories. One easy way to connect with them is to read the Koorie newspapers and magazines and listen to their radio and TV. This not only promotes goodwill and understanding between our cultures but also makes us easy to peruse when their extradimensionals want to enter our lives. When I open the Koorie mail each week, Tuckonies are with me. Their knowledge of human affairs is so great that they actually participate in our politics and in the development of our lands and resources.

One of the most unforgettable sights I have ever seen was at Adelaide's government house lawns, where I saw, during a time of heavy campaigning for Koorie rights, thousands of tiny Tuckonies camped in protest against human rights abuses against Koories, feys and extradimensionals, an occupying force to equal the Canberra embassy. I was told that even when things were calmer there was always a force there, negotiating on subliminal levels with our politicians for culture-fair government that respects the vision of the fey. I was remote-viewing from my bed at home, with Tuckonies on my bedside table when I lay down and again when I opened my eyes.

They do exert will-power to steer us away from disaster, but their sense of justice is of the merciful sort, and they have a part to play in our future.

But Dream-time is 'funny stuff', as I've heard them say, and Tuckonies know where, what and when to share with people of our, but I also often see them mingling with other types of fairies. One fairy shrine I tend was established for tiny people I found, white people of all ages, only about five or six inches high, who were lost and parched in the dry heat. They crept into shade and their skin hurt from the scorching dryness. I had not really intended a shrine, just 'water interest' when I placed a decorative basin on the lawn where they were and saw them for the first time when they ran to it to dip their feet and hands in it and to cool themselves. Then they sat round the rim of the basin with their feet in the water. After a few days, Tuckonies came and, inviting me to view, they opened doorways in what looked like thin air and led the people through to a more comfortable living space. They followed with great gratitude, and even seemed as if they had been waiting for the Tuckonies all along they just hadn't known it. So who are these white people, only inches high, who get themselves into such predicaments? Says the Tuckony, if Tuckonies' souls can incarnate for several decades during a single five minute meditation, why do we imagine that we don't do pretty much the same.

There are hints enough of it in the Celtic literature. Evidently our souls are much, much more than we imagine. Tuckonies as spirit guides help beings, with celestial Dreaming places and access to timescapes more thrilling than we can currently imagine.





G'day people! Welcome to the Imbolc 2012 Edition of SerpentStar. After a much-needed rest I'm returning as editor. Grateful thanks are due to the lovely LadyA of the Shire for keeping things going in the meantime. We wish her great joy of her growing family!

Email subscriptions are free of course, but at a tiny cost of \$10 pa, for 4 issues within Australia, some of you may prefer a paper subscription instead. Recent research has indicated that on-line newsletters that drop their paper subscription alternative tend to be weaker and less likely to be read than those that maintain them. Must be good magic, and admittedly, it is nice to find a newsletter bristling with good reading in your old-fashioned letterbox every quarter. So do consider a good old-fashioned print copy—published of course on ecologically sustainably produced paper.

Druidry is growing in Australia, and this is reflected in the lively collection of reading we've got for you from bards, druids and ovates young and old, with some refreshing new faces swelling the ranks, in particular, talented poet Ainvur Ronal Greenleaf, and insightful philosopher Orin Raven Winter, both seed group members from Adelaide. We owe thanks also to Adrienne Piggot for her help to bring us the photos and story about the English Ale. Other familiar and not so familiar names grace our pages this edition. There are stories, articles, poems, pictures and much, much more to enjoy!!!!

Have a BLESSED IMBOLC

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SerpentStar

A quarterly for members of
The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids
in the Southern Hemisphere.

Imbolc 2012



The first dewy mornings of early spring.
Photo by Wyverne

I advise against using refined sugar and stimulants, but I must admit that some fairies are easier to find if you're on a sugar high...



A FAIRY RETREAT

By Wyverne

In our culture, until recently, almost everything has dictated against the seeing of fairies. Social attitudes, urban planning, calendars, work schedules, diet, education, noise, pollution, electrical fields and the mass media have all tended to obscure the realities nearest to our own, and some still do. So if you're serious about getting closer to our neighbour-realities and learning to see the fairies and ghosts of our own, you might like to consider a fairy retreat. It will take some planning; you will need at least two weeks and preferably four to begin to make the perceptual shift towards seeing their worlds, and you may need to do some radical reorientation during the previous cycle of the moon before you begin.

You are multi-dimensional, but you are also fragmented, so that that part of yourself that perceives through the material senses is perhaps only rarely aware of the experience of those parts of you that perceive the fairies that live all around us or the ghosts that haunt our cities and towns, or the gods that guide our evolution.

Most children learn to select out fairy perception at an early age, but the interface remains lifelong,

waiting to be reactivated. If you have a hankering to see fairies, surely it is because your seer-self wants you to, wants you to be aware of your experiences in the fairy realms - which are as vivid and structured and meaningful as those of our material world - and is among the many highly specialised fairy beings who are willing to help you to succeed.

The retreat takes one complete cycle of the moon, from one half-moon's waning till the next. You can do it alone or with a friend or dedicated group, although it's a very introverted thing and companionship should not be too intense. It begins with a debriefing, followed by a period of fasting and meditating, then a week of active engagement with your heightened perception, and a week-long withdrawal period.

1. DEBRIEFING:

Debriefing is simple, and can be done before you begin the retreat. Ideally you should start this on the evening of the half-moon waxing. It consists of setting aside a little time at dawn and again at dusk to listen to the birds and sounds of nature audible through the noises of human activity, and think about fairies. Imagine seeing them. Perhaps you have pictures or books or statues of fairies or elves or plant spirits, angels, gods or whatever you love best. Use them as icons, talk to them, let them know how much you want to see them and be part of the bridge between our worlds. Remember the intensity of your childhood engagement with fairylands and fantasy worlds. If you can cry, use a mirror or crystal ball, actively invoking your favourite spirits. Write a calling chant, sing or croon to them. Or just imagine you are looking into the eyes of your fairy self and inviting him/her to connect with you and teach you.

Note any anxiety, any sudden loss of concentration, or point where the mind wanders, or mundane thoughts intrude, and focus on them as they arise. Ask all unnecessary anxieties to abate, and if any persistent thoughts or objections intrude, deal with them and then ask them to recede. Eucalyptus leaves or oil is helpful.

This is not a relaxation exercise, but a vital, active self-exploration, a seek and satisfy mission to find and allay all anxieties that stand between you and your goal - and perhaps discover whether or not you have the courage to proceed. Consider any ambivalence you might have about your own self-image, your credibility among your peers, what fairies will think of your strategies and fibs - anything that comes to mind might block your enhanced perception. You need your own full consent. Spend a couple of half-hours a day doing this intensively and also take advantage of odd times during the day to run the themes that emerge for you through your mind.

Wearing a crystal or a ring will help to remind you to return frequently to the task, and you'll be surprised how much more clarity you can achieve by this simple exercise than you might have expected. It's a technique that can be adapted for other purposes too.

Meanwhile, the venue for the retreat is important. A place where fairies are likely to be is obviously best, but it doesn't have to be a breathtakingly beautiful wilderness. Your own backyard is very often the best place, even if there's a constant hum of traffic and noisy neighbours, as you will have been gardening there while thinking about fairies and will no doubt continue to do so afterwards. But if you have no garden find a quiet place that you have free access to and can visit often. Your own bedroom or den may be right for you.

You can enhance your space if permitted with crystals, pyramids, geodesic towers, shrines, altars, fountains etc, with music or Schuman resonance, runes, incense and chanting. Building tiny houses brings them!

2. ORIENTATION:

After the week's debriefing, on the dark moon preparation for the fast begins. Prepare by reducing your food in-take. Take the whole week to reduce to small serves of wholemeal bread and water, honey and milk, salads nuts and fruit, or

other minimalistic whole-foods diet. If you really can't give up smoking, chew horehound leaves or drink a tisane of them as strong as you can enjoy it every few days. Horehound helps to repair the damage to the lungs that smoking tobacco might otherwise cause.

While fasting your body, you should also fast your mind, so if possible, phase out any newspapers or magazines, don't watch TV, don't turn on the radio, don't even play recorded music and avoid any reading that isn't absolutely necessary at all - unless it's to help you to focus on fairies. Stay away from the computer as much as possible for the week or whole month if you can. You will return to them all with a fresh mind.

Whenever your body yearns for its accustomed soothing noises, you can sing, hum or play a musical instrument or drum, but it is more helpful to invite your body to appreciate the sounds around it instead. Natural sounds such as birdsong, breezes through the trees, the sound of the sea are easy enough to enjoy, but if your neighbour's having band practice or there's a pneumatic drill drowning everything out, make your peace with the noise, love the technology and remember that some beings of the other dimensions love these noises, and work unseen magic for the people making them. Learn to love them as city fairies do.

Your activities while fasting should include frequent meditation, for example, transcendental meditation, a light-body exercise or breath-work or yoga in a magic circle, pyramid or temple; sensitivity exercises such as holding a crystal or pebble, wand, rune-stone or other pleasant magically enhanced object; some easy gardening or the creative-visualising of gardens of light, walking, observing plants, birds, and the life of your garden or the place you are in. If poetry comes to you, write it down, but don't strive for anything during this time. If you play a flute, drum, harp or other instrument, take it with you, but don't play it unless you feel prompted to.

Take rests as you need to, enjoy the slowness and especially enjoy the heightened sensory experience

and the clarity of mind. Drink plenty of the purest water you can find, enhancing it if you wish with crystals, runes, earth resonances, drumming, chanting, or music or 'mooning' on an altar or in a pyramid, and if you feel dizzy or light-headed, put a dab of your favourite pure-run honey (Scots wild heather honey is perfect for it) on your tongue and let it slowly dissolve there. Don't have any more unless the dizziness returns.

Deepening the enchantment of this time, you might enjoy a three-week-long social fast also. You may be in the same house with your family or need to be accessible to dependents or supportive friends, but try to be alone as much as you can in a place where the fairies are likely to be. Then resume your social life as carefully, thoughtfully and selectively as you can.

Pets sometimes enhance the fairy experience and can be good companions on your fast. Telepathic communication often happens between people and animals under conditions like these. Wild places may offer you some wonderful encounters with wild animals that enhance the experience still more.

3. ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT:

By the time the moon is full you are ready to begin the phase of active engagement, while fasting and meditating. Brave souls will benefit from a near total week-long fast on water alone, but it needn't be that radical. You can eat fruit, honey, natural, unsweetened yoghurt, and drink small quantities of milk, herbal tisanes, herbal beer or honest mead and even tea or coffee.

The more you drink just water and dewdrops and sip just nectar from flowers and magically enhanced honey the closer you are to flower fairies. Adding fruits and berries brings you to elves and brownies like a little wild game – trout or hare. Whatever you eat will help you to different fairies.

The amounts taken should be tiny, and bread and milk or cheese should be shared with the fairies on

a smaller plate on an altar. You should meditate while absorbing the food and take their full metaphysical radiance into your being. Give full attention to the flavours, even of the water and let yourself feel your body responding to it. Love your body. Explain to it what is happening as if it were a simple-minded, innocent companion.

Hunger pangs tend to vanish after the first twenty four hours of a fast and after that the delightful feeling of lightness and calm that comes upon you tends to make it deliciously easy to stay on it. Don't take to your bed. You won't be feeble or ill. Light activity as normal will be not only possible but highly desirable.

Your retreat should include time outside at night, and at least one lengthy meditation and attunement to it, especially the full moon, but as I've said, frequent meditations on the moon throughout its phases during the whole retreat are a powerful aid to seeing fairies. Stare at it until you can feel it staring back. Smile and feel her smile. Or if it's a he for you, feel his smile. Ask her/him to help you see fairies.

Locate Venus and do the same. Venus might make you want to dance and if you feel uninhibited, do so. If you have any feelings for any other stars, seek them and attune to them too. If you can't see them, just think about them.

While attuning to the plants around you some will have attracted you more than others. Focus on some of these. Remember that you are shifting to your seer-self's perceptual modes and be aware of slight personality changes. You might feel softer, more serene, smilier, and you might even feel sentimental. Let yourself. Feel the gentle pull of the mind of a flower and let it draw out your fairy nature for you, just as a five year old child might.

Don't be surprised if you suddenly feel accustomed to all this – your seer-self is! If you feel a sudden wave of affection as if for an old friend, between you and a daffodil, recall that that's what you are, old friends, because we bond with flower friends in our earliest childhood, and

they never let us go, but love us always. Don't be surprised if you catch yourself calling a rosebush 'darling one', or a daisy 'beloved'. They expect it and they respond in kind. These are plant spirits, and you might glimpse human forms among them, hovering between you and a plant, just the face, or a whole person, or using tricks of the light, and accidents of line and shape to suggest a human form among their leaves. Smile when you see them, or say something, because they observe you and try to delight you. Once you are aware of those, it won't be long before the flying fairies, garden elves and other aerial beings get to know about you and they'll begin to try to show themselves to you too.

On the other hand, especially if your place is noisy or subject to sudden interruptions you might feel stimulated and energised instead. Here you may begin to catch fleeting glimpses of small intense little beings that take you by surprise. They appear suddenly and you instantly lose sight of them, or else you suddenly become aware that one has been staring very intently at you for a long time, but again, as soon as you see it, it's gone. These are insectile, with iridescent wing covers and helmet-like carapaces on their heads – fun and dynamic to be with.

Watch birds, too, and lizards, as many small fairies and elves ride on them, or ghost them to transport themselves, manoeuvring them into conspicuous positions for viewing 'humans viewing elves'. This applies also to many wild animals, including bats. If any seems particularly tame or foolhardy, or to behave in some conspicuously unusual way, watch it carefully through half-closed eyes. Sometimes the elf or fairy may leave it to appear near it within a sort of haze that is fairly easy to see.

If you are in an area that is sufficiently woody, even if it's only half a back yard full of trees and bushes, or a library with plenty of that sort of thing in it, and you've been thinking about fairies a lot, you might meet a brownie. The kind you would look for is the one who inspires the brownie lore behind the Brownie movement for little girls aged

eight to ten, with Brown Owl, Grey Squirrel, and the like. These come readily to dedicated shrines, and help enormously in regulating the access that other fairies have to you and the courtesy with which they treat you. Give them honey, milk and sweet cakes or bread.

If you have large stones in your place, loudly call the gnomes. They'll make you talk, out loud if they can, because they read the ocean of thought from which we select the things we say, reading volumes of thought process, experience and attitude for every word we speak. When we speak, not only do we stream vast amounts of data through our minds in the selection process involved in deciding what to say and which words to use, but also when we've chosen a word, our reactions set in motion waves and depths of subtle response of which we're scarcely aware but which the gnomes revel in. If you give them a crystal, a charged stone or gem, or metal object, they'll be pleased. They adore cats' eye marbles and cheap glass spheres.

Some fairies will try to make you laugh, dance or sing, whistle or hum a melody, and if possible, this can be exquisitely enjoyable, even if you're not accustomed to it. It often brings the fairies very close and after losing yourself in the performance you may be taken by surprise to see them thronging around you, leaning against your knees, and climbing into your lap with delight. They might even pull your beard if you've got one, or cling to your plaits. They may make you speak or sing in other languages if you know any.

If you can sleep outside among them, like tramps of old, that's ideal, but otherwise, try to make the transition from being with them to being asleep as continuous and flowing as possible. If you can, at the end of the day go straight to the room you will sleep in and spend some time writing in a leisurely way about the experiences you've had that day. Or write poems, stories or whatever you feel inspired to write, bearing in mind that at these times, if you've made successful fairy connections even if you weren't aware of them at the time, you may be replete with their communications to you, and this is an optimal time to channel them, either onto

paper, or verbally onto cassette or as music or dance, alone or in the company of selected friends.

4. WITHDRAWAL

When it's time to come off your fast, ideally at the time of the half-moon waxing, if you've fasted for seven days you should take seven days to come off it and make the transition to your new diet designed to maintain the enhanced fairy vision. Meanwhile, other activities bring you out of the deep enchantment of the fairy worlds and reorient you to the mundane world around you. Here are some suggestions for week four.

Day one: Add one teaspoonful of rosehip syrup, or one tablespoon of apple juice or raspberry or blackberry juice to each glass of water, and drink five glasses full over the course of the day. Up to three tsp of honey. Let your senses fully explore each flavour as it happens. Give thanks and say, sing, pipe, drum or chant your farewells.

Day two: As day one, but add two or three teaspoons of rosehip syrup building up to about five, or slowly increase the proportion of juice to water to half and half. Have one tablespoon of goat's milk yoghurt or kefir five times a day. Unbuild temporary structures, clear altars, uncast circles.

Day three: During the day drink three glasses of rosehip syrup in water as strong as you like, or full strength berry or apple juice. Have two tablespoons of yoghurt or kefir three times a day. Eat two or three walnuts or other nuts, such as hazel, pecans or almonds (not cashews). Drink tisanes as desired using herbs such as mint, catnip, hollyhock flowers (especially if feeling jittery) borage, vervain, lemon balm, sage or thyme (but be careful of the latter until you are off the fast). Tidy and restore the site.

Day four: As Day Three but only two glasses of syrup or juice, and add an apple, pear or other fruit. Eat slowly with awareness. Wild fruits such as blackberries are to be preferred. You can also

begin nibbling herbs and salad vegetables in the garden if you have them. Tisanes or water as desired. Be aware of the depth of the fairy enchantment as it fades and you return to your material senses. Remind yourself not to delete the memory of it. Some of it will become more meaningful in retrospect.

Day five: Substitute for one serve of yoghurt or kefir a small bowl of porridge or meusli or a slice of wholemeal bread with unsalted butter. You can add a small amount of dried fruit and some crushed nuts to the porridge or have them separately. Have a glass of vegetable juice (unsalted) or vegetable cooking water with the midday serve of yoghurt. You could substitute a boiled egg for the second serve of yoghurt. Meditate on the enchantment of your everyday life and how the magic of the fairy retreat might enhance it or change it.

Day six: As day five, but increase the amount of nuts seeds and dried fruit, substitute a small lightly dressed herby salad for the vegetable juice, chewing slowly and appreciating every flavour, and have two eggs and three pieces of fruit.

Day seven: As day six, but add a piece of bread, and you can have a small piece of meat, poultry or fish or cheese with your evening meal. Hare, goat, or rabbit are good meat, but lamb will do. Most freshwater fish are wonderful.

Thereafter, you'll find your way into your own preferred diet, keeping the emphasis on natural uncooked or simply-cooked fresh foods, plenty of nuts and herbs, with meat not more than once or twice a week, and honey, not sugar, for sweetening, and herbal beers such as hops, horehound or ginger, flower wines and mead *pour aider la digestion*.

By adding or changing items one at a time, you'll begin to find your own body's responses to food and drink and events like music, films and parties intelligible and be able to use these stimuli not only to build and maintain health more successfully, but also to enable you to find the

most appropriate fairy wavelengths and stay on them for as long as you're comfortable there.

I advise against using refined sugar and stimulants, but I must admit that some fairies are easier to find if you're on a sugar high, and black coffee or coca cola facilitate communion with some kinds of elves (so does working with technology). But with proper meditation, for example yoga, and substituting very sweet, high-pitched music for sugar, and rock and roll or flamenco for coffee, you can do without these drugs (and live longer, too!)

SerpentStar



Magazine and newsletter of
The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids
in the Southern Hemisphere.



Willy Wagtail nestlings. Photo by wy

Beltang 2013

NATIVE PLANT SPIRITS

AWAY IN

Vivyan Ogma Wyverne

Because native plants have evolved for so long in the rich, myriad mindscape of this land, we relatively recent migrants have to learn new ways to find our way in to the spirit worlds that plants can reveal to us.

European plant spirit lore is basic to us, and we also have the wisdom the aborigines are now sharing, so that we can make ourselves intelligible to the plant spirits and their allies. Appropriation isn't necessary. It is simply respectful to understand what it means that the place you are in is goanna, ant or wallaby country and that some aspects of its life are under cosmic law which is still being administered (more and more peaceably) by aborigine dream-time spirits.

The Alcheringa is a way of categorising elements of the cosmic mindscape or matrix, and as such is in the public domain. Findhorn's idea of a deva, from Hindu folk wisdom complements the idea of dreaming, so it is extremely helpful to keep both in mind.



Mallee, woman tree

A dreaming is a constellation of potentialities. The deva is the dreaming's predisposition to manifest

those potentialities as living beings. When the mallee dreaming manifests as a tree, it is a mallee tree. When from the same category of latent qualities a human being manifests, that's a mallee woman. As an animal, the same spirituality manifests as a small marsupial, the marla, or rufous hare wallaby. It's also a place and a people. All mediate the earth mother complex. Both draw experientially from the same well-springs of cosmic experience.

The Aborigines talked of their dreaming places in the sky, just as European herbalism associates a celestial array with each plant, so it's a cosmic spirituality, not just an earthly one.

And while the Aborigines recognised that spirituality when it manifested in Australia, it naturally manifests as a full range of plants, animals, people and other entities throughout the world – and beyond. Nevertheless, many Aboriginal 'gods' recorded by early anthropologists are sheer post-romantic period fantasy. I invoke the biome not baïame.

It is important to be aware that we are strange to the spirit people we are going to be interacting with, and that the living places, plants and other entities we are going to encounter on this journey are vulnerable. If we are crass or clumsy we might harm some of them, so they fear us. The nearer to the ground the more sensitive the politics, so always be courteous and sensitive in approaching a plant if you want to invoke the plant spirit, because they may flee out of their plant till you're gone if you are too eager and impatient for results. It helps to verbally promise humility and respect with exaggerated gestures, and I know from poignant experience how much it helps to confirm your participation in the 'sorry' process.

Most of us have highly evolved psychic senses, dormant perhaps, or awakening, or wide awake at least sometimes, which have evolved on other continents amidst other flora and fauna, under the richly various enchantments of a whole different array of fairies and nature spirits. Most of us will have had since birth a whole range of helpers and

guides and teachers in the worlds beyond. They too must be honoured and their gifts can be used to greatly enhance the whole experience of talking to plants. We are meeting Aborigine fairies for the first time and need to take things slowly and remain sensitive to their response – most people find them delightful to work with once you show them due honour.



Lichens on prickly moss

I fell haphazardly into the meditation that the following plan is designed to help you into in an orderly fashion. I made all the mistakes, incurred the wrath of all the fiercest fairies, unwittingly terrorised beings till I was forced to see them, and generally speaking, I rushed in where angels fear to tread. Not all these steps will be necessary every time. Some can be glossed over sometimes. Others might need to be dwelt on. It's a matter of honing your instincts and crafting your own path.

Here's my step by step plan:

1. Centre yourself. Be aware of who you are. If you like circle magic, cast or imagine a circle around yourself and let yourself be drawn to its centre. Otherwise, meditate for a few moments on the inner peace you find within you, that you recognise as your own. Know who you are, love who you are, and let yourself live vividly in the moment.
2. Attune. Attunement is an on-going process. It begins at birth or upon taking up residence in the land and continues throughout life. With or without intending to, we are continually cultivating an awareness of where we are, what our contexts are and what surrounds us, and the way we fit in. Mental attunement involves knowing, and improves with everything you learn. It can involve being aware politically, socially, ecologically, as an animal in the landscape, as a fairy among the faerie and as a dreaming among dreamings. Emotional and spiritual attunement are sometimes more subtle, but whether we are articulate about it or not it is happening. Becoming conscious of that process enables us to give it more energy, more space, to nurture and cultivate it, to bring it under our control.

While we attune to the environment, the environment attunes us to it and we attune it to us. It can be more or less perfect attunement – no need to strive for it, because when you express a need for it, all nature responds helpfully. Be aware of sacred landscape, both Aboriginal and settlers. Make contact with local spirits through reading about them, making shrines and servicing them, and sending kindly thoughts ahead of you as you walk in the land. It is not necessary to have visited Uluru, but it's helpful. Eat local plants – bush tucker. Live locally, camping out if possible, beneath the stars is best. Or

For example, as I enter Adelaide on a bus I ask the city to guide and protect me and help me get around in what is for me unfamiliar territory. This has changed going to town from a rather fraught ordeal to a happy and enriching gala day. On its own such a rapport can make a real difference to how you feel about living or being in an area. From greater to smaller, shift your awareness to your own locality within the greater area, to the garden or spot you are in and then narrow your focus to the plant or group of plants you are aiming to commune with.

All this can be wordless. Some people with busy, chattering brains might want to photograph, sketch, or sing to the plant, or play music, or dance with it. Others skilled in meditation will easily find their way to a shared silence which can be more articulate than words themselves, imparting inspiration that will later unravel in dreams, fantasies, stream of consciousness and your personal omeny - anything from a sense of friendship to a detailed awareness of the inner chemistry of the plant. It's at this stage that you are likely to encounter plant spirits that appear human-like, but with barked skin and twiggy limbs, or flower fairies, tree spirits and the land fairies from round about. Native plants are just learning to form and interact with these European types. They can guide us to the Tuckonies, or Aborigine diminutives, with whom many of them work hand in hand.

8. Ask the deva to commune with you. This is often not really necessary, but you don't know for sure until you get there. Feeling nervous and humble, I was originally a bit scared of my own temerity in addressing the sandalwood tree like that, even though I had faithfully followed instructions in the Ovate gwersi of the OBOD course. Would it be aware of me? Would it understand? I was invoking it as a living tree, a

dreaming, a mythos, a symbol, an individual and an object of scientific interest, and I feared I might be crashing into its inner peace with less than finesse. But it held me still and stilled my mind until I received in clear detail its words: 'I am an awareness... you are called to this work'. By this I understood that it was not my temerity that brought me to its feet, but the need of this land for its shamans. It will awaken us if we give it half a chance, and if we are patient and committed to 'the good of all beings' it will make good, useful shamans of us.



Moonah, or old woman tree

if gardening in the suburbs, research the area to which the plants you wish to know about are native and try to visit it if possible.

3. Shift into ritual mode. A bard or ovate might take a wand or don a special hat or costume that gives a visual indication to the spirit beings who watch us. A druid might pull on a robe. Announce sacred time and sacred space and orient yourself to the new enchantment, maintaining an awareness that the fairy worlds are already abuzz with the news of you and arriving in orderly or disorderly array to watch, participate and guide and assist the magic. Announce in words, preferably spoken out loud, who you are.



Edible waterbush berries

4. Obtain the consent and blessing of the beings who guide and guard you by name if known. These would include ancestors, soul-group members and spirit friends, spirit guides, guardian angels, watchers and helpers. If you are this far in, no doubt you have Aborigine spirit guides at the ready. Whether you are actively aware of them or not, acknowledge them, invite them in and ask for their blessing and consent.
5. Address the continent. Australia for example is a separate creation, an entity with decided ego boundaries, and a unique soul and spirit all its own. You might see it as a map, or as viewed from a satellite, or

let images and events from your experience of travelling through the land or dwelling in it or studies done on-line or from books pass through your mind – people and animals, city and country, Australia. In a couple of sentences, ask for the inner dreamtime spirit of the land to help your magic. In effect, you are offering yourself as a shaman to unfold the mysteries of her manifestation and to learn to use her latent magic for the benefit of the planet and beyond.

6. Honour Uluru and ask a blessing of power for the quest (she can withhold it if she fears you). The aborigines insist that she fell as an egg from the sky, and though science has other theories, it is not impossible that the continents arrived on earth one after the other as moons that circled long enough to attune and then fell into the ocean at the time of the massive extinctions noticed in the fossil record. Highly controversial of course, but it does help to let go of scientific dogma, which is constantly under review anyway, and be open to the magic of spirit communication.
7. Now zero in. Acknowledge the country or cityscape you are in and in a sentence or two, tell it who you are and what you are doing. The area may be as small or large as you experience it as being. It helps if you establish a grove, temple or sacred garden, and give it a name which you can tell to the spirits who attend magic rites. Ask for guidance into the magic of the plant or place or animal etc. Let images of its people, places, trees and animals, and memories of feelings and impressions fill your mind, and address this myriad collectively, as the spirit of the place, rather than trying too soon to invoke a personification. It has its own will, and after years of ritual and daily rapport it will show you its own array of personifications, tailored to your own needs.



Sandalwood, guardian male

be evil and trying to eliminate them. All species are due respect and kindness, even the angry or enraged ones that are sometimes encountered. There are no evil demons, just some entities with whom we have not succeeded in making peace. If you maintain peaceful attitudes to all, success is sure to follow.

So happy wild-crafting. A world of magic awaits you!

FOLLOW THE GLEAM: NWYFRE

wyverne

Not all druids identify as animists, but many are, whether they know it or not. The word comes from the Latin word for a living being or spirit, mind or soul. Animism considers the entire universe to be alive and conscious, from atoms forged in the blazing centres of stars through biological life-forms such as the plants and animals of our own planet to the great celestial organisms we see as the stars in the night sky.

Many animists add that this all-pervading livingness makes itself intelligible to fey people through humanlike plant and animal spirit people, fauns, fairies, elves, angels, benign devils and daemons, elementals, dryads, aerial weather spirits, gnomes, pixies and the myriad nature spirits of many other cultures, the local native cultures in particular, who can help us to attune ourselves to the wider contexts of the extended network they help us to weave.

Science tells us that the material world is made of atoms, each one infinitely packed with structure and flow, like the organs of animals or the structures within a cell. They are all impressionable and responsive to stimuli, and capable of intricate proactive negotiation with their neighbour atoms in forming molecules or in their free states. There's a constant exchange of information occurring across the interfaces between subatomic particles, between atoms, molecules, cells, plants and animals, and between the celestial bodies comprising the galaxies and other great beings of the cosmos. In effect there is a network of communication which incorporates the food web and the human communications networks. What this means to a magician is that we are in continuum not just with those networks of the primitive contact telepathy of the social animals we still are, or the food-web and ecological systems; or the zodiac magic between us and the planets and stars; or the elemental forces of the material world all around us although

all of those are vitally important; but also to the networks we as a species generate: the culture, the mass media and the world wide web.

The sum total of impressions held in each aeons-old atom of earth is like a causal cone, a 'Ceridwen's cauldron', a rich brew of events and qualities, principles and dimensions, garnered from myriad 'text-rich' events and encounters in deep space and deep within the atmosphere, on their way to becoming part of the earth and during their evolution ever since. Whatever is communicated across any of the interfaces forming this universal network is the result of much process, sorting of data, filtering, censoring, deleting, expanding, filing away, etc, and the resultant emanation of meaning-replete patterns of flow and disturbance is nwyfre'. It is mindfully controlled by the negotiation among all its parts. It can be the mere nuance of an awareness glimmering instantaneously in the heart of an atom as it comes into being in a distant galaxy not yet born; or the sights and sounds of the whole of a Hollywood movie; or the symphony of subtle, complex, deeply meaningful impressions we receive when communing in silent or chatty meditation with a tree or when reading a book. If, as I've said, this nwyfre forms a vital, mindful fabric of constantly changing stimulus and response, cause and effect, stasis and flow, not unlike the turbulence and flow of human experience, surely by understanding it we can learn to read it, manage it wilfully and use it magically to optimise our own personal experience and to practice good magic worthy of the name of 'druid' in our troubled world.

Just as our bodies are made of vast constellations of aeons old atoms, so our minds are constellations of knowledge, memory and thought, incorporating detailed impressions from a lifetime of experience, including all the films, books and music that enrich our lives, to say nothing of the people and animals and even plants that we include among our family and friends and wider social milieu. Any human being is a fountain of nwyfre. That's why ritual touching is part of life – part of the subliminal knowledge we have of each other. A

conscientious druid is able to harness and direct the nwyfre, extracting it selectively from consenting sources or learning to generate it and use it skilfully, in accord with a finely focused magical intention. This is what a well-constructed magic circle facilitates, extending and fine-tuning the magician's focus, power and influence in much the same way as an astronomer's telescope extends and specialises the vision of the star-gazer, or as a detailed map assists a traveller.

With or without a circle, it's fairly easy to learn to see a flow of nwyfre-rich energy using a wand or staff or a crystal with at least one good 'shooting' point, or just your fingers, at least to start with. You may just spontaneously happen to find yourself 'energised', exhilarated or vibrant with some exciting radiance from dancing or gardening or meeting with friends, or you may prepare yourself by casting a circle and doing a simple or elaborate light body ritual followed by three awens for attunement, or using chant, drumming or ritual dance.

When you feel radiant with power, hold your magical tool or your bare hands close to your solar plexus and breathe steadily, willing the nwyfre from your body to flow into the object and fill it. You might chant something like 'healing power in my hands (wand, crystal, etc), magic power in my fingers (etc), or just 'magic fingers, healing hands' or you might try a dramatic, commanding 'healing nwyfre flow!' Speaking words aloud or in our mind helps us to be focused and articulate about our intentions, which helps the magic.

This flow is easy to see, especially against a dark backdrop. It is similar to the energy that can be seen flowing between your fingertips if you hold them an inch or so apart and bring them slowly together. In a healthy, energised system this radiance appears sparkling clear. You can easily train yourself to see the radiant electromagnetic field, which is a major 'smart' carrier of nwyfre, especially surrounding your fingertips. It is at its brightest and most active when you are in tip top health, happy and confident and have optimised your relations with

your social, natural and magical environment enough to have the good will of most of your neighbours, since like it or not we are all contributing to a collective mentality and nothing is more empowering than the common consent.

Even a beginner can successfully charge magical items such as charms and amulets, or cast exquisite circles for seasonal rituals, fizzing with good exciting effective magic with a wand, hands, symbolic items or crystals or whatever charged in this way. Or it can be discharged beneficially into the life field of a sick friend or animal, plant, garden, city or town, or even the earth itself via whatever symbols you choose to attune for the purpose.

It is important to understand that the flow we see here is not 'in' everything, but is like a specific medium which carries nwyfre, and flows around the all material objects, even subatomic particles and vast galaxies, like the interstitial fluids that carry the biochemically coded information around the body of an animal or plant. It's real and dowsers can detect it, and it registers on scientifically designed sensors as real energy capable of having real physical effects. There are good reasons to believe it is not inert – not much in nature is – but interacts with the information it carries in a way that you might call 'smart', trafficking intelligently organised nwyfre about from one part of the system to another, from the atmosphere to the birds, for example, and vice versa, keeping us all separate but engaged in a kind of eternal conversation, in the loop, so to speak, in accord with the wisdom of the higher collectivities, the spirits, devas and angels, for example, in negotiation with the inner potential mediated through our genes and our humanity. Or from the tip of a well-crafted wand to a collection of symbolic items selected for inclusion in a druid's egg.

The interstitial fluids of a human being convey chemical information, while the electromagnetic field is rich in what psychics call psychometric energy. It's a confusing term, referring to the psychic impressions that certain gifted people can

gain bringing past scenes to vivid consciousness upon holding an object such as a ring or watch that once belonged to someone else. The psychic might see and hear actual scenes from that person's life, or from the past experience of the actual object held. So whether you are reading it or not, it is high resolution data which different beings can extract their own species specific experience from. This is as true of objects as of people. So the nwyfre channelled by the ring in the psychometrist's hand is the equivalent of a psychical experience or a dream or a vision in human awareness. Of course it is possible to argue that the ring has no consciousness of the experience flowing through it when a human being wears it next to the skin, within his/her electromagnetic field, but how could anyone know? For all our pride in human science with its most advanced knowledge of the biochemistry of thought and emotion in human beings, the 'seat' of consciousness remains a beautiful, totally elusive mystery.

As so often the case in magic, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Anyone who takes a few simple steps in developing a working interface with a properly enchanted magical tool risking little or nothing in a few moments of suspended disbelief now and then will observe without doubt that the tool responds as a responsible being in its own right. Wands communicate intelligently, crystals bond with you, druid's eggs call you and feed from you and need you to incubate them, and stranger things happen as you go deeper in. It is therefore customary to address your tools with great respect and treat them as kindly and considerately as you would a room-mate or dancing partner. Allow, for example, that they have minds of their own. They are constantly streaming experience and communicating experience-rich energy to everything around them, just like everything else. Experienced practitioners will agree that your magical life becomes deeper, richer, friendlier and more meaningful if you talk to your wands, show concern for their welfare and ask with pleases and thank yous, and give them treats: a song, a poem, incense, a ring.

Everything contributes impressions to the nwyfre circulating and percolating through the material world. It's like white noise, and like the colour white, can be made to show its inner spectra. Theoretically it should be possible to do this in an infinite number of ways, but nature uses a restricted palette, leaving a major part of the artistry to us.

Magic is a kind of metaphysical technology. It uses mind over matter to influence events using metaphysics, governing the flow of change, the shifts of emphasis, the management of morphic resonance etc., through symbols, ritual, metaphors, stories, myths, fantasy and folklore and the sentimental and practical poetic of everyday life. Almost all of this magic involves the management of nwyfre, so it is worth dedicating some time and energy to the study of it. A web search will show you how others are using the word, and how they make use of whatever they think it is. Keep adding to and enriching your sense of what it is by trying to maintain an awareness of it in everyday encounters. Meditation upon the word itself is sure to be rewarded by an enhanced sense of what it is. Advanced meditators should theoretically be able to penetrate to the collective sense of the word and thus intuit a deeper sense of its meaning, but most of us are not quite so advanced and besides, our co-operation in crafting new meanings for these old magical words is all part of the magic.

Naturally the most important magical tool is yourself, and the nwyfre you carry and communicate will pervade your magic, so let it be healthy, vital and smart, and may its radiance be for the good of all beings.

Notes:

- 1) Some people use this word differently.

FOLLOW THE GLEAM: BUILDING BRIDGES

vyvyan ogma wyvernne

Being a natural philosopher at heart I like to have a reasonable basis for my belief. As a druid in mixed society, when my beliefs are questioned I appreciate the credibility that goes with having a sound rationale. I try to ensure that a *scientific* description of the material world supports my belief in *nywfre* as a flow of information-dense effects through the network of communication that interconnects all material beings. So I will begin with a glance into the magic of the rich and varied world that is within the range of our ordinary perception and proceed later to the so-called 'invisible' worlds that exist beyond that range.

If I stand near a tree, its radiance mingles with mine. They interact and both are changed, charged with the excitation of this new stimulus, which we communicate to everything around us. The same happens if a rock fetches up under a tree, or in my hand. As a human being I have special senses - of sight and sound, smell, taste and touch - which read the radiances of the material world, streaming data to my brain where I construct my perception of reality. This means I can create much more dynamic interfaces than I otherwise could, reading much more of the detail encrypted in just the light, for instance, simply by looking at things, stones, trees, yes, but also far-off mountains, the rising sun, the distant stars and galaxies, and indeed everything that radiates or reflects the colours of the spectrum of light. In dividing the light in this way I am part of the processing of light - light changes as it changes me. I respond to it and it responds to me.

These exchanges may be subtle, but as a human being, I have a brain as well as senses, a brain that generates a mind that

categorises and stores information selectively according to nuances more subtle than I can bring to consciousness. It's a mind that gives or finds in or for everything a meaning, and it responds to everything with feeling, understanding and imagination to categorise, judge, wish for, repel or condition the *nywfre* in all sorts of ways. All the time I am feeding back my responses to the whole through the beings nearest me, and contributing to its evolution.

All of this is dynamic and effective and all of it is magical. The power that the mind exercises over matter, which medical scientists know can cause psychosomatic illness when random, repressed or abused, can also enhance life when used consciously and may be used creatively for all kinds of exciting and beneficial magical effects beyond healing. We have before us the task of learning how to use it.

The universe is logical; our physiology is logical and we think logically, but within the infinitely packed reality we inhabit, our ever-evolving minds are as yet not capable of comprehending more than a relatively small range of logical systems of limited extent, which we work very hard to extend, for example, through education and intelligently sought-out experience and the mass media developed for the purpose. The magic of mind over matter is *also* logical, and it is by understanding the default logic, which doesn't foreground human needs over those of other beings, that we learn to advance *beyond* it and contribute to the evolution of the more human-friendly logicistics of the metaphysicist's reality. Nature doesn't mind if our planet dies - we do, and we can save it by taking control of our proper share of the planetary magic.

Logic maintains and manages the relationships between systems in the universe. Some of the logic governing physics is so simple that its laws can be written as

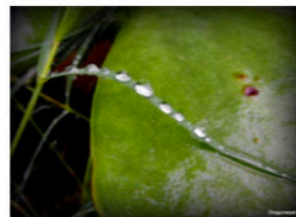
mathematical formulae. Other logic, such as that of children's play is whimsical, witty and subtle, often submerged and not obvious, with so many variables that it takes child psychologists years of study to begin to discern it. Our species is timidly and cautiously learning to reason logically, experimenting creatively with meaning, relationship and idea, observing the energetics and transformative power of ideas, observing the poetic force of thought, feeling and experience, beginning to understand how attitude can heal or harm us, learning the consequences of faulty, simplistic or misapplied logic along with those of sound reasoning. And in doing so we are learning to believe in the magic.

The more logically we reason, the more realistically we view the world and the more appropriately we interact with it. Even people who seem to be illogical are simply following an inner logic of their own that does not necessarily mesh seamlessly with that of others, though at least equally sound. It may even be less flawed than the common logic, not more so. We should respect all paths even at that level, even if they clash with our own, perhaps even paths less respectful than our own.

All this is obvious when we consider the visible world, and equally true when we begin to search the edges of our consciousness for evidence of what exists beyond. So far I have considered only the material universe, without addressing the question of aether, the light body, the astral plane and so on. The reason for this is that we need to be sure of our material body's clarity and to affirm what so many spiritual pathways still often deny - the validity of the here-and-now life of the biological body we live in and through.

The surface of any object infinitesimally small to infinitely vast, including humans, receives and responds to information about its environment. A mirror reflects reality. Images

are created in it by virtue of what happens when light strikes its surface. Many birds and animals are imitative, and will, upon receiving impressions from other animals, mimic them, or mirror them. In the zodiac reflections of the great celestial patterns generated in the intricate spiral dance of galaxies and stars, and planets and their moons contribute to and reflect the myriad forces affecting the lives of small mammals on earth, including our human selves.



We're used to seeing and responding to, mimicking and mirroring the actions of our fellow creatures, of birds, mammals, reptiles, fish, insects etc. We do it mindfully, and who's to say trees don't? Being motile, our gestures are writ large, purpose-built for the sensoria we've evolved. We can see our fellow animals responding to hunger, love, fear, joy, anger, pain and the passions of oestrus, social competition and the hunt. It's different when we come to appreciating the life experience of a plant.

The plant seems still, usually needing a breeze or other disturbance to move its leaves, the roots fixed firmly in the ground. We can't see the writhing, twisting, bustling activity of its growth - time-lapse photography had to be invented to show us that, and even then, its dance has not necessarily evolved as a means of communication. It tells us about the growth habits of plants, but except in a very few anomalous species does not seem

wyvernne's words

to demonstrate responsiveness to fellow creatures, and tells us nothing about the inner experience of the plant.



Microbiology does lift the veil a bit. It's a precise science and is currently making amazing breakthroughs into the biochemical responsiveness of plants. The gushes of pheromones and bating of vital processes, the alterations in tensions and force-fields within the tissues of plants in response to threats such as herbivores, bad weather or pathogens is comparable to that which we find in animals, where we take it for granted it is associated with feeling, with awareness, with intelligence. Plants have a 'fear' response, although just as it is chemically different from our own, it is probably experientially different to the same degree and corresponding to the chemical difference. And plants have attitude: it's basic to their spirituality and anyone can discern it. People often joke about the perkiness of petunias or the bombast of a much-frilled gladiolus, the feistiness of a young pine tree or the gaiety of a bed of annuals. Take it seriously. It's a major key to the fun and magic our favourite garden flowers have brewing for us.

Plant chemistry centres around the flamboyant, light-hearted, extravagant, dancing, delightful magnesium, while that of animals centres around dull, plodding, solid,

pattern-seeking, hard-working, reliable iron. Therefore a sensitive study of magnesium and iron are useful to an ovate seeking to bridge the communication gap between them. Basic chemistry can be a useful starting point. Watching magnesium expend its capacity for inter-reaction with air in an extravagant flare with little energy input while iron absorbs and consumes more and more energy before glowing dully, and still more before passing through the red, orange and yellow part of the spectrum before flaring much more sedately, can help us to understand what sort of bridge across what kind of gradations in what spectra of nature we have to build. Same sort of process, but at a different speed and with comparable but different results.

How do plants experience us? Plants have no visible organ that corresponds to an eye or an ear. We can see only what our very different physiology allows us to see. Certain fine highly active structures in the neurology of the brain are in form so similar to tree branches that they are termed 'dendrites' after a Greek word for a tree. It's not difficult to understand that though they serve different physiological forms, having similar shapes brings them into a special relationship through the natural geometry of forms. Morphic resonance begins to be a feature. Humanity needs to be doing much more research into these areas of plant study, both as scientific studies and as the magical explorations that are much more relevant here to ovates in particular.

Now at about this point, we can turn our attention to the extended reality that becomes accessible to us as we open our psychic eyes. We have to acknowledge that there is another gap to be bridged: the gap between our scientific, *objective* understanding and our own personal *subjective* experience. We have in our support the testimony of generations of fey peoples and fey individuals, accounts of whose daily experience have contributed to the lively traditions in many cultures worldwide of 'plant spirits' in human or

human-like form, traditions that persist in the mainstream imagination as myth even though seldom still believed in - and always have and no doubt always will.

We have no scientific instruments that can verify the claims of seers who talk to plant spirits. Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, and besides, is the subjective experience of millions of believers since the dawn of time not evidence? Obviously, it's unscientific to go *beyond* the evidence so far as to say it isn't.

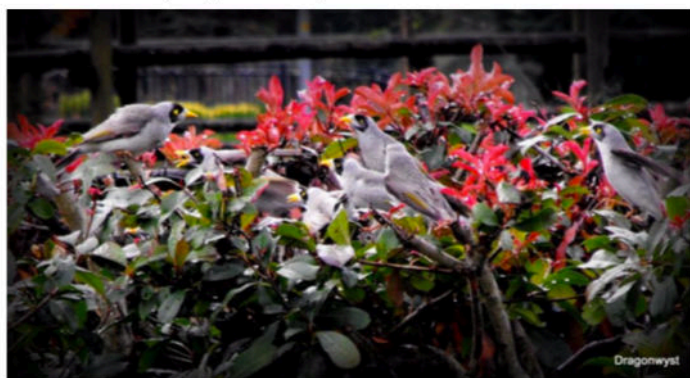
People who practice organic gardening often become conscious of plant spirits. The Findhorn Foundation (see <http://www.findhorn.org/>) revived our current consciousness of them. Rudolph Steiner (see <http://wn.sarchive.org/Lectures/19101208p01.html>) taught us more about them. Cultures worldwide are currently contributing to our knowledge of them in Australia and the world wide web is currently vibrant with the buzz of their magic.

Anyone who takes the time to approach the idea of communicating with plants seriously

can usually fairly readily obtain a glimpse, or other equally clear and unmistakable impression, of a dryad, provided they start with a domestic or traditionally befriendable tree. (Apple tree dryads are willing, patient and druid-friendly teachers, having been family members for millennia and are now Ogham trees as well, and apple wands are easy to enchant).

So the bridge we have to build between our experience and that of plants is apparently being built with equal willingness and enthusiasm from both sides. And the gap between science and subjective or 'psychic' experience is not so difficult to bridge.

Immersion in nature or gardens and parks is necessary for successful communication with plant spirits. If you can't get out and about, work through pictures in books or on line. I've seen plant spirits pop up out of seed-packet pictures. Reading about nature as scientific, faeried, whatever, can deepen and widen the experience and be very inspiring. But one thing is certain: none of it works without an open mind.



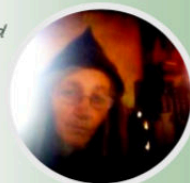
G'day people!

It's been a brisk, windy spring here in the southern mallee. The kangaroo joeys are leaving their mother's pouches and learning to forage, wagtails are breeding prolifically and the reptiles are spreading their magic through the land. As the native pasture grasses are haying off, the days warming up and the skies clearing, it is time for the Beltane 2013 Edition of *SerpentStar*.

With gratitude and applause we farewell OBOD Druid Todd Dearing as editor and wish him every success for the future—see within! Under Todd's care *SerpentStar* has been growing and evolving along with us all, contributors, subscribers and casual readers, members and non-members alike. It is reaching out to more and more people, emerging into the pagan circles as a vital, informative little newsletter packed with great inspiration and plenty of seriously good druid writing. Getting back behind the editor's desk, I find it is time for a skin-change, allowing more room for things to expand to their fullness, and I'm also trying for a sleeker more stream-lined style. And so nothing could be more welcome and blessed than the abundance of pictures and articles and news items of interest that arrived in my inbox for me to work with. A glance at the table of contents on the next page will whet your appetite for a feast of good reading. And while you're enjoying it, think how much contributors benefit from your feedback—a quick email to wyverne@gmail.com will get your encouraging comments on an article, poem, picture or news item into the next issue for all to share. I'd also appreciate your opinion about all things connected with *SerpentStar*.

Condolences and best wishes to members affected by bushfires in the Blue Mountains of New South Wales in October.

May you all have a blessed Beltane!
wy.



2

G'day people!

Welcome to the Lughnasadh issue of *SerpentStar*. It's been a hot summer and some of us will be glad of the cooler weather as the summer heat declines into autumn.

We've had a very exciting three months since Beltane, with the South Australian Beltane Camp with Dámh the Bard our illustrious Pendragon, and the lovely Cerri Lee in November followed by the Assembly in January, where many members were fortunate enough to meet and mingle with our chosen chief, Phillip Carr-Gomm and Stephanie. Read all about it in this issue. There's even a full copy of the ceremony of the Golden Grove, so even if you weren't there, you can still attune while reading through. Not the same as being there, but the next best thing.

Thanks and praise go to those who sent in the poems and pictures and articles that fill these pages.

Announcement: Owing to a lack of interest, the print copy will be phased out and there'll be no new subscriptions from now on. There are only two paper subscribers now, and their subscriptions will be honoured. Of course you can still subscribe on-line, and that's still free.

The wheel of the year turns and the sequence of the seasons continues. May you all enjoy the time to come.

In the peace of the grove.
Wyverne /A

G'day people!

Imbolc has arisen, the first whispers of the returning warmth can be felt in the breeze. Spring flowers are spreading hopeful petals in sunny springtime gardens. It's time to focus on new beginnings, early childhood, seedlings full of promise, eggs bursting with new life, plans, plots and projects hatching into vital, energized reality. Beyond the garden wall, the chilly grip of winter that slowed all green growth during the rainiest time is being released and the spring flowering is beginning. Find time to listen to the birds. At this time of the year, in city or country, they have so much to say to each other and to us—it's a symphony rich in meaning that perhaps some of us once knew. Thanks to all our wonderful contributors, *SerpentStar* again brings you a load of lovely reading, full of kindly magic and good wishes for the season. *SerpentStar* is again looking for a new editor. If you are interested in taking on this light and cheerful task, details are on page 16.

Under the mallees
Wyverne



3

G'day people!

Samhain is upon us again, the time when the veil between the worlds becomes thin allowing us brief contact with the blessed dead. This is the time to honour ancestors whose spirit still inspires us, heroes and legendary figures of the past and people you have known who have now passed into the worlds beyond. But they're not our only Samhain visitors—this is a time when extradimensional beings might break through that same veil: ghosts, fairies and strange, wild gods undreamt of in our daily lives. Whether you honour them in full-scale ceremony, robed and hooded and blinged to the teeth with magic, or just light a simple candle with an offering of flowers or mead or whatever, may the many blessings of this season fill our lives, both sides of the veil, and spill out into the world around us.

Much kudos goes to all contributors, who have made this issue a beauty, with poems and prose, artwork and photography, all brimming with inspiration and the joy of Samhain.

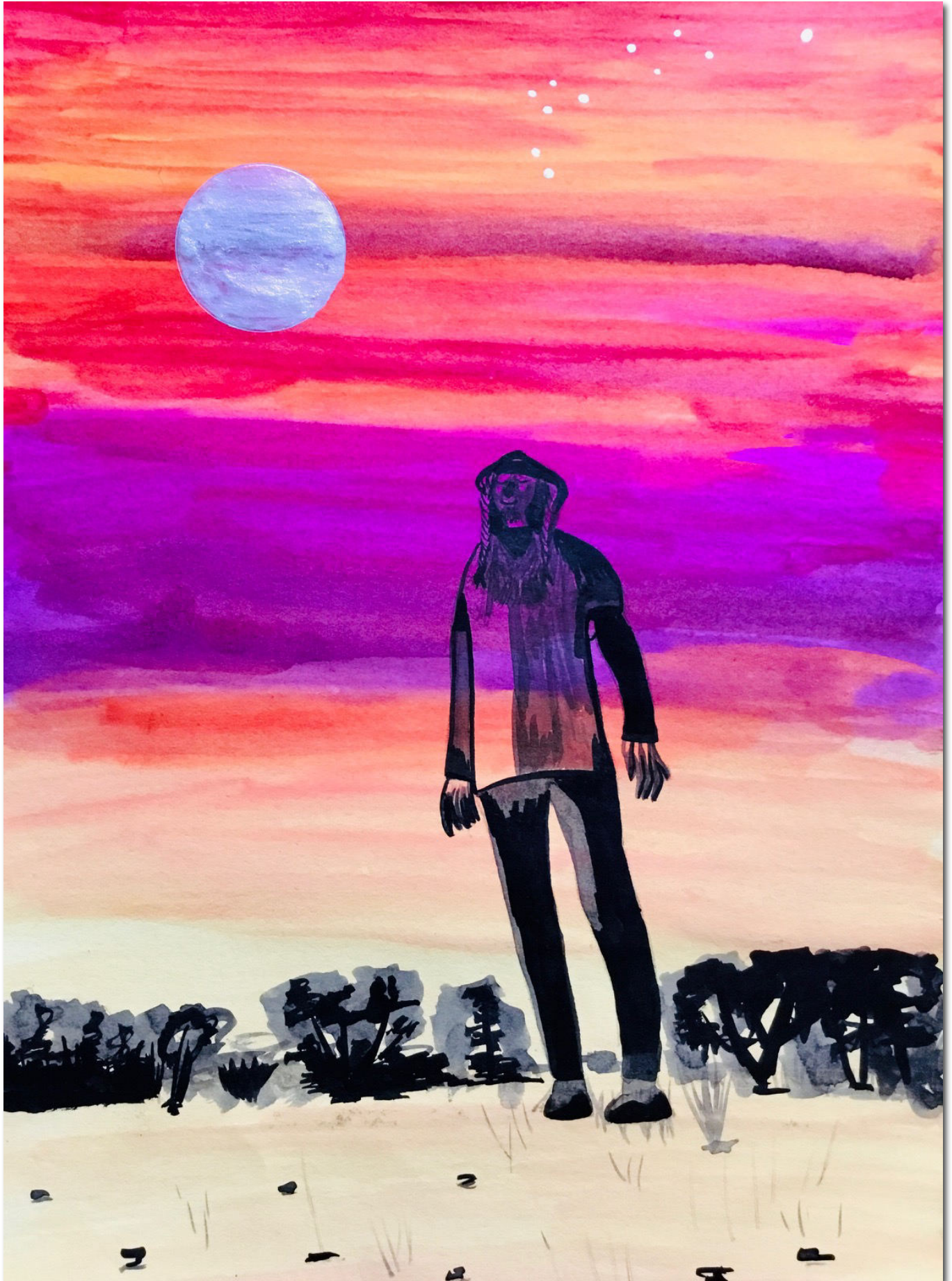
Under the mallees
Wyverne



2

Mallee Treader by Janine Cobb

*Wy. Pathfinder, Mallee Treader, Star Skimmer. Your friendship was as gentle as the zephyrs that stirred the leaves on the Mulga trees.
As powerful as the dust storms, that scooped the red dust from the Mallee and carried it hundreds of kilometres to Melbourne.
Such a beautiful unexpected gift.
I will miss you my friend.*



The Art of Scrying.

By Wyverne



Scrying is gazing into a mirror, chalice of wine or water, blank computer screen, window or other reflective surface until visions appear which may be used for divination or simply explored for their own sake.

Slavic girls once believed they could scry their future husbands through the glass, no doubt a piece of folklore descended from fact. When marriages were arranged between distant cities, brides and grooms exchanged framed, glazed portraits. The memory then lapsed into its current fanciful form. But magic makes mystical use of our mistakes, and the most persistent myths are those reaching for higher truths, more relevant and important enough to make us want that gift. So, we discover in us this latent ability to scry magically; and like water-witching, most people can achieve some success in it easily.

Sometimes scrying happens accidentally. Falling into a reverie while shaving or putting on make-up you find yourself soft-gazing into the mirror; or you might become absorbed in reflections in a shop window, or lost in thought staring at a dark computer screen and there is a shift, very subtle, like the reputed shift from left brain to right brain when drawing, and an image appears, animated and alive, undeniably magical. Or maybe you've always scried in your teacup or wine, and just giving yourself credence is all it takes. This kind of natural scrying is fun but random, and the visions are not guaranteed to be pleasant, or even relevant.

Like any magical practice, scrying is safer with spirit guides and a formal framework. Using a magical space either physical or in the 'inner grove' greatly enhances the scrying experience. Drink water. Cast a circle. Mirrors are under Mercury's dominion, so acknowledge that. If you dedicate a special mirror, you might ask for a guide who will help you bring your mirror to life: perhaps a god or goddess you trust; although mirrors, like wands may develop their own personalities and can become companionable guides. Writing its name in runes around the frame can help magic like that if you're keen, as can giving it selected crystals, herbs and flowers, incense-holder, trinkets etc, and for working at night, a pair of candles can add to the charm.

As you gain expertise, such a mirror can become to your own psycho-space as a computer is cyber-space. It's fun and safe if you treat every vision kindly, even the scary-looking ones. The fear you feel may be theirs. If anything frightens you or seems threatening, simply withdraw to your own inner centre, re-attune to your guides and continue when the mood feels friendly again. Learn to send peace into fraught situations.

Remember uncast your circle and ground yourself after each session. A good relationship with your mirror will work in your favour, enabling you to explore your own psychic abilities, and allowing active contact and communion with the faces and visions you encounter.

May the spirits of the mirror bless you!

Wyverne

Mallee My Mother: The Goddess Tree

by wyverne

Gaia is a complex animal. Her continents are something like the organs of the human body. Each has its own logos, or mindset, and different ways of going about things. These different modes are expressed through the genetics of the planet which give rise to the different animal species. When you compare the fauna and flora of, say, Africa with that of Australia, you find great differences expressed in biomes of great diversity which nevertheless contribute seamlessly to the worldwide continuum of species. Nowhere is this more evident than in the trees.

In Europe of the past, trees have been recognised as important organs within the biome, with roles to play that humans can understand - roles that go far beyond their place in the biophysical networks of exchange, the carbon, nitrogen and water cycles that all lifeforms participate in. Our memory of this recognition has been obscured by the massive achievement of the last several centuries, the growth of technology, science, finance and our great sprawling civilisation of cities, highways and air and shipping lines, our mass media and our greedily consuming society. We rely on mere traces of this former knowledge to jog our race memories and guide us back to rediscover the instincts we once had, that enabled us to know so easily what we now recall with so much difficulty.



A white mallee tree in the prime of life.

The ovate grade gives us a beautiful ritual to help us in this work, and many druids are now 'downloading' from trees information-rich nwyfre which we are reading with more and more confidence and accuracy. Better yet, piecing together memories from this lifetime that we begin retrospectively to recognise as barely conscious communion with trees we have loved, and which we feel have loved us, until some of us feel ready to share what we have gained from our best moments of what we feel is true communion with trees. Even casual work in the ovate way will prepare us to benefit from the communion, but those of us who have spent decades dedicated to the practices of druidry - living consciously in natural surroundings, pursuing lucidity and sensitivity in formal ritual and focused questing, dedicated tree-huggers all - will be aware of how much more conscious understanding the ancient seemingly-silent trees around us have to share with us.



My first communicative contact with the mallee tree occurred well before I began druidry. I had been fasting and meditating in a pyramid in the wilderness, where the rainfall is only ten inches and the mallee stretches for miles in all directions. Not expecting a tree to speak, I had been captivated by glimpses of aboriginal ghosts and loved to wander about, eating the native berries, shoots, flowers and roots (including the harlequin mistletoe so beloved of the old druids) and feel their help and guidance in orienting myself to the land. This is a limestone landscape characterised by small dongas - shallow basins which are actually old filled-up blowholes, made when the still-fluid limestone was setting hard when it was first drained of the ancient ocean that once broke upon a rocky shore near where the River Murray now flows. There is a lot of beautiful magic in these dongas, now almost filled with wind silt from the centre of our continent. My guides often guided me to meditate in them. Parabola-shaped, they seemed to enhance my clairvoyance and indeed all my psychic sensibilities.

Trees are new to the rocky land and their roots find easy passage in these deep dongas which are therefore often ringed with mallee trees - small multi-stemmed eucalypts of the kind that yield the famous oil - bearing great upside-down bushes of mistletoe, harbouring populations of birds and reptiles and smaller creatures too numerous to name. My aboriginal guides made me sit down under the mallee tree and feel her consciousness intertwine with mine.

The first feeling that came over me was the awareness of her power. I knew from an Arunta friend that her name and variants of it all over Australia mean woman. Not just any woman, but 'respected woman' - community-minded, mature, maternal and virtuous. So she represents a feminine ideal. According to the ideas

The name Mallee is closely related to Mula, the Arunta word for Woman.

that I let flow through my mind, the mistletoe she carries on her greyish-white-to-pinkish fawn arm-like branches is her child. Attuned to the human communities around her, her relationship with the mistletoe is affected by the same forces that affect human inter-relationships and our relationship to the land as a species in the ecology. When aborigines lived here in pre-colonial times, and populations of human beings were smaller in more reasonable proportion to the carrying capacity of the land, the mistletoe and mallee grew together in happy harmony, just as the land supported the humans in

wyverne's words

contentment and pleasure. Mother and child, enriching, supporting and loving each other in due measure. When the population exploded with European settlement, the human population became too heavy for harmonious life to continue, the child became a burdensome responsibility, and the mistletoe became a destructive parasite instead of a symbiotic companion, with some poor trees dying under its sap-sucking weight. I noticed that this phenomenon was worse by roadsides and near towns, where the population density has increased and where the stresses of modern living have made child-raising more stressful than it has ever been before. On the other hand, where the mallee scrub is sparse, and the living more difficult, we often see forlorn skeletons of dead mistletoe saplings hanging on mallees that having killed their burden seem somehow apathetic...

Because first and foremost, the mallee is a mother tree. In European tradition the same spirituality, derived from similar subtle qualities is found in the birch tree, and they share a similar capacity to generate the narratives that shape our lives, embodying the laws of human evolution, communicating essential dreaming to our species, our instincts being blocked by our wonderful but ecologically costly brains. As biologists are noting with growing amazement, the tree is very like a brain - not *has* a brain, but *is* a brain, far bigger than our own and less obstructed by the specialisations that we are still in the process of evolving.

I heard the mallee communicating with me by wordless telepathy, which she directed into my mind in such a way as to stimulate me to produce the words I would have chosen had they been my own thoughts.



Hollow trunks, dense much and lots of loose bark - mallee is habitat for myriad species.

This form of telepathy is quite common, and seems to have been used by aborigine seekers for millennia. The first thing she told me was that her roots reach down to the centre of the earth, and her leaves to the outermost atmosphere. Immediately hard reality contradicted this, but she explained that her roots bear sensoria that maintain open lines of communication with the inner and outer planet that actually do constitute veritable extensions of her roots and reach as far as she said. Not material, but absolutely real.

The next thing she told me was that she was a mother in a real sense, and a mother of humanity at that. She gave me images that could easily be interpreted as dot paintings. In her bole - the material, visible part of which is much more than we can see - she conditions spiritual energy replete with information-rich nwyfre and dreamtime narrative from the planetary logos. Taking the template from the millions of human beings who have walked since time immemorial among her gesturing arms, she forms the souls of human females (and certain males as well) and streams them at appropriate times into the places where aboriginal women go when they want a baby, to connect with the spirits and devas who will help them to the right one for them. Thus the babies are born. European women are seldom aware of such things yet they too are supplied from similar sources. And she showed me how my conception was managed in just such a way, so that all my life she's been a kind of second mother - building me up from past, present and future soul-energy, bringing me into alignment with my dreamings, kangaroo, echidna and emu, and keeping my feet on the path home to her to be claimed as a daughter. Never have I felt such love.

Or such grandeur of spirit. Her celestial soul! She seems infinite to my tiny earthbound consciousness. She encompasses in her range of perception far more than the moon and stars of our visible reality. Perhaps she can take us to the implicate order from which the holography that constitutes our planet is maintained, and begin to show us the awesome complexity of our mother planet - who needs such a diverse array of sentient beings to explicate such myriad modes of expression and perception into the vast array of parallel realities we know there must be, and long to experience.



Druids will notice her connection to the wedge-tail eagle, a powerful far-seeing bird.

Ovates will be interested in her medicinal oil which aids convalescence, wards off infections such as coughs and colds, and eases muscular and dental pain.

Bards will find inspiration in her rough beauty and grace, and the many beings she shelters.

Her ogham, of course, is Beith.

Mistletoe - magic herb of the druids - often finds a welcome here.

Entering Wilderness

by vyvyan ogma wyverne

As pagans, by now we know the importance of connecting to the land and most of us have made some conscious attempt to do so. Out of my decades-long immersion in remote, sparsely-populated mallee wilderness here are some of my thoughts on how to connect with nature in a magical way.

Whether your reasons are personal, spiritual or animistic; or to do with yourself, the biome or the planet; or whether you seek mental, emotional or magical contact, it begins with the self - the ego. Nature experiences can be quite awesome, a feast for the senses: so much to take in, so stimulating to our senses and exciting to our minds. It makes sense to prepare for the encounter bodily, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Your body will need plenty of fresh water and quick energy from healthy sources. Your mind should resolve all troublesome quarrels it might be having or put them quietly aside, your soul should be respected and given due honour and allowed to bring forth its best poetry, be it verbal, sensual or just feelingful, and your spirituality calmed and harmonised.

It's sometimes worth doing a small ritual incorporating the light-body exercise or similar. At this time you might find time to enchant any wand, staff, crystals, rune-stones or other charms; or robes or cloaks or hats you might be planning on wearing; flutes, drums, or fiddles, harps or harmonicas. This would be a harmonising rite, and would benefit from having the Schumann resonance played in the background.

Find quiet time to gather your thoughts and feelings about the trip, consider your expectations and any qualms you might have, and let them all have their place. They will all affect the way you respond to what you experience, and affect the magic of your own radiance as it prepares to mingle with the radiances of the natural landscape as you enter it.

Imagine the moment of entry, when birds notice you, when you share space with trees or dip a hand into water. Pictures and information of all kinds will help this meditation. Knowing what species live there, some history of the place's human inhabitants, some geological details can provide further points of contact. All of these become conduits for the magic.

All places are magical, all beings have their magic and all magic is active and alive. As a pagan you are seeking to discover and understand nature's wild magic and learning to use it in ritual and spell-craft, to heal the magic in traumatised wilderness places just as we use it to manage the more mundane magic in our daily lives. So it's good to understand these conduits, these interconnections made by seeing, enjoying, touching, sharing, feeling and moving about, while knowing you are part of a natural scene.

It's nothing mysterious. You are making these magical connections between yourself and the world around you all the time, between yourself and others, between yourself and the materials, plants, animals and objects you encounter, between yourself and the greater world of politics, culture and society viewed through the mass media. These connections form interactive interfaces that mediate real exchanges of text-rich energy, both subtle and not so subtle, charged with nwyfre, replete with tiny memes.

You're spreading happiness, sorrow, fear, ideas, mannerisms, fashion trends and all kinds of information and taking in your share of what others are sharing - participating in the great waves of change, the magical transformations that drive the evolution of our planet and all her species. Contact points may be disharmonious – you learn not to 'poke the bear', and the ovate will benefit from trusty guides and guardians of the wilderness places they visit or move into.

These will filter out vandals and they'll manage and protect beginners, and as you learn respectfulness and responsibility they will help you to build viable interfaces that will gradually activate your subtle sensitivities, deeply enhancing the way that magic works through you. If you ask it, they may even assist you in opening your psychic eyes. If you go with good intentions you will usually find a welcome.

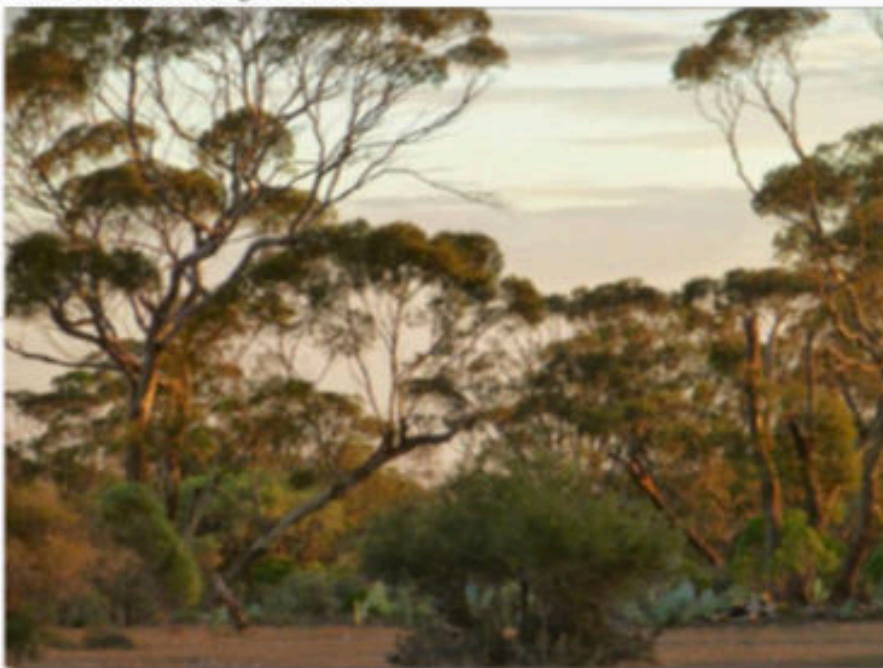
All this is very subtle, and like trails of tenuous gossamer can be easily spoiled. Just as our neurology works best when our cells are clear and healthy, so we need clear, healthy senses; calm, orderly minds; realistic information; lively imaginations; optimistic, happy feelings and good, honest intentions. That's when we do our best magic, both consciously in ritual and sublimely in our everyday lives.

Our body perfumes mingle with the pheromones of plants, the exhaust of traffic and industry, and the breezy breaths of deserts and oceans. Learning to manage those interfaces is what the ovates' most rewarding task would seem to me to be. You may like to consider the amount of energy and attention you give the place before you get there – energy replete with your attitudes, feelings and magic impacting remotely in myriad tiny ways on the whole community of entities - while you are opening your mind to what you can glean of the energy of the information you have about the place.

Depending on how deeply you intend to connect – from a pleasant afternoon walk in a park to a months-long nature retreat in unspoiled wilderness; from a few minutes to a life-time; from a few photos through a café window to a detailed study of the botany; you can craft your interfaces with nature and her many lively beings with ritual, spontaneous acts of magic and skillful management of the enchantment of the visit.

Myth, mystery, history and fantasy, poetry and song, a listening meditation, a sense of the numinous, sensitivity to the varying energies of the biome, an open mind, a love of nature and a philosophy with a firm basis in reality are all valuable ingredients in the mixture. Bring these with you and you can expect to find the way to harmonious, easy, relaxed communion made smooth for you by the fore-knowledge you will have of each other, your piece of wilderness and you.

Of course, you can just grab your hat and go, plunge into the wilderness experience and out again to ruminate upon at your leisure, and your magic just as effective. That may be right for you. In magic, it's a matter of what you feel drawn to. If it feels good, do it.



This place is full of sentient, intelligent beings, all responding to you!

The Venus Trumpet

by wyverne

*in the afternoon garden
proudly is trumpeted
a trumpeting flower
soft whiskered
and gilded with
pollen*

*blows cool jazz
from dusk to dark*

*then smores a stream
of meme-bearing ripples
into the ether
all the way to venus
from dusk to dawn*

*now in the glittering morning
amid myriad shattering collisions
of sharp-shrieking sparkles
of light-smash a-scatter from
silver-steel spangles
of facets of ice crystals
frenetically splintering
radiant rainbows
into sharp shards of
new dawn day dazzle*

*i see my sylphish self
still as a stone
silent as listen
little as leaf
watching frost forming*

*and seeing frost forming
i don't see me
seeing me
seeing frost forming*

*on the not yet purring
lip of the still
sleeping trumpet*

*i just stand in the sunscream
the mistbead in my hand
scattering shattering sparkles of
clattering crystals of light
into the golden
howl of the morning sky*



Samhain, that time has come again and I am reminded of the transience of life, how we all become ancestors one day. I remember back to 2017, sitting around the campfire at Wyvernes place, with the mallee sunset's orange and red colors turning, our attention to the stars above.

Wyverne and Nellie chuckling away by the camp fire, the beautiful music of Wy's guitar, singing in Cornish as we all stared into the warm fire with billie coffee bubbling away and discussions about all things Druidry and magic.

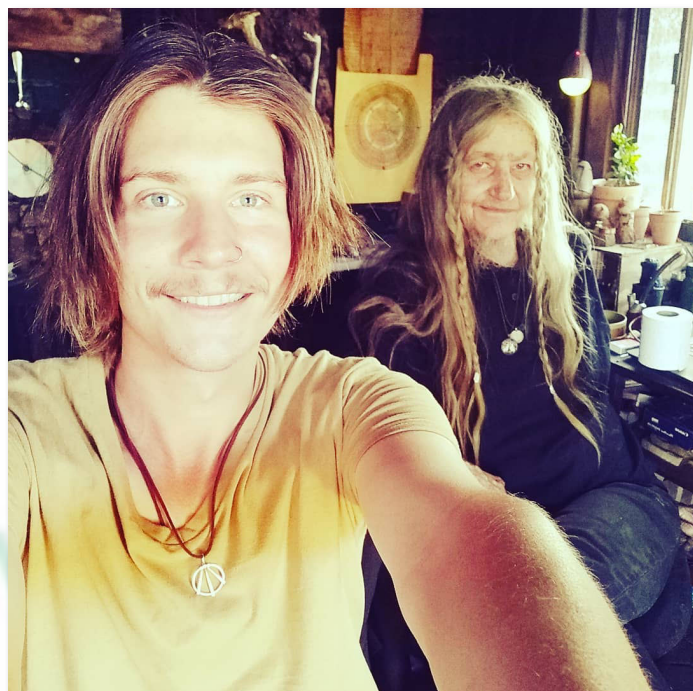
They are times I will cherish forever, sharing precious moments with our elders, listening and learning, and the exchange of ideas, of learning together.

We celebrated Samhain that year in Wy's stone circle with the Cailleach's presence everywhere, ancestors and ghosts roaming the mallee, the fairies playing tricks on us at night. It was a time of somber reflection and crazed hilarity too and tears and laughter, everything mixed into one.

This Samhain, when I go there and light the fire, those memories feel like yesterday, how quickly our lives move and change. As I stare into the flames and look up at the Milkyway, I feel Wyverne there in star and stone, in the mallee trees and sandalwoods, in the kangaroos and wombats and wedge tailed eagles. I imagine her, sitting with Nellie once again, chuckling by this fire and singing tunes together. I see Wyverne traversing the land, rounding up the goats with Atticus and Trusty following behind, memories are like the wind, they are never gone and they have a life of their own, they live forever.

The past few months have taught me a lot, about myself and about others too; what really matters in life, honestly, to always remember to be there for one another, to always cherish the small moments and the big, the wise thing that someone said that changed you forever, the small gesture of love or good will, moments of magic with others, moments spent gazing under the stars and sharing in that awe struck moment, remembering that we are born from the universe and that one day all of our constituent elements return again and that we are never really alone, we are part of everything. Wy said to me not long before she passed that death is just part of the continuum, and I feel that, so strongly.. we are never really gone, we just change, we live on in infinity and the otherworld is part of that infinity within us and without. To remember to be mindful, present with one another, present with life and our personal and collective needs.

The fairies are a vital part of the inhabitants of Wyeuro, the name Wy gave to the land there and you really do experience them, particularly if you are there long enough. Wyverne use to leave out offerings for them all the time and I've continued this tradition for her at her place, butter and cream with honey for the house hold brownie, beer sometimes as well and libations and other offerings in the stone circle for the genius loci, the spirits of place and other fairies. The land really responds in a deep way too, it is truly a fairy kingdom that land.



words

The Mallee trees sing Wyverne's name every time I am there and when the wind whispers with the mallee gum leaves and the creaking of their boughs and limbs, I feel her whispering within those trees and in the surrounding breeze. Wyverne was a multifaceted genius and reflected the balance of bard, ovate and druid through her work, the way she lived: her music, poetry, writing and storytelling through her bardic work, learning nearly every language under the sun and being well versed in Kernowek (Cornish).

In her hut, she had match box upon match box stacked one on the other with little cue cards in them, phrases of other languages; ancient Greek, Latin, Cornish, Irish and so on, and she would use them as memory devices. She was an incredibly adept seer through her ovate work, the otherworld and the world of the fairy was just as real as I am here, typing this out right now, her vision was deep and far reaching. She had a deep and personal knowledge of the plants spirits, their healing and magical potencies as well as a great working knowledge of European herbs and others. She had a very close bond with the spirits of the land and was always happy to teach people about them and explain where they lived.

In her Druid work, she was part of the Mensa society in Australia and had some profound and very insightful scholarly arguments about recorded history and she theorised extensively about different time periods.


She was a druidic philosopher too, often theorising about the metaphysics of the otherworld, of spirit and the nature of magic. She always had a very inquisitive and open mind and was very environmentally conscious and concerned about the state of the world and the human spirit. She was always pioneering to invite people to see things in a different way, to consider the world from a mystical, magical, animistic and spiritually dynamic perspective that was also intellectual and scholarly.

When I sit upon the mallee soil, the loamy sand kissing my feet and the stillness and peace of that place, I know that you are all around, I feel you as a vital part of the land, Mallee Mother, great ancestor, wise elder to us all. We love you Wy, forever in our hearts and each time we walk the sacred land of Wyeuro, we remember you and we carry your wisdom and knowledge in our hearts and our lives.

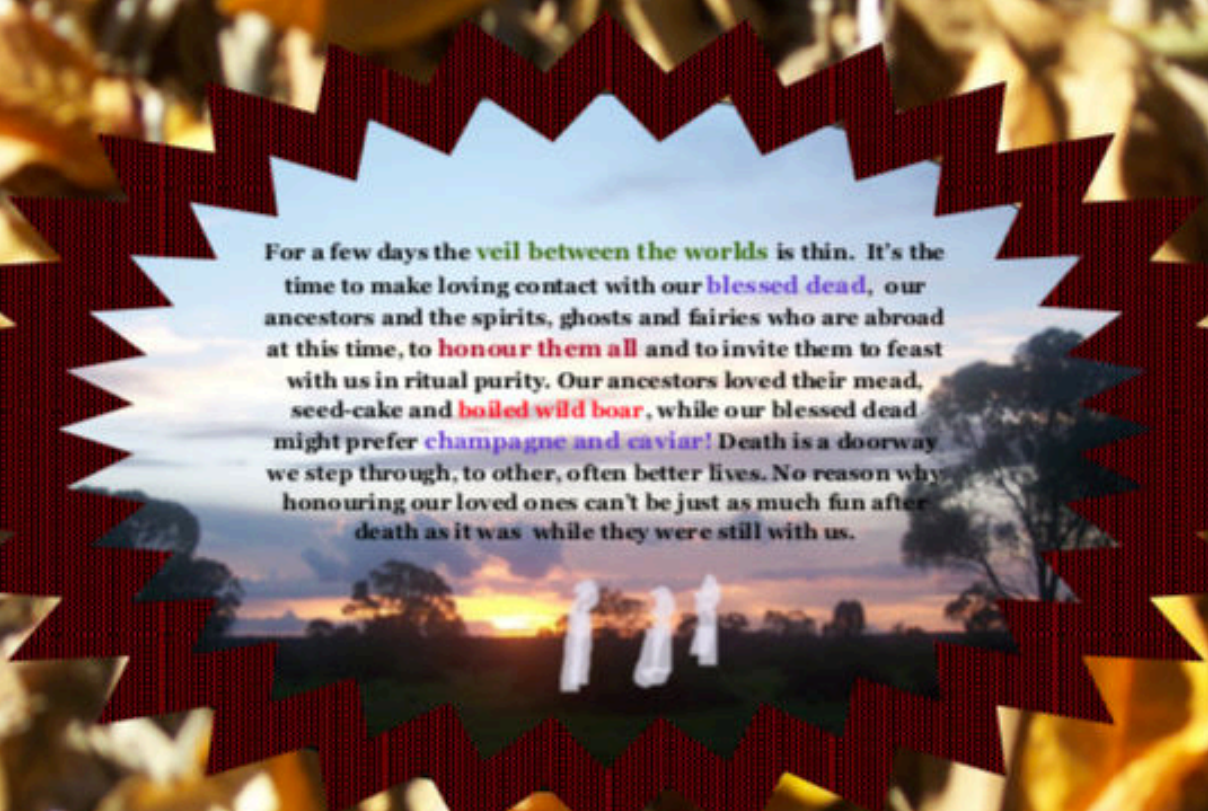
Love, Kacey. /|\ XXX



During her time as Editor, Wyverne created pages of tidbits, facts and ideas to celebrate each of the seasons. This seasonal Samhuinn selection is from 2010.



Samhuin Blessings! The long summer has brought its abundance of fruits— Samhuin is about saving that abundance to see us through the winter. The rousing energies of summer are ebbing at last, and time is coming for rest and appreciation over the long winter months. The days are slowly shortening and the chilly evenings and long nights are just right for reading and studying and watching tv, hobbies, dreaming, and planning the way ahead...

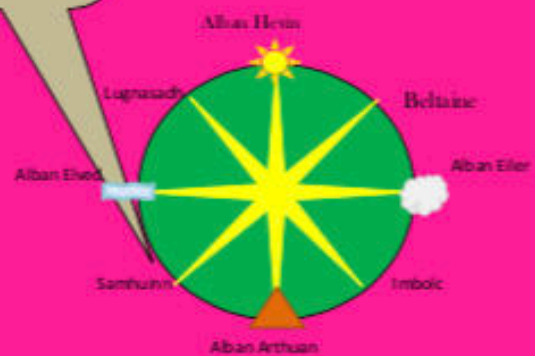


For a few days the veil between the worlds is thin. It's the time to make loving contact with our blessed dead, our ancestors and the spirits, ghosts and fairies who are abroad at this time, to honour them all and to invite them to feast with us in ritual purity. Our ancestors loved their mead, seed-cake and boiled wild boar, while our blessed dead might prefer champagne and caviar! Death is a doorway we step through, to other, often better lives. No reason why honouring our loved ones can't be just as much fun after death as it was while they were still with us.



Samhuin

We are
here!



Wealth in store

Masquerade is fun at Samhuinn. You can make traditional costumes or get your inspiration from modern sources. Dress up as witches and wizards, ghouls and ghosts and scare everyone on the block!

Candle magic for the lost souls,
and for displaced spirits will
help to guide them on their way
to their safe haven.



to

Use a white candle, surround it
with fruits, berries, nuts and herbs, and a few flow-
ers, and with an invocation to the powers of the west
and the element of water dedicate it for the succour of
the souls of those who have died but not yet
found rest.

honouring
the dead

saving

sharing

The English Ale



- Masked Torch Light Procession • Giants of the Hills - Petal & Rufus •
- Hobby Horses • Burning of the Wicker Man •
- Adelaide Empire Band - Song & Music Session •
- Hot for Joe Border Morris • Dr Dan Burt & Dobbin the Wonder Horse •
- Ruby Moon • Fayre Guisers Mummers Players •
- Runebilly Rattle •
- **Spiral Dance** •

Saturday 15th May 2021
Mylor Hall & Oval, Strathalbyn Rd, Mylor
From 2pm Onwards

\$35

Wear a mask if you fancy and join in the procession to the bonfire
evening concert entry

Procession/Bonfire and Concert tickets compulsory
due to COVID - BOOK ONLINE via our website

theenglishale.org

COVID PLAN IN PLACE

The Ale is
generously
supported by
AHC



enquiries:

info@spiraldance.com.au

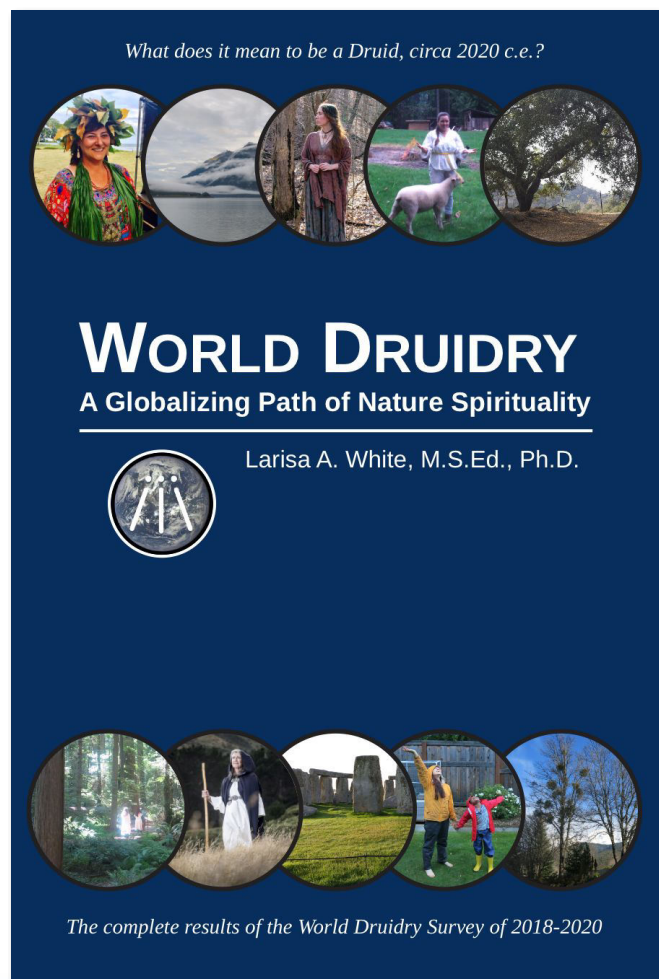
THE 2021 SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE ASSEMBLY IS MOVING ONLINE!

The organisation team for the 2021 Southern Hemisphere OBOD Assembly (which was planned for 10-14 September at Bribie Island, Qld Australia) has discussed the current situation and recent developments in the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic in our region, and has made the difficult decision to move this year's event online. Although we are in a much better place than we were last year, it is clear that there are still too many variables to be able to confidently proceed with planning the type of event that we can stand by as a full face-to-face OBOD gathering.



But all is not lost! We have already begun discussing options for a 3-5 day (exact program TBC) schedule of online ritual, talks, workshops, bardic gatherings, games, markets and social time. We encourage local groups to organise a mini-retreat in their own region where you can consider holding initiations, share meals and spend time together, while also dialling into the Zoom event.

The online event will be free to all OBODies to attend, and conducted entirely within Zoom. Links to the Zoom room and full schedules etc will be posted in the Southern Hemisphere Order of Bards Ovates & Druids Online SHOBODO Community Facebook Group. To attend the event, you will need to either be a member of that group, OR if you do not use Facebook you can request to join the event info mailing list by emailing mandy@druidryaustralia.org. There will be no 'public' live stream of this event, but recordings will be made available to the Facebook group and email mailing list for those who cannot attend live via Zoom.



ANNOUNCING – "WORLD DRUIDRY" – THE BOOK

What does it mean to be a Druid, circa 2020 c.e.?

- What do modern-day Druids believe?
- What are their religious practices?
- How does Druidry vary with geography?
- How has Druidry evolved over time?
- What defines it as a religious tradition?

In the past, the answers to these questions have, of necessity, taken the form of educated guesses based on limited data, often biased by ease-of-contact, or Druidry group affiliation. The World Druidry Survey of 2018-2020 was the first, large-scale global effort to collect, interpret, and learn from the stories of all the practicing Druids of the world. The questionnaire included 189 items, organized into 42 sets of questions, including 18 open-ended essay questions. It probed into details of modern Druids' physical, social, and cultural environments; their ethnicities; their theological beliefs, ritual practices, and celebrated holidays; and the factors that influenced their development as Druids. Completed surveys were returned by 725 Druids, in six languages, from 34 nations, representing 147 Druid groups from around the world, in addition to 131 unaffiliated, solitary practitioners. Their responses included thousands of pages of rich, narrative data, allowing for the use of robust, mixed-methods analytic tools to paint a vivid picture of the contemporary religious tradition that is World Druidry.

After three long years of analysis and writing, the book presenting the full findings of the World Druidry Survey of 2018-2020 is finally finished. "World Druidry: A Globalizing Path of Nature Spirituality" by Larisa A. White, M.S.Ed., Ph.D., has an official, on-sale/publication date of 20 June 2021, after which time, it should become available through most standard book distribution channels, internationally. However, for fellow Druids who might like an earlier start on their reading, the author will personally process and fill book pre-orders via email, starting at Beltane 2021, and continuing on until the book's information propagates throughout the global book distribution network. Additional information about the book, as well as pre-publication reviews, can be found on her website: <https://larisa-a-white.com/worlddruidry.html>

The 23rd Mount Haemus Lecture, "World Druidry: Seasonal Festivals in a Globalizing Tradition," which presents a subset of the survey findings, is also due to be published by the Order of Bards, Ovates, and Druids at Beltane.

And finally...

The Song of the Salmon

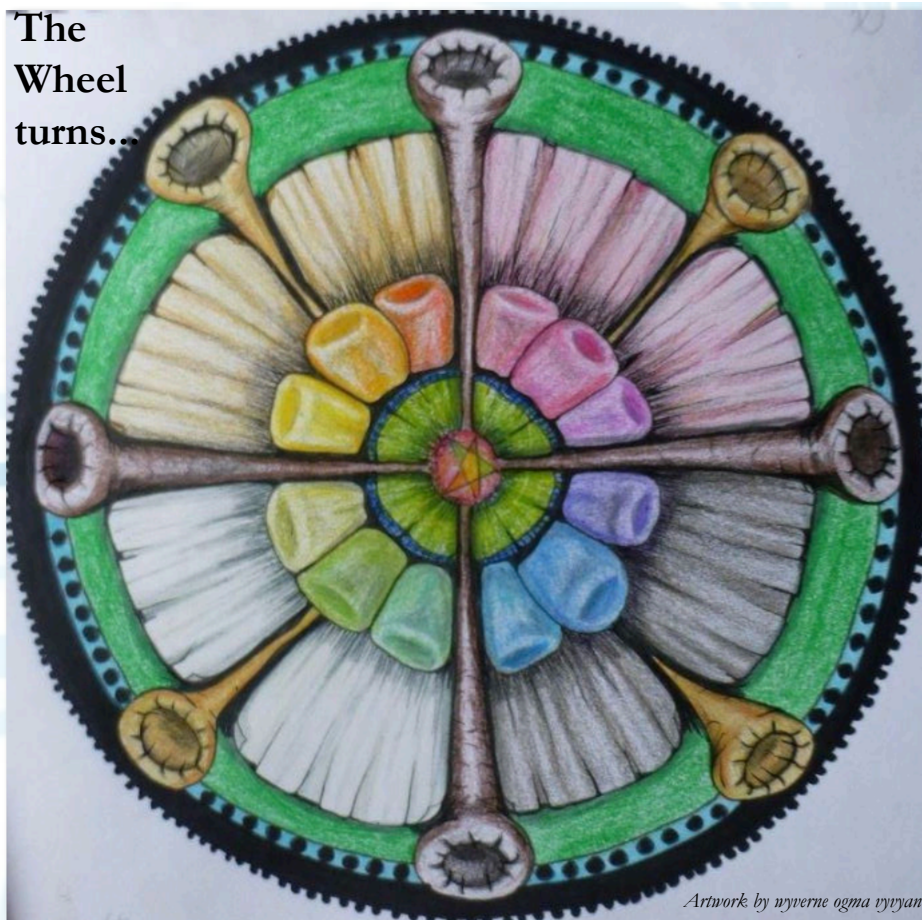
I am drop upon drop
of experience. I drink my
long journey down.
I wriggle in the
muscling flow. I flicker
in the flash and shine,
I am the flash and shine,
The muscling flow.
I am my journey.
Of wisdom I am
made. Wisdom I
am. I must swim
every river
with love.

Vivienne



wyvørnø's words

The
Wheel
turns...



Sambuinn... 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 Sambuinn 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 deadline for contributing to the Imbolc issue of SerpentStar is 25 July 2021.

The Imbolc issue will be released in the week of 1 August 2021.