

Serpent Star

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



Imbolc 2022



Welcome, welcome, welcome to the Imbolc issue of Serpentstar!

Hello again!

The wheel ever turns, and I'm running like mad to catch up with it! Where has the time gone?

How did the deadline whoosh by so quickly?

It's been an interesting time, here in Brisbane. The ground is still cold, but the wattle is starting to appear in the various shades of yellow, white and red, the days are getting longer. It's really starting to feel like Spring is coming, even though winter still wants to cling on for a few more days that are on the colder side. The land is waking up again, the days are getting longer and warmth is coming back to the earth. Pretty soon, I should be able to open the window and feel the gentle breeze that just clears out the *stuffiness* of winter.

It feels like a time of movement in the mundane world as well, and my household has *definitely* done that! My partner and I have recently moved, and with all the stress and the excitement of a new home it kind of feels like we've been 're-potted'. *Metaphorically*, of course. I don't think my feet have sprouted roots, at least not yet.

But enough about me! What've we got in this issue?

We've got more great reads from Vicki Minahan, Tina Merrybard and John Jordan, as well as a wonderful piece from Nicola about celebrating Matariki. We also have a photoset from the English Ale by yours truly which really felt like a lifetime away. Grab a cuppa, get comfortable and settle in for a great read!

Until next time, with all the hugs and bright blessings that I can give,

- Sam /\



I'll miss this view, but new beginnings await!

SerpentStar, Imbolc 2022

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

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Follow us on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/SerpentStarOBOD>

Enquiries via email: serpentstar.obod@gmail.com

All opinions expressed herein are solely the contributors' own.

A reminder to everyone that SerpentStar has a YouTube channel, which hosts 2020's DDUDE talk series from Druids DownUnder. I'd like to see other videos from OBODies on there as well - they can either be linked to ones already on other channels, or we can arrange for you to send them to serpentstar.obod@gmail.com for upload. Get in touch if you have a bardic video or a short doco you'd like to share in SerpentStar.

Search 'SerpentStar OBOD' on YouTube to subscribe!

OBOD in the Southern Hemisphere

Groves & Seed Groups

The following are groups listed on OBOD's official Groves & Seed Groups List 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 out first group Alban. Full moon meditations are conducted for peace and harmony. Email Debby at triskel@mweb.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: macademiagroove@hotmail.com

The Melbourne Grove

At present we are full to capacity for our seasonal celebrations, but we still delight in meeting and chatting with new members of the Order. Contact: Elkie: elkiwhite@gmail.com, Trudy: moondancer@outlook.com.au, 0409 186 316

Facebook: [Friends of The Melbourne Grove](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfTheMelbourneGrove)

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: ghriancu@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.

Friendship

Written by Vicki Minahan

Elkie and I met about 15 years ago, the years have slipped by, and I cannot remember if it was before or after we moved into our current home but ultimately that does not matter.

I discovered OBOD through Phillip's Animal Oracle cards, joined and then connected with The Melbourne Grove. Elkie and I found we had grown up near each other, she had visited my family home when I was a baby and I had gone to high school with her younger sisters and brother.

Fast forward a gazillion years and after been mentored through my early OBOD years by Elkie and a series of "coincidence's", Elkie mentored me through my first Marriage as a Civil Celebrant. This was to be Elkie's last legally binding ceremony, my first. Elkie performed the Druid/Pagan rituals with my assistance, while I performed the legalities.



The couple requested a Druid/Pagan Wedding and we worked closely with them to make their day special. The groom made the arbour we are standing beneath, the bride supplied much of the spoken word and the garlands we are wearing. Together we weaved a beautiful ceremony that hopefully will set them on a steady course for their life ahead. For me it was wonderful that my first Wedding was so deeply steeped in my own beliefs and that I was able to share it with a dear friend and mentor.

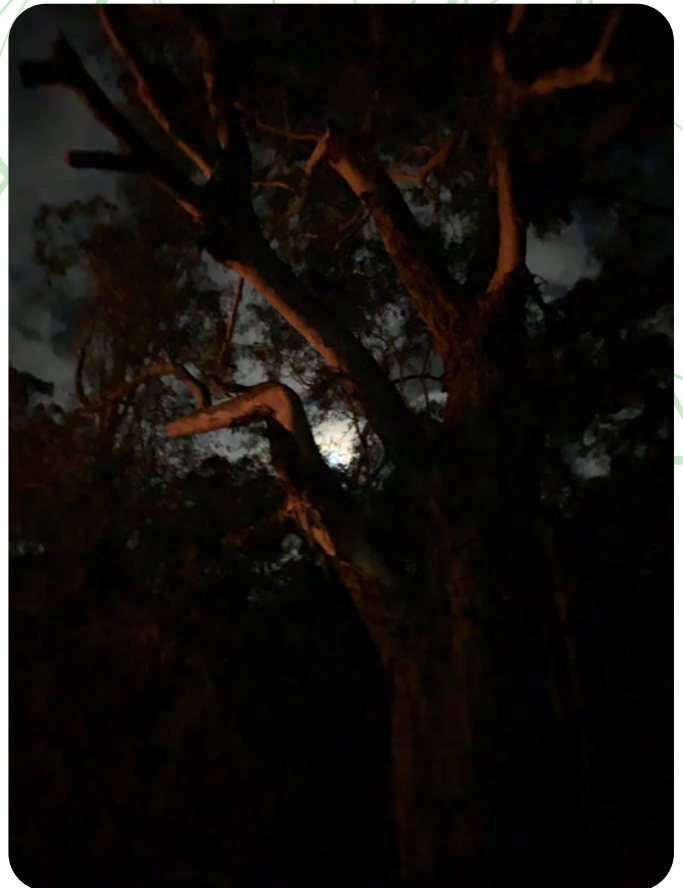


Photos from the English Ale 2022

Photos by Samantha Travis



It was just after Samhain, but I had travelled down to Adelaide for the English Ale! It was my first Ale, with hopefully a lot more to come. Here are some of the pictures I took while I was there. Enjoy!





The Dawn of the Druids

Written by John Jordan

Once I thought that all my life I had been struggling towards a ragged archway made of stone, and one day I would gasp through and suddenly realise that my entire life had been spent in a cave, and everyone I knew, even my best friends, had just been shadows on the walls.

Then I would see that there was a real outside where the air is pure and sweet and everything is for the taking. It would be about then that I would hear the sound of a distant bell and turn towards the mountains in time to see a golden sun burst through the clouds.

That would be the sign of the new dawn.

I would start walking down the side of a small hill where the cave was and see other caves, some higher, some lower on the hillside. Each and every one would have people, male and female young and old, struggling through the cave-mouths.

As if being born, they would turn around and gaze in wonderment towards the new sun and realise they were Druids.

Then we would start to collect, silently walking down the grassy hill to sit by the stream until we had all been born. The little brook whispers dreamily of a lush green valley high in the mountains. No-one has said a word, we just exchange glances and smiles, knowing without realising, why we have been chosen. After a long period of spellbound interest in the story which the brook has to tell, we come to understand the decision we must take. We must all go to the mountains, to the source of the little stream, to find this monumental valley and lie among the sweet grass and flowers.

Someone among us brings forward a large leaf.

We all crowd around it and look deep into the pattern of veins.

Mirrored in the intricacy is a little road map for mystics, a plan of the path we must take. Like every leaf, on every tree, it tells us the way.

The middle vein shows the course of the whispering brook.

We start off on our journey, thousands of cheerful hearts, with the leaf in the front.

The sun rises no further in the land of Imbolc.

In the land of perpetual dawn everything is crystalline clear, it is like a new order of existence or a new perception or clarity.

I can't stand the quietness and without looking for eyes I burst into song.

With a slight shock, the entire grassland resounds into a thundering chorus, all of us had the same idea. Through our laughter we sing in harmony the story of the beginning of time.

We slowly start to climb the hill; the river broadens and in the shadow of the mountains the contingent gets sleepy.

Clumping together like small furry animals we sleep around the campfires under the smile of a watchful moon. I wake in the night and move to the edge of the firelight.

There a lone watchman stands and I move to talk with him.

Together we look at the stars shining on the multitudes of Bards, Ovates and Druids.

We are one people under one sky. Why is it that we both do not sleep?

Something wonderful is about to happen, he says. He is the man who found the leaf.

He is wearing armour, the armour of a warrior. He protects the living land. His green eyes twinkle in the camp-fire light. We sit and talk.

Why do we watch and guard? Someone has to.

Someone must watch. Someone must guard. We are the guardians of mother earth.

There is going to be one more dawn, the Dawn of the Druids.

Thank you for reading! This poem was previously published in Touchstone, but John has graciously submitted his work to be published here as well. - Sam

Mistress Munchkin and the Plutonium Dragon - Part 4

Written by Tina Merrybard

Mistress Elfrida Munchkin has been living in a small cottage on the top of a cliff, sent there by her Druid Order to magically babysit a nuclear reactor, known to her as Lumpy Bum. Despite her supposedly living alone, Elfrida's cottage is rather full, what with the twinned spirits of place, Maelgwyn and Gaelgwyn, and her somewhat awakened helpful household implements, Fusser, Stewart, Bowly and Cassie the Cauldron.

Using her prodigious Druidic power, Mistress Munchkin has managed to avert a nuclear meltdown by channelling off all the toxic energy as Lumpy Bum began to blow. Somehow, that energy has coalesced into a being, a scintillating, flowing, floating being of purple and silver that nobody has ever seen the like of before. A being she has named Dragon. A being made from dangerous radiation...

Dragon had heard her, despite her mumbling. It stretched its head back down to her again, while its body yet flitted about like some giant glistening hummingbird. "Poison?" it asked. "I am made of poison?" "Yes," Elfrida said. "Your body is made of something that does not sustain life. Not life as this planet knows it anyway."

"That is not good," said Dragon, bringing its body down to earth once more, light and colours dimming. "I don't want to poison you, Mother." Large eyes peered into her face in worried enquiry. "Am I making you ill?" "I am safe, my child," she said. "I am protected. It is others who might be made unwell by you." "That is bad," Dragon said. "How will I be able to see this world if I will make the beings here unwell?" "Let's go have a cup of tea," Elfrida said decidedly. "I'm cold and I need tea. Tea helps me think."

She made her way across the frosty grass, with Dragon floating along behind her like the most spectacular parade balloon ever. At the door to the cottage, she turned to size up her child, and said, "Even if you pull in all your beautiful fins you will still be too big to fit in my cottage, too big to sit on my cushions by my fire. I will put the kettle on and then bring tea outside. Let's see if you like tea."

"Leave the door open, Mother," Dragon beseeched her. "I will be lonely out here." A being the size of a large house who has separation anxiety, that's going to be convenient, Elfrida thought to herself as she went to the fireplace to fill Fussie full and pop it into the centre of the fire, which she stirred up to get flames jumping. Then she hunted for her biggest teapot, known as Cassie the Cauldron, and put ten teaspoons of tea into her. If Dragon drank tea at all, it would need a lot.

Dragon had poked its vasty frilled head as far into the cottage as it could, and the room was filled with a purple and silver light that competed strangely with the flickering orange firelight. It watched her now with intense interest.

"I like your house," it said. "I like the cushions and the fire. I would like to sit in there and drink tea with you, Mother."

"Well, I would like that too," Elfrida said, "But as you can see, this is a small space and you are very big." Dragon grumped a bit in an amusingly similar way to Elfrida's own, and subsided its head down until its short, frilly chin was resting on the back of the couch nearest the door. It sighed a long sigh that caught the tablecloth, which flapped up and nearly blew right off, until caught by the weight of Cassie the Cauldron. Elfrida hefted Fussie up and poured a river of boiling water into the giant teapot.

"Well, you're a sight for sore eyes!" exclaimed Maelgwyn from her armchair, where she had suddenly materialised, with Gaelgwyn in his chair beside her. The pair of old spirits were smiling wickedly, and Elfrida knew they were enjoying this unusual development very much.

"I know you missed having a pet, but really, wouldn't a rat or white rabbit have done?" said Gaelgwyn with mock grumpiness. His old eyes were twinkling as he reached forward to stir up the fire with a fire-poker as misty and half-there as he himself was. The fire responded anyway.

"What is a pet?" asked Dragon.

"A pet is an animal that humans keep beside them for company," Elfrida said. "You are not a pet. You are a person, I'm just not sure what sort of person yet. These two are a different sort of person too. The annoying sort who poke their noses into things," she added, glaring at the two house spirits, who both chuckled unashamedly. Suddenly the cottage seemed way too small for all the large personalities in it.

"I am a person, and persons sit in cottages and drink tea," said Dragon decidedly, and it began to come into the doorway more and more, until its shoulders were stuck. Long glowing frills of silver and mauve drifted

about the room, and Elfrida carefully pulled one away from the hot teapot and set it drifting in another direction. Dust filtered down from the ceiling, and the walls creaked as the huge being continued to push.

“Dragon!” Elfrida snapped. “You’ll knock the cottage right over! You’re too big to come in!”

The creature stopped, still pressing up against the door, gazing covetously at the couch and fire and the two chuckling old spirits in the corner. “I will be smaller,” it said, and with that, it began to shrink and shrink, until suddenly its shoulders fit through the door, and still it shrank, until it was the size of a Great Dane, and now the whole body was inside, though there wasn’t much room any more, and then it was small as a cat.

Dragon floated up onto the couch-back where it had so recently rested its enormous chin. Ribbons of silver and purple spread out around it. It curled up, catlike, and looked very, very unlike a cat, apart from the smugness.

“There,” it said. “I am now a person who can fit in a cottage and have tea by the fire.”

“Well, that’s handy!” Elfrida said. “But now we have too much tea!”

“Maybe,” said Dragon, “But maybe I still have a very big stomach inside my smaller body. We will see.”

Elfrida grumped comfortably and poured tea into Bowly for Dragon and into an ordinary cup for her. She filled cups for Maelgwyn and Gaelgwyn too, and placed them carefully beside the spirits. They couldn’t drink the extant tea, but they enjoyed the ritual, and they said they drank the spirit of the tea. Elfrida didn’t know how that worked, but it felt cosy to include them in the many-times-daily practice.

She took down the biscuit tin and brought out two biscuits for each of them, a pair for each of the old house spirits too. She carefully placed them on each saucer beside the tea cups. Dragon growled excitedly at the sight, big pug eyes popping out, streamers flowing around extra fast with the emotion.

Ahhh, what an odd and long night, Elfrida thought to herself as she eased her substantial self down into her battered favourite armchair.

Pulling her tea towards her to cradle it against her breast, still-cold hands cupped around it, Elfrida settled at last with a sigh of contentment.

Dragon reached a long, stretchable neck to lap at its tea without leaving the couch back, a sight which made Elfrida snort with amusement, as Maelgwyn and Gaelgwyn leaned forward with happy but totally unnecessary old-people groans to pick up the spirit-cups of their own drinks, biscuits and all. Elfrida sipped hot tea like it was some magical healing elixir, and of course that is exactly what it is.

Dragon drank up its tea in one snuffling, sucking, smacking rush, flat face jammed into Bowly, then snapped up its biscuits and, still crunching, turned that odd, puggy, fishy face around to look at Elfrida. “Tea is very good, Mother, and I like person-food.”

It settled back onto the couch-back with its odd, finny hand-feet tucked neatly under its chest. It blinked a few times and its head drooped for a moment. “I think I’m very tired now. Being born was hard work.”

“I hear you!” Elfrida said nibbling at her second biscuit. “Birthing you was hard work too.”

Dragon stared at her with those slightly protuberant, glowing purple eyes, looking more hungry than tired and for a moment as she nibbled there, Elfrida idly wondered if it might like to eat her for dessert even though her heart knew that it wouldn’t.

Instead, the being crept forward until it was at the closest corner of the couch back, then, “Could I?” it pleaded, and without waiting for an answer, it floated from the couch to her armchair, living fins of silver and purple drifting about as it came. It was suddenly on her lap, snuggled under where she still cradled her tea cup. Warm, soft, and only slightly radioactive at this size, her new and very strange child began to snore gently, its silvery streamers slowing, sinking, drifting down to rest on her knees, and to trail down her legs to the floor. Elfrida grumphed a little, just to keep in practice, then sipped tea carefully so as not to disturb her sleeping Dragon. She smiled a secret, contented smile.

Thank you for reading! You can catch more of Tina’s amazing work at www.tlmerrybard.com

Aotearoa



Inspiration, wisdom and blessings from New Zealand

Mānawatia a Matariki!

Reflections on Celebrating Matariki and a new national holiday in Aotearoa

by Nicola from the Grove of the Summer Stars, Wellington

This year the Grove of the Summer Stars celebrated Matariki alongside Alban Arthan, acknowledging both the spirits of Aotearoa New Zealand and the way our ancestors have marked the solstice for centuries.

In European traditions, winter solstice, which occurs around June 22, marks a turning point: the start of a new year. Once we adjust our seasonal calendar to the southern hemisphere, the link becomes obvious.

In Te Ao Māori (the Māori world) Matariki also opens a new year. Both festivals take place after harvest and at the quiet start of a new cycle, a natural place to pause and begin anew.

(‘Why is Matariki significant’, by Juliet Batten at julietbatten.co.nz)

What is Matariki?

Matariki is an abbreviation of ‘Ngā Mata o te Ariki Tāwhirimātea’ (‘The eyes of the god Tāwhirimātea’) and refers to a large cluster of stars that is recognised by many cultures - the Pleiades, Subaru, the Seven Sisters, or Twr Tewdws [Tur Toodus] to the Celts. When Matariki returns to our skies at this time of year, we take this time to remember those who have passed away, celebrate the present, and look to the future. The new year has begun.

Traditionally in Aotearoa New Zealand, people would look to the horizon at this time of year to spot the rising of Matariki. When Matariki is sighted, the new year has begun. There are many practices that sit around this event: star lore and how to predict the rising of Matariki, what the clarity of the stars signifies for the year to come, and tales of the great canoe in the sky that carries the dead to their resting place.

Several iwi (tribes) look to the rising of Puanga (Rigel) instead of Matariki. For many the reason is simple: if you live on the western side of the land, the horizon is obscured by large mountain ranges. Puanga sits higher in the night sky and is a more appropriate sign to look for to mark the solstice.

There has been growing awareness of Matariki both within local communities where this knowledge was lost, and across New Zealand as a whole. Schools now teach and celebrate Matariki, local communities have created events to mark the season, and in Wellington the city council has even chosen to shift its major fireworks event away from Guy Fawkes Day in November to Matariki in June.

Matariki as a new public holiday

Last year, the New Zealand government established a new national holiday to celebrate Matariki. This is the first truly indigenous holiday for New Zealand. The development of Matariki celebrations has been guided by a special advisory group, who have forecast out the expected rising of Matariki for the next 30 years – a necessity for scheduling business hours and organising payrolls! They have also taken on the role of advising the media and public, to help guide the public in celebrating in a way that is respectful and inclusive.

The holiday centres on three principles: remembrance of those who have died, celebrating the present with family and friends; and looking to the future promise of a new year.

For me, it has been like watching a small element of our grove work happening across the whole country. People are discussing what practices would be appropriate (Are fireworks appropriate or will the cloud the night sky? How do we feel about a “Matariki special” at the supermarket? Are you waking up at dawn to watch the stars rise?). I went to work and heard people discussing their plans to mark the turning of the seasons, saying happy new year at the right time of the year, and discussing how good it was to have a public holiday in the middle of winter. It was like watching the whole country become a bit more Druid for a day.

I started my day watching the celebrations from my warm bed before catching up with friends and heading into the city for food and a bonfire.

Across the country, many communities joined new dawn celebrations run by local iwi. Some of these were new, some of these have been run quietly for several years and are now being attended in greater numbers. In Wellington, alongside several local events, we had a national ceremony with live broadcast from 6am.

Called the Hautapu or Umu Kohukohu, this ceremony includes incantations for each star to rise, a moment to acknowledge those who have passed in the year, and a karanga (call) to each star, welcoming and calling blessings for the new year. As part of this ceremony food is offered to the stars, the steam rising in the cold of the morning as our blessings are sent up.

Matariki in our druid celebrations

When we came to celebrate Alban Arthan on the 19th of June, it felt right to include an acknowledgement of Matariki within our ritual. As we designed the ritual, we considered how we could create a space to acknowledge Matariki, while still grounding our Alban Arthan festival within its Celtic origins. One of the aspects of Matariki is to acknowledge our ancestors, and those who have passed in the year. But this is something our grove already does at Samhain. It felt repetitive to focus on this so soon after our Samhain celebrations. Would we need to adjust the wheel of the year again? As one of the coordinators for the Alban Arthan ritual I reflected on this in the leadup to the solstice. And the answer was right in front of me. When I reflected on the three principles of Matariki - remembrance of those who have died, celebrating the present with family and friends; and looking to the future promise of a new year – Matariki is a natural fit for the winter solstice. It's more than just remembrance, it's about the death and renewal. What to keep and what to let go.

And so, our ritual spoke of the common ground between Matariki, Alban Arthan, and the Winter Solstice. In the working of our ritual, we held a meditation on the new year. Using the stars of Matariki, and the image of the stars rising at dawn, we focused on:

The stars that align with the past, reflecting on what memories we want to hold on to, or cast aside from the year.

The stars that align with the present, reflecting on what we are thankful.

The stars that align with the new year, reflecting on our wishes for the new year and what we want to nurture.

This moment to pause, reflect, and set intentions blended naturally in to the OBOD ritual. It feels like by this time next year, a whole country pausing to acknowledge the solstice will feel just as natural.

*Kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua
We walk backwards into the future with our eyes fixed on the past.*



Wellington Matariki celebrations - Picture
by Nicola

For a summary and video of this year's dawn celebrations, see Radio NZ's "What is Hautapu?" <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/te-manu-korihiri/469704/matariki-what-is-hautapu>

Member Businesses, Groups & Retreats in Australia/New Zealand



Animal Oracle by Vicki Minahan

After nearly eight years I am pleased to announce a project close to my heart has arrived with art by Helen Wells. Mountain Ash Animal Oracle is here.

I grew up in The Strathbogie Ranges, Victoria, Australia and have been greatly influenced by both the environment and the lifestyle espoused by my parents and extended family. I currently live in Cockatoo, Australia, Victoria

With this book and accompanying cards I have incorporated family stories, autobiographical aspects, my spiritual experiences and scientific information for each animal. My hope is that this will help you to incorporate both the Apparent and Otherworldly aspects to aid you on your journey through life.



Pan's Script by Elkie White

Pan's Script, the book, was written over a period of sixteen years with the goal of providing people with accurate information about their birth data. The book is huge – nearly 400 pages – but costs only \$50, including postage within Australia. Only four copies left.

Pan's Script, the report: over the years, the book has spawned individualized reports further designed to help people understand and appreciate themselves. These 20+ page reports are based on your personal astronumerology. Whilst the book teaches people how to analyze birth data in general, your individualized report does all of the work for you: entirely personalized and excellent value at \$125.



Pan's Script, the research project: a huge thank-you to the druids who have already participated, but to do us justice, we need more of you. To formulate a comparison with the other sample-groups that I have on file, I need at least 100 druids. In the future, I will write an article based on the findings, but no names will be mentioned. For those of you who send me your date of birth, place of birth, time of birth, and name given to you at birth, I will calculate and inform you of your Astro-Number Signature.

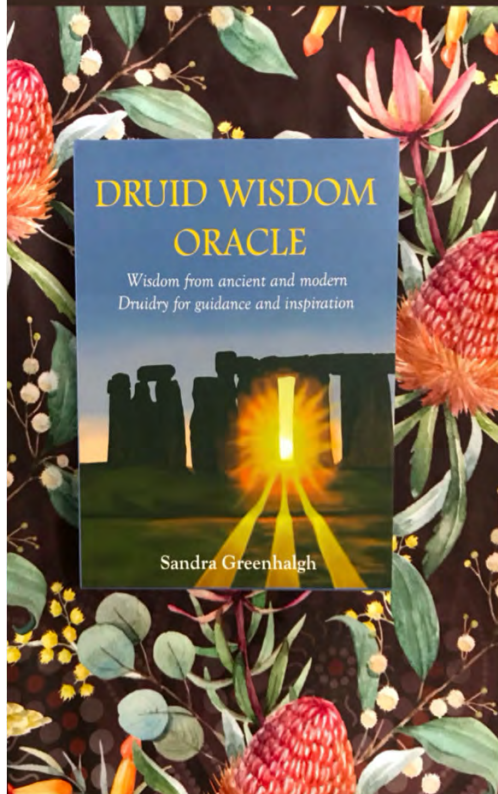
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Tuatha Dea and Nightsong Studios Presents:

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

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

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

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

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Issued June 20, 2016

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Dr. Paul Salaman
Chief Executive Officer



Okapi

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WENDY RULE
SJ TUCKER
BEKAH KELSO
GINGER DOSS
KELLIANNA
DAVE THE BARD
SPIRAL DANCE
SHARON KNIGHT/
WINTER S

CELIA FARRAN
BRIAN HENKE
MAMA GINA
MURPH'S
MIDNIGHT
ROUNDERS
SPIRAL RHYTHM





Anam Cara Soul Space

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Readings are available in person in Auckland, New Zealand, or from anywhere in the world using Skype or Messenger. Please visit my website anamcarareadings.com, and follow my Facebook www.facebook.com/anamcarareadings

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

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

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This year explores each Zodiac sign's unique skills and talents and how each might contribute to humanity's collective purpose through these times.

You can purchase a 2022 Moon Calendar, Moon Diary (**LIMITED STOCK**) or a Companion Pack at:

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



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

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

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



Tying the knot

Two lives entwine

Tying the knot

Two families entwine

Binding our futures together



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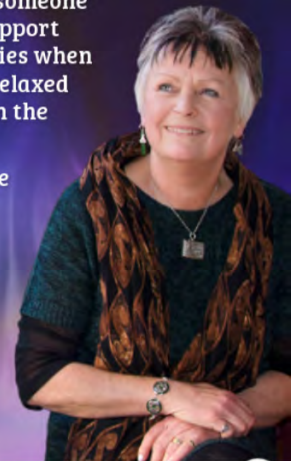
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www.deborahrosehalani.com

I am a lifelong student of Hawaiian Spirituality, a Wise Guide and Affiliate to the School of Spirituality, Healing and Development (SoHAD).

I am trained to perform Ho'oponopono which is an ancient and traditional Hawaiian healing process that has been orally handed down by the generations.

Mentoring is my passion as its about relationship and all things in life is about relationship, I assist you in moving in the direction that helps you. I'm BIG on Self Care and found that this is the foundation to all aspects of moving through life in a harmonious way and being your best Self.

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And finally...

One more picture!

This is a picture taken from a friend's property a week or two ago in the western suburbs of Brisbane, Australia. The wattle is popping up in the gully below where the house sits, and the colours are only just starting to come out.

Stay safe everyone, and I'll catch you all at Beltane. Bring on the Spring!

- Sam



The Wheel turns...



Although we would think of **Imbolc** as being in the midst of Winter, it represents in fact the first of a trio of Spring celebrations, since it is the time of the first appearance of the snowdrop, and of the melting of the snows and the clearing of the debris of Winter.

It is a time when we sense the first glimmer of Spring, and when the lambs are born. In the Druid tradition it is a gentle, beautiful festival in which the Mother Goddess is honoured with eight candles rising out of the water at the centre of the ceremonial circle.

The Goddess that ruled Samhuinn was the Cailleach, the Grey Hag, the Mountain Mother, the Dark Woman of Knowledge. But by Imbolc the Goddess has become Brigid, the Goddess of poets, healers and midwives.

Text sourced from www.druidry.org

**The deadline for contributing to the Beltane issue of SerpentStar is Sunday, 23rd October.
The Beltane issue will be released in the week of 31st October 2022.**