

SERPENT STAR

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



Imbolc 2024



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

Hope everyone's doing well and keeping warm! Welcome to the Imbolc 2024 issue of SerpentStar!

As we approach the midpoint between winter's chill and spring's promise, Imbolc offers a moment of reflection and renewal. Imbolc invites us to embrace the gradual return of light and the hopeful signs of new beginnings. Rooted in Celtic traditions and honouring the goddess Brigid, Imbolc reminds us to celebrate the subtle shifts in nature from the cold depths of winter to the gentle freshness of Spring and to set intentions for growth and transformation.

In this issue, we explore the significance of Imbolc and its themes of light and renewal, encouraging readers to find inspiration in the changing seasons. We have a huge issue with beautiful pieces by Deborah, Dawn, John, Tina, Bec, Pauline, Brenda Rae, Liluri and Nikki. Once again, a HUGE thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue! It's been wonderful putting together the work from these amazing OBODies into an issue that helps bring in the Spring! There are a couple of pieces that didn't make it in to this issue (I know this issue is late as it is), but you'll definitely get to read them at Beltane. They're definitely worth the wait!

May this time of year bring a renewed sense of purpose and the anticipation of brighter days ahead, and I'll catch you all at Beltane!

Bright blessings,

- Sam /\



Amazing collage by Nikki Love!

SerpentStar, Imbolc 2024

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 and submissions 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, music 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](#)

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@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

Macadamia Grove includes OBOD members from South-East Queensland and Northern New South Wales. 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

Celebrating the seasons in a cycle around Melbourne,

Contact: Elkie: elkiewhite@gmail.com

Facebook: [Friends of The Melbourne Grove](#)

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 Grove

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 Down Under](#) - 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)

International 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) <http://www.obod.nl/dryade/>

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 15 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.

The Wheel Doth Turn by Deborah Rose Halani

The Wheel doth turn
in times of olde
the greatest fires
caressing our souls
cleansing, protecting
healing within
each lick of the flame
dancing in delight
passions rising
to meet the nights sky

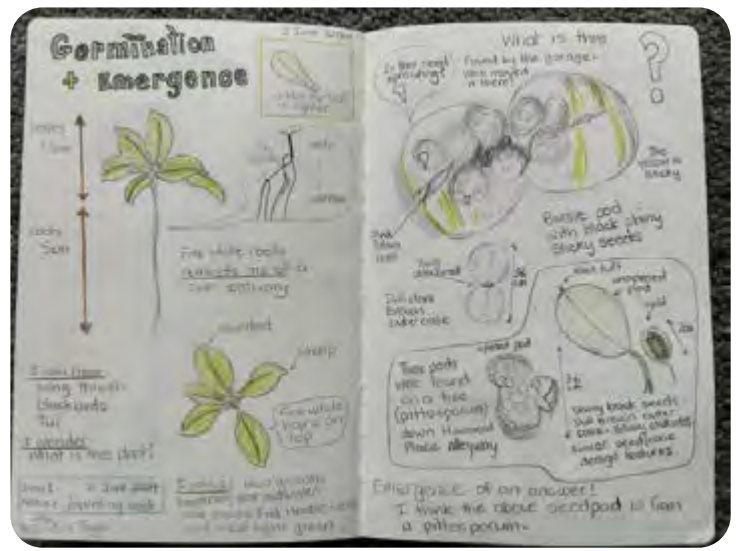
The Wheel Doth Turn
as I weep and cry
where are you my love
where are you tonight
let the waters rain down
and take my tears away
river, stream or babbling brook
flowing endlessly out
further into the deep
awash with life's sadness

The Wheel Doth Turn
in the great nights sky
soaring and flying
through clouds and space
reaching out I touch a star
a drop of ancient
coldness I grasp
as I reunite
a family of witnesses
and observers of life

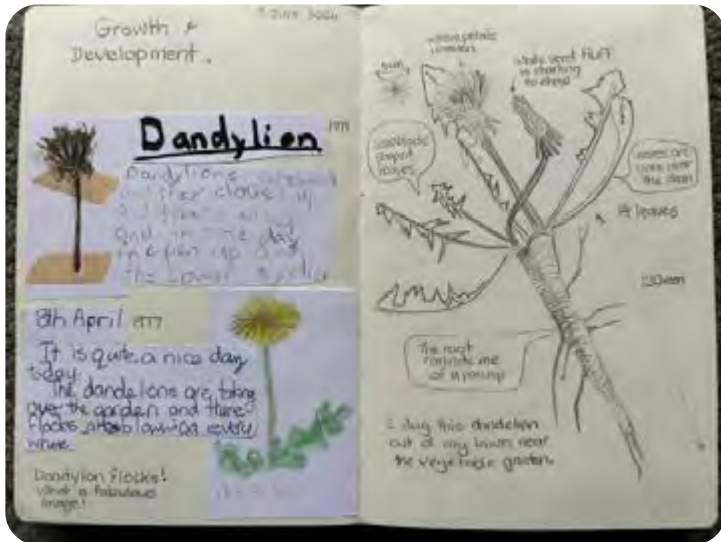
The Wheel Doth Turn
as I hold onto a tree
whilst all is spinning around
I am held safe and close
the harsh bark against my cheek
my feet embedded in roots
the smell of damp moss
fill my lungs
a leaf unfurling
my life stops turning

Nature journaling the cycles of life

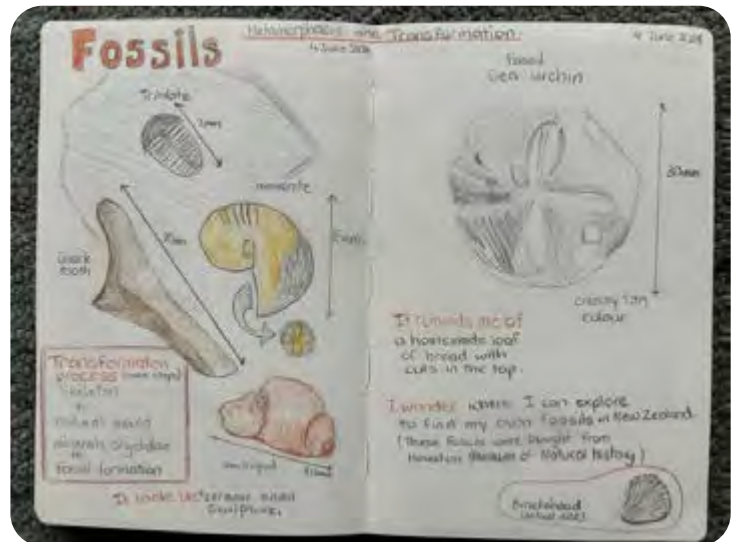
by Dawn Mckenzie



It was International nature journaling week from 1-7 June 2024. People from around the world did nature journaling in their own environments guided by the 'naturejournalingweek.com' website which has video clips, articles and inspiring ideas. This year we explored 'Celebrating the cycles of life'. Each day a new theme guided our focus.

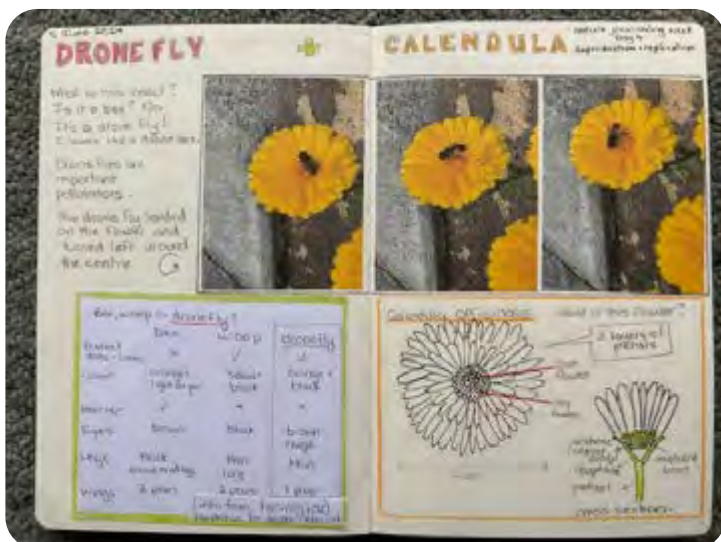


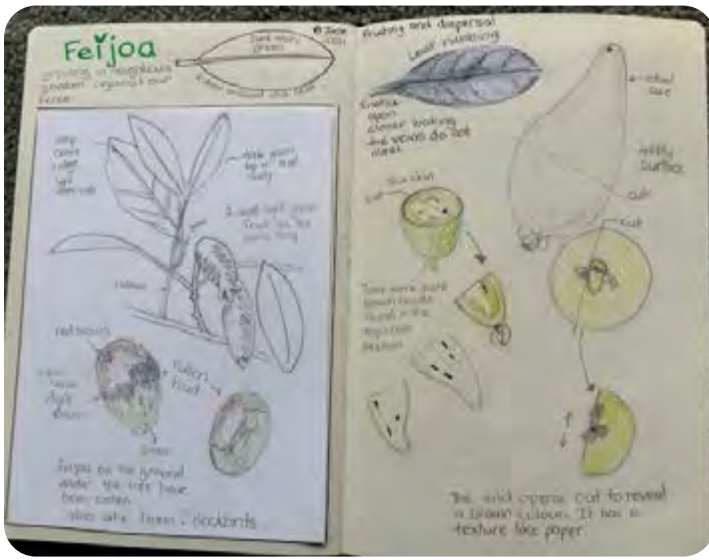
At first I was a little skeptical as to how I was going to find things in nature to illustrate each topic in such a short time frame. How can one season show all parts of the cycle? As I progressed through the week my eyes opened to the wonders in my garden and neighbourhood.



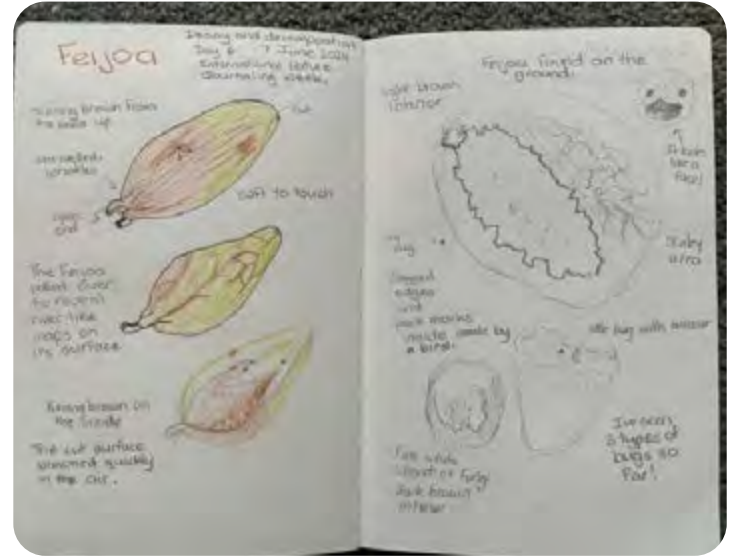
On day one I started to be more curious, discovering and naming a mystery seedpod.

On day two my old childhood nature drawings provided insight into my growth as a human being.

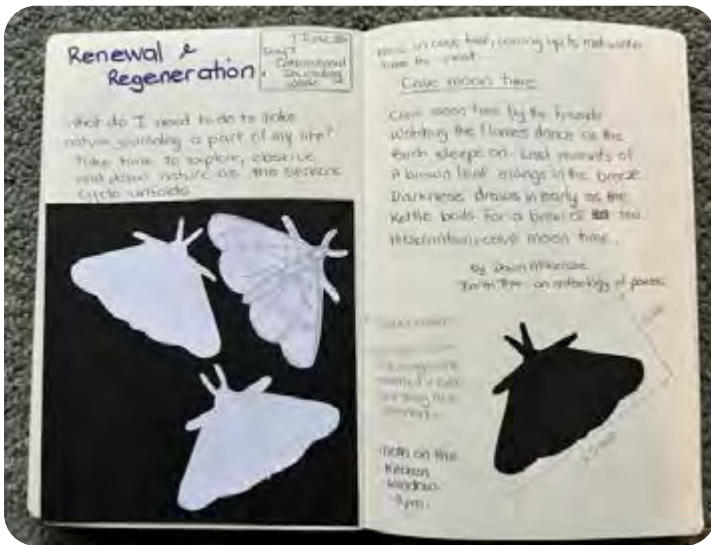




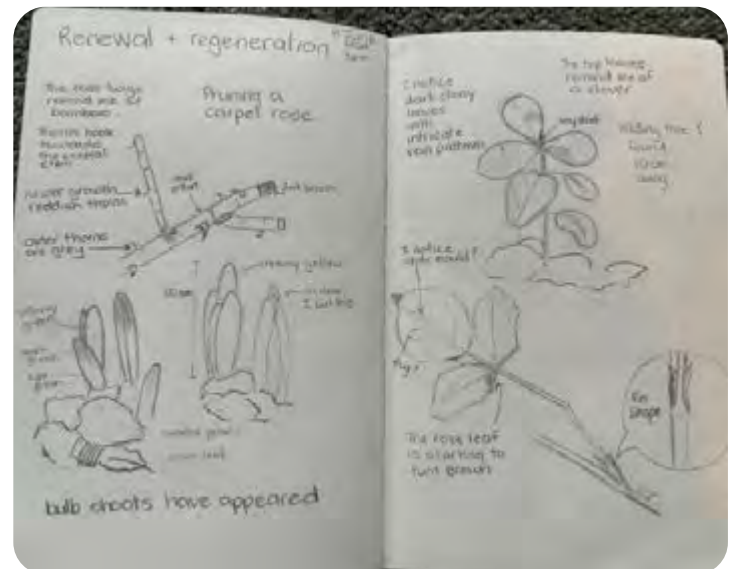
On day three I expanded my thinking on what nature actually is as I drew fossils which I had bought.



On day four I started to question what I was seeing. What I had assumed to be a bee was in fact a drone fly.



On day 6 and 7 I explored the feijoa from fruiting to decomposition. Observing the fine white strands of fungi and tiny bugs emerge was like entering a tiny magical world.



I am looking forward to continuing my nature journaling journey exploring the cycles of nature in every season.

The Chicken Philosopher

by Tina Merrybard

Tiny singleton chick
Roaming my garden
with your silver-laced mother

Two weeks of life
and already you run and scratch
and play at flapping those newly fledged wings

You know what to do
You hatched knowing
Just as your mother knew
How to hatch you
A miracle I never tire of witnessing
She, fluffed guardian of the baleful eye,
Seeding your beginning
With the heat of her body

Baby-fuzz still on your head and back
Spines of feathers beginning on your shoulders and tail
Ugly-charming
Domestic dinosaur-genes in full view

Your mother is so happy to squire you about
Clucking importantly to you about this or that morsel
And already you have that great ability of all chickens:
The capacity for joy in all your actions,
Presence, cheerfulness,
Utter abandon to caress of dust or sun,
To taste of worm or grass

You and your mother
You feel the warmth on your feathers,
Cast yourselves down in a moment
Wings spread, eyes closed in bliss
And I, a blessed smiling witness
Am given the gift of sharing that joy

It warms me like the sun warms you



My Friend, White Sage

Words and photos by Bec Bennett

As with most things, my taste in plants has changed over time. Borderline feverous obsession that lasts a few years or so, eventually plateauing out to a healthy collection of the plants that really matter to me, and a bank of half remembered botanical names. I have accepted and embraced this pattern in many aspects of my life. Recently, my appetite has been for medicinal plants. I can't really explain why, I strongly believe any plant can be healing, it's all about the connection you have with it. All plants have a history or lineage, if it is intertwined with human history or not. I think maybe it's the sacred plants that capture me, plants with folklore and mythology. Those plants are often medicinal. It makes sense that they would carry physical and metaphysical power.

I scrapped the concept of solid plans years ago, so my garden was formed with a general shape in mind and a yearning for medicinal herbs. The nights of internet seed buying began, herb suppliers cross referenced with internet searches and books. It became clear that my garden would require a White Sage. I recognise how cliché a white, Millennial, female, falling in love with White Sage is.



Let's just get that out of the way. I simply do not possess the arrogance to deny the lure of a plant when I feel its pull. And I have felt the pull of *Salvia apiana*. At that stage, I hadn't met White Sage in person, not a live plant. But I was familiar with the aroma and regard of its burning foliage. This plant's importance to the Native American tribes it shared land with is well documented. Used as a food source, medicine and in ceremony, White Sage was treated with respect and harvested sustainably. Its power, and recent popularity has not gone unnoticed by commercial interests and *Salvia apiana* has now been over-harvested to near extinction, putting pressure on plant populations, and risking accessibility for a culture that has worked with it for countless years.

I wrestled with the idea of growing and using a plant held so sacred to people not of my culture, the best I can offer right now is acknowledgment of its importance, mindful respect and a refusal to profit from its smoke. By growing my own, I can share a connection, without the risk of participating in over-harvesting.

I sowed a few seeds under a grow light, and to my delight, they germinated! (I'm not a good seed grower, I lack the consistency often required, as you'll discover as the story continues). I babied the seedlings, feeling like these special plants had accepted my invitation, I had better keep them alive! Over time I potted them up into increasingly bigger pots, always wary not to

give them too much space, too much new mix to hold moisture. Sometimes known as Californian White Sage, native to Arid America, I was nervous to strike a balance between the space and water for growth and mimicry of its natural conditions. I'm in not-very-Californian Melbourne. Eventually I had 2 plants potted into 250mm pots, and it was time for me to be long winded and indecisive about where in the garden they were to be placed. First, I put the pots in the garden, the idea was they could become accustomed to the conditions of this space.

They moved around a little, and blew over often. One was a strange, wild shape. I planted it at the back of the garden in a space probably a little too shady and full of other plants. Being from the desert, White Sage enjoys the company of the sun more than that of plants. Despite these less than ideal conditions, I felt it wanted to go there, and it continues to grow in its wild shape, amongst friends. The second plant was a much bushier shape, a stronger more vigorous plant. But something didn't feel right when I would go to plant it. I'd hold the pot and look around the garden and experience no urge to plunge the roots into the soil. So I'd put down the pot and walk away.



After years of horticultural training, my gardening is now being led more by gut feeling and plant connection than strict learnings. I listen rather than tell.

The roots found their own way into the soil, anchoring a half-topped pot and causing the plant to redirect its growth to its new upward. We've all been there, or at least that's what I tell myself. One Autumn morning the feeling changed. Today was the day. I overloaded my little car with a large stone pot and potting media and carefully transplanted the White Sage. The next three days were unseasonably warm and windy, and I watched my special plant suffer from transplant shock in unfavorable conditions. On day three I wrapped some bunched up netting around the plant to reduce the wind across the leaf surface. Conditions normalised and the roots settled, my tough friend made it through a Melbourne winter in its new home. The bushy form gave way to a slightly more sparse nature, heralding the coming of flower spikes. The spikes reached high, demanding your attention. Nectar rich white flowers adorn the crown of this wise plant, bees visiting and adding a hum of sound to the spectacle. Not a surprise when you consider the species name of *apiana*.

I haven't done an intentional harvest yet. If I'm called to prune, I make use of the trimmings, and occasionally a branch is chosen for me by the overzealous resident Wattle Bird. Most of my time spent with this plant is in conversation. A friend, and plant connection I hope to have for years.

*A note from Pauline:
The poem below was after Cyclone Seroja that hit Kalbarri.
We had long spells of no power, therefore the quiet was
heavenly, before the un-ending convoy of trucks headed close
to the disaster zone with supplies and to remove debris.
This was my first poem.*

Peace at Dawn

by Pauline Bicker

on Monday the 17th day of May 2021

Gentle rolls of thunder and quiet flashes of lightning across the sky in the
early hours, long before daylight.
The break of dawn heralded by roosters calling to one another,
greetings of a wonderful new day in my district.
So different to the dogs calling each other in greetings of a new day in the city.
Then begins a clearing of the throat from a lone kookaburra nearby,
expecting loud and raucous laughter.
In the gentle silence of this morning, the laughing was toned down low.
No vehicles breaking in the moments before the night's cloak lifts.
Nature in motion before the metal chariots are brought to life.
The spell of the morn lingers longer than usual.
Trucks quietly rolling along the highway stirring the mix of nature
and daily rituals of going to places of work this morning.
Today this does not break the spell. Nature seems to hold its own above all,
as the sun sends out beams of soft sunlight, breaking through the cloud blanket,
shining silently in the stillness.
The peace last within me for many hours.

Tuesday the 18th day of May was the opposite, no birds calling.
All the trucks thundering down the highway.
Workers leaving their abodes in droves in their noisy metal chariots,
heading towards the highway to join the long line of vehicles,
cranked up for early morning travel to their destinations.
Today is a working day,
yesterday like a serene and tranquil, relaxing Sunday.

A Sojourn with Giant Stones, and Birds

by Brenda Rae

During this time of Winter Solstice and Matariki I have been remembering people and places that have helped me on the journey through the OBOD course; one of these experiences I would like to share with you. Years ago, with the morning sun burning away the fog and mist blanketing the vast Canterbury plains, a friend and I motored along the long straight highway towards the Southern Alps, west of Christchurch.

Humming along in a 1929 white MG sports car, we snaked up the steep foothills then down into the valley that is the home to the Castle Hill's amazing giant Limestone rocks. Rocks carved by Water, Earth and Air (wind), sitting upon the crest of several tall hills to the west of the old Greenstone valley trail that leads via Arthur's Pass to the West Coast.

Leaving my friend to read and sleep in the car, I set off along the gravel path. It was 8 o'clock in the morning, just the Rocks, the Sky and me. Turning right at the Information board, I followed Barry Brailsford's instructions which he had given me 3 days previous. On passing through a farm gate, I looked up. There before me was the trail leading to the Waitaha ancient School of Learning.

Two magpies perched on the first of the seven large stones that lead to the upper levels. After a snack and a drink, I asked if I may enter. When the permission to enter came, the magpies flew up to the next stone. As I moved forward, I was aware of the presence of a small crowd following behind, and so it was all the way up pass the seven stones; each stone I greeted with Peace, walked sun wise around it finishing with an Awen, then asking permission to move to the next stone up the steep trail. Walking sun wise around each stone I moved my hand, which had a "mood" ring on the ring finger, gently over the stone's surface feeling the interesting textures. I noticed the ring changed a different colour with each stone.

On reaching the seventh stone, the magpies flew off over the hill to the South, and the crowd disappeared. From the seventh stone I asked to be shown the way forward. After a brief wait, my attention was directed to certain stones. Moving to each level or group of stones I was lead to "gateways", where upon receiving permission to enter in Peace, I found myself chanting Awens – loud and strong, vibrating deep inside me, the best I have ever sounded. So I journeyed through the stones; giving Peace to the Four directions within a stone "circle", climbing through arched stone gateways, and walking sun wise around many amazing, huge stone entities, often with vigorous, healthy Mataguori trees growing through gaps in the stone sculptures.

At the highest level, the edge of the escarpment over looks the village of Castle Hill and in amongst the big stones I found a "balcony" with a strong Mataguori tree growing by the back wall. Leaving a gift with the tree, I sent 3 Awens and Blessings of Healing to Barry in the village below, before climbing back through the "doorway" out on to the highest level of the stones.

Suddenly I found that I was not alone. Around the stones came two women from England, who had read Barry's and Hamish Miller's book "In Search of the Southern Serpent", and had come to visit the Stones of Castle Hill, along with a family from Denmark, while touring New Zealand. After a chat we continued our individual ways.

Finally it was time to return. Retracing my steps I gave thanks for what I had received at each gate way, closing it with deceasing Awens. As I approached the third stone down on the trail of seven, a loud bird cry pierced the air several times as a young Falcon flew across in front of me to land on the third stone. There it perched, bobbing it's head several times looking straight me. Quietly I walked towards it till I was by the stone. We stood at ease with each other for awhile, then it seemed time to move on down the trail to the first stone . Only when I had turned to thank the way with quiet Awens , did the Falcon fly away with the last Awen.

After a peaceful walk back to a busy tourist filled carpark, I saw again my fellow travelers of the Stones and had another chat with them before returning to my friend snoozing in her car. I could have spent all day up there amongst the Stones, but I am very thankful for the four hours I did have.

If you ever read the book "In Search of the Southern Serpent", the stone that the Falcon perched on is photographed on the bottom left-hand corner of page 138.

My friend, Minerva passed over last year and I miss all our interesting chats; my life is richer from knowing her. Hamish Miller passed over several years ago; he was a dowser who wrote many interesting books on Ley lines in Britain, Europe and other places, especially sacred sites. He came to New Zealand to explore the sacred sites of the Waitaha people with Barry Brailsford, an archaeologist who was asked by the Waitaha people to write their story "The Song of the Waitaha " the first people of Aotearoa. An interesting read.

It is interesting how been "cocooned" inside by the winter weather helps us reevaluate friends and experiences and get our priorities sorted; it helps us to see a clearer picture of the important things in life. It is often the little things that make the big differences.

Ancient of the shadow

by John Jordan

The Silver wolf knocks on your door
She screams but you can't hear her
Because your ears are full of honey
Delivered by the bees from the sun

So, you enter; howling – 'How do I get out of here?'
No one understands you, with sounds like a baby crying
And you exit through the wound that life gives you
As you creep along the edge of the blade
Balancing yourself carefully between right and wrong

Now you know the ashen fool
Who raised you, with blood like sour iron
Like the others, you shed your skin, and live
Waiting for the Black Darling, the only one you never met
Who knows your voice, and you know hers.



MAKING FRIENDS WITH CROW

by Nikki Love

Well strictly speaking he's a raven, and he (and occasionally his mate) have been visiting my back yard for over a year now. Or at least I think so. It's a bit hard to tell ravens apart for obvious reasons.

I had started feeding the pair last year, and loved watching their antics and demanding ways for food. They had started to be a fairly regular visitor and quickly became relatively comfortable around myself and often my cat on the back deck. I particularly remember one day I had put some scrap meat on the dining table outside, which he would often jump on and march over to where I had placed it and gobble it down, but this time my cat was sunning herself on the chair under the table, so he kept ducking his head under the table to make sure she was still asleep and wasn't going to disturb him before he would jump on to the table and go grab his food. He did this several times until all the scraps had been handed out, and I remember thinking that a) he was very smart and aware to look for my cat under the table, and b) and also brave or self-assured enough to realise that he could easily avoid Missy if she decided to take her life into her own hands and go up against a bird that was actually the same size as her!

I've heard and read several stories of how intelligent crows are, and had especially taken note that corvids can remember the faces of the people who are either kind or hostile towards them for many years, and even seem to pass that information on to others in their group. It was then that I decided I was not ever going to be on the bad side of a crow and would make sure I was on friendly terms with any that I met.

Crows and ravens have long been held as important totems in many different traditional folklores, such as Celtic mythology links crows with The Morrigan, and in north American traditions the raven is usually portrayed as heroic, as well as a trickster. Even in Greek mythology crows were linked with the god Apollo who would send them out to give messages to the humans, and when one of the crows made the foolish error of telling Apollo that the nymph he was in love with had actually married a man, Apollo turned all ravens, who up until that point had been white, to black, and then of course there is Hugin and Munin the ravens of Odin, who were similarly seen as messengers.

Perhaps the crow who visits me may or may not be a messenger or representative of the gods, but I have noticed recently that when he visits and loudly calls to let me know he is waiting on the back deck for some food, that I immediately jump up and grab something from the fridge, that my cat now knows that if the crow is getting some tidbits then she is likely to get some, and my neighbour's dog now knows that means my cat will come out on the back deck and perhaps if she barks enough to get the cat's attention then maybe they'll become friends! (Don't count on it Pixel!) So for a brief minute or two there is me, a cat, a dog and a crow all hanging out and interacting on the back deck all because of him, and if that is not magical I'm not sure what is.





Boann River Goddess

By Liluri Sage

Boann releaser of divine knowledge
She of the Radiant brow
Poetic inspiration your image
May the frenzy be mine now
With the hazels and salmon aplenty
I bathe in your waters so bright
May the wisdom flow through me easy
See praise poetry Illumine the night

Member Businesses, Groups & Retreats in Australia/New Zealand



Animal Oracle by Vicki Minahan

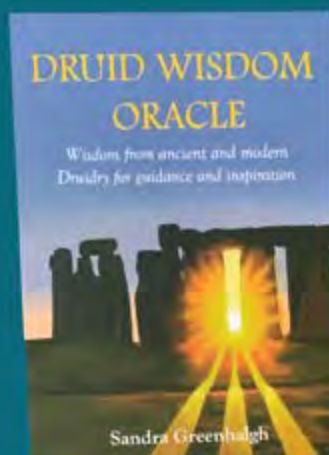
After nearly eight years I am pleased to announce a project close to my heart has arrived with art by Helen Wells. Mountain Ash Animal Oracle is here. I grew up in The Strathbogie Ranges, Victoria, Australia and have been greatly influenced by both the environment and the lifestyle espoused by my parents 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.



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Pan's Script, Astronumerology, by Elkie White

Pan's Script, the Book will help you to understand yourself by teaching you how to analyze your birth data: your date, place and time of birth and the name you were originally given. Instead of selling yourself short, astronumerology encourages you to embrace your full potential. Available from Balboa Press and Amazon.

Pan's Script, Individualized Reports: Whilst the book teaches people how to analyse and interpret birth data in general, your individualized report does all of the work for you: entirely personalized and outstanding value at \$125.

Pan's Script, Ongoing Research: To formulate a comparison with other groups that I have on file, I'm seeking the birth data of 100 druids. Thanks to all of you who have already participated, I'm close, and hoping that by year's end I will have an article for SerpentStar based on the findings. If you would like to participate, please send me your date of birth, place of birth, time of birth, and name given to you at birth.

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Southern Hemisphere OBOD Assembly (SHOBODA)

Date claimer 13-16 March 2025

Bookings are now open at www.druidryaustralia.org

Mark your calendars now!

Members of Macadamia Grove are delighted to host the SHOBODA on Thursday 13 to Sunday 16 March 2025 (3 nights).

The venue is on Bribie Island, north of Brisbane, Queensland. We will be a couple of blocks away from the ocean and the nearby sea-side town of Woorim, though the venue feels like a private sanctuary.

Initiations, rituals, workshops and explorations of the Bardic Arts will be included in the program. SHOBODA is fully catered.

Accommodation is in shared dormitory cabins (4-6 people per room, with each room having its own toilet and shower), with camping also available on site. There are a range of nearby options (including cabins in the caravan park next door) if you'd prefer not to stay onsite or have medical reasons precluding dormitory accommodation. You will need to arrange any alternative accommodation yourself.

This event is for OBOD members only, due to limited numbers.

More information regarding the price, program and other information is available via <https://www.druidryaustralia.org>, Serpentstar and Facebook.

If you have any questions in the meantime, please email or pop up a question in the Southern Hemisphere OBOD Facebook or Druid Hearth site or email OBODSHA@gmail.com

THE WHEEL OF SEGAI'S

The Wheel of Segais is a simple but profound template for understanding the nature of change, the innate nature of the universe and our place within it. It allows us to perceive all that we are and all that we need as we experience the turning of the wheel of the year - the Four Seasons, the 12 streams or stages and the Well of the Salmon of Wisdom, the Well of Segais itself, in the centre.

Over the last few years the Salmon has certainly been busy and a number of products from The Wheel of Segais are now available for 'treeful' living, life coaching and divination: the Personal Reader Kit and Way-Showing Cards for divination; Reader Training and Life Coaching online; and the latest offering, my book Living Treefully.



Living Treefully is a book for any person, organisation, group, team or relationship that has ever asked the question, 'Where next?' – a system for managing change and 'living treefully' in the seasonal ways that trees do. It can help to guide you and provide insight, no matter where you are in the journey of your life right now.

I received this great review from Mandy Gibson:

Some

months ago I received a review copy of this wonderful book - not only a companion to Pamela's ground-breaking Wheel of Segais divination method, but also a stand-alone system that can be used by a single person or group to really get at the heart of starting and working through a new project or life change. Living Treefully is a great metaphor for the ideas presented, being as it is a representation of the pure cycle of life – it also gives something to aim for, the energy and promise of new growth, the strength and stability of knowing your purpose, and the trust involved in allowing things to decay knowing they will feed the next cycle. It's a beautifully resented book too – soft and attractive illustrations, a fold-out Wheel of Segais diagram in the back and even the choice of paper is soft and comforting to the touch! So much love and care has gone into every page.

The Book is becoming really popular in the UK and I have just sent off my last books of the last printing and am about to receive the next delivery from the printer this week. So if you have been waiting for a copy, Living Treefully it is now available again.

For prices and how to order the book, The Wheel of Segais – Living Treefully or any of the other products go to the Wheel of Segais website www.wheelofsegais.com or send me an email at pamela@thewoolshed.com.

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

OBOD Member Celebrants

Australia & New Zealand

Pamela Meekings-Stewart

Registered Marriage and
Civil Union Celebrant
New Zealand

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

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

I am also able to arrange contact for weddings and civil unions at Stonehenge Aorarua 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:

Naming (children and change of name), Birth Blessings, Vows of Commitment, Entering The Wisdom Years - **Crowning** (women) and **Sagging** (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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Anne Conroy

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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, the
Wheel turns...



Here is a photo I took a couple of days ago while I was out and about nature journaling in my garden and blowing bubbles with my Druid husband Tom. Clover in a rainbow bubble!

- Dawn McKenzie

This is the Feast of Imbolc. The Light of the Sun in the Wheel of the Year stands in the North East, within the Cone of Darkness. This is a time of hope and preparation. This is the time of the growing of the Light.

This Feast is known by many names to many people, for the Truth is reflected from many mirrors. It has been celebrated as Februa and Candlemas. Our ancestors called it by names long forgotten, and our children will call it by names as yet unconceived.

At this time, our ancestors saw the Sun, the weak and helpless Child of Light, grow stronger day by day. The land still lies in darkness, but the rule of the darkness is challenged by the infant Lord of Light. Little by little, the skies grow light and the blessed Earth gives forth her first flowers, snowdrop and crocus, as promise of the Summer that is to be when all creation will rejoice in the One Universal Light.

- by Coifi

Text sourced from www.druidry.org



Artwork by wyverne ogma vyvyan

**The deadline for contributing to the Beltane issue of SerpentStar is Thursday 23rd October 2024
The Beltane issue will be released in the week of 1st November 2024.
Bright blessings, and see you next time!**