SerpentSTAR

Journal of THE ORDER OF BARDS OVATES & DRUIDS in the SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE



Padstow
OBBY OSS
Festival

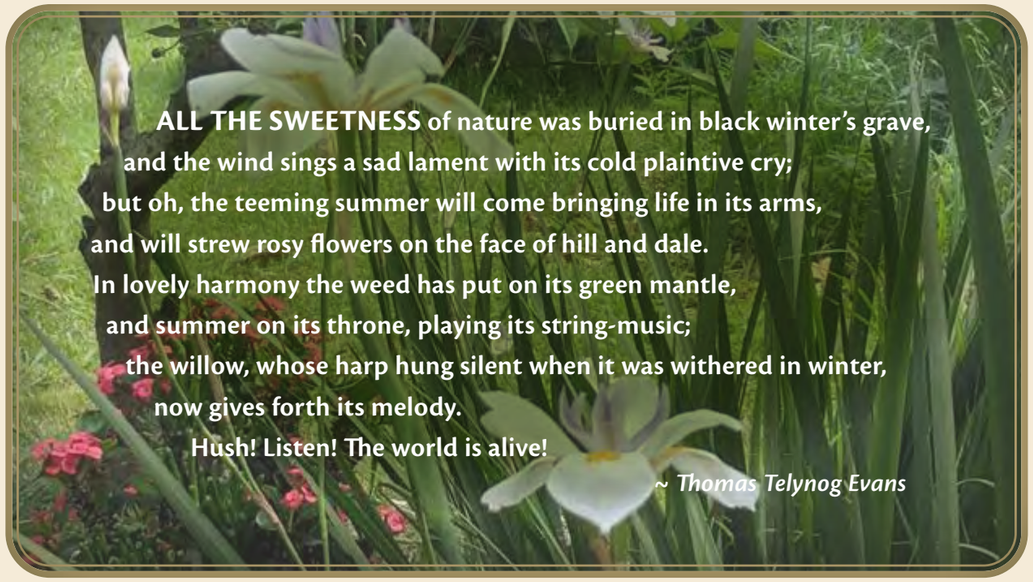
BELTANE ~
One Spoke on
the Great Wheel

How to Grow a
FAIRY DRUID

TRUTH *and*
STORY

SIGNS &
Portents
in the SKY

Beltane 2026



ALL THE SWEETNESS of nature was buried in black winter's grave,
and the wind sings a sad lament with its cold plaintive cry;
but oh, the teeming summer will come bringing life in its arms,
and will strew rosy flowers on the face of hill and dale.
In lovely harmony the weed has put on its green mantle,
and summer on its throne, playing its string-music;
the willow, whose harp hung silent when it was withered in winter,
now gives forth its melody.
Hush! Listen! The world is alive!

~ Thomas Telynog Evans

***In the Southern Hemisphere**, we celebrate Beltane on the 1st November . . .*

AT BELTANE, we open to the God and Goddess of Youth. However old we are, Spring makes us feel young again, and at Beltane we jump over the fires of vitality and youth and allow that vitality to enliven and heal us.

When young we might use this time as an opportunity to connect to our sensuality in a positive creative way, and when older the mating that we seek might well be one of the feminine and masculine sides of our nature. Integration of the male and female aspects of the Self has long been seen as one of the prime goals of spiritual and psychotherapeutic work, and Beltane represents the time when we can open to this work fully, allowing the natural union of polarities that occurs in nature at this time the opportunity to help us in our work – a work that is essentially alchemical.



Artwork by wyverne ogma vyvyan

~ by Maria

Text sourced from Druidry.org

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

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Editorial

It's nearly Beltane.
I'm visiting family in Qld. The Jacaranda trees are purple. This year is cool and windy. Last year was hot with big storms. Migratory birds are arriving at the mangroves and mudflats of Moreton Bay. Outside the window a juvenile magpie squarks unmelodiously, feathers fluffy and grey, not the crisp black and white of its parent bird that walks along beside it, dutifully, looking for food to answer the squark. At night the Curlews' call is eery.

In my little Tasmanian town, down by the river the geese eggs have hatched into a dozen little goslings, the Cherry Blossom have come and gone and now there are new leaves. Hawthorn are flowering, looking like wedding veils. The native Waratah and Meleleuca show their colour. Changeable weather, winds, squalls, sun, rain. The weather is doing its own thing, summer, winter, summer again, winter, it changes by the day, by the hour, too stubborn to accept that it's time to change season. Perhaps we need to call the summer in and invite it to stay. Insist, demand, that the summer come now with cheerful celebrations.

In the UK there are still towns that have celebrated the arrival of summer on May Day / Beltane for hundreds of years. We bring you an article featuring the Obby Oss Festival at Padstow in Cornwall.

Also, a range of other creative contributions, artworks and photos, sharing our Druid journey and impressions and knowledge. And from the Bards, there's poetry, a meditation, and storytelling.

As usual, we'd love to know how you are spending your Beltane. What does this season look like for you? Do you gather in ceremony? Does your community acknowledge this festival?

Or perhaps there's other ways to celebrate the time of year.

In Australia, we celebrate a horse race on the first weekend of November, the Melbourne Cup. In my little town the community gets together and puts on The Craft Fair, the largest working craft fair in the Southern Hemisphere. It's great to share our creativity.

It is time for celebration.

~ Isabel

A Communication Web . . .

The AIM of SerpentSTAR Journal is to inform and draw together members in the peace and light of the Grove, and to support and nourish each other in our quest for strength, understanding, knowledge, justice and love. Let's work together to achieve this aim.

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Acknowledgement of Country

SerpentSTAR Journal *acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We would like to acknowledge the contributions and sophistications of First Nations knowledges, and their ongoing spiritual practice and connection to Country.*

IN THIS journal, *SerpentStar*, which honours and explores traditions from some of our ancestral lands in the Northern Hemisphere, including through an exploration of the '*Wheel of the Year*', I would like to deeply acknowledge the profound history of this land on which we walk and live, Australia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have practiced culture on this land for over 65,000 years. Sharing stories, passing on knowledge, reading the land and the environment.

They have their own seasonal stories and observances, specific to the part of the country on which they live. Europeans have come and superimposed a calendar, with seasonal markers and traditions, onto an existing land. In some times and places, it might work out, in others it doesn't fit at all. The Wet and the Dry seasons of the tropics a good example of the latter, the Spring in Tasmania perhaps the former, and the introduction of European plants likely to amplify any similarities.

For those who are interested, the Bureau of Meteorology has online information of Indigenous weather knowledge, including culture and seasonal knowledge and indigenous seasonal calendars for some parts of Australia. What a valuable resource! The link is here: ***Indigenous culture and seasonal knowledge***

In my part of the world, Tasmania, due to the extraordinary destructive history with colonists, knowledge of Aboriginal seasons in this state is limited. But some knowledge survives:

> *"Tasmanian usage derives from, and relates to, a northeast Tasmanian indigenous population. Their seasons were as follows:* ***Wegtellanyta*** *(December–April);* ***Tunna*** *(May–August);* ***Pawenyapeena*** *(September–November). Note that there are only three seasons rather than the four seasons in the European-based usage, and that the definition of Pawenyapeena corresponds exactly to the European-based season Spring as used in Australia."*

(from: ***Comparing indigenous and European-based concepts of seasonality for predicting macrofungal fruiting activity in Tasmania***,
as quoted in ***Pawenyapeena; Lake Belton, Tasmania***)

So please, wherever you are, we invite you to take a moment to appreciate the depth of knowledge and connection to country that exists on the land that you stand on. Perhaps we can all learn more about some of the seasonal markers that have existed for years in our part of the world.

~ Isabel

Beltane ~ One Spoke on the Great Wheel

~ Michael Vlasto


'CERIDWEN' by Christopher Williams

What does Beltane mean to me now?

Over the years, the meaning will always change as the attitudes click by. What was true to me at the age of eighteen has faded and changed for me now at seventy-six.

So I sought through my memories of involvement and waffles of academia on the subject. These are walking strands of the great truth that still stays strong and unbroken.

Firstly, I will consider the season.

Being a farmer's son, I notice seeds which have been planted, which now have a hold on Mother Earth and are starting to grow strongly.

I feel the lingering temperature, no more hesitant, but surging forward, hotter and drier, spiralling through the ground and up, ever up into the air.

I notice birds, their nests now built, are grabbing their partners with the urge to make eggs. Foremost in their minds, the hard work of building is finished. Now guarding and tending the raising of babies is in their heads.

Music festivals begin. People go to the beach to flaunt their bodies, to dance. The wild notes of mating are in the air.

All this is beginning to happen now.

The stars of Orion, the great hunter, and his faithful dog Sirius hang over us all night.

So the poets always watched all this. Then they hammered it in their minds with symbols and shapes, into forms which they could store in the library of their memories, to be worked and cooked in the cauldron of inspiration.

But they were needing a guardian shape.

They, in earlier times, called the tender of this great brew Cerridwen.

They called the lad who burnt his fingers and so sucked them, Taliesin — Radiant Brow.

He who always had an answer, so was considered wise. He who could always tell a story relevant to what was happening, and it was filled with rhythm and rhyme, so it could be remembered by others.

Stories of the sacred dance around the Maypole,

. . . continued on the next page

Photos: *Fire by Cullan Smith & Orion Stars by Pascal Debrunner - unsplash.com*

which, as we know, creates life.

The plants and flowers which blossomed in this season — boys noticed these made girls happy. So once again, more songs and poems were composed as a result.

It was a time when the old men and the old women noticed everyone in the tribe or the village was happy.

Luck, or as they said, the gods, as we all call the unexplainable ones, seemed to be smiling.

And always at this time of the year, when certain stars popped over the horizon at this exact time of sunset, six weeks after the wise ones had recognised the time of the spring balance.

So over the thousands of years, the rituals and the practices, the reasons and the memories solidified in our DNA of this time of the year.

So now, although many have changed their way of life, still the invisible, unexplained surges of our bodies do not forget the time of Beltane, when the energy of the Scorpion rises over the crest of the world.

So the thinkers see it as one spoke on the great Wheel of the Year, where gay abandon and fertility are balanced by the time to go within at Samhain, where the barns are full and blood is on the floor, where animals have practised the great sacrifice, giving their lives so others can live.

And the tool to remember all this was, of course, fire.

Fire to protect, fire to cook, fire to warm, fire both within us and without us, fire to remember, fire to transcend.

This is the great fire festival of Beltane, when fire mixes with air.

So we jump over the flames.
The voice on all lips was, "Hail Bel!"
Bel being the ancient Lord of Fire.
As the dance began, so Beltane was sung.





Padstow OBBY OSS Festival

BELTANE Travel Journal

Padstow Photos ~ Isabel Shapcott

~ by Isabel Shapcott

LAST year I celebrated Beltane in May in Padstow, Cornwall. Padstow's Obby Oss celebration is one of the oldest surviving festivals in the UK, famous for both its age and its uniqueness. It is a grand procession, a bit of street theatre with two stylised 'horses' (Osses) representing two 'teams' and a performance/dance routine paraded through the streets, accompanied by lots of music, drums, accordions, song and crowds of people.

PADSTOW, Cornwall, UK. 30 April 2025, 10am

WOW, this is beautiful, sitting halfway up a green grassy hill, looking down on the town of Padstow nestled in the nooks and crannies of the hills, a wall-built harbour to protect the boats from wild storms in winter. But today is perfect, beautiful, warm, sunny, no clouds in the blue sky, just a bit of haze. Lots of spaniel type dogs, warm breeze, birds hovering on the breeze looking about them below.

Padstow is beautiful. The old part of town near the harbour has been bought up by second house owners, who've done them up to lease out to holiday makers, bringing them out of the price range of the locals, but so lovely to see the old houses loved and looked after and cared for, regardless. The grass is lush and green, and full of dandelions and little white daisies.

Eve of May Day, 8.20 pm

It's the Night before Beltane, the festival in honour of the God 'Bel', who makes the sun grow stronger each day until its peak at summer solstice. A night to make wishes, set an intention, dream of a project and see what happens in the coming weeks.

It's a busy night in Padstow. The community has gathered



to decorate the
town's narrow streets
with flags, and fresh, live greenery, to bring in the summer. And to raise the tall, colourful May Pole. Tonight the pubs are full and overflowing with cheer and song. It's a time for the locals to catch up with old friends and family who have grown and left the town, but come back every year for May Day.

Tomorrow is the Obby Oss festival.

First of May, 1pm

Obby Oss Day! Brilliant, so much fun.

I asked my BNB host about it. She said the festival is about joyously bringing in and welcoming the summer. So happy that it's summer. Summer has come, it is here, yay. There are parades and celebration, lots of cheerful noise and singing. Welcoming in summer by bringing extra foliage into town in a tradition that goes back … nobody knows how far.

. . . the festival is about joyously bringing in and welcoming the summer. So happy that it's summer



It made me all teary seeing the crowd in their white clothes, almost like a uniform, with red or blue ribbons, depending on which 'team' they followed. And cheery noise. I touched a plant growing outside a café to ground me, but the plant was very moved too. *All is right in the world*, the plant seemed to be saying to me. *People have remembered their part in this, they're doing what they've always done in celebrating the seasons*. The plant was alive and rejoicing. Even the stonework was alive and vibrant and rejoices. People still doing it, here and now, carrying on their tradition in tune with nature. This is it. This is how my ancestors did it. What if we are joining in with Nature's party?

And like Dandelion seeds, we spread the good vibes far and wide … travelling to these festivals and sharing our impressions.

It was unlike other festivals I've been to. The whole community came out, wearing crisp, clean, white, with scarves and accessories of either red or blue, depending on which 'team' they represent. There were beautiful young English girls, with peaches and cream complexions, and dimpled cheeks, and big smiley eyes, all done up to the 9's, looking beautiful, with their cheery, warm inclusiveness. Living up to its courting purpose, a chance to get dressed up and strut your stuff. Of course the crowd represented all sorts of people, young and old, so much fun, I loved it.

And because it was Beltane, the Hawthorn bloomed all across the UK, from the tip of Cornwall to Scotland.



From the Dark ~ For Bindy with Love © Pingala Walsh 2026

Emerging from the dark,
How we grow to full bloom,
Over time, over seasons, now arrives . . .

A **GIFT** and tribute to a bright and spirited young girl who was deeply affected by ongoing tragedy. In traversing her fragile and rich underworld, this artwork is a recognition of how adversity can be transformed in time, creating fruits and blooms of beauty and abundance, the depth of which, otherwise, may not have been attained.

This MANDALA is a symbol of wholeness and connection with all that is. Illustrating the structure of our world, inner and outer, it is an ancient meditative practice, believed to be a device of transformation . . . Stories that can tell us something and enhance an inner journey to wholeness.

ELEMENTS: pomegranate, rose, Australian native orchids, fig leaves.

From the Dark ~ For Bindy with Love, original photographic limited edition artwork
by *Pingala Walsh* © 2026 **www.pingalawalsh.com**



Image by KAN LIU from Pixabay

How to Grow a *Fairy DRUID*

~ by Ashel

Druidry today is a living, breathing, growing experience, and it's borne out in how we raise our children.

I WAS chatting with my daughter the other day, and she said something that made me think. She said that growing up had been hard at times because of all the things I expected her to learn. We had focused a lot on personal responsibility, like learning how to fix your own stuff, sewing, making candles, cooking, and the sort of home apothecary skills that you use for basic self-care. You know, the things that I expected everybody learned. But she said that she had a reputation at college of being the person you could go to for a solution in a crisis: what to do if you had a toothache; how to survive on a student budget without becoming malnourished. They called her a fairy druid, which is rather cute.

"Thinking back, now that I'm older," she said, "I can appreciate what you were really teaching me."

That got me thinking about what I had wanted her to learn. It wasn't how to do things the way I did them. I wanted her to be confident meeting the challenges she would face, to be confident with her own creativity. Even before I had become an OBOD druid, before I had terms like Awen or Nwyfre, I was committed to nurturing my children as unique beings. As I grew as a Druid, my original parenting practice wove together with Druidry's core principles like embodying the flow of creativity and the greater life that suffuses all reality.

Making Our Own Normal

I don't think I ever wanted my kids to be successful, as in doctors, lawyers or private eyes, but I wanted them to live lives they wanted to live. After the horror tales I was told as a young mother of what we now call twice-exceptional (2e) children, I knew whatever they wanted from life they would likely have to get to it with more than a dash of creativity. They would need to learn how Awen flowed through them, what it felt like and how it tasted.

My girl was the youngest of four children, born into an autistic household. Her eldest brother had been diagnosed in kindergarten, in the mid-1990s. By the time she came along, our lives had adapted to the needs of neurodivergent people. Home life was a mixture of structured environmental processes and sensory support strategies, well before anybody knew that there was a serious sensory component to autism. Basically, I had to wing it.

I made up strategies as we went along. It was a life of careful observation and testing what worked. I broke down in tears more than once. There just weren't books about how to be a good parent for kids like mine.

We were not normal in the regular way. We weren't dysfunctional, either.

Together, we created an unusual sort of normal. Strange, interesting, and wonderful, the everyday of our lives was both predictable and bizarre. Some of that was because of 'the tism', as some of my friends call it. I think more than a bit of it was because I was a wyrd weaving of many diverse correspondences, as we all are. (Though working through the gwersi didn't make me creative or resilient, it did ground me. My understanding of correspondences entered my relationships as they anchored in me.)

Sandpits for Sandcastles

When I was younger, there was a parenting ideal that saw kids as themselves. You didn't speak down to them, and you didn't instruct at them. Parenting focused on the unique relationship between parent and child. You got to know each other. You didn't assume that your child was a 'mini-me'.

Teaching felt more like mentorship or apprenticeship. You offered yourself as support instead of saying, "This is how you do it." You listened more than directed. Studying Vygotsky and the zone of proximal development in the early 2000s further solidified this view of parenting for me.

Further, when my kids were little, autism wasn't seen as difference. It was an irreparable deficit. But I didn't look at my kids that way. I saw them as smart, caring, and capable people. I saw their souls, their wholeness. There was often a disconnect between what they wanted to do and what they were able to do. To me, that sehemed pretty common for human beings in general.

We all struggle to express our fullness, so we need people who can see more of who we are than what we can express.

The important thing is to learn how to bridge the gap between what we want to do and what we can currently do. Traditionally, we call that learning or growing up. While most people in the 1990s and 2000s focused on getting children with Asperger's Syndrome or High-Functioning Autism to be 'normal', I was more interested in helping my kids to be functional and fulfilled. You don't have to be 'normal' to be functional. Your solution doesn't need to be their solution. You just need to know who you are, where you are, and be settled in your embodiment.

My daughter attended a performing arts public school. Her teachers offered the students multiple ways of engaging with the curriculum. For an assignment on women's rights, a child could do the normal book report, essay, or model, but they could also write a story, make a film, create an instrument, design a set, choreograph a dance, or compose a song. Each way of engaging the material presented the child with a new way of engaging their creativity and personality.

We taught my kids to be confident in their creativity by broadening the way they presented their perception. All we need is a medium for our creativity

to work through, for the Awen to flow through: skills and experiences that offer us pathways to finding our own solutions to life's problems. It's kind of like you need sandpits if you want to make sandcastles.

How to Create Your Own Life

The nature and shape of your problems develop the shape and nature of your life. The way you value your problems and what you focus on are creative responses to the way you perceive reality.

We like to think that our choices don't matter, but choices build on one another. Simple choices, like what to eat at night, weave together with complex choices, like how to cross liminal spaces or build a quantum computer. What we choose to focus on is up to us, and choosing takes confidence and insight.



When you teach your kids to make a candle for a blackout or to cook a meal, you are teaching them to make choices and solve problems. More importantly, you are teaching them to be confident in their solutions. Their choices make for meaningful living.

I taught my daughter how to make her own life, and I taught her to feel the way her perceptions feed her insights. A lot of 2e people can be left anxious because their way of engaging with the world seems so startlingly different to those around them. They aren't confident in their bodies. Growing up in an environment where you are encouraged to feel your way through problems, and where your solutions are valued helps us to weave lives we can cherish.

I taught my kids how to make choices by exposing them to lots of distinct problems and helping them build skills. I showed how techniques learnt in one domain can be used in another, and we experimented with new ways of weaving them together until weaving became a skill of its own.

Awen flows through the unique way we interpret and interact with the experiences, skills, and problems that we encounter.

Confidence grows as we settle in our embodiment and feel safe in weaving our own correspondences. Druidry anchors us in the living, changing nature of existence, and this is intrinsically empowering. More so than any other time, we need to empower our children to make their own lives, whether that is a doctor, lawyer, private eye … or a fairy druid.

(*Ashel is the Druid name of Danuta Raine. This is a revised version of "How to Grow a Fairy Druid" from Danuta's Substack, Beyond the Nevers.*)

The 24th
Southern Hemisphere OBOD Assembly

*Will be held on the **South Australian coast**, south of Adelaide*

From **Thursday 29th April to Sunday 2nd May 2027**, right in time for Samhain.
Hosted by ***Welkin***, ***Wave*** *and* ***Wattle Seed Group***.

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Go to *www.druidryaustralia.org* and look for *Events*.

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BARDS' Page ~



Public Art , Aberystwyth, Wales

The FOOL

~ *Pingala*

I AM blessed by the sea of stars all about me,
My voice is quiet as I hold the lightness of my clear heart.
I am proclaimed by the crystal spiral of life and roses crown my glory,
My staff is magical, where all abundance grows to the accumulation of brightness.

The light is fading, it is dusk, the turning of time.
As I float and leap on the air of whimsy,
I know not where I am going, though how I'm going is known.

The raven warns danger as she lines my pathway,
I float beyond in the flight of freedom from restraint.
Omnipotent, wise aliveness is me,
The path of many colours I know.

Delight of the new journey, forever new.
All that is needed to know is the guiding light of the divine.
Nothing masks my way.
Not the attached nor the convoluted,
Pure energy pushes me and transformation is my constant companion.



0 Fool *card image reproduced with permission,* ***The Star Tarot*** *2nd Edition by Cathy McClelland*

Travelling the waterway, flowing in time,
Unswayed, facing fear and danger,
Heart's courage is mine.

CREATED during *The Energy Body in Tarot, A Guided Practice Through the Seven Chakras* course by *Steve Hounsome* and *Philip Carr-Gomm*

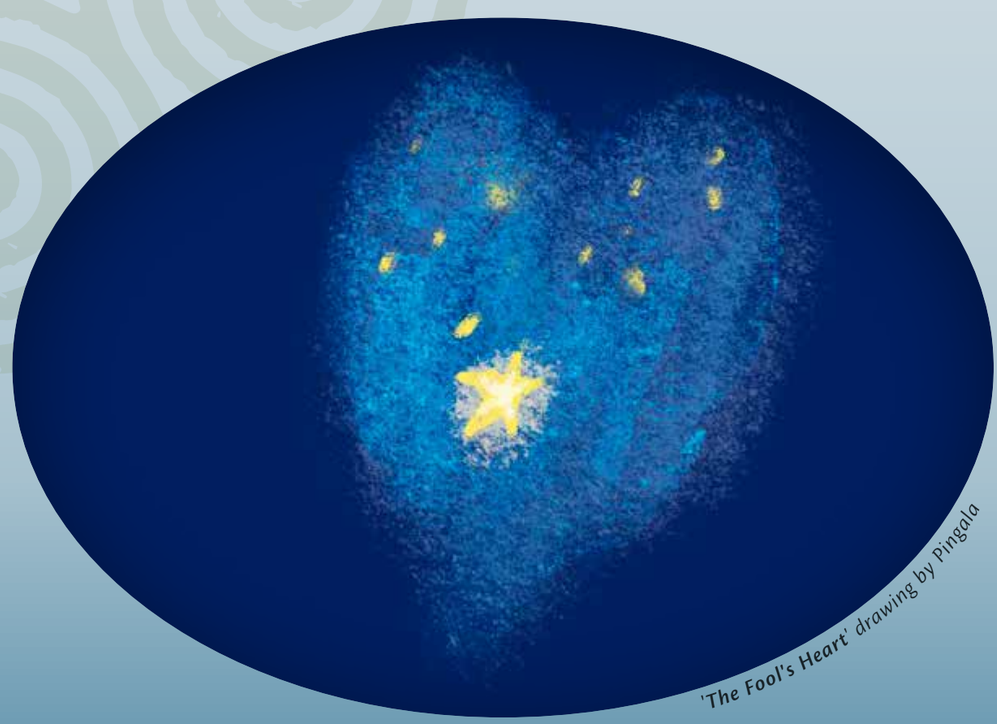
Witness

~ *Heather Watson*

A glow of light calls me to witness
A clear firery glow deep in the nor' east
Crested moon shines between the ripples to the north
Glowing bright colours of pinks and oranges
Puffy ripples spread from the western sky
Marching forward to the clear crisp east
Paleness in the far south waiting for the light
A glow of pink spreads far to the west
Bright intense colour comes across the sky above
Shinning tips on the crests as the waves march on
Honking magpie geese break the stillness



Photo by Dawn McKenzie



'The Fool's Heart' drawing by Pingala

Dark BODY Exercise

~ *Tal Milroy*

Imagine you're floating in bright light,
An endless bright, the heat of a summer sun.
It's beautiful, it's holy,
and you're tired.

Now imagine as the world spins on
A well of night is moving,
Slow and steady
moving to you now.

See your light-soaked body,
Waver like a sun mirage at noon.
Through blazing heat, it gazes East
longingly,
Anticipating shade.

And now the shade has reached your toes,
A twilight dawns, and then a dusk,
The shadows move across your skin.
Your toes relax.

And now the muscles of your calves
unwind like dark silk scarves
Your knees slip into gloaming
as they soften.

And now your waist is twilight,
hips are dusk,
Your knees are deepest night all strewn with stars.
Last night there was a moon,
but not tonight,
She turns her face away in kindness,
Lets you rest.

And now the stars are winking out
one by one, and leaving dark behind.
Your toes rest in the endless void.
The flesh of your feet
turn into
a flock of crows, and fly away.
Black down floats down behind them,
pillowing and soft.

The bones of your knees,
turn into black bees,
and swarm away,
with a buzz and a hum.
The void hums back, a lullaby.

Your waist breathes out
Your lungs become
strange nebulae
and then wink out.
Your heart pumps blood, then ink,
then swims,
In umbral tides
of vaster pulses.

The dreamtide,
motherlike,
enfolds
your tangled shoulders,
weary neck.

Your throat draws out
a final note
then sings a deeper silence,
As the shadows reach your lips
and flow like wine.

The quiet tide
slides up your cheek
Your eyes drift closed,
their pupils wide
and dark as evening lakes.

Unclench your jaw,
Your aching head
slips under
and is baptised by the dark.

Your body is weightless,
your body is darkness,
your body is holy.
Close your eyes, and close your eyes again.

Floating in nothing now,
your body is silent,
In soundless void
and boundless night enrobed.
The womb of god
enfolds your days
and endings.
Breathe out,
and let the infinite begin.

Hawthorn & Tea Tree

BELIEVED to be the Australian equivalent to Hawthorn, Tea Tree is a diverse shrub of many varieties in Australia.

Here we refer to Taran's article, **An Australian Ogham** *on* **Druidry.org**, *according to her research from various sources, those being books, friends, gardens, and 'spirit'.*

Given the broad scope of tea tree species in Australia, Taran worked locally in Victoria:



Hawthorn & Tea Tree photos: Isabel & Pingala

FESTIVAL:
Colour and times suggests placing it at Beltane
Element: fire
Colour: purity and passion; the negative being scattered passions
Numerology: the five starred petals - emotions.
Month: October

OGHAM &RUNE EQUIVALENTS:
Ogham: Hawthorn
At first I was 'told' these two went together and then for my own curiosity set out to find how. Both are emotional calming. They also have similar growth type. Curiously enough both are used as hedges (possible emotional blocking here?)
Rune: Berkana – Growth

~ *Taran*



THEY say we teach what we most need to learn, and I'm keen on learning about the art of storytelling. I was delighted to present a storytelling activity at the 2026 SHOBOD Assembly.

To tell a story well you need to know it really well, and to get it down to its essence, its bare bones. That was what we worked on in this activity. Working in pairs, we told a story to each other in shorter and shorter periods of time. Can you tell the story in 10 seconds? Did you capture its essence?

The story I chose to work with was enjoyed, and so I thought I'd share it here.

Although you can't see them, behind me is the person who first told me this story, and standing behind her, the person she heard it from, and so on. I first heard this story at a storytelling workshop at Cygnet Folk Festival 10 years ago by Niki na Meadhra.

TRUTH *and* STORY

SHOBOD storytelling workshop

~ by Isabel Shapcott

TRUTH is an old woman, with an iron will and a twinkle in her eyes, who likes to walk about, seeing the world, village to village, town to town. She's indestructible! She's Truth after all. She can be clever. Often are the times when Truth is not welcome. But she has found a way around this!

One day, Truth was out walking the world. The day was getting on and she was getting weary. One step at a time, she said to herself, something will turn up, it always does. And lo and behold around the next bend in the road she could see a village. Surely there would be a little food, a little shelter for the night, there.

In the village was a central grassy common area surrounded on all sides by houses, huddled in together, looking like they had grown out of the hillside, with thickly thatched straw roofs coming down low over stone walls and brightly coloured windows and doors.

The old woman knocked on the first door. She heard a woman's voice. "What now?! Who could that be?" The door opened and a small face peered around it. "It's an old lady, Mummy" called out the small face. "Who?" called the woman's voice, and she made her way to the door. The old woman could see that this mother was exhausted.

"I am just a traveller looking for a little food and shelter at the end of the day," she said. "But I can see your hands are full, and I wouldn't add to your burdens, good day." And she went to the next house.

At the next door a man peered out without fully opening it.

"What do you want? You're not from around here!" he grunted.

"Would you give a little food and shelter for a weary traveller?" asked the old woman.

He peered past her as if expecting her to be the bait for bandits.

"Don't want no trouble," he said, and closed the door. He was suspicious.

At the door after that she met greed and vanity. They were only interested in her if she had something to sell.

Then she met guilt, pride, snobbery, poverty. She went to each and every house, and each one closed their door on her.

The old woman was puzzled, but she just took life one step at a time. And now she was tired. She saw a shady tree next to a water pump, She wet her throat and sat down. What's next, she wondered, something will happen, it always does.

Before long she heard a sound coming up the hill, of horses' hoofs making music with bells and a wistful, lilting flute, and then she heard a merry voice sing out.

"I've travelled the world
I've seen the sights
I have a hearty tale,
and if you would bring
a pint to drink
it would not be for no avail.
A tale I bring
for young and old
I'll trade for a bite to eat.
My tale be worth
much more than gold
but I'll trade for a comfortable seat.
Bring just a chair
or a hearty fare
bring whatever you can afford,
Of kings and queens
and folk just like thee,
I'll be leaving you asking for more."

And the young man was so merry and so intriguing that windows opened and people peeped out, and the doors opened, and out they came, with fruit from their garden, and freshly baked bread with sweet honey spread and bottles to drink, and a couple of men brought out a table to put it all on, and others brought chairs and cushions, their eager eyes hungry for entertainment and a happy distraction to take them away from their worries and cares.

While this was happening the young man came up to the old woman sitting there and asked where she fit into this close-knit little village. "I am a wanderer like you, but when I asked for food and drink they all closed their doors and looked away".

Surprised, he soon found she had been to the places and met many of the people in his stories!

She had tasted the fruit, drunk from the well. She'd danced with the lords and sung with the ladies. She had a wealth of experience and a depth of wisdom. And the young man soon saw that she could help him as much as he could help her, for although he was full of energy and enthusiasm, his repertoire could always do with a little more depth.

The young man put his cloak around the old woman protectively He invited her to travel with him and to rest on his horse.

"Tell me your name, old woman" said he.

"My name is Truth", she said.

"Ah!" said he. "I think we will work well together. My name is Story".

And indeed, the arrangement did work very well, because Truth was welcome everywhere wrapped in the protective cloak of Story, and we do know the best Stories always come with a little Truth.

Signs and Portents in the SKY

~ by John Jordan

The lower the sun, the redder the bow, and if you can make it to the end of the bow you might find one of the Aos Si, a leprechaun, guarding a pot of war-lost gold that he has hoarded. What does a rainbow mean? Well, it could mean renewal and refreshment, as the earth may be getting a good drink. Perhaps one of the colours is calling out to be noticed. Maybe you need to choose a colour for that bathroom renovation?

Rainbow

If you've ever had the sun at your back on a rainy day you will likely have seen a rainbow. Aristotle was one to first explain what caused the bow. If you are in good conditions, you may see a primary bow and an inverted secondary one. The two different bows come from the single and double reflections of sunlight within the raindrop. The reason that water droplets reflect light within 42 degrees (primary bow) and outside of 51 degrees (secondary bow) was solved by a monk in the first decade of the fourteenth century. He filled glass spheres with water and observed the results. Years later, when Descartes derived the mathematical laws of refraction, he thought he had discovered it first. Christian mythology has the rainbow representing a promise that God made to Noah that he would not flood the earth again. Norse mythology depicted the rainbow as a bridge from earth (Midgard) to heaven (Asgard), called Bifrost. In Aboriginal lore, the Rainbow Serpent is associated with the creation and sustenance of life, in some cultures being male, in some female and in others both, in some bringing the rain, and others stopping the rain. It is one of the oldest continuing religious beliefs in the world. When angry, the Rainbow serpent brings thunder and lightning.

Halos

Halos around the sun or moon are caused by light shining through high, thin cirrus clouds drifting high above your head. Tiny ice crystals in Earth's atmosphere creates the halos. They do it by refracting and reflecting the light. Lunar halos are a sign that storms are nearby. Halos appear at a radius of about 22 degrees around the sun or moon. Often solar halos have rainbow colours and are sharp and brighter within the halo where the red colour lies. Outside the halo they are more diffuse. Lunar halos are less colourful, perhaps because the colour receptors in our eyes don't work so well in dim light. Long exposure photos of lunar halos can capture the colour. Because high ice crystals make a halo, they more often occur in winter. What do they mean? Some say it means change is coming, at least in the weather. Often a storm is on the way.

Rainbow coloured clouds

If you've ever spotted clouds high up in the sky with colours reminiscent of the film on a soap bubble or of oil film on puddles, then you've most likely seen the fairly rare iridescent cloud. The colours are more likely pearly rather than vivid rainbow colours, with pink, mint and lavender being predominant. They are caused again by light refracting off ice and water crystals in the clouds. They can be found anywhere in the sky and not at a particular angle from the sun. What do they mean? Watch out for oil slicks and mother of pearl jewellery.

Anti sun

The opposite point in the sky to the sun can sometimes look as if it has rays proceeding from it. Just as the sun shines rays outwards through clouds, if you are lucky enough to have a low sun you come sometimes see them converging on the opposite horizon, through clouds, trees or mountains. Rays from the sun are called crepuscular rays. The opposite point is called the anti-sun. What does it mean? Everything has an opposite, even the sun. Watch your back. Be kind to your Aunty.

Sun dogs

The sun dog is a member of the family of halos, caused by the refraction of sunlight by ice crystals in the atmosphere.



Cartoon by John Jordan

Sun dogs typically appear as a pair of bright coloured patches of light, around 22° to the left and right of the Sun, and at the same altitude above the horizon as the Sun. They can be seen anywhere in the world during any season but are not always obvious or bright. Sun dogs are best seen and most conspicuous when the Sun is near the horizon, and when the air is cold. The images are formed by particularly plate shaped crystals of ice reflecting like a mirror to the left or right of the sun. Sun dogs have been taken to be signs or omens of good or bad fortune, depending on the observer. Whenever observed, though, it means a singular sun has two following dogs, or has become a triplet. Maybe keep an eye out for triplet occurrences or take a good look from left and right angles of a thing that you take as being one thing. There's light at the end of the tunnel. If you have one dog, it might need a playmate.

Comets and bolides

Nothing stirs the imagination quite as much as the possibility that a comet seen in the daytime is an omen. The famous appearance of Halley's comet at the battle of Hastings in 1066 was good news for William the conqueror but bad news for King Harold II of England. Often interpreted as impending doom, not everyone took a gloomy view. In AD 77, the Roman writer Pliny the Elder gave his version of how to interpret a comet: "If it resembles a pair of flutes, it is a portent for the art of music; in the private parts of the constellations it portends immorality; in relation to certain fixed stars if portends men of learning and a revival of learning; in the head of the northern or southern serpent [i.e. Draco or Serpens] it brings poisonings". In terms of frequency, a major comet arrives

Photo by Taeshin T. on Unsplash

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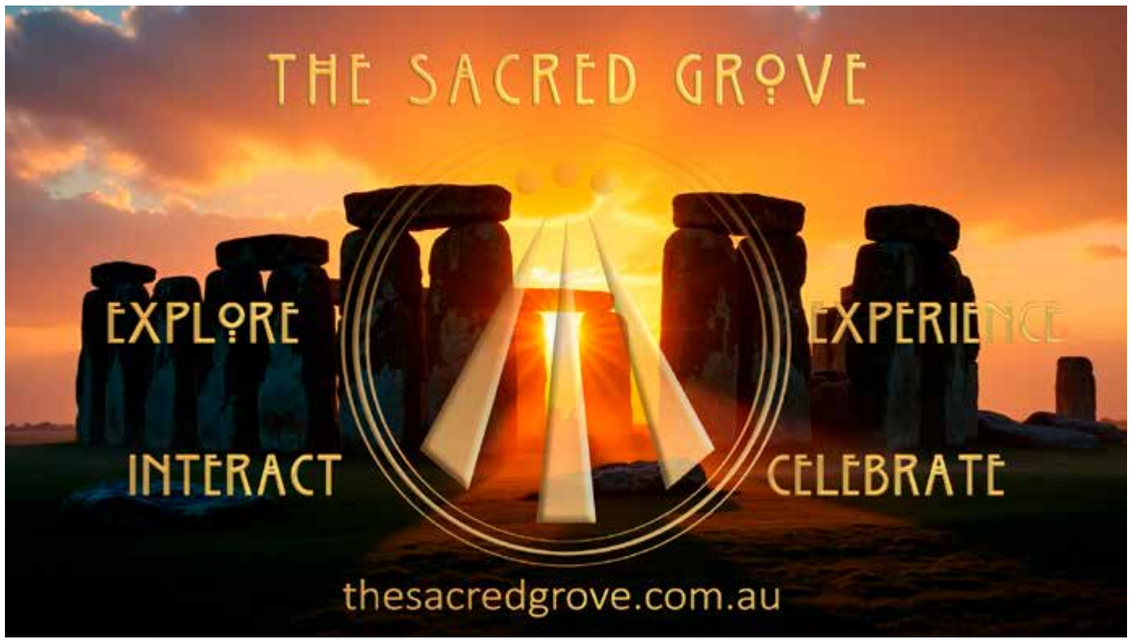
Animal Oracle by Vicki Minahan

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.





every 5-10 years or so, but truly great comets come every 25-40 years. The northern and southern hemispheres have different average appearances of comets. What do they portend? Pretty much anything including the end of the world as we know it. Likely a comet ended the reign of the most successful creature on earth. Dinosaurs ruled for 186 million years until they got hit by an extinction event started by a 10-15km diameter comet hitting ancient Mexico, in what we now call the Yucatan peninsula. Comets orbit the sun and are outside the atmosphere of earth. They last for more than a few days, often weeks or months. They are made of dirty ice and shed a tail of steam and dust.

A bolide is a meteor which explodes in the atmosphere and is brighter than the moon or planet Venus. It may have an accompanying sonic boom. Burning up as they penetrate the atmosphere, they may reach the surface and become meteorites. Made of rock or metal, they are quite rare and valuable, and relatively high in nickel content (5%-25%). They often make good swords, with rare attributes, but are not rust-free. One legend has it that Excalibur was forged from meteoric metal.

The world's largest meteorite was found in 1920 by a farmer in Namibia and was three by three by one metre thick and weighed about 66 tons. Mostly made of iron, it is called 'Hoba', after the farm where it was found. The word 'hoba' in the local language means 'gift'.

Keep an eye out for bolides landing in the ocean (76% of the earth's surface), or in sparsely populated areas, or when everyone is asleep. That's when they tend to happen, which is why we don't see a lot of them. If you see a bolide it means that many treasure hunters will try to see where it lands. See if you can get there first. Fame and fortune may be coming your way. Wear oven mitts, they get quite hot.

Call OUT for CONTRIBUTIONS

SerpentSTAR *is always on the lookout for contributions from those on the OBOD path . . .*

OUR next edition is LUGHNASADH. *Named after the Irish god Lugh, this festival marks the beginning of the harvest season.*

The DEADLINE is the 18th January 2027

- What does this **time of the year** look like where you live?
- Does your **Grove or Seed group** celebrate in any particular way, or do you have a certain solo practice?
- Do you have any other **news or events, stories** or **snippets** that you think other SHOBODies might like?
- A **story** from your part of the world?
- **Poetry** for our Bard's Page?
- **Craft** ideas we may like to make?
- A **review** of a favourite book, music, website or podcast?

SUBMISSIONS are welcome as **prose, poetry, art, paintings, drawings, images, photos, videos** for Facebook or however your creativity seeks to express?

We look forward to your contributions!

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 Grove

The Blue Mountains Grove 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 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

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: macademiagrove@hotmail.com or join our FB Group 'Friends of OBOD Macadamia Grove'

The Melbourne Grove

Celebrating the seasons in a cycle around Melbourne.

Contact: Elkie: elkiewhite@gmail.com
Facebook: Friends of The Melbourne Grove

Treesong Forest Seed Group

Based in Tasmania, formed online during lockdown.
Contact: knightwalkerjan@gmail.com

The Willows

The Willows are members of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids. The Willow, sacred to the Moon and Waters has long been associated with liminal spaces in Celtic and Druid lore. To this seed group willow represents the introduction of Druidry to a land that continues to carry ancestors and cultural knowledge of the oldest continuing culture in the world. We welcome all caretakers of this land to join us throughout South Australia in learning to listen as nature speaks.

We are a small group meeting in the Adelaide Hills and Victor Harbor. We are a study group, book club and get together for lunch on occasion.

Contact Janine.Hartley@bigpond.com or search for The Willows OBOD FaceBook page

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 Sarah or Adrienne:
thewindharpgrove@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

OBOD Worldwide

OBOD.org: www.druidry.org
Druid Hearth: https://hearth.druidry.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/druidry
Instagram: www.instagram.com/oboddruidry
TikTok: www.tiktok.com/@oboddruidry
Threads: www.threads.com/@oboddruidry

Druid Wisdom Oracle cards

Available on ETSY
https://www.etsy.com/au/listing/687481261/druid-wisdom-oracle



Byrningtyger@gmail.com

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.

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.

Facebook: Pan's Script, for posts about current research projects

All enquiries: elkiewhite@gmail.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.
Please let us know if your ad needs updating or renewing

The Trees Speak

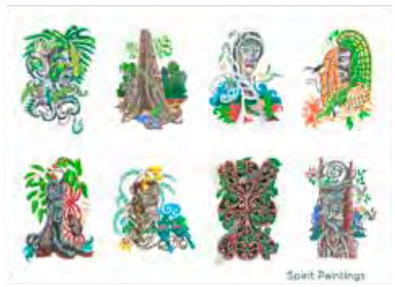
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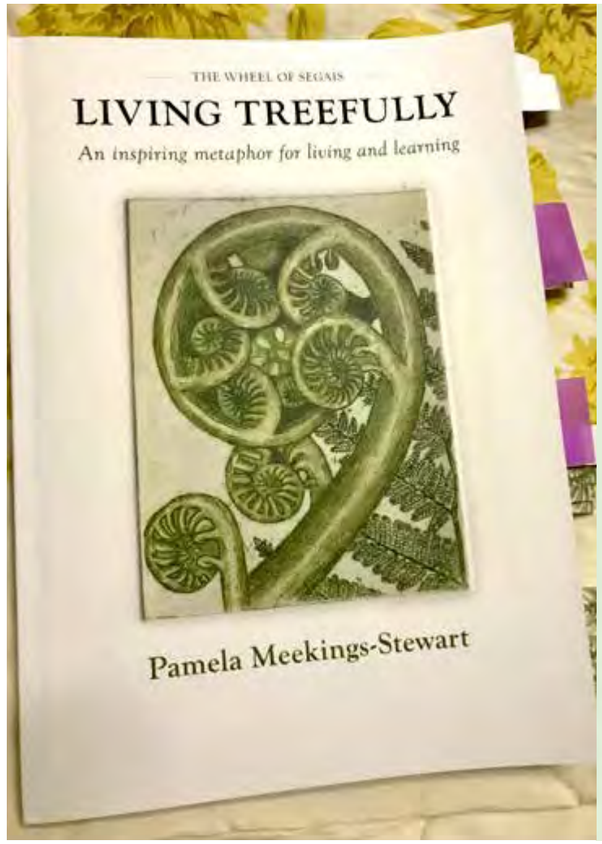


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House of Cu'

Vicki Minahan

Authorised Civil Marriage Celebrant



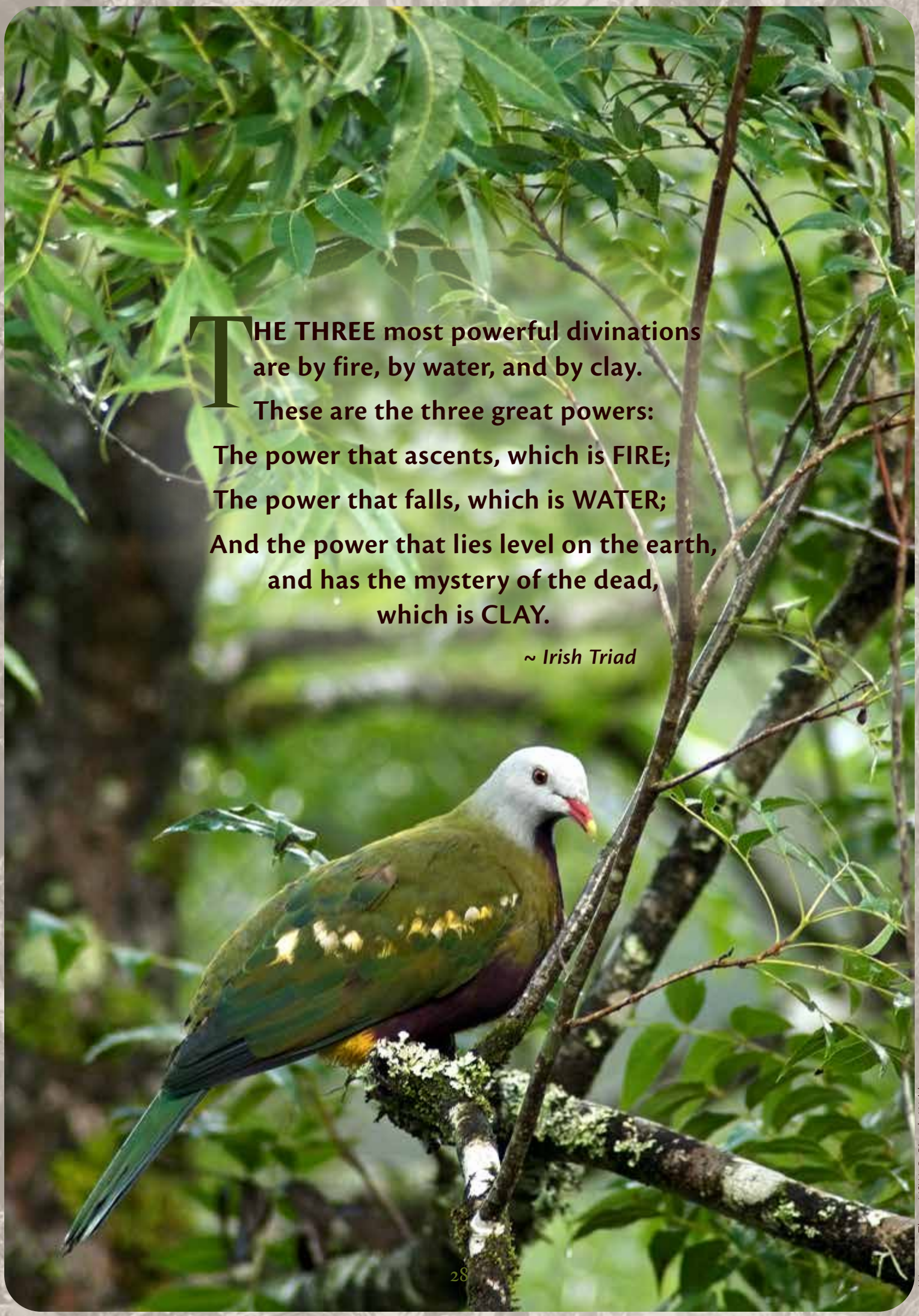
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THE THREE most powerful divinations
are by fire, by water, and by clay.
These are the three great powers:
The power that ascents, which is FIRE;
The power that falls, which is WATER;
And the power that lies level on the earth,
and has the mystery of the dead,
which is CLAY.

~ Irish Triad

Wompoo, Thora NSW © Pingala Walsh