

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



Beltane 2011 Edition

# About SERPENTSTOR.

SERPENISION comes out four times a year at each of the Fire Festivals, Imbolc, Beltane, Lugnasadh and Samhuinn.

Opinions expressed in **SERPENTSTOR** are contributors' own and not necessarily opinions of the editor or of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids.

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Have you contributed to SERPENTSTOR yet?

We'd love to hear from you!

Contributions are eagerly sought for future editions. Whether you like to create masterpieces in the Kitchen, with paper and pen, a camera, or you've read a relevant news article or some links of interest. Maybe you've created your own Sudoku, or you've written a piece on Druidry, we can use it all. Please email ladya.serpentstar@gmail.com

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#### From the Editor:

#### Beltane Greetings!

I have recently returned from the 11th Southern Hemisphere Druid Assembly, refreshed, revitalised and reflectful. The Assembly gave me some time to look at what I was prioritising in my life, and to realised how good it was to "just be."

I had the pleasure of being publically initiated into the Bardic Grade. Whilst I had done my own private initiation quite some time ago, I felt it was perfect timing for me to reflect on the journey so far, as I move through the grade and publicly declare my intent. After the initiation I have been reflecting on "accept the love and joy you will experience with life on earth." It brings to mind the quote from Perks of being a Wallflower, "We accept the love we think we deserve." Do I accept the love that my family, and the earth has for me. I love my family and take care to love and care for the earth, but do I accept its love in return, to its full extent.

Beltaine also brings me to reflect on the relationship of fatherhood and motherhood. Whether those you perceive for you in that role is biological or an example you would like to follow in your life. Unfortunately the Imbolc edition of SerpentStar never came to fruition due to a computer breakdown (speaking of, reminder that the next Mercury Retrograde begins November 24, so it would be a good time to back up any electronics, computers, phones etc), and lack of submissions. I hope to produce a special summer edition in its place in December/January, so if you would like to submit anything please feel free to do so.

Enjoy this edition, there are some great gems within these covers.

Blessings on your life, your family, your home and your community.

Bright Blessings under the Southern Stars,

' Lady A

Notes on the spelling of Beltane: there are a few acceptable spellings of Beltane, and so if a contributor has spelt it differently to Beltane, I have left it "as is".

Kindness



By Whyterox Ah, to the softness of the heart that has found its balance and centre in goodness, and flows out from there into the world, leaving no moment from overflowing. Kindness gentle and vast, and deeply nourished in what is worthy to call a true life. Like a gardened valley fed by sweet mountain springs and scented with the warmth of flower breeze, and the hum of bees, in honeyed dance among the aspens. There is no romance that so soothes the soul, as does the path of kindness, venturing all ways without hesitation. Bold and sure, sweet and so simple that path; ambient it parades nothing, but with the wish of joys and of freedoms it wakes wonders.

In that forest-garden, the eyes of the trees affirm the ancients in their common silent sentience, and the singing stars brighten their nightly colloquy, while the Sun, spilling red Her ashes through Her golden hair, draws in an amber mood to complement and cradle the hush-patterned hoot of the white wise owl. Kindness in memory is living, and it is our journey home, as it breathes its melodious and maverick tracks amongst our days, and reaps rewards in deep and fertile sleep to follow us into the lands of forever; satisfied, one longs only for what is best after all.

And the plight of our world, the challenge of a thousand spikey variables in motion, becomes but a simple kiss of Spirit, a single note of hallowed light, softened through kindness and silver fey-song; the eyes are renewed, as tears wash white joys of the heart, healing throat, the face, and fable, and young again we play, as youth we swim the heart of the Earth, in a world now smoothened by the waters of care and love. In absolute radiance the riddle of longing bears the fruits of becoming; sweet tenderness and mirrors of beauty in every sight, as the roses flowering, fly into Spirit to embrace the heavenly whispers of endless choirs. Kindness soft, sand and sand-rock, once rock, now in the salt, which the ocean drinks and delicately dissolves, and brings us to rain its dreaming power of deep love, in the balance of days and the healing of the sorrows of the past, as the weather above will reflect our own ways.

So simple! Yet a test of truth or heart-death, is kindness. We gain our power through unbounded love, singing through that gardened valley of the heart so soft.

# Summer

- Lady Cu'

the grass long and lush humidity hangs heavy in the air rain endlessly falling

the north wind visiting occasionally a harsh reminder of what may come will that grass become dry ready to burn

will we have a gentle summer that eases us into autumn will we be fleeing for our lives praying all will survive

at the mercy of the elements in this land of harshness this land of beauty

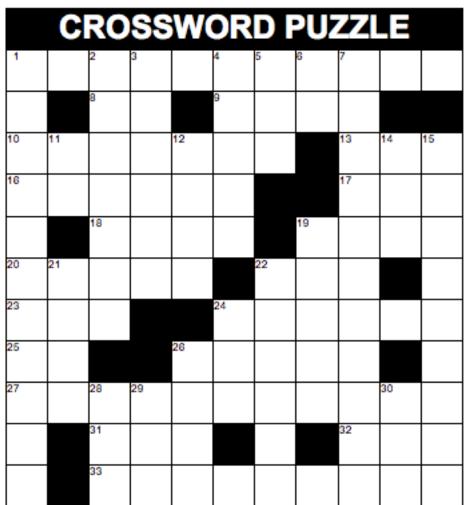
this land we open our hearts and souls to this land we choose to live in this land our home the most beloved place of all

## Events/Upcoming...

Plans are already afoot for our English Ale gathering in May 2012 next year and we are very keen to bring Damh the Bard and his beautiful partner Cerri Lee back to our fair shores to be part of our gathering again. Spiral Dance are looking for 'sponsors' to be involved in bringing Damh and Cerri back to Australia - we already have some very generous sponsors but we are looking for 80 more Sponsors to donate \$50 each.

Sponsors will be invited to a special 'Sponsors Only' night with Damh and Cerri, a night of songs and stories, you will also receive a CD of the concert and special artwork by Cerri Lee.

Workshops will be announced once the final planning happens, so if you would like to be a 'Damh the Bard Sponsor' and help us bring this amazing couple back to our Great Southern Land then you can email info@ spiraldance.com.au or you can donate directly via PayPal - log in to pay via PayPal is sponsordamh@spiraldance.com.au and make sure you leave your name and email so we can keep you up to date! Love, magick and bright blessings, Adrienne and the Spiral Crew



### Clues Down

1. Cultural rebirth (13). 2. Wandering (7). 3. Water birds (6). Rise to the top (5). 5. Double-entendre (3). 6. Pupil (2). 7. Perfunctory (7-4). 11. Hesitant sound (2). 12. Containers (4). 14. Fish eggs (3). 15. Enchanted (9). 19. Sitting room (5). 21. Diminish (4). 22. Witch goddess (6). 24. Cured pork (3). 26. Digits (4). Vehicle (3). 29. Grain (3). 30. Anger (3).

### Clues Across

- Magic jewellery (4,2,5).
- 8. Alternatively (2).
- 9. Irish god (4).
- 10. Sacred grove (7).
- 13. Wrath (3).
- Ancient land (6).
- Male offspring (3).

- 18. Slight damage (4).
- 19. Let it stand (legal) (4).
- 20. From Switzerland (5).
- 22. Man's name (3).
- 23. Pouch (3).
- 24. Woman's name (6).
- 25. Just one (2).
- 26. Bread (5).

- Wyverne's Beltane Crossword
  - 27. Calling up spirits (13).
  - 31. Yes (3).
  - Metal-bearing rock (3).
  - Soaked again (9).

# The 11th Southern Semisphere Assembly of Bards, Ovates and Oruids

Thursday 6 - Monday 10 October, 2011

Three favourable fortunes of Cooringal; Good company, good food, and good music. - Whytefox

Three aspects of Assembly at Caer Gentilin: Peace, laughter and harmony.

Three joys of assembly at Cooringal Love, friends and children - James and Janet

Three foundations of Cooringal: Love and nuture of the land Love and nurture of spirit Love and nurture of family and friends.

> Three blessings of Cooringal: The people who live there The power of song lines The outpouring of music - Dragonwyst

Three rich gifts of the Cooringal assembly -Laughter, kindess and insight. - Reilly

Three aspects of the Cooringal Grove Earth, Sea and Sky Honouring the Earth with initiation and playfulness of the Ocean and Mannanan And hearts open to the Sky and Spirit - Derek













Three borders walked upon at Greenly; Where the ocean meets the sand, Where the mountain meets the sky, Where the Grove meets the world-of-here-and now - Tiki

Three aspects of Assembly happiness; Joyous companionship in musical harmony, The sharing of communal abundance, Magical ritual bringing deep peace. - Rafayard



This assembly was an unqualified all out splended success because our beautiful hosts presented a program characterised by: Inspired hospitality Magical "flow" Enchanted atmosphere - Wyverne

Three favourable phases of the assembly at Cooringal;

Sweet reminiscences, presence in the grove and revitalized purpose - Ngatina

"Three promises we make to the land: to honour, heal and defend." - Murray





Melody of life and love To move the heart to acceptance of all With the belonging to a family of certain minds - Baden

Three things shared under Orion's belt: Music Laughter A warm fire

- Jowen





Croning: coming of age in the 21st century.

- vyvyan ogma wyverne

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

The archetypes preserved in folklore are interactive – do we need their power in our lives? They represent real people who lived in or before the middle ages, or during the renaissance or thereabouts. Our genetic inheritance comes from a population which not only included them, but fore-grounded them in story and song. The genes that determine our natures were hammered on the forges of their zeitgeist, just as we now find ourselves fine-tuning them in our 21st century interpersonal dramas. The crone of the middle ages incubated the spirituality of the crone of today, just as we are now shaping the nature of crones to come. It helps gaia if we maintain the

continuity of such evolutions – it's a way of helping to repair the web of race memory, making subtle psychic connections between our times, allowing healing as in the repairing of damaged nerves.

Our ancestors had their own rightful place in the nasty past and are now fading from memory, while we live in the here and now, albeit consciously working towards an ideal

future. Shouldn't we be imagining new role-models based on current experience? In the late 20th century, feminist scholars deeply explored the range of stereotypes generated by our culture, in the mass media, pop culture and in the popular imagination - many of these made use of carl jung's work on archetypes and the collective unconscious. They found themselves awed at the power of the archetype as the shapers of society, of society's response to individuals and their expectations of people who fall under their spell.

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

The 12th Australian OBOD Assembly will be held at Beltana in late October next year.

Located in the ancient desert mountains of the Northern Flinders Ranges, South Australia, Beltana (www.beltana.org.au) is a small heritage town with a permanent population of 6.

The Assembly will be dedicated to Morrigan, and activities will include exploring a conservation park accessible only by 4WD: Warraweena (http://www.warraweena.com/) and a Masquerade Ball on the Friday night.

*Dates for the event are as follows:* 

Arrival Day: 25 October 2012

Bardíc Day: 26 October 2012

Ovate Day: 27 October 2012

Druíd Day: 28 October 2012

Departure Day: 29 October 2012

People are welcome to stay for Beltaíne celebrations on 31 October, but this will not be included in the general programme.

For further information, including transport and accommodation options, please register your interest at www.druidryaustralia.org (you will need to sign up to do this) or contact Ngatina direct at gypsy@sincorp.org



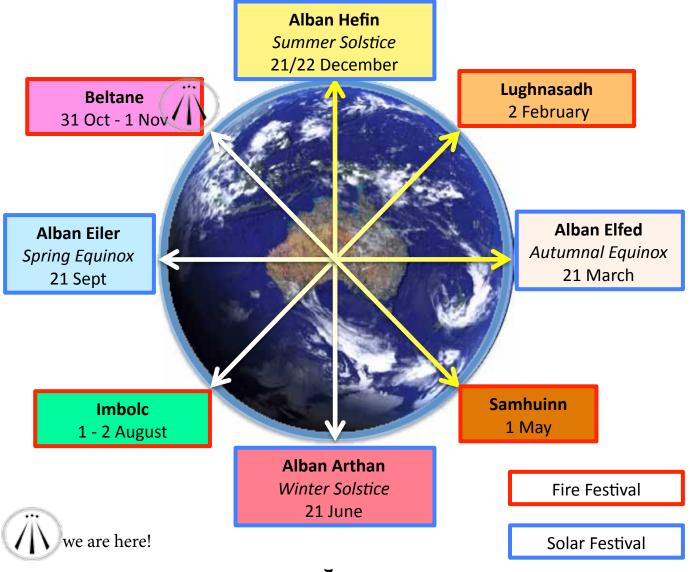
#### 

I've come to the place of the wind whispered shoreline, Of glittering rocks and waves edged with white lace I've journeyed by dreams down the pathways of myst'ry # Could it be that a dragon inhabits this place? It seems that the crystal-sharp stones would repel me They tear at my feet as I seek to draw nigh To the place where there rises the image of dragon Carved out through the ages by earth, sea and sky. As I sit and gaze out at the blue of the ocean Where the Sragon has watched through the centuries long The words of a language come rising unbidden And lo, I can speak to a dragon in song. here echoes my name in the sound of the sea. My vision is filled with the gold of her aleaming As she glides on the breeze playing over the strand And then wings to the mountain, encircling the beauty Of all she calls home on the edge of the land

"Do you see what I hoard?' she enquires of my spirit. "No goblets, tiaras or bracelets you'll find The work of the forge fire and hammer and anvil Is not what is guarded by those of my kind. My treasure is here in the rocks and the ocean The blessings of mica and black tourmaline. Look deep in your own heart at what you hold dearest for Sragon-wealth hides in those caverns unseen. And I give you a name by which you may call me: Gundwalha I am, Gundwalha the free. forever I Swell where the rocks meet the ocean here echoes my name in the sound of the sea."

Gundwalha, Gundwalha, the song of the ocean Is sounding your name with the waves on the sand Gundwalha, Gundwalha protector and guardian Of treasures of spirit and wealth of the land

## Celebrating the wheel of the year in the Southern Bemisphere



## Beltane

meaning 'bright fire' or 'lucky fire' is held on May 1st (May 15th in Scotland) and celebrates the start of summer, the crop and pasturing season.

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.

### BELTAINE

The Sun is gathering warmth Birds busy mating and nesting Smell spring in the air Honey perfume from the Tea Tree The Sun slowly inching towards summer Warmth burning the skin

Hay ready for cutting Sheep to be shorn Seeds in need of sowing Currawongs lingering down from the mountains Scorpions in the woodpile Hounds, complaining, it's too hot to be outdoors

> North wind blowing a reminder Storms threatening Long green grass waiting to dry Lush seeds waiting to be dropped Tree's calling us to join them Spirit friends waiting patiently Let us rejoice in the season to come Lady Cu' 2011

## A Druid at Beltane

Anita Bailey

In the Druid tradition Beltane is the third of the Spring celebrations and its original meaning is 'The Good Fire' or 'Bel-fire'. Named after the Celtic God 'Bel' – 'the bright one', God of Light and Fire. A celebration of the God and the Goddess, fertility, sexuality and the return of the sun's warmth to the land.



In Ancient times, all across the Land the hilltops would be a glow with Bel-fires celebrating the coming of life and fertility and the people of the land would dance, make merry and jump over the fire. Lighting the fires was a ritual act to signify the light of the sun blessing the earth. Jumping the 'Bel-fire' was also a blessing; travellers would jump the fire to ensure a safe journey, pregnant women an easy birth and the young and single to bring a husband or wife. Even cattle would be passed through the fire to ensure their fertility.



In the Northern Hemisphere in later times, Beltane was celebrated on May day when the May pole (a phallic symbol itself) was and still is danced around. Some village members would go into the woods on May day eve and gather boughs of fragrant hawthorne and dance around the houses at dawn leaving blossoms on doorsteps and windowsills. The 'mayers' as they were known, were rewarded with food and money as it was considered bad luck not to, no one wanted their crops to fail or their animals not to thrive!

As I currently live the Wheel of the Year as a student of Druidry, I will acknowledge and attune to the energy of the time by holding a Solo Beltane Ceremony.

There are many simple things that you can do if you are not planning a ceremony;

\* Take off your shoes and walk barefoot in nature, even if it is just in your own yard.

\* Do something creative that you may not normally do, it doesn't have to be a work of art, it could be taking a creative approach to something.

\* Write a love poem

\* Celebrate your sexuality!

However you celebrate may you be filled with creativity and passion!

Blessings Anita /|\

# Alban Hefin - The light of Summer As the sun spirals its longest dance, Cleanse us! As nature shows bounty and fertility Bless us! Let all things live with loving intent And to fulfill their truest destiny.

The Summer Solstice is the time of maximum light - when the countryside around us revels in colourful and fragrant splendour. This time is known in the Druid tradition as that of Alban Hefin - 'The Light of Summer' or 'The Light of the Shore'.

At Alban Hefin the spiral of the year has expanded to its widest point and now the hours of light are as long as they will ever be. After 21st or 22nd June, the sun's power will begin to wane and the days grow shorter. The sun has touched the northernmost point along the horizon and is about to embark upon the long journey back south, ending at Alban Arthan, the Winter Solstice, in mid-December in the Northern Hemisphere. In the Southern Hemisphere, the Summer Solstice falls on 21st or 22nd December, with the sun touching the southernmost point along the horizon.

The Summer Solstice time was an event of tremendous importance to the proto-Druids of the New Stone Age, who built a number of magnificent megaliths aligned to the sunrise on this day. In southwest England, the thread of tradition connects the 5,000-year-old temple of Stonehenge with ritual activities through the Bronze Age, the Iron Age, and into modern times. Today many modern druid orders, including The Order of Bards Ovates & Druids, gather here to watch the first rays of the sun shine above the 'hele stone.' Another great stone temple to the Summer Solstice is at Callanish on the island of Lewis, in the Outer Hebrides. Here, four rows of stones lead into a circle from the four directions, forming a Celtic cross in the landscape, and the stones form an astronomical observatory aligned to the solstice sunrises and sunsets, as well as to the equinox-es. Callanish is so far north, the sky never actually darkens on a midsummer night. This is also the case at the mysteriously beautiful stone circle, the Ring of Brodgar, on Orkney, which was known for centuries by local people as the Temple of the Sun, aligned as it is to the midsummer sunrise. Mara Freeman - druidry.org

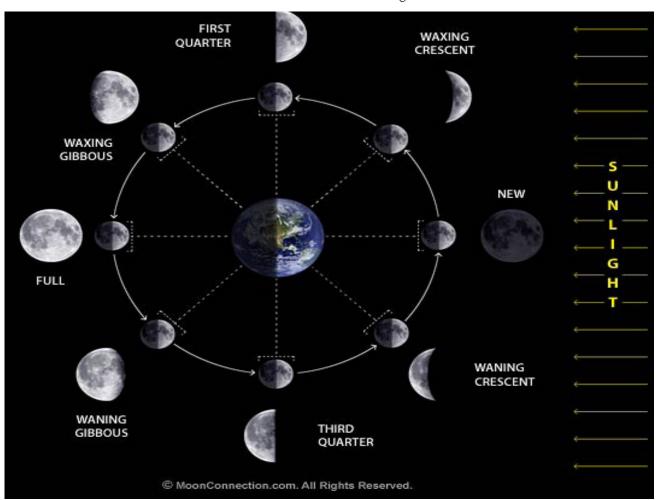


## Moon Phases Beltane through to Lughnasadh

Fírst Quarter Moon - Thursday 3/11/2011 Full Moon - Fríday 11/11/2011 Last Quarter - Saturday Moon 19/11/2011

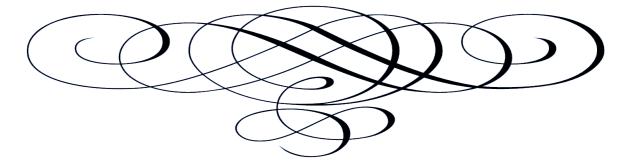
New Moon - Friday 25/11/2011 First Quarter Moon - Friday 2/12/2011 Full Moon - Sunday 11/12/2011 Last Quarter Moon - Sunday 18/12/2011 New Moon- Sunday 25/12/2011 First Quarter Moon - Sunday 1/01/2012 Full Moon - Monday 9/01/2012 Last Quarter Moon - Monday 16/01/2012

New Moon - Monday 23/01/2012 First Quarter Moon - Tuesday 31/01/2012 Full Moon - Tuesday 08/02/2012 Last Quarter Moon - Wednesday 15/02/2012

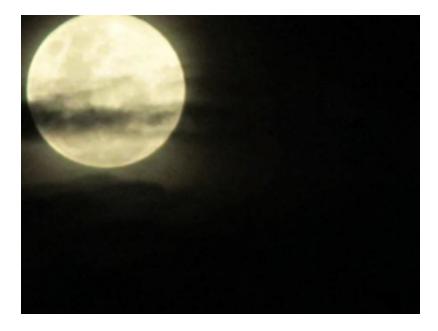


Lamar Valley - Lady Cu' 2011

Cold wind blowing up the valley Pale but glowing sunset Aspen rippling with the wind A Grizzley walking through the willows The lone bison on the river front A black spot on the hillside Suddenly five wolf pups gambling across the rock face Long legs and floppy puppy ears A glimpse of the adults they will become showing through



Lamar Pups - Lady Cu' 2011 Let's run down the hill We know one yearling can't control us, she pulls, and gives a little nip Oh the new smells It's so warm New play things we've never seen before The little grey lay's on the warm road Refusing to move The yearling tugs, pulls, give a little nip But already strongly independent, refuses to move Suddenly the big black thing comes at us at speed We run back up the hill Three black and two grey pups



Full Moon in Capricorn - vyvyan ogma wyverne

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

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

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

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

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

## Who am I?

Tree...

I am a diverse genus of flowering trees in the myrtle family. Myrtaceae.

I have more thank 700 species, mostly native to Australia.

I have attracted attention from global development researchers and environmentalists, due to some species having desirable traits such as being fast-growing sources of wood, producing oil that can be used for cleaning, and functions as a natural insecticide. Some have the ability to be used to drain swamps and thereby reduce the risk of malaria.

I am said to have originated between 35 and 50 million years ago

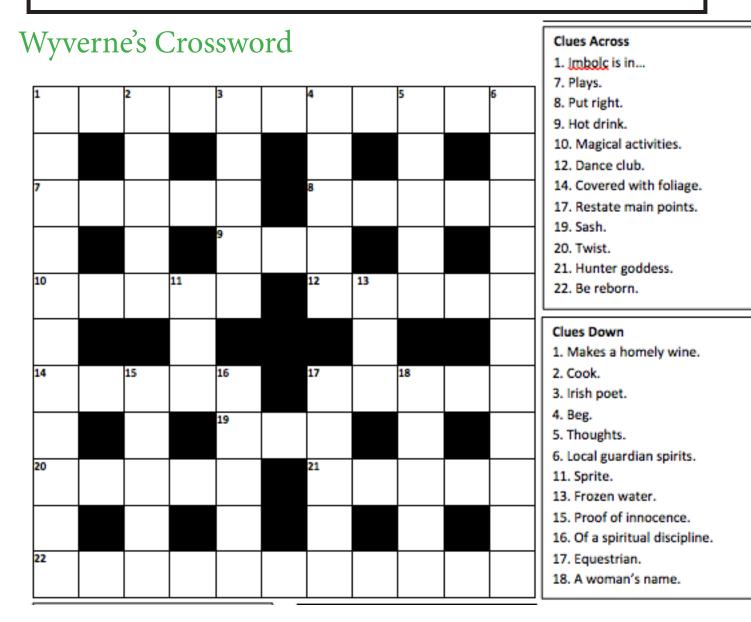
On warms days my vaporised oil rises above the bush to create the characteristic distance blue haxe of the Australian landscape.

All parts of me may be used to may dyes that are substantive on protein fibres (such as silk and wool), simply by processing my plant parts with water. Colours to be achieved range from yellow and orange, through green tan chocolate and deep rust red.

#### Links of Interest

www.druidry.org http://www.druidryaustralia.org/

http://www.facebook.com/pages/SerpentStar/185899541465800



### Answers...

						Beltane Crossword					
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#### Bonus Crossword.. Answers

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Who Am I? I am the Eucalyptus Tree

