

# SerpentStar

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

Huggin and Munnin



Artwork by Tina Merrybaird

Ravens in flight with inks

Imbolc 2014

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# G'day people!

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

*Under the mallees  
Wyverne*





# Summer Gathering at Glastonbury

## Wonderful Glastonbury welcomed 400 Druids with open arms.

I arrived on Thursday 5th June and was greeted by some very generous people, a wonderful place to stay and an invite to a small gathering in the evening at Chalice Well Gardens, I certainly knew I had landed in the right place. On Friday morning I explored Glastonbury and the Druids rolled in steadily like bees returning to the hive. The excitement was building. OBOD Central opened at 1pm. This certainly saved me a few times trying to find venues in the rich labyrinth of Glastonbury Town.

The four days were jam-packed with such nutritious networking, Phillip Carr Gomm joyfully interviewed 11 guests over the four days, amongst them, Will Worthington, Caitlin Matthews, Penny Billington and Jonathon Wooley. In the evening the Grove and Seed Group organisers gathered and there were thirty four candles lit, each one representing a different group, some groups from Italy, Germany, Mexico, Belgium, Poland, New Zealand and many more.

**400 Druids singing  
Awen cascades  
— the Earth was  
humming.**







Saturday morning we all gathered in the grounds of Glastonbury Abbey under a huge marquee. 400 Druids singing Awen cascades — the Earth was humming. This was a great opportunity to meet the behind the scenes team of OBOD and Phillip invited each of us from our countries to stand and be welcomed. In the afternoon we all travelled up the pathways to the Tor for a Ceremony dedicated to the Order. The energy was electric a three deep circle of honouring past, present and future members and an unforgettable image of the blue, green and white Tabards . After the Ceremony there was wild drumming, dancing and a long greet and meet surrounded by the amazing 360 views from the Tor.



After a buffet dinner the party began in the Abbey grounds with the honorary Bard Eisteddfod, much music, more dancing and a great deal of delicious locally made mead and all ended with surprise fireworks.

Sunday morning 4am we interrupted our brief sleep to board buses and return to sleep on the bus for the ride to either Stonehenge or Avebury for Ceremony. I have been longing to meet Stonehenge for 40 years and did the stones throw us a welcome! It was a clear sun-filled morning and the stones glistened. We all returned to Glastonbury town hall where OBOD members set up areas to meet up and share their ventures and group information.



On Monday I thoroughly enjoyed an hour of Awens at the Chalice Well meet room, it was one big sound bath. In the afternoon all international OBODies were invited to a cream tea as a farewell and a chance to swap addresses etc, so our connections can continue .

This was an incredibly rich four days with so much opportunity to celebrate and share so many aspects of our wonderful OBOD. Thankyou to everyone involved in making it happen. This occasion was so much fun and it has deepened my understanding of the work we do as OBODies.  
Debs from **The Melbourne** Grove.

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3	4		5			6	7	8
9								10		
11				12						
				13					14	
				15		16	17	18		
19			20							
		21								
22	23				24					
25		26						27	28	
29							30			
31										

## Down

1. Mirror Images
2. Time
3. Ideas.
4. Like
5. Transform
6. Mesh
7. Cut short
8. Gaia
12. Man's name
16. Re Hindu law texts
17. Expression of uncertainty
18. Far away
20. South Africa
23. Let fall
26. Fierce guttural utterance
28. One (Scots Dial)
30. Scoriaceous lava

## Across

1. Rebirth
9. God of Love
10. Period .
11. Plump
12. Accomplice
13. Bachelor of Law
14. Seaside town
15. Jumped head-first
19. The using of commodities
21. Raw vegetable dish.
22. Instinctive self.
24. Aromatic tree (Aust native)
25. Grown without chemicals
27. Exclamation of pleasure.
29. And not
30. Girl's name
31. Refreshing drink.



# *The Mushroom Grabber*

by Todd Dearing

Deep in the dark and dewy woods went the song of the Mushroom Grabber, his voice mellifluous: "See, snatch, smell, and swallow... see, snatch, smell, and swallow... see... snatch, smell, yep. Swallow."

The calm eyes of this green being moved about the root-ridden moss-carpeted bird-sung woods. The curling limbs of the figure clutched healthy white mushrooms with joy, grabbed indigo milk caps with glee, caught St. George's with an eye for a feast. He left behind destroying angels, death caps, galerinas. On and on he went.

"See, snatch, smell, and swallow. See, snatch, smell, and swallow. See, snatch, oops! Almost plucked a death cap by mistake... see, snatch..." went his song, "some in the basket and some in the belly. Basket and belly, belly and basket."

He saw a large patch of girolle. "Snatch, snatch, snatch." And then another group, hopping quickly there, "snatch and smell, don't scratch the soil; sweet smelling soil which grows these things," improvising fresh lines.

He spotted a spotted one among the twigs, "aggh! Not this one," and continued singing, snatching, smelling, and so on, all about the green growing woods.

"Horns of plenty, gypsies, truffles." Hopping about with feet all springy.

The bird song was rhythmic about him. He smelt that wood smoke was present. His wife was probably baking some bread, for the lunch they were to share.

He continued scanning the immediate ground with his serene eyes.

Here and there he hopped, he gathered; edible mushrooms of all kinds. In early Spring the forest was full, and soon would his basket be.

Then he stopped, sensing something near him. A white hare, standing on hind legs, before some false morels. "Aha miss hare!" She bounded away. He never wondered why; too caught in delight to care.

"False morel, are you good for me?" Seeing he snatched; smelling, he swallowed.

His song continued. "See, snatch, smell, and swallow... aha! A bounty for the basket."

"See, snatch..." and he vomited.

After a long moment, with hanging drool and watery yellowish eyes, "definitely no good."



# The Brandenburg Gate

By Martin Samson

It was the full moon before the summer solstice this morning, a good day to go and do some earth healing. I caught the train into Berlin to visit the Brandenburg Gate. Coming up from the underground station I was met with the busy noise of summer tourism, concrete pavements, the American embassy and a scaffolding company erecting a fenced off stage right around the gate for some concert. I wondered how I would be able to find any quiet to meet this place. How could Robert Coon include this over-urbanised place within the structures of the earth's heart chakra along with Glastonbury and Montserrat in Barcelona?

The gate was originally a city gate to the fortress town and let people into the large 'Tiergarten' - the animal park. Over the centuries it has gone through many transformations. Although the current structure was conceived as a gate for peace it became a victory gate at the end of the thirty years war at the end of the eighteenth century; was completely withdrawn into solitude and walled off within a vesica piscis shaped enclosure to all people during the cold war; and now has at last





come into its fullness as a symbol of world peace since the Berlin Wall came down.

This transformation is not the immediate experience as atop the twelve Doric columns is a chariot pulled by four horses abreast ridden by the goddess Victory carrying a staff adorned with the laurel wreath within which is an iron cross and an eagle landing upon it! The first impression is that of the universal symbol of military domination from Rome to Nazi Germany and still visible atop many cities such as Paris and London in almost exactly the same form. It is hard to imagine how this war symbol, compared to the very caring and compassionate feminine aspects of the queen Victoria fountain in London, could be part of the heart centre of the world.



I began to walk around the gate and on the northern side is a building with a small room of silence. I entered and sat there a while. Slowly images emerged in my mind of histories and events that had happened around this place: many of great suffering and loss, many of the traumas of war and many others blurred by the pain held in this place by this structure. I felt the pain of humanity held in the consciousness of a renewed gesture that the world has now given this gate. The goddess Victory is now Eirene or Peace and she yearns to bring her blessings out of

the deep suffering of this place which now represents the full integration of East and West with each other.

I walked further as I was still searching for a place to help enliven the subtle energies of this landscape temple, albeit completely covered in manmade symbols. I came around the other side and walked into the animal garden and found myself amongst a forest of beautiful trees with pathways weaving in and out of carefully tended lawn sanctuaries. A little further in and a large pool of water met me: the basin of Venus. I had found the place where mystical contemplation could be added to the heart of this city. The basin is a long pool of water with a rounded centre where an old oak tree stands alone amongst the beech and linden trees surrounding the pool. The statue of Venus is long gone and now at the foot of the pool is a monument to music, another transformed energy in this mystical forest. However, the water was cold and dark, still and sleepy.

I had a small red stone in the shape of a heart in my pocket which I took in my hand and stood at the monument of music and Venus and looked upon the length of water towards the oak tree and began to chant ancient sounds of awakening. Within a short time a few crows had come to listen along with some sparrows and the aquamarine undines raised their heads above the water in eager hungry attentiveness. As I let my perceptions ease and broaden I felt Venus standing next to me. She was moving through her forms of Beauty and Jealousy, a very apt picture of humanities story of destruction through revenge and covetousness that I felt here in Berlin. As I looked I saw the pool was filled with red and white lotus flowers and whilst I continued my singing and chanting a

gentle meeting and transformation happened: Kuan Yin, the one who hears the cries of the world and the avatar of compassion, appeared on the water. She came towards us and embraced Venus, giving her a deep and new possibility of redeeming power. Venus, the human story of destruction through jealousy, can find a new healing path through compassion from suffering and lead us to a new way of transforming our humanity. I began to realize how truly this place is a very important part of the heart of humanity. A place that has witnessed, heard and held so much suffering yet awakens compassion as a force in the soul and mind of humanity. I prayed a prayer I know that speaks of the fully transformed humanity that acts out of our highest virtues into the stone and threw it into the pond next to the red lotuses. I asked them to allow this wish for humanity to grow into the world from this pool of creative waters.

As I moved further into the forest I walked past a statue of an Amazon woman on a horse and felt the real battle for our humanity in this journey to transform jealousy into compassion. At the same time I felt Kuan Yin was walking next to me and as we walked and spoke we watched the mystical creatures of the forest watching us from behind trees and bushes offering us deep gratitude for bringing the awakening song of old. We were led along a path into the rose garden where two magnificent stags with full antlers greeted us and I could feel Cerrenos touching the stars above the heart of the world and letting their starlight further enliven this temple as the radiant fragrance of roses permeated my soul. A deep marriage of star and earth light in my heart left me feeling truly blessed to have been witness to this mid-summer solstice cosmic dance.

As I walked back across the cobbled court of Pariser Platz to the underground station I turned to have one last look at the gate. There was a golden filled violet aura around the gate with a large sun like radiance over the forest behind it. The chariot atop the gate with its four horses felt more like the mythological images of ancient mystical imaginations of the world foundations found in Enochian traditions and the goddess Peace was radiant with her staff now looking like an ancient Celtic Sun Cross with the Eagle of Enlightenment settling into its heart.

There she rides from the Stars to the Earth settling Her blessing upon this gate, no longer the edge of a fortress but the gateway to the heart centre of a cultural stage where arts are performed and the world meets in the ongoing marriage of our humanity.

As I walked and travelled home I began to see what I hadn't taken time to look at before. Every bridge I crossed (Berlin is full of rivers, canals and lakes) had magnificent art work on it, mermaids and mermen, female sphinx, and water gods of all kinds. The ancient builders of this city knew!

And at last that night in my mid-summer dream I met Berlin! Who is the being Ber? Possibly an ancient Gothic word meaning bog or marsh, out of which the city grew? Or more likely the great bear who has become her symbol? I saw the great chariot above the Brandenburg Gate again and now it had become filled with the mid-summer sun: a chariot of the sun carrying all the light of the world into the earth. Yet within the sun light there are stars, just as the night is filled with stars so too do they shine into the world in the light of the sun.

At this June solstice time of the year the great mother bear is the starlight within the sun. And behold who is the light of the bear: Alban Artan, the Light of Arthur! At mid June the light within the sun is that of the great bear. Berlin, a place where the Light of Arthur blesses the heart of humanity through the great chariot of peace atop the gate to the heart centre of the world.



# In the Search For Pagan Musicians

## Spiral Dance

by Michala Lee-Price – Mystique Mish



**I first heard Spiral Dance in 2002, at the inaugural “Magic Happens” in Newtown, New South Wales, Australia. As I have mentioned in my previous articles about Wendy Rule and Samantha Fernandez, I have a love of the female voice especially one which can take your soul to the other-world and astral plane. Adrienne Piggott’s vibrant voice is no different and caresses my heart and embraces my soul.**



In her own blurb (words) on their site - <http://spiraldance.com.au> Adrienne wrote: *"Having grown up surrounded by magic and a love of legends, I longed to put these feelings into song. I believe we all have an affinity with the magical elements of our existence and the songs are written to invoke these emotions from within. These impressions need not be left in our childhood."*

As I have previously written, to make a comparison of one musician's style or sound is fraught with danger and likely to unleash the hounds of Hell upon me, but way back then, in 2002, when I first heard Australia's Premier Pagan Folk band, I felt compelled to compare the band to ye old "Steeleye Span".

I was wrong. Spiral Dance is Spiral Dance.

The band was formed in 1992 as a project to explore some of the more mystical elements in life and has drawn its energy from the song-writing and vocal skills of Adrienne Piggott. Adrienne's haunting lyrics are supported by intoxicating guitar riffs and groovy accordion lines, underpinned with potent bass and dynamic percussion, all carefully arranged to blend acoustic folk-rock with lush Celtic harmony, creating an almost tangible musical aura that envelopes the audience (source: <http://spiraldance.com.au>)

I have since that day attended many gatherings where Spiral Dance have performed and every time the exhilaration felt the first time I heard them perform is renewed.

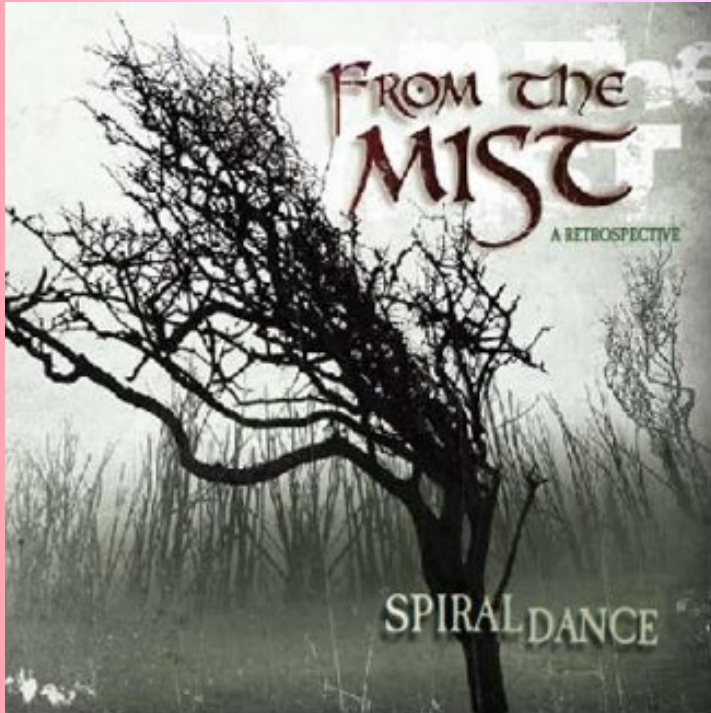
Since 1992 Spiral Dance has gone through many metamorphoses and band restructure but the one constant is the magical energy and haunting aura of Adrienne's beautiful vocals.

Whether you are a Spiral Dance fan or not, their last two CDs, "From the Mist" and more recently, "Through A Sylvan Doorway" (a two disc set) are must-haves in your music collection.

From Disc 1 - track #1 the hauntingly beautiful "Sylvan Doorway" on to the the very Celtic, very bouncy, very folksy "Fae Dance" and the magical hypnotic "Spirit of Albion" (featuring the marvellous storyteller and Bard – Damh the Bard) to my very favorite song penned by

**Adrienne, the very bluesy “Winter's Dreaming” the first disc is nothing more than brilliant.**

**It is Disc 2 that makes this mystical musical journey an adventurous expedition. Disc 2 track #1 “Witch's Tree” (another wonderfully penned Adrienne song) is totally haunting and mesmerising and track #3 the Mythical feeling of “Sing the Stone” (also written by Adrienne) is captivating with other songs of Traditional fare performed with the usual Spiral Dance flair and musical genius the CDs will have you dancing around your house like an Elemental on faery dust.**



**What is there not to love ... stop reading this article and rush out and purchase both “From the Mist” and “Through A Sylvan Doorway” and come and join me in the land of yore and perhaps one day dance with me at one of their brilliant concerts.**

**Photographs supplied courtesy of Adrienne Piggott and Spiral Dance 2014**

# SerpentStar

needs a new editor.

Must be a  
member of  
OBOD

Will it  
be  
YOU ?

I've had great fun with it, learned a great deal, got to know some great people, found some fine talent and developed some new skills, but now I feel I've given enough of myself to SerpentStar and the editorship of SerpentStar has given enough to me, and it's time for us to go our separate ways. This will be my last issue, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everybody for their support and encouragement during my on-again off-again relationship with this rapidly-growing, exciting newsletter over the years.

What does it involve? Once you get organized, not more than an hour or two per quarterly issue, although there's room for creativity if you have more time to spare and wish to develop your skills. You need basic editing skills and the web-publishing skills of a good beginner or better. It helps to know your way round the web, so that you can drum up interest in all the right places. Furthermore, you get your finger on all the most exciting druid pulses in the southern hemisphere, and worldwide. You work closely with contributors – all interesting people with fascinating stories to tell of their own druid paths.

The rewards are truly great – experience, commitment, and involvement all bring their special blessings, and sharing of so many different viewpoints is life-enhancing to say the least. I've experienced all this and am now ready to hand over to someone new. Some creative person, ready to commit themselves to a newsletter, with full freedom to take it in whatever new directions they see fit - if that's you contact me asap at [wyverne@gmail.com](mailto:wyverne@gmail.com)



# The Bird Bath Garden

by

Mystique Mish

There is an old adage: “One person's junk is another one's treasure” and sometimes that adage holds true and other times junk is just junk. But to a creative mind that junk can be recycled, renewed and given new life.

I watch the American show “American Pickers” on occasion and envy the awesome stuff that they discover and often see the “junk” that is uncovered and say to myself, “I could do something with that.”

I have always been a creative person and always at my happiest when I am creating something with my hands. Several months ago my friend Louise was preparing to move to a new residence and had many such “junk” items stored in my garage, much of which was destined for the Garbage tip.

Mystique Mish 27th July 2014

Several of these items caught my eye. One was a broken Birdbath. I grab the birdbath and gave it new life.

Here is how to turn an old broken birdbath into a miniature garden using recycled material. Photos #1 and #1a are of the birdbath

Find some discarded microwave plates (or Similar). I used two weight-watchers empty meal dishes. I used silicone although you could use super-glue to glue one of the dishes over the hole in the birdbath. Refer photo #2

Once the glue had dried, I then packed good soil mixed with potting mix and dry cow manure and then wet the mixture and left it to dry for a further 24 hours. This reveals also any further leaks. If there are leaks use more silicone/ glue under-

neath the birdbath and leave for a further 10 hours or so.

Once you are satisfied that the birdbath and dirt are dried start planting small plants like you would in a rock garden

etc. I used various kinds of pig-face as the birdbath garden will not need watering constantly and also therefore, will not corrode the silicone/ glue. See photo #3

Finally, so you still have a miniature birdbath within your garden get the second discarded microwave dish and place it without using glue gently into the first dish and fill with water

The whole process is not that time consuming and can be left and come back to.

The final photographs are of the birdbath garden three months later as taken on the 27<sup>th</sup> July the day prior to the





night of the New Moon. I can't wait until Spring to see how my little garden has progressed. It should look beautiful.



As I always say:  
To be able to Create;  
to be creative  
Is a BLESSING!

To be able to share  
with others this talent  
is the JOYFUL PURPOSE!"

Brightest of Blessings  
Mystique Mish

Crossword  
Puzzle

1	R	E	N	A	I	S	S	A	N	C	E		
9	E	R	O	S		U			10	E	R	A	
11	F	A	T		12	A	B	E	T	T	O	R	
	L		I		13	B	L				14	P	T
	E		O		15	D	I	V	E	D		H	
19	C	O	N	20	S	U	M	E	R	I	S	M	
	T		21	S	A	L	A	D		S		O	
22	I	23	D				24	T	I		T		T
25	O	R	G	A	N	I	C		27	A	A	H	
29	N	O	R			N		30	A	N	N	E	
31	S	P	R	I	N	G	W	A	T	E	R		

Answers



# Happy

2014

# Imbolc!