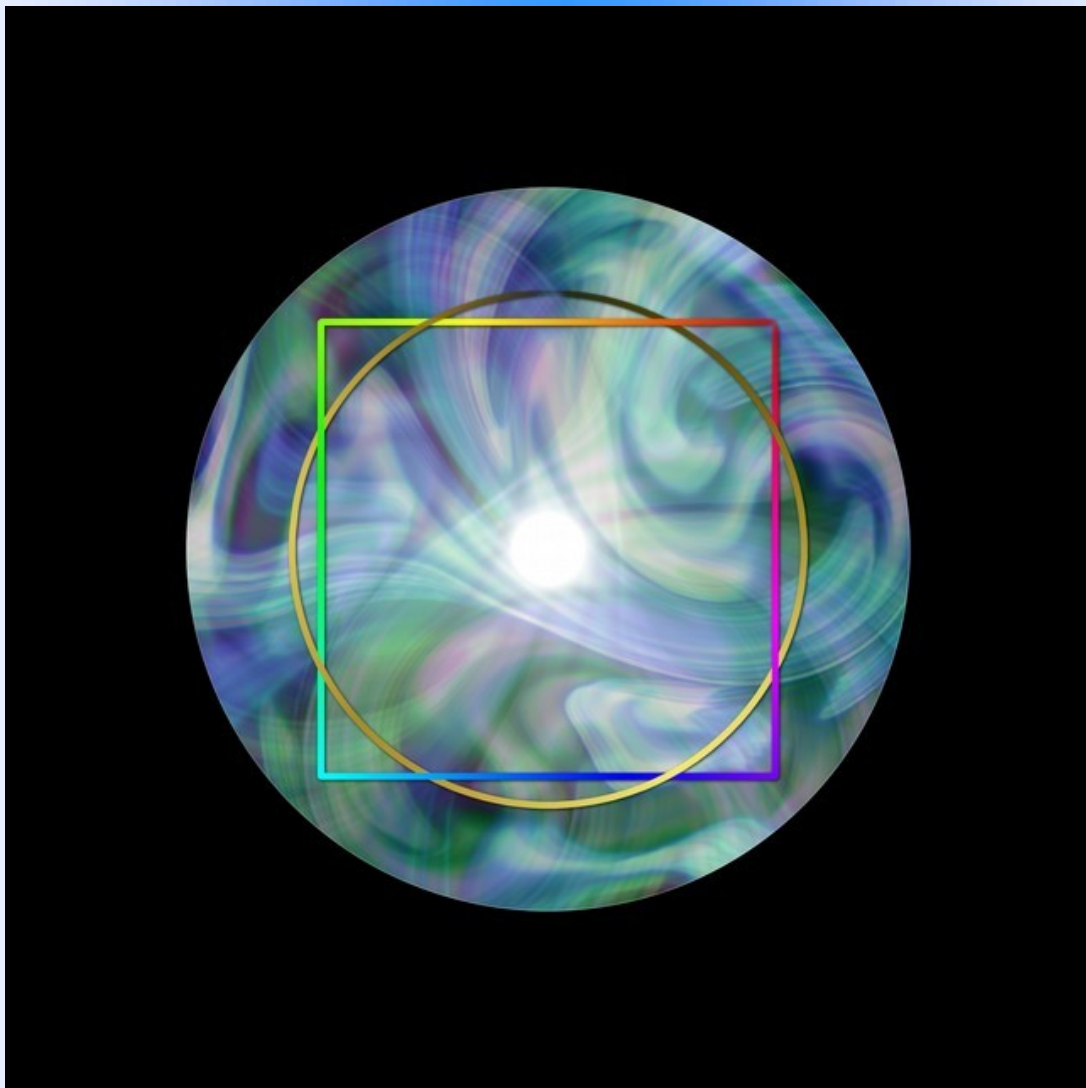


SerpentStar

A newsletter for members of

The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids
in the Southern Hemisphere.



Artwork by Todd William Dearing

Squaring the Circle

Lughnasadh 2015

Cover and featured Artwork by Todd William Dearing.	
Table of Contents	2
The Editor's Desk	3
Featured Artist—Todd William Dearing	4
Greetings from Philip Carr-Gomm	6
Crossword Puzzle	9
Yoga for Druids — Julie Brett	10
The Art of Scrying — Wyverne	15
A Prayer of Opening — Martin Samson	18
Crossword Puzzle Answers	19



Greetings

As the Sun moves on her annual cycle into the sign of Aquarius and the earth's breath shifts . We hear her calls for our fire festivals. Here in the south we celebrate the sacrifices of Lughnasadh and the north meets this with the Imbolc fires of re-birth.

While Imbolc is the first stirrings of light in the mother Goddesses' womb, Lughnasadh is the sacrifice of the light God in the harvest to be transformed into bread and the marriage of the Sun God with the Goddess.

Across the Earth we celebrate the fire-light festivals of life in death and death in life. The fertility of life is embraced in global consciousness

This is the second edition of SerpentStar that I am editing and ask if anyone can suggest someone, or offer themselves, to be a featured artist or practice for our next edition in May.

Peace and love from the grove of She Oaks
Martin



Featured Artist ~ Todd William Dearing

I am a professional writer and artist living in Adelaide, Australia. My work follows the humanistic traditions of Europe into our contemporary and hypermodern world. I explore the universal, cultural, and natural inheritance of our collective humanity.

I was born in Adelaide, Australia. After a semi-common childhood, a wild and geeky adolescence, and a university course in Physics and Mathematics, I had too many questions in me. So I left all that behind to explore Eastern spirituality.

I explored various traditional paths of Buddhism, Daoism, and Shamanic ways (in the Siberian/Tungusian/Tibetan sense), and diverse areas of what could be called New Age spirituality, and eventually settled upon the Hindu Yoga tradition. My journey through the East took me through 12 intense years of deep Yoga practice, including related disciplines of the Vedic Yoga tradition: Ayurveda, Jyotisha, Sanskrit, Vedanta, Tantra, and Vastu. I began to teach Vedic Yoga, which is a far deeper and more integrated system than most of what Yoga is known as in its popularised current day forms. I became a polymath of the East in a way, which seems much easier to do than with Western lore, because Eastern wisdom has remained an integrated multidisciplinary system where each discipline reflects and contains the whole of the others. I taught and practised Vedic Astrology, Ayurvedic Healing, and Yoga, and visited India for this purpose twice.

Still I felt something was missing: I wanted to find my own ancestral spiritual wisdom. So I sought out my own cultural heritage and traditions. Eventually I discovered Druidry, which seems the closest thing to my soul's home – a creative natural philosophy, spirituality, or way of life, based upon the wisdom of Nature and the ancestral traditions of North-Western Europe. This personalised, dogma-free tradition appealed to my uniqueness wonderfully. I have since developed my unique approach to Druidry, as the tradition encourages. I realised I was always inclined in such directions, since my earliest memories as a young boy. It is now as though I am no longer wearing a glove of spirituality – a foreign costume. My own self has become my spirituality and need not be rejected to fit within a tradition. There is so much more to it than this brief description, of course.

So I became a member of the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids and have been working through their training courses since. I am now working on the Druid Grade. I continue formal study through University in Literature, Art History, Visual Art, and Creative Writing. I have also benefited from travel, especially a trip to the UK last year. I value interaction with a wide range of people, rather than keeping to exclusive clique-groups. And immersion in Nature is essential. I have also independently

explored many areas of the Western Traditions: Art, Literature, Language, Philosophy, History, Psychology, Alchemy, Folklore, Healing, Politics, Symbolism, Sacred Geometry, Dreams, Music, Mystery Traditions and more; a broad and diverse research into anything that interests me. I have developed practical and creative skills and sought to balance, integrate, and enhance my own capabilities physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, ethically, creatively, and socially.

Through this journeying, I have come to recognise many threads of sacred lore running through both spiritual and secular culture in the Western World. Before this, when I was immersed with all my being in Eastern traditions, I never considered the West to have much to offer. I had rejected my upbringing and native culture of Australian and North-Western European heritage and wanted nothing to do with it. It seems this idea still pervades many spiritually seeking Western minds, who, being critical of the West, consider it a spiritual vacuum, and so renounce their own culture in favour of something more 'exotic'. Meanwhile many people of the East are rejecting their heritage in favour of so-called 'Western' ways, which is in reality more an industrialised materialist kitsch-culture than anything traditionally 'Western'. But it was the idea of embodied spirituality through my own ancestors that enabled me to return my soul home, after having journeyed along various Eastern paths for 12 years. I still use much of what I learnt in the 'East' – it has become an integral part of my being.

There is a central focus to my work. The archetype of the complete human being, the renaissance human, or wizard has come to the fore of my seeking. I make no claims to be such, but I continue to pursue this sacred archetypal ideal through practical realism. This personal journey of becoming whole, a *Universal Human*, for me is the perfect quest. Through the development of Love, Wisdom, and Creativity, a broad spherical diversity centred upon personal self-mastery is crafted, which is then focused practically and creatively through my writing and art. I believe we are all capable of becoming whole, and this is essential for the well-being of the Earth. Through our wholeness in relationship to the Earth, the Earth in turn completes us further, and we arrive in the fullness of Life and the world as is every being's birthright.

I believe it is in becoming whole ourselves that we can best 'help' the world, and from this we have no choice, if we are kind in heart, other than to serve the world, through our gifts and passions. I do not believe our life is solely for ourselves alone, but part of something far greater than we can imagine. My service is through my creative work. I have a great love for writing – it is my main art form. I also practice visual art of various kinds. Music is new to me in this life, but I am developing that too.

Life is short, art is long, said Hippocrates. And what is Life? What is Art? I still have many questions in me, but have learnt that the question (and quest) is more important than the answer, and furthermore, that the best questions may never have an answer; they become journeys in themselves which reward in ways which the calculating and conscious mind cannot bring of its own accord. The universe will not end when we find the perfect answer to it, instead, it will begin in a whole new way. We need to experience through journeying. Ultimately, our journeys lead to something far more useful and universal: wisdom.

It is to this purpose that I put my pen, as a quest and journey, for wisdom. I am currently working on a novel, have several book ideas in seed form, and ongoing painting projects, amid much learning and Druidic living. I also offer my services as a freelance writer and artist in web-design, logos and art commissions, and writing/editing. I hope you enjoy and gain something from my digital art, painting, and writing presented here. You can visit my website or contact me at www.toddwilliamdearing.com. There you will find more of my writing and art, including prints for purchase, as well as my poetry publication. If you like my work, please support it.

Greetings from Philip Carr-Gomm

In a recent interview I was asked:

Why have you chosen Druidry as your spiritual path?

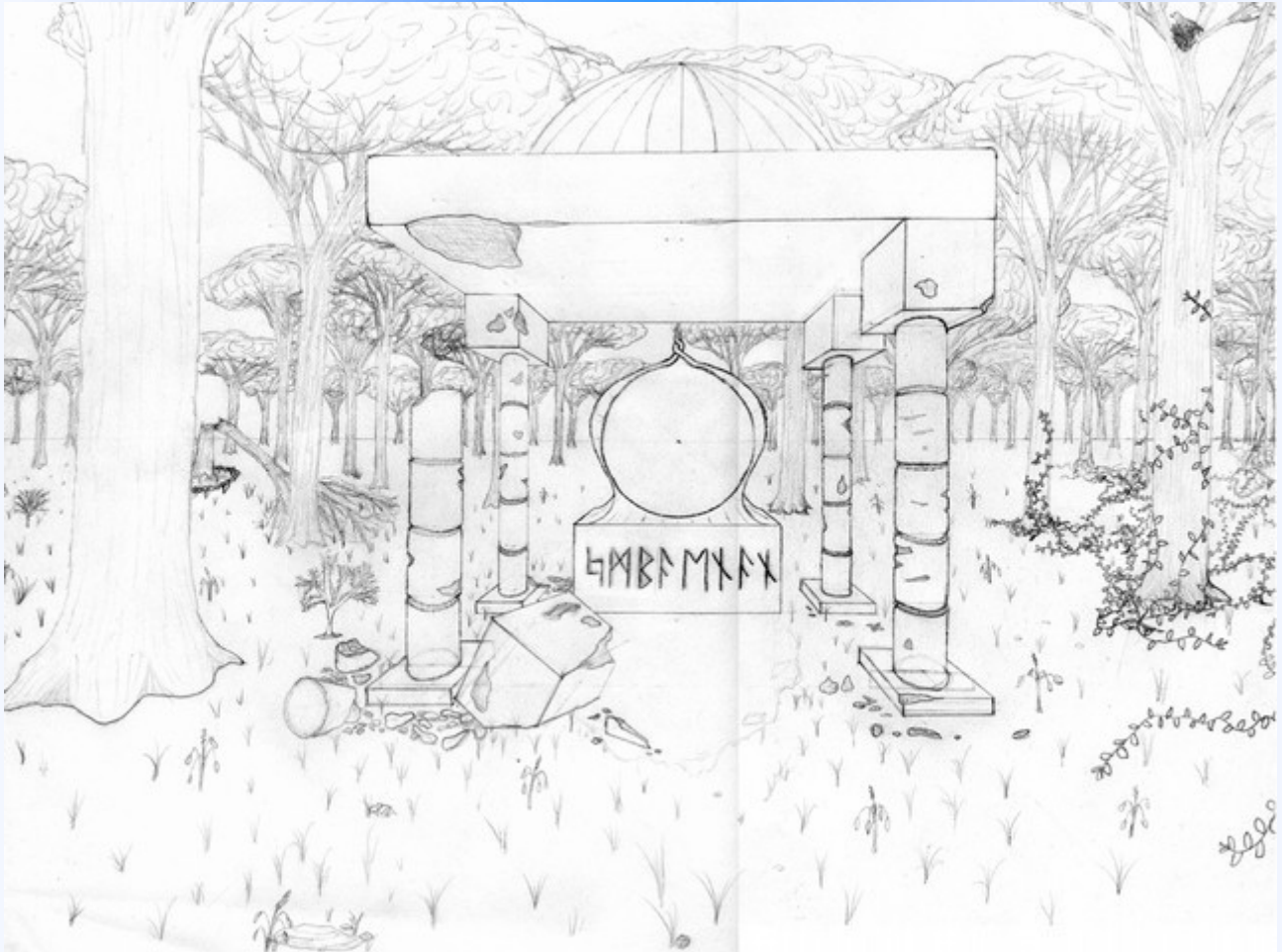
I have always been interested in many different forms of spirituality, and for me the name or label I give to the path I tread is not so important, because I think we each have to create our own path in many ways. But what I like about Druidry is that it is an approach that is designed to help me feel grounded and rooted in my depths. And it is light on dogma and philosophy and heavy on soil, rain, fire and wind. It's like a goose.

A goose?

The goose is the bird that flies the highest in the sky but in the farmyard it is strutting around in the mud. I want a spirituality that can take me very high but which also allows me time to splash about in the mud. At our summer camps we often build a mudpit and just splash about in it. I like an approach that allows me to do serious rituals and meditations and also sit naked in a mudbath. The poet Mary Oliver uses the image of geese wonderfully in her poem 'Wild Geese' that finishes: *Whoever you are, no matter how lonely, the world offers itself to your imagination, calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting — over and over announcing your place in the family of things.*

With much love and many blessings,

Philip / | \



A Forest Shrine (above) and The Openness of Solitude (below)



SPIRAL DANCE'S LUGHNASADH CONCERT

Join Spiral Dance to celebrate the turning of the season and Lughnasadh. Saturday 31st January. The Wheatsheaf Hotel, George St, Thebarton, S.A. Doors open at 8.30 and \$10 entry. And there could just be a few surprises in store!!

MYLOR ACAPPELLA DAY

Do you love to sing?

Would you like to harmonise with others?

Come find your voice and join us in a day of Acappella workshops and singing up a storm.

Let's all go MAD at the Mylor Acappella Day.

No experience necessary just an open heart and voice and a willingness to participate.

Saturday 11th April; 2015 @ The Mylor Hall, Strathalbyn Rd, Mylor. S.A.

Workshops 10am – 5pm with Alison McAllister, Jodie and Ellyn O'Regan and Matthew Lykos.

Evening Acapella Concert at 7.30pm featuring Emlyn & Jodie O'Regan, Matthew Lykos, Saltwater Taffy and more to be announced. AND the MAD choir (YOU) will be performing on stage with the songs learnt during the day!!

INVESTMENT \$55 for day of workshops (includes entry to concert)

Concert only \$20

Workshops to be announced in the next month.

PLEASE NOTE YOU MUST BOOK VIA THE WEBSITE AS THERE IS A LIMITED NUMBER OF PLACES FOR THIS EVENT.

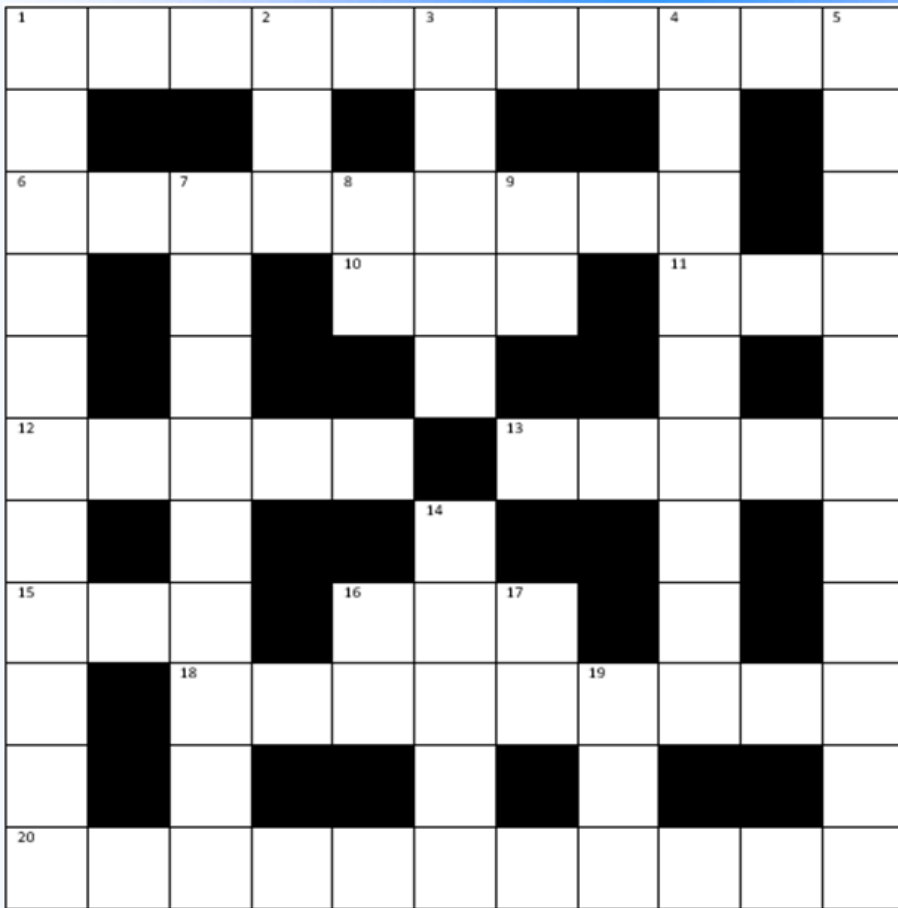
BYO lunch and drinks or The Mylor General Store and Tea Rooms and The Mylor Cafe are either side of the venue. BYO drinks for the concert.

To book go to : <http://myloracappelladay.com/>

The English Ale

Saturday 16th May at the Mylor Hall and Oval. Strathalbyn Rd, Mylor, S.A. - all the details soon!!!

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



CLUES ACROSS

1. Enigmatic patterns in cultivated fields (11)
6. Lunar radiance (9)
10. Instances of (3)
11. The smallest Aust. state (abbrev) (3)
12. A fruit (6)
13. A short robe (5)
15. New (in combination) (3)
16. Long fish (3)
18. Five-pointed star (9)
20. Dryads (11)

CLUES DOWN

1. Plaintiff (11)
2. Fastener (3)
3. Boudicca's tribe (5)
4. Focusing on sounds (9)
5. Ocean-going nausea (3-8)
7. Elders (3,6)
8. Soul in Egyptian Myth (2)
9. Yes (2)
14. Costume (3-2)
16. Half an em (2)
17. Los Angeles (2)
19. Neither (3)

Yoga for Druids

By Julie Brett

When we think of yoga some words might come to mind "tree pose", "cobra", "down facing dog" or "heron pose" and truly, there are so many animal names for yoga poses that I could have dedicated this entire essay to comparing them to the idea of shapeshifting (maybe next issue), but yoga is not just about stretching or *asana* meaning "poses". It is also a system of Classical Indian philosophy. One of the most important texts for yogic study is called *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, and interestingly, within it, the only mention of *asana* is in reference to the position for meditation. The word "yoga" can be translated as "union" meaning union with the divine, and it was mainly through meditation that this was originally taught. I've found that by looking at yogic philosophy I have deepened my understanding of some of the concepts in Druidry.

By looking at the philosophy behind the chanting of *aum* or *om* we can find a greater understanding of the purposes of chanting *awen* for Bardic inspiration. In both modern Druidry and the ancient yoga sutras, these words are chanted to gain a connection with the divine in order to find more enlightened states – that of the poet/sage. Patanjali suggests that chanting *om* develops "interiorisation" meaning inner awareness, "... and obstacles fall away". These obstacles are described as "sickness, apathy, doubt, carelessness, laziness, sexual indulgence, delusion, lack of progress, and inconstancy" which "are all distractions that, by stirring up consciousness, act as a barrier to stillness". The lesson here? In order to deepen our connection with *awen*, we may need to overcome mental obstacles and find an inner awareness. This can be achieved through chanting.



Yoga can help us to deepen our understanding of the mythologies also. The Song of Amergin is a poem which has great meaning for me probably because it seems to speak of the truths I have learned in yoga. The concept of our "true self" or "essential being" as divine and one with everything is important in many classical Indian philosophies. Our true nature is eternal and within all things. In this realisation we see that we are in fact all things, that everything is intrinsically linked and that separation is merely an illusion.

When we consider this idea while looking at the Song of Amergin, we can see a commonality. Amergin spoke this poem as the first of the human race, the sons of Mil came to Ireland. He was their chief poet, and in speaking it he showed that he was not only able to understand the spirit of the land, he was one with it; they were one and the same. Each line of the first part of the poem begins with the words "I am". The first lines are:

I am the wind which breathes upon the sea
I am a wave on the ocean
I am the murmur of billows
I am an ox of seven fights
I am an eagle upon a rock....

The poem also features in the story *The Children of Lir*. Lir's children had been cursed to take the form of swans and live in exile on the wild coasts of Ireland. At one point they are at the peak of their suffering when they begin to sing this song, and at once they find that they are no longer in suffering, but feel comforted and soothed. They felt a power that was "great and awe inspiring. It is the Truth and we must abide with the Truth against the world.... We will always be, no matter where we are, in this world or the next."

Finally I'd like to explore an interesting correlation between the otherworld of Celtic mythology and the *siddhis* (or extraordinary powers) in yoga. The *siddhis* are the super-human attainments found in the mastery of meditation, such as levitation, walking through walls, changing the size of the body and moving vast distances in an instant. Often in the Celtic myths, when people encounter the otherworld, super-human feats are also noted. Time and space seem to be more flexible and bendable to the will. One can't help but notice the dreamlike qualities of such experiences, and I can't help but wonder if there was a similar tradition of journeying meditation or lucid dreaming practices in both ancient cultures. Did practices like the *tarbfeis* (the bull feast) involve rigorous meditative practices that are lost to us today? Could yogic meditation be a pathway to exploring what the Celts called the otherworld? It's an interesting thought!

I feel I have only touched the surface of what could be discussed in the comparisons between yogic philosophy and Druidry. There is a wealth of knowledge in both traditions, and looking at the two in tandem can create an interesting dialogue of ideas, perhaps brining inspiration to our Druidry practice from a new angle.

References:

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, Chip Hartranft (trans.), Appendix B in *The Wisdom of Yoga: a seeker's guide to extraordinary living*, Stephen Cope, 2006

"The Children of Lir", pp. 56-78, in *The Mammoth Book of Celtic Myths and Legends*, Peter Berresford Ellis, 1999.

Heartland (Based on the Lake Districts in the UK)

Acrylic on Canvas



Autumn Equinox 2015

The 2015 Autumn Equinox to be held at the Gladstone Gaol in South Australia from Friday 20th through to Sunday 22nd March 2015. Cost for the weekend will be \$120 pp and this includes accommodation (gaol cell), meals, workshop, handouts and ritual. A registration form must be filled in and signed and sent along with a non-refundable deposit of \$50 by January 23rd 2015. Numbers are limited so it is first in first served. For catering purposes and to ensure your cell for the weekend, final payment in full must be made by February 27th. All payment details, email addresses, snail mail etc. are on the registration form.

You will need to bring your own bedding = sleeping bag and pillow (or however much you think you will need), munchies and drinks and any musical instruments, acting abilities, story telling skills if you wish – you may be the entertainment!!.. Many successful events pagan and otherwise have been held in the Gaol and I personally have stayed there on about 20+ occasions (they keep letting me out!! ☺)

For a registration form or any other queries you can

pm me on face book - Deb Keleher

email me = dilali@bigpond.com

phone me = 0408895965

Gladstone is about 220 Km north of Adelaide on Highway 1 and busses run up that way on a daily basis. However, if you are coming from interstate I am sure there will be enough people driving up from Adelaide that may be able to give you a lift.

Kindest regards

Deb Keleher



Onkaparinga Mouth
South Australia

Oil on Canvas

DAMH THE BARD 2015



SPONSORSHIP FOR DAMH THE BARD

Plans are afoot to bring Damh the Bard and Cerri Lee back to Australia in October 2015.

There will be a Sponsor's only concert in Adelaide on Monday 5th October 2015

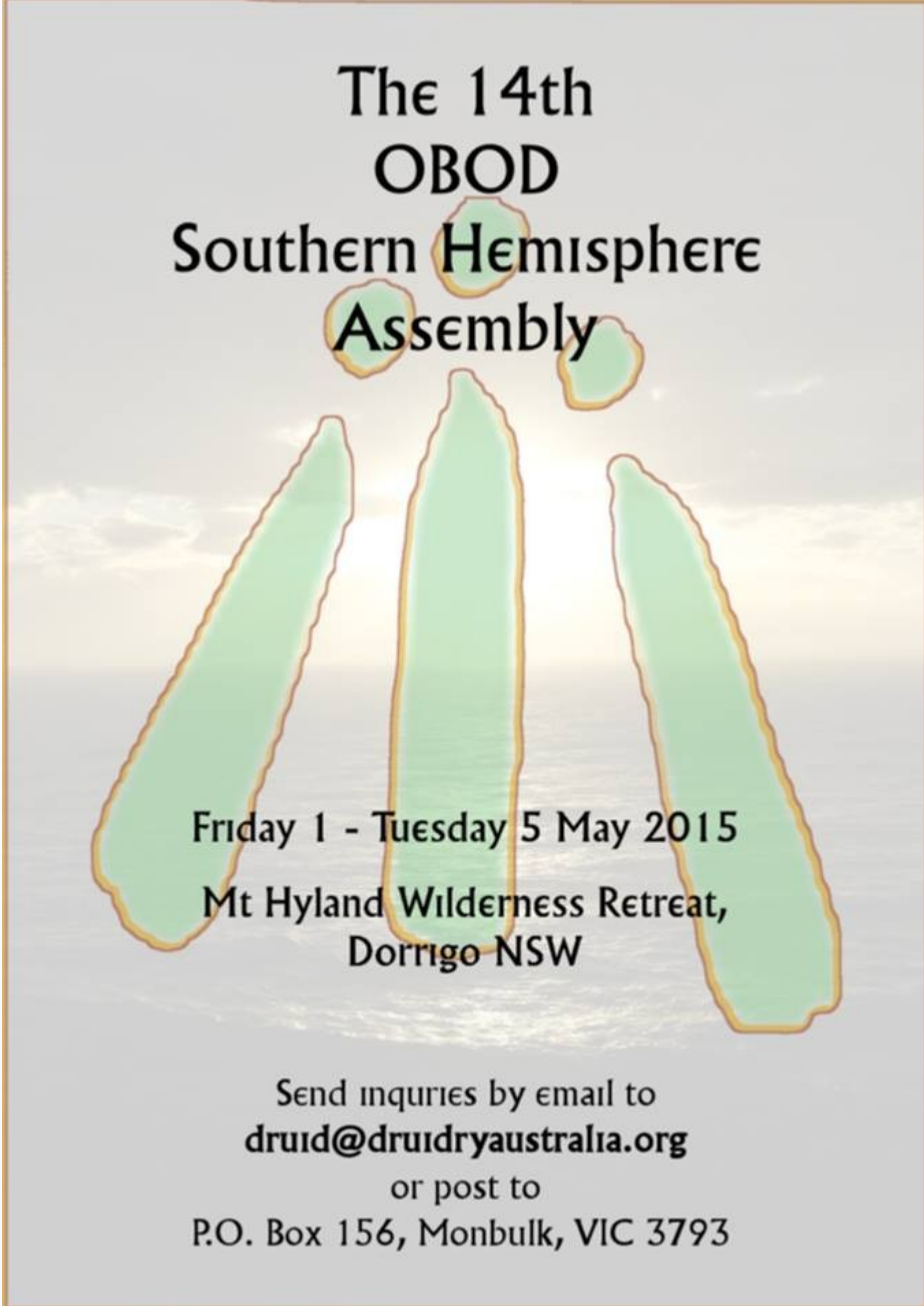
We are looking for 120 people to donate \$50 each so if you would like to be a 'Damh the Bard' sponsor and be part of bringing this amazing couple back to our Great Southern Land you can either donate via Paypal or direct debit.

Paypal login address for sponsorship is
sponsordamh@spiraldance.com.au

or

email us for direct debit details
info@spiraldance.com.au

The 14th OBOD Southern Hemisphere Assembly



Friday 1 - Tuesday 5 May 2015

Mt Hyland Wilderness Retreat,
Dorrigo NSW

Send inquiries by email to
druid@druidryaustralia.org
or post to
P.O. Box 156, Monbulk, VIC 3793

The Art of Scrying.

By Wyverne



Scrying is gazing into a mirror, chalice of wine or water, blank computer screen, window or other reflective surface until visions appear which may be used for divination or simply explored for their own sake.

Slavic girls once believed they could scry their future husbands through the glass, no doubt a piece of folklore descended from fact. When marriages were arranged between distant cities, brides and grooms exchanged framed, glazed portraits. The memory then lapsed into its current fanciful form. But magic makes mystical use of our mistakes, and the most persistent myths are those reaching for higher truths, more relevant and important enough to make us want that gift. So, we discover in us this latent ability to scry magically; and like water-witching, most people can achieve some success in it easily.

Sometimes scrying happens accidentally. Falling into a reverie while shaving or putting on make-up you find yourself soft-gazing into the mirror; or you might become absorbed in reflections in a shop window, or lost in thought staring at a dark computer screen and there is a shift, very subtle, like the reputed shift from left brain to right brain when drawing, and an image appears, animated and alive, undeniably magical. Or maybe you've always scried in your teacup or wine, and just giving yourself credence is all it takes. This kind of natural scrying is fun but random, and the visions are not guaranteed to be pleasant, or even relevant.

Like any magical practice, scrying is safer with spirit guides and a formal framework. Using a magical space either physical or in the 'inner grove' greatly enhances the scrying experience. Drink water. Cast a circle. Mirrors are under Mercury's dominion, so acknowledge that. If you dedicate a special mirror, you might ask for a guide who will help you bring your mirror to life: perhaps a god or goddess you trust; although mirrors, like wands may develop their own personalities and can become companionable guides. Writing its name in runes around the frame can help magic like that if you're keen, as can giving it selected crystals, herbs and flowers, incense-holder, trinkets etc, and for working at night, a pair of candles can add to the charm.

As you gain expertise, such a mirror can become to your own psycho-space as a computer is cyber-space. It's fun and safe if you treat every vision kindly, even the scary-looking ones. The fear you feel may be theirs. If anything frightens you or seems threatening, simply withdraw to your own inner centre, re-attune to your guides and continue when the mood feels friendly again. Learn to send peace into fraught situations.

Remember uncast your circle and ground yourself after each session. A good relationship with your mirror will work in your favour, enabling you to explore your own psychic abilities, and allowing active contact and communion with the faces and visions you encounter.

May the spirits of the mirror bless you!

Wyverne

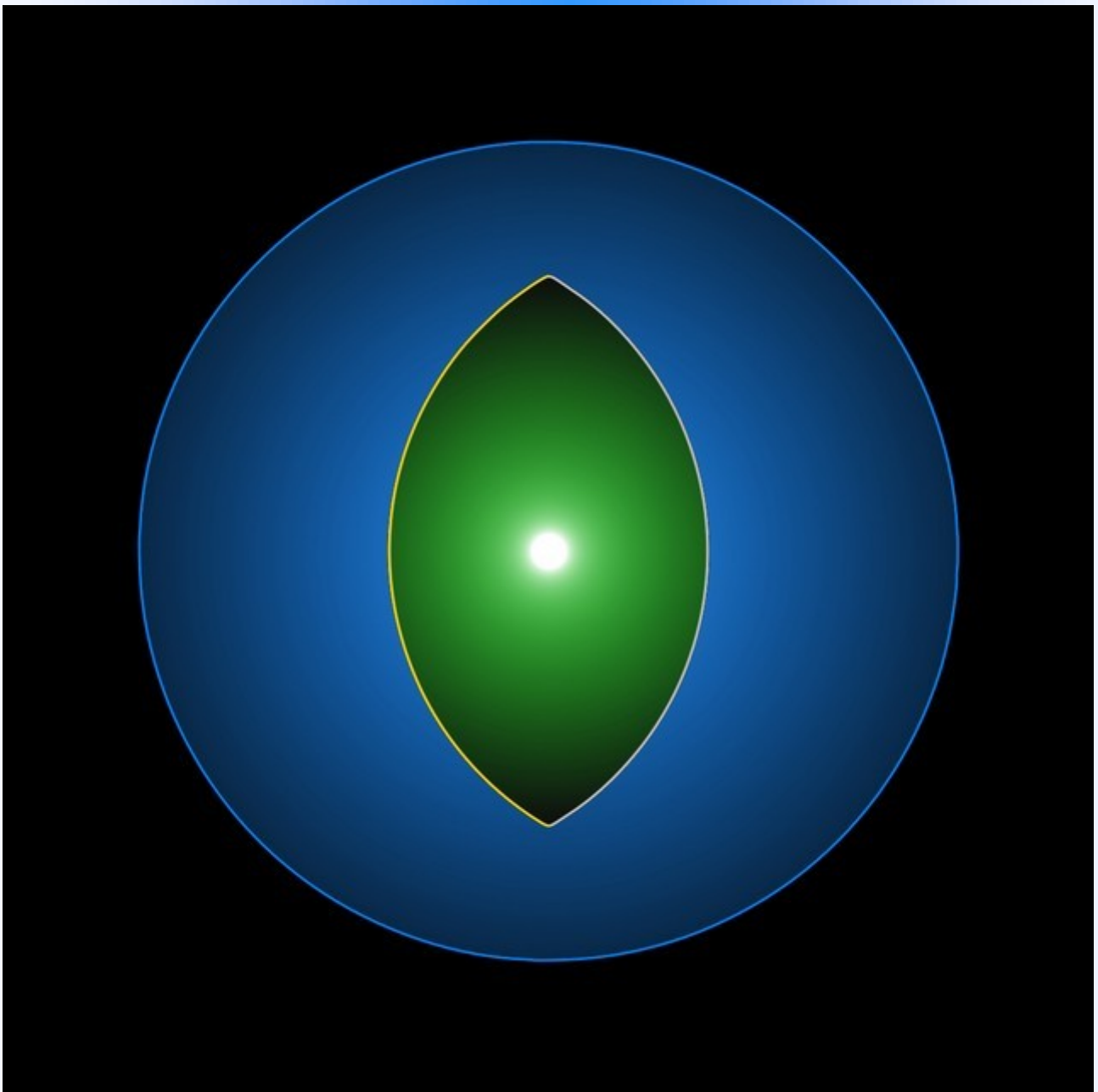
The Moon Drifts with Ourania

*Oh Ourania, Muse of the measure,
I see our mother Moon, finds in you her pleasure.
I see her sitting there, calling forth Sun,
Within our own hearts, to melodious strum.
I see the bright birth of buds to be blossomed,
I hear clear sweet laughter of children alive.*

*Ourania, of astronomical lore,
Of the nine sisters, inspirations' core.
Fine silence gives birth to silver winged vision,
Alas, where am I? For Awen has risen!
I long and I seek and I journey far ways,
To find that true music, that deep the heart plays.*

*Serendipitous Sister of sacred sound,
You bless us with glances and we fall to the ground,
In ecstatic storms, a wind long will blow,
That leads us to paradise, through all that you show,
If we are mere mortals dreaming ourselves,
Sing bright within us, please waken are souls.*

Todd William Dearing



The way of the Sage
A symbolic representation



The Prayer of Opening

*May my ears be open,
hearing what I listen to,
with an open mind.*

*May my heart be warm,
removing cold separating cynicism,
revealing perceptive feelings.*

*May my aversions recede,
unblocking consuming fears,
availing my generous will.*

*May my blindness of my Self,
creator of pride and arrogance,
see in Humble-Sacred-Acknowledging.*

*May my soul unblock,
from anger's destructive separation,
to unfolding future understanding.*

*May my spirit burn,
with merciful acceptance
of life's dance of human frailty.*

*May I transform,
Through suffering and joy,
my prayer to Earth's-Heart-Light.*

Martin Samson

Horus

Sustain the world but with a minor exhortation, an eddying groove, greening through a gentle lack of management, revealing the revolving within all that revolves, near and far, as one great circuit oozing potential credibility yet never actually drifting past the ripest wake of dawn. For as dawn flowers, over and beyond, it is fed not by reminiscence, but by the sweetness of the melody of life-head-on.

So as it is, so much so that the inevitable out-breath, the lull which is an orgasmic easing into the Larger Vision, brings only lovelier wisdom-flourish upon the next arrival of the midpoint, drawing stillness, fullness of hope, some magic which nobody questions because it is too provocative to the eye-seeking-beatitude; because none are lost in its wake.

Raised above this rapture of Dances, choosing to enact the immortal sequence known as sphere-pointed, I watch. Set afire is my untearable heart. Made sound the steps I tread, I quicken all lonelier passageways; like greater cinema epics they converge into the one place which yearns beyond lack. There the eye of Horus, hawk-mage magister, forever illumined, whose gaze flashes upon endless truths, overflowing the Cosmos, draws forth the act which will re-conceive the Original Mother of All: It sheds the Universe as a tear of light.

Todd William Dearing

Crossword
Puzzle

1	C	R	O	P	C	I	R	C	L	E	S
	O			I		C		I			E
6	M	O	O	N	B	E	A	M	S		A
	P		L		10	A	N	Y		11	T
	L		D			I			E		I
12	A	P	P	L	E		13	T	U	N	I
	I		E			14	G			I	K
15	N	E	O		16	E	E	L		N	N
	A		18	P	E	N	T	A	N	G	L
	N		L				U		O		S
20	T	R	E	E	S	P	I	R	I	T	S

Answers

Happy

All the animals have something to teach

Todd William Dearing

Mr. Rabbit stood with one ear flopping down, as he listened to the Donkey who said he had all the answers.

Mrs. Goose was thought a fool by Great Eagle, lofty in flight, for spending all day sitting on her eggs by the pond. It was such a tranquil cosy place, where sweet pollen scent came with teachings on the wind.

And the Crickets all knew the power of sound; the Frogs would every night sing; the scarlet-breasted Robin dance.

Sometimes Dog would find a trail and follow it. Sometimes Starling would circle people in play. Honey-eater ducked and dived and hunted the bugs under the open sky.

Koalas moved slow amid Eucalypti.

And preponderous Red Fox pondered:

"What is known consciously is confused unconsciously.

What is known unconsciously is confused consciously.

Nothing is easily misunderstood.

Mystery is the final conclusion."

"You do not know. You do not know," hooted the Owl.

2015
Lughnasadh!