

# Serpent Star

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



IMBOLC 2017



# Welcome to the Imbolc 2017 issue of SerpentStar!

Hello Lovely People

In just over a week I will be heading off on the road trip to Pennant Hills in Sydney for the 16th Southern Hemisphere Assembly! Bookings have officially closed, but information and contact details are still available at [www.druidryaustralia.org/assemblies](http://www.druidryaustralia.org/assemblies) if you have any questions for the organisers.

Another packed issue this festival, with poetry from Sarah, Fay and Geoff (the last two are first time contributors!), a story from Victoria, articles/ritual and some reader/healer info from the Aotearoa team, a book review from Antonia plus reminders about the current Damh the Bard fundraiser and the 20th anniversary SerpentStar at the end of the year.

Speaking of our anniversary, there is still a lot to upload from the archive project. Things have slowed down due to increased work hours for me, but it's still on track to be finished by the end of the year. On this page is the cover of the first ever Imbolc SerpentStar, which came out in 2009, and which was also the first ever edition to be uploaded to the SerpentStar website.

Blessings of Imbolc, and see you all (with heaps of stories and pix from Assembly) at Beltane!



With all joy, Mandy /|\



Early wildflowers at Wyeuro

## SerpentStar, Imbolc 2017

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

SerpentStar logo by Todd William Dearing. Watermark images courtesy freepik.com and druidry.org. All other images provided by the authors on the corresponding page, unless otherwise credited.

Submission guidelines and subscription info are available from [serpentstar.druidryaustralia.org/about](http://serpentstar.druidryaustralia.org/about)

Follow us on Facebook - search "SerpentStar"

Enquiries via email: [serpentstar.obod@gmail.com](mailto:serpentstar.obod@gmail.com)

All opinions expressed herein are solely the contributors' own.

# OBOD in the Southern Hemisphere

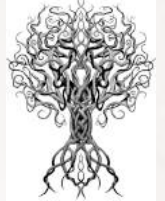
## Groves and Seed Groups

### 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](mailto:southernbreezesfellowship@gmail.com) and you can see our profile on Facebook [www.facebook.com/Southernbreezesfellowship](http://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 three Bards 'in the making'. 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, all in solo as we are spread through South Africa – Johannesburg in Gauteng, Haenertsburg in Limpopo. Full moon meditations are conducted for peace and harmony. Email [debby@triskel.co.za](mailto:debby@triskel.co.za) for details.



### The Golden Wattle Seed Group

We are a group of OBOD members living in South Australia, with a few members from different druid backgrounds. We are open to interested people who would like to experience or learn about Druidry within our seed group, or in general, and we hold group rituals for the Equinoxes, Solstices and Celtic fire festivals. We also work magic together for world peace, environmental issues, political issues etc. We put emphasis on reciprocity and hospitality in ritual to reaffirm our reverent and respectful relationship with nature, with the spirits of place, the ancestors and deity; offering libations and natural foodstuffs to the earth mother during ritual. Any interests, questions or enquiries you can email Kacey Stephensen at [bardofthegreenwood@gmail.com](mailto:bardofthegreenwood@gmail.com) or William Rattley at [wildra2003@yahoo.com.au](mailto:wildra2003@yahoo.com.au)

### 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). Spring Equinox is celebrated at Stonehenge Aotearoa, an astronomically correct replica of Stonehenge Albion, in Carterton, New Zealand. 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](mailto:pamela@thewoolshed.com)

### Macadamia Grove

Welcomes and is inclusive of South-East Queensland and Northern New South Wales OBOD members who wish to join in with any activities. 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](mailto:macademiagrove@hotmail.com)

### The Melbourne Grove

Welcomes all OBOD members (local, interstate and overseas) to its seasonal celebrations. Family and friends may also attend with a member and receive a warm welcome. In 2017 we will be celebrating the seasonal festivals on the following dates: Autumn Equinox – Mar 18, Samhuin – Apr 29, Winter Solstice – Jun 24, Imbolc – Jul 30, Spring Equinox – Sep 24, Beltane – Oct 29 and Summer Solstice – Dec 17. If you would like to join us please send an email to Elkie at [whitelk@bigpond.com](mailto:whitelk@bigpond.com) - our website is [www.themelbournegrove.org](http://www.themelbournegrove.org)

### Song of the Eastern Sea Seed Group

Situated on the Central Coast of NSW, we invite OBOD members and guests to join us as we celebrate the eight festivals of the Wheel of the Year and explore nature and Druidry together. We have a number of projects in the planning, including a Sacred Grove planting, working on environmental issues as a group, and supporting our local community. Contact Chris at [chris@druidryaustralia.org](mailto:chris@druidryaustralia.org)

### Wollemi Seed Group

Hunter Valley and surrounds. We are gathering on the fourth Sunday of each month at Buchanan close to the expressway. Anyone is welcome and we would love visitors, for details contact Rollick on 0423 626 290 or [bonsaidruid@yahoo.com.au](mailto:bonsaidruid@yahoo.com.au)

## Useful websites for SH OBODies:

[www.druidryaustralia.org](http://www.druidryaustralia.org) - A central online resource for druidry in Australia.

*Druids Downunder* - Facebook group - a closed group for druids of any path, in the Southern Hemisphere and Australia in particular.

*Don't see your group or website listed here? Send a listing to [serpentstar.obod@gmail.com](mailto:serpentstar.obod@gmail.com) and spread the word!*



## OBOD Worldwide

[www.druidry.org](http://www.druidry.org) - Official site of the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids

[www.druidcast.libsyn.com](http://www.druidcast.libsyn.com) - Direct download and shownotes for DruidCast (or subscribe via iTunes)

Facebook Groups - *OBOD Friends* (open to members and non-members, discussing general topics) and *Order of Bards Ovates and Druids* (closed group for members of the Order).

### Publications

**Touchstone** (HQ) Sent free to all members taking the course, and once you have finished receiving course material you can subscribe separately. Touchstone is only available to members of the Order.

**Druid** (USA) [www.druidmagazine.com](http://www.druidmagazine.com)

**Druidenstein** (German) [www.feuersprung.de](http://www.feuersprung.de)

**Dryade** (Dutch) [www.obod.dds.nl](http://www.obod.dds.nl)

**Il Calderone** (Italian) [issuu.com/ilcalderone](http://issuu.com/ilcalderone)

**Menhir** (French) [issuu.com/obod-menhir/docs](http://issuu.com/obod-menhir/docs)

**Ophiusa** (Portuguese) [www.obod.com.pt/ophiusa.htm](http://www.obod.com.pt/ophiusa.htm)

## SERPENTSTAR



Volume 1, Issue 1

Alban Hefin 1997

At Alban Hefin 1997, a new publication was born, our very own SerpentStar!

To celebrate there will be a FIFTH issue this year, released at Alban Hefin, our official 20th birthday. For this special issue I'm seeking special content, and the theme is "My first OBOD experience in the Southern Hemisphere".

As always, stories, poems, photos, artwork and musings are welcome. The only thing I ask for this special edition is please stick to the theme - anything received that does not fit the specific anniversary theme will be included in the next regular edition of SerpentStar.

Please send submissions to the usual address - [sepentstar.obod@gmail.com](mailto:sepentstar.obod@gmail.com), and clearly mark them Twentieth Anniversary.

## Pagan Transitions

Pagan Transitions was created over 12 years ago to help pagans create meaningful and beautiful funeral rites which reflect the spirituality of the person who has passed through the Gateway, and offer support to the bereaved.

As well as templates that can be adapted to suit individual funeral requirements, and a selection of reading material and poems, there is also a list of Pagan Funeral Celebrants who can create and lead the funeral rite for you and arrange everything with the Funeral Director. Pagan Transitions is a volunteer-run free service.

If you are a Pagan Funeral Celebrant and would like to be listed please visit [www.pagan-transitions.org.uk](http://www.pagan-transitions.org.uk) and complete the application form. Any suggestions on how the service can be improved are welcome.



## I AM RAIN

(written at Bark Fall, Autumn Equinox, Katoomba, 2017)

*I am the rain: Life Giver.  
Take me into your Being,  
Feel me in your sap, blood and tissue.  
Welcome me, All.*

*Your Poet's voice, long dry,  
Now sings anew,  
Songs long stopped.  
Roots, stems, leaves long dry  
Take life and form.*

*Creatures tired and wan, long dry,  
Swell to my rhythm.  
Flock and mob, join and roam,  
Feeling my drumming.*

*And You, Bard, Singer of songs,  
Teller of tales old and new,  
You are re-birthed:  
Splashed with drops  
From the Cauldron of the gods.  
AWEN*

Fay D'Elmaine, Bardic Grade

Image courtesy freepik.com



# Winter Transformation

*A retelling of Cauldron Wisdom, by Victoria Jewett*

*"More wood for the fire Gwion," calls Morda. You stir from your reverie. "Cerridwen is on her way, tis a year and a day since she summoned us tend her cauldron."*

*You re-enter the wattle and daub hut, tossing three split logs upon the fire. That should do it. Is it really a year and a day? The formidable witch of the woods had caught you wandering, disquieted and pondering 'why'. If it were not for her son Afagddu you'd not be stirring this pot. Afagddu; utter darkness, now there's a thought. The steam dances on the surface of the cauldron. Such a concoction of herbs for just three drops. Will they mitigate all the strange things swirling in the pot? Can three small drops redeem utter darkness? The surface bubbles; ah the wood has stirred the fire to life again. You suck your thumb and blow on it to soothe a scalding spatter...*

*Moments pass, and know, yes know; three drops do redeem the shadow, for you feel the compassion that comes with expanded seeing and realise the drops meant for Afagddu touched your lips, not his.*

*You sense the eye of other, the pot groans, then cracks. Run Gwion run, cries the inner knowing. Dashing over the green meadow even as Cerridwen gathers her skirts for the chaise. You scramble for a hole in the hedge pushing with all your might. Your lungs are burning and the Goddess is gaining, wild hair streaming and skirts billowing. Image of hare flashes before you. Think hare. You are!*

*Powerful hind legs push through in a nick of time for the Goddess almost had you! Joy courses through your veins as you bound away over roots and under logs across the meadow. The newfound agility is exhilarating. The sweet smell of the earth delights you. How did I not know this?*

*A great bound snaps at your heels. It's Her! Mistress of shape shifting. What to do? Once again inner knowing calls you, quick as a flash slipping through taloned paws you disappear into the lake with a plop.*

*Cool water calms searing pain. With a flick of the tail you head for the river as poison courses toward the lake. The waters shimmer as currents tumble stones along the river bed. You feel caressed, the spirit of play beckons, you join the dance, frolicking and flicking about. You've never known water like this. But what is that? The Goddess in hot pursuit! Swim, Gwion swim as fast as you can. The otter is stronger and more agile. Exhausted you leap in hope as otter's teeth slit your tail.*

*The blue nren circles above the water taking in the cottage, lake and valley. Cauldrons within cauldrons, this truly is the land of the Goddess. A flashing glint catches your eye, the distant towers of Dinas Affaraon refract the afternoon sun. The place of wisdom from whence the goddess obtained her spell. How well Gwion knows the story; the first three drops bring the Bright knowledge. The remaining brew was to boil away, lest its baleful knowledge bring misery to all it touches.*

*Shadow of hawk passes above, even as horses cry in pain by water's edge. What cost this knowledge? Is there any escape? You make for the winnowing pile, falling to earth, a grain of wheat as talons grasp. Invisibility amongst many. Jiggle deeper into the pile Gwion. Alas your new found knowing, knows not nearly enough.*

*Goddess of sun and harvest grain, her totem is the black hen. You lay quite as she scratches about. With a cluck of delight you're found and pecked. From this cauldron there is no escape. The end life as you know it. You quietly surrender to the unknown...*

*If not for Afagddu, I would not be here. In Afagddu I see my own darkness, my shadow. All that I, my family and culture rejected, I stuffed into my unconscious where it became ugly and angry by neglect. And now the baleful contents of my own dark shadow are disgorging over my life. Tears of remorse wash a weary heart clean.*

*Thump thump, thump thump.  
Is that a heartbeat?  
Thump thump, thump, thump.*

*You must trust the mistress of invisible processes, for will holds no sway in the womb-tomb. As the goddess rocks and sings by her winter fire, each night is a little shorter. Winter yields to spring as the Crone changes form to life bringer. Early summer and she who knitted you in your mother's womb now holds you in her arms, you gaze into the face of love. Born of flesh and spirit, you are twice born. The time of rest and nurture is short lived. Having faced your personal unconscious, she wraps you in a protective skin and casts you into the ocean, the great collective unconscious, to wash with the currents and learn the ways of the deep. There is no fear in this third cauldron for the ocean is hers and Her cloak is about you.*

*There's a bump, the salmon of wisdom is caught at the weir. The man Elphin takes you in his arms, the wounded healer for whom life has been hard. At long last his medial self is healed, transformed, matured, returned unto himself.*

*Taliesin of the shining brow graces the life of Elphin the wounded healer. Taliesin the wise rights the injustices of the past. Thrice born of the cauldron, Taliesin knows the mystery of the Hag.*

*In the terror of the chase, the sacred woundings and dark mirror of truth, a fragile ego died to fear and found light and love in the dark.*





## TREES

*Druids gather in a grove.  
No English countryside to rove.  
No Elm nor Oak  
To shade or cloak.  
For this is Australia.*

*Here the Gum Tree is king  
Nesting Kookaburras sing.  
River Red Gums marking water  
Water spirit is my daughter.  
For this is Australia.*

*Desert heat some trees grow  
Against the odds their seeds do sow.  
Spinifex in reddened soil  
Stunted trees for life they toil.  
For this is Australia.*

*Druids see nature's life  
Droughts, bushfires and such strife.  
Caring energy thus they send  
A helping hand for nature's mend.  
For this is Australia.*

*By Geoff RAVEN Warren*





The header image for the Aotearoa section of SerpentStar has been created by Glenn Conroy, who writes: "The image is comprised of several elements that are of special meaning to members of the Grove of The Southern Stars; Matariki, (seven sisters constellation), pounamu, (greenstone), ti kouka (cabbage tree), and of course Kapiti Island."

## A Piece for Peace: Planting the Hinau Tree

by Richard Self, Grove Master, Grove of the Summer Stars

Here at midwinter we planted a Hinau tree - in the tradition of all the trees used in solstice celebrations in the past. In one sense it does represent the World Tree. In another sense it represents intentions for planetary health and healing. In another sense it contributes to the healing of the bush here - because we have planted a tree that is native to this region, but is not locally present.



In times of crises - personal or planetary - it is important to remember our values, which for me can be summed up: Earth Care, People Care and Fair Share for all - not just humans or animals, but all entities that have existence. With the advent of Trump there was talk of hexing him, casting binding spells and using other other magical means to influence him. I felt the challenge too: if it is within my power to stop his nastiness, his egotism - then I should stop it! But I feel uncomfortable with the hexing, the binding - so how should I respond?

So the question became wider: How can I use magical means effectively to facilitate positive change - to promote Earth Care, People Care and Fair Share? The idea of praying for peace seems very vague and wishy washy - so perhaps we should draw on the idea of SMART goals - and do smart spells - smart prayer? Rituals, prayers and spells that are focussed, local and achievable, for example to promote clean rivers - or even to specifically pray for our local river or stream.

The question became even wider: How do we, as a magical community, work magic for positive change - without our egos or personal agendas interfering? After much talking and reflection the answer became clearer - plant a tree - a God/dess tree that would contribute to the healing of this land and, by magical association, represent the whole Earth. Intention is central to any spell, any ritual. So if the intention is to heal, this is a healing tree. So my vision was to plant a tree that can represent our intentions for a healthier, happier society, and a healthy Earth with enough for all.

Perhaps this tree will become a place we bring our magical intentions - to give them to the God, Goddess, Great Spirit or however we envision that something other.





## Alban Arthan Aotearoa

by Pamela Meekings-Stewart

What a great Alban Arthan/Winter Solstice we had. We decided to use a different story from the one we usually use, and to adapt the ancient story of the search for the Child of Light held in a dark prison and to honour the many voices of Winter. The weather was fine but cold and we were able to be outside, held safely in the arms of our sacred grove. We held the ceremony at 4pm and as it finished we were gifted with the sight of the Solstice Sun sinking into the sea. Magic!

It was such a meaningful ceremony on many levels that we would like to share 'The Working' part with you.

### *The Rite of Alban Arthan/Winter Solstice in Aotearoa*

EAST: I proclaim the festival of Alban Arthan – the Light of Arthur - at the Winter Solstice.

WEST: The turning point of the whole world.

NORTH: The time of endings and beginnings.

SOUTH: I proclaim the time of greatest night... Let us hear the many voices of Winter.

CAILLEACH: I am The Cailleach, the Hag of Winter revered by the Druids of the North, who I shall attend six months hence as I attend you now. When the Winter storms rage through the hills, people say the Cailleach is trampling her blankets. I wash my plaid in the eddies of the Corryvreckin, and the next day the hills are white with snow.

I am as the Ancient Earth herself. I am the lichen-covered rocks and the mountain peaks. I am the bare earth covered with snow and frost. I am the Deep Ancestress, veiled by the passage of time. I see beyond dualities to the ultimate unity of all things on the Web of Life.

I am the Spirit of the Land who holds the sovereign power and Kings hold office by symbolic marriage to me.

WINTER: I am Winter...the Time of FIRE

*My landscape is bleak, austere, long-shadowed.*

*Some of my trees are bare while others announce their greenness.*

*The sap has withdrawn, night closes in early and days are short.*

*At this time the sun has withdrawn furthest from us.*

*The birds of the air seek shelter. There is little life to be seen.*

*For this is the time of Potential...the promise of things to come.*

*Beneath my frozen landscape so hostile and threatening is the warmth of germination.*

*All that will emerge in the next time is responding now with a power silent yet unseen*

*For I am the Life Force of new growth.*

*My creativity is unique for it expresses in darkness and has no outward form*

*But without darkness, humanity could not imagine.*

*I am the time of imagining the New.*

*Though I am cold to touch, embrace me...*

*If you are to know the Energy of Anticipation.*

Let each direction speak for Winter at this time in Aotearoa.

EAST: I bring blessings and speak for Kahu, hawk of the dawn at Winter Solstice. At this time I live communally with others of my kind. While rabbits and mice may be harder to find, my sharp eyes find road kill and other carrion. I help to feed the elders as is our custom.

*Inspiration, wisdom and blessings from New Zealand*



NORTH: I bring blessings and speak for the Great Pohutukawa Tree at Winter Solstice. At Summer Solstice my blooms and greenery decorated our circle and altar...now my life force, the inner fire of the sun is deep within the earth, within my root. I am the companion of death and birth. My oldest relative guards the entrance to the sacred cave at Cape Reinga.

WEST: I bring blessings and speak for our tuna, the tiny eel at Winter Solstice... Carried by the ocean currents that sweep across the widest waters, I come to the ancestral rivers that carry the rains from the land. I leave the salt waters of the sea for the sweet waters of the land to honour the Great Circle that calls into being the fullness of my life

SOUTH: I bring blessings and speak for the deep and fruitful Earth, Papatuanuku herself at Winter Solstice. I hold the energy of the seeds deep within my being, protecting them, nurturing them until it is their time to emerge. Though my surface may appear cold, my womb is warm. My obsidian embraces the shadow and transforms it to light.

*(Others may wish to speak.)*

MODRON: Of all the tasks that weigh upon our company this dark day, the most important is to find Mabon, the Child of Light, my child, held in a dark prison I know not where. We mourn for his return. If he is not found and set free then light will not return to us and the days will not grow longer. Who will take on the quest to free him from his dark prison?

*(Warriors step forward.)*

WARRIORS: We will search for the Child of Light. We will find him and set him free. Let us ask those who are the most wise where he might be found.

*(Warriors walk to the East and ask:)*

WARRIOR 1: O mighty kahu, do you know where is to be found the Child of Light, Mabon by name?

EAST: I and my brethren fly high in the sky and see much with our sharp eyes but we have seen no sign of the Mabon. Perhaps the great Pohutukawa tree that lives in the North can help you.

*(Warriors walk to the North and ask:)*

WARRIOR 2: O mighty Pohutukawa, do you know where is to be found the Child of Light, Mabon by name?

NORTH: I have sent the message along my roots to my brothers and sisters and to the oldest of my kind who guards the cave of the ancestors but we have heard no word of the Mabon. Perhaps tuna who lives in the West and travels far from sea to land can help you.

*(Warriors walk to the West and ask:)*

WARRIOR 1: O mighty tuna, do you know where is to be found the Child of Light Mabon by name?

WEST: We search and we search from far out to sea to the furthest reaches of the inland streams and we have not heard but one word of the Mabon. Perhaps Papatuanuku who this day resides in the South, who knows every mountain, every stone, can help you.

*(Warriors walk to the South and ask:)*

WARRIOR 2: O mighty Papatuanuku, do you know where is to be found the Child of Light, Mabon by name?

SOUTH: Welcome great warriors. Your quest is true and I can help you. As my birthing was in the stars as it was for all of us, look above your heads to the great marker star, the Southern Cross, follow where it points and you will find the Mabon. KARANGA - acknowledge the dark and then call back the light.

*(The warriors search around the circle and finally find the Mabon who is brought to the centre with great joy and cheering from all present. The tiny lights on his crown are lit. Modron embraces her child. Scraps of mourning are cast off.)*

MODRON: *(lights Mabon's candle)* A flame is lit in the depths of our souls.

MABON: I come to this place as a child of future generations. My gift is the gentle flame of hope that each new life brings into this world. I, and those who follow me, ask that you protect this sacred flame. You who are the earthly guardians of wisdom unite together in peace and harmony to protect this planet, our home. This I ask for the children of the world.

*(Mabon walks around the circle lighting each candle from his own flame.)*

SOUTH: *(as candle is lit)* Let the Sun shine upon Earth, that the Seed of whatever we intend to manifest within each one of us may be reborn.

EAST: *(as candle is lit)* Let the Sun shimmer in Air, that breath may bring new life.

NORTH: *(as candle is lit)* Let the Sun fire our minds, warm our hearts and light our spirit.

WEST: *(as candle is lit)* Let the Sun reflect in Waters, that their blessings be redoubled.

MODRON: The new fire is with us in this circle of light. I proclaim the rebirth of the Sun, the Mabon, the youngest, who from the womb of the Great Mother is born in silence and weakness as the smallest of lights, in this midnight of the year.

SOUTH: In honour of the Great Mother who gave us Life and of her son the Child of Light, may we work together to provide a future strong and secure in the roots of our heritage, allowing the future generations to grow, reaching out towards one another, beyond boundaries of race, religion, class or gender, and into the Light of Truth.

As the light is reborn, let us sing to the returning sun the Sacred word. May our voices be heard in the heavens.

ALL: *Cascading Awen*



Inspiration, wisdom and blessings from New Zealand





## Grove of the Summer Stars – Labyrinth Update!

For those of you in Australia who may be familiar with the labyrinth at the Children's Hospital in Westmead, Sydney; that labyrinth spent 11 years simmering in the cauldron before coming a reality.

We've turned up the heat here in NZ, and for the last six months our cauldron has been bubbling with design ideas and site plans. These were revealed to enthusiastic members of the Grove in a quick presentation prior to our Winter Solstice ceremony, with a large tick of approval from our Modron, Pamela Meekings-Stewart. It is wonderful to have Grove members supporting what has been a long-held dream, for us personally, and for them to be fully engaged in the process. That's a good thing as we still need to find another 300 bricks to reach our target of 2000.

Imbolc, that time of stirrings, has been chosen as the most appropriate time for site to be blessed by a local Kaumatua (Maori Elder) and then work will begin in earnest. We'll be wrapping up warm against the winter cold to make sure our deadline is reached – tentatively looking at Summer Solstice 2017, the time of manifestation, but that will depend on weather conditions and the time our brigade of eager helpers have available to help. We'll be sure to keep everyone updated on progress. In the meantime, check out this photo of The Druid's Tree Labyrinth as it will look once completed. This labyrinth has been designed exclusively for the Grove of the Summer Stars, incorporating many Celtic and Druid elements.

If you would like further details about the design concept contact us through the OBODS NZ Facebook Page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/OBODDruidsNZ/>

*Bright blessings from Anne and Glenn Conroy, Grove of the Summer Stars, Pukerua Bay, NZ*



Inspiration, wisdom and blessings from New Zealand



# The Wheel of Segais



Pamela Meekings-Stewart

## **THE WHEEL OF SEGAIS FOUR SEASONS/FOUR ELEMENTS**

The Wheel of Segais website is complete, so on-line readings and life planning sessions are now available!

If you would like to know more about the Wheel of Segais here is the website:  
[www.wheelofsegais.com](http://www.wheelofsegais.com) - with lots more information about upcoming courses and a video that contains extracts from the live presentation I did in May. You can also purchase the full recording of the class from there.

Come drink from the Well of Segais and let the Salmon discover your eternal wisdom.

I look forward to meeting up with many of you at OBOD Southern Hemisphere Assembly for great ritual and great discussions.

Elementally Yours,  
Pamela Meekings-Stewart





# 'Australian Druidry: Connecting with the Sacred Landscape'

by Julie Brett

Review by Antonia Newlands

When I first held a copy of this book in my hand, I remembered the time I met its author, Julie Brett. It was an Imbolc ritual some years ago in the Dandenong ranges, where all the participants had awoken long before the cold dawn to stand amongst the mist and trees to honour the seasons. We were rewarded for our tired, freezing effort by the shooting stars which heralded our arrival. The subsequent enveloping darkness ensured a powerful connection with the adjacent spring which was consecrated to Brigid.

The previous evening, Julie had informed me that she had driven across from Sydney to the Victorian ritual as part of the research for her forthcoming book on Australian Druidry. For her, it was insufficient to merely collate and reproduce data on the subject, she needed to experience Druidry through the stories of those who practised this tradition across the country and the land that they lived on. At the time I could sense the strong need for this book to be present in the world. But what inspired me most about Julie's diligence in her work was that she was heavily pregnant at the time. In addition to creating a book, she was creating a child.

As Julie passed through the initiation of motherhood, she simultaneously carved a path towards becoming a published author. I ordered the book online the instant it was in print and I was delighted with what I read. Instead of simply guiding its readers towards connecting with the Australian landscape, which it most definitely does, I held in my hands a tool which could be used anywhere in the world to facilitate a rich and fulfilling earth based spiritual practice, created from direct observation and communion with nature.

In translating the remnants of an historical European tradition into a modern Australian context, Julie Brett has synthesised a universal approach which can be used to create a personal relationship with the land and seasons anywhere and everywhere in the world. This can enrich the lives of all readers in their own way, for as she puts it, "...in our connection with nature, we feel the presence of the Divine".

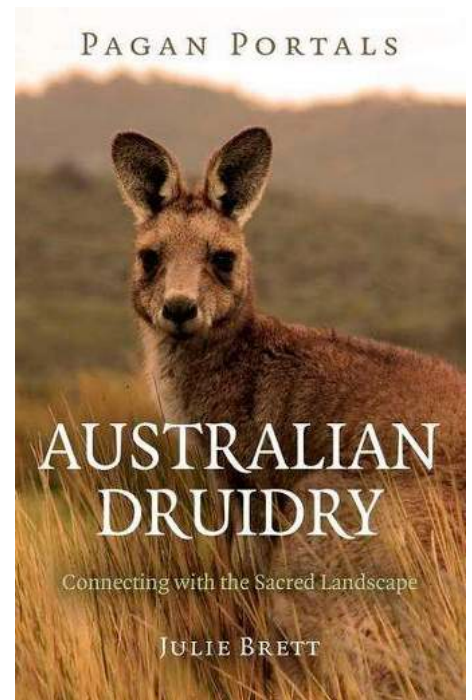
Based on her own observations, Julie Brett discusses how to create a local Wheel of the Year and suggests how this could reflect in the psyche of those who live on that land. Most excitingly, her regular practice of working with her own Wheel of the Year has produced a description of different seasons, relative to her own native coastal New South Wales and the concept of two phases of death and regeneration.

One phase relates to the death and rebirth of the sun at midwinter. This would be fairly unsurprising to most people who follow Druidry. However, the second phase of destruction and regeneration relates specifically to the combination of land and seasons in Australia, and describes the death and rebirth of trees which occurs in bushfires. How these two phases are reflected in the land and the psyche, both of the Australian people and further afield, merits and receives worthy consideration.

Interspersed throughout the text is a narrative which could be used both as a guided meditation, as a way of considering your own path or even just a simple story. In addition, the book discusses the symbolism of various native Australian animals, plants and trees. Whilst having presented her own experience and research, Julie places a strong emphasis on the reader establishing their own personal relationship with the aspects of nature they encounter around them.

The book finishes up with a detailed account of how to create your own druid ritual. It gives a clear framework to work within whereby you can utilise your own special relationships with the aspects of the land, its ancestors, the ancestors of Druidry and your own ancestors.

This review has really only touched the surface of the wisdom contained within Julie Brett's '*Australian Druidry*'. This book is a treasure to both Australians and non-Australians alike, who wish to discover the sacredness in both themselves and the land on which they live. Through her words, may you find your own flowing inspiration in the hardening of the bark, the thin needles of the she-oak, the duality of the platypus and the Spirits of your own place.





# DAMH THE BARD 2018



## SPONSORSHIP FOR DAMH THE BARD

Plans are afoot to bring Damh the Bard and Cerri Lee back to Australia in September 2018

There will be a Druid's Camp Weekend in Adelaide S.A. as well as concerts in various cities across Australia.

We are looking for 140 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](mailto:sponsordamh@spiraldance.com.au)

or

email us for direct debit details: [info@spiraldance.com.au](mailto:info@spiraldance.com.au)



## My Imbolc Man

*He was a spring man, a gentle-man,  
A gazer of tides and fields of grain  
Totally solid with a dependable plan  
My lover and extoller of wisdom without pain  
I loved his eyes glinting with hope and joy  
A imbolc soul who loved the stirring of earth  
With a soul of a blues man and the heart of a boy  
Creator of mischief with irreverent mirth  
As the rains increased so did his energy lift  
He was blessed to be alive and he revelled in the newness  
A rambling man with his head lifted skyward  
Heart a-swelling with renewed hope and vigor  
Never one to risk standing on driftwood  
But excited to push through with much rigor  
I loved him in winter and kept him warm with caress  
But it was a comfort that did not offer succour  
The cold pushed him to his duress  
And it was the spring that brought back the colour  
Take him as you find him my dear souls  
Treat him gently for his roots run deep  
Never fail to trust his honesty and be told  
My Imbolc man well he's one to keep.*

*Sarah Duffy*



*Image courtesy freepik.com*





## Anam Cara Soul Space

Readings, Tarot, Astrology, and Sacred Plant Essences with Fleur Grant

Greetings and Kia ora, my name is Fleur Grant and I am a student of OBOD and a practising tarot reader, astrologer, and sacred plant essence practitioner.

My connection to Spirit has been active for as long as I can remember. I have always been blessed to receive messages, and this ability has been passed down my family line from my Anglo-Irish grandmother, who possessed second sight. I have good reason to believe my Irish ancestors, who left Ireland after one of the large famines, were descended from ancient Druids.

The land of my birth, Aotearoa New Zealand, has provided me with a deep appreciation of the native forest here, and my communion with nature has been further developed through training as a plant essence practitioner. Plant essences contain specific healing properties that shift emotional and traumatic patterns. There are even essences that can shift DNA patterns that have travelled down family lines. This is an exciting area of work, as it ties into the scientific discovery of epigenetics, which is confirming what ancient cultures have always known, that trauma can be hereditary. For instance, there may be a pattern of betrayal and heartbreak in relationships that have travelled down the ancestral bloodline. As Druids, we work with our ancestral inheritance, and it is now possible for us to clear negative hereditary patterns and receive our divine inheritance.

Astrology is an ancient tool which allows us to map the potential of a soul and look at key strengths and challenges. Most people are familiar with Sun Signs, but you are more than just your star-sign! Based on your time, date and place of birth, natal astrology explains the map of the Zodiac for your individual birth, and the position and relationship of all the planets and signs that make up your personality and potential. I also provide updates of full moon and other major astrological patterns for New Zealand and Australia on my Facebook page.

Tarot (I use Rider Waite and the Druidic Tarot) is an amazing tool for Divination. Tarot is my first port of call for questions about relationship insight and decisions.

Anam Cara is an old Gaelic term which means 'soul friend'. Here, at Anam Cara, I work with you in integrity, openness and non-judgement, using the ancient tools of tarot, astrology and sacred plant essences to help you make decisions, clear emotional and hereditary blocks, and move forward with confidence.

Consultations are available at my practice in Auckland, New Zealand, or from anywhere in the world using Skype.

Please visit my page  
[www.facebook.com/anamcarasoulspace/](https://www.facebook.com/anamcarasoulspace/)  
for more details.





# THE GREEN ALBUM

Tuatha Dea and Nightsong Studios Presents:

THE GREEN ALBUM is a collaborative concept album featuring Tuatha Dea, Wendy Elizabeth Rule, SJ Tucker, Sharon Knight, Winter Jp Sichelschmidt, Celia Farran, Bekah Kelso, Ginger Doss, Damh The Bard, Kellianna Girouard, Spiral Dance, Spiral Rhythm, Murphey's Midnight Rounders, Brian Henke and Mama Gina LaMonte.

It's a musical plan of action. An Independent musical compilation created by a consortium of like minded Muses, Musicians and Songbirds from all over uniting as a global Tribe to raise awareness, celebrate and give something back to Mother Earth! All these amazing artists will be offering one gift of song, either NEW or never before released specifically for this Album, and themed toward the universal concept of 'Green!' All of the Artists have banded together, and partial proceeds from every album sold by the collaborators will be donated to Rainforest Trust, a Global Green Charity doing amazing work around the world!

THE GREEN ALBUM and all the artists on this compilation project are proud and honored to announce our association and partnership with this wonderful organisation. 25% of all (That's ALL 14 artists) sales proceeds from this project will be donated to Rainforest Trust! This amazing group so profoundly echoes the sentiments of this project, and has been putting them into action for 27 years. PLEASE spread the word and get involved!

<http://www.thegreenalbum.net/about.html>

<https://www.facebook.com/greenalbum/?ref=hl>

Direct downloads available from <http://www.thegreenalbum.net/home.html>

or you can buy a physical album via

[http://www.spiraldance.com.au/?CDs\\_and\\_Downloads\\_\\_\\_Ordering\\_Spiral\\_Dance\\_CDs](http://www.spiraldance.com.au/?CDs_and_Downloads___Ordering_Spiral_Dance_CDs)



## RAINFOREST TRUST® *Hero*

### The Green Album

donated a gift to protect

**1,817 Acres of Balanga Forest Reserve  
in the Congo**

This gift assists Rainforest Trust and our local Congolese partner to establish Balanga Forest Reserve, safeguarding crucial habitat and providing a future safe from poachers for the Congo's magnificent and threatened wildlife, including the African Forest Elephant, Okapi, and Bonobo.

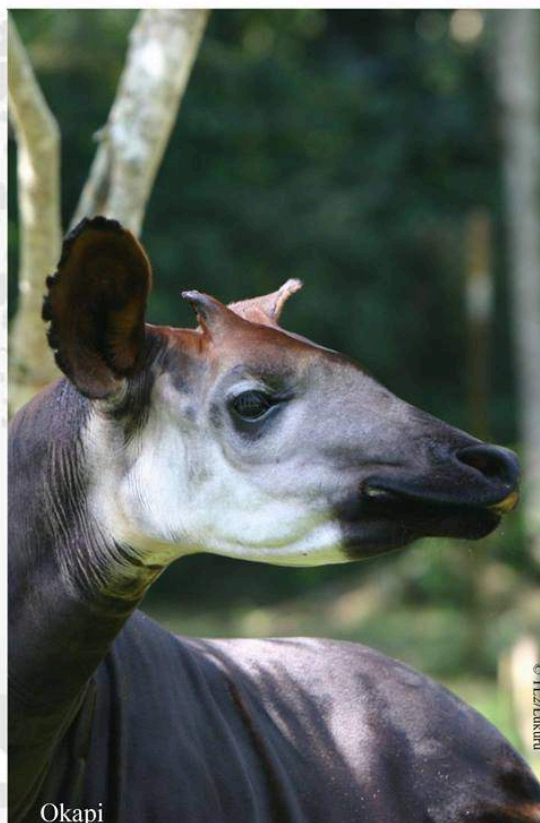
Issued June 20, 2016

*Thank you for your commitment to biodiversity.  
Together we are saving rainforest acres, forever!*



RAINFOREST TRUST®

*Paul Salaman*  
Dr. Paul Salaman  
Chief Executive Officer



Okapi

TUATHA DEA	CELIA FARRAN
WENDY RULE	BRIAN HENKE
SJ TUCKER	MAMA GINA
BEKAH KELSO	MURPH'S
GINGER DOSS	MIDNIGHT
KELLIANNA	ROUNDERS
DAVE THE BARD	SPIRAL RHYTHM
SPIRAL DANCE	
SHARON KNIGHT/ WINTER S	





# Member Businesses, Groups & Retreats in Australia/New Zealand



*Todd William Dearing*  
WRITING ART DESIGN

♦ ART ♦ VISUAL DESIGN ♦  
♦ BOOK DESIGN ♦ EDITING ♦ PROOFREADING ♦  
♦ PUBLICATIONS ♦ WRITING ♦

[www.toddwilliamdearing.com](http://www.toddwilliamdearing.com)  
[todddearing@gmail.com](mailto:todddearing@gmail.com)  
0405 115 279

Located within the Perth suburb of Banjup, Western Australia, Dreaming Tree Grove is a nature-based spiritual group grounded in Druidry, inspired by a "shamanic worldview" and a love of being immersed in natural surroundings. We view Druidry's journey through bard - ovate - druid as a creative and experiential journey, one that explores not just the Self in nature, but the nature of Self. For us, our spiritual path is one of integrity and service, of celebrating life and recognising the interconnection of all things.

Although we are affiliated with the British Druid Order, and while we acknowledge the traditions of our path, and the mythic cycle that weaves its way through our tradition, our connection to place is here within the bio-regional movements of nature that create this part of the Southern Hemisphere. So we explore our spirituality and practise through these sacred lands here in the south west of Western Australia, and therefore our approach reflects this.

To find out more about the Grove, about joining us, and our training program, visit our website:

<http://dreamingtreegrove.wixsite.com/dreamingtreegrove>







## Forest Spirit Jewelry

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inspired by the beauty of nature, the spirit of the forest.

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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](http://serpentstar.druidryaustralia.org/about)







Celebrancy Services available in Melbourne  
Legal weddings, handfastings, commitment  
ceremonies

Contact Elkie - [whitelk@bigpond.com](mailto:whitelk@bigpond.com)



I am a marriage celebrant living on the beautiful Sunshine Coast in Queensland. I have studied with OBOD for the last six years and will soon complete my Ovale studies. My aim is to help make your ceremony meaningful and memorable....



Fully qualified civil/funeral celebrant, and authorised marriage celebrant, with a professional background in customer service and publications writing/editing, and a personal background in performance and community education. If there is any skill needed to write, deliver and make your ceremony special, you can be assured that I have it...or can make it happen.

My gift as a celebrant is a passion for creating a beautiful experience – each ceremony will be individual to your needs and personality, including research into special moments and traditions that you and your loved ones will remember for years to come.

Based in Tamborine, QLD but willing to negotiate travel. If you'd like to know more please don't hesitate to get in touch.

[ajgcelebrant@optusnet.com.au](mailto:ajgcelebrant@optusnet.com.au)

0413 593 609

[ajgcelebrant.wordpress.com](http://ajgcelebrant.wordpress.com)

[www.facebook.com/ajgcelebrant](https://www.facebook.com/ajgcelebrant)



Amanda Gibson  
Qualified Civil Celebrant

Weddings, Commitment Ceremonies, Vow Renewals, Baby Namings/Blessings, Funerals and Life Celebrations, Home and Business Blessings, Life Transitions and Women's Circles







As a registered Marriage Celebrant & passionate creator of ceremonies, I craft unique & beautiful rituals to help you celebrate the important times in your life.

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0415 158 941



## Anne Conroy

REGISTERED CELEBRANT

My celebrancy is heart centred for those looking for someone who can genuinely support individuals and families when the need arises, in a relaxed and caring manner, in the Celtic tradition.

Regardless of the type of ceremony and its level of complexity, you can be assured of respect, empathy, deep listening, compassion, and creativity, along with a healthy dose of humour.



[www.ritualcelebrant.co.nz](http://www.ritualcelebrant.co.nz)

**Ph: 021 781 873**

**E: [anne@ritualcelebrant.co.nz](mailto:anne@ritualcelebrant.co.nz)**



Member of the Order of  
Ovates Bards and Druids



Member Celebrant's  
Assn. of New Zealand

Creating meaningful ceremonies and lasting memories

## Pamela Meekings-Stewart

Registered Marriage and  
Civil Union Celebrant  
New Zealand

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

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

I am also able to arrange contact for weddings and civil unions at Stonehenge Aotearoa in the Wairarapa with myself as Celebrant.

Marriage and Civil Unions are the only ceremonies that require a legal, registered Celebrant. However, I also craft and perform many other forms of ceremony and blessing:

**Namings** (children and change of name); **Birth Blessings**; **Vows of Recommitment**; **Entering The Wisdom Years - Croning** (women) and **Saging** (men); **House Blessings**; **Blessings and Invocations For Passing Over**; **Funerals and Burial Blessings**



*Tying the knot*

*Two lives entwine*

*Tying the knot*

*Two families entwine*

*Binding our futures together*



Contact: [pamela@thewoolshed.com](mailto:pamela@thewoolshed.com)

[Thewoolshedretreats.co.nz](http://Thewoolshedretreats.co.nz)

Tel: ++64-4 2399234





**Need some time out from your day to day life?**

**Want to escape the city and experience the Outback Heart of  
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**Interested in helping with a permaculture self-sufficiency project  
and learning new skills?**

Experienced WWOOF host, and OBODie Ngatina, and her family, would like to invite members seeking a time of retreat to consider their home in the Northern Flinders Ranges (SA).

- The stunning ancient landscape and vast starry or moonlit nights are perfect for contemplation and fostering a connection with Spirit of Place.
- Experience living in an heritage listed small town (pop. 20) in a remote location
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For more details about our home and project visit <http://casaindomitus.wordpress.com> or contact Ngatina on [wwoof@sylvanius.net](mailto:wwoof@sylvanius.net) or 0429795002 to discuss options.

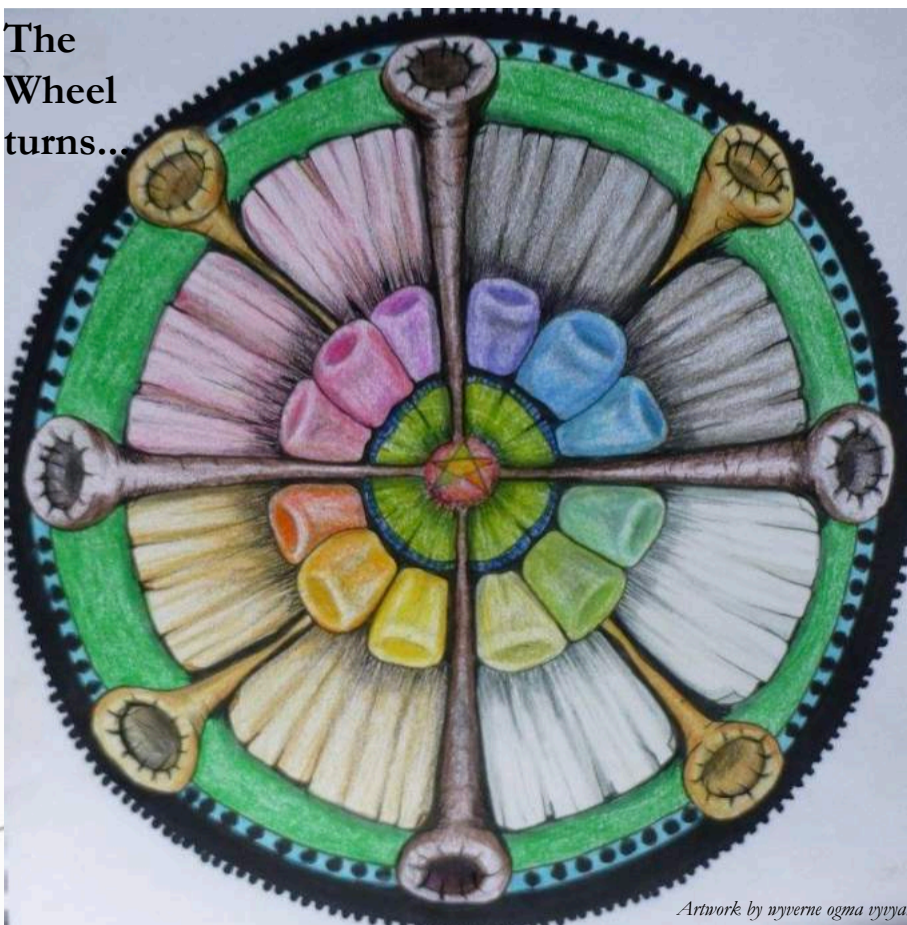


And finally...



Artwork by John Jordan

The  
Wheel  
turns...



Artwork by nyverne ogma ryvyan

*Although we would think of Imbolc as being in the midst of Winter, it represents in fact the first of a trio of Spring celebrations, since it is the time of the first appearance of the snowdrop, and of the melting of the snows and the clearing of the debris of Winter. It is a time when we sense the first glimmer of Spring, and when the lambs are born. In the Druid tradition it is a gentle, beautiful festival in which the Mother Goddess is honoured with eight candles rising out of the water at the centre of the ceremonial circle.*

*The Goddess that ruled Samhuinn was the Cailleach, the Grey Hag, the Mountain Mother, the Dark Woman of Knowledge. But by Imbolc the Goddess has become Brighid, the Goddess of poets, healers and midwives. And so we often use Imbolc as a time for an Eisteddfod dedicated to poetry and song praising the Goddess in her many forms.*

Text sourced from [Druidry.org](http://Druidry.org)

**The deadline for contributing to the Beltane issue of SerpentStar is 26 October.  
The Beltane 2017 issue will be released on 31 October.**