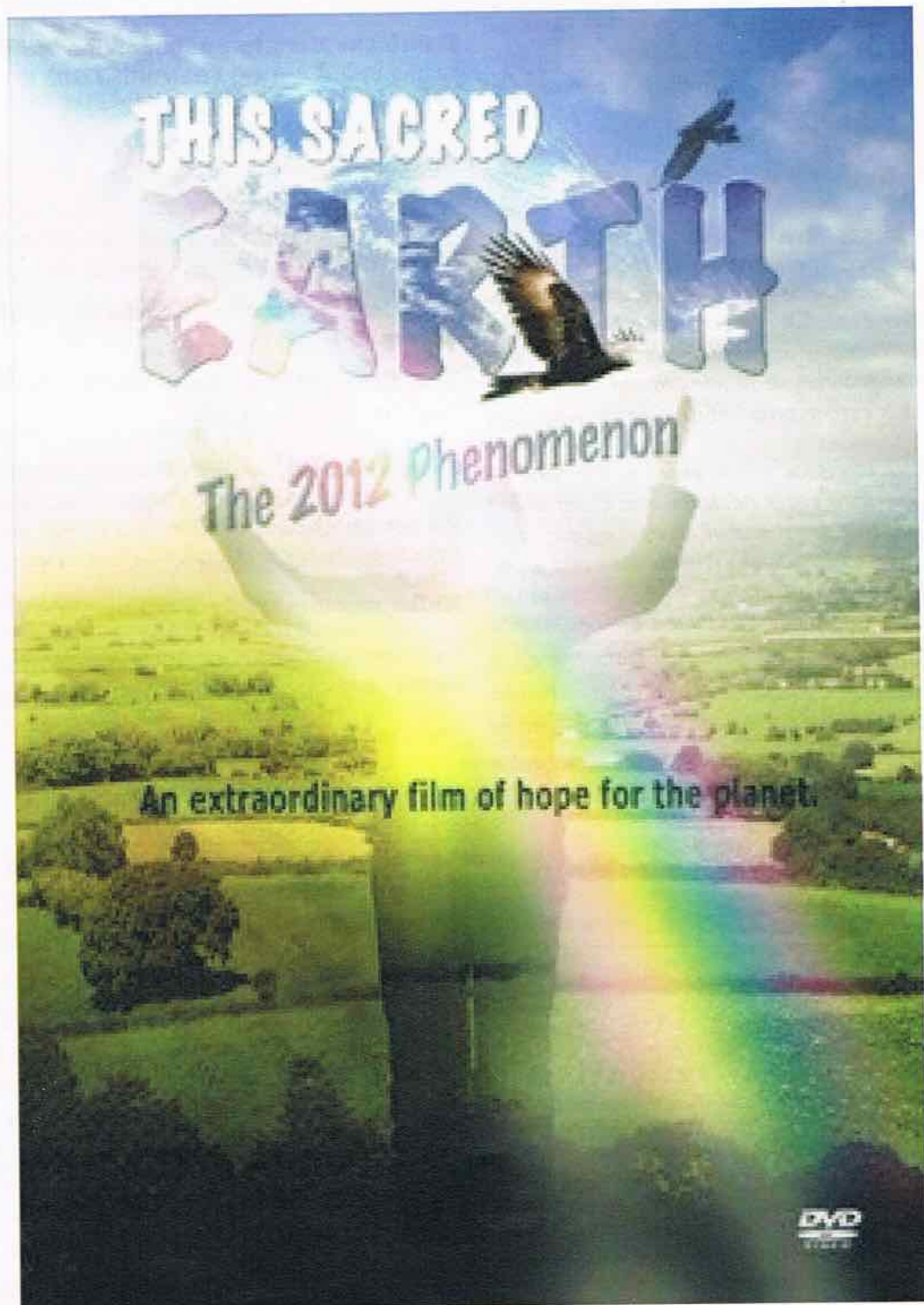


SerpentStar

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

Bealtang 2009





wyverne's words

G'day, Southern Hemisphere OBODies!

Welcome to the Bealtane 2009 issue of SerpentStar.

Spring has sprung, the grass has riz - that's certainly true here at Wyeuro! We've had a satisfying amount of rain at last and now the tiny but exquisite wild flowers are blooming. You can **see** the energy rising in the land, and feel the pulse of life revelling in the warmth.

As for our Druidry, it's a time for networking: suddenly Druids of all kinds are reaching out to find each other, make contact, compare notes and get together on projects and activities as they never have before. 'Get involved' is the watch-cry! Even if you can't physically attend, look for each other on-line. To help you, there's a new feature: a regular perusal of links and venues on-line. —see p3 (opp.).

SerpentStar is evolving. So is its editor. At the advice of our printer, the Librarian at the Swan Reach Area School, SerpentStar is now being prepared in Microsoft Publisher instead of Word. There's a big megabyte difference, and the ed is on a steep learning curve, but it's a much easier programme to work in and more flexible. SerpentStar's rather proud of this issue. We'd love your feedback.

Headlines this issue: whew, where to start???

Damh the Bard visits Adelaide. And guess what? I myself, yes, me, this lizard soul of mine, is appearing on the same programme with Damh, Wendy Rule and other big Pagan names. See p.7.

Australian OBOD member Billie Dean has made a wonderful DVD, featuring our chosen Chief, there's a timely warning from the Mayans, regular columnist Julie Mills invites us to share our rituals with the ancestors and we have our finger on the international Pagan pulse with a lively report on the immensely successful first International Celtic Gathering in Canada.

And much much more. Read and enjoy!!!!

Have a BLESSED Beltane

wyverne/1

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

Subscriptions *** Free on-line as a pdf file from:

www.serpentstar.wordpress.com.

For a paper subs. send \$10.00 (in Oz), \$12.50 (NZ & Pacific) \$15.00 (rest of world) in Australian dollars made out to

v o wyverne to PMB2 Angaston SA 5353 Australia or use Paypal.

PLEASE DO NOT MAKE OUT CHEQUES TO SERPENTSTAR.

Nellie can't bank them without a lot of explaining.

Contributions are eagerly sought at above addresses.

Please make sure your contributions do not violate copyright laws.

Opinions expressed in SerpentStar are contributors' own and not necessarily the opinions of the editor or of the **Order of Bards**

Ovates and Druids. Printed at the Swan Reach Area School library with a lot of very kindly help from school librarian Leanne.

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FREE OFFER

DON'T MISS IT!

IT'S YOUR BIG OPPORTUNITY!

See your work in print!

You can become a contributor to Serpent Star, see your work in print

and gain valuable experience—all for

!!!!!!FREEEEEE!!!!!!

Poems and Stories, Artwork and Photography, News and Links of Interest to SerpentStar readers.

Children's work especially welcome.

If it's not your own work, make sure it doesn't violate copyright laws.

Links

Order of Bards Ovates and Druids: <http://www.druidry.org/>

One of the biggest, liveliest sites with many interesting pages, a regular podcast and a very active message board where OBOD-ies and friends can freely discuss everything from casting spells to honouring the ancestors. All free, with some members-only forums for special interest groups within Druidry.

The Druid Network:

<http://druidnetwork.org>

An interesting site with many pages full of stimulating and relevant information, Good message board. For druids serious enough about their Druidry to pay for it—for a reasonable subscription rate you get something a little more serious and committed—plus a regular Newsletter that's well worth the subscription. Welcomes Druids of all paths.

Druidic Dawn:

<http://www.druidicdawn.org>

This is livening up to become one of the most exciting websites of its kind, actively working towards harmony within the various Druidries world wide. Membership is free by invitation. It's free newsletter, *Aon-tacht*, which is an Irish word meaning 'Unity' is rapidly becoming one of the liveliest and informative Druid e-zines. Truly engaging, gutsy discussion on the forums.

In the Trees

<http://www.conjure.com/COG/PPPA.html>

Great forums, plenty of potential, well worth a visit. Great work from Unikorn, well known NZ Druid.

Southern Hemisphere witches and pagans: <http://www.conjure.com/COG/PPPA.html>

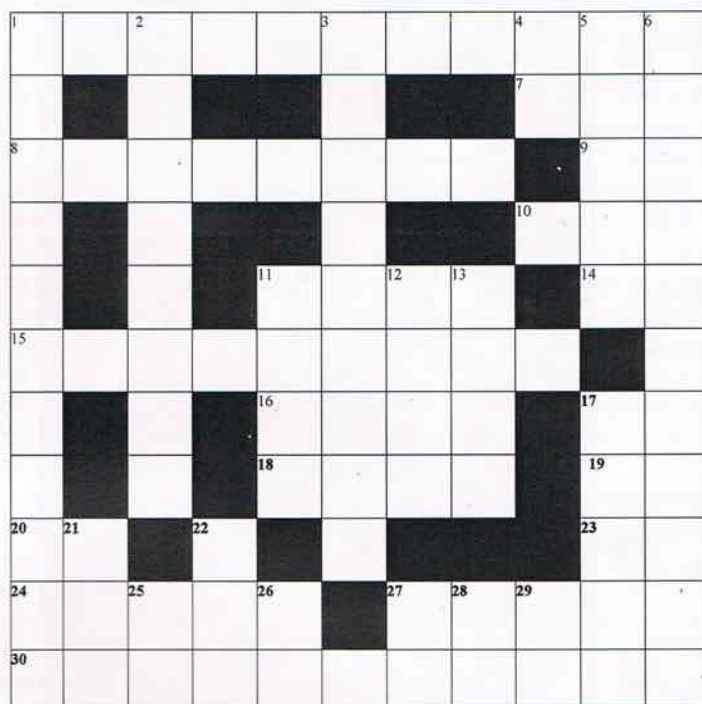
This site gives a list of links for Southern Hemisphere Pagans.

The Ancient Ways

a NON-PROFIT organisation and Community Service established to support, advise, and provide pastoral care for Alternative Spiritualists, Buddhists, Pagans and Heathens in the community, including those in Hospitals, Hospices, Nursing Homes, Tertiary Institutions

<http://ancientways.org.au/>

Crossword Puzzle



Clues Across

1. Rules
7. Cooking vessel.
8. Ocean Spirit (3,5).
9. Thank you (slang).
10. Egyptian god.
11. Torn.
14. Spanish for 'yes'.
15. Sharing of minds.
16. Volcano.
17. For example.
18. Expired.
19. Long-playing record.
20. Whether.
23. Depart.
24. Aristocratic.
27. Irish hero.
30. See the universe in a . . . (5,2,4)

Clues Down

1. Enjoying country life.
2. Grandpas' wives.
3. Genuine.
4. Cry of pain.
5. Jottings.
6. Winter sports arena (7,4).
11. Regretted.
12. Three times three.
13. Frog-like amphibian.
17. The famed _____ marbles.
21. On behalf of.
22. Boy's name.
25. Egyptian soul.
26. Printer's measure.
27. Belonging to.
28. Has existence.
29. South Australia (initials).

Anthology & CD of Southern Hemisphere Bardry.

Contributions now being sought.

It's six years since our last anthology, Southern Echoes, appeared. It's still a refreshing read - we Southern Hemisphere Bards have vital, vivid voices. There are more of us now, and our talents are developing, so let's give them an airing in a new Southern Hemisphere anthology. This is also a call to singers, songwriters and musicians, story-tellers and actors for our first ever CD. Send a selection of your best mp3s, cassettes, CDs or whatever of music, poetry and performance to me, wyverne, at wyeuro@bigpond.com, or send it on snail-back to SerpentStar C/- Wyeuro, PMB2, Angaston, SA 5353, Australia. and we'll see about getting up a CD to showcase our best talent.

This Sacred Earth:

The 2012 Phenomenon



In a time of uncertainty OBOD member Billie Dean, brings a film of hope and inspiration to the world.

The prophecies of the Mayan end date of December 21, 2012 have intrigued me and called me since I first heard about them at a gathering of herbalists in the bush, over a veggie meal of potato pancakes in 1978. Very little was known about it and like today, wild and ludicrous theories were bandied about.

What I did know in my heart was that I wanted to be one of the one of the so-called 144,000 Rainbow Warriors who would help bring about the prophesized golden era of peace. This was the Hopi Prophecy. This was the end of time as we know it, and the launch of a new time. But what it looked like, nobody knew.

I left that lunch knowing that no UFO was going to lift me off the planet I loved, and that I did indeed love this planet very deeply. To not take 100 percent responsibility for our stewardship was something I couldn't fathom. In the lingo of the day, we called the UFO scenario, a "leaving pattern".

Was the new world a hologram? Was it all a furphy? Did one have to "believe" in Jesus to be saved and who were the supposed "good people" who were going to survive?

In 1987, I found myself filming the Harmonic Convergence in Glastonbury, which was the "official" beginning of the New Age of Light. We were all filled with such hope for the future at a time when World War III seemed to loom on the horizon. And since that time, the spiritual awakening around the planet has definitely quickened.

Channelled works abounded on the subject of the Ascension, which was still filled with mystery and misunderstanding. In the early 90s I was asked to write about the coming Earth Changes by some Native Americans who had come to Australia to find the safe places. But at Jinta Jungu, an indigenous peace conference envisioned by Grandmother Twylah of the Seneca Wolf Clan Teaching Lodge, I met an Elder who told me "there's no safe places, only safe people."

That made me think. What is a safe person?

While I was figuring out what it took to be a safe person, I was also listening to the messages of the animals and the natural world – and watching for signs.

Walking my dogs one morning I came across a dead owl lying in the paddock. My immediate thought was that it was a bad omen. The spring sky was blue and I let the feeling go with the gentle breeze. But the dogs drew me back to the owl on our way home from our run, and I shuddered involuntarily.

That night I watched on TV as the twin towers fell. It was September 11, 2001. In the panic that followed I realised we were well and truly into the time of prophecy – a time it was said – when people would "thrive in faith and love, or die in fear."

This Sacred Earth: The 2012 Phenomenon was a delight to make. It is filled with practical wisdom from the 17 wise people from all

calls "the Golden Agents".

A safe person in this time of troubled change, is one who has done their spiritual work. They have faith. They are in love, not fear.

I look back at that time of

The 2012 Phenomenon isn't about a date on an ancient calendar. It's about something far bigger. It's about the truth of what that date really means. If our species is to survive, then we have to change and change now. The pressure put onto humans is like a pressure cooker – or a birth canal. One either grows with the challenges, learning to make life a spiritual art form, or one flounders. We are being asked to grow up as a species, and become the peaceful people of prophecy. We are what Celtic Scholar Dr Geo Athena Trevarthen



Billie (front left), John and Karen.



Billie with a rattle.



BILLIE DEAN

Billie Dean is Australia's most acclaimed animal shaman, the author of *Secret Animal Business*, and the co-producer and director of *This Sacred Earth: The 2012 Phenomenon*. You can find out more about Billie on

www.billiedean.com

and you can find the DVD of the film at www.thissacredearth.tv

terror and realise that the magic of the 2012 Phenomenon had begun its work on me because suddenly I started talking urgently and loudly about the need for peace. I began to step up.

Peace isn't something you can just mouth. You have to embody it – with your every action and thought. Because peace isn't going to come to a world in turmoil, unless people follow their hearts and live without violence in thought, word or deed. Revenge does not belong in a world of peace.

As an animal shaman, someone who focuses their healing and gifts on the animal kingdom, I take the need for peace even further. Because if there is still suffering amongst our brothers and sisters because of our actions, then there is no real peace.

So I speak about a vision of a predator-free world. A world in harmony where humans and animals live in mutual reverence and respect for each other. Where humans are connected back to the natural world, and life is in balance.

With the power of our imagination and thoughts, we can have a future that is one of beauty or not. When we watch the news, our minds are filled with horror – and on that other level of powerful consciousness, we create more of it, simply through the focus of our attention.

This is what pushed me to make *This Sacred Earth: The 2012 Phenomenon*. I wanted to make a film that would give people hope and a vision of the future – a world of peace. Because the more people who thought of a world of peace and beauty and connection to the natural world, the more likely we were to get one.

While we are filmmakers by profession, this was not a film the industry was interested in funding. However that didn't deter us. I wondered why people fussed about money when the future of our species was at stake. It doesn't take much to look at the planet and view humanity with the greatest despair. We have been on the brink of self destruction. I wanted this film to help change that.

I was delighted to film the head of the Bards, Ovates and Druids, Philip Carr-Gomm not once but twice. The first time was in his office in Lewes, and the second in Wales. We chose the Wales interview, simply because it was so beautiful there, and we wanted the film to be beautiful. Both times Philip's down-to-earth wisdom was a valued contribution to a film about the future, about connecting to nature, and about hope. "Turn off the television," Philip advises and he also talked about the need for living more simply. I re-read Thoreau after we spoke. As we all know, Philip is an inspiration. And he shines in this film.

These are also the messages from our animal friends right now. According to them, the television unbalances their people, especially the news and other violent programs. My own dogs, sensitive to the tension in our bodies, won't let these kind of programs be watched at home. They don't settle. If we watch something gentle, they all fall asleep.

The animals also echo Philip in the need for living more simply. Many people view taking the dog for a run as a chore. The dogs see it as their duty to get their people outside, reconnecting with the natural world. Sadly their message is missed by many.

There are 17 wise people in *This Sacred Earth: The 2012 Phenomenon*. Each brings their own flavour to the film which won a standing ovation at rough cut stage in Perth earlier this year. The 2012 Phenomenon isn't about a date in the future. It's about now. Today. Tomorrow, and the next day. It's about doing our spiritual work to make sure we embody peace in every sense of the word, so we can become the instruments of peace needed for our own species survival.

The other exciting thing the film explores, is the quantum leap in evolution that is another part of the prophecy. The Inka call it the return of the children of light. Medical anthropologist, author and shaman, Dr Alberto Villoldo dubs this new human, which is you and me, homo luminous.

He says our future will be as different to this as we are to Neanderthal man. And that's got to be exciting. Imagine being a fully realised human being in a world of peace and harmony.

This Sacred Earth: The 2012 Phenomenon was a delight to make. It is filled with practical wisdom from the 17 wise people from all over the globe, including Australia. It is not a technical film about the galactic event of December 21, 2012. It is a heart-felt film about what we can each individually do to make the prophecy of the time to come a reality today.

May it bring peace and beauty to your soul.

Story by
Billie Dean.
Photos supplied by
Billie and
Andrew Einspruch



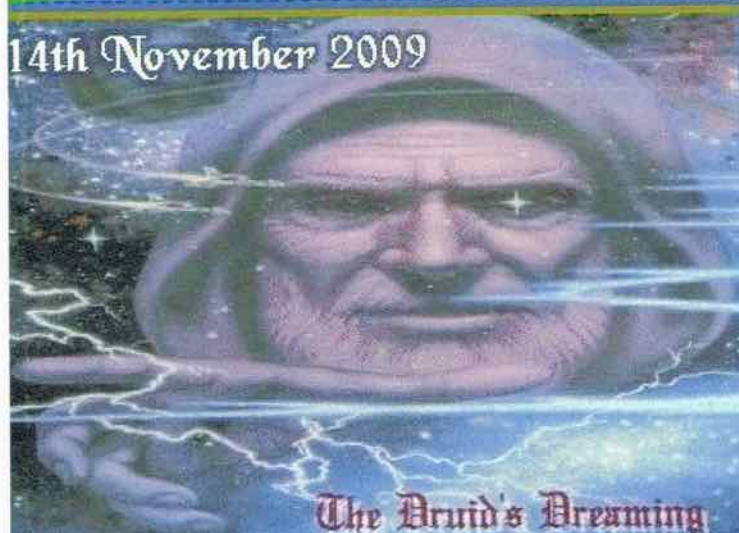
Dr Alberto Villoldo



Damh the Bard

Come along and experience!

14th November 2009



Tickets NOW on Sale

Damh the Bard

Wendy Rule

Lizzy Rose

RavenWolf

Burn'Collect

White Rhino

Black Knight

and so much more....

<http://druids-dreaming.net.au>

Disclaimer

It has been widely assumed that this Festival is solely a Pagan Festival. This is NOT the case. This Event is representative of many Spiritual & Cultural beliefs and paths. People who classify themselves as Catholic, Christian, Taoist, Hindu, Buddhist, Ecclectic and yes, Pagan are involved in this Event! This is a Celebration of Diversity and Australian multi-culturalism.

Michael Lee-Price
Event Director

in the Adelaide Hills!

OBOD'S favourite Bard is coming to Australia from England shortly to appear at the

Druid's Dreaming Medieval Fair

to be held at Mylor in the Adelaide Hills on the

14th November 2009.

It's a full-day cultural event, celebrating cultural diversity in a uniquely Druidic way, with the best Pagan music, market stalls, plenty of good food and a great family atmosphere. Commencing at 10:30 am with

Welcome to Country

followed by Pagan music and fun all day. Damh's appearance is scheduled for 8:00 pm, and Wendy Rule at 9:00 and the Grand Finale will bring the day to an



**Much, Much
More . . . INCLUDING**

yes, folks, your humble
editor, **me!!!!!!**



Billed as

wyldwyverne

I'll be making my debut performing
ballads and folksongs with a
medieval flavor to the tune of
my trusty guitar.

**Come along and sup-
port me on the day.
11:30 am**

November 2009

Mo	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
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A Druid's Diary

with Julie Mills

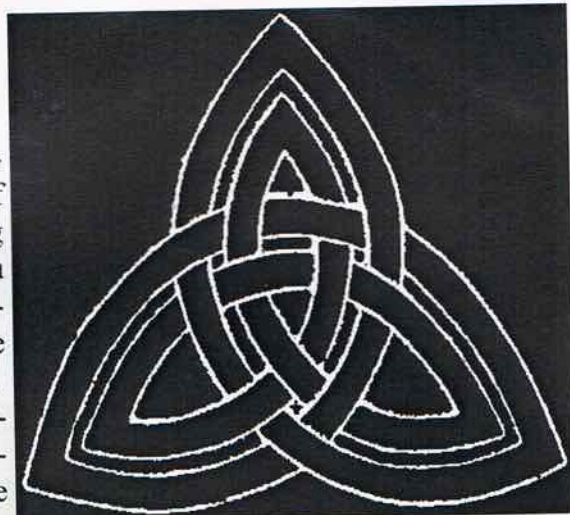
Making it Personal – the triad of ancestors.

I was once told in my training that when we acknowledge the ancestors we should consider three different types:

- those of our bloodline
- those of our tradition
- those of our land

I have found this triad of ancestors to be incredibly inspirational in finding balance in my own practice of Druidry, and I hope that by sharing my understanding of it, you might be able to do the same. Wherever you are in the world, this way of thinking about the ancestors can help you to understand more fully the unique nature of your own experience of the world as a Druid.

The Celts revered their ancestors a great deal, remembering their feats and adventures in the tales and mythology, some of which survives today. People were deified and turned into gods and goddesses, their actions exaggerated and used to find deeper understandings of the world through mythological symbolism. Their adventures turned into moral tales giving us guidance in our lives. These ancestral figures can be important to us as inspirations of how to live, but there are also our closer personal histories.



Many people, Druid or otherwise, find that exploring their family tree gives them a great sense of their own personal identity. To understand where your family members have come from, their lands and the stories of their lives you might like to do this yourself. Think about how where your ancestors have come from might influence who you are today? You might like to find out more by looking up the meanings and histories of your family name. Where were the people from? What is the language background? What occupations did they have? What are the traditions of the lands they come from? You might find things out that you couldn't have imagined.

The importance of the ancestors of our bloodline can be particularly important for Druids if you are not of Celtic heritage. You may feel that you want to incorporate gods and goddesses or stories and beliefs from another religious or cultural path into your Druidic studies and practices. This is of course perfectly acceptable as there are many paths to the source, and a varied cultural approach can make for an incredibly interesting and inspiring ritual life!

This brings me to the ancestors of tradition (which I also understand as 'inspiration'). We do not have to be of the bloodline of a particular culture to be inspired by it and to be able to use it in our practices. I myself have used a wonderful Shinto waterfall purification ritual as an inspiration, changing it to suit my own beliefs and names for the processes and energies. Druids are inquiring people and many have varying interests in many of the world's spiritualities. To include these ideas in our rituals can help us to expand our understanding and express who we are and what we are inspired by. Many Druids are inspired by traditions such as those of the American Indians, Hinduism, Buddhism, Shamanism, and so many others.

The third kind of ancestor is those of the land. I think this is the most important of the three, as it makes us acknowledge that our tradition is one of connection with nature. Acknowledging the ancestors of the land means that no matter where we are, we should honour that place, it's history; it's spirits. For those of us 'down under' I think this is really important as it makes us aware that we can't just transplant a northern hemisphere tradition into the southern hemisphere and expect it to feel right. There has to be a connection with the local ancestors of the land too.

*we can't just transplant
a northern hemisphere
tradition into the south-
ern hemisphere and ex-
pect it to feel right. There
has to be a connection
with the local ancestors of
the land too.*

Learning more about the spirit of your local area can be a fascinating process and deeply enriching to your practice. In the last two issues of Serpentstar we have explored native animals and plants, their energies and divinatory symbolism. Learning more about native plants and animals and the seasonal cycles of the native forest is a fantastic way to attune with the ancestors of the land and honour them in our practice.

Another way is to learn more about Indigenous culture: learning to respect and acknowledge the wisdom of the people of your own area. Even simple gestures like acknowledging country at the beginning of your rituals can be a great place to start. And incorporating Indigenous myths can be especially enriching to ritual, especially outdoor ritual as so many of the stories are related to specific landforms. Here is a way of welcoming the three ancestors that you might like to use in your rituals:

We welcome the ancestors of our bloodlines,
Those who have gone before us
Whose spirits dwell within us
Without whom we would not be

We welcome the ancestors of our tradition
Our inspirations, our muses, our awen
Whose spirits have guided us here
And made us who we are today

We welcome the ancestors of the land
The spirits of those who have been here before
us
Those who hold the stories of this place
Who protect and nurture the energies here
We welcome you and ask for your blessings in
this rite.

I hope that you find inspiration and balance in working with the ancestors in this way. Different people will have very different paths following this guide, but it can help us all to recognise our individualities in following a unified principle. Where one person might find that all three ancestors lead them to Celtic inspirations, another may find that the only place Druidry is relevant to them is as a tradition – but it's all Druidry! It's all about making it personal and expressing your own unique place in the world through your spiritual practice.

A WOMAN DIVINE

A woman is so divine

She bides me her time

And coyly says she is mine

If I can pass the time

When she and I unwind

A newborn life is thine

Ascending and marking time

As the child unwinds

We are to age combined

She bides her time

To tell me she is mine

Our lives are then entwined

The child is hers and mine

She brings it into line

And it is quite refined

For she is so divine.

mandragora



Inbóle's many blessings are here at last. The long cold winter is drawing to a close and the early signs of spring are visible all around us. This is a time of new beginnings, to take a fresh look at our lives, to see new opportunities, and to give ourselves and our communities a healthy rejuvenation in the blessings of this vitalising time of the year.

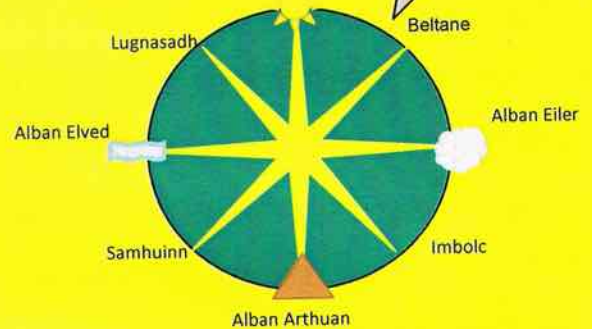
Bealtaine

Bealtane is for many of us the happiest time of the year. A time for working industriously motivated by the promise of rewards to come. The seeds we've sown in the past months have sprouted and grown and put forth flowers—beauty and joy for the bees and butterflies. This is a time of high fertility, for the pollination of crops and the increase of flocks.

And it's the best of all times for being in love.

It's not always practical to run our herds and flocks between two fires for ritual cleansing, but one can stand for all. Lead a representative animal or carry a kid, lamb, foal or calf, or your favourite chook, duck or bantam between the fires.

**We are
here!**



*Fires for purging, smudging and smoking,
Fields of plenty, flocks a-grazing,
Time for working, dancing, joking,
by Belinos, Beltane's amazing!!!!*

**Now's a time to
direct our prayers and
the energies of our rit-
ual magic into the prac-
tical productive work-
ings of our world...**

industry

ecology

economy

Greeting the New Gods

Southern Hemisphere Druidry is different. As the spiral turns and we rediscover our own true spiritual path as it comes to light after the long, troubled night, it does make a difference where we are. If we find ourselves still in our ancestral lands, sometimes the ancient spiritual paths are not far removed from surviving physical paths in field and forest. The stones our ancestors raised and venerated, the roads they travelled, the descendents of the trees they walked among, and many of their sacred wells and fountains are still there, often as entangled and obscured with legend and myth as they are with ivy and moss. Even the country and townspeople are likely to have evolved as part of that land.

When we find that ancient spiritual path calling us back to it although we are now living in lands far from that of our ancestors, it's a very different thing. We have to rediscover our magic through books and the internet, or make trips overseas to soak up and store and share as much experience as can be crammed into a few weeks for future reference. Some of us might sometimes feel not very authentic, and yet we know we're Druids. How then, can we begin to manifest our Druidry in our adoptive lands.

We find no roads or landscapes that are truly our own, that ever belonged to our own direct ancestors. The wells aren't our own, the sacred places belong to people we're only beginning to get to know. Most of us, knowingly or not, take our inspiration from Amergin, and as a matter of respect we introduce ourselves to the spirits and gods and ghosts of our

adoptive land, perhaps in a special ceremony in our circle. We recognise that our new gods need to understand who we are and what we're doing with our circles, our robes and wands, and our awens. Here's Amergin's famous poem, according to legend, the first poem uttered by a mortal in Ireland, by Amergin as he first set his foot on the beach.

Duan Amhairghine

Am gáeth tar na bhfarraige
Am tuile os chinn maighe
Am dord na daíthbhe
Am damh seacht mbeann
Am drúchtín rotuí ó ngréin
Am an fráich torc
Am seabhac a néad i n-aill
Am ard filidheachta
Am álainne bhláithibh
Am an t-eo fis

Cía an crann agus an theine ag tuitim
faire
Cía an dhíamhairina cloch neamh
shnaidhite

Am an ríáin gach uile choirceoige
Am an theine far gach uile chnoic
Am an sciath far gach uile chinn
Am an sleagh catha
Am nóma tonnag sírthintaghaív
Am úagh gach uile dhóich dhíamaíní

Cía fios aige conara na gréine agus
linn na éisce
Cía tionól na rinn aige, ce an gladh na
farraige,
cor i n-eagar na harda, na haibhne, na
túatha.

Amergin's Poem

I am wind over the sea
I am a flood across the plain
I am the dord of the ocean tides
I am a stag of seven tines
I am a dewdrop dropped by the sun
I am a charging boar
I am a hawk, my nest on a cliff
I am a poet of high prestige
I am beauty of flowers
I am the tale of knowledge.

Who is both the tree and the lightning
striking it
Who is the dark secret of the dolmen
not yet hewn

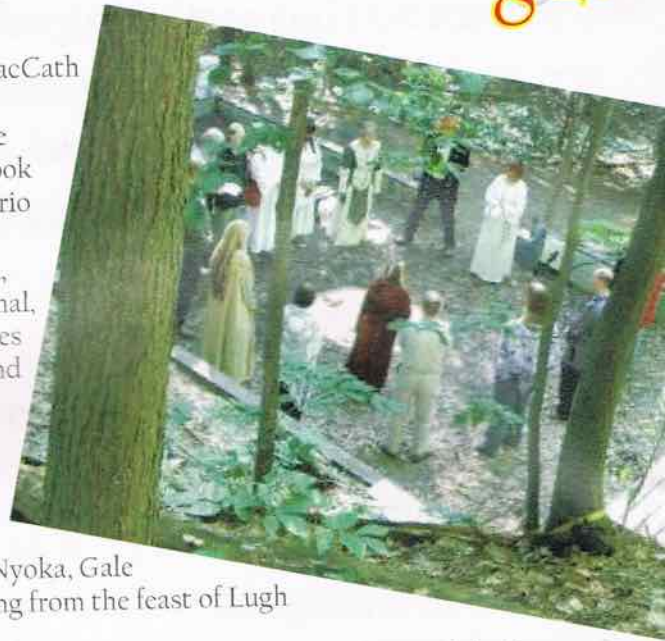
I am the queen of every hive
I am the fire on every hill
I am the shield over every head
I am the spear of battle
I am the ninth wave ever-returning.
I am the grave of every vain hope

Who knows the path of the sun, the
periods of the moon
Who gathers the divisions, enthralls
the sea,
sets in order the high country, the riv-
ers, the peoples.

The International Celtic Gathering 2000

By: C.S. MacCath

The first International Celtic Gathering, organized by Faye Boyd, Nigel Dailey, Kevin Howard and Marija Kuncaitis took place at the Mansfield Outdoor Centre in Mansfield, Ontario Canada over Lughnasa weekend, July 31st to August 3rd. Three countries were represented in its attendees; Canada, the United States and Wales. The facilities were exceptional, providing beds, meals, hot showers and three hundred acres of woodland for ritual, hiking and campfires. Faye Boyd and Kevin Howard coordinated the event on-site and secured sound engineering for the workshops and the eisteddfod, while Nigel and Caryl Dailey saw to the spiritual needs of the gathering through readings, ritual and workshop planning. During the weekend, presenters Donata Ahern, Nigel and Caryl Dailey, Ceallaigh MacCath-Moran, Gail Nyoka, Gale Park and Brian Walsh offered workshops on topics ranging from the feast of Lugh to shamanic journeying.



As with all such gatherings, Friday evening was for the renewal of old friendships and the forging of new bonds. After participants arrived, received room assignments and dropped their luggage, they drifted into the common room for hot coffee, tea and conversation. The lights dimmed. Nigel and Caryl took the microphone, and after a few words of introduction invited attendees to draw a card from the Druid Animal Oracle to represent their path into the gathering. Then Caryl led a contemplative candle ceremony that served to attune participants to the spirit of the Lughnasa season. Afterward, conversation resumed for a time until the hour grew late and the common room emptied, person by sleepy person.

Saturday
woods at a spot
graffiti on the stone
suggested layer
gatherings over the
welcome energy
participants. The
ted land, sea and
celebration of
also welcome.



began with an early breakfast and Faye's opening ritual in the
clearly reserved for campfires. Colourful

borders of the space
upon layer of youth
years, which was a
for many of the par-
ceremony itself knit-
sky to ritual theatre in
Lughnasa, which was
Afterward, I presented
history of the Celtic
teaching of a Gàidhlig
cepts of the world tree

a lecture on the
languages that culminated in the
song. Nigel was next with a comprehensive lecture on con-
that explored the idea across time, culture and cosmology. After lunch, Brian married Celtic cosmology,
storytelling and meditation with his lecture entitled 'Into the Valley, and Donata taught a participatory
medicine wheel workshop that encouraged attendees to stand, stretch and pray. Early in the evening, Gail
brought her theatrical expertise to participants through warm-up exercises that facilitated communication
and community and then unleashed the host to enact one of four Merlin tales. The day was rounded off
with an eisteddfod of poetry, storytelling and song both well-
performed and well-received. On Sunday, Caryl led participants
through an exercise in laughter and then lectured on the benefits of
magic for the process of self-seeking and individuation, encourag-
ing magical people to keep their own counsel first. Gale followed
with a thorough discussion of dream work that included sugges-
tions for remembering dreams, keeping a dream journal and lucid
dreaming, then led participants through the process of group
dream interpretation. In the early afternoon, Donata facilitated a
guided shamanic journey, which encouraged travellers to find





their own personal dragons. Later, I taught an introduction to the bodhrán workshop that included information about the drum and the rhythms of Celtic music along with the rudiments of bodhrán technique. Brian rounded off the evening with a lecture about the feast of Lugh and another tale from Celtic cosmology. A bonfire followed with conversation, storytelling and song, lasting well into the evening as the bright moon rose behind the trees. Monday morning, Gale's closing ritual encouraged participants to speak about the good they had received at the gathering. Afterward, Monday brunch offered participants the opportunity to finish conversations and exchange contact information. Nigel and Caryl took the stage again and invited everyone to draw a departure card from the Druid Animal Oracle, and then it was over, and the participants were on their way to separate destinations.

As with all sacred gatherings, the intimate details of ritual and spiritual exploration belong to the time and the place in which they were experienced and so are not a part of this writing. However, the overall spirit of the gathering was one of camaraderie and deep spiritual exploration. It was a fellowship that provided the fertile soil for friendship. It was a place of shared knowledge and growth in the safe company of fellow seekers. It was an international gathering of druids, and it is my sincere hope that it will be the first of many.

C.S. MacCath

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Spears of Destiny

By Mandragora

My fingers roam the page
As I write in this age
Never given to rage
I write on the page

My thoughts they are entwined
As my fingers combine
To write and to rhyme
In this age of our time.

My hands are now entwined
To seek out a rhyme
There is a shakedown on the line
In space and in time

Our lives they are entwined
And on paper combined
In the rhythm of time
And the manifestation of the mind

PLANET EARTH

THE ORB OF LIFE

All we have done is create divisions and wars amongst ourselves.

Since its formation by mind projection into material matter, that is, thought projection by the creator—as in thought, so materialisation—it has given home to a myriad of life. The only one that threatens its existence is man. We are using its blood, which is oil, and the substance of its breath, which is natural gas. The earth is a living organism in the universe. If it was dead matter nothing could live on it. We are not meant to use its blood and breath, which is vital to it. If we deplete that, it cannot live—and neither can we if it dies. Nothing will grow on earth and without growth there will be no oxygen for surface life.



As predicted in the Maya calendar, this civilisation is to be destroyed in the years 1012-2013. This happens every 12,000 years in such cycles. That is what has wiped out civilisations in the past.

You are only allowed 12,000 years to get your act together and we have failed that and by the same time, almost destroyed the planet. We are the only civilisation that is using its blood and breath for our own use. I cannot see that to be allowed to go on past 2012. Also, we have not united ourselves on earth. All we have done is create divisions and wars amongst ourselves. The belief in Jesus can do nothing for you, in this life or any other. You are only worshipping a mortal man who could not even save himself.



You have five deities to contend with:

- 1. the creator 2. the Christ 3. the free living psyche*
- 4. anti-matter which is satanic 5. the earth.*

Links

Unless we change our act we have little to look forward to in our narrow-minded beliefs.

THE REAL MAYA PROPHECIES: ASTRONOMY IN THE INSCRIPTIONS AND CODICES

<http://members.shaw.ca/mjfinley/mainmaya.html>

Mayan Prophecies and Calendar <http://www.crystalinks.com/mayancalendar.html>



The Melbourne Assembly

PROGRAM OUTLINE

FRIDAY APRIL 23

- Arriving and settling in at Cú; lunch available from 12
- 2 p.m.: Introducing our special Speaking Staff and introducing ourselves tell us briefly what are you passionate about*
- 4 p.m.: Lighting the Assembly Fire and conducting the Opening Ceremony
- Dinner at 6
- Informal bardic 'free for all' in the evening

SATURDAY

- Breakfast at Cú
- Speaking Staff: general housekeeping + plans for the day
- William Rickett's Sanctuary
- Lunch at midday at the Hamer Arboretum
- Bardic Grove in the Birches (including an Initiation Ceremony)
OR clay-play nearby
- Walk to Rowan and Alder Groves
- Back at Cú Vendors set up stalls and talk about their wares (expanding on your passion*)
- Dinner and Eisteddfod
(Theme: Pan –an opportunity to dress up and tell us about your favourite aspect of Pan)

SUNDAY

- Breakfast at Cú followed by the Speaking Staff
- Ovate Grove in the Yews (including a Croning Ceremony) for Ovates and Druids
OR Excursion to Gembrook (market – local produce, arts & crafts)
- Lunch at midday, ovates meeting up with the those who went to Gembrook
(Druids will lunch near the Oak Grove)
- Druid Grove in the Oaks (including an Initiation Ceremony)
OR a Play about Pan: story told and plans developed
- Dinner and Play Presentation
- Skype link-up with Philip Carr-Gomm in the evening

MONDAY APRIL 26 (a public holiday for Anzac Day)

Breakfast at Cú

9 a.m. - Speaking Staff: The Winding Up Circle

Followed by Closing Ceremony at 11 and extinguishing the Assembly Fire

12 – Lunch and farewells

A walk has been planned for those who are staying on for a while

For further information contact Vicki Minahan at faster28c@yahoo.com.au PO Box 858 Cockatoo 3781 or Elkie White at whitelk@bigpond.com PO Box 404 Ferntree Gully 3156

The Red Wattle Bird

vyvyan ogma wyverne

A red wattle bird came and perched on a tree
In the garden so gay on a morning in spring
Though the weather was fine and the air fresh and free
Oh his song was as sad as a bird's song could be!

For he gave a great cry and his body was wracked
By the harsh, hacking sobs that came out of his beak!
Oh it gripped him, this grief, oh it wrung and it
hacked
Til his whole soul was in it! I then heard him speak:

"Oh I see by your size and the set of your head
And your legs long and straight and your arms
swinging free
That you are not a bird, you're a human," he said,
"It's a very good thing that you're listening to me.

For I want you to know, ye who sorrow and grieve,
That there's sorrow enough in this poor, suff'ring earth
And there's sufferers enough, if you'll only believe,
To shed all the tears that that sorrow is worth.

Do you see on each cheek these long wattles so red,
Running down from each eye for all people to see?
They are tears—tears of blood - that I constantly shed
For the woes of this world as I flit tree to tree.

They're the tears of the world, of the lonely and sad,
And the sorrows of lovers betrayed and forlorn,
And the pity and grief for the sick and the mad
And the tied and tormented, the tortured and torn.

So now you may rest—leave the sorrow to me,
With my constant red tears and my great racking sob,
I'm far better at it than you'll ever be
And what's more, I *enjoy* it—I should; it's my job!

Then he spread out his wings and he fluttered and flew
And he plundered the honey from blossom and bloom,
Then he sobbed and he cried and he bade me adieu,
And he stole—without asking—my misery and gloom!

So list to his song, O ye people of earth,
To his harsh, sobbing cries that so often are heard,
Our job's to be happy—all pleasure and mirth.
Leave sorrow and gloom to the Red Wattle Bird!



CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS

1	R	E	2	G	U	L	3	A	T	I	4	O	N	6	S
	U		R				U				7	W	O	K	
8	S	E	A	W	I	T	C	H			9		T	A	
	T		N				H				10	S	E	T	
	I		D			11	R	E	N	13	T		14	S	I
15	C	O	M	M	U	N	I	O	N					N	
	A		A		16	E	T	N	A				17	E	G
	T		S		18	D	I	E	D				19	L	P
20	I	F		22	A		C						23	G	O
24	N	O	B	L	E			27	O	I	29	S	I	N	
30	G	R	A	I	N	O	F	S	A	N	D				

DEE-SIDE CATTLE RAID

This is probably as close as you'll ever get to a real live Celtic cattle raid—and maybe as close as most of us would want to get. Tempers flared in those days and lives sometimes went cheap.

This vivid, sharp-edged glimpse of old Celtic life preserves the passion and bitterness of the original event, a fairly orthodox cattle raid, a frequent enough happening if the books tell us the truth. A cattle raid was a symbolic act, with the carrying off of the Baron's cattle being symbolic of a bid for possession of his houses and lands, and perhaps even his wife. This Baron's baby son's vengeful spirit would have been found valorous in those days.

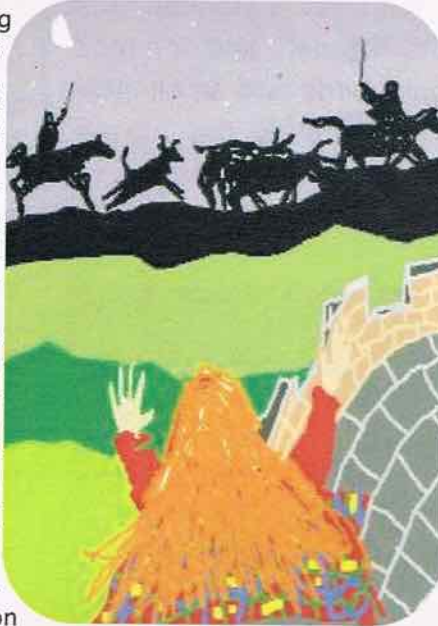
Peggy's scorn and fickleness might seem quite different seen from different political perspectives—she does seem to have found release from what was obviously an unsatisfactory marriage. Who needs a weak, ineffectual husband? With all their courage and savagery, strength and weakness, once real people like you and me, these characters live on for us here in this old traditional song.

Best of all, it's a song full of authentic ancient voices echoing off cold stone walls, cutting through the chill night air, voices full of scorn and anger, sarcasm and scorn. You can see the flash of steel, hear the clangour of hooves at the castle yetts, feel the fear and scorn and outrage of that ancient time.

You can get also a sense of the politics of the time, a time when an organised gang of thirty men could end a dynasty in a single night of daring, times of shifting alliances and steadfast loyalties too, times of treachery and deceit, vengeance, moral indignation, scorn and towering pride, cherished tradition and jealous rivalry.

There's 'mirth in the ha', and we can imagine the laughter ringing through the candlelit halls and corridors of that castle, and yet we can share also the 'grief in the kitchen', and feel the spirit of rage that was once brewing there. These were our ancestors, the old Celts. These are events from their lives preserved for us like ancient insects in resin. Here we see everyday features of their lives and their deaths, their reality, the world they lived in.

Lessons we learn easily these days were hard-won to them. We see them here grappling with it, and we see the constantly increasing results of their ultimate triumph in that struggle for peaceful, civilised local politics as much in our own genes as in our societies and civilisations of the 21st Century worldwide. These old songs are their legacy to us, so we'll know them.



*By Dee-side came Inverrai, whistling and singing,
And he's down to Brackleys' yetts ere the day's dawning
Saying, 'Baron o' Brackley, O are ye within?
Here's sharp swords doon at your yetts will gar your blude
spend.'*

*Oh rise up, my husband, and turn back your ky!
Young Inverrai's Duine Wassails are driving 'em by!
'Oh how can i rise up and turn them again?
For every man I hae, wae's me, he hae ten!'*

*'Oh if I had a husband the like I hae nane,
He'd no lie in his bed and watch his ky ta'en!
Then up spake the Baron, saying 'Gie me my sword—
There's no a man in Scotland but I'd tak' at a word!'*

*There rode wi' false Inverrai fu' thirty and three.
Along with the Baron just his brither and he.
No gallanter Gordons did e'er the sword draw,
But against three and thirty, wae's me, what is twa?*

*When the Baron was busked tae ride
over the close,
No gallanter Gordon ever rode on a
horse,
Saying 'Kiss me, ma Peggy, dinna think
me tae blame,
For i maun gang oot, lo'e, but i winna
win hame.'*

*With swords and sharp daggers they did
him surround
And they pierced his dear body with
mony a sair wound. . .
Frae the banks o' the Dee, tae the sides
o' the Spey.
The Gordons will mourn him, and we'll
burn Inverrai.*

Part 2

*'Oh cam' ye by Brackley's yetts? Cam' ye by there?
Saw ye his Peggy, a-reeving her hair?'
'Oh yes, I cam' by Brackleys' yetts, I cam' by there—
And I saw his bonnie Peggy. She was mak'in' guid cheer.*

*She was dancing, she was laughing, she was ranting wi joy!
And she swore ilka night she would feast Inverrai!
Oh, she talked wi him, dined wi him, danced wi' him, then
Lay wi' him till morning—he that slew her guid man!'*

*There's grief in the kitchen, there's mirth in the hall,
For the Baron of Brackley lies dead and awa'
And then up spake his young son from his nurse's knee
'Gin I graw tae be a mon, it's revenged he'll be!'*

Kids Page

Junior Bards:

Beltane is a good time to **do things outside**. Here's how to make a **wind flute**.

You need a heavy **wooden board**, a **nail**, and a plastic **bottle** with a lid. Get someone to cut a **narrow slit** in the bottle with a sharp knife. It can be about **half a centimetre** wide and eight to ten centimetres long. Then nail the lid of the bottle **upside down** onto the board. Screw the bottle onto the



lid so that it **stands** upside down on the board. Place this outside on a **breezy day** and turn it until the wind is blowing over the slot. It will **begin to play**.

In nice breezy weather this flute will **play tunes happily** all day. You can turn it as the **wind changes direction**, or leave it set up to play its tunes whenever the **wind blows** from its usual direction. You can add other bottles of **different sizes** to play different **melodies**. Just make sure all the slots are **turned** the **right way** to catch the **wind**. Which bottle plays the **highest notes** and which one plays the **lowest**?

Young Ovates:

Animals and birds are easy to see and it's good to see them **wild and free** in their **natural habitat**. But without the trees and grass and plants around them, **they would die**. They'd have no food, no **shelter**, nowhere to **hide from predators**. That's why **ovates** observe the plant world too. They know that our **poor sick world** needs to be healed, and that that starts with **habitat**. Habitat just means **'home'**, and for most animals, birds and small creatures, **'home'** is the **trees**, grasses, bushes, **lichens and mosses**, and plants of all kinds.



Just noticing their **shapes**, smells, textures and colours **helps plants**. Best of all, it prepares a young ovate to learn about all the **plant medicines** in the wilds, which ovates use for healing and **magic**. The **fairies** will be watching you, and if they love they will help you. They love people who are **respectful**, **kind-hearted** and **truthful**.

Budding Druids:

The old druids used to make a **magic potion** using **mistletoe** and other ingredients. Mistletoe is a **plant parasite**



that means a **plant** that grows on another plant. A bird eats **mistletoe berries** and the seeds stick to its beak. The bird then **flies** to a tree nearby and wipes them off onto a **branch**. When a seed sprouts, the root goes into the tree branch and begins to feed on the **sap of the tree**.

If this tree is healthy, the mistletoe may **bring great benefit** to it, **paying it well** for the sap it takes. But when the tree is sick, old or **weak**, sometimes the **mistletoe** gets too much for it and it may die.

We've forgotten the **recipes** the old druids used. It's very **dangerous** to use mistletoe in potions unless you **fully understand** it, because many kinds of mistletoe are **poisonous**. That's why most druids these days only use **living sprigs** of it in rituals and we do not usually eat them or **brew them** into **potions**.