

SERPENT STAR

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



*Cold winds still blow fallen leaves
Warmth of hearth, smoke spiralling through bare oak trees
First stirrings rise through winter's shroud
Here in the land of the long white cloud.*

IMBOLC 2018

Welcome to the Imbolc 2018 issue of SerpentStar!

Blessings of Brigid to my kin...The first snowdrop has bloomed! In NZ at least, thanks to Ady for our cover pic this year, and also in Victoria - thanks to Kath for the pic from her garden below :)

In this issue we have a special double dose of seasonal wisdom from Michael Vlasto, whose Samhuinn submission spent extra special time with the postal faeries before reaching me after the last issue came out. We also have Part 2 of Chris Pingel's fascinating talk on Druidry & Modern Physics, Part 1 of a tale from Wyverne, exciting news about Assembly 2019, more artwork from the ever-prolific John Jordan and poetry from Kacey Stephensen and Geoff Warren.

And around we come again to Assembly 2018, has it been a year already? Details on this year's Assembly are on Pages 3 and 4, and a little bird told me it may still be possible to attend (if you call Tracy and ask really, really nicely...)

Those of you who are attending, I look forward to your submissions for Beltane SerpentStar ;)

See some of you next week!

With love

Mandy / |\

SerpentStar, Imbolc 2018

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

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Submission guidelines and subscription info are available from serpentstar.druidryaustralia.org/about

Follow us on Facebook - search "SerpentStar"

Enquiries via email: serpentstar.obod@gmail.com

All opinions expressed herein are solely the contributors' own.



OBOD in the Southern Hemisphere

Groves & Seed Groups

The following are groups currently listed on OBOD's official Groves & Seed Groups List for 2018 and have consented to have their information included in this list. Other groups run by OBOD members are listed in the Advertising section.

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 and you can see our profile on Facebook 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 for details.



The Golden Wattle Seed Group

The Golden Wattle Seed Group are an OBOD Seed Group in Adelaide, SA. We hold ceremonies for the Wheel of the Year, nature walks, meditations and other rituals for peace and for the land. If you would like to get in contact with us, email us at golden.wattle.seed.group@gmail.com or connect with our Facebook 'Friends of' page: search Friends of the Golden Wattle Seed Group (OBOD).

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). 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

Macademia 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

The Melbourne Grove

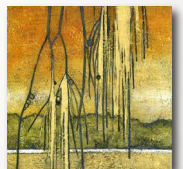
Welcomes all OBOD members (local, interstate and overseas) to its seasonal celebrations. Family and friends may also attend with a member and receive a warm welcome. In 2017 we will be celebrating the seasonal festivals on the following dates: Lughnasadh - Jan 28, Autumn Equinox - March 24, Samhuin - April 28, Winter Solstice - June 16, Imbolc - July 29, Spring Equinox - Sept 23, Beltane - Oct 20, and Summer Solstice - Dec 23. If you would like to join us please send an email to Elkie at whitelk@bigpond.com or Fiona at Fiona.mulholland@bigpond.com

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

The Windharp Seed Group

Based in the Adelaide Hills in South Australia and named after the She-oak or Casuarina, also known as a Windharp. She-oaks are known as windharps because of the mystical sound they make when the wind breathes through the knotted leaves - a soft music like that of the Aeolian Harp. We are a learning group who gather to celebrate the eight seasonal rituals of the wheel of the year and study together. We also hold various shared events and ceremonies that non-members are able to attend. Contact Tamzin Woodcock or Adrienne Piggott windharpseedgroup@gmail.com



Wollemi Seed Group

Nestled between the mountains and the sea, Wollemi Seed Group covers Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and the Greater Hunter Region. Rich with flowing rivers, fields and natural beauty, we meet fortnightly to explore the depths of the Bardic and Ovate paths. We meet for each of the festivals, and invite all interested in Druidry and the love earth to join us. For information, contact Rollick on 0423 626 290 or bonsaidruid@yahoo.com.au

Useful websites for SH OBODies:

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 and spread the word!

OBOD Worldwide

www.druidry.org - Official site of the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids

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

Druidenstein (German) www.feuersprung.de

Dryade (Dutch) www.obod.dds.nl

Il Calderone (Italian) issuu.com/ilcalderone

Menhir (French) issuu.com/obod-menhir/docs

Ophiusa (Portuguese) www.obod.com.pt/ophiusa.htm

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 and complete the application form. Any suggestions on how the service can be improved are welcome.



2018 OBOD Assembly

*Proudly hosted by the
Golden Wattle Seed Group S.A.*

When: 10th-14th of August 2018.

Where: Glenhaven Park Campsite, Stockport S.A.

*For more information and bookings please head
to the website at: www.druidryaustralia.org/assemblies*

Email us at:
golden.wattle.seed.group@gmail.com

For all other inquiries ring:

Tracy Hamilton-Breed - 0447878688

2018 OBOD Assembly Workshops/Lectures

Awen: and the power to change hearts and minds through creative musical expression with Adrienne Piggott (Spiral Dance) and Kacey Stephensen (Bard)

In this explorative and experiential workshop, Adrienne K Piggott from Spiral Dance and Bard Kacey Guy Stephensen will guide you through theory and discussion on the creative flow of song writing. By singing the Awen together we will compose a song as a group. A great workshop for those looking for inspiration on their bardic path.

Wisdom of the Trees with Julie Brett

The meanings and uses of trees and plants are important in understanding the magic of any land. In this workshop Julie will guide the group in a discussion of the traditional ogham trees and lead us on an oracle walk looking at native plants. This will encourage self-confidence to learn about your local trees and begin or continue the practice of collecting a set of ogham sticks for divination.

Alexandra Tanet (author of 'Living Witchery')

Alexandra will be discussing the similarities and differences between Druidry and Witchcraft as she has experienced them, through her practice as a Wiccan and Druid.

Fencing with Inspiration with Samantha Travis

Sam will bring to light how the art of fencing fits into her Bardic practice.

Working with Sacred Sound with Lesley Gentilin (Raf)

This will be a wonderful experience as Lesley helps us to deepen our practice through working with Sacred Sound in a toning circle.

Deep Listening with Amanda Meadows

Developing the art of listening to the stories of the land and her custodians.

Storytelling & the Great Awen with Michael Vlasto

As we are seated around a glimmering fire, Michael will talk to us about opening up to Awen and Storytelling. This workshop will inspire, and lead into some wonderfully spontaneous offerings for the Bardic Circle that follows it.

Herbal Medicine & the Four Elements with Kate Broderick

This workshop will include discussion and herb tasting experiences to learn about how the four elements are represented in the energies of plant medicines, and how we can use commonly available plants to bring our body-mind-spirit into balance with nature and the elements. There will also be a bit of history, related to how European herbal medicine was practiced according to the four elements for more than 2000 years.

Nourishing the Body as a Practice for Healing the Earth with Kate Broderick and Unanyntji

The body is the Earth, the breath is Air, the blood is Water, movement is Fire. We can see our current culture in many ways destructively uses and abuses the earth and the body beyond the point that is healthy or sustainable. This workshop will look at nourishing the body in different ways as a practice for healing the Earth. We know that our care for the Earth ultimately supports our human health. Let's look together at the mirror perspective and learn how caring for the body ultimately supports the health of the Earth.

Samhuinn & Imbolc

with Michael Vlasto



What do I write about the three days of **Samhain**, which in the South goes from April 30 to May 2? The amount of knowledge is huge! It is like trying to describe a mountain, or the clouds in the sky. There is the surface shape, such a tiny part. Then there is the inner, hidden bulk. There are all the words written by others over the last 5000 years, which sit like rocks, trees, or animals around the mountain sides. So people describe one small gully, a grove, a cave, or the shape from the southwest on an Autumn evening. All important aspects, when put together, but disjointed on their own. Indeed, there are as many opinions of this great fire festival as there are cats in Australia!

So for my own point of view I look at the balance between the Northern hemisphere, which at this time of the year is Spring - flowers, maypoles, dancing playfully, fertility - and the Southern hemisphere, which is wild winds, grey skies, bare trees, flames and shadows leaping wildly around the circle, and death.

So as the wild hounds and the great huntsmen gallop across the sky, we bring Mr James Practical into the house, settle him in his chair by the fire, add another log to the orange tongues as they stretch elegantly upwards, pour a wee nip of the fine amber and give it to Grandmother Imagination. The rocking chair squeaks, the story begins, Mrs Rat (in the corner by the kitchen cupboard) puts down her rind of cheese and listens. The winter has begun, let us climb into the bucket and descend into the well of remembering...

We drop past the sign of 'All Hallows Day', past 'All Saints Day', past 'All Souls Day', past 'Guy Fawkes Night', and on into the pitch black deeps of the Underworld. As we descend, please consider this article from the 1993 factsheet of the British Pagan Federation, found in *The Stations of the Sun* by Ronald Hutton:

"Dressing up as monsters at Hallow'een allows children to come to terms with the unseen and sometimes frightening world of dreams. This is a recognised form of Play Therapy which helps balance the developing personality. For adults as well it is a time when conventions relax a little. Adults too can dress up and play at fancy dress parties and take pleasure in firework displays and other childhood delights. It is a time when tricks and games can be played. It is a time when adults and children can reach out to touch the realms of myth and imagination which are so important for the maintainance of mental health and creative wellbeing. Hallow'een has many faces and means many things. Rooted in a Celtic Pagan past it preserves the age old custom of an end-of-summer feast. It should not be feared but welcomed as a time to help children and adults come to terms with their fear of change and death. It should also be a time for celebration, stories and games; a time for laughing in the face of adversity and for challenging the darkness of winter."

So the bucket reaches the bottom of the well, we step out into the world of the Cailleach, a world of a softer light, a different sky; who is waiting here to greet you? Please be polite! This is the realm of the Ancient One: she who is made of the earth itself; the hooded one cloaked in mist; she of the dilly bag; collector of all that needs to be left behind; she of the piercing eye that sees all, forgives all, remembers all; eater of greedy attitudes. So think deep what question you ask her, let her come deep within and take what you offer. Accept her gift with thanks then return up the well to the time of chaos, where order and control are tipped upside-down. It is the time when the unexpected washes us, and we do not mind.

This is the season when water descends into Earth. The Grail pours its elixir back into the mother so she can be renewed, the old wounds are healed. The start of a new year, with a clean slate. Because at this point on the Wheel, as we stand in the southwest and feel the balance of water and earth, we feel the start of the power of manifestation which comes into its full power on June 21 - the longest night.

Now we begin to need signposts as we walk into the unknown! So we turn to divination, telling the great myths for this time of the year, meeting the Shining Ones, meeting our ancestors so we can ask, "Which way should we go? And why should we go at all?"

All these festivals of the Wheel are in our DNA, so I believe the greatest crime we can commit is to block, or to refuse, the impulse of their calling.

So light your fires, put garlic on the window ledge, food on a plate, drink in a cup, and invite Great Uncle Albert to come in with as many friends as he chooses. Then tell the story of the Cailleach and the Pooka.

Let us begin this study of **Imbolc**, or the 'end of winter' which leads straight into the 'beginning of spring'. A festival which starts with a celebration and a simple feast, probably just bread and butter. Where a 'Dolly' or a 'Biddy' decorated with ribbons, shells and flowers, was left in the ash beside the fire with a wand of Birch and a little cot made of rushes. So when the great Goddess Brigid passed by she could rest for a while, and so bless the house with a sign.

She who is the goddess of learning, poetry, healing, prophesying and metal work, the provider of plenty, a friend of all animals and the whole natural world; but also let us not forget - the battle goddess, and patroness of armies.

This ancient festival, which is even mentioned in the tale of 'Chulainn and Emer', seems to have a lot to do with milk - the time when 'ewes are milked at Spring's beginning', This was followed the next night, once the house had been blessed and purified, by the night of 'Candle-mas' - the start of the season of Purification, or Lent in Christian culture, which is a celebration of 'the returning of the light'. The renewal of light in the dark time of the year. So everyone would have a new candle and bring it to the feast. Here it would be made sacred by being blessed by water, and by incense, and by blessing, then by carrying it round the sacred stone; afterwards it could be lit to ward off storm, sickness, or put into the hands of the dying. It had the power to drive darkness from the afternoon, make the first flowers appear, and the first buds upon the trees.

So what does this time of the year mean to us now, in this hectic world? The answer to this is go within, and let those ancient ones who guide us all teach.

Please consider the Blackbird in the North and the Lyrebird down here in the South, both birds of the gateway between the two worlds - this world, and the subtle twin world where many races more races live and which we do not see in this realm. Both birds have a very clear call at this time of the year, calling us through the gate, urging us to use our skills in both worlds, not just one.

The calling of the Goddess, for this is her great festival of the year, means we must infuse ourselves with magic, we must really believe and so know that we are truly blessed. Then the Shadow Ones - the children Deceit, Misery, Blame, Ruin, Lies, all of the family of Doom - are banished from our lives; and all obstructions break and fall, as the gatherings of winter's stagnation and darkness flee from us. A cycle is set in motion which will last until this time next year, when we will renew it again, remembering the wonderful year just past. So we start the cycle of good intentions, which when directed at others can only enhance our own life.

This is the time to make offerings of simple food - milk, bread, honey, and salt - to nature for a good year. It's also the time to settle old quarrels, because if they are carried forward for another year they will only get bigger.

We now come to "Why now?" Let us consider the wisdom of the letter 'E' - the Aspen tree, the whisperer, the tree that bestows willpower to overcome problems and doubts, that gives self-confidence, the great shield tree. It is also the stick to measure the year with, or the exact 40 days after Mid-Winter. The beginning of the year can be observed by farmers, druids, kings, or merchants with an awareness of the land and the seasons to come. Will they be early or late, mild or harsh? Will they bring flood or drought? Observation with awareness will always show you the patterns for the year to come.

Now is the time of the first signs of Spring; whales migrate north, housemartins gather to gossip on the edge of the roof. The wind one moment old and savage, hurling curses at all, the next mild and gentle, brushing your cheek with a kiss of flowers. So it is easy to see the maiden escaping from her prison of winter - the chase, the re-capture, then the new escape.

It is the time when food gets low yet sheep are having lambs, geese are laying eggs, and Bride is walking across the stars in her cloak of blue with an edge of silver fire. She stops, she has heard our call, she looks, and where her glance falls there rises the first snowdrop, poking shyly out of the wooded ground while she listens to our prayers and our needs. Her mind is now happy, as we are honouring her. She grants our wishes.

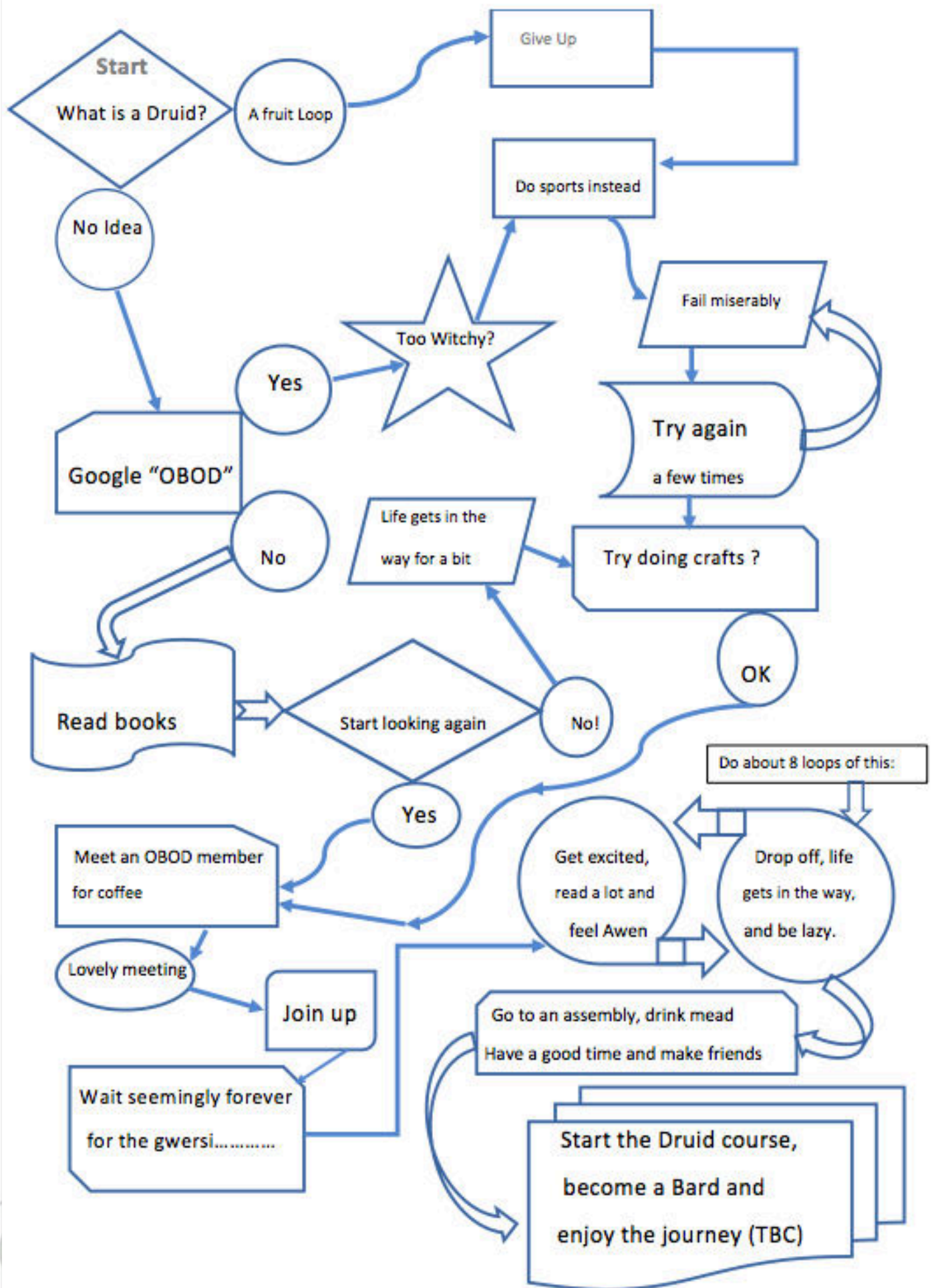
This fire season is also the time when the stone of destiny and generosity meets the sword of light and clear-mindedness. The time of the sword in the stone when the man or maiden must draw it forth. The question being: is each one of us clear enough in our own innocent intent to draw the sword from the sacred heart of our own mountain?

This to me is the essence of Imbolc: the time to honour the feminine, to call to Brigid, to float candles on water, to create a poem and sing it loudly, to watch the flame turn into a sword of light that spreads all over the world, to dig the garden, plant some seeds. The tie to measure your dreams.

This is how we clear the children of Morose or Doom out of the way, so our sacred responsibility to Mother Earth can be activated.

A Bardic Flowchart

by John Jordan



The Path to Elfland Pt 1

by vyvyan ogma wyverne

In a corner of my orchard while I was watering a favourite apple tree a few years ago I was inspired by what at first seemed a mere whim to build a path. I saw it clearly in my mind's eye, the little flat stones I would pave it with, the wide curve it would cut through the grass and weeds, the point where it would branch from the main path, and the shady place under a gnarled old peppertree that it would lead to.

And I smiled.

Because I 'knew' that no one would ever be able to walk on it, and even if they could, it would take them nowhere, or only to where they could never stand up, because it would end under low-hanging branches that reached to within thirty or forty centimetres of the ground. The path would end up there because the fallen pink berries among the bronzy-brown mulch had made a pretty, beaded carpet over the ground, aromatic and cool and inviting. I felt I'd like to stand there, if only I were small enough.

I must admit that as I imagined the path I had imagined tiny people using it, and I thought of Norse elves, or Cornish pixies. And I checked myself there, wondering if projecting visions from my own imagination might obscure any genuine perception, and even offend elves, for example, who might be observing me - they are said to be touchy - and might prefer me to forego these entrancing fictions in favour of clarity. After decades of dedicated effort, practicing austerities, meditating conscientiously, and cultivating a close connection to the land, I knew I was getting very close to seeing, and had been supernaturally chidden more than once for wafting off into fantasy when I should have been paying attention.

And yet I couldn't resist. I kept sensing little people there and it seemed to me they were elves.

I finished watering and went inside where I had more important things to do. But I didn't get much done. I felt tired and dull-witted so at last I lay down on my bed and fell almost into a doze. Fell? No. I was pulled into it as if by a strong magnetic force. Once there I felt weightless, afloat, disconnected - the trance-state in which the visions they call 'hypnopompic' occur. I felt my thoughts wander over the day's activities and they drifted to the little path I had planned. I saw it plainly, in the perfect clarity of a dream-vision but wide awake albeit with my eyes closed, in its finished state, all the little flat stones in their places, the route I had planned skirting the drip-line of the apple tree, leading to that magical little place under the pepper tree.

And that's when it happened. The shift was subtle and quick like a trick of magic swift and sure when I saw the elf. His mind took hold of mine and easily held mine in thrall, very real, very serious, talking not in words but by telepathy. He told me it was their path, that they had induced me to imagine it because they wanted it built and that he and his ilk would use it. It did not join the main path but started in a little garden of stones beside it. In this garden was a brick with steps going up to it on which two elves might stand, to make contact and perhaps be seen. Elves are among the easiest of our fairy neighbours to see.

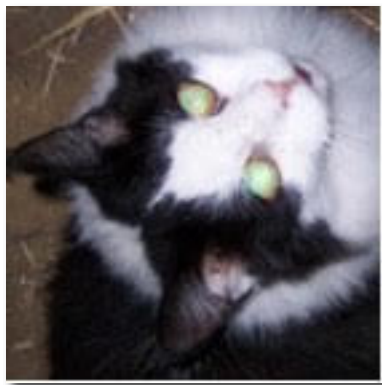


Up to this point, still resting with my eyes lightly closed, I clearly saw the elf standing in a landscape I could not easily see and could not recognise, but as he talked of the path and my mind followed his telepathic explanation of it I saw that he had it ending at the same sort of platform made from two bricks which he described as what I called a 'landing pad'. These were bricks I knew well, which I'd never found a use for because they were cemented together in a solid block which was difficult to fit into any project of mine.

I understood by now that this path was not just a charming whim, not just for fun. Furthermore he was not just asking for it. In their world, it was already built, and I and the materials were now being inexorably fetched to the task. He told me that he wanted people to recall and know again what we once as a race knew – that we have a common destiny with the elves, a commitment to reconnect and know each other as we had known each other in the distant past. The health and prosperity of both our peoples depend upon it. He told me a lot more, using the telepathic technique so often employed by extradimensionals of all kinds, dropping into my mind a lot of information that only filtered into my consciousness over a period of months, as I began work on the path. He explained that the metaphysical path between earth and Elfland is a path that can be walked, and that someday both elves and humans must walk that path. If elves are sometimes angry with us it is because we tend to refuse to believe, and so with few exceptions we are not preparing ourselves to do so, ridiculing the few who do see as soon as we speak out.

It is a rational pathway, not irrational or transrational, but perfectly mathematically logical and viable. There has never been anyone who can walk it, except in dreams, hypnopompic trance, and other forms of out-of-the-body experience and it is unlikely that anyone will ever achieve it in our time. We have to learn the magic that will enable us to walk along such paths, disappearing from the earth and appearing in Elfland, seeing earthly landscapes giving way to elvish ones as we go. We must be aware, he insisted, that it is in our destiny to do that, and we must be preparing now, orienting our evolutionary path towards it. If we defy our destiny the tension becomes unbearable and amounts to pain and ultimately destroys the health and prosperity of both races.

In closing I must acknowledge the assistance of Hannah the black and white cat, in facilitating this communication. Cats are great facilitators of the fairy sight. And I must also mention that while I was hand-writing the first draft of this article her successor, Tessa the tabby cat, was on my left knee while I balanced the book on my right, and she purred all the way through...





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."

**|WE ARE LOOKING YOUR WAY
18TH OBOD SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE ASSEMBLY
FIRST TIME IN AOTEAROA, NEW ZEALAND
17th to 22nd January 2019**

**Proudly hosted by
The Grove of the Summer Stars
With special guests Philip and Stephanie Carr-Gomm
And Eimear Burke!**



Eimear Burke, Pamela Meekings-Stewart, Philip Carr-Gomm
Glastonbury 2018

The venue is booked, the Heads of Department for various tasks have been appointed and we're practicing our *haka* of welcome!

The Grove of the Summer Stars now has a website with lots of information about accommodation, meals, costs, etc. for SHOBODA19 (Southern Hemisphere Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids Assembly 2019!!)

<https://www.groveofthesummerstars.nz/shoboda-2019>

The Booking Form, Payment Information and Programme will be up soon but, in the meantime, please go into the website and download the information pages. Put the dates in your diaries and, if possible, let us know if you're thinking of attending.

Expressions of interest, comments and queries to: pamela@thewoolshed.com

The Wheel of Segais

The Wisdom of the Four Seasons as a Divination Tool



We've packed the boxes, we've put on the stickers, calculated the postage and the Wheel of Segais Personal Reader Kit is now available to buy!

www.wheelofsegais.com

The divination kit contains a copy of the Wheel of Segais on which to do your casting; a Personal Reader Guide; nine hazelnuts for casting (plus a couple of extras in case you lose one or two) and a notebook and pen to record your personal reading,.

AND NOW: THE WHEEL OF SEGAIS READER TRAINING!

After a very successful Wheel of Segais tour in the UK, I am now putting together the video components for the **Wheel of Segais Be a Reader for Others Training**. Each participant will need to receive a Personal Reader Kit by mail before the on-line training begins, which will be included in the cost of the course, as well as a copy of the initial recording from May 2017. The further six recordings are being recorded now and I am researching ways that we can be interactive for some of them.

For more information: www.wheelofsegais.com/be-a-reader

The Wheel of Segais is a simple but profound template for understanding the innate nature of the universe and our place within it. It allows us to perceive all that we are and all that we need as we experience the turning of the wheel of the year - the Four Seasons, the 12 streams or stages and the Well of the Salmon of Wisdom, the Well of Segais itself, in the centre.

You can book an online reading or Life Coaching Session through my website
www.wheelofsegais.com

The Flowing of Water, The Love of Trees

by Kacey Stephensen

We share a lot in common with water and trees; Water flows through our beings as it flows through rivers; so too the waters of life flow through the veins of trees.

There she was, gigantic ancient Mother. Her crown way up high, big branches in the sky. Her Bees, taking a break from all their hard work and resting in her belly, inside the depths of her sturdy trunk.

Rain and flowing water overwhelmed my senses; cold and mud and the fresh smell of leaves releasing fragrant oils into the cleaned air. I greeted Mother Tree, I watched and looked as big drops came falling like gems from her soaked leaves and branches above. I felt her pulling me close; she let me rest into her embrace and I felt all this emotion rush over me. Going as fast as the cascading river was flowing just below.

She has seen so much, felt so much, learnt so much. I felt her sadness, as if she could finally release it all with the inevitable release that water brings. Her sadness was also joy, joy that she could share all this after such a long time, or maybe the first time with a human; heart to heart, friend to friend.

I feel such a bond with her, I feel the Nwyfre that we share, I feel the stability of it flowing through her but its more than that; I feel our friendship as a tangible force of it's own linking us at a distance; the spiritual thread that brings us together, that keeps me coming back and connecting and learning and sharing with her. A deep sense of friendship and of connection that I can feel within the depths of my being, that sings in my heart.

I looked up, big drops came falling down like beautiful clear gems with little universes inside of them. They fell from her soaked leaves and ancient branches on high, branches that you can only see if you bend your head right back and look straight up. These branches also house birds and animals, all sharing in the cleansing of water but sheltered from its constant downpour.

We healed together, I cried with her, I felt her tears land on my hair, my face, my clothes. I was soaked in the flowing emotions of Nature, of this beautiful and nurturing guardian of the forest.

She is Mother but she is more deeply Grandmother, for she has watched over this land and protected it for countless generations, for fathomless centuries. She cried with the tears of the emotions of water, the river flowed and all were the same process - flowing river, falling rain, flowing tree, emotional human. They were all part of one process, all were sharing in the clearing away of the old, releasing stress, releasing grief, healing...cleansing and being revitalised by the powers of water.

She flows, she responds to flow; she feels the changes of the land, the weather, seasons, animals, her interconnections and relationships that she has with other trees around her, with the fungal networks in the soil and forest leaves that share messages on the clear breath of wind.

I've learnt from her many things but this I will share - that trees are not merely individuals; they reflect and channel within themselves the movements of the weather, the stars, the sun, the essential qualities of the elements.

She tells me what my soul is feeling, in the same way as she expresses what the river is feeling or the air, the earth or the sun.

She takes in what the land is doing and translates it. Her memories, her spiritual awareness is intricate interconnected with all the goings on around her. She is her, but she is also expressing the qualities of everything.

May we let our hearts stay open to the feelings of trees, as they teach us ways to understand and work with our own feelings.

Rain and flowing tree called up in me my own tears, my own rain; because I was moved by the beauty of the moment and I wished that more people would feel the deep bond with trees as I do; to save the forests, to save the land. The same process of emotion in a dynamic way - flowing water from cloud into river, flower cloud of water onto tree, tree flows with water and the powers of water. This same process flows on into a person who is open and inspires a response within the one who connects with flowing tree and watery land.

Feeling, emotion, love, friendship, cleansing, revitalising. Tree and Human connection, sharing the fundamental connection of the spirited universe.

Water helps the flow of Nwyfre in our bodies and in the land. Trees sing with invigorated, refreshed Nwyfre with a big cleansing rain. Fresh water brings peace, brings clarity to humans, to the land and to trees. It is through the opening of our hearts that trees speak the most; it is through the surrendering of ego that we learn how to flow, like rivers flow, like trees flow.

Druidry & Modern Physics Pt 2

By Chris Pingel

*This talk originally given at the 2016 SH Assembly, Bribie Island.
Pic by Sandra (Druid, Macadamia Grove)*

Past, Present and Future: Which is Which?

"We are all aware of the psychological arrow of time, a subjective feeling that time flows mercilessly from the past to the future. Physicists also speak of a thermodynamic arrow of time along which physical systems invariably become ever more disordered. Perhaps the physiological arrow of time, measured by the aging of our bodies, is just a manifestation of this thermodynamic arrow of time. The expansion of the universe provides yet another arrow of time. The big question is whether, and how, these arrows are related to one another. In particular, we would all like to know how our psychological arrow of time comes about, and then, of course, whether we can reverse this arrow."

From Discover magazine October 1992



Einstein's famous theory of relativity showed that time flows at different rates for observers in different states of motion. This leads to a quandary. What do we mean by the present? If the flow of time is different for all of us then we can't all just check our watches and say the time. Watches do not synchronise. (For example, the flow of time at the poles is measurably different to the equator.)

Einstein wrote this to the sister of a dear friend who had just passed away: *"Michele has left this strange world a little before me. This means nothing. People like us, who believe in Physics, know that the distinction made between past, present and future is nothing more than a persistent, stubborn illusion."*

It is hard to believe that, as vivid as it might appear to us, our common experiences of the passage of time does not actually reflect a fundamental aspect or property of reality. Time seems to sit at the centre of a tangle of problems raised by a complicated intersection of gravity, quantum theory and thermodynamics. It is a tangle that physicists are still trying to unravel. Time is far more complex than our personal perceptions of it would suggest.

Not only is there confusion, at the level of physics fundamentals, about the idea of past, present and future, but even the flow of time is in question. *"[Physicists] have never seen hide or hair of an arrow of time anywhere in the fundamental laws of physics. Very strange, given that we see arrows of time all around us... physicists still haven't figured out the difference between past and future."* (Discover magazine ibid).

Given how these ideas challenge our perceptions of time I believe that it is easy for each of us to see how uniquely central we are to our place in the universe. My concepts of past and future, ancestors and descendants, and karma, may not be the same as yours. Particularly in meditation, where we can access the past and the future, meeting with those of our own bloodline, our tribe and the spirits of place, do we see perhaps why, in an altered state that these can all coexist. Time is not an arrow... what it actually is is not yet clear. But, as practitioners of magic have known for millennia, all points of time can be accessed at any moment. Perhaps with this knowledge we can see something of a link to the realm of metaphysics and our experiences of time during meditation may have a basis in quantum reality.

The Dual Nature of the Universe: Polarity

Where, in the fundamental structure of the universe, do we look to find the Goddess and the God, the divine feminine and the divine masculine? We see them in the flow of the seasons and the behavior of animals and plants. But are they accessible in the non-living world... the world of particles and waves?

I believe that we can, in a deep and profound way. I tend to use kabbalah's tree of life glyph to help me out here. If you are familiar with it consider the top three emanations: Kether, Chockmah and Binah. Also, above the tree are the three veils.

The three veils can be thought of as the emergence of the universe from absolute nothingness. I imagine it as the Big Bang. Right at the top is Kether, the fundamental urge of creation, the source of all things. To me this is nature in its broadest sense. Paths from Kether lead down to Chockmah on the right (the God energy) and to Binah on the left (the Goddess energy). Interesting to me is that there is a path that runs across the tree between Chockmah and Binah, completing a triangle. This last path shows that the God and Goddess energy are linked and are of equal importance. So, kabbalah shows us how nature naturally divided into the masculine and feminine aspects. As druids we see the duality of nature... it is fundamental to our beliefs.

Sometimes Chockmah and Binah are called force and form. Chockmah is the driving energy of creation and Binah is where the act of creation occurs. This tells us that everything in existence is either one or the other of these. Quantum physics essentially tells us the same thing and it is contained in the well-known equation of Albert Einstein's: $E=mc^2$. In this equation the E stands for energy and the m for mass. The equation is telling us that all things are one or the other, mass or energy. This equates to force or form. Creation of any sort cannot occur without a place for it to happen. A lifeless inert place cannot spawn creation... energy is needed for that. It also tells us that they are intimately connected. It tells us that energy can be converted to mass and mass can be converted to energy. This process is commonly taking place in all subatomic reactions such as the reaction in the Sun, radioactivity, nuclear power and the production of isotopes for medical use.

Is mass really just a form of energy? Is energy just a form of mass? The answer to this is not currently known. Or are they both essential and polar aspects of what we call nature. To me these two basic building blocks of the universe are the divine masculine and feminine.

In Conclusion

Quantum physics is not for the uninitiated. The concepts are not easy to grasp and they bear no resemblance to what we see in the world around us. The quantum world seems to defy logic in its mystery. And the mathematics it requires for its explanation are beyond the abilities of most of us.

Having said that we can, at least, in broad brush strokes get a feel for some of its very basic ideas... even if the details are beyond us. It is not too difficult to see how there exists little difference between what physics is uncovering and what mystics have understood for thousands of years. Only the methods of explanations and the techniques used vary.

I am proudly a second degree witch and also studying at the ovate grade. My background as a Physics and Science teacher has only ever confirmed my beliefs in an interconnected universe governed by the absolutely fundamental masculine and feminine principles. I see only agreement between my academic knowledge and my spirituality.

'Nature' Is What We See – With thanks to Emily Dickinson

*'Nature' is what we see—
The Hill—the Afternoon—
Emu—Eclipse—the Honey bee—
Nay—Nature is Heaven—
Nature is what we hear—
The Kangaroo—the Sea—
Thunder—the Crickets—
Nay—Nature is Harmony—
Nature is what we know—
Yet have no art to say—
So impotent Our Wisdom is
To her Simplicity.*



DAMH THE BARD

2019



SPONSORSHIP FOR DAMH THE BARD

Plans are afoot to bring Damh the Bard and Cerri Lee back to Australia in April 2019.

There will be a Sponsor's concert in Adelaide as well as a weekend camp over the Easter Long weekend 2019.

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The Wind Harp Druid Gathering 2019

The Wind Harp Seed Group of South Australia is excited to announce a 4 day camp with facilitators

Damh the Bard and Cerri Lee from UK and Kristoffer Hughes from Wales

The camp will be held over the 2019 Easter Long Weekend (Friday 19th—Monday 22nd April)

The venue will be in the peaceful and picturesque valley of Stockport an hour north of Adelaide

Cost \$350/person

\$100 Deposit payable at time of registration

Early bird discount of \$20/per person if deposit paid prior to 30th December 2018



*This event
will be
open to
anyone
interested in
Druidry*

Please email windharpseedgroup@gmail.com to request a registration form

IMBOLC

First of August
Imbolc day.
Spring is here
Mark the way.

The wheel turns
The land transformed
Follow the sun
We will be warmed.

Eggs in nests
Bridget's song.
Renewal
The days are long.

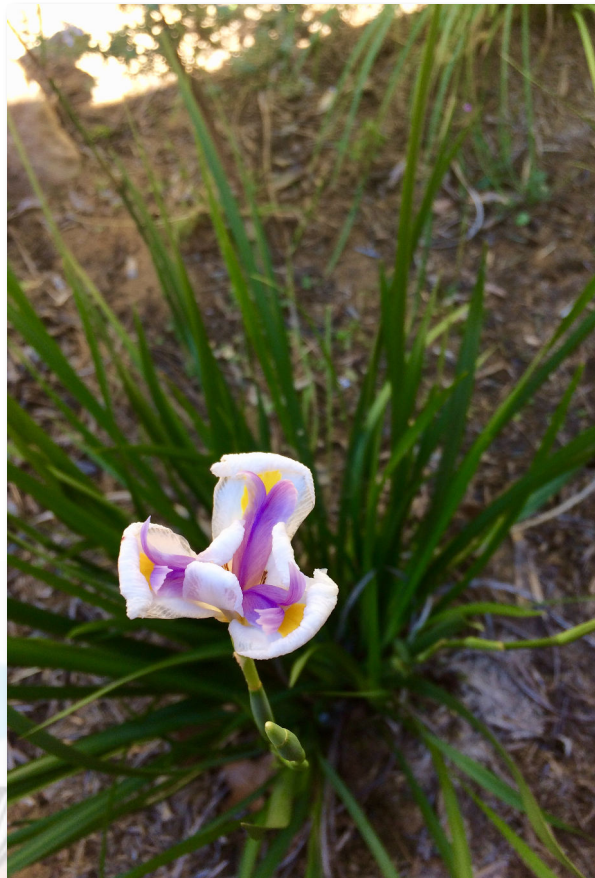
Celebrating
Together as one.
Looking forwards
To summers sun.

Imbolc day
A Druids task.
For peace on earth
We can ask.

Seed groups, groves
Open arms.
Using all
Our magic charms.

Reflecting spring
Starting new.
Sending energies
Like Druids do.

By Geoff Warren
Scribe for Kookaburra Seed Group OBOD.



Pic by Mandy Gibson

Triad

I'm a Druid
Through and through.
I'm based in nature
My magic is too.

I live my life
The way I should.
I celebrate
All things good.

My spirituality
Like water is fluid.
Like fire it burns
I am a Druid.

By Geoff Warren
Kookaburra Seed Group
Australia.

Introduction to the History Project

by Elkie White

The Australian Druidry History Project was launched at the Assembly. The catalyst for this project came from Josie Winter, who instigated the successful Pagan Collective of Victoria (PCV) which I have recently been given the honour of joining as a representative of OBOD.

Josie was asked to write an article for The Wild Hunt on *'Druidry in Australia'*, and needed my answers pronto. The first question was, "Tell me about the history of druidry as a spiritual practice in Australia?" Obviously I could not do justice to such an important question in 24 hours and so I offered to create a questionnaire for the assembly, with the view that if the interest was there, we could then extend it to other groups and individuals.

Well the interest was there, and I thank everyone at the 2017 Assembly for their support. I took four completed questionnaires home with me and have been receiving a steady stream of them since. A delightful trend has already emerged in regard to the question, "What do you think is distinctly 'Australian' in regard to druidry?" The responses have embraced not only the physical distinctiveness of Australia (soil, seasons, animals, plants etc) but also its emotional/spiritual distinctiveness (equality, tolerance, light-heartedness, humour, mateship etc). It will be fascinating to see how this develops.

Josie has decided to mostly leave the history question on the back-burner for now, but intends to put together a more thorough piece at a later date. I sent her a draft questionnaire to her for comment, and in response she alerted me to the need for facts and figures for the history nerds, and so I pass on her request, to you, for names, dates and places, wherever possible. I also sent a draft to David Waldron, who is a history lecturer at Ballarat University. David replied that it was a good questionnaire, and asked whether druidry was worth seeing as distinct to other pagan groups. And so I have included that query in the questionnaire. I sent it to OBOD HQ seeking their support and Philip suggested that we advertise it on the OBOD Facebook page, and in Touchstone, in order to reach more people.

For those of you who weren't at the assembly here it is, and you are invited to participate - please do! You can print the questions as here presented or, better still, write and ask me to attach the questionnaire to an email. It is in Word and thus very easy to edit, according to your needs. My address is whitelk@bigpond.com and I hope to hear from you.

Towards a History of Druidry in Australia: The OBOD contribution

Preliminary notes:

Welcome to the Australian Druidry History Project! The catalyst for this project came from several sources including Josie Winter's article for The Wild Hunt and Julie Brett's book on Australian Druidry. Through this questionnaire, you are invited to include your story and perspective. You do not need to answer every question but just the ones that you feel comfortable with or that you feel are important. It is only out of our personal stories that an authentic understanding of druidry in Australia can emerge. To save paper, the questions have been packed into one sheet of paper (**the next page**). To write more, simply cross-reference to additional sheets. If you prefer, send me an email and ask me to send you the questionnaire in Word format as an attachment. That way you can answer straight into the document.

Please return, with your responses, to Elkie: whitelk@bigpond.com by December 2018. Thanks.

Your name:

Email contact:

- Are you happy to be contacted in regard to this project?
- Please describe where you live: city/town/district/State/'Territory/general ecology
- What is your local indigenous language group/cultural tribe?
- Do you have any contact with them?
- Generally speaking, do you support the idea of writing a history of druidry in Australia?
- What value might it have?
- What should it include?
- When did you join OBOD?
- How far along the course are you?
- Why did you join? Why not some other druid group? What do you like about OBOD?
- When did you realise you were a 'druid'? And how did that feel?

What was your first OBOD experience in the SH?

- As a possible starting point to the above: when did you first meet another druid or member of OBOD? Describe that encounter.
- What do you know about the history of druidry in Australia? *This is a key question and so please answer it to the best of your ability. Single sentences and full essays are both welcome, and everything in between. Point form is also okay, but for the history buffs please include names, places, and dates wherever possible.*
- Would you be willing to research the history of druidry in your local area for this project?
- Are you involved in any other groups (related to your druidry or spirituality – including historical societies, other spiritual groups, environmental groups, social justice groups)?
- Do you see any link between the druidry that you practice today and the druidry that was practiced by the United Ancient Order of Druids in the early years of European settlement?
- Why do you think druidry is becoming more popular in Australia? What do you think people are looking for? Has this changed over the years?
- What do you think is distinctly 'Australian' in regard to druidry?
- Where do you see druidry in the future of Australia? Or, what do you vision for us in the future? Where would you like it to go? Can you relate your ideas to what druidry in Australia has been in the past?
- If someone asked you to specify what a druid is in 3 sentences, what would your 3 sentences be?

As members of OBOD we are not asked to be anything other than that. However some people attach the following words or phrases to druidry, hence the question: How comfortable are you with the following words? Please rate each from 0-10, with 0 being the least comfortable, and 10 the most comfortable.

- druid
- pagan
- eclectic (druidry)
- home-grown (druidry)
- "nature-based spirituality"
- the word 'religion' (in regard to druidry)
- Related to the above, do you think that druidry is worth seeing as distinct to other pagan groups?
- What further questions would you like to see included in a questionnaire about the history of druidry in Australia?

If your own story is not included in the above questions please feel free to write it on as many extra sheets as you like.



The 19th OBOD Assembly – 2020 – Announcement

The Melbourne Grove is delighted to announce that we have found a lovely venue for the 2020 Southern Hemisphere OBOD Assembly! It's booked already so that you can start planning. It will be held over the Anzac Day weekend, from April 24 to April 28 2020, in Gembrook, east of Melbourne.

Spiral Dance's latest album 'Land and Legend'
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| The Sheringham Mermaid / Bay of Soles | A Piggott / P Gooding |
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| Soul's Gateway | M Adamson |
| King Orfeo | Traditional |
| Dark Days and Heys / Tampered Twilight | A Miller / P Gooding |
| Elen of the Ways | A Piggott |
| Mallee My Mother | Wyverne Ogma Vyvyan |

Featuring:

Damh the Bard on Track 1 & 11
Wyverne Ogma Vyvyan Track 11

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THE GREEN ALBUM

Tuatha Dea and Nightsong Studios Presents:

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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

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Issued June 20, 2016

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



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Dr. Paul Salaman
Chief Executive Officer



Okapi

| | |
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| SJ TUCKER | MAMA GINA |
| BEKAH KELSO | MURPH'S |
| GINGER DOSS | MIDNIGHT |
| KELLIANNA | ROUNDERS |
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www.toddwilliamdearing.com
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0405 115 279

The Kookaburra Seed Group

Plant an acorn and it will change and grow into an oak tree. Here in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia a new seed group came into being in the beginning of April 2018. It called itself Druid Network Victoria. As well as being an OBOD study group, one of its aims was to invite people from other spiritual paths to come along to its public meetings and become friends of Druids. This networking proved to be highly successful. As the seed group evolved, it became more aware of its place not only as a study group but in the greater global OBOD community. Through consultation with its OBOD members the seed group decided to change its name to more reflect its current status and its future directions. Henceforth this seed group will be known as The Kookaburra Seed Group. For more information of the groups activities, celebrations, gatherings and meetings as it follows the wheel of the year, please contact the group's Facebook page. Or email: kookaburra.seed.group@gmail.com. The newly elected leader of this group is Maggie Stevens (OBOD).



Pic by Mandy Gibson

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



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/
for more details.





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- Help with an arid lands permaculture project – learn skills for self-sufficiency
- Flexible arrangements – either WWOOF for full food and board or be more autonomous as suits your needs.

For more details about our home and project visit <http://casaindomitus.wordpress.com> or contact Ngatina on wwoof@sylvanius.net or 0429795002 to discuss options.

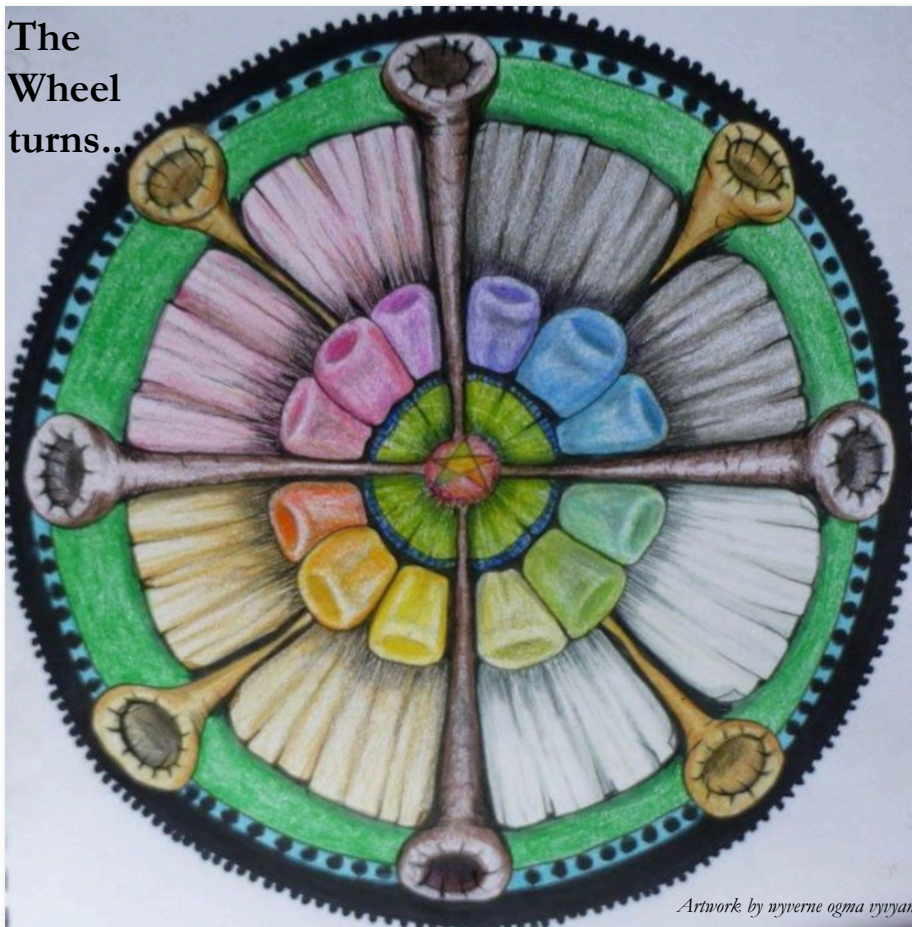


And finally...



Artwork by John Jordan

The
Wheel
turns...



Artwork by nyverne ogma vyryan

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 Brigid, 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

The deadline for contributing to the Beltane issue of
SerpentStar is 26 October.

The Beltane issue will be released on 31 October 2018.