

# SERPENT STAR

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



**LUGHNASADH 2020**



# Welcome to the Lughnasadh issue of SerpentStar!

Greetings All

There isn't much I can say that hasn't already been said about the last few months, particularly in Australia. Horrifying bushfires, storms and floods, loss of life, exhaustion, loss, stress, and the political turmoil that comes from a worn-out people who've seen first-hand the effects of climate change and are saying "Enough" in increasing numbers.

But there have also been stories of joy, hope, courage, and comfort. People have stepped up and shown their strength and heart in seemingly unprecedented numbers.

As druids, we are among the many who walk the path of both dark and light - seeing and working with both. This edition of SerpentStar is likewise a mixed bag of inspiration - some pieces directly reference the fire tragedy itself, others ponder the season as it turns. The Wheel continues to turn.

I hope you find comfort and inspiration, in equal measure, within these pages.

In peace  
Mandy / | \

## SerpentStar, Lughnasadh 2020

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

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

All opinions expressed herein are solely the contributors' own.



An update on the guava tree - she's looking good!

A reminder to everyone that SerpentStar now has a YouTube channel, which is hosting the DDUDE talk series from Druids DownUnder. I'd like to see other videos from OBODies on there as well though - they can either be linked to ones already on other channels, or we can arrange for you to send them to me for upload. Get in touch if you have a bardic video or a short doco you'd like to share in SerpentStar.

Search 'SerpentStar OBOD' on YouTube to subscribe!

# 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](mailto:southernbreezesfellowship@gmail.com) and you can see our profile on Facebook [www.facebook.com/Southernbreezesfellowship](http://www.facebook.com/Southernbreezesfellowship)

### The Cradle Seed Group

The Cradle Seed Group is based in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Group currently has only one Druid and three Bards 'in the making'. One area of focus is exploring other spiritual philosophies and understanding the synergies. Other areas of focus are to 'convert' traditional Ogham into the indigenous South African trees and also to understand and use indigenous medicinal plants and trees. All the eight yearly festivals are celebrated, all in solo as we are spread through South Africa – Johannesburg in Gauteng, Haenertsburg in Limpopo. Full moon meditations are conducted for peace and harmony. Email [debby@triskel.co.za](mailto:debby@triskel.co.za) for details.



### The Golden Wattle Seed Group

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

### Macadamia Grove

Welcomes and is inclusive of South-East Queensland and Northern New South Wales OBOD members who wish to join in with any activities. We celebrate the eight festivals of the year, and organise other events depending on members' interests. As Brisbane is a central meeting point most of our events are held close to the city, often in the bushland of Mt Coot-tha. Non-members with an interest in Druidry are able to attend some rituals by prior arrangement. Contact Sandra: [macademiagrove@hotmail.com](mailto:macademiagrove@hotmail.com)

### The Melbourne Grove

Welcomes all OBOD members (local, interstate and overseas) to its seasonal celebrations. Family and friends may also attend with a member. We now have a public facebook page: Friends of The Melbourne Grove. FFI contact: Elkie, [elkiewhite@gmail.com](mailto:elkiewhite@gmail.com)

### Middle Earth Fellowship Seed Group

Tauranga, NZ. Also Medieval village, Medieval craft camps, Medieval dance and Border Morris dance. Contact Yvonne [yjames@balnacoil.xtra.co.nz](mailto:yjames@balnacoil.xtra.co.nz).

### Silvereyes Seed Group

Perth Hills & members throughout the South West. Email: [ghriancu@iinet.net.au](mailto:ghriancu@iinet.net.au)

## Song of the Eastern Sea Seed Group

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

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:bonsaidruid@yahoo.com.au)

## Useful websites for SH OBODies:

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

*Druids DownUnder* - Facebook group - a group for druids of any path in the Southern Hemisphere, Australia/New Zealand in particular.

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

## OBOD Worldwide

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

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

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

### Publications

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

Contact Penny [touchstone@druidry.org](mailto:touchstone@druidry.org)

**Druid** (USA) [www.druidmagazine.com](http://www.druidmagazine.com) (publication ceased 2018, back-issues still available)

**Druidenstein** (German) [www.druidry.info/das-magazin-druidenstein](http://www.druidry.info/das-magazin-druidenstein)

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

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

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

## Pagan Transitions

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

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

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



## Council of all Beings - Bunya Mountains Qld Sept 13 – 15 2019 Pt 2 - By Cherry Carroll

The first day of our gathering had been an emotional experience.

We had searched within our hearts to realise the depth of our grief for what was disappearing from our World and we had shared these feelings in the Mourning Ceremony.

We had walked in the forest to be chosen by an ally to speak for them in Council and had respectfully made masks to wear when we spoke with their voice.

We had felt the power of this land and its suffering.

We had watched the glorious sight as the full moon of the goddess chased the sun God from the sky and the promised birth of another cycle began.

A new day had now dawned. The morning of our Council of all Beings. Today we would take on the persona of the being which had claimed us. We would don our masks and speak as this entity in whatever way came to us, for this was the time to speak for the voiceless ones.

Once more the ancient pines contained us, bearing witness to our intent. The pungent sage smoke purified us as the drums ushered us into the circle and we put on our masks to become our ally.

The ancestors who had once lived and nurtured the planet were invoked, as were beings of the present who, although not present at this time, shared our hopes and dreams. Lastly the beings of the future were asked to be present. It is for them that we work to preserve this beautiful planet and whose help we need to continue what needs to be done.

“Gather with us in this hour. Join us now in this place “

The three stages of the ritual commenced with each being sharing the story of how their lives have been changed until they are now faced with potential extinction. Heart rending stories of parched and ravaged Earth, polluted oceans, destroyed natural habitat and diminished food sources. We heard the fear and grief in these voices and we cried out fervently, “We hear you.”

The second stage was one of confrontation where a few at a time we set aside our masks to sit as humans in the centre of the circle while the other life forms spoke directly to us, telling of what we were doing as humans to affect their lives and survival. This had been the part of the ritual which many of us had dreaded. Having to own our culpability in this way hit us to the core. The tendency to believe that we are somehow different because we have compassion was swept aside as we realised that in reality we had all in some way contributed to the global problems. We were shamed but the beings voiced a desire to work with humankind towards a solution. They were bewildered by our actions but spoke with love and the knowledge that we are kindred and need to work together for our survival.



*Pic by Chris Parker*

This led to the final part of the Council. We replaced our masks, becoming our allies again, and in turn we offered gifts of our powers and strengths which could be used to effect change. Far sight, patience, time and persistence were gifted and after we had given our wisdom we removed our mask to sit once more in human form and listen to the words of others.

When all had spoken we rose together and clasped each other in a group hug. We were one family, united in the knowledge that what we had shared was already known to us but had been forgotten. Now we had a fresh recognition of our power and a way forward. We circled around in the hug singing “We are the Earth, we are the trees, one with all beings and the rolling seas, We are one we are one ..... “ and as we sang and circled we were filled with a sense of joy and laughter. A wave of relief and hope swept through us as we realised that we are not helpless. The battle would be hard but there was hope.

While still joined in a hug we OBOD members began to sing cascading Awens. The others in the group joined in and the power of the mountains and forest merged with our voices until a vast spiral of energy rose to join us with the all. This was an awe inspiring moment and one which left us all enthralled.

This concluded the Council on a powerful, positive note and the sharing of ideas and insights which followed became a bubbling cauldron of planning and future intentions. There are so many issues that as individuals we can only deal with the issue for which we feel most passion or we will become frustrated and immobilised but every single positive act, however small will be of benefit.

In the closing ceremony which followed it was said that “Each of us can be that small spark which sends up flares to build a signal fire calling to other souls to come together in defence of our planet and all its beings”. We can be the inspiration for change by example.

And so we came to our closing ceremony.

We had mourned.

We had spoken on behalf of the Earth and all who suffer.

We had joined as one for the betterment of the planet and truly remembered that we are co-existent with all.

We had considered what we can do to ensure the protection and continuation of these.

Gathering for the last time in our circle we thanked the Spirits of the directions for their presence and inspiration. The Spirit of those ancient sacred mountains was thanked for its blessings and guidance and we stood silent in the grove as a CD of the song “We are the World” was played.

Tears of love were shed for the miracle of our connection with all beings.

The circle was closed, the candle extinguished.

Hearts were full.

Our gathering was complete.



All profits from the gathering, which amounted to \$225 were donated to Jane Goodall's 'Roots and Shoots' programme, which teaches children about ecology and what they can do to care for nature. It encourages them to organise their own projects to benefit the planet and gives both advice and monetary aid when needed.

Our hope lies with the future generations, their knowledge and commitment.

### *Three Rays from the Turning Sun*

*The vernal rain flexes her gentle fingers and  
Takes the armour off the tired winter  
Every moment is a crack of thunder  
The druids watch under the southern moon  
The dusty buckles taste like eucalyptus  
His weathered bark falls to the limpid billabong  
You don't have to come from where you've been,  
She whispers to him under the yawning sky  
Oh, I've been from end to end, says he, exhaustedly  
And disappears into the grass by her feet  
Their hands spread peace in every direction  
She takes the mantle and skips across the tomb  
Pared down to an almost empty wheel  
Disappearing into the southern brume  
Where basalt columns dispel the foamy spray  
Giggling, they miss their cues on printed pages  
Sea brushed, her dress fades to green, then gold  
She turns and passes the coolamon, and he takes it  
Quandong and Kakadu plum spill over  
Water blankets earth and mountains blue  
He creaks, and draws a salt crusted breath  
Licks a finger and decides to quest, depending  
On whether flying fox or file snakes are out  
Kangaroo, cockatoo, snake and platypus  
Take their stations on the sun drenched cross  
Vents spume and mountains catch the beams  
Fires start slowly, and crack the seeds  
And like a shell inside a shell within a shell  
The new mother wakes and opens the door  
The circle's guardian dips her polearm's blade  
To see him pass the line of rain-wet rocks  
To find a precious baby, hidden among kelp roots  
Guarded by the sea turtles and rays of a new dawn  
And then they eat and drink and laugh and sing  
Until their fire dies and sea fogs chase them home.*

*By John Jordan*

# Rain Ritual for the Fires

By Julie Brett



I woke up very early on the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January. My sleep patterns had become all out of whack as we hadn't been able to do much in the day. It had been very hot and the smoke was thick making our eyes and noses sting. The fires had been burning hundreds of thousands of hectares of our beloved forest both to the north and south of our town, and many millions of hectares across the country. The blaze to the north was the most troubling for us, coming less than 5km away from us. Though our house was not directly next to the bushland, it was necessary for us to have been on alert for the possibility of ash fall and spot fires for the last week or two. We were exhausted emotionally. I slept at strange times of day. Sleeping in the day felt safe as my husband watched the fire reports. At night I couldn't sleep, but kept wanting to check what was happening.

As I lay awake that morning, checking my phone in bed, I noticed a few posts had been coming up a lot – people not only in Australia, but all around the world asking, "What ritual can we do to help the fires? To bring rain?"

I hadn't got involved. It's not really my kind of magic to ask for something. My magic, I had found, was in facing the fire threat with fire in my heart, with determination to be prepared, to know the patterns, to understand the meaning of it in the greater story of the land, and to find ways to help. But then questions came... "Where does the rain come from in Australia? Where does the wind that brings the rain come from? How do we envision it? Who are the deities?" These are not questions easily answered when considering the entirety of the Australian continent. But I knew what I could do.

I attempted to answer the questions, but then realised that no, this was actually something I could help with more, by writing a full ritual, not just answering a query here and there. So I wrote what I thought was a ritual that could be used anywhere in Australia, or anywhere in the world with a few adjustments. Not so much a ritual that was about asking for rain, but about recognising where rain comes from, recognising it as sacred, and asking for balance both in the land, and within ourselves. This was my kind of rain ritual. I published it on my blog and sent it to the people who had been asking questions and passed it around to a few friends. I was pleased with the feedback and sent it to Philip Carr-Gomm who kindly shared it on his blog and the OBOD Facebook page.

I was overwhelmed with the response. Before I knew it, I was getting emails from all over the world, with people telling me they had done, or were planning to do the ritual. I even got an email asking for permission to translate it into French and send it around to French-speakers. It was being shared in Germany, America, and I even got to see some of it shared live on Glastonbury Tor.

People from all over the world were sending Australia blessings of love and compassion; wishes for soft, gentle, soaking rain; the balancing of the elements and the land, and a return of the people to their homes. It was so moving, and then within a mere few days, the Eastern coast at least was blessed with enough rain that many of the bushfires here were brought under control. I had seen the weather forecast before writing the ritual, and knew rain was coming, but I didn't know how much or for how long, or if it would really make a difference... well, it's the 19<sup>th</sup> of January now as I write this, and it is still raining. We have not had so much rain in years. The grass has turned green again. The waterfalls flow. The forest is being reborn from the ashes.

Much has been lost. The animals and their habitat on such an enormous scale that it is hard to imagine how it will recover without any refuge for the animals to shelter in as the forest rebuilds. We have entered a time of regeneration and renewal. A rebirth of sorts, and with it comes great grief, but also a memory of all of those who stood with us across the world as the fires burned and wished for the rains to come. Their solidarity and love is felt in every raindrop that falls, and our hopes for a better world are witnessed in every new leaf that sprouts from the ashes left behind.

Many thanks to Ellen Evert Hopman for the nudging questions, for Antonia Newland's unwavering enthusiasm, and Caitin Matthews and Philip Carr Gomm for kindly sharing the ritual. Also to Delphine Serpentine for the translation into French. The original ritual can be read here: <https://juliebrett.net/2020/01/03/rain-ritual-for-the-fires/>





# Aotearoa



Inspiration, wisdom and blessings from New Zealand

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."

*At winter solstice I picked the yew tree  
It was part of an Ovate lesson for me  
A mystic tree from a different land  
I searched and found two at hand*

*Imbolc, A magnolia caught my eye  
Flowering in the garden 2 meters high  
Bare branches covered in beauty  
A spring sentry during her duty*

*By Spring Equinox a sight to behold  
The kowhai trees were covered in gold  
Time for oestra to do her thing  
Meanwhile I listened to Tuis sing*

*Cherry blossom flowers pink and white  
Covered the ground on a Beltane night  
I climbed through the bush to the top of a hill  
A tree daisy waited there standing still*

*White flowers of Manuka visited by bees  
Pobutakawa, Red blossoms of N.Z. Xmas trees  
Tarata with scented leaves of lemon  
All add up to Summer Solstice heaven*

*Why is the five finger my Lughnasadh tree?  
Its not tikouka a surprise for me  
The days are hot but not quite as long  
Monarch butterflies everywhere like a visual song*

*In our bush traditional giants stand  
Autumn Equinox is close at hand  
Kauri cones fall, acorns from oak  
The trees are mixed like N.Z. folk*

*Sauhain heralds a night for the dead  
Kawakawa makes a band for my head  
The trees and the seasons spoken of this day  
Coming together in a druid sort of way*

*This is my Almanac for the year  
Seasons and trees mentioned here  
I sat and watched and understanding grew  
Of Ovate knowledge and Bardic too*

By Joanna Hurirwai

Two weeks ago I went to the Trounson Kauri Park in Northland New Zealand. This park is part of a restoration project that includes a 586-hectare forest reserve and farmland. The project aims to restore the former richness of native biodiversity this forest once boasted, and to let visitors enjoy a glimpse of what pristine Kauri forests were once like. Visitors are encouraged to go through the boot cleaning stations to clean footwear and prevent the spread of Kauri Dieback - a disease that scientists are problem-solving on now to prevent our ancestral trees from dying.

The visit to the Ancient Kauri trees was spontaneous. Maybe it was the thought that access will be denied if visitors don't respect the rules of washing their boots and staying on the boardwalks.

After greeting the Kauri in this park I moved to the Waipoua Forest Park which preserves some of the best examples of Kauri forest remaining in New Zealand. It is notable for having two of the largest living Kauri trees, Tāne Mahuta (Lord of the Forest) and Te Matua Ngahere. (Father of the Forest)



Tāne Mahuta's age is unknown but is estimated to be between 1,250 and 2,500 years. It is the largest Kauri known to stand today. It is named for the Māori god of forests and of birds.

When I commence my daily morning ritual of calling in the four directions to help and assist me during the day. I always see Tāne Mahuta in the South standing strong, wise and being one of the oldest living trees in the world, calling upon his detached wisdom.

Wisdom is the key message for Lughnasadh. It is that understanding that with careful preparation and the sowing of good seeds/thoughts in our lives we can make a difference in ourselves and others. It is also the time of harvest, learning from the experience of the year before and gaining glimpses of how we can do better in the coming year ahead.

For myself, becoming a grandparent of a young one year old, I draw on the strength of the ancient trees and energy of Papatuanuka (Earth Mother) to help me become the wise one for my daughter and grandson. The image of the great Kauri Tree in the morning helps me focus and stand strong and tall - and I hope I can maintain the strength to stay balanced and focused during the day.

### Whaikōrero (oratory)

Orators on the marae act like Tāne in his various roles. Their role is to be upright like Tāne-ua-tika (Tāne with a straight backbone), to bear the weight of an issue like Tāne-uehā (Tāne supporting the heavens), and bring higher thought and consciousness like Tānenui-a-rangi and Tāne-te-wānanga (Tāne as bringer of knowledge).

The orator speaks to the issues of the day and seeks māramatanga (illumination) – understanding and wisdom to resolve the matter. The orator re-enacts Tāne's actions by figuratively hoisting the sky above and allowing light to shine into the world.

### Barry Brailsford "Wisdom of the Four Winds"

Barry Brailsford mentions that Kauri is balance - when you draw the card. The gift Kauri brings us is "the wonder of change...It asks you to stand tall and be your truth, to walk with compassion and joy and set old grievances and hurts aside. You are reminded to focus on the greater purpose...As your world changes around you. Kauri gifts hope and healing."

When I drew this card I felt relieved as like the Kauri sheds its bark, we shed our old thoughts and behaviour patterns shaking free all that hinders our growth. "Kauri speaks of the seed we hold within, and all that may come from its yearning. We are seed carriers, we are light beings and the children of the universe who carry the gift of love." (Barry Brailsford page 101)

Let Lugh light your way.

Blessings,  
Charlene Hillyard  
Druid - Grove of the Summer Stars



Inspiration, wisdom and blessings from

I took on the challenge of writing a poem a day, for a year and a day,  
from 1 June 2019. It has been a lot of fun.

Blessings of Lughnasadh,  
Dawn McKenzie

At the Grove of the Summer Stars Druid Camp at the  
Woolshed, Pukerua Bay, NZ 19th January 2020 I  
wrote about my walk through the Labyrinth.

## Labyrinth Walk

*I wait to enter the labyrinth  
To ask a question.  
I walk and notice the sea,  
The sky, the misty horizon.  
The wind blows around me  
And my woolly hat.  
I am so present there  
Is only the now. There is  
Simplicity in the awareness.  
The landscape, Kapiti Island,  
The barn below, the hills,  
The greenness. One foot  
In front of the other I  
Scrunch as I walk.  
I am an individual  
Propelling myself through space.  
I reach the centre of the  
Labyrinth, and send peace  
To the four directions.  
I gaze at the sea  
And the changing light.  
My life feels like it is  
Expanding.  
I hear my Druid community  
Sharing the world together.  
I feel lighter as I walk  
Out from the centre.  
I feel open.  
As I reach the outside  
Of the Labyrinth  
I am with the ocean.*

## It's That Time Again

*Dried old sweet pea plants  
Rustle and crackle  
As I pull them up.  
It's that time again*

*Squashed pummelled begonias  
Squint in the sunshine  
As I reveal them.  
It's that time again.*

I wrote this poem a couple of days ago while  
preparing for the upcoming ceremony at the Grove  
of the Summer Stars.

## Reflection on Earth Mother at Lughnasadh

*Earth Mother, the sun recedes,  
Autumn comes with all its needs.  
Earth Mother, our lives ripen,  
Harvesting the inspiration.  
What we reap is what we sow,  
In waning light our Awen flows.  
Crowning glory to Croning glory,  
Unlocking gifts, our Bardic story.  
Earth Mother, the sun recedes,  
Autumn comes with future seeds.*

Blessings of the waning light  
Dawn



## Grove of the Summer Stars Annual Camp by Linda Caddick

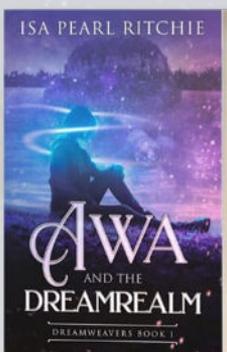


Our grove has had a camp at the Woolshed every January since I joined. Last year of course we hosted the Southern Hemisphere Assembly at Tatum Park. That was wonderful and we were all exhausted! So it was agreed that this year would be a relaxed and relaxing one day get together. In true Druidic style this became a one-and-a-half-day camp, and then, “let’s all arrive on the Friday because there’s lots to do to set up camp, and why don’t we have a big screen movie on Friday night.”

MS and I had not organised a camp before and so things were maybe not as organised as they had been in previous years. We had a wonderful time all the same but it would not have been possible without all the OBODies who knew what needed doing and just got on and did it.

I’m not going to mention any names or I would be sure to miss someone out so I will say: a small group agreed to take charge of opening and closing ceremonies (at very short notice) and it was wonderful. People turned up days before the camp and mowed and weeded. People turned up early on Friday and swept and scrubbed in the barn and sorted out the long drops. Even when we forgot to arrange who was in charge of something; people just turned up and did it. Someone who ended up not being able to come due to pressure of work sent a lovely cake each day and then brought cupcakes for the clean-up crew. OBODies who had organised previous camps sent us information (like the previous shopping lists and task lists) and during the camp calmed us with soothing words. MS and I want to thank you all.

On the Saturday we had a talk from some local volunteers who weed and plant trees along the track that borders Pamela’s property. MS is co-ordinating with them to find days that we can come and help with their conservation work. Glen came and talked to us about planting trees and herbs around the labyrinth. We made sure there was free time in the programme for walking the labyrinth, and walking in the bush.



A Grove member donated one of her books to the Grove library. This is the first in a series, all with druidic inspiration and themes. Isa’s second book is dedicated to the Grove of the Summer Stars and a third one is on the way.

We had a talk from Pamela and Richard about the grove history and then we learnt a song from the Lost Words - Spell Songs book. Richard took a guided walk to the apple grove and the oak grove.

Saturday night we had a fabulous Eistedfodd around the braziers and citronella candles then we “did the time warp agaaaaain” with much hilarity.

On the Sunday we had our grove discussion time where we discussed a range of topics relevant to our grove. The types of conversations we never seem to have time for at grove meetings or always need to be cut short. Then of course it was closing ceremony and all the clean-up. Thank you to everyone for all your hard work and input.

# Macha's Peace Challenge

## by Finn McMillan

*"For they (the Druids) generally settle all their disputes, both public and private ... The Druids usually abstain from war ... ; they have exemption from warfare." - Julius Caesar*

*"Often when the combatants are ranged face to face, and swords are drawn and spears are bristling, these men come between the armies and stay the battle, just as wild beasts are held spellbound. Thus, even among the most savage barbarians anger yields to wisdom, and Mars is shamed before the Muses." - Diodorus Siculus*

Lughnasadh has always struck me as a festival of various curious paradoxes, not the least amongst them being the various myths that express its temper. Lugh brings in the harvest, the Feast of Bread, and it is a time of joy, reward and abundance. But Macha also presides over its spirit, and her cursing of the men of Ulster that they know her labour pains when they needed her most. The giving and the taking is here, the promise of peace and the curse of war. It is this tension between peace and war, much as Summer gives way to the impending Winter, that intrigues me. More than anything, it makes me reflect on what peace truly means. Where does the Battle Crow sit upon Lugh's harvest?

In ancient times, as noted by classical historians and observers, the Druids were recognised as peace makers. Modern Druids have continued in this tradition and the arts of mediation and conflict resolution are held in high regard in the modern Druid revival. The largest international Druid organisation today is the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids and its public rituals begin with sending peace to the four quarters, and they also commonly hold a 'Call For Peace' prayer. The ability to develop a state of deep peace ('an sith' in the Irish), and then to express and manifest it in the world, is a key element of Druidic spirituality and purpose.

I hear the Macha tell me though that the quest for peace is one often bedeviled by wishful thinking and escapist fantasies. It seems easily forgotten that the spiritual path, and the path of the peace maker, are radical paths that demand great resources of personal strength and insight both into oneself and the world. A weak man cannot bring in the harvest; a weak man is not peaceful. He is simply harmless. An important distinction to realise. What does the warrior Lugh tell me here?

Most people, of course, feel entirely comfortable with the rhetoric of spiritual aspiration and peace, - indeed, social media platforms are rife with memes extolling 'feel good' affirmations of general New Age emotionality – but I fear most of us are also aware that such affirmations and aspirations are all too regularly simply expressions of sentiment and little more.

The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche believed that 'goodness' constituted all those things that inclined towards greater strength, while 'evil' was that which inclined to greater weakness. For him, the fundamental dichotomy was of strength as opposed to weakness, with moral considerations of 'good' versus 'evil' simply typically associated values which could be more or less useful, but not fundamental. Nietzsche's 'will to power' philosophy may not resonate with many modern Druids, but he raises an important point, particularly as we leave the Summer behind and look forward to the challenge of Winter. Namely, there is little point in affirming, claiming or boasting of high ideals and great moral virtues without having developed some significant personal strength. What is the point of promoting the virtues of fidelity if one cannot master one's own lusts? What is the value of believing that forgiveness is the highest ideal if one cannot truly turn the other cheek when one has been outrageously betrayed? The spiritual path, and the path to peace, constantly provokes response from the ego that only a deep resource of personal strength can restrain.

"Verily," he wrote, "I have often laughed at the weaklings who called themselves good because they had no claws." Macha wonders at the beasts who would survive Winter when the fruits of the harvest have gone and the longest night still yet to come. This is important to reflect upon when we talk of 'finding peace' and manifesting it in our world. In this quest, to discover peace within ourselves and to give it to the world around us, we must first draw on sources of true wisdom within ourselves and have the courage to face ourselves and act on that insight.

What, truly, does it take to make peace between the warring factions in one's own heart? What sacrifices can one make to learn how to mediate between the warring factions of one's community without losing oneself in identification with one tribe or the other, knowing that one typically makes an outcast of oneself by not choosing sides? It is always easier to be 'Left' or 'Right' - or any other social, political, ideological or religious dichotomy - rather than have the courage to empathise with the values of both, or to be able to understand the perspective of the various protagonists. A mediator must always be able to demonstrate impartiality, without sacrificing personal values. This cannot be done unless all sides know that their beliefs are respected, and their slights acknowledged.

No peace maker can achieve this without a strong foundation upon which to stand. One need not agree with everyone, (or even anyone in any given dispute), but the person who seeks to resolve the pains in others, (or, for that matter, in oneself) must first be able to learn to resonate with the underlying causes of those pains, and do so with an attitude of respect and peaceableness.

“Nothing is easier than to denounce the evildoer; nothing is more difficult than to understand him,” said Fyodor Dostoyevsky. It is precisely this feat which is required by the true peace maker.

It is useful to consider the three ways in which people typically respond to threat, both external and internal. And by threat I mean any condition, person, challenge or situation that requires one to respond in order to maintain one's psychological equilibrium. These can be described as an aggressive response, a submissive response, and an assertive response.

An aggressive response to a challenging situation is to attempt to conquer it. Our shared human evolution makes this a natural response but it is also one which leads to conflict and demands an 'either/or' outcome; there will be a winner and a loser, and the aggressor insists upon being the winner. It is a dynamic of 'power over' the enemy, and such power is expressed in an overt and uncompromising manner.

The submissive response is, ironically, not really different. There is generally an inversion of value where to 'lose' is really considered a victory; hence the 'passive-aggressive' dynamic. The victim becomes the victor. The ability to overcome by tolerance, long-suffering martyrdom, and self-pity becomes the manner in which the submissive response maintains psychological equilibrium.

Much of what passes for 'spiritual' and religious thinking is very often an expression of this submissive pose. Many religious people who pride themselves on 'turning the other cheek' manage to do so only because they fervently believe in some hellish afterlife where their oppressor will burn for all eternity whereas they will be rewarded for their righteous meekness. Their pacifism in this case is essentially only cowardice; the responsibility for conquering 'the other' is simply ceded to another power.

Or we may consider those who pride themselves on their political pacifism and who look down on the soldiers and military power that protects their right to be a pacifist in their comfortable world that enjoys no imminent threat of war. And in that holier-than-thou self-righteousness they label themselves superior and 'the other' as inferior and ignorant.

Both the aggressive and the submissive pose are ones based on a zero-sum mentality - there can only be one winner. One is right, one is wrong. One will succeed and one will fail.

Both are expressions of a fundamental weakness, and a lack of the sort of personal courage and strength required to truly make peace. If one cannot hear, respect and value the reality of 'the other', then one cannot be heard by them. One cannot mediate between those at war if one cannot demonstrate a genuine understanding of the needs and fundamental suffering of all sides.

Because it is this suffering that is at the heart of all conflict. The need to fight, or to succumb, is simply an attempt to alleviate fear, anxiety and self-doubt. To fight when one need not, or to surrender when one should not, both represent coping mechanisms designed to restore a state of basic psychological security.

Albert Einstein once suggested that the fundamental existential question was, “Is the universe a friendly place?” It is a question that is fear-based, and again, given the nature of human evolution, entirely natural. And both the aggressive and submissive response to that question is, “No”. Life is not a friendly experience, and it must be either overcome or submitted to in order to 'win'.

What then is the alternative? To have the wisdom, courage and confidence to answer “Yes” to that question does not deny the reality of conflict, or pain, or of anxiety. But nor does it need to either eradicate, or succumb to, them. An assertive response to that basic existential doubt is to insist upon one's fundamental right to be, with dignity and sovereignty, and not demand anything or anyone else suffer in that stance.

To make peace in the world around one, an attitude born of such a stance is required. One does not need to defeat an oppressor; one just needs to refuse to be defeated. An assertive response to a challenge always allows for a win/win outcome, whereas an aggressive or a submissive one requires a winner and a loser. There are those who say that a violent (aggressive) response to evil or injustice is required in order to overcome it. But is that true? Gandhi's response to such an insistence was, “I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent.” TS Eliot also recognised the seductive, and very egotistical, trap of the aggressive response when he pointed out that, “... most of the evil in this world is done by people with good intentions.”

The peace maker realises that one need not, indeed one cannot, erase anxiety, fear or evil. One cannot hold away the Winter that signals its impending arrival as we still celebrate the sun at Lughnasadh. One can only demonstrate in one's being, and in one's action, that dignity, strength and love cannot be extinguished by those malign forces. This personal sovereignty provides a model of strength to all those suffering, and a balm of resolve to those in need of inspiration. The assertive peace maker can give love and comfort from a soul uncompromised by the need to wage war on 'the other'.

To “be the change one wants to see in the world” is no small task. For the peace maker, to have achieved that, is enough.

*Finn McMillan is a member of OBOD, founder of Druidways, a professional counsellor and Tarot consultant at tarotshamanry.com*

**Tragedy (Koala as Totem, 2019-2020 Australian Fires)**  
by Pia Ravenari



*"I illustrated Tragedy (Koala as Totem, 2019-2020 Australian Fires) - in coloured/watercolour pencil and ink - because I felt moved to pair the grief I was feeling with the expression of avenging. I felt too stuck in my despair, with friends and family and so many ecosystems I love directly impacted. At first, I only did the art for myself to work through my despair, in that introverted way Bards can work sometimes. But as I was inking the Koala and sharing some of the progress with friends, watching other artists also processing their sense of grief and loss and outrage through art, I decided to offer the piece up for sale so that all proceeds might go to the WWF Koala Crisis Fund. It sold within 12 hours of being listed.*

*I don't know that I'll ever be able to illustrate Australian animals in quite the same way that I used to, since my relationship to Australia and its totems has fundamentally changed in the larger context of the world we find ourselves in. But I will continue to illustrate them, and while I admire so many artists who have been illustrating for hope, I have needed to illustrate my grief."*



## Preparing your Pilgrims Heart for the 2020 Southern Hemisphere Assembly

By Danuta Raine

Pilgrimage is a journey of intent and expectation—a song where each step is a note. It has a purpose beyond destination, and offers a path into our personality, a revelation of our unseen and unknown selves. It is an opportunity to gather what we have and sift through what to keep and how we might keep it. It is a way of seeing what holds us, what ails us and what liberates us. While at times, it may start unexpectedly, more often than not pilgrimages require planning. They exist in a season, and before we even step out outside our garden and through our front gate, that season has begun to work upon us. Lughnassadh is a great season for the start of a pilgrimage, because in the breath between the harvest and the underworld, the harvest of our souls' wisdom whispers through our beings.

Michael and I went on pilgrimage last Samhain. We drove from Newcastle to Adelaide, to the Flinders Ranges and Beltana. A journey of the heart, we travelled to Adelaide Druid Camp held by Windharp Seed Group. It was an opportunity to meet and learn from some of our leading Druid elders: Dave Smith, Kristoffer Hughes and Cerri Lee. It was a time that focused on death and parting, on belonging and hearing the land. For Michael, it was a return pilgrimage to Wilpena Pound, to sing his line into a land that had begun it all.

We had spent nearly a year preparing. In mid-2018, I had declared that I would take a year to discover my new path. My daughter was in the final months of high school, and my son was recovering well after a serious illness, and within eighteen months I would have met the large obligations that had directed my life for twenty-eight years. My intention was set; this pilgrimage would open me to possibilities I had never explored before. Michael was keen to travel with me, and had pilgrimages of his own to make.

We started planning the previous Samhain, planting the seed long before our arrival at Wilpena Pound. Preparations lead me through the secret knowings of Mt Hyland just after Alban Hefin and to weaving through New Zealand's North Island for Lughnassadh. Pilgrimages in one land crafted the insight required for pilgrimages in another.

Like most things, Michael took to the South Australian pilgrimage with singular focus. He says he is part water-buffalo and that I think way too fast. However, that pause in his soul, his way of embracing the thing at hand, is something I deeply respect. He has a long process of packing. The choice is long, and everything is seen in its place. He listens to the song of the trees and birds and they let him know what is to come.

From the beginning he said, "There is only one thing I have to do. I have to return to the Pound."

Michael felt the call to meet sacred intentions that had not yet been fulfilled. Twenty years ago, he joined a group of Aboriginal people who walked from Central Australia to Botany Bay to fulfil a rite that should have taken place two-hundred-and-twenty years earlier. They had stopped at Wilpena Pound in the Flinders Ranges to hear the intent of the Elders.

He has a process of moving, a strong respect for the innate intelligence in all things, and a way he opens his heart to adventure. He has a particular daily practice when preparing for a pilgrimage: for what might happen, what might be said, and the abilities we might need along the way.

Meditative time before you leave is essential if you are to hear inner knowledge, the whispering of the Otherworldly Ones, and the subconscious revelations of your future self. Even on well-known and well-marked tracks, pilgrimage creates moments where we are lost, turned around, or in a hole. Anything can happen, and something bizarre usually does. However, more than once, these meditative reflections ensured I was prepared for that unforeseeable event. We had that balm or salve, that knife or book, or the torn old map that worked when the GPS went dark. We had a hidden bottle of water, antihistamine and that thing to offer the Ancients as we stepped onto their land.



Truly, some of the best advice I can offer is to always carry an offering. If you don't have one, it is likely you will lose something you dearly treasure. I always do. And do stop at the boundaries to new territory. Grow your consciousness and ask the way. Negotiate approval for the path with Spirit Elders and Sacred Guardians before you bound off in your ute. More than once I have been turned around by a gentle tug or a voice when I had taken a wrong road in an unfamiliar place.

You also need to prepare for the emotional experiences that come with pilgrimage. Pilgrimage of is both revelation and illumination. There are conversations that Michael and I have on pilgrimage that would not grace any other space. During part of the pilgrimage, we debated about what had more life essence – my dog Uriel or his utility. A long rambling discussion about animism followed, where we went through all the winding paths of essence into dark places of value and who would you save. Would you swerve to miss the dog and write-off the ute?

You have to prepare if you are going to manage strange words, as illumination often requires the release of dark matter. There is a sense that the very act of pilgrimage offers a space for the unthinkable, the unknowable and the politically incorrect. Michael has described them as black ribbons that are pulled from your being. You just have to let them flow and let them go. And then, at the end of that moment, the conversation evaporates, and something has changed. The issue has been lifted away, or taken root in a place where it can be worked upon as the pilgrimage continues.

You also have to prepare to develop skills you didn't think you had, or hone skills you don't usually use. On our trip through outback South Australia, we drove from Wyverne's home to Beltana. It is a trip that should have started early, but of course we needed a walk with Wyverne through the Mallee scrub. Wow! Now that changed me forever! The things I learnt and felt in the Mallee still are in that unconscious, unspeakable part of me. Every so often an image filters through, and I am transfixed. Did you know that kangaroos cultivate their favourite foods?



I was also changed by having to drive down desolate dirt roads in the dark. I know we can communicate with wildlife, and also that the lightbody can be felt by others, but my practical experiences with animal life could be explained away as imagination. Driving to Beltana, however, deepened my experience. Terrified of hitting a roo, I set my lightbody around the ute and announced our presence. The roos answered back. I knew when they were going to jump across the road, and slowed before we could see them. At other times, they let us pass. One time, an old buck jumped right into the middle of the road and watched as I drove by. He lowered his head and looked at us through the window. Seriously! It was amazing. I didn't hit a single animal, except for midges—sorry, can't seem to miss them.

You don't have trek through bush or tramp across desert to be on pilgrimage. You can be in a car. You can stay in luxury. But the truth is, you won't be settled. More than anything else, you need to prepare for being unsettled as pilgrimage changes you in unexpected ways. I have always found something I didn't expect, often lost something I didn't think I could lose, and always been set at the edge of myself.

Any trip can be a pilgrimage with the right preparation, intention and mindset. So, as you prepare to go to the Southern Hemisphere Assembly, think about how this gathering might offer you an opportunity to express your pilgrim's heart. Let the process release the black threads that dance in the light of your soul and infuse you with something you never knew but is just right for you.

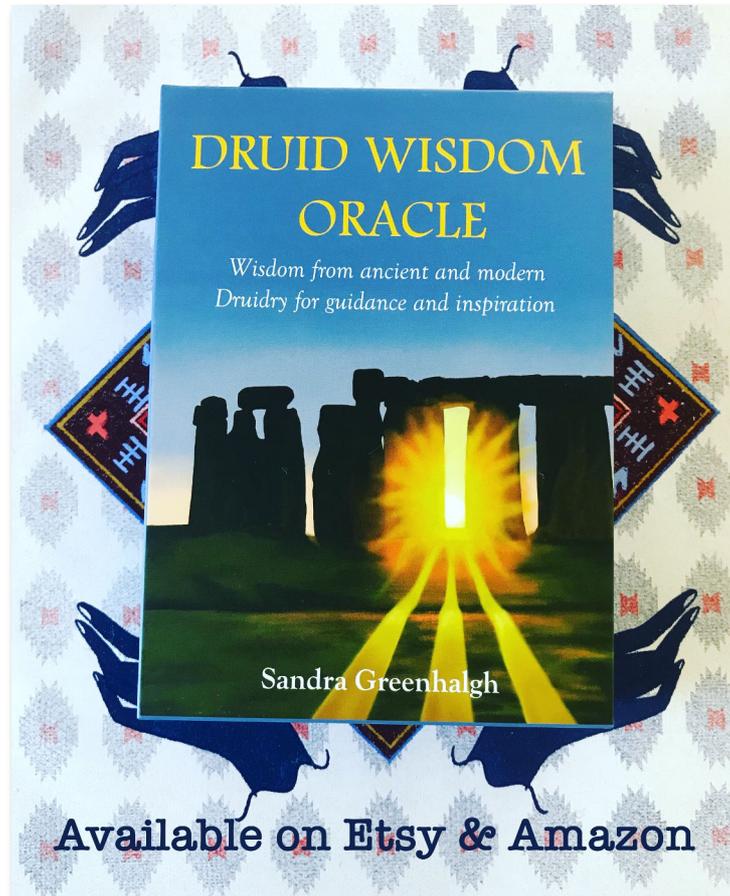


*About the Author: Dr. Danuta Raine and Michael Vlasto are co-founders of Druid Pilgrim and Druid Pilgrim Grove. Their website is at [www.adruid.com](http://www.adruid.com), and she facilitates the Druid Pilgrim FB page with the help of Rebecca Picard, Tina Merrybard and Lisa. Danuta holds a Ph.D. in English (Creative Writing) and has an extensive background in Ayurvedic medicine. She offers courses and mentorships in creativity and lifestyle refinement. She spends her days writing, reading, walking, musing and watering the garden. You can visit her at [www.danutaraine.com](http://www.danutaraine.com).*

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

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.

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# The Wheel of Segais

## The Wisdom of the Four Seasons as a Divination Tool

A big thank you to all of you for your patience while we did our second production run for the Wheel of Segais Personal Reader Kit. The reprinting took somewhat longer than we had anticipated but the good news is (trumpet sounds)...

**The Wheel of Segais Personal Reader Kit is now available again! The printing has been checked, the fabric Wheels, hazelnuts and pens tested, the boxes packed and we are all ready to receive your orders once again.**

If the **Wheel of Segais Personal Reader Kit** is unfamiliar to you, there is lots more information on my website - <http://www.wheelofsegais.com/> - and you might like to check out this wonderful divination tool by having an online reading with me to get you started.

And if you would like to learn a little more about how this seasonal metaphor and 'thinking like a tree' can be used to understand the cycle of all things, be it a project, an intention, a goal, a life purpose, a relationship, a business etc, you might like to take a look at this live video I did for 'Tea with a Druid' a couple of weeks ago which I call, 'Living Treefully'. It includes a short meditation that you might enjoy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sphYwzemtFM>

## THE WHEEL OF SEGAIS READER TRAINING

The Wheel of Segais Reader Training already has a number of students and Graduates in America, Australia, the UK and New Zealand.

If you are interested in taking the **Wheel of Segais Online Reader Training** you will first need to purchase a Personal Reader Kit.

If you already have a Personal Reader Kit then you can purchase the Reader Training course straight away and start your Reader journey. Videos and more information about the Reader Training and its content can be found at:

<https://www.wheelofsegais.com/be-a-reader/>

You can sign up for the Training through Global Spiritual Studies – <https://globalspiritualstudies.com/product/the-wheel-of-segais/> . **Prices are in \$USD.**

- Download seven recordings to your device: **\$279**
- Seven recordings stored on a USB flash drive: **\$290** (includes postage worldwide)

**If you are a New Zealand resident**, the good news is that you can save on international currency transfer fees by paying in \$NZD. Email me for \$NZ prices and bank account details – [pamela@thewoolshed.com](mailto:pamela@thewoolshed.com)

*As the seed is nurtured and the Wheel of Segais unfurls its tendrils around the world, I hope you will consider taking the next step with me to becoming a Wheel of Segais Reader. Let us use the wisdom of Nature to grow our dreams and the dreams of others from Seed to Harvest.*

# WHEEL OF SEGAI'S COURSES

In New Zealand I run one-day facilitated workshops for up to 20 people and also run ongoing monthly courses following the 12 streams that flow from the Well of Segais: Transformation, Openness, Affinity, Passion, Commitment, Alignment, Identity, Discrimination, Ripening, Healing, Harvest and Reflection.

The next one-day (10-4) workshop will be on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2019 here at The Woolshed and from there I will ascertain when is the best time to begin another series of monthly workshops. These will be in addition to the Reader training although they will use much of the same material. I am also exploring the possibility of making these monthly workshops available online for those of you in other countries or out of town.

In the meantime, I will be travelling to Australia in April 2020 and the UK and Europe in May/June 2020 and I am keen to run one-day Wheel of Segais workshops while I'm away. If you would be interested in attending one of these please register your interest. If you would like to organise a one-day workshop for me (promotion, venue, admin, etc) then I would be happy to offer you a place for free.

I look forward to hearing from some of you very soon.

Yours on behalf of the Salmon of Wisdom.

Pamela

*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.*

*If you would like a reading or a life coaching session in person, you can contact me at [pamela@thewoolshed.com](mailto:pamela@thewoolshed.com), 0272068876 or 2399234.*

*Cost: \$40*

## **Out of town or in another country?**

*Book an online reading or Life Coaching Session through my website – [www.wheelofsegais.com](http://www.wheelofsegais.com)*



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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!

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Okapi

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SJ TUCKER	MAMA GINA
BEKAH KELSO	MURPH'S
GINGER DOSS	MIDNIGHT
KELLIANNA	ROUNDERS
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SPIRAL DANCE	
SHARON KNIGHT/ WINTER S	





## 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.

Readings are available in person in Auckland, New Zealand, or from anywhere in the world using Skype or Messenger.

Please visit my website [anamcarareadings.com](http://anamcarareadings.com) and follow my Facebook [www.facebook.com/anamcarareadings](https://www.facebook.com/anamcarareadings)





**OBOD Member Celebrants  
Australia & New Zealand**



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

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

**Anita Bailey Celebrancy**  
Regional Marriage Celebrant  
Weddings, Commitment Ceremonies & Vow Renewals

0413 593 629  
07 346 2288  
anita\_bailey@optusnet.com.au

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



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

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

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

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

0413 593 609

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

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



**Amanda Gibson**  
Qualified Civil Celebrant

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





# JENNETH GRAHAM

Priestess Celebrant Bard Witch



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

Ceremonies are available on the Central Coast, Sydney & Newcastle Areas. Nationally & Internationally upon request.

Handfastings ~ Weddings  
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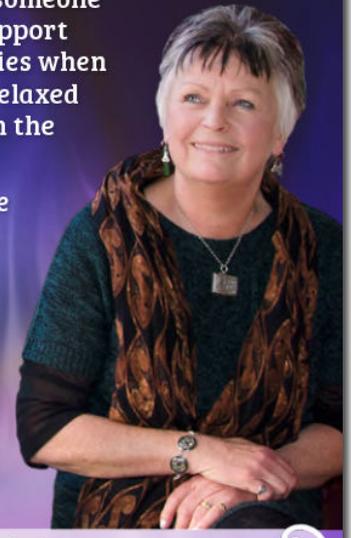


# Anne Conroy

REGISTERED CELEBRANT

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

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



[www.ritualcelebrant.co.nz](http://www.ritualcelebrant.co.nz)  
**Ph: 021 781 873**  
E: [anne@ritualcelebrant.co.nz](mailto:anne@ritualcelebrant.co.nz)



Member of the Order of Ovates Bards and Druids



Member Celebrant's Assn. of New Zealand

Creating meaningful ceremonies and lasting memories

# Pamela Meekings-Stewart

Registered Marriage and Civil Union Celebrant  
New Zealand



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

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

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

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

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



*Tying the knot*  
*Two lives entwine*  
*Tying the knot*  
*Two families entwine*  
*Binding our futures together*

Contact: [pamela@thewoolshed.com](mailto:pamela@thewoolshed.com)  
Thewoolshedretreats.co.nz  
Tel: ++64-4 2399234



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

**Want to escape the city and experience the Outback Heart of  
our ancient land?**

**Interested in helping with a permaculture self-sufficiency project  
and learning new skills?**

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

- The stunning ancient landscape and vast starry or moonlit nights are perfect for contemplation and fostering a connection with Spirit of Place.
- Experience living in an heritage listed small town (pop. 20) in a remote location
- Private accommodation in an historic inn first built in the 1870s
- Visit places of significance in the deeply powerful Flinders Ranges
- 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](mailto:wwoof@sylvanius.net) or 0429795002 to discuss options.



And finally...

## The 19<sup>th</sup> OBOD Southern Hemisphere Assembly UPDATE

By Elkie

The 19th OBOD Southern Hemisphere Assembly has been booked solid for months but if you **really** want to come, please send an email to [elkiewhite@gmail.com](mailto:elkiewhite@gmail.com) and I'll see what I can do. We are offering 14 initiations within a total of 7 rituals, plus 13 workshops, a Play, a book launch 😊, meditations, readings, healings, Eisteddfod, a discussion about the future of assemblies and more!

(Editor's note: Due to my own travel arrangements for Assembly, the closing and release dates for Samhuinn SerpentStar have been extended this year. Please see below!)



The  
Wheel  
turns...



## Earth and Water

*Water runs and rushes  
Over rocks and gushes  
Down dark canyons  
Caved by time  
Carved by the wine  
Of cloud drops  
I can feel it like  
Emotions gushing  
Everything flushing  
Away  
How water is held  
by the rocks  
Of stream  
And headland  
Solidity guiding  
The movement of flowing  
Yet Earth is more forgiving  
It is filled with living  
It soaks it all up  
Let's it in  
Allows and gives  
Then gives back again*

*It nurtures the waters  
It transforms them  
To life  
Sometimes I must  
Be like the rock  
Steady and strong  
Let the waters flow by  
And out to the tides  
Sometimes I must be like  
Earth  
And forgive and allow  
And let new life thrive  
This dance of earth  
And water  
Is part of being  
Alive.*

By Julie Brett

...we come to the time of **Lughnasadh**...which marks the beginning of harvest time. The hay would have been gathered in, and the time for reaping the wheat and barley was due. It was a time of gathering together, of contests and games and of marriages. The marriages contracted at this time could be annulled at the same time the following year - offering the couple a sensible 'trial period'. In some areas a flaming wheel was sent rolling down the hillside at this time to symbolise the descent of the year towards Winter, and in the Druid ceremony a wheel is passed around the circle in symbol of the turning year. The Christian version of this festival is Lammastide, which has recently been revived in some churches. The word Lammastide comes from hlafmasse - 'loaf-mass' - since bread is offered from the newly harvested grain.

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

The deadline for contributing to the Samhuinn issue of SerpentStar is 5 May 2020.  
The Samhuinn issue will be released in the week of 10 May 2020.