



Serpent STAR

Journal of THE ORDER OF BARDS OVATES & DRUIDS in the SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

Encounters
with BRIGID

The GREENING Power
of a NUN who was
like a DRUID

An BREO
Saighead

How MAUI
slowed the sun

WINDHARP
Grove

Imbolc 2026

SONG of IMBOLC

I am the unopened bud, and I the blossom
 I am the life force gathering to a crest,
 I am the still companion of the silence,
 I am the far-flung seeker of the quest.
 I am the daughter gathering in wisdom,
 I am the son whose questions never cease,
 I am the dawn-light searching out glad justice,
 I am the centre where all souls find peace.

~ Caitlin Matthews, Celtic Devotional

Lorikeets in Spring photo © Pingala Walsh

IMBOLC, celebrated as *Februa* and *Candlemas*. Our ancestors called it by names long forgotten, and our children will call it by names as yet unconceived.

AT THIS TIME, our ancestors saw the Sun, the weak and helpless Child of Light, grow stronger day by day. The land still lies in darkness, but the rule of the darkness is challenged by the infant Lord of Light. Little by little, the skies grow light and the blessed Earth gives forth her first flowers, snowdrop and crocus, as promise of the Summer that is to be when all creation will rejoice in the One Universal Light.

This Feast of Imbolc is sacred to the Lady, the childwoman, the virgin who is

known as Brighid and Athena and Britomartis and names without number. She it was who brought forth the Child of Light out of the Darkness in the darkest of the Dark Days. She it is who has nurtured the Child and now brings him forth as the new hope. She it is who has prepared the sleeping Earth to bring forth her bounty in the Summer which even here has its first beginnings.

~ by Coifi

Text sourced from Druidry.org



Artwork by wyverne ogma vyvyan

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

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Editorial

Welcome to this Imbolc edition of *SerpentSTAR*

We're so happy to have received lots of wonderful content for this edition, brimming with your creativity, news and insights, and presented here for your enjoyment.

We hope you enjoy three quite different encounters with Brigid, all here to celebrate Imbolc.

We've passed the shortest day, followed by a month of cold, gloomy, wet weather, at least it is here in Tassie where this is being written. But then we see bulbs emerging out of the cold earth, the first wattles sprinkle yellow through the bush. And now it is noticeable that the days are getting longer.

Hope.

It's still cold and wet here, but there's hope that change is on its way.

We are reminded of cycles and seasons, that all things must change.

Can you imagine how frightening this could be if you didn't know about cycles? If you weren't prepared for winter? If you didn't know that Spring would follow?

How important is this reminder of hope.

Across the world this story was told and retold: Demeter and Persephone; The Cailleach and Brigid.

As the world seems to turn on a larger cycle into despair and darkness when we watch the news of world events, it helps to remember cycles. This too will pass.

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The darkness, the coldness of winter, can prompt us to stoke our fires, including our inner fire that shifts us out of complacency. The life force within us prompts us to act. While there is life, there is hope. Under the surface much is happening, even if we don't see it now.

Look for signs of Spring.

Once you start to see it, it is there abundantly.

~ Isabel

A Communication Web . . .

The **AIM** of *SerpentSTAR* Journal is to inform and draw together members in the peace and light of the Grove, and to support and nourish each other in our quest for strength, understanding, knowledge, justice and love. Let's work together to achieve this aim.



Acknowledgement of Country

SerpentSTAR Journal acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We would like to acknowledge the contributions and sophistications of First Nations knowledges, and their ongoing spiritual practice and connection to Country.

Everlasting Daisies photo © Pingala Walsh

HERE'S a quote from the **Reconciliation Australia** website:

In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, the meaning of Country is more than just ownership or connection to land, as Professor Mick Dodson explains:

"When we talk about traditional 'Country'...we mean something beyond the dictionary definition of the word. ...we might mean homeland, or tribal or clan area and we might mean more than just a place on the map. For us, Country is a word for all the values, places, resources, stories and cultural obligations associated with that area and its features. It describes the entirety of our ancestral domains. While they may all no longer necessarily be the title-holders to land, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are still connected to the Country of their ancestors and most consider themselves the custodians or caretakers of their land."

Incorporating Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country into meetings, gatherings, and events shows respect by upholding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols.

Iwould like to acknowledge the *pallitorre* people, the traditional custodians of the *kooparoonia niara* (Great Western Tiers) region of *lutruwita* (Tasmania), where I live today. I acknowledge the tremendous grace shown by Elders who have welcomed me to country, and how moved by that I am. I also acknowledge the very real and ongoing pain that I have seen as a consequence of stolen land. I acknowledge this land was never ceded.

I acknowledge the caretaker role of First Nations people and the challenges that role must present.

As such, in respect I endeavour to walk lightly upon this earth.

I would like to introduce ourselves to First Nations people, past, present and emerging. As members of OBOD, we aim to connect to the spirit of our ancestors from the Northern Hemisphere, who connected their spirituality with the Earth. As such we endeavour to connect with the sacredness of this earth and to contribute to the care of our planet.

~ Isabel

From Gumbaynggirr Country

... Which spans from the Nambucca River in the South, to around the Clarence River in the North

and the Great Dividing Range in the West of the Mid North Coast NSW, rich land from the sea to mountains; their forests, rivers, islands and valleys.

I acknowledge the First Nation traditional custodians of this place where I live, past, present and future. The *Gumbaynggirr* people, traditionally known as the sharing people, who generously share their culture, language and Welcome to Country with those who will partake while treading on this abundant land that supports us all. I deeply respect the *Gumbaynggirr* culture with its roots in the ancient . . . Ancient knowledge and tradition, of which much has been lost to our Western culture, though for we OBODies, is reflected in our Druid history and pathways.

It's with genuine sorrow that I acknowledge the struggle of First Nations people and the injustices inflicted upon them. May acknowledgement of our similarities and differences, with their appropriate expressions, and our mutual connection to Earth, path the way to creating peace and harmony together.

I too tread lightly on this land with this knowledge and reverence for those who have lived and cared for it.

~ Pingala



An Breo Saighead

~ Eimear Burke

Today is the day of Bride.
*The serpent shall come from the hole,
 I will not molest the serpent, nor will the serpent molest me.*

~ The Carmina Gadelica

Here in Ireland, spring starts on February 1st at Imbolc and traditionally was a day for weather divination - a cold frosty February 1st is a good omen for the weather to come because the Cailleach is still asleep. However, if it is bright and sunny, it doesn't bode well, as the Cailleach is out collecting more firewood for the bad weather to come.

Imbolc in the Southern Hemisphere may be very different for you - we all experience the seasons in different ways; our weather and landscapes lending their own particular magic to each festival. Despite the differences in Hemisphere, I feel

that the Goddess Brigid travels well; it seems that Her energy is felt so strongly at this festival time, no matter where we reside in the world. In the liminal time between dark and light, she brings hope.

According to the ancient stories, Brigid is the self-generating mother, she is 'Neart an Domhain' (Nywfre or Life-force of the Earth), 'broinn na cruinne' (womb of the universe), *the cauldron of all life*, the exalted one, 'an breo saighead' (the fiery arrow). She is the intermediary between winter and

... continued on the next page

summer, the intermediary between darkness and light. Brigid represents 'An Tríbhís Mhór (The Great Triple Spiral) as she maintains the integrity of 'Beatha, Bás & Athbheireith', of Life, Death and Rebirth. Brigid is the Goddess of Water, Healing and Peace; she is the Goddess of Fire and Smiths. She is the forger of the sword but she does not wield it. Instead, she inspires people to forge their path from the strength of fire, water, earth and air.

My thoughts are drawn to the following:

Genealogy of BRID

Every day and every night

That I say the genealogy of Bríd,

I shall not be killed, I shall not be harried,

I shall not be put in cell, I shall not be, wounded,

Neither shall Spirit leave me in forgetfulness.

I shall not be slain

I shall not be wounded

I shall not be prisoned

I shall not be gashed

I shall not be torn asunder

I shall not be plundered

I shall not be downtrodden

I shall not be stripped

I shall not be rent in two

Nor will Spirit let me be forgotten

No fire, no sun, no moon shall burn me,

No lake, no water, nor sea shall drown me,

No arrow of fairy nor dart of fay shall wound me,

And I under the protection of my mother Danú,

And my gentle foster-mother is my beloved Bríd.

~ Amended from Carmina Gadelica

This poem, although hundreds of years old, is very pertinent in today's world. Although the levels of violence, oppression, and human rights violations seem to be increasing and never-ending, let us not give up hope or give in to fear. Our challenges seem relentless but I wonder how we as Druids can work with the spirit of Imbolc and look to Brigid – Goddess of Peace - to forge swords of peace, to inspire peace, to model peace, to be intermediaries between darkness and light. I hope



Brigid mural in Kildare ~ Isabel Shapcott

this prayer of Protection can offer you some peace of mind and heart.

As we enter Imbolc, may An Breo Saighead – the Firey Arrow – fill you with the fire of Brigid's courage; may it fill you with Her Imbas. May whatever intentions you set for yourself this year be fruitful and remember to go at your own pace. May Imbolc, with each new shoot, bring the growing light of Peace to us all ~ the Earth and her beings!

*Go n-éirí libh – may you rise – may you succeed!
Beannachtaí 'is Síocháin (Blessings & Peace)*

~ Eimear Burke, Chosen Chief of OBOD



Encounters with **BRIGID**

IRELAND Travel Journal

~ by Isabel Shapcott

8 June 2025 10am, Kildare

Good morning. I'm sittng in the sun at a Café, waitng for my order to arrive. It's Sunday, so not much is open. Perhaps things will open later. I'm on the search for all that I can soak in about Brigid. Goddess Brigid or Saint Brigid, I'm not fussed. To me they are deeply connected in spirit.

She is not hard to find. There are beautiful, large wall

murals of Brigid on the side of buildings, including this Café. I sit near the gates to Saint Brigid's Cathedral and Round Tower. Tourist maps show me the way to St Brigid's Well, St Brigid's Church, and the Solas Bhríde Centre and Hermitage.

Kildare means church of oak. Kil, or Cil in Irish, means Church. Dare means Oak. Well that's Druids, isn't it. A marrying of the Old Ways and the new religion. A union. A peace accord. A settlement. A truce. A coming to terms with each other.

There's a little mini Brigid at the next table. She looks like a young version of the mural, with red flowing hair and peaches and cream complexion. She keeps escaping from her parents and running away, she looks about 18 months old, the age where parents don't get to sit down. She gurgles and laughs and is full of gorgeous cheekiness.

12.09 pm, St Brigid's Well, Kildare

Just a couple of miles to walk out of town to St Brigid's Well. I sit and soak in the peace, grateful for rest after a busy travel agenda.

I think of the snippets of Brigid's story that I have heard. How she asked the King of Leinster for as much land as her mantle, or cloak, would cover to build her monastery. He laughed and agreed. But her cloak stretched out to cover many acres, and it was seen as a miracle and her request was granted.

In my mind the mantle of Brigid is the green flower filled land in Spring. She is the bosom shaped hills such as the Paps of Anu. The Sovereignty Goddess who is the very land itself.

Here, at this well, remember what we can build when we work together with nature and the elements. Stone shapes the pool and a carved likeness of Brigid. The trickling water makes a song that harmonises with the beautiful song of birds. The gentle flow of visitors coming to look, and to drink in the peace, and to ask for some care and protection for their loved ones and help for their troubles.

I take my troubles of world news to her. She tells me that the craziness is like a boil that needs to come to a head and burst. "Like water, what has been beneath the surface and unseen, rises to the surface again to be seen by all. Hold onto the Spring and be a refuge of peace for people to come to be renewed and given hope again. Be at peace. Deep and fiercely and un-

negotiable be a peace. Irrepressible peace. Strength of peace."

We think of Brigid as gentleness and compassion. But I bet she was also fierce and strong. Unlike Mother Mary, I don't see her with a child in any of her depictions here in Kildare. I see her as the maiden, the fiery maiden. I think of Greta Thunberg.

Returning to town from St Brigid's Well I pass St Brigid's Church. There she is again, looking earnest, holding high her lantern, a larger-than-life statue of Brigid walking toward the church. She's looking keen. There's a sculpture of an acorn cut in half, showing the seed about to sprout. I'm thinking fertility, new growth.

About 3 pm, St Brigid's Cathedral

I walked around the Cathedral and came to the remains of the Fire Temple, where the perpetual fire burned until the 16th century, perhaps even from pre-Christian times.

Filled with reverence and awe, I was about to go down the 2 steps to sit on the seat within the area, but a crow squawked loudly from the trees behind me and stopped me in my steps.

"Squark, stop, you can't just walk into the Fire Temple just like that without proper preparation and process," said the crow.

I heard laughter from women's voices coming from somewhere over the stone wall, or through the veil in a misty time warp from another dimension.

"It is no light thing to enter the Fire Temple," their laughter seemed to say.

Stopped in my tracks. I listened, to the small, small, inner voice. The Abbess. The matronly mother figure Abbess appeared in my mind's eye, or my heart's senses.



"What do you come here for?

What Is your intention?

Are you prepared to have burnt away all that you no longer need?"

My mind plays out a scene of ceremony and ritual. I do walk into the open space and I stand in the centre where the fire had been. I could smell the ashes and smoke. I sense that I am being purified, like being smudged or a smoking ceremony. I receive blessings from the Abbess and nuns, in my mind, a welcome, an acknowledgement.

9 June 25 morning, Solas Bhride Centre and Hermitage, Kildare

Brigid's flame was relit in 1993, at the opening of an international justice and peace conference. A spark taken from that flame is still being tended in Solas Bhride, a Celtic Christian Spirituality Centre, which was opened in 1992 just near St Brigid's Well. The flame burns as a beacon of hope, justice and peace for our world. The vision of the Centre is to unfold the legacy of St Brigid and its relevance for our world.

In 2013 the Brigid's Way Celtic Pilgrimage was established, a 9 day walk from Brigid's birthplace in Faughart to her monastic community in Kildare. Work is currently underway to have this pilgrimage officially acknowledged with signage and a map.

In 2023 St Brigid's day became an official annual public holiday in Ireland.

A simple, small flame. A wick in oil, kept topped up. Carefully tended.

A walk.

An acorn.

From little things, big things grow.

From the small signs of Spring in the depth of winter at Imbolc, Brigid reminds us of turning seasons, of change, of hope.



*Brigid in Kildare photos, top to bottom: Brigid statue at St Brigid's well; Perpetual flame at Solas Bride Centre; Fire Temple at St Brigid's Cathedral
~ by Isabel Shapcott*



IMBOLC ~

The Festival of BRIGHID

~ Imbolc Shona Daoibh

I was born into the world during the first faint stirrings of Spring, Imbolc.

IMBOLC originates from the Celts and symbolizes a cross-quarter day on the Celtic Wheel of the Year. It is the halfway point between Winter Solstice - Alban Arthan (Yule) and the Spring Equinox - Alban Eilir (Ostara). The word Imbolc means in the belly of Mother Earth. The quickening the celebration of the end of winter. The first of the spring celebrations.

It is a time to give thanks for the growing daylight. The warmth of the growing sun begins to activate seeds deep within the Earth to germinate and sprout. The quickening pace of life emerging. Imbolc is also known as Saint Brigid's Day, Candlemass, feast of Torches, Feast of Pan and Oimelc.

Brighid or Bride was the daughter of the Dagda, the

oldest god in the Celtic pantheon Tuatha de Danann. She was the patroness of healing, poetry and smith-craft. A triple goddess and a solar deity. Her skills are all those associated with fire. Her attributes are light and inspiration. She is the benefactress of inner healing and vital energy. She was and continues to be known by many names; Bride, Bridey, Bridghid, Brigit, Briggida and Brigantia. I shall refer to her as Brighid. She is the lady of the Sacred Flame.

Brighid is also known as the Mistress of the Mantle, she represents the virgin aspect of the Great Goddess. Her totemic animals are the cow and the ewe. By Imbolc these animals would have birthed their young and be lactating. Milk was sacred food to the Celts and was valued for its purity and nourishment. The cow was symbolic of the sacredness of motherhood. Brighid was honoured as the Great Mother. She also has cor-

respondences with the rooster; herald of the new day and the snake; symbol of regeneration. It is the season to embrace the new. I believe the kookaburra is a totem for Brighid in the Southern Hemisphere as the bird heralds the new day.

The significance of Imbolc is the harbinger and indication of better times to come following the colder months. A celebration of The Return of the Light. In ancient pre-Christian times, in the British Isles, Imbolc observance was marked by preparing for a visit into their homes by crafting an effigy of the goddess from bundles of oats and rushes. This is known as a 'brideog' and is placed in a basket by the hearth. A time to light candles and welcome Brighid into your home to bless your hearth. In the Northern Hemisphere Imbolc is celebrated on February 1st or 2nd.

In the Southern Hemisphere we celebrate on the 1st or 2nd of August. The colours of Imbolc burst forth; Green for new life with eucalyptus and tree ferns sprout fresh new greenery. Gold for fire; Wattle flowers (*Acacia pycnantha*) begin blooming and our forests are bright with golden flowers. Until recently the first of August was "Wattle Day" in Australia (it has since been moved to the first day of September). Purple /blue hues for protection;

native violet (*Viola banksii*, formally known as *Viola hederacea*) put forth buds, and white for purity; the majestic King Orchid (**Dendrobium*speciosum* v *grandiflorum*) is in blossom. The quickening signifies the emergence of several butterfly species and the

start of migration events. Early August sees the last of the northbound Humpback Whales (**Megaptera novaeangliae**) on the east coast, while whales on the west coast are finishing their northern journey to birth their calves in the warm shallow tropical waters.

It is the season to embrace the new. Emphasis is on nurturing potential and protecting inner warmth as we transition from winter to spring. It is a time to light candles, plant seeds and set your intentions to lay the groundwork for the summer harvest. If you have a besom broom, it's a great time to cleanse your space - focusing on the hearth to symbolise a fresh start, lighting a fire to honour Brighid and crafting protective symbols from local materials.

Bright Blessings of hope and renewal Imbolc Shona daoibh

~ Catherine Eaglesham /\

The quickening signifies the emergence of several butterfly species and the start of migration events



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Brigid: Lady of the Sacred Flame
Druidry.org - Imbolc

Photos left page circle and above: *Viola_banksii* by Ian Sutton; Goddess statue by Isabel Shapcott



Animal Oracle by Vicki Minahan

After nearly eight years I am pleased to announce a project close to my heart has arrived with art by Helen Wells. Mountain Ash Animal Oracle is here. I grew up in The Strathbogie Ranges, Victoria, Australia and have been greatly influenced by both the environment and the lifestyle espoused by my parents and extended family. I currently live in Cockatoo, Australia, Victoria

With this book and accompanying cards I have incorporated family stories, autobiographical aspects, my spiritual experiences and scientific information for each animal. My hope is that this will help you to incorporate both the Apparent and Otherworldly aspects to aid you on your journey through life.





GODS WORK by Hildegard - Public Domain

The GREENING Power of a NUN who was like a DRUID

For many, *Saint Hildegard of Bingen* needs little introduction. She is one of the world's most celebrated medieval women. A visionary, composer, healer, scientist, abbess, and one of only four women to be named a Doctor of the Church. Yet beyond her legacy lies a worldview that feels surprisingly close to the ancient wisdom of Druidry.

BORN in 1098 in Bickelheim, Germany, beside the River Nahe, Hildegard grew up in the Rhineland, a region once inhabited by Celtic peoples before Roman and Christian influence. From the age of three, Hildegard experienced vivid visions, later describing them not as dreams but as encounters with the "Living Light." At the age of eight she entered into monastic life. She was a true mystic, someone who experienced the Divine directly through

inner revelation and profound spiritual insight.

At forty-two, Hildegard experienced a profound spiritual awakening and began recording her visions in *Scivias* ("Know the Ways"). She later founded two Benedictine monasteries, became a renowned healer and advisor to popes, kings and ordinary people alike, and died in 1179 at the age of eighty-one.

Although there is no historical evidence that Hildegard

was influenced by Druidry, many of her teachings closely parallel Druid philosophy. Her writings, music and artwork reveal a spirituality rooted in nature, creativity, healing and the living Earth.

Perhaps Hildegard's most famous contribution is the idea of **Viriditas**, a word she invented, Latin for "**Greening Power**." Viriditas is the divine life force flowing through all creation, the sacred energy that caused plants to grow, inspired creativity, healed illness, and drew every living being towards wholeness. She described it as the green sap within us; the vitality that keeps us spiritually alive. In her hymn "*O viridissima virga*", she writes:

**"And all things appeared
in full viridity."**

To Hildegard, sin was not simply breaking rules; it was becoming spiritually 'dry' and disconnected from life itself. When we lose our connection to nature, creativity, love and Spirit, we wither. When we reconnect, we become green once more.

Her concept of 'Greening Power' resonates deeply with Druidry, where Awen, flowing inspiration, animates all life and reminds us that humans are participants in nature rather than separate from it.

Hildegard saw the natural world as sacred scripture. Her visions overflow with fire, air, water and earth, not simply as physical elements but as expressions of Divine presence. She wrote:

**"I shine in the waters. I burn in the sun, the
moon, and the stars."**

As within Druidry, she understood that humanity exists within an interconnected web of life. Hildegard often describes the human being as a microcosm of

creation. In *Liber Divinorum Operum*, she writes:

**"Man, however, has within him heaven and
earth and all creation."**

She frequently compared the human soul to a tree. Just as sap nourishes every branch, the soul brings vitality to the whole person. One of her most famous illuminations depicts a great cosmic tree, a mandala of creation showing humanity held within an ever-living universe. Rather than being rulers over nature, we not separate but woven into its living fabric.

Hildegard frequently expresses spiritual truths through groups of three in Triads to express wholeness, balance, and the interconnectedness of creation. For example, she describes the three powers within a stone:

**"In a stone, there is moist greenness,
palpable strength and red
burning fire"**

Similarly, her image of the three wings in her song *O virtus Sapientiae* offers a profound vision of Divine Wisdom. One wing reaches into heaven, one flows from the earth, and one embraces all creation, symbolising the Divine as transcendent, present within nature, and active throughout the cosmos.

Hildegard's artwork is filled with circles, wheels, eggs and mandala-like forms that express the harmony and unity of creation. These sacred geometries mirror the symbolism found in Druidry, where circles represent wholeness, seasonal cycles and the interconnectedness of all beings. We are held within a living cosmos where everything belongs.

~ **Charlie Bigwood**, Western Australia

*Photos: Vineyard of the Benedictine Abbey of St. Hildegard;
Hildegard's Universe photo by Charlie*



The 24th Southern Hemisphere OBOD Assembly

Will be held on the South Australian coast, south of Adelaide

From **Thursday 29th April to Sunday 2nd May 2027**, right in time for Samhain.

Hosted by **Welkin, Wave and Wattle Seed Group**.

By the time this edition of SerpentStar comes out, all things going to plan, you'll be able to get all the information you need and book on the website.

Go to www.druidryaustralia.org and look for *Events*. But you'd better be quick, only 35 spaces are available.

THE WEAVING

a gathering of druid magic



only 1,5 hours from Frankfurt Airport

22-25 July 2027 Herbstein/Fulda, Germany

programme

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Opening the portal	Workshops Marketplace Spirit Web	Crafting our pluriversal magic	Closing the portal

- fireplaces - eisteddfod - magical druid evenings - concerts -



Sign up now and gain early access and reduced prices!

open for:
OBODies & friends



all languages welcome,
all paths honoured

weaving@obod.org

druidry-weaving.org

Would you like to engage more with fellow Southern Hemisphere OBODies?

CRAFTY Friday

is a new monthly event to do just that

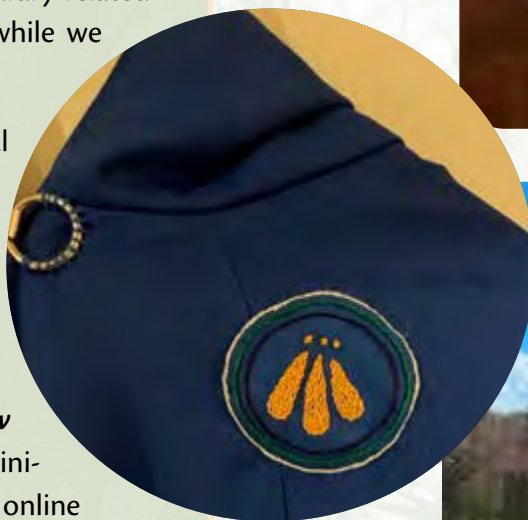
When and where: Every 3rd Friday of the month, on Zoom

How: In the comfort of your own home, bring your latest crafty project to work on while we talk. We can have a Druidry-related topic each month to explore while we work

Why: Given the geographical vastness of the Southern Hemisphere, Crafty Friday is a way to get to know one another and develop our fellowship in our online community

Six of us from Australia and New Zealand are championing this initiative. We have been meeting online for two years in an Ovate study group, so know the benefit of regular contact.

Contact Jan Knight-Walker knightwalker-jan@gmail.com for more information if you are interested in joining.



Here's a sample of some of the amazing craft created on Crafty Fridays by SHOBODies





How MAUI slowed the sun

One evening, Maui and his brothers were making a hangi for their evening meal. They had just finished heating the stones when the sun went down and it quickly became too dark to see. Maui was annoyed with having to eat his food in the dark. He stood in the light of the fire and addressed his people.

"Every day we have to rush to do our chores and gather our food before the sun sets. Why should we be slaves to the sun? I will catch the sun before it rises, and teach it to travel slowly across the sky!"

But one of the brothers was quick to criticise, not believing Maui could possibly do such a thing.

"It would be impossible to catch the sun, he's much bigger than any bird you've ever caught!"

"The heat and flames would surely burn you to death," said another.

"I think he's got sunstroke," another added, and they all laughed.

When they had quietened down, Maui took the sacred jawbone of his ancestor from his belt and waved it in the air.

"I have achieved many things that were thought impossible – gaining fire from Mahuika, catching the greatest fish in the world, descending to the underworld, and many more. With this magic jawbone, gifted by Murirangawhenua, and with your help, I will succeed in conquering the sun!"

The majority of the people agreed that Maui had achieved many great feats, they decided to help Maui in his quest.

The next day Maui and his brothers collected a huge amount of flax, Maui then taught them how to make flax ropes, a skill he learnt when he was in the underworld. They made square shaped ropes, tuamaka,

flat ropes, paharahara, and twisted the flax to make round ropes. After five days the ropes were completed and Maui said a special karakia over them.

"Taura nui, taura roa, taura kaha, taura toa, taura here i a Tamanuitera, whakamaui kia mau kia ita!"

During the night, Maui and his brothers hoisted the ropes and travelled towards the east to where the sun first rises. They hid under trees and bushes during the day, so the sun wouldn't see them approaching. They collected water in calabashes as they travelled, which Maui said was necessary for their task ahead.

On the twelfth night Maui and his brothers arrived at the edge of a huge, red-hot pit, dug deep into the ground. Inside the pit Tamanuitera, the sun, was sleeping. The brothers were silent, terrified at what might happen if he awoke. Maui immediately ordered his brothers to build four huts around the edges of the pit to hide their long ropes. In front of the huts they used water to soften the clay and build a wall to shelter them. Maui and his brothers then spread their flax ropes into a noose, only just finishing before dawn, when the sun was due to wake.

"When Tamanuitera rises and his head and shoulders are in the noose I will call for you to pull tight on the ropes," Maui instructed his brothers.

One of the brothers became worried and wanted to run while he still had time.

"Why are we doing this?" he asked another. "It's madness!"

"We'll be burnt alive, if we run now we might escape with our lives!"

The two brothers tried to sneak away but Maui caught sight of them through the corner of his eye.

"If you run now the sun will see you when he rises from his pit. You will be the first ones to die. There is no turning back!"

The brothers had no time to answer. The sun had begun to wake and was rising from the pit. They quickly ran back to their huts grabbed hold of their ropes and hid behind the wall of clay, trembling as they waited for Maui's orders. Maui hid and watched.

Tamanuitera slowly emerged from the deep pit, not knowing that a trap was set for him. His head went

through the noose and then his shoulders. Maui suddenly jumped from his hut and yelled to his brothers, "Pull on the ropes, now!"

At first the brothers were too scared to come out. Maui yelled again, "Quickly, before it's too late, and we are scorched to death!"

Just then the sun peered down to the edges of the pit and saw Maui standing before him. Tamanuitera was furious. He hurled a ball of fire towards Maui, but Maui ducked, holding tightly to his rope and once more chanting his karakia:

"Taura nui, taura roa, taura kaha, taura toa, taura here i a Tamanuitera, whakamaui kia mau kia ita!"

The brothers jumped from their hiding places, grabbing their ropes just before Tamanuitera could free himself from the noose.

"Aaaarrhhh!" the sun roared in anger.

Maui fought off the intense heat and moved to the edge of the pit. He raised his magic jawbone above his head and brought it down hard on the sun. The magic forces from the jawbone flashed like a bolt of lightning.

"Why are you doing this to me?" Cried Tamanuitera.

"From now on you will travel slowly across the sky, never again will the length of our day be dictated by you," Maui replied.

Tamanuitera tried to struggle free, but again, Maui showed him the power of his magic jawbone. And Tamanuitera finally gave up the fight.

Maui instructed his brothers to let go of their ropes. Tamanuitera travelled slowly up into the sky, tired and beaten.

The days became longer for Maui and his people, giving them plenty of time to fish, gather food and do their chores. Maui's power and ability could never be questioned again, he had succeeded in taming the sun. From that day until this, Tamanuitera has always travelled slowly across the sky.

And this is the story of how Maui slowed the sun.

~ **Tamzin Rae.** Many years ago I designed a series of legend paintings, one of which was Maui and Mahuika which I have included in with this story

SHOBOD *Communities*

The WINDHARP Grove, the Wrenne Pagan CHOIR & Ancient Orchard MAGIC

~ by Adrienne K Piggott

A YEAR ago at Imbolc the Windharp Grove hosted a day of workshops and connection in the Adelaide Hills. We joined together with likeminded community to honour the creativity of Brigid and delve into subjects that stirred our imagination and fired our curiosity. Among a few of the workshops was a fascinating discussion from Molecular Biologist Dr Paul Gooding on *Ancestral DNA*, Dr Kate Broderick

gave a wonderful talk on *The Power of Herbs*, Medicine for the whole being, and then we finished the day with a singing workshop. From that singing workshop *The Wrenne Pagan Choir* was born. Since its inception the choir has steadily grown and they had their first official 'sing out' at Summer Solstice 2025. Recently The Wrenne Choir joined pagan band Spiral Dance in the recording studio to sing on the final choruses on Spiral's latest song release - *The Wrenne Wassail*.



Ancient Orchard MAGIC

While the northern hemisphere is enjoying the summer's riot of growth and warmth, here in the Adelaide Hills in South Australia, the air is crisp, the nights are cold and frost is gathering on the branches of the trees. As Mother Nature slows and turns inward, we too look to the seasonal calendar and its ancient customs to mark the turning of the wheel of the year. Wassailing is one of my favourite winter customs, it can be celebrated wherever apple trees grow. Whether you tend a sprawling orchard or simply cherish a favourite fruit tree in your garden, all you need is a little cider, some toast, a collection of pots and pans, your singing voices, and a spirit of celebration.

This ancient tradition of Wassailing originally comes from the cider producing regions of the West Country in England and happens every year on or around Twelfth night. The word wassail derives from the Anglo-Saxon greeting *waes hael*,

meaning "be whole" or "be healthy", a toast not only to the orchard but also to friends, neighbours and the year to come.

Custom dictates that pieces of toast, dipped in cider, are placed among the branches as an offering to the trees. Cider is poured around their roots to nourish and honour them, while songs are sung to awaken their spirits. Surrounded by laughter, music and the clatter of drums and pans, the gathered wassailers celebrate a tradition that connects people to the land, the seasons and each other.

In a world increasingly detached from seasonal rhythms, Wassailing is a way to pause and participate in an ancient earth-centred rite. So in winter when Jack Frost starts to nip, grab your drums, pots and pans, your friends and head to your nearest apple trees. Wassail!!!

Available on Bandcamp: <https://spiraldance.bandcamp.com/track/wrenne-wassail>



BARDS' Page ~



Public Art , Aberystwyth,

My Ancestors and I

~ by Deborah Rose Halani

I sing the song of my ancestors
Each breath forced
With their words

I speak the words of my ancestors
Each breath imbued
With love

I see through the eyes of my ancestors
Each landscape scarred
With its footsteps

I sense the spirit of my ancestors
All messages received
With a tangible essence

I feel the presence of my ancestors
Energy all around
With sadness and joy

I hear the sound of my ancestors
In silence we sit
With knowledge in abundance

I walk to the beat of my ancestors
In rhythm we stride
With united strength

I dance to the music of my ancestors
Swirling and swaying
With the wind at my back

I am one with my ancestors
In silence we pray
With no words

Garden for a Spell

~ by Dawn McKenzie

Life will give you lemons even though you
planted oak.

You grew up thinking one thing and it went all
up in smoke.

The crisis of identity is something else, so you
garden for a spell.

I just don't dig it, cos I deal with the weeds
Under the shade of my compost heap.

I'm in a pickle so I need to preserve
My vegetable garden and sanity first.

I'm gonna dig it, get down on my knees.
Down by the fence I'll be planting seeds.
I've got a game plan and some help so Divine.
My rite of passage, clearly defined.

I like to dig in so I'm not going to fail
Under the sun going plot to plate.
I don't mind lemons, I'm making lemonade,
All year around in my green tinged glade.

Life will give you lemons even though you
planted oak.

You grew up thinking one thing and it went all
up in smoke.

The crisis of identity is something else, so you
garden for a spell.



Wales

NEW Outlook

~ by Dawn McKenzie

Living in a shadow of a story
of my own making
I am slowly emerging.

Seeking light, finding peace,
How courageous, this new outlook.
Light increases, new roots, new trunk, new leaves.

Seeking how, finding why,
how courageous, this new outlook.
Life increases, new boots, new map, new world.

Living as a brave Bard in a story
of my own making
I am newly emerging. The Moon feeling jaunty,
her solemnness eclipsed.

Druids!

~ by Dawn McKenzie

This is what Druids mean to me,
Land, sea, sky, nature and trees,
A bit of magic, a cup of tea,
Creating art, whatever you please.

This is what Druids mean to me,
Rituals together, community.
Coming from the north, south, west and east,
Awen sharing, radiating peace.

IF YOU would like to sing along to Dawn's songs, or simply listen to them, here are links to recordings on Soundcloud . . . And you're welcome to share!

New Outlook [on.soundcloud.com/DxfK48CGzBLaj9NwMy](https://soundcloud.com/DxfK48CGzBLaj9NwMy)

Garden for a Spell [on.soundcloud.com/xuaUMp7aWw6GEQEo8V](https://soundcloud.com/xuaUMp7aWw6GEQEo8V)

Druids! [on.soundcloud.com/LcR1hnn8E5YBr24Ju0](https://soundcloud.com/LcR1hnn8E5YBr24Ju0)

A TRUE Story about the GREAT GOD PAN

This might not be what you would usually be interested in, but it was my introduction to the supernatural,

February 6th, 2011, Province of Québec:

After a six-hour long near-death experience (in which I entered a state of indescribable communion with the Great God Pan in his highest cosmic form, looking as if he was made of all of the stars and galaxies in the Universe), my mother told me that the first time she came to visit me at the hospital, right after surgery when I was practically comatose, she clearly heard her sister's voice in the room with us. My aunt was telling her "I'm so sorry, I was so selfish, I'm so sorry..." over and over

again. That freaked my mother the f**k out, so much so that she was still very deeply disturbed even a year afterwards.

I naturally DIDN'T tell her about my whole experience on the other side, the part where Pan looked at me from the corner of his eye and smiled upon me knowingly, and I then fell into his endlessly spiralling ram's horns, literally made of the fabric of the cosmos, and ended up walking down a spiral staircase made of black stone. Not a proper staircase really, simply steps made of probably onyx, floating above oblivion. After quite some time walking down the onyx steps, I found my aunt completely listless on the stairs

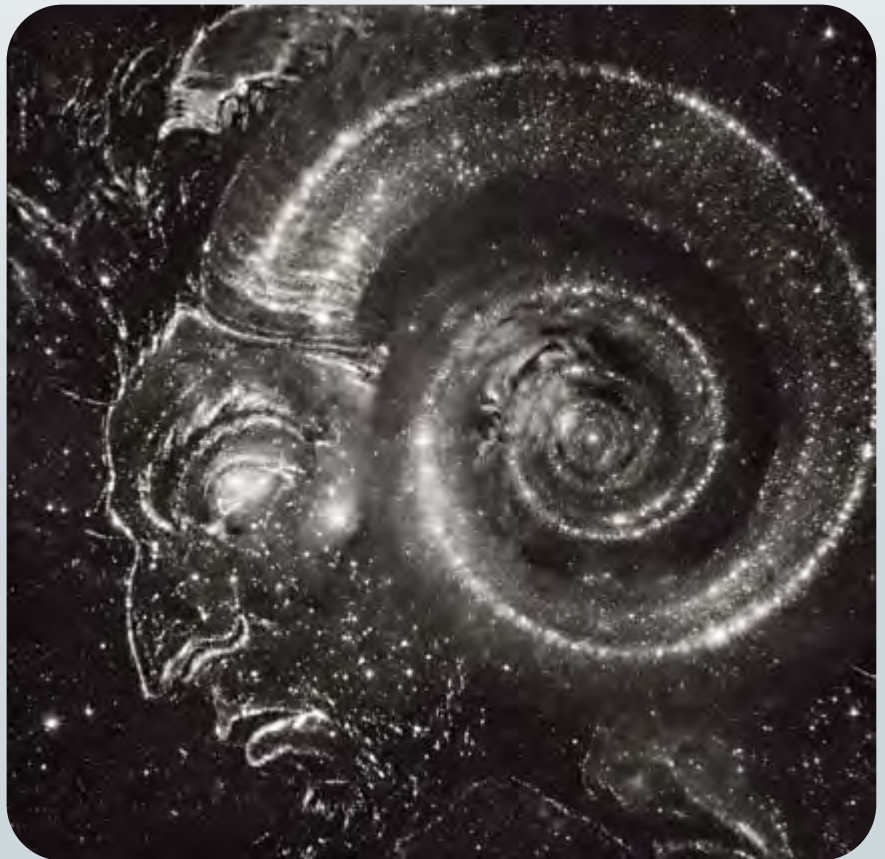
(she had violently put an end to her life five years earlier), and she said “I’m more lost than ever, this is the Abyss, I’m more lost than ever”. Without thinking, I took her hand and replied “You’re not lost anymore, I’ve found you.” She looked up, her eyes full of life again, and that was it, next thing I remember was waking up at the hospital days later.

About a month later, I was at the public library, when I noticed a tall, young, beautiful woman looking at me, smiling. She looked familiar, but I couldn’t remember who she was. It suddenly hit me that she obviously was my aunt, looking as she did in my childhood, when she was in her twenties. When I turned around, she literally disappeared. I rationalized it as an unintentional “Orpheus travelling to the Underworld to rescue the soul of a loved one” sort of journey. In this day and age, for f**k’s sake. I haven’t seen her since.

And my life now, from waking to sleep, is devoted to the mysteries of Pan.

~ by JB

This is a picture I made of what I saw:



Call out for CONTRIBUTIONS

SerpentSTAR is always on the lookout for contributions from those on the OBOD path . . .

OUR next edition is **BELTANE**.
The first signs that Summer is on its way and beginning to emerge.

The DEADLINE is the 18th October.

- What does this **time of the year** look like where you live?
- Does your **Grove or Seed group** celebrate in any particular way, or do you have a certain solo practice?
- Do you have any other **news or events, stories**

or **snippets** that you think other SHOBODies might like?

- A **story** from your part of the world?
- **Poetry** for our Bard’s Page?
- **Craft** ideas we may like to make?
- A **review** of a favourite book, music, website or podcast?

SUBMISSIONS are welcome as **prose, poetry, art, paintings, drawings, images, photos, videos** for Facebook or however your creativity seeks to express?

We look forward to your contributions!

DEBORAH ROSE HĀLANI

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Creator of Ancient Wisdom Oracle Deck

Course Guide Online Welsh Druidry

Founder & Guide of Sacred Druids Tour



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OBOD in the Southern Hemisphere

Groves & Seed Groups

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

The Blue Mountains Grove

The Blue Mountains Grove holds regular public gatherings in Katoomba at the Blue Mountains Organic Community Gardens for the eight seasonal festivals of the wheel of the year. See our Facebook group for more information. This is open to anyone to come along, not just OBOD members. There are also private OBOD members only gatherings, but please come to the public gatherings to get to know the group first.

Email: thebluemountainsseedgroup@gmail.com
Facebook: Friends of the Blue Mountains Seed Group

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 two new Bards and one relatively new Bard. 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, and we will be holding out first group Alban. Full moon meditations are conducted for peace and harmony.

Email Debby at triskel@mweb.co.za for details.

Druid Pilgrim Grove

We are a grove of wayfaring and friendly OBODies who are happy to support those seeking to engage with pilgrimage as part of their druid practice. We have members around Australia and NZ. A number of us are happy to meet up with pilgrims as they travel close to us.

Contact danuta@adruid.com

FB: Druid Pilgrim is a Facebook group that engages with people interested in exploring pilgrimage and druidry. It also acts as a 'Friends of' space for those interested in connecting with Druid Pilgrim Grove.

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

Macadamia Grove

Macadamia Grove includes OBOD members from South-East Queensland and Northern New South Wales. 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
or join our FB Group 'Friends of OBOD Macadamia Grove'

The Melbourne Grove

Celebrating the seasons in a cycle around Melbourne.

Contact: Elkie: elkiwhite@gmail.com
Facebook: Friends of The Melbourne Grove

Treesong Forest Seed Group

Based in Tasmania, formed online during lockdown.
Contact: knightwalkerjan@gmail.com

The Willows

The Willows are members of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids. The Willow, sacred to the Moon and Waters has long been associated with liminal spaces in Celtic and Druid lore. To this seed group

willow represents the introduction of Druidry to a land that continues to carry ancestors and cultural knowledge of the oldest continuing culture in the world. We welcome all caretakers of this land to join us throughout South Australia in learning to listen as nature speaks.

We are a small group meeting in the Adelaide Hills and Victor Harbor. We are a study group, book club and get together for lunch on occasion.

Contact Janine.Hartley@bigpond.com or search for The Willows OBOD FaceBook page

The Windharp Grove

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 Sarah or Adrienne:
thewindharpgrove@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

OBOD Worldwide

OBOD.org: www.druidry.org

Druid Hearth: <https://hearth.druidry.org>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/druidry

Instagram: www.instagram.com/oboddruidry

TikTok: www.tiktok.com/@oboddruidry

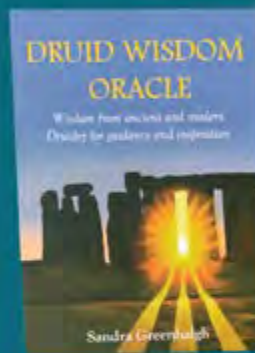
Threads: www.threads.com/@oboddruidry

Druid Wisdom Oracle cards

Available on ETSY

[https://www.etsy.com/au/listing/](https://www.etsy.com/au/listing/687481261/druid-wisdom-oracle)

687481261/druid-wisdom-oracle



Byrningtyger@gmail.com

Pan's Script - Astronumerology by Elkie White

Pan's Script, the Book will help you to understand yourself by teaching you how to analyze your birth data: your date, place and time of birth and the name you were originally given. Instead of selling yourself short, astronumerology encourages you to embrace your full potential. Available from [Balboa Press](#).



Pan's Script, Individualized Reports: Whilst the book teaches people how to analyse and interpret birth data in general, your individualized report does all of the work for you: entirely personalized and outstanding value at \$125.

Facebook: [Pan's Script](#), for posts about current research projects

All enquiries: elkiewhite@gmail.com

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.

Please let us know if your ad needs updating or renewing

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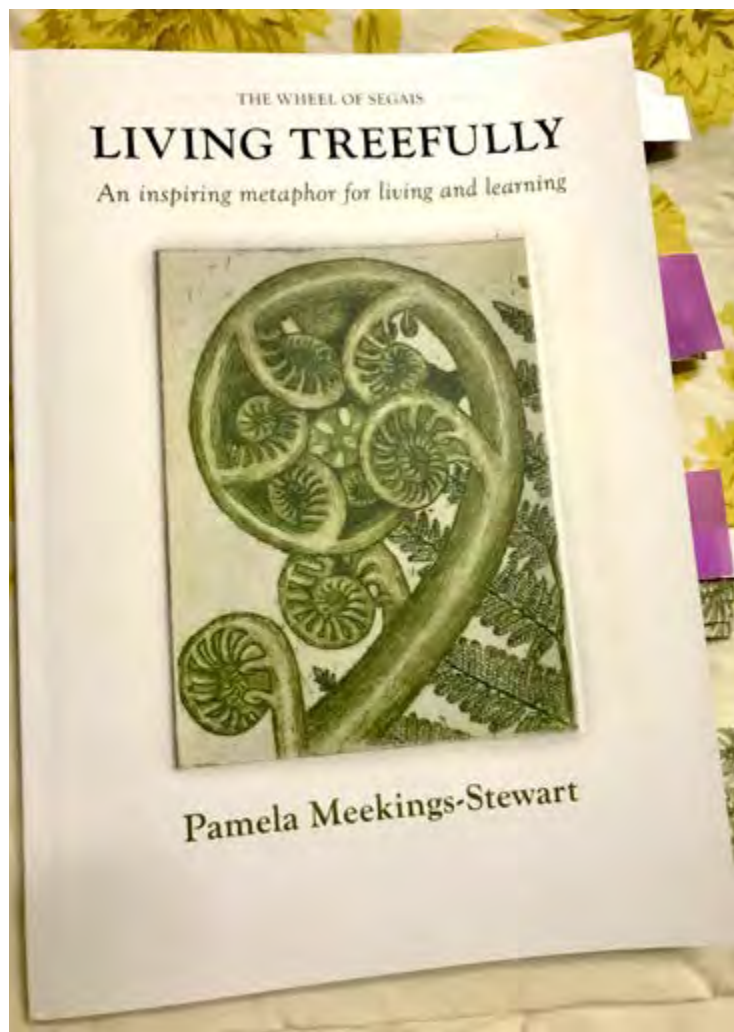


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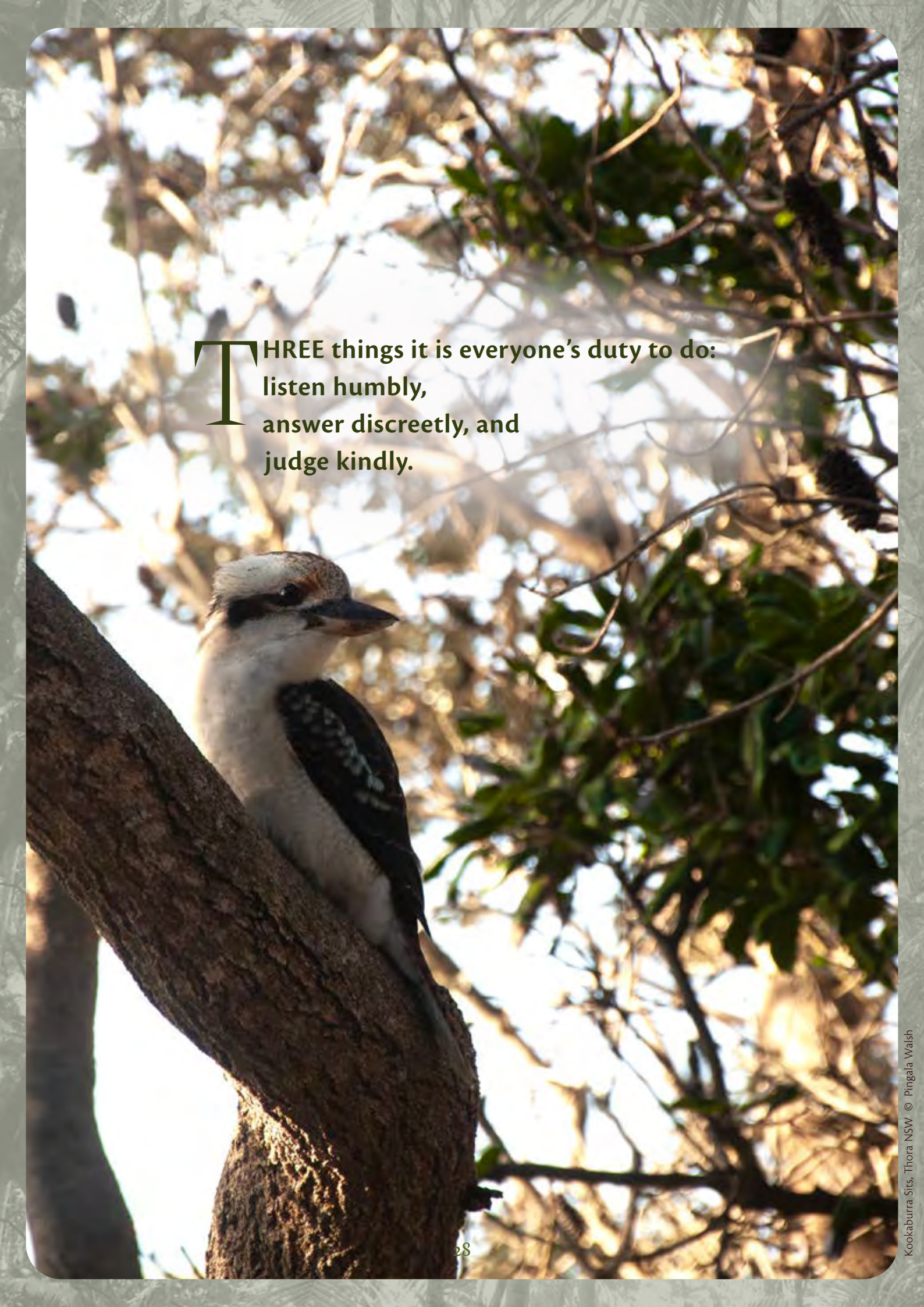
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A woodpecker with a white head and back, and a black and white patterned wing, is perched on a thick, textured tree branch. The background is a soft-focus view of a tree with green and yellowing leaves, suggesting an autumn setting. The lighting is warm and natural.

THREE things it is everyone's duty to do:
listen humbly,
answer discreetly, and
judge kindly.