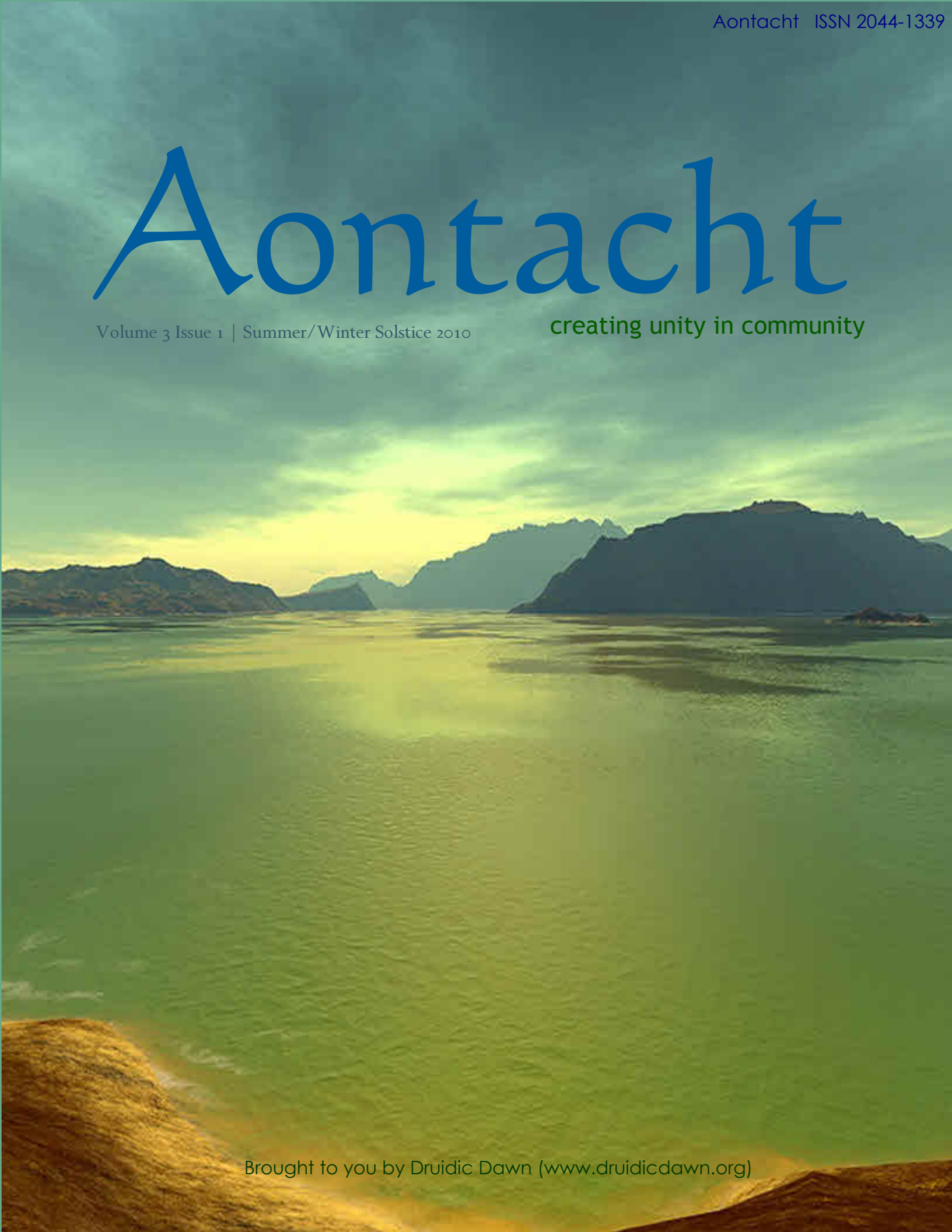


# Aontacht

Volume 3 Issue 1 | Summer/Winter Solstice 2010

creating unity in community





# aontacht

creating unity in community

*Volume 3, Issue 1*

*Summer - Winter Solstice 2010*

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# aontacht

creating unity in community

Volume 3, Issue 1  
 "The Wild Earth"  
 Summer/Winter Solstice 2010

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## Advertising

At the moment we are not offering ad space. However, this is subject to change.

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## Environmental Benefits Statement

*Aontacht* magazine is only available online as a free .pdf download; thereby saving trees, water, solid waste and greenhouse gases. It is designed on an Energy Star rated computer.

Opinions and views expressed are not necessarily those of the editors, publisher or staff.

# Contributors



**Wyverne** was born in rural South Australia. In 1979 she began living self-sufficiently out in the mallee scrub, with kangaroos and eagles for company. This has enabled her to connect with the land in a way that optimizes her psychic experience. Druidry has enhanced this even more and shown her ways to actively help in the healing of the planet. Perfecting this kind of magic and sharing her perspective in a wide variety of written expressions is the main work Wyverne does as a Druid. She is an independent Celtic Scholar, a member of OBOD, the Rosicrucians and Mensa.

**Dr. Kenneth Proefrock** has been a practicing Naturopathic Physician since 1996 and currently serves as Vice-President for the North American Board of Naturopathic Examiners (NABNE) and chairperson for the biochemistry portion of the Naturopathic Physician's Licensing Exam (NPLEX). He is a member of the Council of Elders and current President of the Order of WhiteOak, a Celtic Reconstructionist Druid Order. He has been a member of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids since 1994 and achieved the rank of Ovate in 2001. He is also a member of the Ancient Order of Druids in America (AODA). He is happily married, living in the rural desert of the Southwest United States with five children.



**Julie Hillman (Little Owl)** lives in the wilds of the Llyn Peninsula, North Wales. She has been an OBOD member for about 8 years, currently studying the ovate grade. Her main interests are gardening and sewing, she also enjoys reading. She works as a self-employed complementary therapist.

# Contributors



**Gillian Monks (Aelwyd)** lives in the Nantlle Valley, in Gwynedd, North Wales. She is a Quaker, Theosophist, practicing Holistic Aromatherapist and the Grove Mother of *Cylch Blodeuwedd*. Gillian also regularly runs a series of workshops called “Earthwalking” from her home about practical Celtic spirituality for everyday life.

**Richard Fox (Renard)** is an earth magick practitioner, fire mage and a warrior poet who lived mostly outdoors in the forests of the U.S. for more than 18 years. During that time he planted more than 700,000 trees and supervised the planting of more than 26,000,000 additional trees. Today he works with Native Americans from 14 tribes on major renewable energy projects, including solar heating and electric and wind turbines with a base among the Lakota on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations in South Dakota.



**Jenn MacCormack (Eadha)** divides her time between central North Carolina, USA, and Gwynedd, North Wales. She studies Psychology and Welsh Studies, and is proud to be a fluent Welsh speaker. Her major interests are the Mabinogi, Archetypal Psychology, gardening, poetry, singing stories, the Welsh pibau cyrn (bagpipes) and self-sufficiency.

She is the current editor for *Aontacht*.

**Jason Kirkey** is the author of *The Salmon in the Spring: The Ecology of Celtic Spirituality*, as well as several books of poetry. He currently lives in San Francisco where he runs Hiraeth Press and Dinnseanachas, an organization dedicated to ecological wisdom. In May 2010, Jason will graduate from the California Institute of Integral Studies with an MA in Philosophy and Religion.



## Editorial Notes

You do not have to be a member of the Druidic Dawn community to submit to the newsletter.

Please submit contributions directly to the editorial staff via email to:  
[aontacht@druidicdawn.org](mailto:aontacht@druidicdawn.org)

Refer to the last page of this issue for writer’s guidelines and even more information, before you submit inquiries or contributions.

Below are our upcoming issues. Be sure to specify to which you are submitting.

### Volume 3, Issue 2, “Sovereignty”

**Deadline Aug 15, 2010**

The Celts understood the Wild Earth as sovereign, as a goddess; what is sovereignty and how can we apply this to our everyday life?

### Volume 3, Issue 3, “Celtic Cosmos”

**Deadline Nov 15, 2010**

The Celts viewed the Cosmos as an ensouled, relational universe; how do we observe and relate to the universe in a participatory way?

### Volume 3, Issue 4 “Hiraeth”

**Deadline Feb 15, 2011**

The Celts experienced longing as the desire for homeland, re-union, and belonging; how do we relate to and express our own longings? And for those of us not living in Celtic lands, how does *hiraeth* play a part in our spirituality?.

# Contributors

## Production Team Positions Available:

### "Wild Earth" Feature Editor

The "Wild Earth" Feature Editor will manage our newest forthcoming feature on "Wild Earth". This position would entail writing a short, succinct and relevant piece on any number of topics related to the Earth for each issue. We are looking for diversity of experience and understanding, as well as a clear writing style that is both intelligent and practical. It is possible that if the individual is unable or uncomfortable with writing regularly, instead he or she may procure an appropriate submission on an eco-related theme each issue. The Production Team is flexible and interested in working with the Feature Editor in developing the "Wild Earth" feature into something fresh and unique. For more details on the "Wild Earth" Feature Editor position and what it involves, please contact us at the email below.

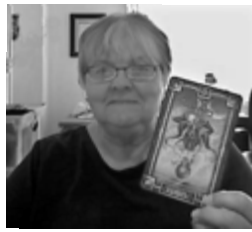
### "Bardic Whispers" Feature Editor

A volunteer position as "Bardic Whispers" Feature Editor is now available. This role is as editor for our poetry feature "Bardic Whispers". Do you enjoy poetry and the written word? Do you write poetry yourself? Are you interested in the Bardic Arts? Are you interested in contributing to the future of Celtic creativity? If interested in applying or would like more details, please contact us at the email below.

[aontacht@druidicdawn.org](mailto:aontacht@druidicdawn.org)

Or

[DDaontacht@gmail.com](mailto:DDaontacht@gmail.com)



**Nancy Hendrickson** is a Tarot reader and Spiritual Journey Facilitator, available for consultations at [TarotExplorer.com](http://TarotExplorer.com)

**Dafydd Monks (CalonDdraig)** lives in Gwynedd, North Wales. He is a student of Herbal Medicine and has a strong interest in the Welsh language, the Welsh tradition of Druidry, and their place in the 21st century



**Maya St. Clair (Cuardai)** resides in Kuwait, is an Irish Polytheist, and a mechanical engineer with a love of history, mythology and culture. She is editor of the *Orán Mór*, the official newsletter of the New Order of Druids. She also serves on their Council. Maya is an Irish Gaelic student and regularly writes a wide variety of articles and book reviews on Celtic and religious topics.

**Nigel Dailey (Astrocelt)** resides in North Wales and has a variety of interests ranging from Archaeology, Anthropology, Archaeoastronomy, Astrology, Druidry, History, Mythology and Smallholding. All has been gained while traveling through the journey human beings call "life."





## From the Desk ...

Letter from the Aontacht Production Team

by Jenn MacCormack

*'Find your place on the planet. Dig in, and take responsibility from there.' -- Gary Snyder*

Our planet is a wild place, no matter how much we think we can civilize her. In much the same way, our souls never cease being creatures of the wild, of the Earth. In this issue, we introduce our newest feature 'Wild Earth' (focusing on various Earth-related topics) by dedicating this whole issue to the subject. You will find one of our most interesting interviews yet with DD member Wyverne, who explores her connection with the wild land and our role as modern druids in the wider Earth Community. There are also articles, poems, a fabulous mead recipe, book reviews--including a tarot/oracle cards review. I would like to point out that Kenneth's superb article on Wildcrafted Spirituality is only the first part of three such pieces--and you can expect the second and third installments in our new 'Wild Earth' feature in issues to come!

It is with great joy too that we introduce to you the newest *Aontacht* Production Team member -- Renard -- as our Co-Editor. He brings with him a deep experiential knowledge of the land, having lived mostly outdoors in forests for over 18 years. His passion for ethical creativity manifests in his poetry, through which his love affair with the Earth shines. Renard also works professionally with many different Native American peoples, so brings with him a respect for diversity that is the

essence of *Aontacht*. In his capacity as Co-Editor, Renard will manage our main feature -- the Interview; this issue, he did an admirable job working with Wyverne.

I would also like to extend my soul-felt thanks to Morri, on behalf of the Production Team, who has worked with honour and diligence as *Aontacht's* Graphic Designer. She contributed beauty and refinement to both our Team and the Magazine. This will be her last issue with us.

On that note, *Aontacht* needs more volunteers. We are looking for a Poetry Editor, a Wild Earth Editor, and now a Graphic Designer. If you have some spare time or would like to contribute to a worthy project, please consider applying for a position in *Aontacht*. You can contact us at: [aontacht@druidicdawn.org](mailto:aontacht@druidicdawn.org)

Where-ever you are in the world, may your Midsummer or Midwinter fires burn bright, clear and true.

*bendithion y ddaer!*

Blessings of the earth,

Jenn



# Keeping Up With the Project Team

Welcome to Summer & Winter of 2010. A lot has been happening at Druidic Dawn, and we like to keep our readers updated on what's going on.

## On Site

Welcome to the third solar quarter of 2010! The last quarter brought an additional feature to the Fraternal Druids menu. This being a Fraternal Lodge index, which is being populated with various Druid Orders from around the world. If you are interested in contributing to this further then Mythagobaz would like to hear from you via the community message facility on the website.

The Canadian Celtic Gathering website has been updated in preparation for the 2011 event. Speakers' interested in sharing their knowledge of specific Celtic and Druidic subjects are encouraged to visit the web page on the main site.

## Druidic Dawn working in the Community

Mother Earth's recent Icelandic sneeze resulted in an ash cloud which affected travellers in the Northern Hemisphere across Europe and beyond. Subsequently the representative from the Management Team was unable to attend the Assembly in Australia or present the talk and discussion as previously requested. All is not lost; as another trip has been rescheduled to cover the Southern Summer Solstice.

The Canadian Celtic Gathering team is beginning to be motivated with the early stages of planning for the 2011 event. As per usual, the event and theme are in the hands of the team concerned, which is being sponsored by Druidic Dawn CIC. It is open to all members of this community and interested parties. If anyone would like to assist or has a suggestion for the event, you are encouraged to contact the team at [celticgatherings@druidicdawn.org](mailto:celticgatherings@druidicdawn.org)

A member of the Management Team will be giving a presentation at the forthcoming Druid Network conference in November 2010. Further details are available on the main website and our current issue of *Aontacht*.

## Druidic Dawn behind the Scenes

The *Aontacht* Production Team continues to be very active behind the scenes, producing this wonderful magazine for everyone. The inspiration of the founding Editor continues in its excellence and in the spirit on which it was founded. *Aontacht* commences its third year continuing to grow its internet readership. Additionally it has achieved its own International Standard Serial Number (ISSN). This is not just proudly displayed on the front cover, but also available digitally, from the British Library within the U.K.

The Production Team has several volunteer vacancies' available which are advertised in this issue. If you have time to spare and wish to actively be of service to this and the greater Celtic and Druid internet community. The Poetry and Wild Earth feature positions could be just the ticket you are looking for.

On a different note; the Management Team will soon commence producing an unbiased document derived from the comments posted to the Druidic Values Thread. This will remain open for community members to contribute their thoughts and values. By doing so it will ensure they become considered and included in the first or second draft. Once completed and published, all additional revisions will be included on annual basis.

In the meantime, the Management Team continues to work on various exciting projects which are to be introduced and announced on the main website in due course.

*Druidic Dawn Management Team*



HOUSE OF  
DANU

Presents Its Annual

# GORSEDD

for the Festival of Lughnasadh

July 30 through August 2, 2010  
In the Redwoods overlooking Monterey Bay

Come join Pagans from throughout the world who gather to celebrate Druid culture in Northern California!

Four days and three nights of Druid workshops, dancing, chanting, drumming, nightly Bardic campfires, a rousing Eisteddfod nestled in a Redwood grove, capped by a grand procession and ritual celebrating Lughnasadh that you help create.

Registration fees include all events, workshops, eight meals prepared by Buddhist wedding chefs, and lodging.

Camping: \$277 • Bunk in cabin: \$337

Space is limited, so register early!

[www.houseofdanu.com](http://www.houseofdanu.com)

The House of Danu is an alliance of California Druid Groves and Seed Groups of the Order of Bards, Ovates, and Druids (OBOD). Membership in the OBOD is not required—just an interest in exploring Druid culture.



*Nemetona* (black & white) by Deborah Holman  
<http://www.deborah.holman.btinternet.co.uk/>

## *Expressions of Druidry*

A presentation of contemporary Druidry with speakers, workshops and performances

Facilitated by  
The Druid Network

*Saturday 20th November 2010*  
'between ten and ten'

The Bilberry Hill Centre, Lickey,  
West Midlands, UK. B45 8RT

Day Entry £12.50 for adults  
£1.00 for children 5-16

Good Vegan Food!

Limited, basic, dormitory accommodation available by prior reservation £12.50 per person.

Day entry available at the door.

More Information and  
Online Booking at  
<http://druidnetwork.org/en/conference>

Talks including  
Druidry in Education  
The Brythonic Tradition  
Crafting a Grove  
Awen and the Creative Impulse  
Magic in Druidry  
And more!!!

Come and share and network and listen  
and speak and eat and laugh and sing..

## The DD Q&A: **Wyverne**



*by the Druidic Dawn Community*

**Wyverne** was born a baby boomer, in rural South Australia and reached the city in her early teens. She was a shy kid, deeply absorbed in her inner experience, and found herself alienated and disoriented, in a society whose problems overwhelmed her. Her emerging spirituality and her psychic awareness were frightening, for as long as our culture declared them symptoms of insanity, so she didn't find her feet until the New Age dawned, and the pagan revivals began to allow naturally fey people their validity.

In 1979 Wyverne began living self-sufficiently way out in the mallee scrub, with kangaroos and eagles for company. This has enabled her to connect with the land in a way that optimizes her psychic experience. Druidry has enhanced this even more and shown her ways to actively help in the healing of the planet. Perfecting this kind of magic is the main work Wyverne does as a Druid. She is an independent Celtic Scholar, a member of OBOD, the Rosicrucians and Mensa, the high IQ society.

**DD:** Thank you, Wyverne, for taking the time to answer our questions. First off, could you tell us a bit about how your spiritual journey began, and how you become involved with modern Druidry?

**Wyverne:** My atheist parents forced me to find the numinous within the mundane, and I've never developed a sense of a separate, extrinsic spirituality. My father passed on to me the easy familiarity with the bush which gave me an entrée into the spirit-worlds of nature as my psychic abilities emerged. My mother taught me flower-gardening along with the fairy lore inherited from her mother. Her mother had been 'fey', which in the 1950s was considered 'nutty' and she'd been hospitalized for it. She lost patience and soon checked herself out and went back to her fairy garden where she was happy, though 'nutty', till she died. I inherited this 'family madness', fortunately at a time when New Age understanding was redefining it as valid psychic perception. An astral contact persuaded me to join a group that would offer me psychic protection and help with managing my psychic experience. I chose the Rosicrucians, and through it, I found Philip Carr Gomm's Elements of Druidry, which hit so many of the right keys for me that I've been an enthusiastic OBOD member ever since.

**DD:** As someone who lives in the Southern Hemisphere, how do you harmonize a Celtic spirituality (based in northern European seasons) with the seasons and cycles of your homeland? Does this influence how you celebrate the Celtic/Druid/Pagan festivals at all (and which do you celebrate anyway)?

**Wyverne:** I'm conscious not so much of successfully harmonizing, but of finding ways to deal creatively with a lack of natural harmony. I bring a disrupted inheritance from my ancestral homelands, and lineages – Munster Irish and English with generous input from travelers and tinkers - so there is conscious peace-process going on within me that parallels the peace-process now happening in the outer world among these peoples. And also, the narrative of the land is disrupted. Most of its ghosts, fairies and spirit beings are aborigines, dispossessed or in danger of it, following the cultural devastation of the European invasion. So reconciliation, peace process and 'sorry' politics are a necessary feature of a druid practice built on the old homelands of these devastated peoples, out of the fragmented resources of my own heritage. There's ecological disruption too – our native ecosystems are seriously shocked. These are the conditions into which we're introducing our Celtic based ritual and ceremony, and it's our job to come up with a magical practice that meets the needs of our land for healing and reconciliation on every level.

The climate at Wyeuro is temperate, but only in the garden do the signs so treasured in Europe appear here – autumn leaves and spring blossoms, for example. So emphases shift; you learn to feel the rising energies of the land, even when other signs are too subtle to note. Apart from extemporaneous special ceremonies, Wyeuro does fairly regular OBOD style ritual and it's amazing how naturally and easily it flows when we substitute the native animals at the four quarters for traditional Bardic ones. The Devas are there and in-

formed, raring to go. The land is ready and waiting for this – on the astral plane, for example, the infrastructure was in place before we even arrived!

**DD:** How does indigenous knowledge of the land and its stories integrate with your contemporary Druidry? Have you found any parallels between the Celtic and Aboriginal views of the earth and cosmos?

**Wyverne:** I grew up in rural South Australia, so it's inevitable that my Druidry would incorporate indigenous views of the land. Even without a conscientious effort to understand them, they permeate my worldview. There are parallels, but the differences are more interesting to me. The aboriginal worldviews offer an interpretation of reality in terms of narrative, which instead of a time-line through solid space, proposes an organically evolving time-scape as multi-directional and multi-dimensional as the landscape itself. This is explained through the metaphor of the rainbow snake, the dreamer of diverse dreams, the dreaming and the dream all in one. Events happening now in the world are sending creative energy and sustaining power into the ever-evolving 'dream-time' or beginning time, when the reality we are accustomed to considering a 'primary' one is still malleable. This time is not yesterday, or a long time ago, or in the future, but coming into formation continually from all points in time and from all places. As a Druid, seeking to deal with problems of time and space as encountered in Celtic mythology, I find in Alcheringa a fundamental stability within which the time travel and time-slip experiences we encounter in Celtic mythology are much more intelligible and credible than they would otherwise be.

**DD:** Can you tell us a bit about the works you've published? What inspires you to write and create? Do you have anything planned for the near future?

**Wyverne:** I'm an independent scholar working to my own study program, studying languages and historical linguistics, old texts, and the history and myth derived from them. My main work right now tends to be of three kinds: that inspired by my Druidry, my creative writing, art and music, and my studies. Everything I write tends to go straight onto my blog at <http://www.wyldwyverne.wordpress.com/> so if you're interested in my ideas you can subscribe. I try to keep it lively and interesting, and I welcome feedback. From this blog you can buy my book 'Fairies of the Wild, Wild Moon', which is available as an e-book or as a Print On Demand paperback hosted, at [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com). It talks about my close encounters

with tiny winged diminutives who held me enthralled for several months during the 1980s while they explained who they were and what they do. I'm currently writing a second fairy book about different types of fairy, and will be illustrated with my best attempts to draw what I see. In the months ahead I will be re-organizing my life around Druidic principles, incorporating the Ogham within a lunar week loosely associated with the solar wheel of the year. This may result in a book on the magical use of time to enhance life and the value of work. I'm also working on a couple of novels, but none of those is finished yet, and I'm taking my time over them.

**DD:** In your work, you state that there is no real distinction between 'living' and 'non-living' things. Does your understanding of the world correlate to animism or pantheism at all?

**Wyverne:** Animism, yes, and it goes beyond the mere scientific observation that 'life' does *not* suddenly start when a narrow range of molecules reaches a certain level of complexity. We see a threshold there, but the molecular matrix is itself alive, and it arises itself from a non-molecular *living* matrix filled with astral and ethereal and many other substances, which generate forms and logistics beyond our ken. So in addition we have the cosmic consciousness permeating and improvising and communicating in all sorts of surprising ways. So there are tree spirits who look like human beings and speak like us, but whose bodies dissolve back into the tree when it has finished speaking. And there are great salamanders and elementals that have no physical manifestation, yet are conscious of us and guide our evolution.

Pantheism? That's more elusive. To me -theism implies a numinosity which might distinguish some things from other less numinous ones. In a pantheism, all things are equally numinous, but to say so almost annihilates the concept of the numinous. Thus numinosity is not a super-added something, but simply the character of any given thing. The aphids on my cabbage don't have to be seen as lovely, divine beings, though that's what they are. I don't have to worship them or any feature of them to recognize that their atoms are as holy and magical as my own. I honour also the contest, the struggle and yes, even the array of emotions with which we repudiate things like garden pests. Even our bad deeds and unloving attitudes are replete with divine wisdom, and our task is to appreciate even them – so as to learn to manage them better.

DD: Can you speak a bit about *corroboree songs* that 'talk up the land', actively willing the spirit animals to come back and re-invest in their species on earth? Is there a way for druids and earth spirituality practitioners to participate in this?

**Wyverne:** During the 1990's, as an undergraduate at Melbourne's Deakin University (off-campus) I studied traditional literature, and was deeply impressed by Aboriginal magical poetry. I remember a song cycle to do with managing the health and fertility of the land in a simple, direct way. Using rhythm to transcend time and place and put the singers and dancers 'a little bit dream-time' or transcendent, the singer then invokes a well-known scene, a river bank, picks out vivid details, wonderfully evocatively, and then while the whole company holds focus on this scene, begins to impute to it details of health and prosperity – animal tracks in the sand, eggs in the reeds, birdlife abundant and vigorous. They describe the flash of feathers, the running of feet and excited catching of prey. These details are enacted in dance. It's very exciting magic, and at the crescendo, the whole magical spell is released into the land with much clapping and yelling. When it's done well, the attention of the land and the creatures invoked is undeniable. This brief contact with aboriginal music and chant stayed with me for years and when the elders from the inland tribes began asking Europeans to learn their way, to do their magic and to 'talk up the land' since the aborigines are not here to do it now, I used this glimpse of their corroboree to inspire a kind of hybrid between corroboree and bardic ritual, calling back the spirit animals of the aborigines and bringing in energy to heal the tribes, their spirit animals and the land. Their participation on the astral plane and through dream-time is very real – almost spooky times. There's a lot of emotion, grief and love, joy, anger and fear still to be cleared, and a lot of work to do to repair the spiritual dimensions of this land.

I don't think you have to be Australian to use these techniques. The principle is simple: you create the vision, sharpen the focus and hold it, then you engage your magical will to have your own effect upon it. It's a passionate thing. For a druid, the focus might be on a cityscape, and the intention to bring peace and prosperity to beleaguered urban environments. Or it might be on world politics, and the druid's will for harmony, for human rights, and justice for small nations. It's a proven way of increasing the health of an environment, and it works well.

DD: One of the interesting things you discuss in your work is the idea of shared knowledge within an ecological network. How does this relate to the idea of an ecosystem? What relation does this have to racial and species memories (not just in humans, but all things)?

**Wyverne:** Gaia is a very large animal, and most of her experience is very mysterious to us. Most of her body is not biotic, but it is very much alive. Simply put, as humans have organs each with their own identity and function, so we are ourselves organs when we form part of a group. Different groups act like organs when they cooperate, groups form larger organizations and so our culture is built up of larger and larger more or less organized groups entities. Humans are part of ecosystems built up of millions of species. As the individuals within groups have their own awareness and ways of communicating it, so the groups tend to become entities, ephemeral or persistent, and insofar as their members share, they have their own group-consciousness. Ecosystems have their own awareness, spirituality, mindful magic and will, some more powerful than others, built from the pooled awarenesses of their parts. Continents, oceans, the atmosphere and other systems also have their awareness and their pooled experience contributes to the over-all intelligence and emotivity of our planet. Gaia produces a range of beings to mediate between these various parts of her own mind. No doubt Gaia shares her thoughts and feelings with other celestial beings at least as much as with us. Achieving the psychic specializations that permit us to participate more willfully, creatively and responsibly in the collective consciousness of our planet is a druid's work, I believe, and a good, well-conceived active Bardic or magic circle is one of the best tools I know of for optimizing your participation in the planetary mind through contact with nature spirits.

DD: How can practitioners access the shared information within and all around them? Any advice?

**Wyverne:** It's easy to tune into this network. You don't start wanting it until you're ready for it. It's a matter of *letting* it happen, not *making* it happen. Of course, the better your health the better it will be. It can be scary, so you have to learn to trust. The biggest risk is of opening your psychic senses to an overwhelming flood of random experience that tantalizes but tells you nothing. I find the organizing correspondences of circle magic an ideal way of optimizing the experience. In the nurturing atmosphere of a well-maintained circle, equally useful relationships can be

cultivated between the druid and an animal, or a species, or a landscape, a city, with technology, one's computer, an art form or creative principle, a distant star, or a pet rock. Each relationship will have, or will call into being, the right array of fairies, angels, spirit beings etc for the task. And it's usually fun!

**DD:** What role do the Fair Folk or 'fairies' have in your path; what is your understanding of them and the mechanisms that form them?

**Wyverne:** The term covers a large array of beings. For me they've been like a pageant. Each type has stepped into my life and left me with a description of themselves and their role in our planet's evolution. This process is superintended by various angels and guides, but ultimately by Gaia herself, who seems to need seers to know the richness of realities beyond our ken, and to fit our vistas into the whole in an informed way. The fairy kingdoms and peoples need us to know them, and they need to know us. They're our neighbours. Wyeuro has an organic garden and orchard and small livestock and we enjoy working with some kinds of fairies close-up, on terms of great affection. But formal politics is also carried out across the interfaces seers are currently making with other less familiar extradimensionals as well – gnomes, elves etc. Many are legitimate peoples, like ourselves, of parallel realities with a lot of interaction between us. These often fear being mistaken for the ephemeral projections of plant spirits and the buffoonery of the ethereal wizards, who like to beguile their pupils with holographic projections designed to teach through comedy. Many fairy peoples regard us as just one more type of 'fairy', and express anxiety about the humano-centric worldview that relegates them to a 'lesser' or 'peripheral' role in a world formed for us.

**DD:** You state that every culture produces 'wizards' configured to focus on magic and commune with invisible worlds. Do you foresee the Earth producing a greater number of wizards in the times to come as a response to on-going eco-spiritual damage and human disconnection? How can magical work aid in overcoming the crises of our times and species?

**Wyverne:** I think one of the main things that will increase the number of wizards will be the lifting of taboos against 'seeing things'. In our culture, our psychic abilities have all been suppressed with great force during this time of darkness. Even now, the threat of the lunatic asylum, anathema and ridicule hangs over every statement you make about fairies. At best, you can expect to be severely alienated within all but the

most supportive pagan environments. So as these become more stable, and the oppression diminishes, we'll see our wizards reviving.

**DD:** In your 'Responsible Use of Enchantments', you state that the natural world with all its beings resists any enchantments (even for healing and repair) until it trusts the circle, grove or individual working. How can practitioners actively gain the land's trust?

**Wyverne:** One way is to live in the land until it knows you – you have to tame it a bit, like the little tailor of Thruene in the story. He charmed the hostile fairies with his marionettes; you have to find your own way in. And you have to surrender yourself to it in turn – lie down naked in the sand, swim in its waters, let your mind be carried away, hear the deep music of the land, let the trees give you dreams, let the birdsong thrill you till you want to cry out and it would be a song as joyous, strong and wild. Trust its herbs and eat them, bless its ants, flies, wasps and snakes as well as its flowers and fruits. Then it will talk to you, and news of you will be shared among the fairies and elementals and spirits of the land, so that when you approach another place, to do healing work there, you'll be trusted.

The other way is to learn to open yourself to the numinous, the mindfulness of every place you enter, whether it's a supermarket or a pristine wilderness, seeking the devas and asking to learn, but being prepared sometimes to stand your ground against mischief. It all depends on your authenticity and spiritual integrity. In time, the spirits will come to know you as trustworthy and good, one of their people and your powers and visions will increase.

**DD:** You view poetry as the 'language of the soul', in the sense that we are not conscious of the soul's experience until it communicates through dream, reverie or special inspiration. Can you elucidate more on this and especially how it impacts bards, 'soul poets', and anyone who uses poetry as part of their spiritual practice?

**Wyverne:** Ordinary speech or writing describes our mundane experience in a fairly graphic sort of way. When we connect our soul's reactions, we access far greater contexts, in which we participate as angels and fairies and spiritual beings in the whole splendor of both earthly and celestial existence. It's when our creations come through soul visions like this that they are so very moving - they invite love and excite feelings of honour, magic and mystery. This is because we are bringing our cosmic souls into earth level

awareness and the soul loves this, rewarding us with the poignant feelings that poetry arouses in us. Writing a poem is the best way to discover and befriend your own dreamtime cosmic spirit personality, your soul. This is why it is often the medium of spells and enchantments, like those of the corroborrees. The power is from the soul.

**DD:** For the first time in history, more than 50% of all people live in cities and are increasingly removed from daily contact with nature. What impact do you see that having on society and our relationship with Gaia?

**Wyverne:** I hope the effect will be to bring the blessing we give the natural world to bear on the urban environment. Beavers build dams, birds build nests, humans build cities. Their problems are well documented, but the key to healing them lies in loving them, respecting them as part of Gaia's metabolism and learning to understand them as natural phenomena. We need to embrace the technologies and spiritualities that are specifically human, new and amazing, faulty as they are. We need to celebrate the advances, the new materials, the new technologies and the new philosophies that come with them, while dealing with the pollution, economic wrangles and the energy crisis. Inventing plastic was a great thing; it only needs to be tamed. I sometimes have visions of fauns, excited, delighted, exhilarated, dancing down city streets among the business crowd, tuning their pipes to the rock and roll pouring out of boutiques and rapping along with pneumatic drills for percussion in just such sheer joy and ecstasy as they celebrate a misty country morning. We've got to learn to see them!

**DD:** Do you believe that Druids used entheogenics in their rituals, like many Native American and Western Amazonian tribes to access different parts of reality?

**Wyverne:** I think we have reasonable evidence of their use of mistletoe as a panacea. They must also have observed and made use of its hallucinogenic, psychoactive properties. Used sparingly, it promotes health both mental and physical, and awakens the psychic powers, especially those associated with race memory, soul memory and transcendence of time and place. The dose is small and great caution should be exercised - some types are poisonous.

**DD:** You are editor for *Serpentstar*, the Southern Hemisphere OBOD newsletter. What has been your experience with this work? How can people subscribe or contribute material to the newsletter?

*SerpentStar* is fun. It keeps me in touch with OBOD-ry worldwide, and as I learn my way round, it will begin to reach out more confidently around the Southern Hemisphere. Anyone interested may subscribe. The pdf file is available as a free download or if you want a printed version, you'll find details at [www.serpentstar.wordpress.com](http://www.serpentstar.wordpress.com),

**DD:** What would be the top five books you'd recommend for us to read?

**Wyverne:**

1. All of Carlos Castaneda's books about Mexican sorcery which he learned from the Yaqui Don Juan.
2. Anything by Katherine Briggs, who wrote about fairies and folklore.
3. *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries*, by WY Evans Wentz (1911)
4. *Wise Women of the Dreamtime*, by Joanna Lambert (Volume editor) K Langloh Parker.
5. *The Oxford Book of Ballads*. Chosen and Edited by Arthur Quiller-Couch

**DD:** What are your other interests besides the spiritual side of your life? What do you do to have fun or enjoy yourself?

**Wyverne:** There's a lot of gypsy in me. When the sun goes down, out comes the guitar, and there's singing - mostly folksongs, Irish, Scottish, American, Australian. I also play chess, garden, and go for long rambles with my dog.

**DD:** Any closing words or advice to leave with us?

**Wyverne:** Yes, Gaia is an animal in pain, and so many of her systems are dysfunctional. For too long her failures and faults have been blamed on humans - we've tried to fix things with anger, punishment and blaming and shaming. This only makes it hurt more. I'm reminded of the gentle lady in Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty*, who pleaded 'Pray do not beat your pony, sir, he is doing his best!' You can introduce the healing nwyfre into any ailing situation in the form of love, pity, respect and the heightened understanding that comes from nonjudgmental, compassionate perception. That's good, kindly magic, without anger, shame or blame, and all manner of healing comes of it. Nothing and nobody ever deserves to be punished for errors. Love is the cure.

Article by Dr. Kenneth Proefrock



# *A Wildcrafted Spirituality*

*In the Bush of Ghosts*

*Part One of Three*

Sarcocaulis is a botanical term, roughly translated as “fleshy stem.” It is a word that describes the ability of certain trees to absorb a tremendous amount of water in a very short period of time and then immediately store that water in their roots, trunk and branches. Here in the desert Southwestern part of the US, one of the best examples of a sarcocaulis tree is *Bursera microphylla*, the Elephant Tree. It is so named because it looks like its skin is too big for it, like the skin of an elephant. You can probably imagine that a sarcocaulis tree would likely have to have a pretty loose fitting outfit if it had the habit of binge drinking, sort of like the equivalent of wearing the elastic waistband pants to the ‘all you can eat’ buffet. Native to Mexico, it was believed to have migrated up to the Arizona portion of the Sonoran Desert with the Hohokam people somewhere between 5,000 and 2,000 years ago. The Hohokam were sophisticated desert farmers who built ball courts, platform mounds and the largest system of irrigation canals in Pre-Columbian North America. One theory proposes that they were a Uto-Aztec people who originally migrated north from Mexico and their modern living descendants are believed to be the Tohono O’Odham and the Akimel O’Odham (Pima) people who still reside in the SouthCentral area of Arizona. The Hohokam were desert agricultural experts and came to depend on a certain core group of desert plants for their survival, many of which they purposely cultivated as they migrated into new and unfamiliar territory. The elephant tree (*Bursera microphylla*) certainly was held in high enough cultural regard to be one of those original core group of plants that now finds itself much further north than might have been possible without human co-operation. I have always been fascinated by the outliers, the plants and animals that live at the extreme margins of their natural habitat. They often possess interesting quirks in their biochemistry, in their appearance and, often, even allow glimpses of future evolution through their own unique unfolding of the community DNA.

It is worth noting that in some remarkable instances, humans have been directly responsible for the worldwide success of many species of plants. Of particular interest as far as it may concern the distribution of *Bursera* are the modern Comcaac or Seri people who live along the coast of Sonora, Mexico, in one of the driest landscapes on the continent. Unlike the Hohokam and their descendants, the Seri never cultivated domestic plants or raised domestic animals, except dogs, but, they did/do carry certain species of wild plants and animals with them as they migrate across the desert and the sea. Living in a harsh and unforgiving environment often imparts a conservational effect on indigenous culture—when survival is difficult, those measures that have worked in the past are adhered to—including abstractions like cosmological contexts and spiritual orientations intertwined with the practicality of traditional migration routes. When we look to the particular motivation for a people to maintain a relationship with a specific plant, sometimes over thousands of years, I think that we will do well to consider the Seri relationship to *Bursera*.

As a plant medicine, *Bursera microphylla* may be more valuable than gold, yet few people have even heard of it, especially when compared to its Old World cousins, frankincense (*Boswellia sacra*) and myrrh (*Commiphora*



spp.). Frankincense is still so highly regarded that wild trees are considered sacred, hereditary property and are zealously protected. In the New World, the spiritual essence of the *Bursera* tree is also at least as highly regarded by the traditional people who have come to depend on it and live in close association with this amazing tree. Historically, the Aztecs have a documented use of *Bursera* in their medical system that spans several hundred to a thousand years. It was a virtual panacea, known to help cure a headache, resolve lung congestion, combat dysentery and diarrhea, as well as finding utility in a whole range of gynecological and obstetrical conditions. Throughout the range of most *Bursera* species of trees, they are highly regarded, even revered, for the important position that they hold in the cosmology of their associated peoples. Collectively known as “torchwood” trees, they are all connected to fire, in that the thick, flammable, resinous sap makes them an ideal wood to use as a fire starter. The resin itself is a *copal* resin, used for the production of ceremonial incense, also as a lacquer and spiritually protective water-proofer in the production of boats, harpoons and weapons.

The Seri people also use *Bursera*, or '*Xoop*' as a sort of physical panacea, even finding it useful in some cases of leprosy—but, they also consider it to have a powerful spirit and the tree features prominently in their spiritual practices. A handful of branches or a wand made from two or more twigs braided together and tied with a cloth or yarn is used for healing and by those seeking power through mystical, visionary work. In one version of this vision quest, the supplicant fasts for three to four days within a vision circle before reaching outside of the circle with a *Xoop* wand. Mystical power from one of their principle spirits, *Icor*, is absorbed into the wand from the external world and transferred to the supplicant, within the circle, by touching their body in proscribed areas with the wand. In this way one could receive healing, empowerment and/or a visionary experience. Another variation on this theme included having the supplicant drink only a water decoction of *Xoop* leaves, twigs and berries through the four day fasting period, prior to utilizing the wand.



According to the Seri origin stories, *Xoop* was the first plant created when the world came into existence, as such, it is a liminal plant that bridges the gap between this world and the other world of spirit. This aspect of *Xoop* may well be one of the reasons why it was used so ubiquitously in both gynecologic and obstetrical interventions, it also translates into several rituals that are still performed today; when one dreams a bad dream concerning another person, they are to reveal that dream to the person and then ritually sweep them with a *Xoop* branch to prevent the dream from becoming reality. Throwing some *Xoop* leaves into a fire was sure to bring good luck to a hunter, and to carry a piece of the wood on one's person was said to bring luck in gambling games. The wood is also used to make healing and protective talsiman/fetishes that would be hung on a person's body, within the home or at the threshold of the doorway into the home. These fetishes are only effective if they are carved by the village healer and can be rented or purchased for their various purposes.

The chemistry of *Bursera* is also a fantastic journey into the world of liminality, it's root system is specially adapted to pulling up even the least amount of water, the trunk and branches liberally oozing a fragrant and compelling resin, the leaves oily with divine aroma. It is fire and it is water. When the two mix, as during the rainy monsoon season when the tree gorges itself on a year's worth of water in a weekend, the resinous secretions take on the milky appearance of an emulsified cream. Full of mono- and triterpenoid saponins, you can wash your hair with the resin mixed with water—the Seri add Jojoba (*Simmondsia chinensis*) and the Apache add yucca root (*Yucca* spp.). The dried bark shows anti-fungal, cytotoxic and diuretic activity, as well as specific toxicity to several strains of Streptococcal, Staphylococcal, and Bacillus species of infective bacteria.

My deeply personal relationship with this tree began on a fateful herb walk in my own backyard, the White Tank Mountains, in April, during the 2009 Southwest Botanical Conference. The Assistant Curator from the Northern Arizona Ethnobotanical Museum, Jessa, leans over to me and

says, “Hey, have you ever seen Bursera trees along the Ford Canyon trail?” I replied, laughing, “No way! I have been on that trail a thousand times and I have never seen one!” She was serious, and she was hoping to get a sample of one of them for the museum and I think that she was seeing if I was up for the job. Ford Canyon is on the northern part of the White Tank Mountains, about 11 miles from my house; it is a place that I have spent countless hours in, it is my heaven, and here was the opportunity to possibly discover one of the most magically powerful trees in the world, in its most extreme northern environment, how could I pass that up? Even though I was still pretty skeptical that the trees were even there, I decided to spend the next few weekends systematically scoping the hill sides. I was able to get some GPS coordinates from the ASU Herbarium; my literature review revealed that there were two specimens which had been originally documented in the 1940's, then vouchered in 1970, but, I could find nothing since then.

At this point I have to admit that I have struggled with how best to represent the following experiences. I feel that what I have experienced in regards to the Bursera quest is one of the most profound spiritual chapters of my life, yet, putting it into words seems to reduce the profundity of the experience in some mundane way. I want to emphasize that a great part of this work is to explore some ideas of what it means to be spiritually aligned to one's ancestors, yet, estranged from an ancestral homeland, the cultivation of a sense of spiritual connection, literally a 'wildcrafted spirituality' with the spirits of place that inhabit the land that I currently reside within, while brushing up against issues of cultural appropriation, engaging the folklore of the native people who utilized Bursera, pursuing potential therapeutics of the plant in modern times, the significance of its traditional spiritual uses and then the tale of my finding it, and then the petroglyphs behind it—with pictures, explanations and sharing the significance of this experience in the spiritual life of a modern Celt. So with that being said...

The next morning, well before sunrise and while the moon was still shining, I started a sacred quest to find a



sacred tree--Bursera microphylla, “Xoop”. The particular trees that I was looking for would be the most northeastern occurrences for this copal resin producer, these would be the outliers. Armed with offerings and vague insight into where this tree is likely to be, I spent most of the first few days questing in some of the most ruggedly beautiful terrain imaginable. It was pure bliss for me, and although I didn't find the tree, I did know where it wasn't. My expectation was to keepsearching until I had covered every square foot of ground before I would admit that there were no more of these amazing trees in this area.



*... to be continued in our next two issues!*

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Article by Gillian Monks (Aelwyd)

# The Path of East

## Earthwalking

I would like to examine the concepts contained by the directions and elements of East.... the direction of sunrise, birth and new beginnings and the element of Fire. This is the place upon the path where we turn our attention to the immediate world around us. In this instance I am not going to begin by focusing on the material aspects of our existence, but look directly at what our *spiritual* needs might be for us to fully participate in this physical life.

We all have varying needs and some of these might be yours:

- \* To experience greater aliveness in our bodies.
- \* Greater connection to nature.
- \* A desire to heal our relationship to everything around us.
- \* To belong to a greater community.
- \* To deepen awareness of our place in the soul of the world, effecting change through service and creativity.
- \* To seek solitude, hermitage, inner work and personal refinement.

### THINK:

What are your most pressing spiritual needs at present?

Whatever spiritual beliefs and practices you prefer, as Frank MacEowen writes, your spiritual framework should provide an effective path for producing the authentic changes that we seek in our lives... a sacred



method for reactivating our citizenship in the sacred world, restoring our sacred standing.

The modern reference points tend to be of an identity consistently placed on external authority, the unsailable influence of the media, ever changing fads and fashions and the all implications of of materialism. But one does not *need* fancy and expensive buildings in which to worship.... such gross displays of wealth and consequence are only an ultimate means of casting the rest of society into a state of awe and respect. Similarly, one doesn't need the special clothes and trappings... the many "tools" of such complicated rituals. These might have some relevance when people wish to meet *en masse* and rejoice in their mutual identity and brother/sisterhood. They can also be useful as tangible signs that something spiritual is actually going on to those who are only in the early embryonic stages of spiritual awareness and discovery. But by very dint of the fact that you are sat here, now, reading this, demonstrates that you have already stepped beyond such necessities. We have reached a time when we need to reconfigure our lives towards the spiritual - something grown from *within*.

*The true test of a religion is not what you believe, but what you do.* ~ Jim Pathfinder Ewing

As always with Celtic spirituality, this can be found in the simplest, most everyday places and scenarios. One of the most important and iconic symbols of Celtic spirituality is that of the "hearth".... the very centre of the home, the family and the wider community. It is where both physical and spiritual needs are met simultaneously. It is the very *heart* of life.

\* It is where physical nourishment takes place; here warmth and light are provided and the preparation of food takes place... usually where meals are shared and eaten too.

\* Where traditionally, the family gathers at the start of the day and at the close of the evening before going to bed.



Photo: *Fire* by Petr Kratochvil

\* A place of spiritual activity and nourishment: where prayers are said, stories are told, problems are discussed, healing occurs and spiritual teaching takes place.

This focus of our ancient Celtic roots is just as relevant for us today. The word *ecos* is derived from the Greek (*oikos*) meaning *house* or *living relations*; thus *ecology* is the study of the household... in our modern context, this is the extended household... the wider community of town, country and planet... the *household of humanity*. The word *cosmos* is also derived from the Greek, meaning *order*. Traditional Celtic homes were built to represent a *micro-cosmos*... a *micro-cosm* of the greater cosmic order. Celtic homes were circular with the fire in the centre, representing the Sun, Life, the energising principle. The door was often positioned facing east so that the rising sun's light would fill the home and touch the fire within.

Heaven and earth are enjoined in a single place within the home. Nourishment of body and soul become interconnected.

#### **THINK:**

Where is the heart of *your* home?

Where would you *like* it to be? (if different from where it is now)

As with all things, this important centre of family and communal life requires somebody to look after it, especially as fire is a living thing, a volatile element which needs constant attention.... a good friend when kept within certain limits but a violent and destruc-

tive enemy if allowed to get out of control. That is why the role of Hearth Keeper is of such vital importance. Traditionally it has usually been fulfilled by a woman... often also a mother. This is a serious position within the family/community, and someone who is really good at their job will also attract and draw in many others around them... a vast extended family .... someone whom everybody *knows* they can turn to and always find warmth, comfort, a hot meal and some words of advice. The Hearth Keeper is not merely a downtrodden houseworker at everyone else's beck and call... this is an empowered role of vital importance, centred on and within the home. It is here that the many and varied traditions of the Wise Woman finds its roots.... one that can be traced all around the world into every society and culture, through every historical age and era. The entire cosmos is encompassed within the circle of the home, the four directions, like the Irish *airts* included. The household becomes a mini universe and the Hearth-keeper is the one who tends the sacred enlivening principles of the home and thus the universe.

The Hearth Keeper is someone who embraces: nurturing, wisdom, healing, inspiration, justice, protection, counselling, midwifery... in all respects!

The Archetypal Hearth Keeper: an icon which becomes a living symbol of the "Spirit of Prosperity" and relates to the living energies of the universe: prosperity, abundance, generosity, gratitude, hospitality, spirit of "place", good "householding", tenders of spaces and those people who inhabit/visit those spaces.

#### **THINK:**

What qualities do you bring to your home? (Even if you live alone.... for yourself?)

This is an excellent example of where the apparently "mundane" embodies the highest magic and spiritual essence! Preparing food anywhere (but in this case, on an open fire) is an act of pure alchemy! Here we have Ceridwen's cauldron! This is the place where all the elements come together:

**Fire** to cook the food

**Air** to feed the fire... and also produce smoke

**Earth** in the form of wood peat or coal for the fire to burn

**Water** used in the cooking processes.

And finally, humanity, which provides the "fifth element"... in this case, the transmutation of the other four into something else altogether... for when we consume the food, we can then use the energy it produces for *any* purpose, including the most amazing *mental* feats.... and the power of thought *is vast!*

From the more overtly spiritual point of view, until the latter half of the 20th Century, central fires have always played an important role in society. For the Celts, sacred fires are lit to initiate new phases of the year, especially Beltaine (the beginning of summer at the start of the month of May) and Samhain (the beginning of winter and also the Celtic New Year). House fires were doused and re-lit from the central celebratory bonfire. One of the best loved and most well known/recognised iconic figures is that of Brigid... or Bridgit (*Ffraid* in Welsh), who among many others responsibilities, has the guardianship of fire and the hearth within her care.

The central home fire works in harmony with the day's activities and when evening comes, the fire is not allowed to die but is banked so that it remains warm and can easily be brought back to life in the morning. On a higher level, if the household represents a mini-universe, this is the reason why the fire domestic fire should never be allowed to go out, and why it's ritual rekindling at sacred festivals like Beltaine was ...and *is...* all the more symbolic.

(Incidentally, one expression of *cultural soul loss* can be likened to our domestic fire; the embers of all our ancient cultural practices and beliefs having been slowly but inexorably forced to be covered... driven underground, into hiding... subdued as quaint "folk customs"; vaguely referred to in fairy stories where the real truths drift like shadows between the trees... Hallowe'en is a global prime example of this!)

All cultures... and none more so than the Celtic... have long held a strong oral tradition. Within families -especially on long, cold, dark winter nights - or within the wider community.... perhaps at the end of a festival, when everybody's energies were waning, people have always drawn close around the fire to listen to stories. Stories of the "otherworld"; of fairy folk, strange monsters and shape-changing animals, giant and ogres, beautiful magical people and wild, terrifying, exciting adventures. Story is "other-worldly", it takes you out of yourself, away from your

everyday ordinary life, to... anywhere and *everywhere* ... and the hearth becomes the doorway... the threshold to the ways of the spirits... to the land of imagination where limits are boundless.

The hearth as the embodiment of an otherworldly doorway is an extremely powerful aspect within Celtic tradition. Just as the fire burns on the hearthstone within the home, and the hot air and smoke rises up the passageway of the chimney that leads outside... to anywhere and everywhere... so it also represents the "jumping off place" from normal reality to wherever else you wish to travel. Humanity can access other levels of existence via the hearth and chimney, and the world of spirit can reach across to us via the same portal. The most famous and best loved example of this is known globally, and still subscribed to annually in the form of Father Christmas.

The whole concept of life around the hearth is... among many other things... one of prosperity. Unfortunately, we tend to view our relationship to prosperity in purely physical terms and through the perspective - not of abundance - but *scarcity*. This in turn leads to mass trends of acquisition and consumption.

#### **THINK:**

What are you needing in your life?  
What are you afraid of being without?

Even after acquiring lots of physical possessions, people tend to still feel dissatisfied which leads to disappointment, confusion, resentment and sometimes rage. (Think of all the instances we have of "enraged" people these days...road rage, air rage...) Not only do





people discover that the result of their amassed possessions and achievements appears hollow and meaningless, but that in doing so, they have also created other "scarcities" in their lives (particularly financially) and worse, now we are discovering ecologically as well. Not only have we impoverished ourselves financially, but in producing all these items with which to decorate, surround and bolster our illusions, we have seriously impoverished the planet, to the extent where our very survival is being called into question! All to pursue and fulfil a hollow dream... an insubstantial and ephemeral dream. Little wonder that such bitter subconscious disappointment is increasingly leading to depression, desperation and addiction.

From the point of view of the body, the metabolism is being fooled into also feeling that it should be laying down endless stores for it's maintenance in the "lean times" to come which would possibly explain a proportion of the rise in human obesity?

It is not an increasing amount of physical sustenance that we require; our most genuine need is to actively develop a conscious relationship to the vital energies of life. Cease to think of scarcity and prosperity in a purely external context.

Similarly, "householding" is not simply vacuuming the floor, dusting the furniture and buying in the ready-made meals. It is the essence, the very *energy* of the *home*. A householder is someone who tends the *spirit* of their home; who makes their dwelling place an oasis of good energy and nurturing to all who enter - open to all. Blocked and cluttered homes lead to a blocked and cluttered psyche.

Reflecting on this leads me to view the popular activity of home D.I.Y. in a new light! What is the *real*

reason for so much work to be done within so many people's homes? Why do some people regularly re-decorate and/or majorly change their homes, when there is absolutely nothing wrong with the present decor? I would suggest they subconsciously *know* that they need to be changing something, but if it isn't their current wardrobe of clothes, then it must be the colour and style of their houses. They work constantly and frantically.... and yet, as in the case of general materialistic acquirement, they never feel any better or satisfied. I would suggest that it is *spiritual* D.I.Y. that they should be concentrating on! That the physical is merely masking the need for soul work at a deeper level.

In care and development of oneself, and in the care and nurturing of one's immediate personal environment, one might hopefully create a physical, emotional and spiritual oasis which is then possible... and desirable.... to offer to others. Hospitality, in the broadest sense of the word, is extending this special sacred energy to others. In Celtic society, the guest is supreme. Even an enemy, under truce, once accepted as a guest, will be treated with every honour, care and respect. Which is what makes the breaking of such a sacred trust such an appalling crime in Celtic eyes... a doubly heinous betrayal.

Once one has become comfortable with the concept of extending hospitality to those around you, it is a relatively simple step to extend it generally to "others".... whatever their race, colour and creed; whether neighbours or on thousands of miles away; the highest and the lowest; the smallest and the greatest; the vulnerable and weak, or the threatening purveyor of hostilities.... human, animal.... or just that little patch of derelict land that needs some loving attention.

#### **THINK:**

How are you tending the spirit of prosperity in your life?

How can *you* extend hospitality to others?

How do you actively encourage a sense of wholeness, completion and satisfaction in your life?

Some simple suggestions to start you off are:

Smile at people

Be welcoming in you general attitude and demeanour

Give praise, comments and/or encouragement where

they are due

Help someone... family member, neighbour, colleague at work, stranger in the street.... even if it is with something relatively trivial.

These are all little ways of giving recognition to and honouring that of the Divine... that of God... that which is sacred and bonds us together, in *every living thing*. Hopefully, kindness, thoughtfulness sympathy, empathy appreciation and fondness.... even love... will eventually lead us to direct *unconditional* love to everything around us. "Unconditional" implies non-attachment but total empathy with the subject. (It can also imply all the healing qualities and gifts that you can imagine.)

Having inspired you to rush out into the world to demonstrate your new-found hospitality and generosity of body, mind and spirit, I just want to add a few words of caution. It is of vital importance to maintain a healthy balance required to tend our own health and well-being while serving others. Well brought-up adults have been schooled as children to "always put others first", the implication being that thinking of or taking care of oneself is somehow selfish. The whole crux of life is to strive for balance! Not too much of one and not too much of the other. For surely we cannot genuinely extend care, love and hospitality to others if we do not also genuinely extend it to ourselves; otherwise it becomes needy with all the unsavoury conditional implications that go with it, and of no value at all. If we do not truly learn the art of self-care, including basic love of our own human journey, no one can really trust us when we say we care about them.

As Caitlin Matthews writes: "True self-respect is not selfishness but our duty to the soul and it's soul-shrine; it includes caring for our body, mind, soul and spirit, enabling us to relate to those who give us love and support, as well as those who challenge and stretch us".

Thinking back to the Hearth Keeper, couldn't we *all* do with someone like this in our lives right now? Unfortunately, *we* might not be able to find such a person, but we can do as much as we can *for ourselves*, and perhaps we can also provide these comforts and supports for others around us? Ever fancied being a Fairy Godmother? (Or Father?) Now is your chance!!! And it doesn't have to be a purely feminine

domain! The masculine entity has kept itself out of the kitchen (metaphorically as well as literally speaking) for far too long. The wheel must turn and the balance be redressed. Perhaps this is just one reason why there is a modern trend towards male chefs and being a "house husband"?

It is also a fact that many more women would be busily and happily fulfilled within their homes if they were accorded the true recognition and respect that such a vital role should naturally command. Governments can make as many new laws as they wish; bring as many more police onto the streets as they want; train as many more psychiatrists, counsellors and social workers as they deem necessary, but the true answer lies in the temporarily defunct and forgotten role of Hearth Keeper. Only when *this* is recognised, regardless of whatever new appellation and "spin" fads and trends care to attach to it, will society begin to find it's feet in the 21st Century and start to heal. And make no mistake, under no circumstances is this a retrograde step; simply a vital human necessity, a fact of the human condition.



*This article is part of Gillian's 'Earthwalking' course, a series of eight weekend retreats focusing on crafting your own unique path to a deeper relationship with Life, Earth and Spirit -- through an animistic, shamanic Celtic approach. The course is also available long-distance on-line. <http://www.earthwalking.co.uk>*



Photo: *Tree in Fog at Night* by Petr Kratochvil

Article by Julie Hillman (Little Owl)

# Views from an Earth Worker

## Mechanical and Human

The Eternal Forest is a natural burial woodland for man, woman and pet to be laid to rest. My role within the wood is to help the area evolve from a forestry commission conifer wood into a serene natural woodland, a place for friends and relatives to visit loved ones.

Over time the wood has naturalised with rowan and silver birch vying for space between the conifers. It is a mixture of young and old, dead and seedling. Some areas have fallen trees covered in moss (it is quite a damp area), where they have fallen new trees have sprouted from the horizontal trunk.

When someone comes into the wood looking for an area for a burial they may choose an area that is overgrown with brambles and trees. This is where I come in. I clear the ground ready for any trees to be taken down; this is done by Dave, my husband, with a chainsaw, unless they are young spindly trees. If it is a conifer the branches are chipped and put to one side for the burial, the trunk and larger branches are piled to dry, to be used for firewood later.



I then come in with the machine, a mini-digger, which I use to pull up the tree roots, these are put to one side



for use later (nothing goes to waste), the ground is levelled and I begin to dig the hole, all goes well until I reach about 3 feet ( 1 metre for the metrics), then comes the clay, it usually needs a human helping hand with a pick-axe to get the shape right in the bottom. Water is the next "problem", there seem to be a lot of natural springs, I haven't dug a hole yet that hasn't filled with water to some degree, it can be anything from an inch to a foot ( 2.5 - 30 cm).

On the day of the burial we are there at least 3 hours before to allow us time to drain the hole with a pump or bucket and shovel if it is only a small amount. The





After the burial I come back with the digger to fill in the hole. I always find myself talking to the person as I fill the hole; "I hope you can swim" is usually my first words to them! The area is finished by hand to remove the tracks of the digger and raked smooth; any flowers are placed on the grave.

You will not find a cemetery style headstone in the wood. They can have slate or wood of any shape or size, one family has a giant granite boulder, it has to be in keeping with the surroundings. The families can plant bulbs on their plot as long as they are local natives.

There are other things going on in the wood, an area has been opened to store all the wood that has been cut down, it is work in progress, also the tree stumps are being used as "stumperies" - they are piled up and filled with soil the planted with ferns and wild flowers, they break up the flatness of areas that have been opened up.

It is a lovely peaceful place to take a wander around, there have been a profusion of bluebells and all the wild flowers that have been planted are looking lovely. It's worth a visit. [www.eternalforest.org](http://www.eternalforest.org)

boards are put around and levelled then the conifer chippings are used, some are put in the bottom of the hole, firstly to make it look neat and secondly to hide any water that may start to seep back in, the rest are spread over the ground where people are going to stand, giving off a lovely scent when walked on.

The burials can vary greatly from crowds of people to a handful, a full sermon to a few words of farewell. Mostly an undertaker is involved, but we have a future ural which will be a DIY. On occasions there is singing or pipes playing.



Photos courtesy of Julie Hillman  
Used with permission



# Bardic Whispers

Whispers from the Soul

Poem by Richard Fox (Renard)

## Pine Ridge Tree Plantings

I think I will never see...  
A better place to plant a tree.  
For the cold wind blows fiercely  
Across those frigid northern plains  
And everyone knows someone that the north wind has slayed.

Our trees take the bite from the wind...  
And provides the warmth of caring and sharing.  
Each tree planted - to find their true home within the earth...  
Demands our sweat and our attention.

Sharp tree needles and rough bark...  
Claim their drops of blood.

But these drops of life...  
From our heart and from our brow.  
We leave them behind...  
But they cannot replace those drops shed in days past by anger and  
hatred.

We can though... offer them as minute gifts...in honor of the ances-  
tors who once fell  
And those that *still* fall today.

Let these trees planted and our blood freely given...be an offering of  
peace to the Lakota people and to all native people.

And may ALL our relations benefit from our deeper friendship.

Photo: *Deerpark 2* by Jon Sullivan

Poem by *Jenn MacCormack (Eadha)*

## *Midsummer Hunt*

Humid air comes rolling in,  
hair-curling moisture,  
fine dew upon my face,  
inhaling the scents of  
another world  
a summer world  
a world heavily pregnant  
amidst dark forest floors.

I have walked this world  
every year  
hunting for the hooded one  
the hidden one  
his name unnamable  
save by midsummer trees.

Humidity makes me drowsy,  
mind falling to the ground  
under a stupor of heat  
panting, licking cracked lips,  
even the shade is heavy-  
his weight upon my body,  
this hunter down upon me  
my skin to buckskin  
where from his dark hood,  
he looks me in the eyes  
and claims my soul.

Humidity swelling,  
I can hardly breathe  
hardly move  
for the weight of him  
the weight of air  
weight of the world  
holding me here,  
heaving doe  
in mud and fallen oak leaves,

pressing down until  
the clouds burst forth into  
rain  
all  
that  
weight  
falling  
piercing  
plummeting  
to the earth,  
sky rent apart,  
by lightning's blinding ar-  
row,  
hearts heaving, earth growl-  
ing,  
great wind blows back  
his dark endless hood

I see him now  
I see him for who he is  
and find  
the wild in me is real.

Photo: *Forest in Fog* by Giovanni Neri

Poem by Jason Kirkey

## *Conversations with Maple*

After all day working at my desk  
with the sun behind the clouds,  
gathering green tea – pearls of jasmine,  
with cornflower blue specks  
boiling in the water,  
thinking to sit for a while with a book  
and seek the fire of the mind.

Out the kitchen window I catch  
a maple branch covered in May  
growing seeds edged with red and  
new leaves still learning their hue  
in a brief autumn-come-early canvas of color.  
Incredulous, it inquires of my intentions  
for quiet,

"What are you reading for? What are you reading for?  
Let the *world* come in your eyes!"

Now I sit in the brown light of sunset just before a storm  
with space enough in my tea for the rain.  
The lawnmower is broken. The grass is knee-high,  
and bends in the wind like a river.

"Just once, let what is in your care grow wild  
enough to see the world through its own eyes."

Now my tea is mostly rain,  
my best shoes turned to glossy brown,  
and flecked with grass and flowers.  
It is evening now – I can feel it in the trees  
like time is just a mood to shift  
with the light from brown to gray.

"Just once, do nothing for a day  
but study the life of a leaf."

Even in the city, there is quiet in the earth  
and fire that the rain can not put out.  
The sky seems huge above the house  
as I enter, returning to the mind,  
but trailing purple petals at my feet.

Recipe Submitted by Nigel Dailey (Astrocelt)

# *the* Cooking Cauldron

## *Mead Brewing*

Making mead is a traditional practice that dates back thousands of years, although used by Celts, Germanic peoples and the Anglo Saxons. Archaeological evidence has established it was used by the Beaker people three millennium ago, from residue analysis from recovered pottery. That mead recipe is quite different to the one being shared here; please note it is free of chemicals apart from the cleansing process. Natural ingredients are preferred for the best results.

*To make a gallon of mead you'll require the following equipment.:*

- A gallon plastic bucket with a lid is preferable
- A demijohn
- Rubber stopper and fermentation lock
- Sterilisation solution
- Plastic pipe for liquid mead extraction
- 5 empty wine bottles
- 5 Corks

## *Ingredients*

- 3lb of Honey (dry mead) or 4lb of Honey (sweet mead)
- Tea
- 2 Lemons or Lemon juice
- Dry Yeast
- Producing and brewing mead is undertaken three separate stages the first stage involves having all the ingredients available, a plastic bucket and a sterilisation solution.

## *1<sup>st</sup> Stage*

- Make a sterilisation liquid and sterilise the complete inside surface of the plastic bucket.
- Once the sterilising process is complete insert the required weight of honey for either dry or sweet mead into the bucket.
- Add half a gallon of hot water into the bucket and stir to dissolve the honey.



- Add the juice of two lemons or the equivalent of concentrated lemon juice and stir.
- Brew a pot of Strong Tea, when ready pour out half a pint and add to the mead solution in the bucket and stir.
- Add another half a gallon of hot water and stir for an even liquid mixture.
- Add the bucket lid or cover the top, allow the mash to cool down to room temperature, or leave for 24 hours.
- Make up a yeast starter, once it's live, add this to the liquid and replace cover on bucket.
- Allow to brew for six to nine days.

### *2<sup>nd</sup> Stage*

- Sterilise the demijohn, the cork, fermentation lock and the flexible hollow plastic pipe.
- While sterilising equipment, place the full bucket on a high surface i.e. table or chair
- Once sterilisation is complete, empty demijohn and place below the bucket for liquid transfer.
- Insert one end of the plastic pipe into the bucket; take care not to transfer the waste at the bottom of the bucket.
- Create a siphon; place the other end of the pipe in the demijohn thus transferring the liquid.
- Once a gallon of fermentating mead is in the demijohn, stop the siphon, insert the cork stopper and insert the plastic air lock insuring its half filled with a sterilising solution to stop the vinegar fly getting to your mead!
- Place the filled demijohn in a warm place to continue the fermentation process.
- Remove mead waste to compost heap; clean out the plastic bucket and return to the 1<sup>st</sup> stage to start of another gallon of mead.

### *3<sup>rd</sup> Stage*

On completion of fermentation normal average time is six months. A sign to look out for is the air lock will become level as the pressure equalises within the demijohn to that outside of it.

- Sterilise the 5 wine bottles, 5 corks and the flexible hollow plastic pipe. When sterilised :
- Place the Demijohn of mead on a high surface i.e. table
- Remove the air lock and rubber cork
- Insert one end of the flexible hollow plastic pipe into Demijohn

- Using the plastic pipe create a siphon to draw out the mead. Note keep the end of the pipe in the demijohn clear of the waste collected at the bottom of the jar.
- Siphon off the mead into the bottles and cork and rack.
- When sampling the first bottle of mead, save some for the Wryd Hermit the Official Mead Tester with 17 years experience of home brew mead

### *Mead Cocktails*

#### *Druid Ruin*

Mix 1 part Natural Mead with 3 parts Gin

#### *Druid Delight*

Mix 1 part Natural Mead with 3 parts Champagne



# Reviews



## *The Shaman's Oracle*

by John Matthews and Wil Kinghan  
Watkins

**ISBN-10: 190678759X**  
**ISBN-13: 978-1906787592**

*Review by Nancy Hendrickson*

Most of my vacations take me to historic sites in what I fondly call the “frontier west”. Favorite among my adventures are those to ancient sites such as Mesa Verde (Colorado), Chaco Canyon and Bandelier (both in New Mexico).



There is something sacred about the ancient sites, a feeling that comes up out of the depths of the earth that merges stillness, peace, and oneness.

With my love of the Ancients, I knew I had to purchase *The Shaman's Oracle*, a recently

released 52-card deck illustrated with rock art – cave paintings done by shamans of old to chronicle the heavens, the earth, the animals, and the people.

### **THE DECK**

The deck comes in a hard shell case, along with a well-written guidebook and a fold-up “cave map” depicting a hand print much like those found on cave and canyon walls. The map is for a five-card layout, with each finger representing a cave:

- cave of earth (earth) Trial and courage, initiation
- cave of rivers (water) Emotion, journeys
- cave of hearthfires (fire) Home, joy
- cave of winds (air) Beginnings, change
- cave of ice (spirit) Manifestation, blessings

Of the 52 cards, two are special – The Journeyer (the querent) and The Companion (the spirit guide). The remaining 50 are separated into five tribes of 10 cards each; in the lower left corner of each card is a symbol appropriate to the tribe:

1. Spirit (feathered fan)
2. Ancestors (stag's horn)
3. Shamans (pouch)
4. Hunters (spearhead)
5. Dancers (rattle)

### **USING THE ORACLE**

I did a layout for a specific issue – one I've been struggling with for a long time. I was on the verge of

changing direction and attacking this issue from a different angle, so I wanted to see what the Shaman's Oracle said about it.

My first card, in the cave of earth, was the Dancer of Frustration! How appropriate as this issue has been excruciatingly frustrating! However, as I continued



the reading there was light at the end of the tunnel, as the Shamans of Stars, Purification and Reflection all showed up in the spread. Lastly, the Hunter of Vision appeared. The underlying message woven through the five cards was that a change in path was needed, perhaps even critical.

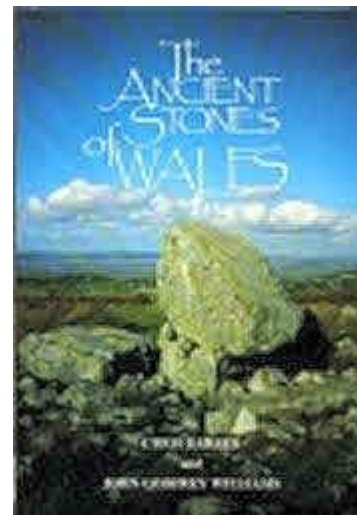
Time has proven the accuracy of the Oracle.

### SUMMARY

I resonate with this deck, not only because I have a deep connection to ancient cultures, but because I believe we all have a mythic memory that encompasses our cave-dweller past. I can even visualize myself in the cave, painting the outline of my hand in deep ochre.

Would you like it? Even if you don't feel that kind of connection, I think anyone would enjoy the stunning beauty of the oracle's artwork. The artist has added a luminescence to the cave art, which makes it look like spirit is streaming onto the painting.

Although I don't use oracle decks often, this one is a keeper, particularly when doing my own pathwork.



### *The Ancient Stones of Wales*

By Chris Barber and John Godfrey Williams

ISBN-10: 0951044478

ISBN-13: 978-0951044476

### *Book Review by Dafydd Monks (CalonDdraig)*

I remember first seeing a copy of this book in the library at Work and being totally amazed by it, stealing odd minutes at break time to have a quick read. This book really does have it all, and I cannot praise it enough as a concise and informative guide to the megalithic monuments of Wales written in a simple way but crammed with information, and references to other works for those who want to take their interest a bit further.

The book is organised into sections: by monument type, and then by other information of interest to Druids: for instance "Arthurian" monuments and monuments in other Welsh legends. Each monument has its own little write up and references to any archaeological work that's been done. As well as clear directions to the site and OS map references so finding the monument is easy. There are clear black and white photos of major sites on every other page, and you really do get a feel for the monuments that are described.

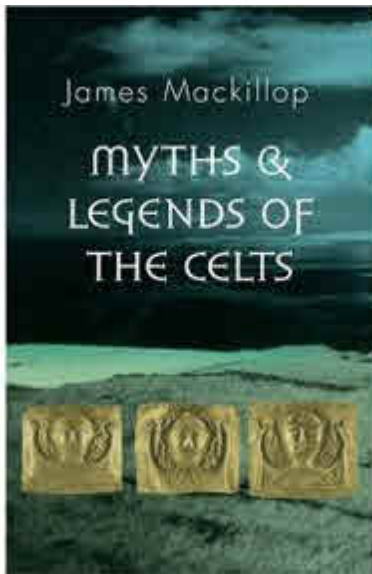
While the book provides a good archaeological study, there are also chapters/essays on The Church and Stones, monuments that were destroyed, preservation efforts and also on some more alternative subjects too: Dowsing monuments, quartz crystals in the monuments, Strange lights and objects and much more.

Photos courtesy of Nancy Hendrickson

© John Matthews & Wil Kinghan

It is hard to find fault with this book when viewed as an introduction to megalithic monuments in Wales. I use it as a field guide that is particularly suited to Pagan use as it goes beyond just the monuments, into tradition and metaphysics.

I'd rate this book 8/10 and say that it should find a home on the bookshelf of anyone with a serious interest in the ancient landscape of Wales.



### *Myths & Legends of the Celts*

By James McKillop

ISBN-10: 0140515526

ISBN-13: 978-0140515527

#### *Book Review by Maya St. Clairr (Cuardai)*

Mackillop began his book with a very comprehensive Introduction. It was so jam packed with wonderful information that it kept me wondering what the rest of the book was going to be like. He started out the introduction by talking about the history of the Celts, and the controversy of whether or not they really existed as a people. He explained in his easy way how that controversy started (without being petty about it and you don't really get the sense that he thought it was a controversy, most people who don't know about it wouldn't guess he was talking about it), and why and then he explained how we should see the Celts and what defines them as a peoples. The next part of his introduction is about the sources of our knowledge of the Celts, from the classical writers, to archaeology to the vernacular records he explains it all in such easy terms for the beginner and the

advanced reader will get a great refresher too! He also explains the term Celtic mythology, and what is encompassed in this term, he also discusses something that is not usually discussed in books of this type. He tells us the names and dates of the manuscripts that have survived of the Celtic myths and from which branch of the Celtic people it came. Keep in mind all this is still just the introduction AND HE IS NOT DONE YET! The final part of the introduction talks about the interpretation and reinterpretation of the Celtic myths, the theories surrounding them and he even gives us a taste of a little bit of theories of mythology in general to help explain the theories on Celtic mythology.

After the introduction the book is divided into three parts. The first part is called Contexts and it has six chapters. This first part gives you the background information you need to read the mythology. It talks about Celtic deities, the Celtic religion and what we know about it today, sacred kingship in early Ireland, Goddesses, warrior queens, saints, Celtic feasts and Otherworlds. Part two discusses the Irish myths and it too has six chapters. It begins with the Lebor Gabála Érenn, then goes on to the Irish mythological cycle, continues to the Ulster cycle (devoting two chapters to it) and the last two chapters discuss the Fenian cycle and the cycle of the Kings. The final part of the book is about the Welsh and oral myths and it has two chapters. The first chapter is about the roots of the Welsh tradition and the second is about the survival in the oral tradition of the Celtic lands.

The end of the book has a beautiful selected bibliography but even more beautiful than that is the list of leading names and terms in Celtic mythology. It gives short explanations of the names and terms, sort of like a glossary.

This can be easily called the best book I've read so far on Celtic mythology. The author's attention to not just the myths themselves, but the background behind them makes it an interesting and fact filled read. You are not just reading a story you are also seeing the people behind them.



# Community Events Calendar

Listing your event is free and you can submit up to five entries at a time. Note: We reserve the right to edit or omit entries. To submit, please send an e-mail to [admin@druidicdawn.org](mailto:admin@druidicdawn.org) with 'DD Event Listing' in the subject line. Include the date, title of event, location (including country), a short description and any contact details.

Note: Inclusion of events here does not imply endorsement from Druidic Dawn, *Aontacht* magazine or its editors.

## General on going events for 2010

### Anam Cara - Weekly Meditation Group

'A Weekly Meditation Group to be held in Oswestry, (UK) to explore everything from the Breath technique; mantra/ chanting' to hopefully movement and shamanic journeying.' To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/1070>

### NEW MOON MEDITATIONS every new moon, Denmark; ring 004575757131 for next meditation:

We'll make a circle and connect with the powers of Earth and Sky, I will then play channelled harp music from a time past, and the participants will be guided into some deep mediation to the Holy Grail within our hearts. Go beyond time and space to previous incidents/ present problems/ diseases. See them, solve them, let go. Afterwards we'll discuss what happened, and I will aid with my clairvoyance. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.sosha.dk/kurserUK.html>

NYMÅNEMEDITATIONER I BRYRUP: Ring for tilmelding og nærmere tidspunkt

Vi vil danne en cirkel, forbinde os med Himlens og Jordens kræfter og jeg vil spille kanaliseret musik fra en svunden tid på min harpe, under det første nummer vil mine hjælpere fortælle mig om den første meditation, derefter vil jeg videregive den til cirklen som en guidet meditation, med den forskel, at meditationen først påbegyndes når jeg atter begynder at spille på min harpe og undervejs vil mine hjælpere følge alle deltagerne og støtte dem. Jeg vil spille mens deltagerne rejser til deres destination i den anden virkelighed, derefter vil jeg bede deltagerne vende tilbage samme vej som de kom fra, takke deres hjælpere og vende tilbage til cirklen. Her vil hver enkelt

deltager have mulighed for at fortælle om sine oplevelser, hvis nødvendigt, vil jeg gå ind og hjælpe med mine clairvoyante evner. Dernæst holder vi en pause, hvor vi får noget te og noget godt at spise. Så fortsætter vi med endnu en meditation.

<http://www.sosha.dk/kurser.html>

### Pathways

A named Pathways, in Ellesmere, Shropshire, on the Welsh borders. The time together will be used to discuss anything that anyone wants to about spiritual pathways. All are invited, from those who have a clear idea about where they are going, to those who are just curious, and all explorers in between. Come to raise questions, talk about books you are reading, workshops you have attended, stuff that is coming up, etc. Self-advertising is allowed/encouraged, if relevant to the spiritual pathways subject. Meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month in the Function room of the Ellesmere Hotel. Parking is plentiful very nearby. Meet in the bar from 7.30pm; go to the room from 8pm. If you are late, come in anyway! There is no charge, and the drinks are cheap.

Ellesmere is part of what is locally known as the Shropshire Lake District. The energy of the town is given by the fabulous Mere in the edge of town. Future meetings might include a walk down to the Mere and through the public gardens. This is the beginning of something new, and the direction will evolve with time.

If you need any more details, you can contact John and Rachel on [jpathways@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jpathways@hotmail.co.uk)

Or see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/1698>

## Events for 2010

### June 2010

20th June: Magic Market, workshops, discussions circle, Midsummer midsummer fire ritual Nervii Nemeton Grove, Lier, **Belgium**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/182> or  
[http://mothergrove.druidcircle.org/nervii/index.php?option=com\\_eventlist&Itemid=27](http://mothergrove.druidcircle.org/nervii/index.php?option=com_eventlist&Itemid=27)

20th June: Summer Solstice Rite, the Three Cranes Grove Ohio, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/186> or  
<http://www.threecranes.org/calendars>

20th June: Alban Hefin Earthworks Gorseddau, Nescliffe Shropshire/welsh Borders, **UK**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/177> or  
[Earthworks\\_Gorsedd-subscribe@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Earthworks_Gorsedd-subscribe@yahoo.co.uk)  
or  
<http://earthworks.grove.googlepages.com/camps>

20th June: Litha (summer Solstice) Charnwood Grove, Beacon Hill, Leicestershire, **UK**. To participate and for further details,

see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/174> or  
<http://www.charnwoodgrove.org/events.html>

20th June: Public Summer Solstice Rite-Dawn at the Tor with the Sassafras Grove, Pittsburgh, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/187> or  
<http://www.sassafragsgrove.org/cgi-bin/webcal/webcal.pl>

21st June: Sun Standing held at Tara, with the Druidschool, Co. Meath, **Ireland**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/345>; or  
<http://www.irishdruidnetwork.org/index.html> or  
<http://www.druidschool.com/site/1030100/page/3626076>

21st -22nd June: Alban Hefin or Summer Solstice. Isle of Wright Druids, **UK**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/178> or  
<http://www.wightdruids.co.uk/Events.html>

22nd June: Tolkien (Modern Myth) Blessing Rite-Spring Tides, with the Sassafras Grove, Pittsburgh, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/187> or  
<http://www.sassafragsgrove.org/cgi-bin/webcal/webcal.pl>

25th-27th June: Faery Ritual Magic, Three Tall Sticks and conferring Second Sight, workshops with R.J. Stewart, Twisp, Washington, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/197> or  
<http://www.rjstewart.org/calendar.html>

25th - 27th June: 'Experiential Herbcraft' Wildways, Shropshire, **UK**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/172>, or  
[http://druidry.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=PagEd&file=index&topic\\_id=2&page\\_id=146](http://druidry.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=PagEd&file=index&topic_id=2&page_id=146)

25th-27th June: Comfest, the three Cranes Grove, Columbus, Ohio, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/186> or  
<http://www.threecranes.org/calendars>

### July 2010

2nd - 4th July Sli an Drui Weekend Workshop, **Ireland**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/112> or  
<http://www.druidschool.com/site/1030100/page/3117458>

8th July: Walking the Dedicant Path: Druidic Study, the three Cranes Grove, Columbus, Ohio, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/186> or  
<http://www.threecranes.org/calendars>

8 - 11th July: The Way of Merlin: The Prophet, the Goddess and the land, with R.J. Stewart, Hawkwood Stroud, **UK**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/211> or  
<http://www.hallowquest.org.uk/index.html>

9th July: Workshop-Ritual Structure-Moonstones, with the Sassafras Grove, Pittsburgh, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/187> or  
<http://www.sassafragsgrove.org/cgi-bin/webcal/webcal.pl>

17th July: Introduction day at the Druid School, Ireland. Interested see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/112> or  
<http://www.druidschool.com/site/1030100/page/3117458>

22nd July Lore Meeting with the three Cranes Grove, Columbus, Ohio, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/186> or  
<http://www.threecranes.org/calendar>

30th July - August 1st: Druid Camp Lughnasad in **Germany**, "OBOD and friends" open to everybody. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/172> or [http://druidry.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=PagEd&file=index&topic\\_id=2&page\\_id=146](http://druidry.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=PagEd&file=index&topic_id=2&page_id=146)

30th July – 1st August: Sli an Drui Weekend Workshop Co Roscommon, **Ireland**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/112> or <http://www.druidschool.com/site/1030100/page/3117458>

July 30th – 3rd August: House of Danu Gorsedd, Druid Festival at Lughbasadh, California, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/1533> or <http://www.houseofdanu.com>

## August 2010

August 1st: Primrose Hill, London, **UK**. Lughnasadh/Lammas Open air ritual. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/172> or [http://druidry.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=PagEd&file=index&topic\\_id=2&page\\_id=146](http://druidry.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=PagEd&file=index&topic_id=2&page_id=146)

August 1: Lughnasadh, Isle of Wright Druids, **UK**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/178> or <http://www.wightdruids.co.uk/Events.html>

1st August: Public Lughnassad Rite with the Sassafras Grove, Pittsburgh, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/187> or <http://www.sassafrasgrove.org/cgi-bin/webcal/webcal.pl>

6th – 8th August: Calan Awst a celebration with the Red Oak Grove, Delaware Valley (PA, NJ & DE), **USA**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/185> or <http://www.redoakgrove.org/upcoming/index.html>

8th August: Lughnassadh Ritual with the three Cranes Grove, Columbus, Ohio, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/186> or <http://www.threecranes.org/calendars>

12th August: Walking the Dedicant Path: Druidic Study, the three Cranes Grove, Columbus, Ohio, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/186> or <http://www.threecranes.org/calendars>

13th August: Bardic Circle-Moonstones with the Sassafras Grove, Pittsburgh, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/187> or <http://www.sassafrasgrove.org/cgi-bin/webcal/webcal.pl>

14th August: Eigse Spiriod Ceilteach (Gathering of Celtic Spirituality) at Slí Na Bandé, Newtown Mountkenedy, Co. Wicklow, **Ireland**. Day includes 5 speakers, talking circle, sweat lodge, music and storytelling. Accommodation available. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/345> or <http://www.irishdruidnetwork.org/index.html> or <http://www.irishdruidnetwork.org/eigse>

19th – 22nd August: Summer Gathering with the three Cranes Grove, Columbus, Ohio, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/186> or <http://www.threecranes.org/calendars>

21st August: Introduction day at the Druid School, Ireland. Interested see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/112> or <http://www.druidschool.com/site/1030100/page/3117458>

24th August: Blessig Rite-Manannon MacLir Spring Tides with the Sassafras Grove, Pittsburgh, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/187> or <http://www.sassafrasgrove.org/cgi-bin/webcal/webcal.pl>

26th August: Lore Meeting with the three Cranes Grove, Columbus, Ohio, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/186> or <http://www.threecranes.org/calendars>

## September 2010

9th September: Walking the Dedicant Path: Druidic Study with the three Cranes Grove, Columbus, Ohio, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/186> or <http://www.threecranes.org/calendars>

10th September: Discussion-Patron Deities-Moonstones with the Sassafras Grove, Pittsburgh, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/187> or <http://www.sassafrasgrove.org/cgi-bin/webcal/webcal.pl>

11th September: Introduction day at the Druid School, Ireland. Interested see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/112> or  
<http://www.druidschool.com/site/1030100/page/3117458>

11th -12th September: Inner Mysteries of Avalon, Boston, Massachusetts, **USA**, with RJ Stewart exploring the inner mysteries. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/197> or  
<http://www.rjstewart.org/calendar.html>

17th – 19th or 24th - 26th September: Fall Feat with the Red Oak Grove, Delaware Valley (PA, NJ & DE), **USA**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/185> or  
<http://www.redoakgrove.org/upcoming/index.html>

18th September: Public Autumn Equinox Rite, with the Sassafras Grove, Pittsburgh, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/187> or  
<http://www.sassafrasgrove.org/cgi-bin/webcal/webcal.pl>

18th - 19th September: Walkers between the world, led by John Matthews and Wil Kinghan. North Morton, Oxen, **UK**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/211> or  
<http://www.hallowquest.org.uk/index.html>

18th -19th September: Inner Mysteries of Avalon, Seattle Washington, **USA**, with RJ Stewart exploring the inner mysteries. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/197> or  
<http://www.rjstewart.org/calendar.html>

18th – 19th September: Family of the Goddess Harvest Festival & Grove Alban Elfed/Fall Equinox ritual with the Sacramento Grove, Fair Oaks, California, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/308> or  
<http://www.groveoftheoak.org>

19th September: Alban Elfed, Earthworks Gorseddau, Nescliffe Shropshire/welsh Borders, **UK**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/177> or  
[Earthworks\\_Gorsedd-subscribe@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Earthworks_Gorsedd-subscribe@yahoo.co.uk)  
or  
<http://earthworks.grove.googlepages.com/camps>

19th September: Autumnal Equinox Ritual with the Sassafras Grove, Pittsburgh, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/187> or

<http://www.sassafrasgrove.org/cgi-bin/webcal/webcal.pl>

19th September: Mabon (Autumn Equinox), Public Ritual, Charnwood Grove, Beacon Hill, Leicestershire, **UK**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/174> or  
<http://www.charnwoodgrove.org/events.html>

20th/21st September: Alban Elfed or Autumn Equinox., Isle of Wright Druids, **UK**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/178> or  
<http://www.wightdruids.co.uk/Events.html>

23rd September: Lore Meeting with the three Cranes Grove, Columbus, Ohio, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/186> or  
<http://www.threecranes.org/calendars>

23rd-26th September: Talks and workshop at the OBOD US East Coast Gathering Milford PA, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/1365> or  
<http://www.philipcarrgomm.druidry.org/> or  
<http://eastcoastgathering.druidry.org/>

23rd-26th September: The Sacred Arts of Healing - Shamanism and Spirituality in our everyday work. A three part programme led by Dr. Angela Cottter, Caitlin Matthews and Felicity Wombwell. Hawkwood Stroud, **UK**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/211> or  
<http://www.hallowquest.org.uk/index.html>

26th September: Primrose Hill, London, **UK**. Alban Elued/Autumn Equinox Open air ritual, to participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/172> or  
[http://druidry.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=PagEd&file=index&topic\\_id=2&page\\_id=146](http://druidry.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=PagEd&file=index&topic_id=2&page_id=146)

## October 2010

2nd -3rd October: Inner Mysteries of Avalon, Vancouver Island, B. C., **Canada**, with RJ Stewart exploring the inner mysteries. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/197> or  
<http://www.rjstewart.org/calendar.html>

8th October: Workshop-Ancestors-Moonstones with the Sassafras Grove, Pittsburgh, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see

<http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/187> or  
<http://www.sassafrasgrove.org/cgi-bin/webcal/webcal.pl>

14th October: Walking the Dedicant Path: Druidic Study with the three Cranes Grove, Columbus, Ohio, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/186> or <http://www.threecranes.org/calendars>

21st-24th October: 3 jours en Brocéliande sur les traces du grand cerf blanc... Découverte des lieux et des légendes, Retraite druidique, Soirée des Bardes avec la participation d'Ozégan. **France**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/1365> or <http://www.philipcarrgomm.druidry.org/>

29th – 31st October: Calan Gaeaf with the Red Oak Grove, Delaware Valley (PA, NJ & DE), **USA**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/185> or <http://www.redoakgrove.org/upcoming/index.html>

31st October: Halloween Moonstones with the Sassafras Grove, Pittsburgh, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/187> or <http://www.sassafrasgrove.org/cgi-bin/webcal/webcal.pl>

31st October: Primrose Hill, London, **UK**. Open air ritual, to participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/172> or [http://druidry.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=PagEd&file=index&topic\\_id=2&page\\_id=146](http://druidry.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=PagEd&file=index&topic_id=2&page_id=146)

31st October: Samhain Ritual with the three Cranes Grove, Columbus, Ohio, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/186> or <http://www.threecranes.org/calendars>

## November 2010

1st November: Public Samhain Rite Moonstones with the Sassafras Grove, Pittsburgh, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/187> or <http://www.sassafrasgrove.org/cgi-bin/webcal/webcal.pl>

6th -7th November: Inner Mysteries of Avalon, New York, Manhattan, **USA**, with RJ Stewart exploring the inner mysteries. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/197> or <http://www.rjstewart.org/calendar.html>

12th November: Discussion-Three Kindreds-Moonstones with the Sassafras Grove, Pittsburgh, **USA**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/187> or

<http://www.sassafrasgrove.org/cgi-bin/webcal/webcal.pl>

13th -14th November: Inner Mysteries of Avalon, Louisville, Kentucky, **USA**, with RJ Stewart exploring the inner mysteries. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/197> or <http://www.rjstewart.org/calendar.html>

19th -21st November: Inner Mysteries of Avalon, Boulder, Colorado, **USA**, with RJ Stewart exploring the inner mysteries. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/197> or <http://www.rjstewart.org/calendar.html>

20th November: Expressions of Druidry, West Midlands, **UK**. Hosted and facilitated by the Druid Network. To participate and for further details available in this issue and <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/1995>

## Advance Event Notices for 2011

Spirit of Scotland: Mystical Islands and Highlands a tour being offered in 2011 via Avalon Mystery School, for more information see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/109> or <http://www.celticspiritjourneys.com/scotland.php>

2nd Celtic Gathering, Ontario **Canada**, Date and Venue to be announced later, for details as they become available see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/1381>.

17th - 19th June: 'Spirit of the West' Druid Gathering at Pigeon Lake, near Edmonton, Alberta, **Western Canada**. To participate and for further details, see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/1365> or <http://www.philipcarrgomm.druidry.org/events.htm>

17th - 23rd September: 'Anchors of Light - Being a Third Millennium Druid: Vision, Action, Celebration' **Spain**. To participate and for further details see <http://www.druidicdawn.org/node/1365> or <http://www.philipcarrgomm.druidry.org/>

# DRUIDIC DAWN CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

## *Aontacht - Autumn/Spring Equinox 2010*

An interview with artist, poet, musician, activist and organizer, Sidhe, is currently set up as our main feature, but we would love to have more wonderful submissions. News, events, reviews, editorials, articles, essays, recipes, devotional pieces, photos and more are welcomed.

We are also fielding questions for Sidhe's interview. Sidhe is an Ovate with OBOD and a member of The Druid Network (Westview). She was involved in the organizing of the first two Canadian Gaia Gatherings and assists in organizing the Spirit of the West gathering. She has been a champion for human rights and poverty issues for over 25 years, and homelessness is a cause very dear to her heart. Her focus is on the integration of spiritual practice and artistic practice. So if you have something you'd like to ask her, please send it to [aontacht@druidicdawn.org](mailto:aontacht@druidicdawn.org). Questions will be asked to Sidhe in an anonymous fashion, however, we ask that you keep them clean, professional and courteous. Also note that we reserve the right to edit or discard any questions submitted. If too many questions are received we sadly cannot use them all, but will try our best to include all. **Deadline for questions is August 10th, 2010.**

### Basic Guidelines:

- i Submit original work only. Essays & articles should be between 1,000-2,000 words (footnotes and bibliography included). There is not a word limit for poetry, however, please do not submit epic verse.
- ii You may submit multiple pieces. Only electronic submissions are accepted and should be either compressed (.zip/.rar) and attached (preferred for photos & artwork), or pasted into the email body. Document submissions should be in Plain Text (.txt) or Rich Text (.rtf) formats only; Photos/artwork as .jpg or .png. Please cite your sources and clearly mark when using UPG [Unverified Personal Gnosis] ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unverified\\_Personal\\_Gnosis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unverified_Personal_Gnosis))
- iii Articles should be relevant to the Celtic/Druidic communities (refer to Subject Areas below) and must match the theme of the issue (if the issue is themed).
- iv Run a grammar/spell check on your work before submittal.
- v Keep work in a friendly manner. No racism, bigotry, violence or hatred.

### Subject Areas:

- Pre-Christian: Discussion of history, anthropology, archeology and more, but also of the current Reconstructionist or Traditional movements happening today.
- Modern Druidry: Discussion of Druidism within the last 300 years; includes Revivalist and Neo-Druid.
- Modern Celtic: Talk on surviving beliefs, folklore and superstitions still alive today on the Celtic isles, i.e., Fairy Faith.
- Celtic Christianity: Looks into this truly beautiful and unique branch of Christianity.
- Inter-Faith: How people incorporate other cultures into their Celtic/Druidic practice, or getting along with those of other faiths.

**The deadline for ALL submissions will be 15 August 2010, as we are looking to have distribution by 21 September 2010. Submissions can be sent to [aontacht@druidicdawn.org](mailto:aontacht@druidicdawn.org) or [DDaontacht@gmail.com](mailto:DDaontacht@gmail.com)**

**Note:** International copyright law will protect all materials published. However, submitting your work will not guarantee its publication. Also note that as *Aontacht* is a free publication, which generates no profit, you will not be paid for your contributions.

You do not have to be a member of the Druidic Dawn community to submit to the newsletter.

Please submit contributions directly to the editorial staff via email to:

[aontacht@druidicdawn.org](mailto:aontacht@druidicdawn.org)

Refer to the writer's guidelines, before you submit contributions or inquiries. Below are our upcoming issues in case you'd like to get ahead on submissions. Be sure to specify which issue you are submitting to.

### **Volume 3, Issue 2, "Sovereignty"**

**Deadline Aug 15, 2010**

The Celts understood the Wild Earth as sovereign, as a goddess; what is sovereignty and how can we apply this to our everyday life?

### **Volume 3, Issue 3, "Celtic Cosmos"**

**Deadline Nov 15, 2010**

The Celts viewed the Cosmos as an ensouled, relational universe; how do we observe and relate to the universe in a participatory way? .

### **Volume 3, Issue 4 "Hiraeth"**

**Deadline Feb 15, 2011**

The Celts experienced longing as the desire for homeland, re-union, and belonging; how do we relate to and express our own longings? And for those of us not living in Celtic lands, how does *hiraeth* play a part in our spirituality?.