

TOUCHSTONE

The journal of
**THE ORDER OF BARDS,
OVATES & DRUIDS**

February 2024 | Issue 318

This Issue

- ✿ A Review of the Celtic Goddesses, Witches and Queens Oracle by Danu Forest and Dan Goodfellow.
- ✿ From the Archives: A Book of Shinings by JJ Middleway.
- ✿ Thoughts for New Bards on daily practice by Selkie.
- And lots more!



COVER: "Boudicca" by Dan Goodfellow

Editorial

Hello, and welcome to *Touchstone*! (I still can't believe it's now my job to write that!).

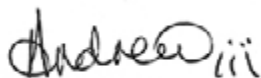
I want to kick off this edition with some thank you's.

Firstly, my deep thanks to Penny for such a wonderful handover – she has been working with me since October to ensure the transition was as seamless as possible. However, I am not letting Penny go that easily – after 22 years of service to *Touchstone*, I'm sure she has some wonderful stories to tell, so look out for an interview with our beloved Editor Emeritus this Summer. Thank you, Penny, for everything you have done for me and for our readers.

Secondly, a massive thank you to Lisa in the OBOD Office for creating the lovely new look for our magazine. It feels fresh and new, but retains the heart of our beloved publication. I also want to thank you all of you wonderful readers who have contacted me to wish me well and sent me such wonderful content. It's very much appreciated.

So, what does this new edition hold? Well, I think it is the perfect mix for Imbolc, bursting with new life and new ideas, but still a bit wintery around the edges.

And with that, let's get started!



TOUCHSTONE (February '24 - Issue 318)

2. Chosen Chief's Bit
3. Bard's Page
4. Ioho - *James Fox*
5. Ritual for a New Moon - *Nancy Grace Hart*
5. From the Archives: A Book of Shinnings
- *JJ Middleway*
7. Daily Practice: Thoughts for New Bards
- *Selkie*
9. Under the Cottonwood Tree - *Susan Jones*
9. Romeoak - *Cheryl Anne Maris*
11. Review: Celtic Goddesses, Witches and
Queens Oracle.
12. Open Forum
14. Events

An Imbolc Haiku - by Janet Elvidge

Under winter skies,
Nodding, heads of snowdrops bob,
Icy breezes blow.



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Chosen Chief's Bit

Bandia daoibh a chairde! Greetings everyone!
Beannachtaí Imbolc daoibh uilig! Imbolc
blessings to you all!

As I'm writing this the rains and floods have subsided and a much welcome frost has arrived. Well, I welcome it at least. I love the winter frost because it brings with it clear blue skies which always uplift me. The frost is also important to help the flowers with bulbs to bloom. The first shoots, heralds of spring, have begun to push their way up through the soil. The white heads of the snowdrops, associated with Brigid, which are now beginning to appear in my garden always give me a sense of hope, anticipation and excitement for the year to come. "Today is the day of Bride. The serpent shall come from the hole, I will not molest the serpent, nor will the serpent molest me." (from the *Carmina Gadelica*) The serpent, the symbol of regeneration and transformation, was said to come out of the depths and was referred to as 'the Noble Queen'.

Here in Ireland, spring starts on February 1st at Imbolc and traditionally was a day for weather divination - a cold frosty February 1st is a good omen for the weather to come because the Cailleach is still asleep. However, if it is bright and sunny, it doesn't bode well as the Cailleach is out collecting more firewood for the bad weather to come. Since 2023, the first Monday in February is dedicated to Brigid, Goddess and Saint. According to the ancient stories, Brigid is the self-generating mother, she is 'Neart an Domhain' (Nywfre or Life-force of the Earth), 'broinn na cruinne' (womb of the universe), the cauldron of all life, the exalted one, 'an breo saighead' (the fiery arrow). She is the intermediary between winter and summer, the intermediary between darkness and light. Brigid represents 'An Tríbhís Mhór (the Great Triple Spiral) as she maintains the integrity of 'Beatha, Bás & Athbheireadh', of Life Death and Rebirth. Brigid is the Goddess of Water, Healing and Peace; she is the Goddess of Fire and Smiths. She is the forger of the sword but she does not wield it. Instead, she inspires people to forge their path from the strength of fire, water, earth and air.

Since becoming Chosen Chief, the world has faced many challenges, including COVID, Climate Change and Wars. These challenges

seem to be relentless. I wonder how we as Druids can work with the spirit of Imbolc and look to Brigid, Goddess of Peace, to forge swords of peace, to inspire peace, to model peace, to be intermediaries between darkness and light. I'd love to hear from you, the members, how you might do this.

May Imbolc, with each new shoot, bring the growing light of Peace to us all and the Earth and her beings!

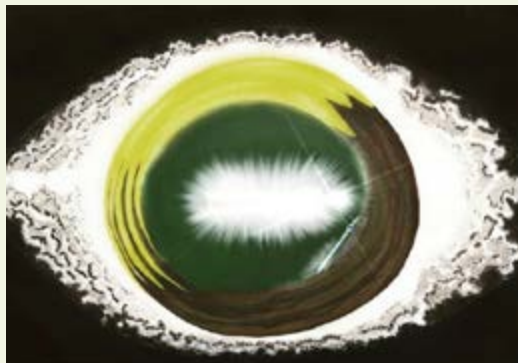
"Sit safely Brigid, in triumph on Liffey's cheek to the strand of the sea;

You are the princess with the ranked hosts above the children of Cathair Mór.

Brigid in the land, I behold where each in turn has lived, your fame has proved superior to them. You have an everlasting principality with the King of Heaven apart from the land where your sanctuary is."

From translated by Kuno Meyer. *A Golden Treasury of Irish Poetry A.D 600-1200*.

Eimear 



Nature is all around you, not what you see! - by Vohl

"This piece was designed for clearing sacred space in my meditations, feeling and connecting to nature within.. The dark forest represents the unconscious waiting to be explored. "



Bard's Page

Callieach

- by Vanessa Fielding

She strides the red dawn,
flings her shadow on the mountain side,
a giantess in tattered plaid,
peat and heather stalks worn thin,
threads of green and rose,
spun from aurora nights,
have lost their glimmer.

She turns to the north,
frost tattoos sparkling,
blue lips crack the stillness in her eldritch cry,
split the sky open.

Echoes loop from peak to peak,
a mountain tongue of glacier and gneiss,
words of power to woo the wild north wind.

Her fingertips burn for his snell embrace,
his arctic breath to ravage her ear,
shiver the pinnacles of her old breasts,
a promise of ice and wolves,
a blizzard waltz from Ben Macdhui
to Lochnagar.

A raven follows her.
It is lonely on the hill,
promises,
promises.

She knots her plaid,
swings the blackthorn at her side,
gnarled fingers hefting snugly to its magic.

Rothiemurchus glitters,
a thumbnail scrap of ancient Caledon
littered with diamonds,
ghosts of lost forests sough through
her old bones.

She grits her teeth,
tramps the black mountain side
with heavy feet.

A she wolf sniffs the air,
restless in her cage across the glen.
The first slow flakes of winter start to
fall from open palms



The Book of Pheryllt

- by Daniel Smith

In the night
Surrounded by shadowy beasts
Enjoy that first smoke
A way to use time
To relax
To reflect

The horned man
Sits with you next to the fire
He declines the pipe
Smiles, offers instead
A gold herb:
A new book

Circles

- by Shawna K Whaley

There is no death, only rebirth.

Just as there are seasons in a year,
There are also seasons in life.

Nothing is really linear, it all begins again.

A week moves from Sunday to Saturday, and
then begins again.

The year begins with January and concludes
with December, but once again we see
January.

The circle begins again.

We are born into infancy, and move into
adolescence.

From adolescence we become adults.
And then we experience old age.

But life does not end in death,
The circle continues and starts over with
rebirth.

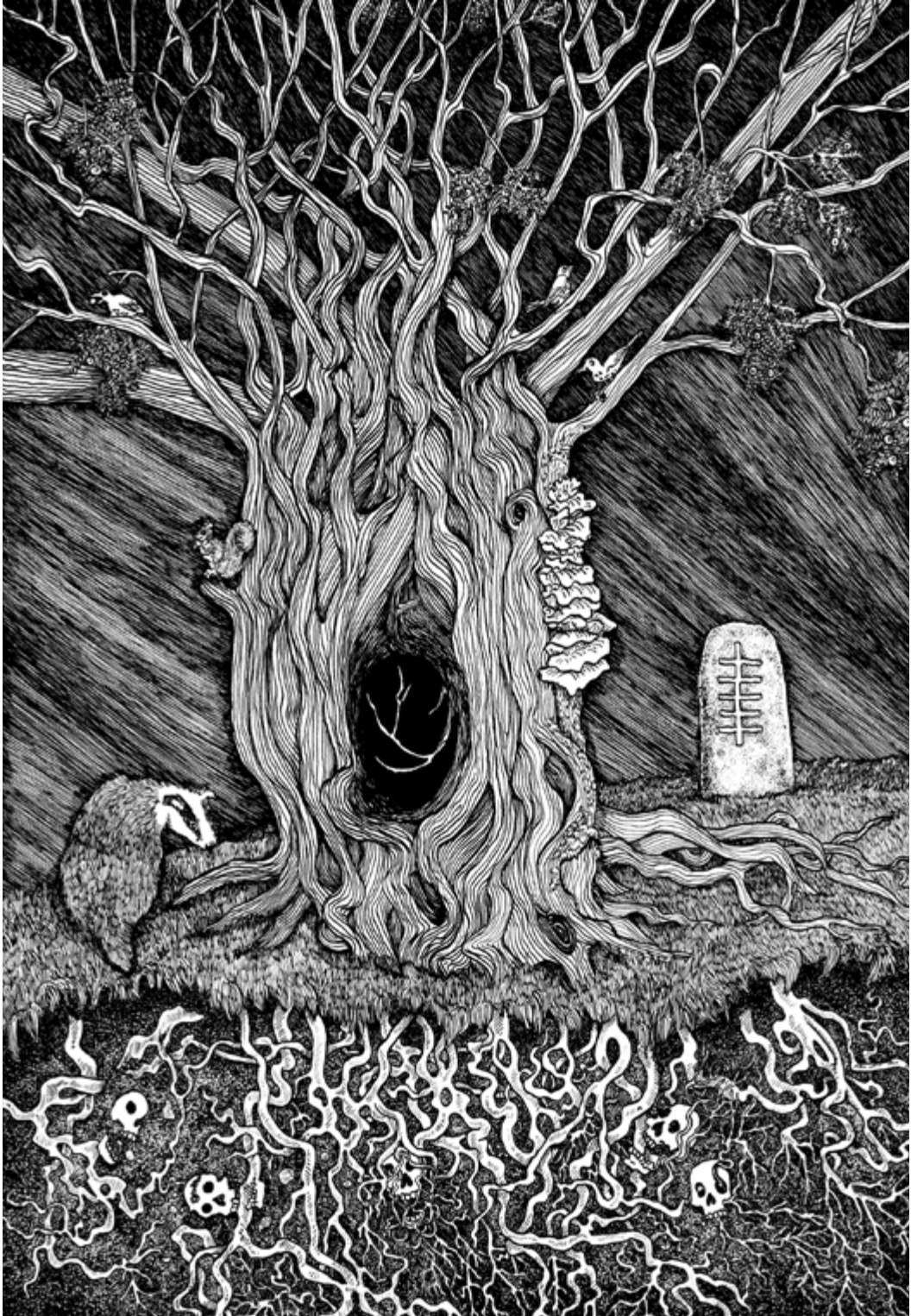
Winter, spring, summer, fall, and then the
winter comes again.

There is no end, there is only again.



Ioho - by James Fox

James' beautiful ink illustration of Ioho was inspired by the yew tree and by his experiences of the Ovate Grade.



Ritual for the New Moon

- by Nancy Grace Hart

This ritual may be performed outside in the presence of the appropriate plant or tree, or indoors with twigs or leaves. An Ogam card or stick may also be used.

Cast the circle while chanting the Ogam name of the Luration Cycle. Use a small drum or rattle as you walk. Bless the circle with water and fire.

Walk sun wise around the circle, beginning in the East and pausing at each quarter while you say -

“Come to us Spirit of Wind and Air,
giver of clear seeing and knowledge.
Come to us Spirit of Fire,
giver of passion and transformation.
Come to us Spirit of Water,
giver of love and kindness.
Come to us Spirit of Earth ,
giver of strength and bounty.”

Return to the West and pray to the Moon thus -

“In darkness we travel in dreams.
Dark Moon, deep cauldron of still water,
Your hidden face fosters imagination,
Your voice whispers the wisdom
of the unseen,
Your Spirit holds us in the arms
of pure love.
Your blessings are boundless.”

Say aloud the magical and healing properties of the Ogam plant or tree. Drum or dance. Then meditate in stillness.

When you are ready, thank the Spirits of the Elements at each quarter, and the Spirit of the New Moon. Uncast the circle. Bow or curtsy.



From the Archives

A Book of Shinings

- by JJ Middleway

For our first foray into the archives, I have picked a personal favourite from May 2015 by JJ Middleway. I remember reading this article for the first time and thinking what a magical and wholly practical idea it was. My book of shinings has been a source of inspiration and comfort since I set it up back in 2015 and I hope this article inspires you too. AA

Over the years, maybe just like you I suspect, I have gathered together all sorts of sayings, quotes, poems, songs, scribbles and more, often on odd scraps of paper – whatever is most readily to hand.

Over the years I have forgotten many of them; others I have ‘sorted’ when having a clear out – and promptly put them into the next ‘to be sorted’ pile, for two, five or maybe ten years down the line.

Over the years, without fully realising it was happening, I have amassed all sorts of snippets of wisdom, smilings of silliness and songs of



IMAGE: Book of Shinings - By JJ Middleway

.....

enchantment, which, together, form a valuable resource capable of enhancing pretty much any occasion.

Or at least they would be, if only they were readily accessible, and finding them didn't involve a Harrison Ford-like excursion into the depths of boxes, cupboards and other remote places.

Except now they Are. Or at least I am well on the way to compiling a unified collection of what I regard are the best of them and – just as importantly - culling the others, which I'll never need anyway and half the time I have only hung onto for 'old time's sake' (like bits of old string in a forgotten drawer).

Some are profound – others just plain silly. Here's one I found recently that I wrote decades ago and had pretty much forgotten:

Why shouldn't poetry Rhyme?
Children like it that way all the time
And they are closer to our maker after all.
So why fall, for loss of rhythm and of
metre
When childlike song,
Though amateur is sweeter,
Than adult pro's (prose)

Equally, some depth provided by an appropriate and timely insight can help create truly sacred and often magical space (see example at the end).

In part perhaps, it is a book of spells – capable of creating a certain energy or keying into a particular field. Yet it is more than that.

Just as in Wicca each initiate is encouraged to develop "A Book of Shadows", so in Druidry I wonder if each of us might do well to develop "A Book of Shinings"? A collection that reflects who and what we are, how and why we utilise the imaginative faculty, and where and in what manner we dare to risk sharing these inspirations and reflections of Awen.

So to finish, I dare to risk sharing this, a favourite from my own 'Book of Shinings', which has been and continues to be one of my inspirational guiding threads – both in Druidry and in Life. It is originally by someone called Morris West, yet I've come back to it so often over the years, and it so much reflects my own experience and philosophy, that it has come to feel like it is somehow 'part of me' now too. And maybe that's the best definition

of 'A Book of Shinings' – a true reflection of who I am.

It takes so much to be a human being
That there are very few
Who have the love and courage
To pay the price.

One has to abandon altogether
The search for security
And reach out to the risk of living
With both arms.
One has to embrace life like a lover.



Groves & Seedgroup Noticeboard

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Small, newly minted Seed Group based in Northern New Jersey offering regular face-to-face and online meetings.

Visit us at <https://www.andionfellowship.org/>

Contact Richard at
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for details



Daily Practice: Thoughts for New Bards - by Selkie

Introduction

In this 3-Part article, Druid and Mentor, Selkie, shares her insights gained whilst studying for a Doctorate at the University of Glasgow. OBOD have generously awarded her with a scholarship to pursue her research and she wishes to publicly acknowledge her gratitude. Selkie hopes that what she is discovering will benefit the members of the extraordinary group of people that is OBOD, particularly new Bards.

In Part 1, Selkie introduces the concept of 'losing oneself' and why observation of the process interferes with this.

In Part 2, regular Practice is discussed regarding 'doing' versus 'being' and suggests the key lays within the Primeval brain.

In Part 3, Selkie shares her reflections on why the key to 'losing oneself' can be found within Devotional-based Practice.



Part 1: What Bards (we as Druids) do.

As a mentor for Bards, I am regularly brought back to my early days with OBOD when I was cultivating my Druid Practice. It can be a challenge at times to remember how it felt negotiating new ideas and to be able to give useful information to those who correspond with me. I know how important it is as a mentor to inhabit the 'beginner's mind' when offering guidance.

Recently whilst I have been studying in an academic setting, I have discovered how, when you are in a mind-space of learning and wishing to internalise what you are realising, it is hard to truly 'lose oneself', or to put another way, remain 'in the moment' when you know that you need to remember what is taking place. To lose oneself in the moment is essential for benefiting from the lessons in the Gwersi, I believe, and I'd like to share some recent observations.

I love to hear about what Bards are doing, how they negotiate the ceremonies, rituals and practices in the OBOD course, and many generously share (although they do not have to) excerpts from their journals. When they are ready to submit their Bardic Review, it is usually an overview or synopsis of what they have written in their journals – a record of what they have done.

This is interesting and valid, and I enjoy reading them. But commonly, I find myself asking for more – what is it that they have gained – why is it relevant – how has it changed them?

Most of us end up supplementing our first efforts of a Bardic Review, but I have found that a rewrite can become a distillation where real illumination can take place. Through this we are able to communicate not only to our mentor, but to ourselves perhaps for the first time, the major shifts we have gained in thought, attitude and, yes, Practice.

But this can only happen, I believe, if we are able to unlearn our traditional schooling which teaches that we need to remain objective and record the data – essentially to be an observer. Objectivity is not the point in this instance, it is subjectivity, and in my view that is vital. How can we experience this subjectivity and retain it without resorting to 'observation bias', to use a research term?

For example, when I was working as a midwife, I was acutely aware that my very presence, even if I said and did nothing, could influence the way a woman's labour would progress; her awareness of being observed had a consequence. This is because a healthy woman in labour needs to inhabit her primeval brain to actualise the safest and most effective birth. I think that the same principle is at work when we are working with our Druid Practice but still learning and observing; when we can finally 'lose ourselves' in the very act of what we are doing the greatest shifts can take place.

But how on earth, do we achieve this?

During much of my Druid Practice, I have found that I am still observing and recording



what is happening, even after more than 15 years. It is only since my personal Daily Practice has matured that I understand this as a kind of gnosis which informs me when I am no longer 'in this world' but 'lost', inhabiting the Otherworld fully. I'm a slow burner it's true, but at least I've reached the tipping point where I can honestly say that I am more often 'away with the fairies' in my Practice than not.

I hope this reassures Bards, that even with years of practice and study, there is always more to learn and experience, and – and this is the most important lesson I wish to talk about – it is the nature of 'practice, practice, practice', the mantra I most regularly share with my Bardic mentorees, that is essential.

In Part 2, Selkie suggests that 'practise' is not necessarily 'practice'...

In Sickness and in Health

- by John Davis

What is becoming.....?

Air....noxious and choking
Water....polluted and poisonous
Earth....dusty and spent
Fire....out of control and searing
Spirit....crushed and diminished

What might still be.....?

Air....clear and sustaining
Water...pure and cleansing
Earth....alive and full of potential
Fire....serving and comforting
Spirit....free and uplifted

Our choice....to be or not to be?



Transformation: The White Phoenix

- by Vohl

"This piece was my transformation, all parts of the forest (unconscious) explored and lit up beautifully, the golden bridge leading between worlds."

W and Competition

Under the Cottonwood Tree

- by Susan Jones

Today I visited our cottonwood tree. "Ours" because it's on our property, but it provides shade and beauty to the street it is near, and shelter to insects, birds, and mammals. It belongs to many. It grows here because its roots sink deep to the water table and are fed by an intermittent spring by its trunk. Its gnarly roots spread thick over the bank. Last year I found the exoskeletons of cicadas climbing its bark. Last month I spotted a packrat nest on a flat place among the roots, a little precarious when the summer monsoon rains come down this gully. Today there was another one being built several feet away. The cottonwood provides many twigs and leaves from which to build their nests. Another nest hangs high in the branches. We watch the male hawk bringing food.



The largest cottonwood in the country, and the largest tree of any kind in Arizona, is just a few miles from where we live. Cottonwoods grow in the riparian areas, forming bright green ribbons in the spring, sending out fluffy white "cotton" seeds in early summer, showing off their golden colors in the fall, and letting us see a wider landscape through their bare branches in the winter. Today the leaves are falling, and I can delight in the sound of their crunching under foot. Ah, during my 30 years in Phoenix, how I missed this sound: cactus spines just don't crunch!

As a child I lived on the shores of Lake Erie, in Ohio. And on the bank leading to the water, a tall female cottonwood stood, sending out its cottony seeds each year, reminding me of snow. The male was farther up toward our house, and my friend

and I called it "The Witch Tree" and spent many hours playing beneath its shade.

That one of my childhood was an Eastern Cottonwood. Actually, here on our property in Prescott, AZ we have two different species side by side by our spring - a Fremont and a rare Sargents. At first we thought they were identical, but we started seeing subtle differences in their bark, and the timing of their leafing.

From Ohio to Arizona: Today I saw how my past and present are connected through this majestic tree that says "home" to me.



Romeoak

- by Cheryl Anne Maris

The oak tree has been dear to me for decades now; its presence, a sign I have come to trust by way of guidance and confirmation of goodness on my path. It has been the symbol of my creative, care-giving, and celebrancy work.

In 2017, I took on a new part time care giving job, helping a widowed gentleman in need of some companionship, cleaning, and cooking. Imagine my delight when, as I was turning into his driveway, I saw just ahead of me a truck carrying a young oak to be planted in the backyard. I immediately knew I was meant to be there.

Over the course of the next few years, Bob, the gentleman I was helping, and I established a genuine friendship. I enjoyed our meals and conversations together, and walking together in the neighbourhood. It was lovely to be able to say hello to the little oak tree a few times each week. I especially enjoyed looking out at the tree from the window of the upstairs office, which I affectionately called "the ladybug room", since those were its only inhabitants at the time. The little oak tree seemed to be looking back at me; like Romeo calling up the balcony to his beloved Juliet. I started calling the tree "Romeoak"; soliloquy and all!

My full time job at the time was caring for Bob's mother-in-law, whom I was with for seven years

until her passing in March of 2020, just before the pandemic emerged. Because of all the fear and uncertainty surrounding the virus, people were uneasy about allowing anyone unknown into their homes and thus I had difficulty finding work and was unable to keep up with my rent and bills. At this point, Bob extended hospitality to myself and my two children, and allowed us to take the upstairs rooms of his home. It was perfect, and a mutually beneficial arrangement.

I allowed my children to choose their preferred rooms and, as it turned out, that left me to the ladybug room, where my sweet Romeo oak and I have been gazing at each other ever since! The little breakfast table in my room faces the window, so he's my first chat every morning. We have comforted each other and celebrated seasons and festivals together.

I often think of that first day, having no idea of how things would unfold, but knowing that the little oak tree being planted upon my arrival could only mean something good.

It seems these particular stars were indeed auspicious!



Tree Poem - by David Hockley

In the imagination –
Beech - knobbly giant trunk in a commanding position.
You can see for miles the rolling hills.
My body was immersed (sucked) into the trunk.
Felt the core strength and sap rising, up the trunk out the branches to the leaves.
Heat of the sun on the leaves and back down into the roots.
Strength, support, root fibres drawing nourishment from the earth.
The tree guarded, holding long memory and protection.

In the real –
Approached a large copper beech in the grounds.
Noble, alive, delicate with scars on the bark.
Mighty, enduring smooth bark with resin running down in streaks.
Welcoming.



We still have 4 wands, made by Cally Palmer, to give to members who send in contributions to *Touchstone* about their journeys with trees. Please send articles, poems and photos to touchstone@druidry.org

Reviews

Celtic Goddesses, Witches and Queens Oracle - by Danu Forest and Dan Goodfellow

I must admit to having a particular soft spot for oracle and tarot decks. I have shelves packed with an array of different cards, a different set for every mood and season. However, as soon as I heard that Danu Forest and Dan Goodfellow were creating a new deck based on Celtic Goddesses, Witches and Queens, I cleared a space on my shelves.

The good news is their deck does not disappoint. There are 40 cards devoted to the women of Celtic myth and legend, from Abnoba to Tamara. The women are drawn from across the Celtic world, meaning that familiar names stand alongside some you may not know as well. Each is beautifully realised by Goodfellow. His distinctive style gives a strong visual sense of every figure. There are some cards which will be instantly recognisable to those of you who are familiar with his work, such as Blodeuwedd, Brigid and Cerridwen. Dan's presentation of Artio has long been a favourite of mine, curled beneath her bearskin in her winter torpor. Standing alongside these familiar figures are some stunning new creations. New favourites are the moonlit Abnoba, hunting her prey through the misty night-time, Ragnelle, who basks in the golden light of an eclipse, and, of course, the wonderful Boudicca who is on the front of this magazine. There isn't a single card which does not sing wholly of the woman it depicts.

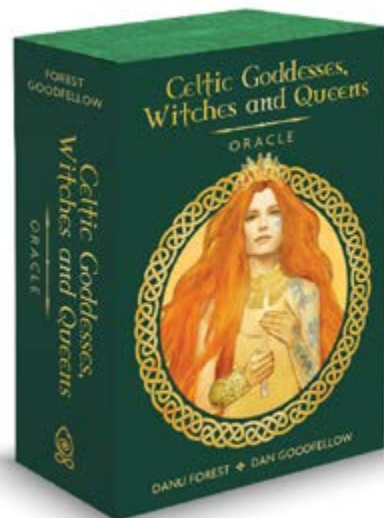
With oracle decks, it is easy to overlook the quality and contribution of the writer, simply defaulting instead to the visuals of the cards. However, that is not the case with this oracle. Forest's book is a wonderful piece in its own right. The prose is clear and authoritative, presenting the sometimes complex history of these figures with concision and clarity. The entry for each figure begins with a useful pronunciation guide before giving a brief introduction to their history and legacy. Despite the constraints of space, Forest explores each figure thoroughly, giving real depth to each one. The book then explores the divinatory meaning of the figure, in other words, what drawing this card potentially means for you. Each entry finishes with a prayer to the woman depicted on the

card, distilling the factual content of the text into magical, lyrical verse. Further information about women in Celtic culture, consecrating the deck and a range of different spreads bookend the text.

I decided to do a reading with the cards to see how they felt to work with. On a practical level, they are a really good set of cards to handle and shuffle. Sized at 9 x 12.5 cm, the cards are good quality with a beautiful emerald design on the reverse. There is a strong connection between the design of the card and the text of the book, meaning you can begin to intuit the meaning of the card before reading from the text. I used one of the simple spreads from the book and the reading was clear and thought-provoking.

This oracle is far more than just a celebration of the Celtic women it presents. It is also a celebration of the the skill and artistry of Danu and Dan themselves, with words and pictures working in complete harmony. As a result, you will certainly want a copy of this oracle for your collection. A thorough understanding of each female figure is presented to the user in a deck which is both easy to use and interesting to read. It can be used as a divinatory tool, as a succinct introduction to each of the women it portrays or simply as a beautiful visual journey in which to immerse yourself.

It is highly recommended.



Find in the OBOD store -

<https://store.druidry.org/products/celtic-goddesses-witches-and-queens-oracle>

On the Front Cover

- by Andrew Anderson

I wanted to write a very short explanation of why I chose the Boudicca card from the *Celtic Goddesses, Witches and Queens Oracle* for the front cover of this edition of *Touchstone*.

When I initially spoke to Dan about the possibility of using one of the cards for the front cover, we thought Brigid would be the most logical choice, with the edition coming out at Imbolc. However, the more I worked with the deck, the more I kept getting drawn to Boudicca.

You see, Boudicca and I have history. I was born in St Albans in Hertfordshire, which was once the Roman town of Verulamium. As a child I played in the Celtic earthworks near my home and learned the story of how Boudicca and the Iceni burned Roman Verulamium to the ground. Although I no longer live in St Albans, the history of the place feels like it has become a greater part of me as I have grown older. Having Boudicca on the cover of the first edition of *Touchstone* I have edited feels like a circle has somehow been completed.

But my choice was not only about the past but about the future. Danu's text which accompanies the oracle, states that drawing this card urges us to "Remember the old values of honour, bravery and serving or protecting something greater." These seem to me rather wonderful qualities to set out at the start of this new chapter in *Touchstone's* history and takes us back to the ideas explored in Eimear's article on page 2.

Finally, I want to say a big thank you to Dan Goodfellow for allowing me to put his wonderful depiction of Boudicca on the cover of this edition. It really does mean a lot.



Open Forum

AUROCHS UNDERGROUND PRESS

Call for Submissions

Homecoming 3: TIME – Summer Solstice 2024. Have you ever spent an hour imagining a better future, or daydreaming about the distant past? Do you ever spend your evenings wondering if past and future might lie underground, or over the horizon? Do you sometimes dream about a world where days and years are given names instead of numbers, and special times are identified by the angle of the setting sun slanting through a narrow opening between two stones... or wonder what it might be like to live in a place where you would not notice the natural passage of Time at all – perhaps a deep cave or a space station that has had to invent its own daily and monthly rhythms? Or do you like to play with ideas of Time that stretch over aeons or compress into milliseconds – Time as experienced by rocks, or micro-wasps? Are you excited by the Australian Aboriginal idea of the Dreamtime – the world as a continuing experience of creation?

For Homecoming 3, we are exploring Animist Conceptions of Time. We are looking for short stories, poems, and creative non-fiction pieces that play with ideas of Time in ways that get away from modern divisions of time into past, present, and future, and escape the domination of the clock. We are keen to read stories set in distant pasts and in imagined futures; re-imagined Creation Myths; memoirs that dream of building a hopeful future despite the present threat of Climate Change; poems that evoke an experience of being out of Time, or feeling Time differently – and many other things. Show us your dreams, and tell us your hopes.

Submission Guidelines:

Stories and Creative Non-Fiction pieces: up to 3000 words. Poems: up to 40 lines.

Please read the full brief before submitting work as pieces that do not fit the theme cannot make it into the journal no matter how lovely they are.

Deadline: Midnight, MAY 1st (Beltane) 2024

Visit <https://aurochspress.co.uk> for more information and how to submit.

Open Forum

Workshop weekend: "The Turn of the Wheel"

Join Thomas Marty ('Cambridge Core Shamanism') and Will Fordham (Corr Réisc Grove) for a weekend workshop to explore the eight ancient festivals of the pagan year.



Saturday 24th & Sunday 25th February 2024

About the workshop:

'The eight 'agricultural' festivals of the year form an everlasting wheel of seasonal changes, bird and animal migrations and hibernations, plant growth and harvest and ultimately human connection and survival. Exploring our sense of awakened humanity within these moments allows us to understand ourselves as part of Nature's greater wisdom that ebbs and flows into being with each year that passes.' (Will Fordham)

Taking place over a February weekend, Will and Tom will journey with you through eight unfolding events that will involve ritual re-enactment, creative expression, contact with the divine and ultimately, contemplation of our very essence as human beings living in harmony within Nature.

Whether you have experience of attending druidic and/or pagan ceremonies, gatherings or events for previous celebrations or are investigating your connection to the year's seasons for the first time, this workshop is for you. Both Tom and Will have reliable experience in creating and hosting individual and group events as facilitators, pastoral leaders and spiritual guides who will enable you to explore your own path as you travel through the 'Wheel of the Year'.

Whether you might come with a friend or two or on your own, we will shape the weekend around your energy and unfolding experiences to awaken your spiritual interaction with sacred time and sacred place. Come with an open mind and leave with an open heart!

Both days of the workshop will take place at Abington Barn: 52 North Road, Great Abington, Cambridge CB21 6AS.

To book your place on the course, visit <https://cambridgedruidry.wixsite.com/grove/post/workshop-weekend-the-turn-of-the-wheel> for more details or contact Tom on 07955 700066 or via email: tmarty@hotmail.co.uk

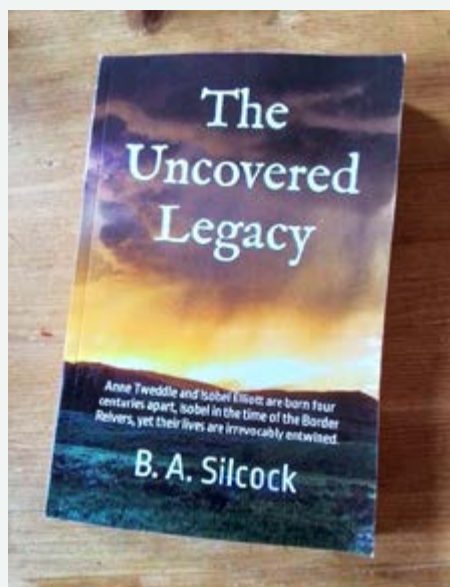
"The Uncovered Legacy"

- by B.A Silcock

Touchstone recently recieved an email from B.A. Silcock, telling us about their new novel which has been five years in the making.

They told us *"The book is set in the turbulent times of the Border reivers when the fight for survival was a daily occurrence. Its people at the mercy of English armies coming, North and Scottish armies moving South. Those caught in the middle, the people of the borders, survived the best way they could."*

This tells the story of the relationship between Anne Tweddle and Isobel Elliott, two women born 400 years apart. Anne Tweddle, living in the 21st century and Isobel Elliott's, life in the 1500s. But what is the connection between them? This is a tale of shapeshifters, travelling bards, kidnappers, betrayers, murderers and healers but, ultimately its about love and loss with an intriguing presence of animal magic." It sounds wonderful, and a perfect read for those dark February evenings.





Regular Group Meetings

ARTIO SEEDGROUP, Zurich area, Switzerland. Open rituals for Beltane and Samhain, occasional meetings - New members welcome. Contact: britta.holden@sunrise.ch, +41 76 326 6963 or lily@wildwood.ch

ARTURIAN GROVE Seasonal rituals near Otley. optimistichannah@outlook.com

ASH GROVE, GLASTONBURY meeting OBOD visitors for druidic chat. FFI jacki.woolmington@btinternet.com

BIG SKY GROVE, NORFOLK OBOD/BDO 8 festivals, walks, discussion/social. FFI: rebniac@btinternet.com

BADGER & TOAD S.G., Folkstone area. Seasonal/meet ups FFI: Sian and Hazel obodbadgerandtoad@yahoo.com

CIRCLE OF COLL Seattle Seedgroup public rituals, workshops, tree walks monthly. circleofcoll@circleofcoll.org

CORNOVII GROVE. Seasonal rituals, Worcs. www.cornovii.org
Email keith.southall@creativelandscapes.co.uk

DÓITEAN AGUS UISCE (Flame & Well Druid Grove). Seasonal rituals, moots and other gatherings. Colorado, Front Range, USA. FFI: flameandwellgrove@gmail.com, <https://flameandwellgrove.org>

DRACAENA GROVE: Saltburn/Cleveland: N Yorks Celebrations/informal meetings. dracaenagrove@hotmail.com

DRUID PILGRIM GROVE: Pilgrimages, gatherings and rituals. Encouragement for pilgrims. Australia and NZ. Contact: danuta@adruid.com; FB: Druid Pilgrim group.

FELLOWSHIP OF THE FOUR DIRECTIONS, BRISTOL. Monthly local park meeting/ceremony FFI: fellowshipotfd@hotmail.com

BOREALIS CIRCLE SEED GROUP 3rd Saturday of the Month: Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada. Public rituals in local parks. FFI: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/lakeagassizdruids/>
Email: borealiscircle@gmail.com

LIGHT OF AWEN SEED GROUP in Bristol. Celebrating the wheel of the year, and healing. Email: Lightofawen8@gmail.com

MACADAMIA GROVE Seasonal/events, Brisbane Australia. Sandra macademiagrove@hotmail.com

THE MELBOURNE GROVE Seasonal, Melbourne, Aus: Trudy Richards moondancer@outlook.com.au

OAKHEART: 8 Rituals, Druid Drinks, Gatherings. Portland OR USA. <https://www.oakheartdruids.com/>

PENDLE GROVE. Clitheroe/around Lancs. Sionnach on 0161 3432705 or email drvernnon@hotmail.co.uk

SHINING MOUNTAINS GROVE W. Montana, USA, 8 rituals, community, hikes, zoom. FFI: Heather: roanrob-bins@aol.com

SETANTII GROVE Seasonal Rituals in Manchester / S. Lancs. Always outdoors. Email: groveofsetantii@yahoo.com

SILVER BEAR GROVE Middlesbrough, County Durham. TS3 9DD. Contact Paul 07923575364
Email: silverbear-grove@hotmail.com

SLIABH ANAM GROVE Rituals and monthly moots Durango, Colorado, USA. FFI: contact: sliabhanam@gmail.com

TAMESIS (LONDON SG) festivals/moots/workshops
Contact: Ferdiad.tamesisgrove@gmail.com | www.tamesisgrove.com





Events



OBOD members and friends are welcome to submit events they have organised for inclusion here.

This section may also be posted on our website at <https://druidry.org>

Please tell us if you don't want your event posted on the www.

OBOD Wheel Of The Year Online Rituals

On FB and YouTube. Hosted by CC Eimear Burke. Check: <https://www.facebook.com/druidry>

DATES FOR 2024:

Imbolc: January 27th | Alban Eilir: March 23rd | Bealtaine: May 4th |
Alban Hefin: June 22nd | Lúghnasadh: August 3rd | Alban Elfed: September 21st |
Samhain: November 2nd | Alban Arthan: December 21st

Regular OBOD Meetings

Fireside chat with Eimear: Join CC every Thursday, 8pm. Google YouTube + [Fireside chat](#)

[Tea with a Druid](#): With Philip Carr-Gomm/guests every Monday 8pm

Monthly OBOD Peace meditation: with your Grove or by yourself every full moon: 7pm local time

Building Resilience in Difficult Times: A monthly OBOD Listening Circle. Online zoom gathering, 1st Wednesday of the month 7pm UTC. Contact harrietlock@gmail.com

Upcoming Events

9 & 10 March OBOD Inner Journeying and Ritual level 3 'Singer, Seer and Sage' in Glastonbury. With Penny Billington and Matt McCabe. For level 1&2 achievers - email mattmccabe.1@outlook.com for an invitation

1 & 2 June, OBOD 60th Anniversary Summer Gathering, at Strode College, nr Glastonbury

15 - 16 June Inner Journeying and ritual level 1 with Penny Billington, Matt McCabe & Gary Llewellyn Glastonbury, non-residential. Cost £75.00. Email druidevents@yahoo.com for a flyer

28 June-2 July Bioróg Retreat - Discovering Mythic Landscape in Donegal, Ireland. Venue: Song House, Falcarragh. <https://thesonghouseireland.com/> Facilitators: Eimear Burke and Seán O'Gaoithin. FFI/bookings email seanogaoithin7@gmail.com

15 - 18 August Druid Camp in South-West Germany, in Waldhambach. The website is www.druidencamp.de

NEWS OF 2025

2025 OBOD Gathering in the American West. Have you a great location idea in the US NW? Would you like to help? Do you have great advice? "We work to spark an OBOD Druidic gathering in the Americas Western Mountains in 2025, seeking a centrally location, financially and physically accessible, embedded in nature, for our Druid retreat." From Montana's Shining Mountains Grove with teammates from Nevada and Utah, we look forward to seeing you in 2025. Heather RR

Heoranrobbins@gmail.com

