



The journal of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids
July 2022

Issue 299



Morning meditation Grove: Moss Gnome

EDITORIAL

As I write, many Druids old enough to know better are reeling from our inability to pace ourselves. I joyously blame the cornucopia of riches pouring out on our Midsummer Gathering in Glastonbury. For those who couldn't be there we'll present a charivari of reminiscence next month to give you a flavour of the talents OBOD nurtures. But I had to include one letter of appreciation for everyone's hard work, and one fun thing, p15.

This month, there's an opportunity for members, and 'silver silk' on p3 appeared at the perfect time to encourage all with deft fingers to contribute to a Taliesin banner, p7. Not sure - for myriad rea-

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sons? Me neither. But we're adventurous, so I'm emailing to find out more: why don't you? We could become Druid Compadres of Banner 2023!

Ecological concerns are never far from a Druid's mind and we have seedplanting, p4, story p.5, and an article on p8 with a personal commitment that proved life-changing. What would *you* sacrifice for nature's health? It's a sobering question. We have reviews to help you explore the land and its myths and, from Finland, the practises of the most ancient peoples of the region.

Health warning: don't worry that your eyes have gone skewy - I have taken liberties throughout with font size and spacing to cram all in - the compositor's equivalent of stuffing the puffy sleeping bag back into the tiny bag post-festival. So, higgledy piggledy, Touchstone's safely zipped.

Well, the energetic waves from the gathering have calmed - yes, there was lightning on the night of Eimear's witnessed installation - so settle down to a good read. Lastly, here's my personal earworm from the eisteddfod, from a kilted ecological educator, to the tune of 'Ghost riders in the Sky.' Here's the Green Man's message - we all know it, so join in now:

'Let's keep it wild,

Let's keep it free,

Said the man with the hedgerow

On his hea-ad.'

(Tumultuous applause!)



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SILVER SILK IS FOR SPINDLES

Rumplestiltskin spinning gold in the village
On odd wednesdays into the afternoon,

Merino sings a rainbow palette
And dances on the loom

Shetland flows like a gentle river,
Always leading me along from the fold

While Romney and Leicester are patient
teachers
The lessons are better shown than told.

Cheviot and Corriedale by Rolags
Lincoln and Buelah in braids

By wheel and shuttle and loom and by hook
My charms and enchantments are made.

And silver silk is for spindles.
Sitting spinning by the ancestor shrine

Bathed in moonlight,
Listening, connecting
To a long, thin,
But unbroken line.

Dasos Crowsong



Embroidery: Maxine Warren (See p7)

LONGING

High in the tree, the blackbird sings
down in the grass, some insects whirr
a mouse disappears in a burrow
and young trout are playing in the brook
at the brookside a pair of rabbits sit.

So friendly is the forest's edge
so familiar that choir of voices
I recognise all these eyes
I know you are watching me.
I can see you in each leaf
I can feel you in my heart
I welcome you in my arms.



Dr. Daniela Dick (Saileach)

BEL FIRE

Through the woodling thicket, Bel fires grew,
Through sapling cloaked and mist-born
yews,
Echoed murmurs of the horns they blew,
Sacred oak, sacred fires, sacred through and
through

Up crept the wyrd and crawling things,
Weaving as the night-lark sings,
Round buzzed the chords of stinged wings,
Called to stones – the maker's rings,

And here we gather,
Here we stand,
Our ritual on ancient land,
Gods to gods, hand in hand.

Eric Schoch

Philip Carr-Gomm contacted us, as the nearest OBOD Seed Group, to tell us about the Jamie Reid event at The Lost Gardens of Heligan. Jamie, the overseeing artist, and John Marchant have a one year project sowing a wildflower design in a field.

Beltane Seed Sowing

Bagas has Kernow Cres (Mid Cornwall Seed Group)

LYNDA MOSS, VICKY WALKER,
RACHEL WAKEMAN

Eight simple ceremonies to follow the calendar have been proposed, starting with the first public sowing on 1st May 2022 and we were invited on behalf of

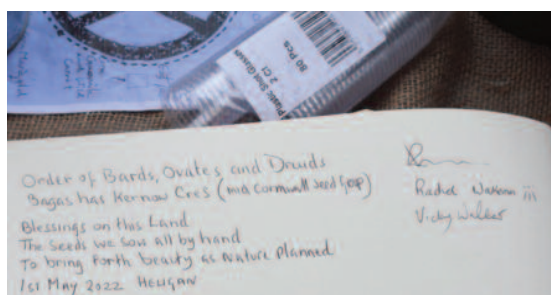
The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids. We all got to dig our hands into the seed bag and cast the seeds around the circle in a beautifully symbolic gesture of grounding.

They have been given Valentine's Meadow to work in and will sow Jamie's OVA glyph at a 100m diameter. This will be in pink Corncockle against a backdrop of mixed wildflowers, supplied and overseen by Richard Scott of the National Wildflower Centre. Richard is a close friend of Jamie's and has also worked this meadow with Heligan.

The OVA, as well as being an encircled Anarchist A with an added V for Victory, references the Eight Fold Year. The glyph will be oriented to the North, with a path running around the outer edge of the circle and a central path crossing the Middle East to West, following the trajectory of the sun. With this path, there are eight clear points around the circle.



The field will flower, revealing the OVA symbol from a distance (and from the sky) and create seeds that will be harvested. Some of this harvest will be forwarded to the event participants who will then, hopefully, sow the seeds the following year.



We also signed the visitor's book and will follow the progress of the field throughout the coming year.

*Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap
but by the seeds that you plant. •*

Robert Louis Stevenson 1850 - 94

I have a relationship with the dryad of an oak near a pond that is sacred to me. It's a big

*pond full of turtles, fish, ducks, geese, herons, and the occasional water snake, coot, or muskrat. A trail goes around it, and I often see killdeer, bluebirds, and swallows. Many trees dot the landscape – oaks and maples and pines, sometimes a sycamore or an elm. One of those oaks (a *Quercus phellos*, willow oak) is my friend.*

When I first tried to get to know her, I was cautious. I asked permission, brought offerings, and was a little diffident. She laughs at me now. Occasionally he's a he, but usually when she's talking to me, she's a she. She's like a wonderful grandmother – affectionate and loving and always supportive. She draws forth my respect just by being herself. I sit in her shade, and she makes me feel welcome, always insisting that it's no bother to have me.

The first day we started talking, after we'd gotten to know each other a bit, she called my attention to a stick on the ground. She told me that a salamander was growing inside and that she wanted me to keep it until Beltane and then burn the wood to release the salamander. I did so, but not until after visiting with the tree.

On that day, she pointed out another stick to me, this one straight and light-colored. She told me she knew I'd miss the salamander (who had spent the past several months on the windowsill in front of my altar) and that when I felt the time was right, I could take this stick to fill its spot at the window. I thought about adding some color to it but quickly realized that artificial paints wouldn't feel right. I think when the time

Dryad Story KIMBERLY ISRAEL

comes, I might research how to make plant-based dyes at home and see how many colors I can get.

I asked the dryad how I could repay her for her kindnesses to me, and she said she didn't need anything. I pressed her, saying that I wanted to feel like she got something out of this relationship. She told me we need people who know and love the earth. I pushed her on this a little bit. What about pollution and climate change and overdevelopment? She said those were all big problems that needed action, but that they meant we needed to love the earth more and faster – not that we should skip that step.

The more we love, the more we're able to give, but if we're pushed to give where we don't love, we feel resentful. We might cooperate anyway up to a point, if laws or social sanctions force our hand, but only greater love can increase our willingness to take the risk of changing. Not even justice is as powerful as love.

The more people who love the earth, the easier it will be for everyone to care for her. For one person to massively decrease their consumption is hard. For a society that finds that it loves the earth, nature will provide much of the novelty our brains need, freeing us from overconsuming for the thrill of experiencing something new. For a society that finds it loves the earth, productivity will be measured in health and joy, not in shareholder profit. For a society that finds it loves the earth, a slower pace of life will make room for creativity and connection. For a society that finds it love the earth, desire to support everyone's well-being will join many hands in sharing the work.

After we dreamed together, the dryad offered me another gift. A small knob of wood, it holds much of the beauty of the salamander but is smaller and fits beautifully on my altar. A small dent in the wood is just the right size to hold a loose pearl. As I place it, I'm reminded of the Christian parable of the "pearl of great price", a pearl so precious that the one who finds it devotes himself to obtaining it.

Love of the earth is my pearl of great price. All my rituals and meditations, my practices and explorations increase my awareness and knowledge and love of the earth. Part of my role as a bard is to experience the beauty of the earth and show it to others so they can love her as well. Is it part of your calling too?



Dear Touchstone, A third book has been designed for the element of air and has again become quite magical...

We have walked through the green forest and found tree friends. We swam through the seas and studied the rain.

In the third book, we explored the element of air and rode the storm, flew the kite and felt the breath of the earth. For a third time, many authors, artists and photographers have approached an element and worked with it. The result is

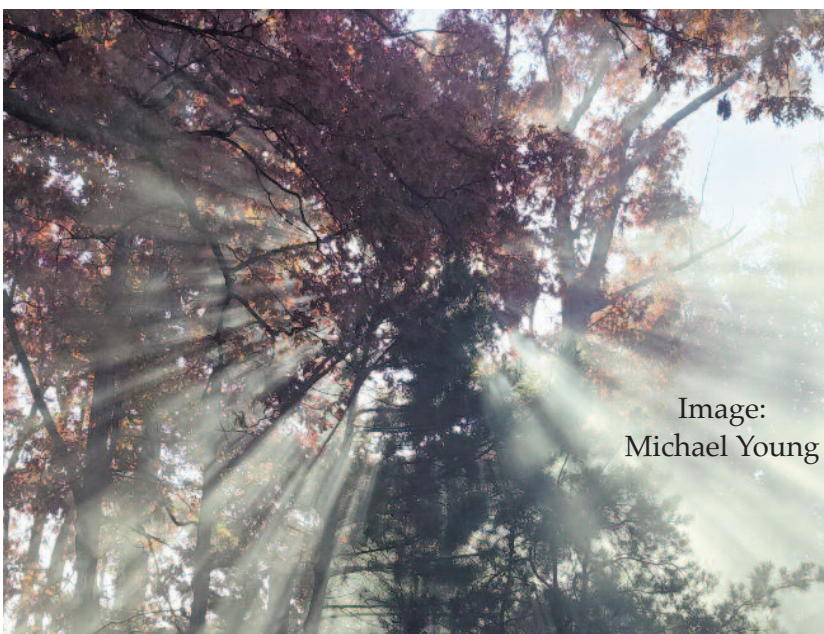


Image:
Michael Young

another wonderful book with different aspects of this fleeting element. The book on the theme of air is called "**Fühl den Atem der Erde**"

("Feel the Breath of the Earth").

Again, the majority of the proceeds will be donated to environmental protection projects, which this time can be assigned to the element of air. All three books are commercially available and are unfortunately only available in German. *Saga & Birgit(Lunaria)* (custos-verlag@gruenwald-greenwood.de) ISBN 978-3-943195-41-5 108 Seiten, Mai 2022 mit zahlreichen s/w Bildern €10





OSSIAN Warrior Poet *Dramatic tales of loyalty, love & war.* Edited & Illustrated by Eileen Budd, primary illustrator Maxwell Cant. Adapted from *The Poems of Ossian* by James Macpherson Wide Open Sea Art Heritage Press

Forgery – particularly of ancient documents - was all the rage in the late 1700s. Thomas Chatterton astonished literary London with the works of ‘medieval poet Thomas Rowley’, while Edward Williams (Iolo Morganwg) amplified original Welsh texts & also produced his own. The most celebrated ‘forger’ of the time was James Macpherson, whose epic poems, he claimed, were translations from the work of the legendary Ossian: these caused a sensation on both sides of the Atlantic and had a massive impact on the Romantic Movement & the Gaelic revival. Macpherson was buried in Westminster Abbey among Europe’s literary giants.

Nowadays we view such ‘forgeries’ differently. Chatterton was a child prodigy, if not a genius: Iolo Morganwg a distinguished scholar, a visionary, a mystic. James Macpherson? Author Eileen Budd dismisses the debate over the poems’ “authenticity” as purely political: “*there is considerable evidence supporting Macpherson’s claim, and the poems have..... been proven to come from early Scottish Gaelic tradition.*” They show the sophisticated civilisation of Scotland’s past, too often overlooked in the light of the Roman invader’s account.

In this special new edition, ancient Scotland is brought to life through the author’s

dynamic illustrations & fine maps. Her chapter summaries and comprehensive introduction to “The World of Ossian” (sections for example on ‘Geography’, ‘Technology’, ‘Characters & Peoples’) are essential aids to poems which are often allusive rather than narrative. *We love myths re-told* wherever we can get them. To quote the author, these poems are “a breath of fresh air”. **ARB**

Awen-inspired Embroidery Project MAXINE WARREN

I am hoping to get a global embrace project off the ground and would love some Bards, Ovates and Druids to put themselves forward to help. I have long been fascinated by the Taliesin story, of magic and transformation, and Ecclesiastic embroidery (See p3). Combining these two passions, I have a vision of a group of people coming together on line to create a wall hanging or long scroll.

I have a source of hand dyed yarns and fabric for the background, but I need people to stitch it! I am planning to send out (globally!) a basic ‘kit’ with a pre-drawn image outline, a box of threads, needles and basic stitch guides. The work will need to be completed and sent back to me by an agreed date so I can put all of the parts together to hang in the hall for the **Summer Gathering 2023**. It sounds ages away, but I would need to know if you would like to join in, as life can get in the way and everyone sews at different speeds! If you know you will not finish then we can arrange for you to send the work back to be completed so we don’t miss the deadline.

Please email maxinewarren@me.com FFI. Tell me a bit about yourself and your stitching Awen, photos of previous work.. and of course pictures of your pets helping out.

Blessings from North Wales, myself and the boys Hector and Jack. /|\ (The kits are lovely, but no room for the photo; apologies! Ed.)

At the tender age of seventeen, while preparing for my coming-of-age vision quest, I had an unexpected dream.

Ions and Aeons - the roots of life FRED HAGENEDER

I saw a hole in the sky, slightly larger than the moon. And from all around me, from all over the Earth, the spirits of tree species drifted up and disappeared through that hole. I knew this departure meant their extinction, and I had never felt so much pain before. I cried and screamed *"Don't leave us! Stay! Come back! Please don't go!"* Eventually three of them turned around and looked back at me through the opening, with kind, loving, but mournful faces which I will never forget.

This visionary dream shaped my life. Since then, I knew that biodiversity loss was underway. What we now call the sixth mass extinction also affects trees, and it has pained me all my life. But despite the urge to help save the trees, I didn't really know what exactly I could do. How could I contribute to counteracting the loss of species among trees? It was only a few years later that the answer came, through another touch from the Otherworld. One evening at a retreat I was sitting alone in the sanctuary, by the altar. And I felt that I wanted to make an offering to the divine that was really worth its salt. I asked myself what I could offer that really meant a lot to me. What did I identify with the most, what would hurt me the most if I let it go?

It was my harp. My Celtic harp music. So I

took my deepest desire – to be a neo-Druidic Celtic bard who plays harp for the Earth and all her beings – ripped it from my chest and

placed it on the altar. After the tears had dried up, I sat in silence for a while and then went to bed exhausted.

The next morning, after the yoga session, my new desireless freedom allowed me to go particularly deep into meditation. And that's when what I call "my Taliesin moment" happened. Suddenly, in my contemplative silence, The Song of Amergin began to recite itself within my mind. *"I am the wind on the sea ... I am the eagle on the rock ... I am the word of knowledge ...,"* I felt the presence of the tree

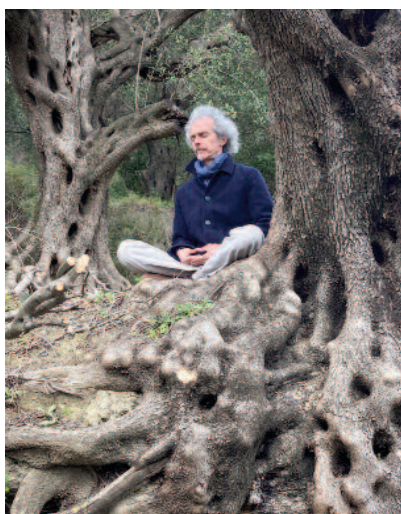
species of the Ogham alphabet, and I understood: I was to create a painting and a piece of music for each of these tree dryads.

The results only became apparent after years of research and attuning. Some readers may know my tree books: *The Spirit of Trees* (containing many of the paintings); *The Living Wisdom of Trees*; *Yew – A*

History, or my harp-based (yes, I was given it back :) tree music. I also published *The Tree Angel Oracle Deck* (a divinatory card set representing 36 tree species) and *Tree Yoga* (which shows the similarities between druidic and yogic lore).

FOR ALL LIFE

In recent years, however, my tree work extended to cover the entire web of life on Earth. Of course, I was always aware that the



forests of Gaia are of great significance for the whole. But I had always been content to learn from and about the Wildwood, I liked its boundary and the shelter it provides. But the trees themselves began to call me out. “We cannot breathe,” they said, “the air is poisonous.” “We cannot drink and feed,” they said, “find out why our fungal friends are dying and tell it to your fellow humans.” For a long time I did not know where to start. Then Scots Pine, the ancient spiritual warrior, came to the rescue.

One day I approached a young grove of Scots Pine and asked this ancient tree being for some help with a personal problem. Admittedly my mistake, as usually I don’t encourage reducing trees to aids in human-centred problems such as health, wealth, luck and romance, the typical contents of medieval superstition (like hammer a nail into a beech tree to reduce your toothache). But Pine doesn’t really care for whining anyway – for emotional problems, better approach Alder by a river; Willow might bring you back into flowing too, Oak might give you strength, and Rowan inspiration how to overcome your dilemmas. But Scots Pine, this sombre spiritual guardian? After I explained my problem (to myself and the trees around me) I sensed a clear response which would translate as “We don’t care. Be quiet.” I apologized for being so self-centered and dared to ask one more, very honest question: “What do you care for?” “Ions and aeons. And now go!”

I had to contemplate this for weeks. After a thorough learning curve I understood that “ions” refers to the nourishment of all higher plants, especial-

ly the process of photosynthesis, where an electron of the hydrogen atom is split off and captured by another molecule. The process of photosynthesis is way too complex for the human mind to fathom, but it sustains all biological life on Earth (apart from some archaic bacteria) as it turns sunlight into edible food. Through the exchange of ions, trees are connected to the entire ecosphere of the planet.

“Aeons,” on the other hand, are vast timelines. The ancestral lines of trees (like our own) go back to the beginning of life billions of years ago (and spiritual lines perhaps even further). Their collective memories and experiences in the morphogenetic field of each species, and hence their “wisdom,” go back aeons. But there is another meaning: the rays of light that shoot through the cosmos. Trees (and us) don’t just bathe in moonlight and sunlight which was born just 12 minutes prior. We are constantly receiving starlight (even during the day, we just don’t see it) that has been travelling for aeons, conveying a variety of information that human brains are incapable of comprehending. (In *The Spirit of Trees*, I describe how trees respond to starlight and to planetary movements.)

Imagine you are a tree and all your leaves vibrate with the lightning-fast chain reactions of photosynthesis, your abilities to learn, remember and make decisions are

connected to the ancient pool of your species’ morphogenetic field, and you are constantly reading the starlight stories of celestial, planetary, and chemical developments in solar systems or even galaxies light years away.



Pinus Sylvestris

Ions and aeons – no wonder the Pine deemed my problems insignificant. But healed them anyway. For my focus on trees began to shift to their inter-connectedness with Earth's entire ecosphere.

I can no longer separate a bee from a tree, or a whale, or a bird, or a salmon. What happens to one affects them all. Us all. And currently we are all being poisoned. Our house is on fire. We must stand strong for all life, and do everything we can to take back our home planet.

*Fred's new book, **Healthy Planet: Global Meltdown or Global Healing**, describes how our planet's life-support systems work, how we disrupt them, and how we can get back into harmony. Review next month*
www.healthyplanet.one

SUMMER COOL

On a red hot day
when visitors flock like Starlings
to our little seaside town
I flutter to the green and dappled wood
where Blackbird and Thrush
are playing Jazz
and Woodpigeon
sings the Blues.

Linda Davis

A SUMMER'S NIGHT

The night is dewy as a maiden's mouth,
The skies are bright as are a maiden's eyes,
Soft as a maiden's breath the wind that flies
Up from the perfumed bosom of the South.
Like sentinels, the pines stand in the park;
And hither hastening, like rakes that roam,
With lamps to light their wayward footsteps
home,
The fireflies come stagging down the dark.

Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906)

GRAND CANYON SPEAKS

I'll take you from your gods
I'll take you from your kin
If you return you will be changed
And ne'er the same again

I'll take from you your trinkets
From some, their blood and bones
Some will pay the highest price
And rest e'er among my stones

No cruelty or evil sits inside
But what you bring along
So come and find yourself in me
Write new lyrics for your song

More iron in your deep red blood
More grit within your spine
I'll let you leave, perhaps, this time
But some part of you is mine

What you take away is yours to find
And think on down the road
My waters and my rocky shores

Are tales oft' retold
For you and I are never done
Though this journey sure will end
We'll talk in thoughts and reveries
And in dreams that I will send

My river flows within your heart
And ever more you'll know
The Canyon never leaves you
However far you go

So now we have our history
And you are Raven kin
No matter where or how you fly
Know that you'll be back again

Once more to sleep beneath my stars
And hear spirits of this place
To feel your heart forever twinned
And your soul in my embrace

*Joshua Ramey-Renk
Colorado River, April 2022*

My initiation into Druidry began at the Autumn Equinox celebration hosted by the British Druid Order at

*Offering practices,
interspecies communication
and the spirits of our cultures*
FRANCIS JOY

the large Avebury stone circle in 1997, through a ritual conducted by Philip Shallcross and Emma Restall Orr. I met Adrian Rooke and Ronald Hutton at Stanton Drew Stone Circles the following Imbolc and subsequently became a member of Dobunni grove in Bristol, and thus, joined OBOD until 2004 before leaving the UK to live in Finland in January 2005, following a powerful Ouate initiation.

Shortly after arriving in Finland, I travelled back to the OBOD Lughnasadh camp in 2005 and right after the camp had ended was visiting a friend in Stroud, Gloucestershire, who arranged a visit to listen to a talk by Guatemalan shaman Martin Prechtel one evening. During the talk, one of the statements Prechtel said was that “the spirits of our cultures are in trouble. They are hungry because they are not being fed”. He also spoke about our over domesticated cultures and how that impacts us in terms of our creativity and loss of connection to our spiritual traditions and sacred places which have become a commodity.

His words struck a chord with me and really made me think about how I knew practically nothing about how to consciously feed the spirits of our British culture, and especially those associated within Druidry and the Celtic traditions.

I had been an incense maker for some years and had burned fragrant ingredients at ceremonies and rituals and also as an exchange

for help received when giving healing to clients. In addition, incense smoke was also used for cleaning crystals and help-

ing to create an atmosphere for meditation and purifying the home.

In time spent with Dobunni, their visits to and ritual gatherings at Stonehenge, Avebury, Stanton Drew, Glastonbury and a multitude of other ancient sites, some which were holy wells placed little emphasis on what it actually means to feed the spirits of these sites in terms of honouring them as being part of our culture and how making offerings to them might help consciously, better establish communication with them and help revive something that is desperately needed in our world. Henceforth, in terms of transformation of consciousness and better care, protection and renewed responsibility towards cultural heritage and memory.

Since coming to Finland and developing as a researcher of indigenous religion with a particular focus on the traditions, beliefs and practices of the Sámi people who are the indigenous people of northern Europe and the Kola Peninsula, north-west Russia, I have been able to study and engage with some of the fragments of what remains of the ancient hunting, fishing and trapping cultures which goes back into the Neolithic era about 7000 years.

The signatures of these peoples are left at sacred sites in the forms of prehistoric rock carvings and paintings throughout northern Europe, which in different ways symbolize multiple forms of communication and documentation of oral traditions, beliefs and prac-

tices, which were made to last; i.e. so they could be passed down to the future generations. More recent research into the rock art traditions has helped to establish how all 140 prehistoric painting sites in are located close to water, suggesting that water has acted as a type of membrane. It is where the shamans of the Stone Age periods, who were the genetic ancestors of the Sámi people, travelled to the mythical world today called Sáivo - said to exist beneath the bottoms of certain lakes - in order to communicate with the ancestral spirits who resided there or in the realm of the departed, a location called Jabma Aimo.

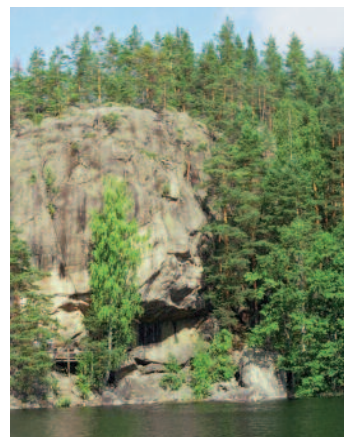
Some of the boulder formations where rock paintings in Finland are to be found, are in the north Sámi language called sieidi. These have been painted and have also been places where offerings have been found, such as bears teeth, bird, moose, reindeer and fish bones, as well as figurines made from resin. At some sites, these boulders are shaped like human heads and also those of animals, such as frogs, birds and bears and what can be described as mythical beings. possibly indicating abodes of the local gods or spirits that protected areas, and thus, keeping the water, fish and birds healthy and protected.

At other sites more recently in the north of the country, there are sites where reindeer, moose and bird bones are found on sacred sieidi stones. Some of these are placed there by

reindeer herders, fishermen and also occasionally, tourists. It is not uncommon either to find coins, jewellery and candles. Therefore, demonstrating how customs and traditions still associated with ancient practices and beliefs are still adhered to for important reasons, perhaps concerned with reciprocity and maintenance of local identity.

To *demonstrate* what I've described, pictured top-left is an anthropomorphic stone with the face of an animal at Verlankoski rapids, south-eastern Finland, which has ancient prehistoric rock paintings (5-7000 years old) on it depicting a line of moose, possibly linked with animal ceremonialism or hunting magic. Top right, depicts offerings of coins and reindeer vertebrae on the Näkkälä sieidi stone, Enontekiö, Finnish Sápmi, which is a fishing sieidi by the lake.

When the stone is observed from a distance, it looks like a bear...



Bottom-left of the photos are reindeer skulls, bones and a reindeer bone wrapped in birch bark, which is a Sámi practice, at the Kirkkopáhtta sieidi stone, Muonio, north-west Finland. The stone is 1km from a sacred Sámi *sáivo* lake. Bottom-right is Astuvansalmi in south-eastern Finland, which is a large stone terrace by the lake where a human-like face is clearly evident. The 'old man' is considered to be a sleeping god, namely, old Astu. At the bottom left side are rock paintings reportedly to be 7,400 years old. In the water beneath the sacred site, amber pendants have been found, as offerings to the deity in the rock, as have arrow heads below the rock face, thus, possibly linking the site with hunting and associated rituals. What is clear is that none of the offerings seen above are connected with agriculture or malign practices or powers. They are what has survived from the old hunting cultures in the north....

Pt 2 next month



Hello Office Grove! What a wonderful and well balanced New issue of Touchstone! good work. I always feel the larger grove of OBOD when I read it. Great article on autism and druidry. Thank you -- many blessings from these wild mountains.

Heather Roan Robbins

Good morning, I must write to you with sincere thanks for such a magical and soul enriching 4 days at the annual OBOD Summer Gathering. It has been a truly fantastic experience and I have loved every moment. The dancing was such a fabulous way to meet new friends, have fun and laugh. Ceremonies were all magical and beautiful moments. Eimear's confirmation was graceful and touched the heart. The fringe events were all just wow!!!!

I just had to send an email of thanks to all

involved who were at the gathering and who were unable to physically be there. What a transformational summer gathering. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

With heartfelt gratitude Jamie

Dear OBOD,

I have been a member of the Order for around twenty years and regularly attend ceremonies at the Dobunni Grove in Bristol. I am also a long-standing member of White Horse Camps, and my first novel *The Tale of Raw Head and Bloody Bones* (Penguin/Random House 2013) was set close to the White Horse and drew considerable inspiration from the spirits of that place. It won the Author's Club best first novel award in 2014 and went on to be published successfully in France, Spain and the US. I teach Creative Writing on the Open University's MA.

I have now set up my own micro-press, Aurochs Underground Press, through which I intend to publish *Animist/ Environmentalist* inspired fiction and creative non-fiction, and while not confined to Druidry these subjects certainly have a strong connection with it – so here is the website link. <https://aurochspress.co.uk/> The two publications currently listed are my own, as I felt that as an ethical publisher any early mistakes should really be made with my own work rather than anyone else's. *Mammoth and Crow* (my second novel) and *Dog Walking Weather* (my first poetry pamphlet) are due to be published on the Summer Solstice and Autumn Equinox respectively. After this, the next exciting project will be the production of the digital Journal *Aurochs 1*, which is planned for publication next year and which will be open to submissions from other authors. The theme will be 'indigenouness' and the form will be fiction up to 4000 words (ie short stories).

If you feel you have a contribution to make to the project, please contact contact Jack at admin@aurochspress.co.uk . This is the time for those of us who have a voice to speak up, and not be silent.

Thanks and blessings, Jack Wolf
Aurochs Underground Press



MAGICAL BRITAIN: *650 Enchanted & Mystical Sites* by Rob Wildwood. 336pp. WILD THINGS Publishing. £18.99

WILD RUINS B.C. *The Explorer's Guide to Britain's Ancient Sites* by Dave Hamilton 254pp. WILD THINGS Publishing. £16.99

If you're wondering " 'Magical Britain'? Ancient Sites? I've already got Janet & Colin Bord's (& 27 others!) – do I really need yet another one?" the answer is "Forget the rest, THESE are the ones you will want to use."

'MAGICAL BRITAIN': sites covered include: "Places featured in the stories of King Arthur, Merlin & the Celtic Saints/ Entrances to the Otherworld/Spirits in the stone, creation stories & giants' strongholds /Sites of healing, divination & wish-making /Secret shrines & places of ancient ritual/Sacred Goddess sites in the landscape /Legendary locations of Norse mythology/Dragons & mermaids". Also 36 secret locations "never previously published....."

This remarkable book is clearly a labour of love: the author has devoted ten years to investigating & photographing the sites. His photographs are magnificent, while the prose is concise, providing a clear description of each site & its esoteric significance. A delight to look at, it is also thoughtfully conceived: thoroughly indexed & with maps & a landscape glossary, it identifies at a glance each site by one or more symbols ('portal', 'healing', 'Merlin', 'Wild Hunt' etc). Each entry

provides GPS co-ordinates as well as UK grid references, plus other essential information such as parking, entrance fees and whether a site is on private land. A delightful book & an invaluable one.

'WILD RUINS B.C.' has all the fine qualities of 'Magical Britain' and the books don't tend to overlap as far as material is concerned. The difference would seem to lie in each book's target audience – the latter firmly "New Age", the former more the tourist with a serious interest in prehistory. (Its 'Timeline of Prehistory' is itself a fascinating study).

Where *'Magical Britain'* chooses sites on the basis of associations (e.g.) 'songlines', 'creation myths', 'rituals' & 'divination', **Wild Ruins** confines itself to prehistoric structures per se (dolmens, henges, passage-graves, stone circles) & prefers its symbols to make clear which sites are better for (e.g.) picnics, children, views, pub lunch (& who's to see harm in that?) Both books are available as a premium app for iPhone or Android. Both are beautifully produced & will take you to astonishing places.

You really need to buy them both. **ARB**

That's nearly it, folks. And doesn't this read-out-loud poem hold the resonance of Fred's article, P 8??

I am a stone in the river, and the water that washes it.

I am a seed in the earth, and the earth that nourishes it.

I am the candle's flame, and lightning that splits the night sky.

I am the breath that fills the lungs and the whirlwind.

I feel those things in me, patient, powerful, sprouting

growing, nourishing, destroying–

beautiful and terrible and beautiful again.

Held in my skin, cradled in my heart, part of my soul.

Cathy Johnson

Remember our August Gathering theme? Here's a foretaste...

CC's Emeritus & Current, with strange & arcane totems. Students have their Gonks, their Marvel heroes, Barbie dolls or Bagpuss... Druids have the mighty Getafix!

A happy memory preserved in these 'Daft pictures as offered:' -thanks to *Ricky Gellisen*.

How it began



How it is now



REGULAR GROUP MEETINGS:

ANDERIDA MOOT: 2ND MON The Ship, Southwick, nr Brighton. 8pm FFI: info@anderidagorsedd.org
ARTIO SEEDGROUP, Switzerland (Zurich) Meet/rituals/Gatherings/walks. Lily or Britta at Info@druidry.ch (+41 76 326 6963)c wc

ARTURIAN GROVE Seasonal rituals near Otley/York. Optimistichannah@outlook.com

ASH GROVE, GLASTONBURY Seasonal rituals/meetings: OBOD visitors welcome. FFI jacki.woolmington@btinternet.com

BRIGANTES SEED GROUP. YORK, England. Gatherings on the full moon. brigantes.group@gmail.com

BIG SKY GROVE, NORFOLK Our name reflects the vista and big skies of our Norfolk landscape. Open to members/ former OBOD members. Meetings (zoom) for the 8 festivals & meetings, walks, discussion. FFI: rebnikc@btinternet.com

CORNOVII GROVE. Seasonal rituals in Worcs. www.cornovii.org or email via 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>

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

FAVERSHAM PAGAN MOOT 2nd Mon The Sun, West St Faversham Kent & events FFI www.favershampagans.org.uk

GOLDEN WATTLE SEED GROUP, ADELAIDE S. AUS. Regular meetings, rituals FFI: golden.wattle.seed.group@gmail.com

LAKE AGASSIZ SEEDGROUP 3rd Saturday of the Month: Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada. Public rituals in local parks. FFI: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/lakeagassizdruids/> email agassizseedgroup@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 QLD, Aus macademiagroove@hotmail.com FB "OBOD Macadamia Grove"

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

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

SHINING MOUNTAINS GROVE western Montana, USA, Eight festivals +seasonal hikes, on-line in winter. contact Heather: roanrobbins@aol.com

SOLAS AN IARTHAIR GROVE: public ceremonies for the eight festivals, full moon meetings. info@lukeeastwood.com

SETANTII SEASONAL RITUALS IN MANCHESTER / S. LANCS. Always outdoors. GROVEOFSETANTII@YAHOO.COM.

SEATTLE SEEDGROUP CIRCLE OF COLL - public rituals, workshops, tree walks &... every month. circleofcoll@circleofcoll.org

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

SONG OF THE EASTERN SEA SEEDGROUP Central Coast of NSW Aus, FFI: contact Chris at chris@druidryaustralia.org

TAMESIS (London Seedgroup) seasonal festivals/ moots/ workshops Contact Ricky: gelli3@me.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 www.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 druidry.org/facebook
Lughnasadh, July 30th; Alban Elfed, Sept 17th; Samhain, Nov 5th; Alban Arthan Dec 17th

REGULAR MONTHLY OBOD MEETINGS

OBOD PEACE MEDITATION: *with your Grove or by yourself every full moon: 7pm local time*
BUILDING RESILIENCE IN DIFFICULT TIMES An OBOD Listening Circle. FREE monthly online ZOOM gathering, 1st Wednesday of the month 7pm UTC. Contact harrietlock@gmail.com for the link.

EVENTS 2022

24 - 27 June Midsummer Magic at The Awen Center. Join OBOD members to celebrate the magic of summer in the Catskill Mountains of New York, USA. www.theawencenter.org for more information.

7th to 10th July International OBOD-Camp 4 days of gathering, workshops, talks, groves, initiations with lovely like-minded-people in the triangle near Belgium/Netherlands/Germany. For more info and registration see www.oakwisdom.org

7-10 July The Path Leading Home. Healing Resources for Challenging Times, (Glos) Cáit Branigan & Caitlín Matthews. Find the path that leads us back to our true nature & home to support us. Shamanic journey, song, & movement; the ancestral paths laid down by our wise ancestors Some experience of shamanic journeying needed. Contact: Hawkwood College, Painswick Old Rd., Stroud, Glos GL6 7QW (01453 759034)

25 - 29 July Wild Women Retreats "Healing Heart" Summer Retreat Come feed your soul Springhead Trust, Dorset Tickets: info@wildwomenretreats.co.uk www.wildwomenretreats.co.uk or find group on FB

5 - 7 August Lughnasadh at The Awen Center Join OBOD members to celebrate the first harvest in the Catskill Mountains of New York, USA. www.theawencenter.org for more information.

2-14 August Éigse Spiorad Cheilteach Annual Gathering for Celtic Spirituality Clara, Co. Offaly, Ireland Druids, Shamans, Pagans, and all with an interest in Celtic Spirituality are invited to a wonderful weekend of talks, workshops, fireside music, storytelling, and more. Organised by OBOD members Paul Corcoran, Anna Coote & Eimear Burke For details contact pauljcorcoran@gmail.com; Website: <http://eigse.net>

8 - 11 Sept BAM Druid Gather: Air - Breathing Awen. Join us for our third year in beautiful Ashby, MA! Adults \$175, children (12 and under) \$50, includes meals and cabin space. We will continue to weave deep relationships with each other and the land, and focus on inspiring each other in our methods of self-care, community-care, and Earth-care. Workshops, meditations, market, Fairy Feast, children's activities, Bardic & Ouate initiations, fire circle, Eisteddfod & more. FFI: <https://bamdruidgather.org>

1-2 Oct Walkers between the worlds Part 2 32nd Foundation Course in Celtic & Ancestral Shamanism (Oxon) with John Matthews & Margot Harrison. Non-residential. FFI: janedmay@btinternet.com 01865 407680.

15 & 16 Oct Inner Journeying and OBOD ritual Level 1 with Penny Billington and Matt McCabe, in Glastonbury. Experiential workshop exploring what OBOD Druids do, and why we do it that way, in a supportive, stimulating Druidic setting. FFI or to register, email mattmccabe.1@outlook.com

2023

3-5 March Druid Grade Gorsedd in the New Forest National Park, Hampshire, England.

Email druidry.sylvangrove@gmail.com for further details

1&2 April Inner Journeying and OBOD ritual Level 2. For previous level 1 participants.

Email FFI: mattmccabe.1@outlook.com

17 Decmber OBOD full day Online Winter Gathering; details to follow

Touchstone July 2022