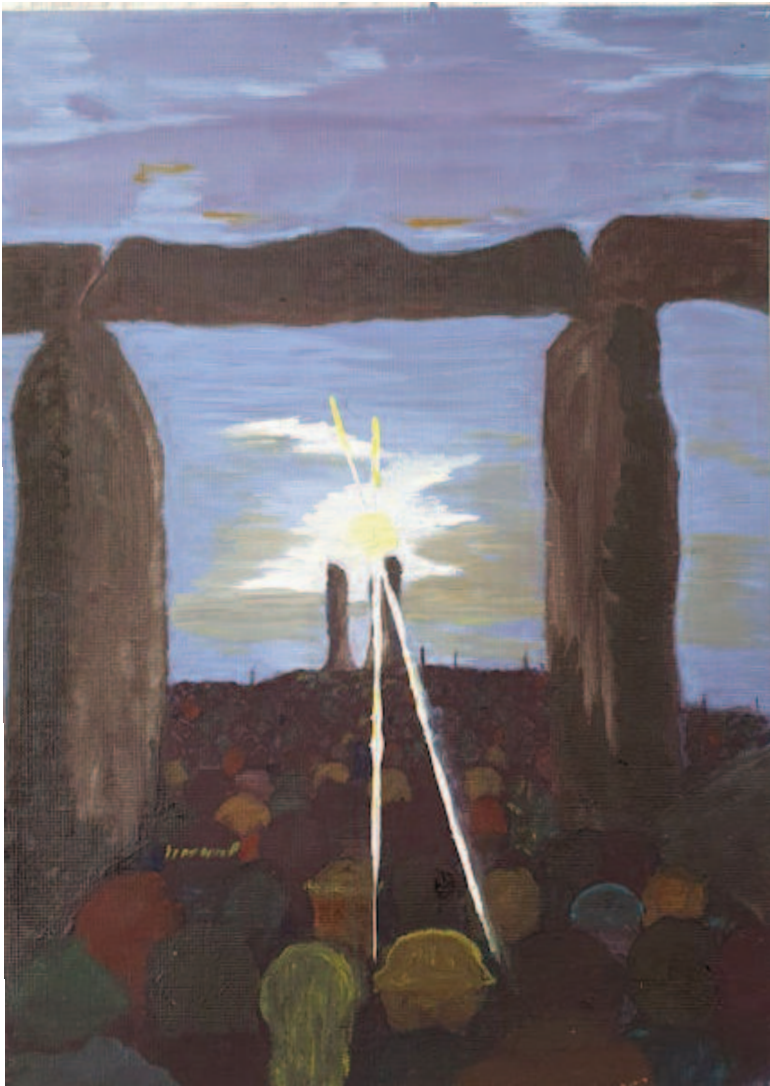




The journal of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids  
August 2022

Issue 300

## THE MIDSUMMER GATHERING FRINGE EDITION



Solstice Summer Henge: Dr Diana Birch

# EDITORIAL

*Good day to all and, oh, the heat must have got to me!* Let's start by coming clean - I've held over part 2 of 'Offering practices' but promise it will be in the next edition. And, in 'July', there is an uncredited picture - a real piece of bardic art - under another member's poem, for which huge apologies. No more of that now; it will be in next month illustrating its own very moving piece of writing.

*This is an unusual Touchstone*, a melange of our fringe speakers' reports from Stonehenge to singing, wizards to water-honouring, ceremony to storytelling and heart-space to

honouring - of queer ancestors, ancient Avalonians and the mystic power of the songlines of Druidry. Mugshots are rare, but the photos of our speakers all add to the flavour of what they were offering. Find all their contact details on page 14.

*Touchstone was not big enough* to fit in all these treasures, so some will appear in subsequent issues, but next month's edition will resume in a more usual mix of contributions... but who knows? Maybe the singing trees will demand the space, or there will be a breath of chill wind from the S. Hemisphere??? When Druids are listening to the sentient world, who knows what might transpire? For Druidry uncovers connections, and this was illustrated by a magical synchronicity around the grade rituals: although he facilitators all planned independently, both the Bardic and Druid grade ceremonies revolved around the same themes, whilst Philip's tree-interview could have been tailor-made to introduce the Ovate grade workshop. And similar connections are rippling out amongst our community worldwide as I write... Druidry is absolutely amazing!



**TOUCHSTONE is published by OBOD.**  
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## FRUIT

Red, round, you fit in the hand like a little bomb  
That if shattered would fill the world with seeds;

Aged eight, I saw one for the first time;  
held one for the first time; so exotic.

My dear mother had given in  
To an impulse of nostalgia,  
Remembering her sun-filled years  
In the south of another continent.

She bought one in the gloomy rain of Merseyside,  
To stave off loss of hope, I thought.  
She handled it with love.

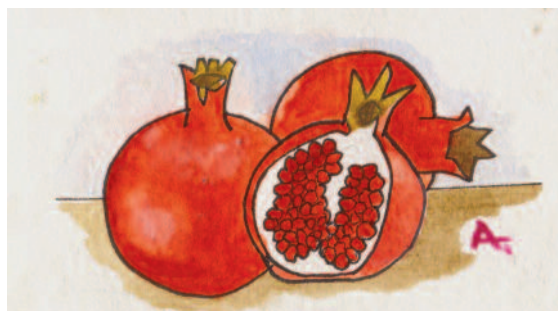
I still came home from school  
Half-way through the day, a precious time  
When my older siblings were not present,  
And she and I could dream.

Demeter, Persephone.  
A different story, told before our time.

I did not yet know what happens in families  
When someone breaks the rules.

We savoured each seed slowly, one by one,  
The colour glowing in our hands,  
Sweetness exploding on the tongue.

*Ann Beer*



## GENESIS

Billions of years ago,  
a gigantic glowing disc  
revolved slowly in space,  
titanic forces in its spin,  
a fiery furnace in the deep.

Thus a star was born,  
the glorious Sun awakened,  
the planets all in train.  
All children of the radiant Galaxy,  
cradled in its cosmic splendour.

Mother Earth was forged  
on the anvil of gravity  
by the mighty blows  
of hammering meteors.  
A sphere of molten rock  
and gushing flames  
glowing redly, hell on Earth.

Slowly Earth's crust cooled;  
the spark of protein – life emerged  
and spread across the globe,  
in sea, on land, in air.  
In all its wondrous beauty  
and incredible diversity.  
All part of life's great web,  
the dust of stars transformed.

*Paul Sandover*

### *NOW THE SUN IS RISING*

*(to the tune of Slunecko by Cechomor)*

Now the Sun is rising over a high mountain,  
My praise to all the gods will burst out like a fountain.

Now the sun is rising over the tallest stone,  
I greet the trees in groves on this beautiful morn.  
Now the sun is rising over a quiet lake,  
I dip in its waters which makes me wide awake.

*Jan Jasek*

# Stonehenge ceremony

## 5th June 2022

### JJ MIDDLEWAY

*As has become customary, we all gathered at 4.00am on Sunday morning ready to board the coaches and leave at 4.15 - yet no coach appeared - at least not as usual.* A thunderstorm earlier in the night had felled a large tree across the road which the coaches normally travel to Glastonbury by. They had to take an alternative route. We were all relieved to see the coaches appear at 4.20am.

*Although the sky was overcast,* we were blessed with dry weather for what turned out to be an incredibly rich and rewarding ceremony. One of the most evocative and moving I have witnessed at this spot over many years. In particular, the Lady of the Land and The Oak King powerfully and beautifully represented the spirit of this time as we approached the Sun at its height. Especially poignant and 'of its time' was the way the spirit of the Land and of the Goddess was not only powerfully and skillfully evoked, but also in how the responsive honouring, and call to arms in support of her embodiment was expressed.

*Carrying that energy forward,* and with clear intent, each participant mindfully entered 'The gateway to Avalon' by walking through



an archway of flower bedecked staffs - appropriately and magically carved with the faces of Arthur and Guinevere. I think it fair to say that everyone present was deeply moved, with many a tearful eye, my own included.

*To round things off,* the ceremony was bountifully blessed with several contributions of music and voice during eisteddfod. Very tired and very inspired we headed back to Glastonbury for breakfast.

*Steve ('Sun') King* in particular deserves mention and honouring, for having put these ceremonies together, for what I believe is 24 years now.

### OUR SACRED VESSEL

The first time I looked inside my sacred vessel,  
I could see the multiverse with All that Is.....

The stars, comets, galaxies, dark matter, universes,  
sacred connections~

Breathing, Swirling, Whirling  
Spiraling, Spinning, Rippling  
Undulating, Billowing, Flowing  
Collapsing, Exploding, Rushing  
Circulating, Unfolding, Bending  
and Swelling.

As She prepares to birth Herself again and again  
Full of Infinite Potential.

Inside of me,  
inside of you,  
inside of everything~  
We are limitless.....we are Potential  
We are a sacred vessel of the Divine Multiverse.

*Linda Stern*

Here is something about my Workshop, book and path: *The Way of the Mystic-Wizard*.

## The way of the mystic wizard MATT BAKER

### HOW DID THIS PATH COME ABOUT?

*Nonduality and shamanism* came together for me about seven years ago. I had been practicing both for almost 20 years as both a Druid and through Tibetan Buddhism. At one point when I took Refuge and Bodhisattva vows from my teacher H.E. Garchen Rinpoche I saw in the ceremonies that for the Tibetans the inner world of the spirits and the awakening process had always been fused and had never separated out as they are in the West. Later I was shown that this is why I had been studying these two paths, as it was my soul-work to bring them together for a Western audience. So I started the Institute for Nondual Shamanism to research how they could be brought together. That has been a successful venture with exceptional transformative results. The people who find and engage with *The Way of the Mystic-Wizard* are people who are drawn to a deeply embodied spirituality and an awareness of the spirit world, all combined with the desire to know and embody the nondual view of reality. They are people who want to help heal the split in the West and in themselves between the ascending mystical traditions and the descending shamanic traditions of our ancient ancestors.

### HOW HAS YOUR LIFE CHANGED SINCE DISCOVERING THE WAY OF THE MYSTIC WIZARD?

When *the Way of the Mystic-Wizard* came to me, I expected to find it had already been done, and was wildly surprised that there was no website on nondual shamanism.

There was only one other person in the world even writing about it and we talked and we both understood that the time had come to heal the split. So I created the institute and since then it has grown and become my main priority. This is why I retired and turned my attention to my soul vocation and let my arts educational leadership profession complete itself.

*My 30 years of spiritual work* had come to fruition and it was clear it was time to teach. I had been informally mentoring people for decades as I raised a family and built an art school, but the pandemic in particular ushered me through a door into this path and soul purpose. In truth, I was reluctant to write a book, but was asked by some of my students to do so. They pointed out that they had no way to explain to others what we were up to and that the path itself needed to get out into the world. That is where the book came from. It took two years to write but I had been unknowingly researching it for some fifteen years with various students and classes I had been teaching.

*It was a great pleasure* to have my first public workshops on the Way of the Mystic-Wizard book at the summer OBOD event in Glastonbury. It is an event I have wanted to attend for over two decades and since my work is a flowering of the tree of Druidry, it seemed right and auspicious to initiate this work at the summer OBOD gathering.

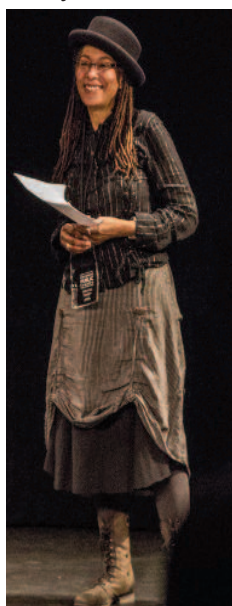


## Storytelling Style: territories of the heart at the Summer Gathering GAIL NOYOKA

*Every storyteller develops a unique style. Some sit quietly, as if at a fireplace, and have their audience lean in to listen.* My personal style is animated and somewhat theatrical – I am a playwright after all – bringing in some techniques from theatre when I tell a story, although I do use stillness if I feel the story needs it. In performance, I often give the impression that I am talking off the top of my head – and sometimes I am – but it takes work to present even a casual storytelling style. It is necessary to shape a story and to learn, and practice, the flow of that story. I don't learn a story word-for-word. I decide on which details are important and then shape the ideas into a coherent story. Each telling of a story is slightly different.

*The one exception* would be if I recite a poem, or words written by someone else. At the Summer Gathering, I ended my session with a short excerpt from *Awakening Osiris*, by Normandi Ellis. The title of the storytelling session was *Territories of the Heart*, and so I quoted a section from *Awakening Osiris* that is a plea for the return of the heart and of life.

*I was honoured* to see audience members from the Netherlands, Austria, USA and Britain.



## Honouring the Water Spirits at the Assembly Fringe LIZ CRUSE

*"You do not have to give up your lives but you must look after your rivers..."*

*Kogi Elder (Mamma) to the Younger Brothers (us in the Industrialised World)*

*As a Storyteller* I work to inspire reverence for and love of our world and all its beings: trees, insects, birds and mammals to name but some. On the last day of the Assembly Fringe I was privileged to offer a session designed to honour water in all its forms. It was the last slot (from 12.40 to 2.10 p.m.) and pessimistically, I worried that there would be few takers. But to my delight, the workshop filled up to capacity.

*I told stories about rain*, springs and wells, as well as the birth of the River Boyne. My fellow druids offered their own accounts of their experiences with the rivers they lived near. One man described how every day, he swam in the burn that ran through his property. Another talked of being a Water Guardian for the River Brue (Glastonbury's own river) on behalf of Wessex water, watching for pollution so that he could report it.

*We ended with the story* of the Well of Segais and the Salmon of Wisdom. This reminds us that we must embody inspiration and knowledge through the use of our senses. It is not enough to have knowledge. It needs to be translated into action. This led to a short ritual to bless the waters of our world symbolised by the bowl of water (a mix of water from the Brue and Chalice well) in the centre

of our circle. I offered each person a hazel nut of wisdom, if they dared. All did.

*Our rivers in Somerset* (and in many other areas) are in a woeful condition, with only 14% of Somerset rivers at 'good' ecological status. They are polluted by sewage, industrial effluent and agricultural run-off largely from the slurry produced by intensive farming methods. Hence the ritual. Roberto Calasso points out that rituals are “*intrinsic to order. Where ritual is absent the precepts of the law step in. But these are for the most part negative: they no longer tell us what we need to do, as ritual does, but what we mustn't do.*” This is, of course, not news to Druids.



*We must honour and protect* our waterways. They are fundamental to the health of our lands as the elders of the Kogi people tell us. I hope this workshop will inspire people to go back to their waterways and work to protect and honour them.

*I took the water* that witnessed our conversations and stories back to the Brue after the workshop, together with the ashes of the blessings participants wrote on paper.

## The Bardic Grove & a colloquy with CC KRISTOFFER HUGHES

*During the Gathering I had the unexpected privilege of facilitating the Bardic grove, due to Damh and Cerri's unfortunate encounter with Covid-19.* 138 Bards gathered to make Bardic magic under dramatic thunderous skies but kept dry in the marquee as torrential rain battered the canvas. On Monday it felt so good to be back at the town hall, packed with 130 Druids who came to listen to my presentation on the journey to *Cerridwen's Cauldron of Awen*. Here we explored the nature of the journey in conjunction with the Hero's Quest and its relation to the OBOD study programme, and the concept of separation, initiation and return in applied mythology.

*After a fifteen-minute break* Eimear Burke and I told the stories of Taliesin and Finn mac Cumhaill before discussing the similarities in both myths and welcoming questions and observations from those in attendance. It was a truly inspiring, uplifting and illuminating session that brought the stories to life in a magical and unique manner. It felt amazing to be back in the company of the OBOD, looking at a sea of gleaming faces swimming in the currents of mythology and storytelling. Thank you to everyone who came along.





*As we know our Druid ancestors followed an oral tradition and therefore we have very little information as to how they held their rituals. Thanks to the early Christian monks in Ireland we get some glimpses into the world of the Druids.*

One such glimpse, which is indeed a treasure, is the Lorica I used in the meditation at our Summer gathering this year. It is a Christian prayer found in *The Book of Ballymote*, circa 8th century, and believed to have been adapted from a Druidic spell of protection. "*A Golden Treasury of Irish Poetry AD 600-1200.*" Trans. David Greene & Frank O'Connor:

**LÚIREACH ADMUINIUR SECHT NINE-  
NA THRETHAN (LORICA)**

I summon the seven daughters of the sea  
Who shape the threads of long life  
Three deaths be taken from me  
Three lives be given to me  
Seven waves of plenty be poured for me  
May ghosts not injure me on my journey in  
my radiant breastplate without stain  
May my name not be pledged in vain, may  
death not come to me until I am old.

I call upon my silver champion, who has not  
died and will not die.  
May time be granted to me of quality of  
bronze  
May my form be exalted  
May my strength be increased

May my tomb not be readied  
May I not die on my journey  
May my return be ensured to me.

May the two-headed serpent not attack me,  
nor the hard grey worm, nor the senseless  
beetle.

May no thief attack me, nor a company of  
women, nor a company of warriors.

May I have increase of time from the king of  
all.

I call upon Senach of the seven lives whom  
fairy women suckled on the breasts of good  
fortune.

May my seven candles not be quenched.

I am an invisible fortress

I am an unshakeable cliff

I am a precious stone

I am the symbol of seven riches

May I be the man/(woman) of hundreds of  
possessions, hundreds of years, each hun-  
dred after the other.

I summon my good fortune to me. May the  
grace of Great (of the Holy) Spirit be upon  
me.

**CONFIRMATION SPEECH 4.6.22**

*It's just so wonderful to be here.* And I want  
to thank Philip for his words. Two years ago  
I described the Order as an natural forest  
where there is a wide range of trees and  
plants and how healthy such diversity is. For  
me, it's an Order that has many different  
faces, different expressions for the members,  
and as a result, people's experience of it is  
very, very different. There are those who've  
been to druid camps, the OBOD Camps in  
the old days, which are now the White Horse  
camps, I've never been to them. There are  
those who attend just the gatherings and oth-  
ers the OBOD retreats or the Gorsedd. And

in these last two years the Order has found a new expression and that is an online expression. Although I was a solitary practitioner for seven years before I became active in the Order, it wasn't until the pandemic that I really appreciated how difficult it has been for many of our members who are Solitary Druids. So many people have told me how important our online events, that is the *Teas with Druids*, the *Fireside Chats* and the Ceremonies have been. Many have described them as a lifeline – that they have given them a deeper connection to the Order and a greater sense of community.

*It has been an interesting discovery* for me how well we can connect online. This struck me two years ago when we had the online installation ceremony, thanks to Damh's magical weaving of the various recordings together to create the ceremony. Entering that inner landscape I could feel Philip handing the mantle over to me. It was a very profound and moving experience for me. I realized this was how it was meant to be. That's not to say it's a substitute for being physical. However, it's been very, very important that we will continue to hold online events. We have had two meetups on Zoom and the response has been very positive. We will have other regular events on Zoom, where we have a speaker presenting on a particular topic of interest.

*It's a great privilege* and an honour to be of service as Chosen Chief to what is an amazing Order. And I'm not the only one of service: I mean, Philip talked about all those people over the years who have and still do contribute greatly to the running of the Order, with dedication, with competence, with goodwill,

with love, joy, commitment. One of the cornerstones of Druidry is Service. What I love about this Order is that our service as Druids has so many expressions. We are all unique and we can be of service to ourselves, to our communities through music, art, poetry, song, healing herbs, listening, being with, teaching, holding rituals, or Celebrancy - there's an expression of service for everybody.

*I'm really grateful* to those Groves and Seed Groups who, in these last two years, have stepped up and offered to hold an online ceremony to mark the Wheel of the Year. And they've been very much appreciated, judging by the comments of the viewers. That is really, really important to the members who have never met another OBOD member, who have never been in a group ritual or have to keep their Druidry secret for fear of losing their job or for fear of discrimination within their communities. The rate of membership has increased over the last two years. I imagine this is due to the Pandemic and climate concerns and shows how relevant Druidry is for these times. It's ironic that while we were physically isolated our community developed thanks to technology. So each one of us contributes to make this Order what it is, and I hope that as I continue in the years ahead, to continue to strengthen this ethos that we are of service, all of us, together in peace, through the love of Justice, and the love of all existences.



*We have an expression in Irish, 'Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine'.* And it means in the shelter of each other, people survive. And I think that's what we can do as druids within the order 'Ní neart go cur le chéile' - There is strength and unity. *Sin é!*

*Divination is about accessing the divine within us, our own inner wisdom to find answers to questions we have about life issues. These can be life-changing events or something as simple as what to focus on today. Images on the 78 cards of a Tarot deck open the door to your inner knowing, your Higher Self.*

## Tarot and divination LINDA MARSON

demons and find yourself returning to the ordinary world bringing with you, insight and

wisdom? I cover this in the first class of my Live and Learn the Tarot course which you can watch for free on Global Spiritual Studies - <https://globalspiritualstudies.com/live-and-learn-the-tarot/>.

I have a number of Tarot decks, but always use the Rider Waite Smith deck for readings. Why? Because the images on the Major Arcana cards relate directly to Joseph Campbell's concept of The Hero's Journey and this was the first deck to illustrate the number cards in the four suits of the Minor Arcana with stories linked to the four elements of Water (Cups), Air (Swords), Wands (Fire) and Earth (Pentacles). The artist who created the images was Jamaican-born storyteller, Pamela Colman-Smith. The Rider Waite Smith deck quickly became a worldwide best-seller and the model for other decks, including the DruidCraft Tarot where Druid and Wicca concepts are built into the Minor Arcana stories.

*In the workshop* I showed how, in her book *78 Degrees of Wisdom*, Rachel Pollack drew a parallel between *The Fool's Journey* and *The Hero's Journey*. The result is a divinatory tool that provides insight into where you are on the archetypal adventure. Are you simply dealing with things in the ordinary, everyday world or have you crossed a threshold into a special world where you are fighting 'demons'? Or have you dealt with the

*The key to divining with Tarot* is to ask a clear question. Avoid closed questions which invite only a 'yes' or 'no' answer. Ask open questions like 'what's the best way for me to deal with the problems I'm having at work, in my relationship etc'?

*In small groups* everyone in the workshop selected three cards which they placed face-down, asking:

1. What do I need to focus on right now? (card 1)
2. In relation to whatever that is, what should I NOT do? (card 2)
3. In relation to whatever that is, what should I do? (card 3).

It was fascinating to see how quickly people got into interpreting the cards. Some were

experienced Tarot readers, others were new to Tarot. As I went from group to group it was exciting to see people having insights simply by 'reading the picture' and relating it to the meaning of the position it was in.

*If you want an easy guide* to reading Tarot for yourself, check out my video and written resources called TarotNav.

(See fringe speakers details p.14 for offer details. Ed)



*A few years ago I was blessed with the opportunity to work with a small group of LGBTQ+ and*

## *Honouring our Queer Ancestors at the Gathering CUILLIOC*

*Town hall, some 20-25 of us, and built a small altar together out of symbols of Pride.*

*Two Spirit, indigenous, native, and aboriginal Elders and friends, putting together a workshop and a series of small activities to be offered via the Spiritual Care Team at the Creating Change conference ([www.creatingchange.org/](http://www.creatingchange.org/)). This included an interfaith "Queer Ancestors Ritual." When it was confirmed the OBOD Summer Gathering would go ahead this year, I felt a strong urge to offer this same ritual, perhaps with slight modifications, to our community, and got permission to do so.*

*To my surprise, I was approached by many anxious cis-hetero people (by which I mean: anyone who does not identify themselves with a gender or sexual minority) who expressed an interest in or wish to attend the ritual, but felt they could not because they weren't part of our Alphabet Soup (my words, not theirs). Surprise first at their interest; I admit I just didn't think cis-hetero folks would care about such a thing (very judgmental on my part!) But secondly, surprise that they wouldn't feel automatically welcome or entitled to attend.*

*I finally felt the need to request a moment on the mic at the end of Sunday's Cèilidh party and let everyone know this simple fact: we ALL have Queer Ancestors, and we all have the right (if not the duty!) to acknowledge them, and (when appropriate) call on them for power, wisdom, and support. ALL were welcome to attend both the Ritual, and the social/meet-and-greet that followed!*

*On Monday morning we gathered in the*

*We invoked the names and stories of three specific Ancestors, who represented to us the Land, Sea, and Sky; the Feminine, Masculine, and Other / Nonbinary / Transgender / Transcendent Genders; the Past, Present, and Future. We reminded ourselves of our rich and ancient history and presence, as protectors and guardians, as artists and entertainers, as slaves and freedom fighters, politicians, diplomats, warriors, military leaders, and peace-keepers.*

*An Unexpected Visitor prompted us to remember, also to hold space for Grieving. Persecution, shame, violence, death, and loss are also our inheritance. We make space for pain, for anger, for sadness, and for eventual healing from and through and with all of these. We ended with a powerful chant arising from the depths of our Pride history: "Whose streets?? OUR STREETS!"*

*Druidry - as I understand and practice it - very much emphasizes and honours the Liminal Spaces, the Both-And rather than the Either-Or. Our Sacred Times and Sacred Places are the in-betweens, the beach where land and sea are one, the dawn and dusk where it is neither day or night, the solstices and equinoxes where seasons are in flux. Queerness, too, is all about erasing boundaries and playing joyfully in the grey areas, even as we seek the labels and definitions that allow us to be understood, seen, heard, and respected. Yes, you can do both at the same time.*

*As Bards we learn the power – and limits to the power – of words. I acknowledge the*

word "Queer" is difficult and painful for some, and that creates a barrier to accessing some of this power. Some of us have transformed that bloody sword into instruments of peace and growth; others find it hard to do so. If that includes you then I simply invite you to substitute whatever word – or no word at all – for the power and idea it's meant to convey: "Queer" – a little odd, inexpressibly Different, outside the realm of normal experiences. We've all felt "a bit queer" at one time or another.

*Without erasing* the very real distinction we need to acknowledge, that the experiences, identities, legal and political realities of queer, transgender, lesbian, bisexual, gay, asexual, nonbinary, omnisexual, and otherwise not-straight, not-cisgender people, are different from those of the Hegemony, of the Mainstream... without doing away with that statistical fact, we can also say: ALL of us have Queer Ancestors.

*My hope is that*, at least within the community and Communion of Druidry, more of us can come to acknowledge, explore, and celebrate that. It is our heritage. It is our right. - Dare I say it is our obligation, (at least for those of us who see Ancestors as important to our spiritual or philosophical practice)?

*I am honoured* to have had the chance to welcome some of you into the circle, and look forward with hope to



future rituals with even more of you. Thank you to everyone who made it possible at this year's Summer Gathering.  
*Sincerely, Quill*

## Enchanting the Void 'Songlines of Avalon' JJ MIDDLEWAY

*As a Fringe event, 70 - 80 of us gathered in the Goddess Hall in Glastonbury on Monday for an hour and a half of chants and songs for the Land* - a golden opportunity to come together as Druids and evoke the spirit of our calling. It is rare to have so many voices offered in unison and with shared intent, literally singing our hearts out. 'Devotional Druidry' in action. Singing is such a powerful medicine in its own right, yet when offered in the fellowship of a few dozen OBODies, it somehow becomes even more special and magical. We sang for ourselves, our communities and our lands.

*The chants* were particularly relevant and evocative of Druid themes: Kinship, Trees, The Elements; Earth, Land, Sky and Sea. Of the Fire in our Souls and the Passion of our Being. Above all, we sang of Love and with Love. "I am the Land that is all that I am". "I am a walking Tree" . 'Let the way of the Heart' . "Humble yourself in the arms of the Wild" - All these and more. Many said how touched and blessed they felt; as was I, as if a deep healing infused us all. The harmonies and resonances resounding out through the Vale of Avalon and way beyond seemed joyous and uplifting. So much so, that I was invited to carry these songs of 'Druidry in Action', across the waters to New Orleans. I'm certainly up for that - and for anywhere else that is calling.



*The Avalonians are of perpetual interest to anyone delving into Glastonbury's spiritual past: and with OBOD members from far and wide gathering there, what better subject for my talk?*

## The Avalonians PENNY BILLINGTON

author, visionary and geomancer, Dr Goodchild. The Avalonians' is an ongoing

*Dion Fortune* coined the term "Avalonian" for those who saw the energetic and spiritual reality of Glastonbury behind its apparent face: she likened Glastonbury Tor to a volcano erupting a spiritual essence to inform those of vision. And the Avalonians expressed their visions in a way we Druids understand, for they harnessed their natural bardic abilities and talents to leave a lasting legacy on this small market town.

*Who were they?* My talk briefly sketched some luminaries: Alice Buckton who saved the sacred waters of Chalice Well from an industrialist: Bligh Bond, who contacted the mysterious "Watchers of Avalon" through automatic writing and used their secrets in Glastonbury Abbey to uncover unsuspected chapels during the archaeological dig. On the arts side, Rutland Boughton's mystical opera 'The Immortal Hour' had its first public showing in the Assembly rooms; and, representing psychics was Wellesley Tudor Pole, who, with three maidens, energised the land by walking a pilgrimage route. Through vision, he discovered a mystical blue bowl in a well. Senior churchmen seriously debated whether this was the Holy Grail.

*The person who might be regarded as* the originator of the 'Avalonian current' was the man who placed the bowl in the well: the now almost forgotten

story of visions, signs, images and dreams. It culminated in Dion Fortune's 'Chalice Orchard Club' with its wild Chant of the Elements on the Tor: she styled herself the last of the Avalonians.

*My theory of the timing* of all this would fill another article: for now, it behoves us as modern Druids to realise just how hard these people worked: what dedication they showed, and how we inherit their legacy. They poured their money and talents into projects – cultural events, plays, pottery classes and dyeing; rituals and pilgrim routes, meditations and prayers in the landscape; music that became the most successful British opera ever. They rose early, cycling from Bristol to Glastonbury (Druids took the same journey on the bus; it takes one hour!) and wading, in late November, in full Edwardian dress, into muddy overflows after a vision.

*Exemplars all;* may they rest in peace. What we might share with them is a profound belief that the West has its own land-wisdom and does not need to import a system from another culture. What a legacy; that wherever we live, the ancient wisdom of the land rests, and can be recovered.



*There is a narrative strain* in the land that needs us for its expression and, if we are still and listen, it will respond to us: we can learn its qualities and receive its gifts. It is from this relationship that we each earn the right to tell the stories of our own lands.

# OPEN FORUM

## OBOD GATHERING - NEWS FROM THE CREW

*Hi to all* who came to the gathering - I've posted on the OBOD members FB page thanking everyone for their help with keeping the place clean and helping the five of us on the crew!

*We only handed out about 25 cups* as most people had brought their own as requested. Everyone cleared their own chairs away after each event which saved us a lot of time and, even though we were cleaning the loos a few times a day, everyone took care to help keep them clean and serviceable too. We had only one bag of rubbish in the drinks tent (mostly empty wine boxes) and at the end of the last night we collected just two half-bags of rubbish from the marquee. It was very minimal.

*I was so proud of everyone* for keeping everything so clean, and the whole crew was grateful for the help and consideration, I can tell you!

*Billie*

*(Starry-Apron Controller of Comfort, OBOD 2022)*



**A touch of magic: Druid Grade 2022**

## FRINGE SPEAKER DETAILS

### P 5. Matt Baker

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

**P 6. Gail Noyoka** is a Canadian storyteller and writer. [www.gailnyoka-stories.com](http://www.gailnyoka-stories.com)  
[gailstoryteller@gmail.com](mailto:gailstoryteller@gmail.com)  
 or [radiantflame2001@yahoo.ca](mailto:radiantflame2001@yahoo.ca)

**P 6. Liz Cruse:** if you would like more information about my storytelling practice and what I could offer your Grove or Seedgroup please email me on [lizcruse@googlemail.com](mailto:lizcruse@googlemail.com)

### P 7. Kristoffer Hughes,

<https://www.angleseydruidorder.co.uk/>  
 & Anglesey Druid Order FB page  
<https://www.llewellyn.com/product.php?ean=9780738763828>

**P 10. Linda Marston:** for an easy guide to reading Tarot for yourself, check out my video and written resources called TarotNav. – a GPS for Life (<https://globalspiritualstudies.com/tarotnav-agps-for-life/>). Purchase by 31 August and receive a 30% discount by entering '30%off' (no apostrophes) into the coupon code field at the checkout.

**P 12. Quill** <https://linktr.ee/cuillioc>

### P. 13 Penny Billington

[pennybillington.com](http://pennybillington.com) for talks and workshops, the blog & to sign up for newletter  
 Online course: <https://penny-billington-school.teachable.com/p/home>

### Pp 4 & 12 JJ Middleway

Find Enchanting the Void on Facebook or at [www.enchantingthevoid.com](http://www.enchantingthevoid.com)  
 Or via JJ Middleway at 'Sovereign Earth' on You Tube. CDs; "Songs for the Land", "On Wings of Song" & "Soul Song".

**From Ritual to Romance High Jinks:** *'I came alone and danced with wonderful people from all over the world, language was no barrier when joy and laughter was on the menu.'* J. A.

May memory hold what eye and ear have witnessed...

*That's all until next month. Ed.*



### **REGULAR GROUP MEETINGS:**

**ANDERIDA MOOT:** 2ND MON The Ship, Southwick, nr Brighton. 8pm FFI: [info@anderidagorsedd.org](mailto:info@anderidagorsedd.org)

**ARTIO SEEDGROUP,** Switzerland (Zurich) Meet/rituals/Gatherings/walks. Lily or Britta at [Info@druidry.ch](mailto:Info@druidry.ch) (+41 76 326 6963)c wc

**ARTURIAN GROVE** Seasonal rituals near Otley /York. [Optimistichannah@outlook.com](mailto:Optimistichannah@outlook.com)

**ASH GROVE, GLASTONBURY** Seasonal rituals/meetings: OBOD visitors welcome. FFI [jacki.woolmington@btinternet.com](mailto:jacki.woolmington@btinternet.com)

**BRIGANTES SEED GROUP.** YORK, England. Gatherings on the full moon. [brigantes.group@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:rebnikc@btinternet.com)

**CORNOVII GROVE.** Seasonal rituals in Worcs. [www.cornovii.org](http://www.cornovii.org) or email via [keith.southall@creativelandscapes.co.uk](mailto: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](mailto:flameandwellgrove@gmail.com), <https://flameandwellgrove.org>

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

**FAVERSHAM PAGAN MOOT** 2nd Mon The Sun, West St Faversham Kent & events FFI [www.favershampagans.org.uk](http://www.favershampagans.org.uk)

**GOLDEN WATTLE SEED GROUP,** ADELAIDE S. AUS. Regular meetings, rituals FFI: [golden.wattle.seed.group@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:agassizseedgroup@gmail.com)

**LIGHT OF AWEN SEED GROUP** in Bristol. Celebrating the wheel of the year, and healing. Email. [Lightofawen8@gmail.com](mailto:Lightofawen8@gmail.com)

**MACADAMIA GROVE** Seasonal/events, Brisbane QLD, Aus [macademiagroove@hotmail.com](mailto:macademiagroove@hotmail.com) FB "OBOD Macadamia Grove"

**THE MELBOURNE GROVE** Seasonal celebrations, Melbourne, Aus: Trudy Richards [moondancer@outlook.com.au](mailto:moondancer@outlook.com.au)

**PENDLE GROVE.** Clitheroe/ around Lancs. Sionnach on 0161 3432705 or email [drvernon@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:drvernon@hotmail.co.uk)

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

**SETANTII SEASONAL RITUALS IN MANCHESTER / S. LANCS.** Always outdoors. [GROVEOFSETANTII@YAHOO.COM](mailto:GROVEOFSETANTII@YAHOO.COM).

**SEATTLE SEEDGROUP CIRCLE OF COLL** - public rituals, workshops, tree walks &... every month. [circleofcoll@circleofcoll.org](mailto:circleofcoll@circleofcoll.org)

**SLIABH ANAM GROVE** Rituals and monthly moots Durango, Colorado, USA. FFI: contact [sliabhanam@gmail.com](mailto:sliabhanam@gmail.com).

**SONG OF THE EASTERN SEA SEEDGROUP** Central Coast of NSW Aus, FFI: contact Chris at [chris@druidryaustralia.org](mailto:chris@druidryaustralia.org)

**TAMESIS** (London Seedgroup) seasonal festivals/moots/workshops Contact Ricky: [gelli3@me.com](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](mailto:harrietlock@gmail.com) for the link.

## **EVENTS 2022**

**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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:mattmccabe.1@outlook.com)

## **2023**

**3-5 March 2023 Druid Grade Gorsedd** in the New Forest National Park, Hampshire, England. Email [druidry.sylvangrove@gmail.com](mailto:druidry.sylvangrove@gmail.com) for further details

**1&2 April Inner Journeying and OBOD ritual Level 2.** For previous level 1 participants. Email FFI/flyer : [mattmccabe.1@outlook.com](mailto:mattmccabe.1@outlook.com)

**28th, 29th, 30th July Bardic Gorsedd.** For those currently studying in the bardic grade, a weekend of exploring "The fiery spark of Awen," with special guests Kristoffer Hughes and Eimear Burke. Held at Noddfa, Penmaenmawr, Wales, LL34 6YF. £175 (£85 deposit is required). [lorrainem@druidry.org](mailto:lorrainem@druidry.org) and [tomMmentor@druidry.org](mailto:tomMmentor@druidry.org) (please copy both recipients into emails).