

Damh the Bard ([00:01](#)):

Well, thank you for coming on to Druidcast, Andrew. I've read your book and first thing I need to know really is how to pronounce the two names of the book.

Andrew Anderson ([00:13](#)):

Yeah, well Artio, that's the straightforward one. The bear Goddess Artio, and then the male God, I've called him Artaois. In record, he's referred to as Artaois, but that is obviously a Latinized, Romanized version of a name. So generally he's either known by Artaois or Artaois, so I called him, in the book, Artaois to move away from the Roman association.

Damh the Bard ([00:43](#)):

Okay. A Journey Towards the Celtic Bear Gods, and it's a true journey. I read the book and it felt like I was on the journey with you. It felt like one of those documentaries where you travel with somebody and they show you all these different things. What a journey. So what was the seed of Awen that began the journey of your book? There must've been a point where you thought I'm going to write a book about bear Gods and Goddesses.

Andrew Anderson ([01:11](#)):

Yeah, it's really not the direction I thought I was going to go in, I'll be completely honest. I'd published my first book, The Ritual of Writing, which came out back in 2019, and I was having a book launch at the OBOD Summer Gathering at one of the bookshops in Glastonbury. And a couple of days before I just thought I need to know what my next project is. I really need to know where I'm going. And I was reading lots and lots of other pagan portal books at the time by people like Danu Forest, who wrote about Gwyn ap Nudd and there's a really good one on Thor as well. And I thought well, I'd love to write one of these. I'd love to write one of these about a God or a Goddess, and just really explore that area. My only problem was that my OBOD journey just hadn't had anything about deity in it at all. So how can I write a book about a God or a Goddess and actually there's been no real connection for me.

Andrew Anderson ([02:12](#)):

And the only name that just kept popping up in my head was Artio. And that came from Ricky Gellissen, who I interview in the book, I talk to in the book, he shared something on Facebook about this bear God Artio, and it was a little joke, and it just stuck. And it was like okay, well, why don't I be the person to write the book on Artio? This is the only connection I have. And then I researched Artio a bit and found out there's practically nothing on Artio, so I then went oh, well there's this other bear God, there's this Artaois, I'll join them together, and then found out that there's even less on him. So it was a bit of a faltering start, but from the very few bits of information, that's why I went on the journey because it was literally the way that I had to find them was by physically going on pilgrimages as well as spiritually going on a journey as well to find out who they were.

Damh the Bard ([03:08](#)):

So before you went off on your journey for the book, did you have any pre-experience with the bear as a spirit or a guide?

Andrew Anderson ([03:21](#)):

Just very minorly. I mean it wasn't massive. Like I say, there had been this one experience, I recall it at the start of the book, where I was coming to Glastonbury, I was leaving home, and I live in a very weird place. I live in the middle of a town center. I live in the middle of Stratford-upon-Avon, opposite Shakespeare's house. So it's always busy and it's bustling. And whenever I leave my house, I always worry about it. So the night before, I was just like okay, somebody, something, just come and protect my house while I'm not here. Please make sure that it's looked after. And I just had this vision of this enormous bear standing over my house roaring, as if defensively trying to keep people away. And that was the only real experience I had of a bear. And it was like okay, so that's the God then. That's who it is. And then I saw this post and then I was like oh, that must be Artio who came to visit me. So it was very minor and very limited. I had no idea it would turn into this journey.

Damh the Bard ([04:31](#)):

Yeah. Wow. And of course, it really did turn into a journey because one of the first things you do in the book is get in the car and drive across Europe. And I don't think there is a picture of the archeological image that you talk about. I don't think there's a picture in the book of that image.

Andrew Anderson ([04:59](#)):

Yes, there might be. There might not have been in the edition you've got, but I got a friend to illustrate it for me because I realized just how important this was going to be. So there is a little tiny illustration in the book-

Damh the Bard ([05:13](#)):

Ah, right. There it is.

Andrew Anderson ([05:14](#)):

... about what it's like.

Damh the Bard ([05:15](#)):

Okay, well maybe you can talk a little bit about that journey, because obviously you've had this sudden presence of this immense bear deity, and the next thing you do on this journey is get in the car and head off. Where did you go and what happened?

Andrew Anderson ([05:36](#)):

Well, the first trip was to Bern in Switzerland, and I decided to do that one by train, also because I'd never been on the Eurostar before, so I thought hey, I fancy going onto the channel. Let's give this a go. So I got the train out to Bern. The reason I went there is there is so little about Artio, there's five inscriptions and the statue, and you can literally only see a picture of the statue from one angle on the internet. It's very, very limited what you see. And I thought if I'm going to write about this, I've actually got to go and see it in person. And so I really didn't want to go. It seemed like a really good idea and then the actual reality of travel dawned on me and I was like oh, I'm really not enjoying this. So after pretty much an entire day of traveling across Europe on various trains, I got stopped at a station when I missed my train, and I was like right, okay. I'm here for a while now. I just wish I could turn around and go home.

Andrew Anderson ([06:45](#)):

And I lent on this glass window of a shop. And then I turned around and looked in the window, and there was this card behind me which was two bears cuddling each other, and it said, "I love you, big bear hugs." And I was like okay, this is a message. Keep going, you're nearly there. And Bern, it is the most beautiful, magical place. It looks like a fairy tale, the center is. It's just glorious, and there is this big bear park in the middle where there are three bears that just lumber around in the middle of the city, and I spent most of my free time there sitting with the bears and just trying to absorb the atmosphere. The city is just full of bear statues and bear artwork, and they're just everywhere. And it was a wonderful, wonderful place to start the journey, let alone going to see the statue which, having journeyed all that way and struggled with that journey, the moment I saw that statue, I was a great big wuss and I burst into tears.

Andrew Anderson ([07:51](#)):

Because it was such an emotional moment of I am here, I am sitting with this statue, I'm looking at the statue. And there was no-one else there. I spent a lot of time with that statue, just trying to pick things up from it, really trying to analyze it. And in the time I was in there, in city center museum, three people came in and they all ignored the statue. And then, when I spoke to people afterwards, the people who were running my hotel, they had no idea there was a bear Goddess in their museum. And I met up with a couple of Druid chums who ran some places in Bern, and the Druid community was only just beginning to get into Artio in Bern. There is now an Artio Grove. I am so thrilled. I'm hoping to go out back to Bern one day to do a little bit of a launch of the book, and I would love to meet some more of the members of the Grove of Artio. That would just be a real honor.

Damh the Bard ([08:53](#)):

Yeah, hiding in plain sight.

Andrew Anderson ([08:56](#)):

Yeah.

Damh the Bard ([08:56](#)):

That's the thing. And it's one of those things that when you're into this stuff and you're on a journey like you're on, it's easy to forget how much you've learned over the years, isn't it? I guess. And I had a similar experience when I went to see the Venus of Willendorf in Austria. When it's there all the time, it's just there all of the time, but you've come from a different country on a huge journey, and there it is. It's such a big thing, I guess, isn't it?

Andrew Anderson ([09:34](#)):

Yeah, and their city is overwhelmed with other bears. I mean the reason the town was set up is because one of the emperors said, "I will name this city after the first animal I hunt here," and he hunted a bear. So the whole mythology of the town is around that, it's around the bears that they have in the bear garden. They don't quite back far enough into the Roman mindset to say actually, yes, there's bears here now, but there were bears here in the Roman period, and actually very close by is where we find the very, very ancient bear worship in the caves. So there is this big bear spirit which infuses that whole landscape which comes back at different points in history, it bubbles up again, but it's there in Artio just in the same way as it's there now.

Damh the Bard ([10:22](#)):

On your journey, you met lots of people, you went to lots of places. What do you think it is about the bear, when you look at prehistory, that just spoke to the hearts or spirits of those ancestors to the point where they looked on it as some kind of deity, or guardian spirit, or something like that? What do you think that would have been?

Andrew Anderson ([10:51](#)):

I think they saw a version of us. I think there is this connection between bears and people which is very ancient. Some of the first mythology we have is around the bear mother, that humanity ends up through this bear mother being part human, part bear, and there's always been this sense that we are connected somehow. I mean I point out to people that we have teddy bears now, and yes, they come later and they come through a very different route, but there is still that connection between us and bears. And there's Paddington, and Rupert, and Lorek Byrnison. And there's all of these bears that we know and we love that are in our culture, and there has to be this link that joins us, this primal link between us and them.

Damh the Bard ([11:46](#)):

Yeah, I haven't seen it, but I've heard it said that if a bear skeleton is laid out, just the bones, it actually looks very similar to a very large human skeleton.

Andrew Anderson ([12:01](#)):

Yeah, that would make sense because, of course, they walk upright like us. So few of the other animals do, but they actually can stand up and walk around like we do. So like you're saying, that skeleton, that closeness is probably there.

Damh the Bard ([12:17](#)):

Yeah. And of course, you have the twin aspect, I guess. Are those reflected in Artio and Artaois, the mother aspect, the mother bear? When you have a protective, even a human mother, they're the mother bear, aren't they?

Andrew Anderson ([12:34](#)):

Yeah.

Damh the Bard ([12:34](#)):

And then on the other side, you have the berserker, you have the warrior, you have that aspect. Are they reflected in the two, in the God and Goddess of the bear that you've discussed?

Andrew Anderson ([12:45](#)):

Yeah. Artio definitely. Artio is our mother. The first iteration of the earth mother that we see in archeology is the bear Goddess, whereas now, if we perceive an earth Goddess, we see her as human maybe, or having qualities of the world. For those early societies, she was the bear, and there is a sense with Artio that she sees us into the world and out of the world. So she's a midwife at both ends of our lives, which would make sense for a bear because they go into hibernation and then they come back out again with cubs that are born in the dens. And so this sense that she brings us out of the darkness into the light and back in again is definitely there with Artio.

Andrew Anderson ([13:36](#)):

With Artaois, the berserker is there kind of. It's very odd because even the Celts, one of the Celtic wishes were that you would be like a bear in battle, but Artaois seems to have so many other facets as well. He is a warrior. There's no way that he can be a bear God and not be a warrior. He has to be. What else is he going to be? But there's also a sense that he is a leader, there's a sense that he's a magician as well. A magician may be something slightly shamanic. I propose in this book that Artaois is actually a iteration of a God. He's closer to something like Beowulf or closer to somebody like Arthur. The link between Artaois and Arthur has been vaguely explored before, and I do a bit of it here. It's very difficult to nail down to say are they the same iteration, but there are definite aspects of Arthur that are reflected in who Artaois would have been.

Damh the Bard ([14:47](#)):

In Artaois, yeah. Because the root of the name Arthur is Art, which is a bear. Yeah, so that's something I used in one of my songs, Arthur the bear. So did you find any other Arthurian connection with the bear and Arthur himself in any of the mythologies and things like that?

Andrew Anderson ([15:12](#)):

The one that I found most interesting from a purely selfish perspective is, as I said, I live in Stratford, I live in Warwickshire.

Damh the Bard ([15:19](#)):

Oh right, well yeah.

Andrew Anderson ([15:19](#)):

And our county symbol is the bear chained to a staff. And so again, it's what you were saying about things being hidden in plain sight. When I started this book, I went oh, I live in a place with the bear as its symbol. And there was this attempt by one of the previous Earls of Warwick to align himself with King Arthur to show himself as having legitimacy and strength. And that is why the Warwickshire sigil is a bear.

Damh the Bard ([15:48](#)):

Because of that? Ah, right.

Andrew Anderson ([15:50](#)):

Because of Arthur.

Damh the Bard ([15:50](#)):

Wow.

Andrew Anderson ([15:51](#)):

It goes right back there, and this attempt in the Middle Ages for the Earls of Warwick to say yes, we are proper Earls. We should be here. We should be governing this land.

Damh the Bard ([16:01](#)):

Yes, and absolutely, I mean the sense of power of the bear. Every now and again, I've been on tour somewhere like Canada and I've drifted off into some woods. And even I remember, it was the Florida Pagan Gathering, there was a brown bear in one of the big bins. And having said that, I was quite happy it was quite a long way because there's a sense that although they look, and I mean they do look cuddly, don't they?.

Andrew Anderson ([16:41](#)):

They do, yes.

Damh the Bard ([16:42](#)):

But they're not.

Andrew Anderson ([16:43](#)):

Yeah, you don't want to get close.

Damh the Bard ([16:44](#)):

No, absolutely not. So one of the most emotional points of your book for me was when you were talking to Kate and Corwen.

Andrew Anderson ([16:58](#)):

Oh, yeah.

Damh the Bard ([17:00](#)):

I was organizing open rituals at the winter solstice. I never got a chance to get along to one of the Bear Feasts.

Andrew Anderson ([17:09](#)):

To a Bear Feast.

Damh the Bard ([17:10](#)):

But a lot of our Grove did, a lot of my friends did, and I saw photographs, and the whole energy of that just seemed absolutely wonderful. So I know you had quite a long conversation with Corwen. Maybe just talk a little bit about the spiritual aspects of the Bear Feast and, like you say, the oldest Goddess that we know about is a bear Goddess.

Andrew Anderson ([17:42](#)):

I mean again, it's one of these things where it's what we said about things being in plain sight. I met Corwen a couple of years ago at an Ovate Gorsedd and I had no clue that Corwen did all of these things, and it wasn't until I actually started writing the book that somebody went, "Oh, have you tried the Bear Tribe? Corwen runs it." And I was like, "Oh, okay." And I think I went off and had a chat to him. I hadn't actually been able to get to one because of the way that it's fallen over COVID, and the pandemic, and all of that, but basically what Kate and Corwen came up with, which is just inspirational, really, they recreated one of the ancient bear rite festivals, which was documented in the early 20th century by a man called Hallowell.

Andrew Anderson ([18:32](#)):

And he went around several boreal cultures and found that there were these similarities in their rituals where they all went out and hunted a bear in a very ceremonial, almost apologetic way, where they did kill a bear, sometimes they took a cub and then raised it in the village as well, but it would involve the slaughter of a bear, but it was done with probably about as much reverence as you can for killing something. I mean it was just very ceremonial, they'd kill the bear, they'd take it back to the village, the people who'd killed it would be celebrated as heroes. The bear would be cut up, and eaten, and cooked, and then there'd be all series of games and celebrations. And Kate and Corwen have restaged that, and you turn up the day before, you have parties and celebrations, and I don't think you have the celebration on the night before, but there's an eisteddfod where people share music. And then you wake up in the mornings, and you actually go out and you symbolically hunt someone who is the bear in a bear skin, and that is brought back.

Andrew Anderson ([19:43](#)):

So it's done, from Kate and Corwen's perspective as a celebration of the oldest method of worship, but also as a way of honoring all of the food that we eat and all of the resources that we take from the earth. So the bear is used as a symbol, as I said, of Mother Earth and of the resources that we take, and so by doing it that reverently, you thank the universe, you thank the world for what you give. For what you get, sorry, not what you give. For the things that you take. And the pictures that I've seen of it and the experiences of the people who've been, it's amazing. I really, really hope to go along one day, when coronavirus leaves us. So it would be great to go to that.

Damh the Bard ([20:30](#)):

Yeah, well I've moved to Orkney now, so it's a blooming long drive.

Andrew Anderson ([20:38](#)):

Yeah, it is a long way to go. A very long way.

Damh the Bard ([20:42](#)):

Yeah. And you met some other really interesting people, some artists and things like that, all inspired by this beautiful animal that has been extinct on our island for many, many years now. I wrote a song called Spirit of Albion, which has the chorus, "The crane, the wolf, the bear, and the boar no longer dwell." Well, there are now cranes.

Andrew Anderson ([21:10](#)):

Yes, there are.

Damh the Bard ([21:11](#)):

There are now boar. It's rapidly becoming very out of date. I don't think they would reintroduce bears into the New Forest, quite frankly.

Andrew Anderson ([21:20](#)):

In the beginning of chapter two, where I go to a place called the Wild Place Project in Bristol, where they're not trying to introduce them, but they're getting as close as they can, where they have set up this woodland area where there are wolves and bears, that the idea was that they would be mixing

together, and you walk through it amongst the trees at the top on a wooden walkway, and it's just glorious. And it's like this is what our woods would have looked like with bears, and it's as close as we're going to get. So they're never coming back, I doubt it, but that's as close as we're going to get, I think.

Damh the Bard ([21:57](#)):

I remember some years ago at the Artemis Gathering, there was a Wolf Trust who used to bring along wolves to the festival, and you could walk in and sit with the wolves.

Andrew Anderson ([22:16](#)):

Oh my goodness.

Damh the Bard ([22:17](#)):

And I did it with my boys, just sat there with these wolves, and you'd go over to them and they'd lift their paws up to have their tummies tickles, but I can't imagine that same kind of experience happen with a bear.

Andrew Anderson ([22:36](#)):

No, at the Wild Place Project, I was in this little concrete bunker with a glass wall, and one of the bears walk past and she's so cute and fluffy, and you're like oh, she's wonderful. And then you look at the glass, and the glass has got the paw prints on it, and the claw marks on it, and you're like yeah, okay. I'm not going any closer than this. That's it.

Damh the Bard ([22:57](#)):

There's that certain reverence of something. We're, I think, so used to the idea of being, particularly here, top of the food chain kind of thing. And that's one of the things, I mean it's different when I go to Australia and I realize I'm not, and when you're in the woods in certain areas of Canada and stuff, and you realize that you are really part of nature, and everything in nature eats everything else, doesn't it? And I could end up being that.

Andrew Anderson ([23:28](#)):

Being dinner.

Damh the Bard ([23:29](#)):

It wouldn't be because it's a murderous bear, it's because it's a bear and I'm the food, and this is good protein.

Andrew Anderson ([23:40](#)):

And of course, the more we dig into nature, the more that we go these places, the angrier these animals get because they're losing their habitat, whereas they could be off deep in the woods, and being quite nice and happy, and not particularly worried about a human, suddenly we're there on top of them and it creates all sorts of problems. A few years ago, I stayed in North Carolina in, it wasn't a hut, it's a very nice house at the top of a mountain. And it was absolutely beautiful but there was this sense, when there were things around us in the woods, and you could hear the noises in the woods, and you were like what is that? I might just go and sit on the porch, because in those situations, you're just not sure what's looking back.



Damh the Bard ([24:30](#)):

Yeah. So did you get any other surprises from the book? For instance, Andarta, there's that connection with Andarta and Andraste, and I wondered when I was looking at it, down here we have the ancient forest of Anderida or Anderida, which used to stretch from Dover right the way to South Hampton. It's said that a squirrel could get up there and not touch the ground all the way across. And our Grove and Gorsedd is named after this ancient primordial south of England forest, but its name is Anderida or Anderida, which is the A-N-D-E-R. And I just wondered, I mean I haven't heard that that is a connection with the bear, but I guess it could be.

Andrew Anderson ([25:22](#)):

And the A-N-D, I think, stands for ... Hang on, I'm getting somewhere here, because there is Andarta.

Damh the Bard ([25:29](#)):

That's right. Andarta, yeah.

Andrew Anderson ([25:32](#)):

And so that's where the Art comes from, but the and means great, I think.

Damh the Bard ([25:38](#)):

Okay, so it must mean something great woodland, or great forest, or something like that, yeah.

Andrew Anderson ([25:42](#)):

Yes, because she sees the Great Bear and Andarta comes from the same kind of area as Artio. So one of the things I propose is that actually Andarta and Artio are the same. They are the same bear Goddess, essentially, it's just that Artio is how she's normally known and then she's elevated to the Great Bear when she's referred to as Andarta.

Damh the Bard ([26:07](#)):

Right, okay. You have also published another book, The Ritual of Writing, is that right?

Andrew Anderson ([26:16](#)):

The Ritual of Writing.

Damh the Bard ([26:17](#)):

The Ritual of Writing, yeah. So can you talk a little about what that book was about?

Andrew Anderson ([26:26](#)):

Yeah.

Damh the Bard ([26:27](#)):

What led you to that book?

Andrew Anderson ([26:28](#)):

They are the books of my two grades, if you like. So The Ritual of Writing is my Bardic grade book, which I wrote when I had finished the Bardic grade, and Artio and Artaois is my Ovate book. It's the one that I wrote as part of my Ovate studies. So I used to be a creative writing teacher. It's how I actually ended up coming to Druidry because I was a creative writing teacher and you spent your time trying to inspire everyone else to write. And when you're doing that, you find that there's not an awful lot of time for you. So I was what I call vaguely pagan. I wasn't really anything, but I knew that I liked marketing the Wheel of the Year and things like that. And I was just Googling around one night and I found the OBOD website, and it promised me Awen. I was like well, okay. It's going to give me inspiration. I like the sound of this. So between that and the Wheel of the Year, I was sold, which is how I started as a Bard.

Andrew Anderson ([27:29](#)):

So I started the Bardic work and literally my inspiration just stuck. It was like I was blocked somehow. For a good 9, 10 months, I just wasn't writing anything. I just couldn't work out why it was happening. And I went to a really wonderful course with Matthew McCabe and Penny Billington on ritual, and during that weekend, they said to us, "You need to put things in your rituals that work for you. You're not just meant to do it out of the book, you're meant to actually adapt this stuff." So I went away and thought okay, well why are the rituals not quite working for me? And I identified that what I needed was a story. I needed a story for each of the eight of the Wheel of the Year festivals.

Andrew Anderson ([28:16](#)):

So I sat down to write them because I can stand up, and perform, and read things out, but it's not my comfort zone. I used to act and I had to give it up because I get such terrible stage fright, so standing up and reading or extemporizing in front of people is not what I do. I prefer to sit down and write it, and really craft it in so I ended up with these eight stories, and I thought I know, I'll send these off to a publisher because I think these are quite good, and let's see what somebody else thinks. So I sent them off to Moon Books and within about two days, they got back to me and said, "Thank you very much, but no, thank you. We don't really publish this sort of thing." But what they'd done is they'd passed the book out to some of their readers, and one of their readers was [Nimue 00:29:03] Brown.

Andrew Anderson ([29:05](#)):

And I had a conversation with Nimue, because she got back to me, said, "I really love the stories. They're not publishable, but have you thought about writing a book about why you write?" And I went oh, okay. Well, I'm a creative writing teacher. I write things. This should be fairly easy." But it wasn't because I was still in a full-time job, so I actually left my job as a teacher, threw everything to one side and went I'm going to go off and write a book. And that's what I did, and that's what came out of it was The Ritual of Writing. So the first half is really about how you write these festival tales, how you write a story to celebrate Beltane or Imbolc, and all of those kinds of festivals, how you do that and why you should do that. And then the second part of the book takes that further, looks at things like poetry, non-fiction, writing using the Wheel of the Year in other ways as well. So it's very specific to start with but then goes on to become something quite different.

Damh the Bard ([30:04](#)):

Right, okay. Wow. And did that open up your flow of Awen afterwards?

Andrew Anderson ([30:11](#)):

Oh yes, totally. The weekend that I came back from that course with Matt and Penny, that was it. Literally, I've written two books, I've written another book which is a fiction, which I'm still doing a second draft of, I turned 70 Kylie Minogue songs into sonnets. I mean there's no stopping me now. I write at the drop of a hat.

Damh the Bard ([30:36](#)):

And how long have you been in OBOD? When did you join?

Andrew Anderson ([30:39](#)):

About 2015.

Damh the Bard ([30:41](#)):

Right, okay.

Andrew Anderson ([30:42](#)):

So I'm relatively new, I suppose. I still count myself as relatively recent. But yeah, it's just changed my life. I've not really had a belief or a spirituality before that which had stuck. I'd gone through lots and lots of different variations of different types of spiritualities, and this one has stuck, and I love it. It did just really change my life.

Damh the Bard ([31:09](#)):

Yeah. What do you think is different? If you had all these other experiences, what's kept you here with these weird Druids?

Andrew Anderson ([31:21](#)):

I think part of it is that Druids aren't weird. Druids are lovely people. This is one of the things. And it's something that Penny said on that training weekend that made me realize I was in the right place. She said, "Pagans order the universe to do things. I command the wind, I command the elements." She said, "Druids asked nicely." And that, for me, just summed it up, and that is the feeling I get from OBOD. I've got some lovely friends. I love coming to the gatherings. The gatherings are amazing. And I just can't wait until we can do those again, frankly.

Damh the Bard ([31:58](#)):

Yeah. Well, we're all set for next June, that's a fact, so there we are.

Andrew Anderson ([32:02](#)):

Excellent.

Damh the Bard ([32:02](#)):

Yeah. It's been a strange time. How have you weathered the storm of this strange year and a half? Have you been okay?

Andrew Anderson ([32:11](#)):

Yeah, it's been hard. I live with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable who already has to use medical oxygen to breathe, so this virus coming along was hellish, it was just the worst possible thing that we could have imagined. So I actually locked us in the house 10 days before the government told us to stay in because we just can't, we can't risk this. And I think we were one of the last groups of people out. There was a big gap where I literally just didn't even leave the house, and that was tough. That was hard.

Damh the Bard ([32:52](#)):

Yeah. Well, when your spirituality is all about connection with the natural world, it's been a hard ride for a lot of us, I think.

Andrew Anderson ([33:00](#)):

Absolutely.

Damh the Bard ([33:01](#)):

For me, it's certainly affected my Awen and my songwriting because I gain so much inspiration from the community, and being in the community, and we couldn't be in the community.

Andrew Anderson ([33:10](#)):

No.

Damh the Bard ([33:11](#)):

[crosstalk 00:33:11], really.

Andrew Anderson ([33:14](#)):

Yeah, I mean, as I said, I turned 70 Kylie Minogue songs into sonnets. That was during the first lockdown. That was to keep my brain vaguely functioning. But I also realized I was at that juncture between Ovate and Druid. And so one of the other things I decided to do was to throw myself at my Druid studies and I moved between the Ovate grade and the Druid grade during that first one. So once I'd got over the existential terror of what was happening, I tried to make the most of the gift of the time that I was given, I suppose. And then in the second lockdown, I wrote my fiction book, which is again about Druidry. It's a young adult's introduction to Druidry and there's a plan for them to be three. I've written a Bardic one, but quite when I'm going to get round to the other two, who knows. But yeah, so I've tried to use it as much as I can.

Damh the Bard ([34:12](#)):

Yeah. Well, I read the book, it's a wonderful book, Artio and Artaois: A Journey Towards the Celtic Bear Gods by Andrew Anderson, who is our guest this month on Druidcast, published by Moon Books, available from all of the usual places.

Andrew Anderson ([34:31](#)):

Absolutely.

Damh the Bard ([34:31](#)):

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And the other book, A Ritual of Writing, as well, thoroughly recommended. So thanks for being a guest here and, as we look forward, I will see at some point in Glastonbury, rather than on a screen in my studio, which has been how it's been for a while.

Andrew Anderson ([34:50](#)):

Absolutely. Thank you so much for having me on, it really has been an honor. Thank you.

Damh the Bard ([34:55](#)):

It's been great to have you on. I'm sorry it took a little while, but it's been brilliant to have you here. All right, thank you [crosstalk 00:35:01].

Andrew Anderson ([35:00](#)):

Excellent.

Damh the Bard ([35:00](#)):

Thank you. Cheers.

Andrew Anderson ([35:00](#)):

Cheers.