

# LUNAR PATHWAYS

## Sydney Pagans Newsletter

Volume 1

Issue 1

Samhain



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Welcome to the inaugural newsletter for Sydney Pagans. This is an exciting new development for our group, and we hope that Sydney Pagans members will find it informative and interesting. Sydney Pagans are a diverse group, and we look forward to ideas and submissions from our members, ensuring a creative and lively newsletter that we can all look forward to. Please forward your submissions and ideas to our email address for consideration. We are looking for original written pieces, or artwork, and of course photos of events attended by Sydney Pagan members. All original work in this newsletter is copyright, and not to be used anywhere without permission of the writer. All pictures used are copyright free, sourced from [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page).

How wonderful that our first newsletter is the Samhain issue! A new publication for a new year! Samhain is a great time for new projects and new beginnings. On Samhain we let go of the old and start the new, just as the fires were extinguished and lit fresh for the new year. It is a time of travelling inward, deep into the unconscious to listen to the wisdom of the Crone Goddess within. We may experience dreams or visions at this time with clues for our future development.

Samhain is traditionally the time of death; the crops are dying, and the veil between the physical and spiritual worlds is at its' thinnest. Now is a good time to contact those who have passed over, and honouring our ancestors is very important now. We can do this by placing their photographs on our altars, and setting a place for them at our Samhain feast. Samhain reminds us of the Wheel, always turning without beginning or end. We learn life and death are all part of the great cycle, just as the seasons change and the wheel turns.

I would like to thank Ida, Jenny, Joann and Sith for their contributions to this edition of Lunar Pathways, everyone has worked hard to bring this publication from idea to fruition. Don't forget to ask questions of Sith, he has a wealth of knowledge to share, and his sense of fun is certain to amuse. Send in your submissions for the next newsletter, to be published for Yule/Winter Solstice. Submissions close on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2012. Our facebook group is always open for discussion on any of the articles you have read in this or future editions.

However you choose to celebrate Samhain, enjoy!

Deb

# Lunar Pathways

## THINGS TO DO AT SAMHAIN

Silent supper: Fleadh nan Mairbh – Feast of the dead. Set a place at the Feasting Table for spirits who have passed. Have the feast in silence so they can tell their secrets. Memories may come flooding back from times gone by. That's ok, acknowledge them and then let them go.

Place a candle or a lantern in the window so the spirits of the loved ones can find their way to you.

You may like to visit a cemetery a sit a while with loved ones remembering times gone by. Leave flowers or other offerings.

You may like to take children with you and sit and tell stories.

Samhain is Hecates' time. She walks the night with her hounds. Leave offerings at crossroads for the hounds which may please them; Hecate may grant wishes if you ask.

Rites of passage: Boys passing into manhood, Menstruation Rituals for young women & Cronings.

Paint small grave stones for each participant to symbolise passed loved ones. Place these in a garden and light a candle.

This is the last of the harvest festivals. It is thought that anything left on the vines will be blighted by the fae. Leave these left overs to decompose and return to the soil.

## What Samhain Means to Me

We are taught that at Samhain the veil between earth and the spirit world are at their thinnest. The spirits of our loved ones can pass through this veil and spend time with us.

For me, it's a time of remembering and honouring our ancestors. I remember my grandparents who passed over many years ago. I also remember friends who have died recently.

Samhain is the time of the symbolic death of the land. This is the last of the harvest festivals. From this time onward till spring the land goes into hibernation. The land is at rest, allowing for the preparation of the planting that is to come.

I also feel a period of hibernation. I don't do anything and rarely go out. It is a time of rest and preparing for the rebirth of Spring.

I know the wheel is turning. I have seen the last buds of flowers open and fall, the leaves turn from green to brown and fall leaving the trees like skeletons. The sun becomes cooler and the days are getting shorter. Winter is just around the corner.

Jenny



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## KALI THE DESTROYER

The myth of Kali is a complex one, many see her as the bringer of destruction and death and her imagery does little to dissuade us from this. Images of the Black Mother Kali can repulse by the strange, indeed seemingly bizarre personification of death and destruction portrayed in her imagery. The concept of aging, death and decay is denied and hidden and something to fear in a culture where beauty and youth are prized above all.

We look into mirrors with the hope of slowing the inevitable march of time, we consider a new wrinkle or grey hair; we like to deny the fact that our lives are measured and finite and have a start and an end point. The name Kali comes from the Sanskrit word 'Kala' meaning time, she is the devourer of time, when the moment is passed it will never return.



Our own need to dominate, control and micromanage ourselves and 'our' world has become our driving force, and anything outside of our own particular sense of order is perceived as a 'weed' or untidy, regardless of its right to exist; our ego controls us and we are unwilling to release our attachment to it, as we repress those things we deem as 'yucky' or not socially acceptable in ourselves into the darkness that is our own unconscious.

Her dark blue or black complexion alludes to her being mother of the abyss. She is naked, sky clad, as the mother of the dark night; she is both dark and transparent as water in the deep ocean or the nothingness of space in the darkness of the universe. Lacking form and substance, Kali is as ethereal as the night sky, resonating with the darkness existing in us all; that deep part of ourselves we fear and prefer not to acknowledge.

That blackness is also indicative of the darkness inside the womb and the 'babies' we all nurture deep inside, our dreams, still in their formative or 'unborn' state. We can choose to nurture our 'babies' bringing them forth from a place of chaos and imagination to a place of manifestation, thru a process of creative creation.

A closer look at her image shows her to have three eyes, Kali's three eyes indicate her connection to the eternal - she is yesterday, today and tomorrow personified in the NOW.

She wears the crescent moon upon her brow (as does her husband, Shiva), symbolizing the open spiritual eye and spiritual illumination. The crescent moon has the additional metaphorical meaning of mastery over the feminine, cyclical aspect of manifest nature, the way it ebbs and flows, grows full and then diminishes and further reinforces her connection with blood, creation and motherhood through the lunar/menstrual cycle.

The weapons in her many armed personifications indicate she is warrior, protector, guardian of knowledge and wisdom, mother of destruction but also the nurturer and protector of her children. she is depicted with anywhere between 4 and 20 arms, each bearing a weapon or a gift of insight and wisdom, her necklace made up of 51 skulls, representing the letters of the ancient Sanskrit alphabet, Kali is the repository of all knowledge and wisdom. The skulls also are said to represent the fundamental vibrations that make up the Universe.

Her long unkempt unrestrained hair and her nakedness show her freedom from the confines of convention, she dances on the body of her husband Shiva who takes the passive position, she vents and exhausts her blood lust and primordial sexual desire. The terrifying Kali is the creator of all around her, she is naked and unencumbered, apart from the severed arms around her waist and the earrings being corpses of babies, she is blood smeared and is often portrayed as standing or dancing on the body of her husband Shiva, who appears in a state of bliss and sometimes in a state of sexual arousal.

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Kali is the Unconventional and the Transgressor of social norms, those taboos that keep us firmly placed in our roles where women are women and men are men and never the twain shall meet, she allows for that gender cross-over where men can find their creative and nurturing selves and women can be warriors and sexual beings

The powerful Goddess of creation, preservation and radical transformation, she is the raw female instinct, always changing, and ever changeless. Pain, sorrow, decay, destruction and death is not overcome by denial or rationalisation. Pain and sorrow are woven into the fabric of our lives and denial is futile. To realise ourselves as complete beings, we must accept this darkness as another dimension of our own humanity.

The girdle of human hands represents work and liberation from the cycle of karma and the severed head of the demon show her destruction of the ego, that part of us that prevents us from submitting to chaos and thus to the will of the universe; accepting we are part of a cycle rather than the pinnacle of a tower, she is the tower card in the tarot that shows the destruction of the things we know can be a new beginning; 'I' becomes 'We' and we can tap into that source of power present in abundance that we can only access when we trust and love as children do without condition and without the need to control.

Kali is the dark unconscious in us all, both men and women, and represents those things in ourselves we want to hide and repress, the dark urges, the nightmares and the deep sexual desires, she wants us to acknowledge and work with the dark side of ourselves and nurture it, as it also is part of our being, Samhain is a time to explore the darkness within, the time of Kali the mother, the creator and the destroyer of time and of our own egos.

We can use this time to relinquish our need to own and control our universe, and accept the mother of chaos lives deep inside us all, accept and acknowledge the darkness within us all. Kali personifies creation thru chaos, birth thru destruction. She is a grim sight, because it is a grim process; exploring our own darkness and mastering our fear in order to allow the creative process to bear fruit. Samhain is a time for us to consider that the chaos of the dark unknown of our own passing is part of that cycle of creation thru destruction.

Ida



by Peter Behrevede  
[www.sunatiansociety.com](http://www.sunatiansociety.com)

# Lunar Pathways

## THE WILD HUNT

Hunters Moon takes place on the full moon a joining Samhain.

What is the Wild Hunt you may ask? It is a competition between yourself and the Elements. A game if you like. In ancient times it was the sport of magicians, were they risked life and limb. (It should be noted here that the only risk these days is what you put in yourself. Know your limits and stick to them.)

The Hunt maybe halted if you retrace your steps along the exact path from where you came. (This is called surrender)

Winning the Hunt - arriving at the determined finish line in the set time limit. You will then have the co-operation of the Spirits of the land.

Losing the hunt - Not finishing the hunt in the set time limit. The terms of defeat may be physical such as being hurt at some point. Or you may be able to give an offering of precious items such as honey comb, saffron, rare wine etc.

You can fast or have a restricted diet. Then break the fast by eating of the foods available to the land were the hunt is to be held. For example go camping by a beach, fish and then prepare a feast.

"Merlin would say, to take in the food native from an area, is to become one with those forces by which its life came into being" (21 Lessons of Merlin p298). Walk the land and become familiar with it before the hunt.



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The Wild Hunt can be performed on:

- Eve of Samhain
- Hunters Moon (the 6th Night of the New Moon)
  - The full moon.

The hunt should last a full night.

Walk the land and become familiar with it before the hunt.

Establish a boundary a start and finish point. You may like to wear black, make sure you bring flint / matches, and Mandrake root. Moon wash if permitted, if there is a secluded area this is ideal. Kindle a fire using wood from the area. You may like to sit and meditate till the fire dies down. You may like to dedicate the fire to Gwynn ap Nudd, Lord of the Hunt with these words:

'Open glad in dark wood, pine  
branch in warrior hand,

Smoke of Mandrake sends forth  
the Black Guardian.

Hear the flatter of midnight wings,  
the running of woodland host.

Hear the clash of brave souls in the  
name of the Lord of the Hunt.

Hear the breathing of the God,  
rampant and fertile,

Hear the footfall of the terrible  
hounds.

Hear Gwynn ap Nudd enter open  
glad in dark wood" (21 lessons of  
Merlin p308)

When the fire has died down throw  
the mandrake root into the fire.

This releases the spirit of the Mandrake and the Hunt has begun. You will need to use your senses and wits to find your way. Obstacles will be put in your way, physical and non-physical. Note the mandrake root will lose its potency at dawn. It is light sensitive and rapidly dissipates after sunrise.

Douglas Munroe 2005 The 21  
Lessons of Merlin - A Study of  
Druid Magic and Lore Llewellyn  
Publications.



## ASK SITH

Do you have a question about anything pagan?

Any questions about magic or ethics?

Why not ask someone who cares?

Of course caring is a rare commodity these days, and if you do find someone who cares they probably don't have a clue.

So in the absence of caring, ask our very own Sith.

Sith has been exploring the inner and outer worlds of magic, paganism and occultism for the last 20 years. He has travelled the globe to plunder ancient and modern temples, tracked down a variety of practitioners from dozens of cultures to steal their secrets, and generally made an arse of himself in highest and lowest echelons of society.

Sith will be pleased to provide his unique perspective on almost any topic (which he often does even if not asked).

However, be prepared for a heavy handed slap of reality. Sith does not subscribe to any new age, politically correct, touchy feely, time wasting, psychobabble.

By the same token the publishers of this newsletter do not accept any responsibility for hurt feelings or bruised sensibilities of readers.

Please refer your questions to [sydneypagans@hotmail.com](mailto:sydneypagans@hotmail.com)



# Lunar Pathways

## Herbs for Samhain

Mugwort, *Artemisia vulgaris*

Herb of Artemis

Strength, psychic powers, protection, healing, astral projection

A pillow stuffed with mugwort can bring prophetic dreams

An infusion can be used to wash crystal balls and magic mirrors for scrying, or the herb can be burned with sandalwood or wormwood during the scrying ritual.



Mugwort

Mullein, *Verbascum thapsus*

Courage, protection, health, love, divination, exorcism, banishes negativity.

Stuffed in or under pillows guards against nightmares

Mullein is said to be a safeguard against evil spirits and magic, and can be hung over doors, in windows, and/or carried in sachets.

Graveyard dust can be substituted by powdered mullein in spells



Wormwood

Wormwood, *Artemisia absinthium*

Deities: Isis, Diana, Artemis

Psychic powers, protection

Burned as incense, or worn to aid in developing psychic powers. Protects against bewitchment.

Burned with sandalwood to summon spirits.

If burned in graveyard, spirits of dead may rise and speak (according to old grimoires).



Mullein

Source: Cunningham's Encyclopaedia of Magical Herbs

Llewellyn Publications Copyright 1985

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## Samhain Craft

### King of Winter

Summer is now passed, the onset of autumn and winter approaches. We start to harvest our summer crops and start anew for the cold days ahead.

The king of winter is made from leftovers from the garden and is hung within the house to watch over your home throughout the chilly season.



### Items You will need:

Scissors, String, herbs

In our example we used leftover's from lavender, curry & sage, you can use any herbs, vegetable, wheat. You can make it any size you want!



### To Create:

Make two bundles ~ Image 1

On the lengthwise bundle, tie off 2" from the top to make a head.

On the same bundle separate the bottom into two sections and tie off creating legs thus making a body.

Take the other bundle and place it on the body in a "T" section making arms.

Tie arms onto the body around the head binding.

Tie the ends of the arms, making hands.

Your king of winter is now finished ~ Image 2

\* If you want to hang him, simply tie some extra string through your binding or simply lean him against the wall.

When spring finally returns, bury your king of winter or burn your king of winter and place the ashes in the garden for the next harvest. Perhaps use it during your Beltaine festival.

Happy Crafting

Jo-ann

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## Upcoming Events

### Sydney Pagans Samhain Ritual

28th April, 2012.

[Email us](#) for details

### Pagans in the Park Picnic

Nurragingy Reserve, Ibis Site

13th May, 2012, 10am to 3pm

[Website for Nurragingy](#)

### My Lords & Ladies Medieval Fayre

Saturday 19 & Sunday 20 May

Nurragingy Reserve, Knox Rd, Doonside

10:00am - 4:00pm

Free - no booking required

02 9839 6000

[Website](#)

### Damh the Bard & Spiral Dance

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2012, 8pm

The Bald Faced Stag Hotel,

345 Parramatta Rd, Leichhardt 2040

[Details](#)

### Women's Discussion Group

Subject: Empowerment through the Goddess

26th May, 2012, 1pm to 5pm

Gold coin donation for afternoon tea

[Email us](#) for details

