

# SILVER WHEEL

Newsletter of the Pagan Alliance Inc. (SA)  
Edition 2: MABON / AUTUMN EQUINOX 2007

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from the Pagan Alliance newsletter.**

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# There's no such thing as coincidence

**Pagans know there is no such thing as a random occurrence in their lives, but last year's events still came as a surprise to Spiral Dance drummer Rick Kearsley**

– by Nan Berrett

Spiral Dance drummer Rick Kearsley knows there is no such thing as coincidence, but his journey to take a seat in the band line-up is an extraordinary tale.

The persistent rhythm of the drums has been in his veins since he was a youngster and heard the older kids marching into school to a steady percussive beat.

But he didn't get his first real drum kit until just over a decade later and began to learn his craft, apprenticing in a series of garage bands.

"My parents never complained when I practised at home. They were probably happier to have me there making a noise, than roaming the streets, although we annoyed the neighbours plenty of times," Rick said.

The only time he got into trouble was when he and a mate decided to cut up some egg cartons for soundproofing, and accidentally chopped through the new lounge room carpet.

His first real working band was a bush band called Murray Sludge. Folk rock and Celtic music became his first and abiding love and made his heart sing.

"Although, over the years, I have played in rock bands, country bands, 60/40 bands and even a jazz band."

About 15 years ago he played in a band called Bush Brat, which became the ashes from which the spark of Spiral Dance ignited, although Rick was not around by then.

"I heard Spiral Dance briefly about eight years ago – I didn't want to hang around because I pined to be in a band like it, and at the time knew that I couldn't."

Over the years Rick has been heavily influenced by English progressive rock, blues/rock band Jethro Tull.

"I used to sit at home every afternoon playing along to Jethro Tull CDs and I followed the last Tull tour around Australia."

So with a yearning to find his niche in a band which played the musical style he loved, Rick decided to take fate into his own hands and in mid-April last year sat down at his computer. He connected to the internet, and without any prompting the Spiral Dance home page appeared.

"I hadn't touched a thing," Rick said.

"I had a look at their site and I thought to myself – wouldn't it be great to play in that band. But there was no mention that they wanted a drummer, so I didn't go any further."

The next day Rick sat down at his computer again and typed "looking for band" in the world wide search engine.

The first link which came up was, strangely (not really, if you are a Pagan) a link to John Reynolds music store in Adelaide, who had a new service on their web page for bands and musicians looking to connect.

"And there was a notice from Spiral Dance – they were looking for a drummer – the notice had only been put in two days previously."

So Rick rang lead guitarist Nick Carter for a yarn.

"Nick said, essentially the band was looking for a Jethro Tull style drummer."

It looked like a marriage made in the Summerlands – but there were even more "coincidences"

It turned out that Nick's daughter is Rick's hairdresser, both Nick and Rick live in the Adelaide Hills and when arrangements were made to pick up some Spiral Dance CDs, so Rick could familiarise himself properly with their music, he discovered another strange thing.

"Rick said 'no problem', I could pick up the CDs and he told me where he lived – and I told him I would be reading meters in his street the next day."

It also turned out the band had released its latest album, *The Quickening*, on April 28, which was Rick's 48<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Rick took his place with Spiral Dance a couple of weeks later and his first gig was for Winter Solstice at the Queen's Arms in Wright Street, Adelaide – current home of the South Australian Pagans in the Pub.

"Being a member of Spiral Dance is everything I thought it would be. This is a dream that I have had since I was about 14 years old – to be playing this style of music. The band is like a family. I love it."

# The Mysteries of Mabon

By Frances

Mabon - an alternative name used by many modern Pagans to refer the second harvest festival, the Autumn Equinox.

This association has only been around since the 1970s and is accredited to American Aidan Kelly (who is also responsible for calling Mid Summer "Litha").

The "real" Mabon can be found in the Welsh folk tale of "Culhwch and Olwen", which written reference date back to the "White Book of Rhydderch" (1325 CE). This tale, together with 10 others, came to light in mid 19<sup>th</sup> century when Lady Charlotte Guest published her translation of them under the title "The Mabinogion".

According to the tale of Culhwch and Olwen, in order for the couple to be together, Culhwch is set a number of seemingly impossible tasks by the giant Yspaddaden. These tasks include the hunting of a boar known as the Twrch Trwyth to obtain a comb and scissors found between its ears, and the release of Mabon ap Modron, who disappeared only three days after his birth.

Culhwch enlists his cousin Arthur (from the Arthurian legends) who, together with Cai and Bedwyr, learn that Mabon's whereabouts can still be found, as it is held in the memory of certain animals who were said to have been around since the beginning of time.

The first of these animals is the Ousel (or Blackbird) of Cilgwri who recalled a smith's anvil being in place and that "no work was done upon it, save the pecking of my beak every evening, and now there is not so much as the size of a nut". The ousel confessed he had not heard of the name Mabon, but suggested they consult an older animal, the Stag of Rhedynfr.

The stag recalled there was "a plain all around me, without any trees except for one oak sapling, which grew up to an oak with a hundred branches". That oak had since perished and only a withered stump remained. Like the ousel, the stag had not heard of Mabon, so he directed them to the Owl of Cwm Camlwyd.

According to the owl, there was once a wooden glen that covered a wide valley, before the race of men came and uprooted it. While the wood regrew a number of times, the owl had not heard of Mabon, but guided them to the Eagle of Gwern Abyn.

The eagle informed the band of rescuers that, like the animals before, it too had not heard of Mabon, but recalled an incident with a salmon that was considered to be the oldest animal of them all.

When consulted, the Salmon of Llyn Llyw took the rescuers to Caer Lowy (Gloucester) where they were finally able to rescue Mabon from his imprisonment in a dungeon.

The tale of Mabon, while appearing somewhat to be a Welsh and masculine version of the Greek abduction of Kore/Persphone, actually offers up a number of different interpretations and messages.

Firstly, the main aspect that sticks out in this story is the inclusion of the animals who are able to talk and provide insight.

To the Celtic peoples, certain animals had specific meanings and were often considered to be not only totem animals, but also helpers in teachings of rather shamanic natures.

The five animals mentioned in this story are known as "Older Animals", believed, within Welsh myth, to be the original of all animals.

Another interpretation is in the name. Mabon ap Modron means "Great Son of the Great Mother", with Modron being referred to not only as his mother, but also the Great Goddess, the Guardian of the Otherworld. In other words, she is the Earth herself, whereas Mabon is the Divine Youth, or Son of Light.

In this list, Mabon was never "imprisoned" but simply dwelled in Modron's magickal Otherworld, that being her womb. Here a number of challenges would be set for the youth to overcome, and when he was reborn, he did so as his mother's champion, as the Son of Light, and the Guardian of the Earth. Therefore, at the Autumn Equinox, Mabon's light is seen as being drawn into the Earth in order for it to gather strength and wisdom enough to become a new seed which will emerge in the Spring.

However we perceive the tale, Mabon, the Autumn Equinox, is considered a time of balance, and a time of giving thanks for one's harvest.

While we may not have toiled the fields as our ancestors did, most of us work hard, so we are able to enjoy a decent standard of living and some of life's little luxuries. This time of the year gives us the opportunity to stop and survey our individual harvest.

Like our ancestors, Mabon is a time of giving thanks for the success of what we have worked for.

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## References

*Encyclopedia of Celtic Wisdom* by Caitlin and John Matthews  
*Pagan Cornwall: Land of the Goddess* by Cheryl Traffon  
*Mabon and the Mysteries of Britain* by Caitlin Matthews  
<http://caeraustralis.com.au/mabonapmodron.htm>

**Mabon is also time to honour the Green Man, the God of the Forest.**

**You may offer libations to the trees, while wine, herbs, ciders and fertilizer are also suitable gifts.**

**Wiccans celebrate the aging Goddess as she passes from Mother to Crone, and her consort the God as he prepares for death and re-birth.**

**A traditional decoration for altars is to use one white and one black candle to symbolise the equality of days and nights at this time. The wheel of the agricultural year has turned full circle and is now back to the beginning – rebalanced.**

# Scandal at the Goolwa Wooden Boat Festival!!!

I was having a lovely time at the event, and, due to plenty of imbibing of the amber fluid, I felt the need to use the Portaloos. I was so proud to see an advert on its wall for our own Spiral Dance, due to play that very night (and, of course, one of the reasons for going in the first place!)

There I was sitting peacefully, as ladies do, when I heard voices outside, loudly speaking about the band, how rubbish they were, how they can't play, that the music is bad, and whingeing about the tall redheaded lead singer, the worst of the bunch.

Well, I couldn't let that pass!

I rushed out of the loo, prepared to do battle ( I suspect with my dress tucked into my knickers, and toilet paper stuck to my shoe). Drawing myself up to my full height, I glared around to see who these women were who were "dissing" the best band in Paganland...

There were Tracey and Lauren, laughing at my puny anger, fit to bust!

You are BAD GIRLS, you two!

And I'm telling Adrienne on you.....

*Love and laughter, Tamzin*

## PASA Coordinators Report

Hello from Tamzin and Tom. In each edition of the Silver Wheel we will be updating news from the PASA Executive Committee, and the National Pagan Alliance.

Firstly, we farewell Michelle, who has worked so hard and efficiently as our treasurer since taking up the role after the 2004 AGM. Thankyou, Michelle, for taking such good care of our finances.

We hope you keep writing your wonderful and informative astrology articles for the Silver Wheel and look forward to you extending the series which is so popular with everyone.

Let us welcome Deb to the Exec. Team. Deb has kindly volunteered to fill in as Treasurer for PASA until the next AGM, when all positions will again be vacant.

At the last Pagans in the Pub meeting, March 6, we introduced the PASA Suggestion Box, which is for every member to use. Please put any suggestions for speakers, events that you would like to see, and any other ideas for improving PASA, in the box. It will be on the Raffle table at each month's gathering. The Suggestion Box is not for complaints though, unless you have an idea to improve the problem. It is not for complaining about other members, or for personal attacks.

It is a positive and pro-active way of allowing members a chance to help direct PASA.

If, for example, you suggested a topic for the Pagans in the pub night, it would be very helpful if you could provide a name and/or phone number of the intended speaker. If there's an event that you would like to see happen, please be prepared to help with the organizing!

And please give us a contact name and number or email address so that we can contact you...

On the National front, the PA team is in the process of coming up with a national membership card for all Australian Pagans, identifying their state, so that we can have membership benefits whichever state we visit. Insurance is also a topic of discussion – we are trying to get a National insurance scheme as well.

That's all folks!

**Bright blessings from Tamzin and Tom**

## Autumn Chant to the Goddess

*by Frances*

Goddess of the Ancient Skies  
Arise, arise.  
Arise from the darkened depths  
You have been hidden.  
Bring forth your ancient scythe to reap the grain  
Death to bring new life again  
End the Autumn weeds that choke the mind  
Preventing truth to be known.

Yes, I stand before you  
I do not fear  
If it is my time - cut me down  
Let me be reborn  
Breathe life into my soul once again.

Ancient creatrix of life and death  
Stagnant are the waters  
Wild is the mind  
But beneath the shadowy crops we seek you  
The few who know that all life is but fragile as the sheaf  
Against your sacred blade.

If my blood is to flow to the fertile fields  
My soul I give as a sacrifice.

**Celebrate Yule 2007**

*At*

**Spiral Dance's**

**Winter Solstice Feast**

**On Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> June at the Folk Federation  
Centre, Thebarton.**

**Enquiries: Adrienne 08-8131-0228  
info@spiraldance.com.au**

# Astrology without tears

## The Ascendant: How Do People See You?

There are many facets to Astrology, and most people are aware of their Sun sign. Most of the time though, when you meet someone you are seeing their Rising Sign, or the sign on the Ascendant.

The sign on the Ascendant is the one coming over the horizon ('rising') at the time you were born. The Ascendant defines the personality, what you show to the world. It is on the cusp of the first house in your birth chart, the house of the self, what you show to others, how other people see you.

If you were born between 6 and 8 o'clock in the morning, it is possible you have the same sign on your Ascendant as your Sun sign. That could make balance in your life quite difficult.

Psychologically, the idea is to balance all aspects of your birth chart, especially the Ascendant, Sun and Moon – only then will you be able to fulfil your personal potential.

So ... let's play a game - we'll go through the Ascendant in the signs, and you can guess which one you are. If you already have a chart drawn up, you can see whether it is your Ascendant you show to the world.

**Aries Ascendant:** When working on the positive, this person is seen as being confident and assertive, striving to be a leader and innovator (eg. pioneering dancer Isadora Duncan). If working on the negative, Aries Ascendant can be aggressive and over-bearing, or it can be the complete opposite – the person needs to learn to be assertive without being aggressive.

**Taurus Ascendant:** Sometimes you can tell a Taurus Ascendant by a stocky, bull-like appearance. On the positive, this person would be seen as being very practical, loyal and good with money. On the negative, they could be too money-oriented ('I am defined by my material assets'), as well as stubborn and stuck in their ways.

**Gemini Ascendant:** There are two sides to this placement – the person will either be seen as the intellectual (Gemini rules the intellect), or the social butterfly (Gemini also rules all forms of social interaction and communication). The intellectual should be careful to balance their life by not relying too much on the intellect. The social butterfly should work on the intellect a little more so they don't become too shallow, flitting about without getting anything done!

**Cancer Ascendant:** This person is seen as the home-maker, the domestic god/goddess, lover of home and family. Most people don't realise that Cancer is also one of the most creative signs. On the positive, this person would be seen as being very warm and caring, motherly and nurturing. On the negative, they could be seen as being a clingy person, holding on to the past and not moving on.

**Leo Ascendant:** If working on the negative, Leo is very egotistical and attention-seeking – 'see what I have done, look at me!' – since Leo is ruled by the Sun, self-confidence (or lack thereof) is very important. On the positive, Leo is seen as theatrical and loud, generous and kind – many good actors have Leo Ascendants.

**Virgo Ascendant:** Virgo is an earthy, practical sign. If working on the positive, this person would be seen as a logical, practical problem solver who strives for perfection (eg. writer Virginia Woolf). If negative, they would be seen as a worrier, and someone who criticises and picks on people for their imperfections.

**Libra Ascendant:** On the positive, this person would be seen as being charming, charismatic, attractive, creative and refined. On the

negative, they could be seen as trying to 'keep the peace' in relationships, or being indecisive.

**Scorpio Ascendant:** This is a very intense Ascendant – if working on the positive, this person is powerful, intense, a deep thinker, and sexually attractive (eg. French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir). On the negative side however, this sign can be nasty, violent and secretive – many serial killers have this placement!

**Sagittarius Ascendant:** These people are seen as being very easy-going and optimistic – sometimes overly so! On the positive, this person is seen as spiritual, looking for wisdom and truth, especially in nature-based philosophies (eg. author Herman Hesse). On the negative, Sagittarius is seen as being irresponsible, overly-optimistic, and prone to gambling.

**Capricorn Ascendant:** This is the placement of the businessperson – on the positive side, this person would be seen as being practical, hard-working and ambitious. Their profile in the community would be high due to their professionalism. If working on the negative, this is the sign of the workaholic, or someone for whom prestige and social standing is the only thing that matters. Balance, people!

**Aquarius Ascendant:** On the positive side, this person is seen as being unconventional, forward-thinking, intellectual, scientific and interested in causes that benefit the community as a whole (eg. Carl Jung). On the negative side, Aquarius Ascendants could see themselves as the underdog, or be so tied up in 'mad professor' type schemes that they don't see the bigger picture.

**Pisces Ascendant:** There are two very different sides of this Ascendant. If working on the negative, this person would be seen as the victim, the martyr for a cause who puts themselves in this position so others can feel sorry for them, or someone overly dreamy with their head in the clouds. Pisces also rules escapism through drugs and alcohol (or various other addictions). On the other hand, the positive side of Pisces is very spiritual, psychic, capable of deep thought and creativity. When I was learning Astrology, I was taught that a person with this placement was likely to be wearing two different coloured socks, because they were so dreamy they didn't notice!

Did you find yourself in there? Of course, these are very brief descriptions – it's difficult to sum up the flavour of each Ascendant in a couple of sentences. But I hope it has inspired you to research further ...

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*Take nothing but photographs  
Leave nothing but footprints.*

# Foot Notes

**PAGANS ON THE MOVE**

- by Orbmoth

## WALKING WITH THE DEAD

- Pagans visit the Old Adelaide Gaol and come away with unexplained experiences

Ye Olde Adelaide Gaol: 1841 to 1988, housed up to 300,000 prisoners, the mentally insane and prisoners of war. The £34,000 cost of building the gaol was blamed for contributing to the South Australian bankruptcy of 1840.

Hangings outside the gaol ceased in 1854 after attracting 3000 viewers (half the population), complete with children and picnic baskets. I personally find this fact the most disturbing of all about the 141 year history. All people hanged at the gaol are still buried between the two encircling walls.

Elizabeth (Liz) Woolcock was 25 years old when she became the one and only woman to be hanged on December 30, 1873. After a very hard and sad life Liz was found guilty of murdering her husband Thomas. A recent re-enactment and new trial found Thomas died from an overdose of arsenic which was compounded in the various medicines being given by the three different treating doctors. One of the doctors died of an overdose himself just three months after Thomas's death. Liz's rose garden in the centre of the gaol still thrives and a bloom is placed at her grave site number along the wall.

Our Ghost tour, in February, was led by Paranormal Field Investigators (PFI), Jeff and Allison, who have been investigating the gaol since November 2002. The equipment used is an EMF meter (electromagnetic measurements), a thermometer, various types of infrared video and photographic cameras and clairvoyants. The PFI have also kept a list of "activity", noted by themselves and that reported by the public over the last four years.

One of the theories they have come to is there seems to be more activity when the weather is very cold, has been raining and there is a new moon. Perhaps the higher level of electromagnetic energy in the atmosphere is a conductor for paranormal activity? During the studies, the night with the most activity recorded was June 28. This supports my own experiences that there is a lot happening during Winter Solstice, no matter where you are.

Another thought is about the gaol built of sandstone blocks. Could the atmospheric conditions release a built up energy force of events in the form of "visual playback". This could explain the various reports of duplicate sightings of the same thing in a particular area. These playbacks include guards as well as prisoners and also the daughter of one of the gaol wardens who still plays a non-existent piano.

Another interesting point is the similar experiences felt by visitors, including our Pagan walkers, who were able to sense the differing energies. The change felt between different areas went from extremely distressing to extreme calm and lots in between.

Within our group, our experiences included Holly's cheek being stroked and my hair firmly stroked/moved twice, in the same area of the gaol. We all agreed with an unexpected feeling of peace and calm within the last hanging tower, which stayed with us until the next 'eerie' section of the tour.

The PFI also know to expect the unexpected, certain areas which feel intense one day, are perfectly fine the next. I found I was able to walk into the gaol surgery this time without effect. Whereas previously I had collapsed at the doorway unable to go any further and then watch others come out at various times suffering nausea and faintness.

Craig felt his ankles "shackled" from his first entry to the gaol and similarly I had felt my wrist being squeezed during the entire time in the most oppressive wing. After seeing the gaol museum I concluded the pressure on my wrist was as if tied with the old leather restraint cuffs. On a previous visit in this area I had also watched as what seemed to be an unseen hand pulled several times at the bottom of Anne's jeans, she remained very composed considering.

This seemed to be the most oppressive area in the whole place and I believe is where the insane were housed, along with prisoners awaiting their hanging. Wendy felt a need to find a door No. 4 and we were surprised (or were we?), to see the cell had belonged to Liz Woolcott.

Graham's most memorable part was the room known as "The Fridge", which has double doors so no sound escapes. This was the most loathed room and the inside door is covered with the sad marks and dents of the desperate inmates. PFI have video footage of this room emitting IR light with no explanation and is quite amazing to see. At the end of the tour we viewed a 45 second footage of a moving orb which moved the length of a block to where a clairvoyant was speaking with two journalists. It hovered above them as though listening for a while before moving very closely around the clairvoyant.

There were other videos showing an insect flying through a tunnel closely followed by a moving orb. In another, two male PFI captured footage of a heavy door slamming shut, then re-opening, (all by itself) and slamming shut again. The investigators were scared silly and ran like hell, half laughing and swearing, as you do. We also heard an EVP recording of a loud but raspy voice calling out 'Sergeant Murphy', which makes the hair on the back of your neck stand to attention.

Our Ghost tour of Adelaide Gaol was very interesting, historically and hauntingly and we plan to visit again soon.

Anyone can join the PFI team as part of a Paranormal Investigation on Saturday April 14 or be part of the monthly public tours. For further info: [www.adelaidegaol.org.au](http://www.adelaidegaol.org.au) or phone 8231 4062.

## *Gawler Pagans Help Clean Up Australia*

A small but energetic group of Gawler pagans joined in the state-wide Clean Up Australia campaign on Sunday, March 3. Our designated site was the beautiful, but somewhat sinisterly – named, Dead Man’s Pass\* reserve.

Huge gum trees, a winding river bed, rush beds and red clay cliffs give this area an atmosphere of beauty and it was a pleasure to meander along with our bags and gloves. Looking for rubbish certainly couldn’t have been nicer in an environment like that!

We paired up, one with a “recyclables” bag, and the other with a bag for garbage, and combed the area, coming up with eight or so bags of mixed junk.

We finished with a snack on the lawn, after leaving our bags for the Council to pick up in the morning.

Thanks for the effort, everyone, and a special thank you to our Manager Dianne, who registered the site, and set everything in motion.

We were all proud to have been part of a group which cares for our world, and to be seen officially as “walking our talk”.

Tamzin