

KINDRED

Spirit

Quarterly

THE UK'S LEADING GUIDE
FOR MIND, BODY & SPIRIT

COLOUR THERAPY

Using Light to Heal

KUNDALINI YOGA

Clear Karmic Debris

BAREFOOT DOCTOR

Letting go into the Tao

SACRED STORY

Re-membering Myth

KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

Freemasonry Explored

RETREAT RENEWAL

Restoring Body and Soul

AURA CLEANSING

Psychic Protection

PUBLISHING SUCCESS

Writing Secrets Revealed

DOLPHIN ENCOUNTERS

MAGIC IN THE MUNDANE

Looking Behind the Veil

THE SEDONA METHOD

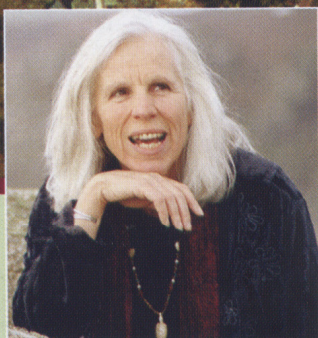
Releasing Negativity

PRIZE DRAW



SACRED SUBURBIA

The application of Medicine Wheel teachings



Civilisations everywhere on earth have reflected the power of the rising and setting sun and moon in their beliefs, traditions, ceremonies and in the direction they place their buildings, says **Annie Spencer** (pictured above).

When we talk of landscape, we think of nature. However, much of the landscape is built up. Spirit manifests in our landscape and we are all affected by this, so it is important to be able to read the contours of a landscape and the patterns that cities make.

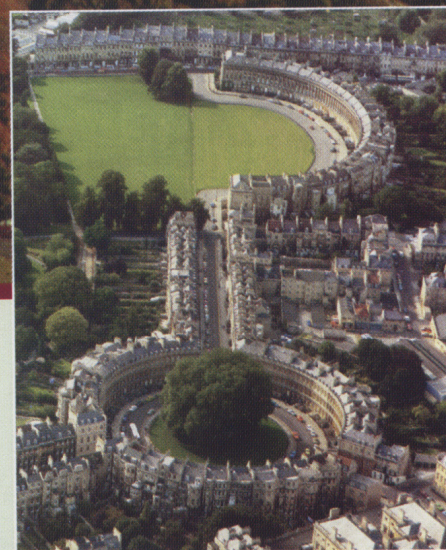
Bath is one of the most magical cities in Britain. Hot springs pour out from deep within the earth, carrying healing minerals dissolved in the waters. For generations, humans have come to bathe in the waters and receive healing.

In pre-Roman times the springs were sacred to the Goddess Sul, whose name means gap or gateway. Healing operates on a physical and a metaphysical level. A visit to the Goddess of the Underworld was undertaken to effect the healing of a King's son, Bladud, when he returned from Europe with leprosy. Another tale

has it that the healing properties of the spring were discovered when a blistered pig healed after it wallowed in the mud; the Goddess Sul's totem is hence a sow.

In the design of Georgian Bath, the mystical was in evidence. John Wood the Elder had a vision of a city of Bath as a temple to the sun and he designed King's Circus (The Circus) on the proportions of Stonehenge. The Royal Crescent was the other part of his vision, built after his death. The Circus seems to draw and enclose power. On one side it pulls from Royal Crescent, a moon shaped curve of buildings with lawns and park sweeping towards the river. On the other side, a road leads down to Queen Square, an allusion to the feminine, where an obelisk was designed to stand in water and feed the Circus energetically. Rumour has it that at one time, passages led from the houses to an underground central chamber. Who knows what energies John Wood was hoping to collect in that great force field which still draws healers, magicians, druids and ceremonial workers. Perhaps the spirit of the springs had her own ideas and like the thirteenth fairy, brought in designs to alleviate man's attempt to shackle the feminine powers.

A few years after John Wood's death, Somerset Place and Lansdown Crescent were added; together with Lansdown East and West, these buildings create a sinuous snake winding its way across the crest of the hill, mirroring the silver river winding its way through the city. A symbol of rebirth, healing and change opens the



energies of Bath to the skies and winds. These buildings are a paean of praise for the sun and the moon as they journey from east to west across the southern sky.

Landscape is always a manifestation of the divine. We are part of the infinite plan, and how and where we place ourselves affects the web that connects us all.

In 1982 I was introduced to a tradition that satisfied my love of the land and my need for a spiritual path.

Hyemeyohsts Storm, the Metis elder, gave me my first teachings on Native American Medicine Wheels. I have worked with teachers from earth-based spiritual traditions including Lorraine Mafi Williams, the Native Australian elder. I have undertaken ceremony at Macchu Picchu; sat in a sweatlodge with elders from the North American Mi'kmaq and the Ho Chunk nations, and participated in Rainbow Dream dances - drumming and dancing for four days for the land.

The ceremonial path I teach includes a Grandmother initiation ritual and celebrating the Celtic Fire Festivals of this land. I open pathways for others, illuminating their life's journey.

My primary interest is the renewal of ancient ceremonial forms for creating a path of beauty upon Grandmother Earth.

MEDICINE WHEEL DIRECTION FOR EMPOWERMENT IN DAILY LIFE

The Medicine Wheel can help in many practical areas of life.

We held a public ceremony outside Bath Abbey during the Foot and Mouth epidemic. One teacher uses Medicine Wheel teachings to help distressed pupils, another uses the four directions to manage an unruly classroom. Some teach children the Wheel of the Year in relation to the seasons, others do ceremonies to heal problems with their children.

Christianne Hythe Cronin, a graduate of my Ceremonial Way training, described how the Medicine Wheel teachings of the Four Directions worked for her in a teaching situation.

'I started teaching hairdressing at a local college. My students were aged between 16 and 18. I picked up the group after a difficult six months: tutors leaving, no organised lessons. They were despondent and disruptive. A small group who had run the show before I arrived caused total mayhem. I was being tested. It struck me one day that the ringleader was probably sitting in the West. Sure enough she was in the Northwest. Before the next theory lesson, I labelled the seats, moving the ringleader into the South. The dynamics of the group changed

that day. When I chose the seating I had control of my lesson.'

Applying teachings around the Four Directions made a clear difference to setting boundaries in a business situation. 'I had been working with a young woman who has her own successful business. She was concerned about one of her clients. He was rude, aggressive and made her feel powerless. She was dreading their next meeting. Despite meeting all their agreed targets and exceeding them during the course of the year, he did not want to pay her for work already done and appeared to be angling for some future free business, using intimidation. We talked about power and formulated a plan so she would dictate where they both sat to discuss contracts, payment and future work. We thought she should direct her meeting from a position of power. He was placed in the South, a position of trust. The meeting was a resounding success. Her client paid her in full and she felt empowered enough to refuse him a future contract.'



My groups are run in Bath and Land's End in Cornwall, where my family farm. Stone walls built in Iron Age times border their fields. Their village is Zennor, home of Cherry who worked for the fairy people, home of the mermaid, and of the old woman who turned into a hare as her coffin was carried through the village for burial. Embedded in each part of the landscape is a story that reminds us of the history of the place and the spiritual beliefs and teachings of our ancestors.

Native American Medicine Wheel teachings whether North American or Mayan from Guatemala or Mexico, offer ways to regain our connection with the sacred in our environment. However, many of us spend most of our time indoors. Our forays outside into the natural world are snatched moments outside the normal rhythm of our everyday lives. So how can we connect with the divine patterning in a room - an office on the 34th floor?

Facing page top: Bath is built in the form of a sinuous snake, Lansdown Crescent and Somerset Place, and inset, Mystic proportions: The Circus and Royal Crescent. Below: The Circus in Bath echoes the layout of Stonehenge. Right: The South-West direction of Medicine Wheel.

THE MEDICINE WHEEL

Medicine Wheel teachings come from the First People of the Americas. The ancient system encompasses spirituality, ecology, philosophy, social and self-development. 'Medicine' is a state of being in harmony and balance with ourselves, the world and spirit. Teachings are held in wheels or circles. This system understands the cyclic nature of life, honours diversity, and values equality over hierarchy.

The Medicine Wheel takes the points of the compass and attributes qualities to each of the directions. Symbolism mixes with material reality. East is the direction of the sun. We learn that the sun is our father/grandfather. East is the spark of our origins, the place of spirit, which we experience as light. While the teaching sounds esoteric and spiritual, it is based on what we know as scientific fact. The sun is the source of life in material reality, manifested out of cosmic dust and gases.

I have been studying and teaching Medicine ways for decades, always excited by diverse ways students employ them in their everyday lives. For some the teachings open up a hidden esoteric side as they develop clairvoyance or telepathy.

One student's innate talent for healing on inner levels has expanded, as she works with the spirit of disturbed children, sending lost spirits of the dead on their way.

Another has found that plants 'talk' to her as she walks in the countryside. The teachings inherently honour nature and help her make sense of these encounters.

Others take the teachings into their home life, encouraging their families to celebrate the seasons of the year in their gardens. One woman told me how excited her children were to come down in the morning and look out of the window to see their prayer arrows, which had been planted some time ago, still standing in the flowerbed, their feathers waving in the breeze. Others request ways to mark rites of passage for their children. The young ones are taken out into wilderness like the mountains of Wales to experience the land in all her power and to feel the strength of spirit manifest at first hand.

ks

more information

- Annie Spencer combines humanistic psychology with skills from earth-based spiritual traditions and has run ceremonial circles on Medicine Wheel teachings for 19 years. She teaches Women's Mysteries courses and training in shamanic ways.
- Annie holds individual ceremonies, vision quests, rites of passage for adolescents and hand fastings.
- www.hartwell.eu.com Annie can be contacted on: info@hartwell.eu.com telephone: 01225 312728.

