

Members' Museum late Halloween shadow and light

The British
Museum

Reach deep into the history
of Halloween to discover its
wild Celtic ancestor – Samhain

31 October 2018
19.00 – 22.30
Over 16s only



Welcome

This Halloween, we take inspiration from the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain. Enjoy an evening of suitably supernatural theatre, music, food and art at our first ever Members' late.



Samhain

Pronounced 'sow-in', this festival signalling the end of summer was celebrated by Celtic peoples across Europe, eventually merging with the Christian tradition of Halloween. It was believed that during this seasonal change-over, the boundaries between this world and the otherworld were more easily crossed. In celebration, bonfires were lit, feasts held, costumes worn and divination practiced.

Shadow and light

Reflecting the themes of shadow, light, life and death, the Museum galleries have been transformed for an evening of activities. From dining and dance to ghost-spotting in the galleries, join us to celebrate the spirit of Samhain.

Cover Image: Southern British Iron Age gold stater. Berkshire, c. 60-20 BC.

Continental Iron Age silver stater. Romania, c. 2nd to 1st century BC.

Shadow

A festival of the changing of seasons, it was believed that during Samhain the boundaries of the physical world and the shadowy otherworld were blurred.

Dare to venture into our shadow-themed areas and discover what lurks beyond the fire's light.

Halloween trail

GC 19.30–22.30

Follow clues to uncover the mysterious tales of objects scattered throughout the Museum. Collect your guide and the first clue at the Membership Desk in the Great Court.

Just drop in

Celtic beasts and where to find them

50 51 20.30–21.15 & 21.45–22.30

Join Museum curator Julia Farley on this torch-lit tour, and come face-to-face with Celtic beasts prowling the galleries. Tickets must be collected from the Membership Desk in the Great Court and will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis.

Limited spaces

Fortune-telling

6 19.30–22.15

Does your future hold fame or misfortune? Discover your destiny with a master of the mystical arts in the Egyptian Sculpture Gallery. Just drop in

Capturing shadows

18 19.30–22.30

Life drawing, but not quite as you know it. Capture the spookish sways, steps and spins of live dancers, and learn the art of drawing shadows with our artist-in-residence.

Just drop in

Light

As summer ended and the darkness returned, bonfires were lit to protect from malign power. Echoing this ancient practice, we've used light to weave magic into the Museum's Great Court and galleries. Bid farewell to summer by celebrating with these themed activities.

Performance by Monster Ceilidh Band

GC 19.15–19.45, 20.00–20.30, 21.00–21.30 & 21.45–22.15
Forget the *Monster Mash* – tonight we're joined by Monster Ceilidh Band who will be seamlessly blending Drum 'n' Bass with Traditional Folk music in the Museum's Great Court.

Just drop in

Headdress workshop

24 19.30–21.45
Get creative and make a headdress worthy of preservation in the Museum's Celtic collection at this hands-on workshop.

Just drop in

Photo booth

24 19.30–22.15
Capture the essence of your evening in our themed photo booth.
Just drop in

Halloween quiz

EC 20.00–20.45 & 21.15–22.00

Know your ghosts from your ghouls? Test your historical knowledge in this friendly quiz hosted by the Museum's very own celebrity quizzier – Iszi Lawrence.
Limited spaces

Drumming workshop

21 19.45–20.15, 20.45–21.15 & 21.45–22.15

Move to the rhythm of the bodhrán, and learn how to play this traditional Celtic drum with the assistance of an expert musician.

Just drop in

Life

Life has always been central to Samhain, and tonight is no exception. Ancient Celts would make offerings of food and drink to the *aos sí* (fairies) in the hope that life would be preserved through winter and into the spring beyond.

Gingerbread-henge

26 19.30–22.15

Try your hand at decorating a gingerbread reconstruction of Stonehenge with *The Great British Bake Off* contestant, Tom Gilliford.

Just drop in

Great Court Restaurant and Court Café

GC 19.00–21.30

Enjoy a glass of your chosen poison at the Court Café or dine in style with our Samhain-themed dinner menu, available in the Great Court Restaurant. Last orders are at 20.45 in the restaurant and 21.20 in the café.

Turnip carving

26 19.30–22.15

Did you know people were carving turnips long before pumpkins were seen on European shores? Tonight we're resurrecting this lost art form.

Just drop in

Potion making (cocktails)

GC Running every 10 minutes

Spend your evening with spirits of a different kind at this cocktail-making masterclass. There is a surcharge for this activity and tickets are limited to 12 people per session. Tickets must be collected from the Membership Desk in the Great Court.

£5, limited spaces

Guising at the Museum

RD 19.30–22.15

What's Halloween without fancy dress? Choose your guise carefully for a chance to win a prize. If you would like to take part, head to the Registration Desk where a member of Museum staff will be of assistance.

Just drop in

Death

At Samhain it was believed that the souls of the dead could once again walk the earth. These ghosts weren't feared but welcomed by their living family. Join us as we honour our dead tonight through a special programme of events.

Celtic harp

WC 19.45–20.15, 20.45–21.15 & 21.45–22.15

Listen to the haunting laments of traditional Celtic melodies performed by musician Simon Chadwick on the *clàrsach* or Queen Mary harp.
Just drop in

Ghosts of Museum past

I 19.30–22.30

Walk in the supernatural steps of the Museum's past as you meet its founder Hans Sloane and a housekeeper named Mary Bygrave and 19th-century curator John Allan.
Just drop in

Storytelling

41 19.30, 20.00, 20.30, 21.00, 21.30, 22.00 & 22.30

The harvests are in; the old year dies at sunset, and the new year begins at dawn. Celebrate Samhain with a night of stories, performed by the ghoulishly gifted Crick Crack Club storytellers, Clare Murphy, Tim Ralphs and Ben Haggarty. Sessions last 30 minutes
Just drop in

Celtic grave goods

50 51 20.00–20.45 & 21.45–22.00

Join curator Neil Wilkin on this torch-lit tour to uncover secrets and Museum objects taken to the grave. Tickets are limited to 30 people per session. Tickets must be collected from the Membership Desk in the Great Court and will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis.
Limited spaces