

Goddess Temple News

Imbolc 2018

Donations Welcome



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A NEW BEGIN, A NEW YEAR!

For many years now, the start of the Priest/ess of Brighde trainings has been at Imbolc. For me this doesn't only signal the time of new beginnings, but also the start of a new year. This is very much a feeling place, but thinking about it, it made me realise that the New Year feeling has not always been the same for me.

When I was a maiden myself and went to school, the New Year was very clearly the time that school started again after the Summer holidays. I loved going to school and looking forward to the start of the new school year was a very exciting experience for me, which accumulated in the purchase of a new diary. These school diaries started in August and covered until July of the next year, which only confirmed my feeling that New Year started in August each year with the start of a new school year.

Growing up I was part of a youth choir, which was a serious business most of the time, but there were also great parties and the annual New Year gatherings.

Editorial

Hello everybody! First I would like to introduce myself; my name is Janet Parfitt and I am a priestess of the Goddess, I am currently training to be a priestess of Cerridwen and I am the new editor of the Goddess Temple News. I would like to thank Lorraine Pickles and Lisa Newing for the fantastic work they have done as co-editors of the Goddess Temple News and wish them both the best for the future. As Imbolc approaches it is a time when we all tend to think of new beginnings and I hope that my time as editor will be good for all of us.

Bridget brings us warmth and the fires of the hearth as well as the fires of her forge and the fires of creativity. As the ground starts to warm the dormant seeds are swelling underground ready to burst forward into new growth but often the secret of success is timing. In today's society it is often all about rushing and doing everything at top speed but Goddess reminds us that sometimes it is the right thing to rest, wait and be patient knowing that the right time to bloom will always be revealed to us.

They were a good reflection of my growing up years where I was with one foot still at home and with the other wandering out into exploration and independence. The hours of the Old Year we spent with family, playing games or watching the annual stand-up shows on Dutch television. Then there were the obligatory toasts and amazing fireworks. But all of that was merely foreplay, because when the streets were safe again after the fireworks had died down, we all jumped on our bikes and went to the agreed place to welcome the New Year. We didn't do anything special, now I think of it, but we did set the world to rights and dream in the year ahead until the night turned into the reality of a new day.

The years moved on until a door opened to the World of Goddess. With that opening, the New Year suddenly moved back about two months in time to the 1st of November. It took a bit of getting used to this Celtic New Year, but it did make total sense, especially from the viewpoint of the Old Year ending. Having come full round from the Maiden to the Crone, the land was apparently dead and all of life had retreated into the earth waiting

I know that I am not alone in having been poorly this winter and however tempting it is to leap off your sick bed and throw yourself back into the fray we can learn to our cost that that can be a foolish thing to do and our bodies are telling us that they need rest and we will suffer if we don't listen to what our bodies are telling us. Imbolc, to me at least, does not have the frenetic energy of high summer but is a time of waiting as growth happens below the surface; the inner journey of winter is not quite complete. Goddess and flowers know the right time to bloom; it is us who have lost touch with nature who are often in too much of a hurry.

So at this season I humbly ask you all to be gentle with yourselves and give yourselves time to recover from illnesses, to think, to read, and to relax as much as you possibly can. The trees and the flowers do not live their lives at a hundred miles an hour and neither should we.



for the New Year to start again. But when does that new year actually start?

Ever since I started working with Brighde it feels to me that Imbolc is the right time to celebrate the New Year. I think personally it is very healthy to have a bit of time between the ending of the 'old' and the start of the 'new'. A period of nothingness, where time stands still and the little seed is dormant in the earth, dreaming in the new. For me it brings up the same feeling as the Summer Holidays from when I was a girl. It holds a kind of anticipation, of curiosity about what is to come.

A time playfully leading into the inspirational energy of the Maiden, where Bridie, Brighde, Brighid is calling us, stirring us, just like She stirs all of nature with Her white rod, just like the snowdrops stir the earth to open up to the new Spring. It is the time that my inner maiden wakes up and gets ready for a whole exciting New Year ahead.

*Bright New Year Imbolc Blessings!
Marion Brigantia, Tutor of the Priest/ess of
Brighde-Brigantia teachings
www.marionbrigantia.com*

The Motherworld Party

or something different?

by Stephanie Mathivet, Priestess of the Goddess

It is certainly time for the Goddess Temple to develop a politically oriented activist wing. The Goddess movement was borne of this, and many causes can be spurred on and grounded by the politics being rooted in Goddess philosophy. Whether that should be in the form of a political party is an idea whose time has come, but is it the right, or at least the most effective, idea? A political party puts its member on the map within the political landscape and allows a distinct ideology to be nailed to the mast. Gaining credence, and moreover, winning enough votes to be able to have elected representatives, takes years of arduous work, often compromising in key areas to get to where you want to be. A political party is about becoming mainstream, even if the aim is to change the way that the system works to achieve your aims. If you want to understand what it means to enter the mainstream from the perspective of a party who is struggling for recognition and support from within that milieu I recommend Caroline Lucas' book *'Honourable friends? – Parliament and the Fight for Change.'* In it she describes what it is like for an MP from a minority party – The Green Party – to hold their own and achieve change within a system steeped in patriarchal and hierarchical protocols and rituals. She also describes the 'corrupt' way that things are done, especially with those who push for a neo-liberal agenda.

Audrey Lorde was right. You cannot use the Master's tools to take down the Master's house. Rather, you need to be on the outside of it, pestering it and giving it hell, weakening it from foundations to rafters and demanding that those elected to represent us are called to account. Working on the outside, even a relatively small number of people can drive forward an agenda to create change while remaining true to its aims and ideology. It is to be the tail that wags the dog. We can remember how the anti-apartheid movement was once the thorn in the side of the South African government, with adherents all over the world, bringing down that system. Likewise, the Civil Rights movement in the US. Once in the mainstream, these movements become part of the system, the same oppressive hierarchy, and those outside of it are required once more to call it to account. With the occasional exception, feminist politics has operated outside of the system too but where it becomes mainstream we can see how easily its stance has been co-opted by the 'jobs for the girls' brigade, more concerned about the glass ceiling than the countless numbers of women working their fingers to the bone for minimum wage.

Ultimately, being small with sharp teeth can create as much change as a mainstream movement. Not being party bound means that you can choose where to spend your energy and limited resources. It means that you can have groups within your group, often with overlapping members, that enables your ideological stance to pull together the threads of many issues, creating coherence of the whole. To the outside, you are then perceived by diverse groups as relating to them, talking the talk on their issues and singing their song. Such a structure gives space for issues based politics to be powerful because it is led by those who know, who have authentic experience which resonates with those who identify with that experience. This is intersectional politics. This is non-essentialist politics, for we experience this world from different spaces. We are not all the same.

Being small with sharp teeth means to have strategies and ways of working that are focused and clear. Allies and alliances are critical, as are connections in places like the local council or Parliament, where you can lobby support for your cause. What is most important is a well-defined political ideology that provides an analysis of what is wrong and a clear rationale for activism. There is a political spectrum and an activist group needs to define where it is positioned on it. Traditionally, Goddess Spirituality grew from the politics of the Left. The New Age has attempted to co-opt it into the territory of the 'radical middle', but the shifting of the centre ground to the Right has pulled much of what is familiar to us nowadays in Goddess Spirituality to the neo-liberal right. Developing a political wing for the Goddess Temple needs to regain that ground if it is to serve in any kind of meaningful context in our world. To dismantle patriarchy involves dismantling sexism, racism, hetero-sexism etc – in short, all the many oppressive strands that dominate or lives according to who we are and where we come from. And that includes corporate capitalism too.

Some time ago I had a vision, and then set it to one side, with no time to develop it and lack of belief that anyone might view it as credible. So, I am putting it out there, out here, now. The vision went like this.

Many moons past, backalong, upon the Ancient Isle of Avalon there existed Nine Priestesses who sat in circle to reflect on the way of the world and to keep the balance between the worlds so humans could live happy fulfilled lives. They would utter Divine Proclamations that guided human behaviour and called it out when wrong was done and the balance of life sent out of kilter. Hubris against the Goddess was not so much 'punishable', as that is a patriarchal concept, but an act that set the balance of things askew and which needed to be righted. The Nine Priestesses were known as *The Vivienne*, each one with the same name, but a different aspect of the Justice and Balance that they sought to have replicated in the world beyond the Isle. They were The Parliament of the Divine Sisterhood. In this vision, the Lady of the Lake is once again holding up the Sword to be taken into the hands of the Priestesses of this time who wish to serve as *The Vivienne*. The sword represents the idea and beliefs whose time has come. It represents the struggle to achieve justice and the righting of wrongs, as there can be no peace without justice. It represents the cutting analysis, the sharp severance of that which does not serve humanity, the ability to see the point and to cut to the chase.

Each Priestess of *The Vivienne* holds a Direction of the Wheel of Avalon. As a Guardian, she stands holding a distaff in her left hand to represent the gynocratic values of that Direction and which she defends. With her right hand, she holds an apple. Each distaff is from a different tree and each apple is also of a different local variety and is distinct to *The Vivienne* of that Direction. Each direction has a defined area of political focus, pertinent to our time. *The Vivienne* may work with other groups or provide leadership to others who also want to support that cause. She acts as a reference point and is knowledgeable on the issues within the boundary of her Direction. When the call comes, she answers ceremonially, summoning the power of her Direction before she acts in the world. She will stand with her distaff, which she strikes the ground three times and issues her proclamation. This is the Word of the Goddess. It is then made manifest in the world through press releases – this is what the Goddess Temple has to say on this matter – or in leaflets or posters or social media – but issued in the language of the secular world. The Goddess has spoken through *The Vivienne*. She may sign a petition or start a petition and ensure it gathers signatures, she may speak at a meeting, or join a demonstration, she may write to her MP or do any one of many mainstream activist strategies, but her power lies in her circle of the Nine Vivienne. The Sisterhood who provide the spiritual guidance and strength, the ceremonial sustenance and the sense of divine connection to Her.

... to be continued at Beltane

Glastonbury Goddess Temple Weddings

by Sharlea Sparrow, Priestess of Avalon



#Team Love, as we affectionately call ourselves, conducted fourteen weddings last year. Dawn Kinsella and I alternate the weddings with one of us either conducting or registering. We each work very closely with our couples from the point of booking, to the day of the sacred Marriage. This ensures the couples have a very personal and bespoke ceremony; no two are the same. At one of our ceremonies / weddings a ferret was the ring bearer! Our last wedding of 2017 was on Winter Solstice night, which was lit solely by candles. It looked magical.

We are supported by a wonderful team of Wedding Melissas who are Trevor Nuthall, Manon Gallifrey, Cristina Granada and Mandy Kay, who transform the Temple into a beautiful bridal space. Iona Jones is our experienced Wedding Planner, who works closely with the couples ensuring they have a fantastic reception. Iona will also be trained as an Authorised Person to register marriages this year.

Writing about Goddess Temple Weddings is very apt at this time of Imbolc, due to Bridie's connections with weddings! Here are a few interesting facts:

One of Bridie's totems is the swan, a symbol synonymous with love and form the classic image of devotion, with their curved necks entwined in a perfect love heart. It's part of a courtship ritual, in which pairs face each other and, with a ruffle of feathers and lifted wings, bow gracefully. They also mate for life.

It is fabled that St Brigid has connections to Leap Year proposals! She petitioned St Patrick to grant women the opportunity to propose to men of their choosing. Originally, he granted permission for this to happen every seven years but was persuaded by Her to change it to every four years, hence we have Leap Year proposals on the 29th of February.

The tiered wedding cake is believed to have originated with William Rich an apprentice baker. He had fallen in love with his boss' daughter and wanted to impress him by making an elaborate wedding cake. The bakery was close to St Bride's Church in Fleet Street and Rich looked to the steeple of Her church which is elaborately tiered, the rest is history.

Which leads onto Bridie being the Goddess / Saint of poetry (St Brigid is the Saint of journalists in Fleet Street). Our couples look to Bridie for inspiration and support for the sacred vows they speak to each other, the story of how they met and their love for each other. Beautiful and moving poems / readings are read after each elemental blessing of their choosing.

Bridie is known as the Mystress of the Forge and so far all of our couples have exchanged rings. All base metals are heated to high temperatures in a forge, again She is a part of the symbols used / exchanged in bridal ceremonies.

Wands and Hoops are exchanged and bound to form the Handfasting or tying of the knot. Our brides are encouraged to create their own sacred hoop. The willow is Bridie's sacred tree and hoop making workshops are held twice a year, or individually. The wood I use? Yes, Willow! I source willow withies from a local farm near to Glastonbury.

The Temple celebrates its fifteenth year at Imbolc, when it first opened. On a personal note, I called in Bridie at the opening ceremony. Little did I know then that I would become one of Her priestesses along with Dawn conducting Sacred Marriages, to unite all beloveds wishing to marry in Her Temple!

2018 is fast becoming busy for us. We have thirteen weddings booked already. It truly is a wonderful way to be in service to the Lady and that we love being a part of.

Dawn and I will be at The Enchanted Market in Bracknell on the 9th and 10th February. Here we will have a stand for Glastonbury Goddess Weddings meeting new couples and answering any questions about the weddings and the Temple. If you or someone you know is considering marrying in a Sacred way – our marriages are legal within the framework of a Handfasting – the Temple is still the only place in England and Wales to do so, please come along to meet us.

From all of us at Glastonbury Goddess Temple Weddings, we send greetings to you all at Imbolc, with love and blessings.

New Moon Healing at the Goddess Temple

Luna holds magic and feminine mystery as she moves across the skies. She is bewitching and illusive behind silvery clouds in one moment, in another she lights the way home, a beacon in the dark. In yet another she invites us to sit in her shadow, to reflect and to learn.

In her changing nature as crescent, full or dark moon she resonates directly with us in our own bodies, and for all of us, whether we are actively in tune with the Moon or not, her rhythms are played out in the ebb and flow of our own potential. In all aspects She offers a celebration of change, wisdom and the potential for healing.

Each lunar month there is the call to create or set out anew, to reap the rewards of efforts made and then to release all that is spent or complete or no longer needed. Allowing us to take another new step forward. We may reflect on the powerful archetypes of maiden, mother and crone. When setting particular actions in place, or noticing what is happening in our bodies we might consider the cycle of the moon, much as those who plan the planting and harvesting of crops do.

Healing with the New Moon At this time, the phase of the Maiden, we call to Her for inspiration, renewal and hope – of sowing seeds. The Goddess Maiden Bridget can be seen at work with her Healing compassion, her thoughtful wisdom and creativity. At her forge she fashions anew with determination. By setting our own intentions and aspirations for healing and growth, we can find renewed vitality for our endeavours and receive her loving support in our efforts, new beginnings and transformations.

Each lunar month in the Temple we hold drop-in public Healing. These sessions are long established and have supported many people in their journeys to wholeness as they return time and again. For others, some of whom are just visiting the town, it is their first experience of the Goddess. Healing takes place in the sacred space in front of the altar, by Healers in Her service. By using touch, voice and sound intuitively, the Healers attune deeply to all that come, working in Her grace and love.

While the Healing is only around 10 minutes duration, the deep response of those who come is very real. Often tears flow, energies move, stuck patterns release, deep peace is experienced and a renewed sense of hope is established.

New Moon is a time of transformation, letting go and beginnings, if you are interested in offering your time and service to Healing please contact Michele Eve michele.eve@gmail.com or Lynne Sedgmore 0785 539 5313 lynne.sedgmore@gmail.com

New Moon Healing takes place between 2-4pm throughout the year. Dates for 2018: 18th Nov, 18th Dec, 17th Jan, 15th Feb, 17th March, 16th April, 15th May, 13th June, 11th July, 9th August, 10th September, 9th October, 7th November, 7th December. All are welcome to these sessions in return for a minimum £5 donation to the Temple.

Tales from the Summerlands

Crane Dance, Sunrise

by Geraldine Charles

...the quaint mazes in the wanton green
For lack of tread are undistinguishable.

Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 2, Scene 1



Common or Eurasian Crane *

To our ancestors, cranes brought the spring and their dance was associated both with the sun and the labyrinth. Plutarch tells us that when Theseus returned to Delos from Crete after slaying the minotaur he and his companions performed "The Crane": a dance Plutarch goes on to describe as "an imitation of the circling passages in the Labyrinth".¹

According to the Touchstone Sacred Dance Library, a dance called "Tsakonikos" is thought to be the Crane Dance and is the only ancient Greek dance they are aware of that was danced by

women and men together. Theseus is said to have learned it from Ariadne, representative of the Mother Goddess on Earth. The connection with the labyrinth comes not from the steps but from the patterns traced by the dancers. Some words to the accompanying music are also given, and the second set, or "alternative words" sent a shiver down my back, which I can only interpret as recognition – here's a brief snippet:

*Listen, Listen/to your origin
There deep in the sea/May You Touch Me²*

But what of the Summerlands and our own connection to these iconic birds? I had thought the crane lost to us, made extinct by our hunting and land use practices and indeed the Common or Eurasian Crane (*grus grus*) had stopped breeding in Britain by the early 17th century. We know they were here long before then as shown by their footprints found in Mesolithic mud in the Severn Estuary near Newport³ and I was fascinated to read that one Walter, tenant of Greylake, one of the tiniest islands on the Somerset Levels, paid in 1234 an annual rent to Glastonbury Abbey of one crane. They must have been widespread, given the large number of British towns and villages with "Cran-" names, such as Cranmore, a village near Shepton Mallet whose name means "Cranes' Pool" and where a lovely pond still exists in the village centre.

Hunted they certainly were: Henry III included 115 cranes in his Christmas dinner of 1251, and no doubt the Abbot of Glastonbury enjoyed them too – perhaps their popularity was partly due to the "reclassification" of water birds as fish by many an abbot, so they could be enjoyed on Fridays without breaking the letter (if not the spirit) of the rules of the church! The cranes' flesh was also dried as medicine

for cancer and ulcers, and their bone marrow used as an eye ointment.

I was delighted to discover that cranes have been reintroduced into the the Somerset wetlands⁴, but despite marching up and down the banks of the River Parrett this year I have failed so far to spot any, although I think I may have heard their distinctive call once.

Myths supporting the connection of cranes to the sun and to happiness or good fortune are found all over the world: they were seen as the heralds of spring and light both in ancient Greece and Egypt, while in Chinese myth the souls of the dead were thought to ride to heaven on a crane's back. There isn't room here to include all the stories, but I love the Inuit one which tells of a girl so beautiful that when cranes spotted her standing alone they swooped down to carry her away on their large wings while other cranes formed a dense flock below to catch her if she fell. Perhaps a clue to a lost myth, a sun goddess who long predates the patriarchal Apollo, riding her water bird to bring dawn to the world: like Sarasvati riding on Her swan, Venus in her chariot drawn by swans, and of course Mother Goose herself.

Patricia Monaghan tells us of a dance performed at Wisby in Denmark, where from a natural limestone cave lines of boulders were arranged in a spiral. "Each spring", she writes, "young men of the village would 'imprison' a girl in the maze's center, then lead her forth triumphantly from captivity"⁵. Where we find the springtime dance, she adds, we find the maze⁶. These dances weren't confined to Scandinavia; over a thousand such labyrinths have been discovered in England and at least some dances survived for a long time after the loss of the original myth. In Saffron Walden, Essex, the dance lasted until the 17th century: a boy would quickly thread the labyrinth to rescue the maiden at its centre.

A German scholar named Ernst Krause⁷ thought the mazes found in northern Europe, often known as "Troy Towns" were connected to a ritual of winter's passing. An archaeological find in Italy ten years



The Pitcher of Tragliatella **

earlier supported his interpretation: an Etruscan pitcher known as the Pitcher of Tragliatella appears to show details of a ceremonial dance in which a woman offers a round object – which Monaghan speculates may be a ball of yarn – to a man, while from a nearby horse's tail comes a labyrinth on which are painted the words "truaia" (Troy) and "mi felena" (I am Helen).

I had believed that "Troy Towns" were named for the city made eternally famous by Homer's *Iliad*, but in fact the Scandinavian name for the labyrinths – *Trojaburgen* – appears to derive from an old Scandinavian word for "twist" or "turn". Is it possible, then, that the labyrinths and indeed the story of Helen of Troy actually originated much further north, perhaps around the Baltic, where there are traces of an earlier northern European sun myth with a female divinity? The image of the Pitcher included here is the only one free of copyright that I could find, but others more clearly show large birds on the riders' shields – quite possibly cranes. Krause suggests a story wherein a winter "demon"⁸ has imprisoned the sun maiden in the maze and the dancers have now freed her. He also questions the origin of the name "Helen", so long associated with Greek words meaning "shine" or "torch", suggesting instead a derivation from words meaning "to enclose" or from "helike" (snail) and in the latter I immediately see the word "helix" – spiral. There are just so many tantalising hints!

Krause has a great deal more to say about all of this and there isn't room here to go into the full details, but one fact mentioned by Patricia Monaghan made me sit up and take notice – a further piece

of evidence that the labyrinth pattern appeared in the far north and spread southwards. Near the Arctic Circle, the path of the sun as it moves through the sky without setting in the summer months, forms a "yearly pattern... the widening arcs of a labyrinth"⁹.

Goddess often leaves footprints to mark Her passing, and when I picture the ancient bird footprints on our British mud, I seem also to see Her tracing Her labyrinth with the cranes: Bridie at Imbolc, dancing not with Her swan but with the beautiful grey crane who is the harbinger of the sun, of springtime, and whose dance is said to mirror the mysterious labyrinths found everywhere in northern Europe.

Image credits:

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5. Patricia Monaghan, *O Mother Sun: A New View of the Cosmic Feminine*, The Crossing Press, 1994
6. I have used the words "labyrinth" and "maze" interchangeably, as I cannot always be certain which is being referred to in other texts.
7. Ernst Krause (pseudonym "Carus Sterne"), *The Northern Origins of the Story of Troy*, "Open Court", August, 1918
8. Krause's "demon" is his interpretation, we need to bear in mind that he was writing a century ago.
9. Patrica Monaghan, *ibid*, p109

Like a child in the womb

Like a child in the womb
I am making myself.

Enfolded in the darkness
Light and sound flickering
Cell by cell

I build the limb and senses of a new life.

Twining strands fall into place
White feet bud
Red embers flare and pulse.

I kick and twist as the Mother's blood
Brings rich gifts.

Wings to unfurl,
Bridget's sun and moon in the heart,
Priestess bones.

Mary Tidbury

Goddess House A Healing Temple

by Janet Parfitt, Priestess of the Goddess



Photo, Matthew Holbrook

On March 1st 2016 Goddess Temple took possession of a new building in Magdalene Street which became known as Goddess House. There was a frantic period of painting and decorating for the following three weeks and on March 21st Goddess House had its first open day. Since then it has gone from strength to strength and with the help of so many volunteers and healers it has been established as part of the Goddess community in Glastonbury.

I have Melissa-ed in Goddess House myself and found it to be a wonderful experience. My favourite thing to do there is show people round because everyone I have guided around has been amazed by the House and some have had visible tears in their eyes by the time I have finished. The feedback I have received has been so positive that it is not unusual for people to struggle to find the words to express how awesome they think Goddess House is.

But I am not a healer and so I wondered what it was like to work as a healer in the House so I went and asked. Two wonderful healers, Mandie Thorne and Ann Pelsmaekers, agreed to let me interview them so thank you ladies! Mandie spoke of it being a privilege to facilitate healing and how she felt more connected to what she was doing than anything she had done before. I asked them both what was the worst thing about working in Goddess House and Mandie said "Nothing. If it was that bad I wouldn't be here!"

Ann later said that the fact that there is so much change can be challenging and the difficulties of finding gentle ways to resolve problems but both ladies agreed that it was a pleasure to work in such a healing environment where everyone matters and you're not just a number. Ann spoke of seeing a huge change in people after they've had treatments and how pleasurable it is to see the positive effects that your healing has.

As Kathy Jones said in an interview with *Pagan Dawn* just after Goddess House had first opened, "Good health is so important to everyone's well-being and especially in these times when people's lives can be so pressured. Goddess House Healing offers a welcome space where visitors can receive a wide range of natural therapies from experienced professional therapists and healers. Our trained practitioners are here to help you receive the healing care and attention you need and deserve for your wholeness and well-being." And I would have to agree with that!

Imbolc Poetry

Bridget

Bridget
Brighter and brighter in the coming of spring
Baby buds blossom in the light you bring
Youthfulness illuminates everything
Maidens dance, celebrate, unfurl and sing

Bridget
Parading Brídeóg dolls door to door
Hanging clooties like pagans gone before
Weaving your crosses in patterns of four
Holy well libations dissolve, restore

Bridget
We feel your sweet warmth of lengthening days
Light candles and fires to bathe in your blaze
Feast, drink and pray in deep worship and praise
Hearts and hearths honour your ancient ways

Bridget
Healing greening of land, light'ning of sky
Twinkling bells of innocence to purify
Seeing your blessings through our Imbolc eye
New beginnings through which the old can die

Dr Lynne Sedgmore CBE, poetess and priestess healer

Bridget's Cloak

Tramping the brumal, bleakness
part of me fast asleep in this
frozen land, this crystalline whistle
of breath, thoughts brittle
snapping like glacial twigs under snow
holding on fast, the inner know
glowing through my sleety shivers
underground, the ice cold rivers deliver
me onwards across this mental chill
as brisk and bitter and crisp as ill
winds cooling the frigidity
I quicken to the parts of me suspended in rigidity
these glacial meanderings keenly
honed to the drone of arctic drifts seen
by the tiniest of creations
stinging my cheek, I am patient
as the snowy wintering of Hyperborean
inclemency, taps at my heart still snoring
as it stores and draws in the light
that vestige of lamp through this night
I traipse with hope against the severity
of barren white searching out clarity
and it's something of a rarity
to find it in this place of scarcity
the charities and necessities
of survival bring me over the edge of vulgarity

yet I am filled with warm dexterity
to overcome a long period of human austerity
but something numb and snapping
in the threads of my arteries trapping
pockets of wisdom like thermal revival
I find the deepest sanctuary alive still
where She tends the embers
of my soul, for a moment, this night I remember
something more than intense raw and biting
pain, the penetrating moon on wane
recedes like tides ebbing from my love
as below, frosted, so the sky above
me flickers with the aura of stars
I lay my polarity here in northern bazaars
sifting through the drawers of sleet for flairs
yet knowing She is there, and I will be spared
trembling and weakened from the bite
of this a long wintered harrowing night
I finally succumb to the numbness of fatigue
all of me impeded by destitution, deplete
of the flame I carried home to Her chamber
careful to measure myself and not blame Her
for the darkness which went on forever
falling to my knees I embrace the weather
cutting me to the core of piercing death
I haven't much time left
and that's when She threw Her cloak
around me, Her gentleness spoke
to the stinging dreariness so grim
She took my soul and warmed within
my bones and sinews in the windswept
corners of my despair as I wept
and exposed the rawest open wounds
sheltered at last, protected, cocooned
long enough by Her gentle green
stripped bare, stark and unadorned, redeemed
of the heaviness I carried this far
She cleaned my hands of burning tar
and took me into the temple of my dreams
offering her broom for me to clean
the scanty vacant unfurnished child
who shivered in the gloom, meek, mild,
waiting to be removed from the wanting
and taunting, sad and exhausting
all her energy, She dolefully
asked nothing more of me
but to tend the spark I had brought here
depressed and dispirited, keep it near
until the moment that igniting flame
would be called into existence again
for so it would, the world aroused from somber
times will grow from woebegone to fonder
eons, comforted no longer forlorn
a small shoot of sun, life was reborn
and would again each year in recovery
become a personal discovery
that above we is the vastness of space
and we will everyone find our place
beside the fire, that First day on earth
as long as we stoke Her forging hearth

Charlie Garland

Cerridwen: Swynwraig – Healer – Magic Woman

Dark eyes peep from beneath the large hood of black-green wool, searching eagerly for the earth's treasures – a fungi here, a plant familiar there, some bark, some root, some bud, some flower – picked gently, with deep reverence and connection, to create medicine, succour for those who need healing, soothing, a re-vitalizing of their life force. At the time of imbolc, we celebrate Swynwraig – Magic Woman, she who walks the secret paths of the forest and the hills – finds the deepest waterfilled caverns by the oceans, where the mineral laden seaweed grows. She roams by the lakes to collect mosses like the life saving Sphagnum, used since the ancient days to make poultices for wound care to ward off infection, and to cool inflammation of the joints.

She harvests the earth Herself, in form of health restoring mud from the shores of the seas – to rejuvenate the muscles of aching backs and necks. She collects clear healing waters from the sacred springs and wells on Her land. Goddess is everywhere and Her beauteous bounty is a gift to all living beings. Nature's mystery and magic restores health and vitality.

Swynwraig is one of the sobriquets used in the ancient Welsh lore for the Goddess Cerridwen. When I first came across Her name in Robert Graves' seminal work *'The White Goddess'*, I was intrigued – it evoked a sensation of *hiraeth* (a sense of belonging) in me. In Cerridwen's myth, she creates a magical brew from an occult recipe given to Her by the mighty Druids of Dinas Affaraon. This brew was a gift to her son Morfran, the elixir of absolute knowledge, understanding and wisdom of the world. It was meant to enable him to take his place amongst the best in her court, a place denied him by the blight of his appearance, which in the myth is described as 'dark, ugly, with hideous lumps out of which grew black hairs.' For a year and a day she toiled, using the secrets to blend this liquor of transformation. In

the end, a higher power intervened and the right person reaped the reward: Gwion, who had stirred the brew continuously, faithfully; fated to be thrice born Taliesin, Cerridwen's magical son.

For millennia, healers of the tribes have lived and practiced the Craft of the Wise, passed from teacher to student, from mouth to ear, especially amongst the ancient Celts. Experiential learning is the key to true understanding of Her mysteries, the Ovates trained for decades to become the healers of the tribe. It takes great knowledge of all Nature's beings and our connection with them – spirit to spirit – Soul to Soul – respectfully asking for their alliance and assistance in our Workings. Plant spirits, tree spirits, our standing sisters and brothers with whom we share DNA; who heal us by their very presence on this planet, breathing in our filth and dirt, breathing out life giving oxygen for us. We dream in the shade of their canopies, we bathe in their emanations – medicine of the trees. Our souls and spirits crave the immersion into the green, the yearning to be present in our body and breathe in deeply.

We, who walk the path of the Swynwraig, use our intuition and channel Her energy to help others heal themselves, we are the midwives to wellness. At the Dark Moon we open the Goddess Temple and invite people visiting or living in Glastonbury to join us in a ritual of healing for the world. We raise energy, we connect with each other and Goddess, we sing, we dance – Goddess conga is a popular choice – we drum and chant. We raise energy, and at one point in the ritual we release it into the world to where it is most needed.

Bee Helygen Baganz, Priestess of Avalon, Priestess of Cerridwen



Support the Goddess Temple

Giving Your Time and Energy

The Goddess Temple is open to the public seven days a week with volunteer Temple Melissas looking after the space while it is open. All kinds of people come to the Temple, some experiencing a Goddess Sacred Space for the first time, and many Goddess pilgrims who come to bathe in Her loving energy, to attend Ceremonies and Healing Days. If you would like to become a Melissa and can offer two or more hours of your time regularly to care for this beautiful sacred space. Contact Dawn Kinsella – dawnkinsella@hotmail.co.uk.

Become a Temple Madron

Make a monthly standing order donation to the Goddess Temple to help cover our regular monthly costs. Any amount you can donate will support the Temple. As a Temple Madron you will receive our Temple Newsletter four times a year, plus invitations to special yearly Madrons, Friends and Melissa days where Goddess speakers and presenters will delight and entertain you. Please see details on the Temple website: <http://www.goddesstemple.co.uk/index.php/how-you-can-help>.

Donations to the Goddess Temple, details – Lloyds Bank, The Goddess Temple, Sort Code 30-98-28, Account No. 0583169.

Let us know your address for newsletters by emailing: info@goddesstemple.co.uk.

Glastonbury Goddess Temple Funerals and End of Life Care – Launch date Imbolc 2018

Throughout the latter half of 2017, three of us met to discuss a subject that was dear to our hearts, namely the setting up of a Funeral and End of Life Service attached to the Glastonbury Goddess Temple. The three of us being Geraldine Charles, Marisa Picardo and Lorraine Pickles. We are all priestesses, as well as independent funeral celebrants, and feel passionate about choice – the choice we all should have to celebrate the end of our life, and the lives of those we care about, in a way that reflects our beliefs, and the way we have lived our lives. For Goddess loving people, that may include a ceremony that reflects a belief that death is but a returning to Goddess. And for those who see death as a return to the shores of Avalon, this may be reflected in a variety of ceremonies both for those close to death, and for those who have crossed the veil, such as the scattering of ashes or memorial services.

There is much work still to be done – we are planning to offer a service that includes the funeral itself, as well as offering a celebrancy service and funeral planning service. To this end we are in contact with local Funeral Directors, natural burial sites, and are considering venues where we can hold ceremonies in and around Glastonbury. We are in the process of compiling a data base of priestesses who may wish to join us – so if you are an experienced funeral celebrant or end of life doula please get in touch with us. For now though, please do check out our website – www.goddesstemplefunerals.co.uk/

Lorraine Pickles, Priestess of Avalon

Imbolc Retreat Days



- Hot Stone Massage
- Warm Bamboo Massage
- Thai Hot Compress
- Lomi Lomi
- Invigorating Tu Nai Massage
- Aromatherapy Massage
- Indian Head Massage
- Nourishing Facials
- Tuning Forks Sound Therapy
- Reflexology
- Brighde's Blessing
- Brighde's Healing and more!

DISCOUNTED PRICES
 £40 for 60 mins
 £25 for 30 mins

Wednesday 31 January - Saturday 3 February 2018



Come and retreat into the Goddess House this Imbolc! You can receive one of our many wonderful treatments, meditate in our beautiful rooms, or relax in our cozy chill out area with a nice bit of a cake and a winter warmer drink! Visit our website for the full program of Imbolc pampering and events run by the Glastonbury Goddess Temple.

Her Love in Action





MARION BRIGANTIA

Priestess services by Marion Brigantia
 Priestess of Brighde - of Avalon



**Priestess/Priest of
 Brighde-Brigantia**
 Circle and Online Trainings
 Starts every February

**Bespoke
 Personal & Group
 Ceremonies**

**Intuitive Goddess Oracle Readings
 &
 Brighde Healing**

**Goddess Presentations
 &
 Workshops**

**Ceremonial Walks & Tours
 to sacred sites on the
 Isle Avalon and Beyond**



Weaving a World of Goddess

For information and Contact:
www.marionbrigantia.com
marionbrigantia@outlook.com
 07948079671





the Goddess CONFERENCE Moon Maiden

Tuesday 31st July - Sunday 5th August 2018
 Fringe workshops from Saturday 28th July
www.goddessconference.com

THE GLASTONBURY GODDESS CONFERENCE

‘Dark Moon’ website is up and running
 and the early-early bird tickets are for sale!
 Don't miss out, they are only available until
 the 1st of February 2018!

The dates for next year are :
 Tuesday 31st July – Sunday 5th August 2018
 with Fringe workshops and tours
 from Saturday 28th July
 and Bank Holiday Monday 6th August.

A few of the presenters who will be in next year's program :

Starhawk
Miranda Gray
Brooke Medicine Eagle
Jewels Wingfield

The whole program will be revealed at Imbolc 2018, so keep an eye out on all the amazing Moon Goddess work on offer!

Accredited
 Elemental Goddess
 healing Course

Brigid healing



9-11 February 2018
 Goddess House, Glastonbury

The Elemental Goddess – Brighde – Healing is an accredited Goddess healing, channelled and developed by myself as part of the Priestess of Brighde-Brigantia trainings. This is the first time this Goddess healing will be offered outside the context of this training, so that more healers can experience the amazing energy of Brighde as the Goddess of Healing.

The healing works deeply with This Celtic Goddess, Her four elements, the transformative energies of Love and Light. The Healing combines Healing Touch, Sound and Body Work.

The healing also moves through the clients Four Energetic Layers : the spiritual, emotional, mental and physical body.

The Elemental Goddess (Brighde) Healing is an accredited / certified (IICT) healing which will be taught by myself and Priestess of Brighde and healer, Nandini Gibbins.

For more information and booking please visit <https://www.marionbrigantia.com/elemental-goddess-brigid-healing-c>
 or contact me :
marionbrigantia@outlook.com