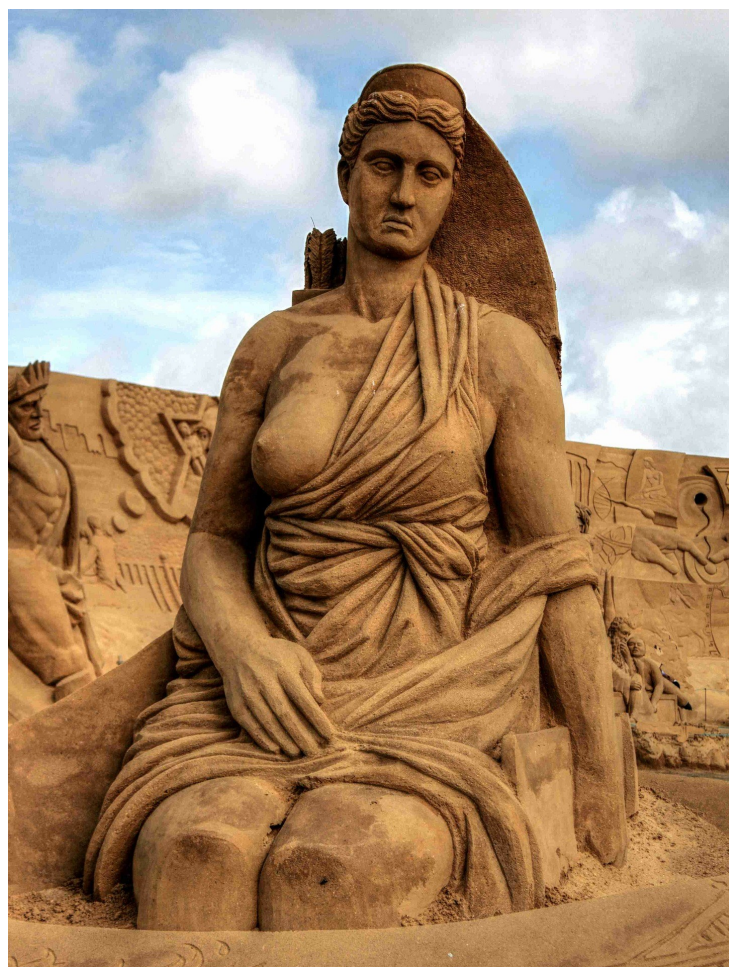


Issue 29: Autumn/Winter 2016



“Artemis” - a sand sculpture, photographed by Violetta

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Welcome to Goddess Pages!

A journal of Goddess spirituality in the 21st century

She Changes Everything She Touches

This issue is dedicated to the memory of:

Lydia Ruyle, 1935-2016



Welcome! In this issue we have the second part of Jill Smith's adventures with the Amazon Woman of Kilda and, also from Scotland, Stuart McHardy—a very welcome new contributor—writes about the Nine Maidens so often associated with the Goddess. Susan Weed is back with the second part of her "Healing Sweets" training, and for something new we have an interview with the three wonderful women responsible for setting up a way to marry legally in the Glastonbury Goddess Temple.

Another of Carolyn Boyd's thought-provoking short stories is also included, and lots of poetry, from Susa Silvermarie, Annelinde Metzner, Maria Duncalf-Barber and Penn Kemp and welcome newcomers Lorraine Pickles and Lynne Sedgmore.

I need to say a sad goodbye to Lydia Ruyle, who died at the age of 80 last March. The Glastonbury Goddess Conference wouldn't be the same without Lydia's colourful Goddess banners (her "girls"), flying high both in the hall and carried in the wonderful Sunday Goddess Procession. Lydia was also kind enough to send an [article about her banners](#) to this unknown editor as she nervously compiled the very first issue of Goddess Pages, and was always ready to help and encourage people in their Goddess work. I know I will miss her ready smile and lovely presence. I can't say it better than Judith Laura—you can read more about Lydia at Judith's [Medusa Coils blog](#).

Finally—I recently realised that Goddess Pages will be ten years old in November 2016. I can hardly believe it! Now planning to celebrate in the next issue, which will be due out in March 2017. Let's have a bumper issue with lots of everything! I'd especially like anyone who wrote for that first issue to come back with another contribution, but all is welcome and will be read and replied to as quickly as I'm able. Among many suggestions from readers so far are a compilation of your thoughts on our ten years, and wishes for

the next decade—so please do send them in! If you're not a writer, then artwork or a photograph would be very welcome, too, of course. Perhaps it would be good to have material on the Goddess movement itself—has it come a long way in ten years, and where would you like it to be in another ten? Any other ideas gratefully received.

Every issue except the very first (which will be available soon) is now available as a PDF download for a small fee—I don't sell enough of these even to pay for the cost of producing the magazine, as all content is free to read online I don't make anything like enough to cover costs, let alone make any profit. If you enjoy the magazine, with all the back issues provided online for nothing and as PDFs for a small fee, please do consider making a donation. At the very least it will help us to keep going, pay for web hosting fees and all the other costs. Please note that I charge nothing for my own time and energy and regard the magazine as my gift to Goddess.

With blessings,

Geraldine Charles
Editor



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The Goddess and the Nine Maidens

by Stuart McHardy



Close-up of the Devil's Burdens Eyes—see page 8. Photo—Stuart McHardy

In his book *Egyptian Myth and Legend* the great Scottish folklorist Donald Mackenzie mentioned that one of the stories of the Scottish Cailleach, or Hag, has her as the 'chief of eight old women or witches.' He goes on, "This group of nine suggests Ptah and his eight earth gnomes, the nine mothers of Heimdall, the Norse God, and the Ennead of Heliopolis." Here he is clearly thinking about Egyptian mythology but his reference to Scotland and Norway is merely scraping the surface of a theme in myth and legend that is effectively world-wide.

My interest in what is best described as the Nine Maidens comes from the fact that a story of them survives close to where I was raised, on the north side of Dundee in Scotland. In this local tale the nine are sisters who were the victims of a dragon-like creature who was later killed by the betrothed of the eldest sister and the site is marked by a Pictish Symbol Stone, Martin's Stone. The Picts, often cited as a mysterious, painted people, seem in reality to

be the indigenous peoples of Scotland¹. They left no literary records of their own and much of what we think we know of them relies on Roman sources. What has survived in Scotland from the time of the Picts - in previously accepted thinking the 3rd to 10th centuries of the Christian era - and been the cause of much discussion, and fantasy, is a vast corpus of carved standing stones with intriguing symbols, a considerable number of which are clearly pre-Christian. Some of the later Christian stones continued to use some of these earlier symbols. Just as Christianity spread by utilising previously sacred locations in many places so it seems that the early missionaries in Scotland co-opted an already established tradition of carving sacred stones to help spread their new message.

It was looking for stories, and their locales, about the Nine Maidens that I came to understand more about the Cailleach that Mackenzie mentioned,

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and to realise that earlier generations of folklorists who thought of her as being an import from Ireland had got it spectacularly wrong. The Cailleach, from a Gaelic root meaning 'the veiled one', is actually more widespread in Scottish traditions and place-names in Scotland than Ireland. The idea of her coming from Ireland is because of a long term misunderstanding of Scotland's past that claims the Scots came from Ireland, which modern scholarship has shown to be wrong² and, I believe, probably based on early Christian propaganda in Scotland. She is also matched by other traditions about her in Scots, which like Gaelic, is an indigenous Scottish language, related to English and other Germanic tongues. What also became clear was that this Hag figure had originally been a Goddess figure, and that the Nine Maidens in the far past had been closely linked with her.

The Nine Maidens story of Martin's Stone led to others, with a group of them based over the hill from the stone in the Sidlaw Hills who were early Christian saints linked to the ancient Pictish capital of Abernethy, and to the figure of St Bridget³. It is well known that Bridget was based on the pre-Christian figure of Bride and in Scottish terms her relationship with the Cailleach is quite specific. There are tales from several locations of the Cailleach going to a sacred well before even a dog has barked on the morning of Beltane, drinking of the waters and transforming into Bride. This is underlined by the old agricultural calendar of Scotland being divided into the Time of the Big Sun and the Time of the Little Sun. The Time of the Little Sun from Samhuinn (Halloween) to Beltane (1st May) was the time of the Cailleach, the Hag of Winter, a fearsome creature symbolic of death and destruction and the Time of the Big Sun was the time of Golden Bride, effectively the Goddess of fertility⁴. They are simply one and the same, different manifestations of the Goddess, Mother of All. In Scots language traditions they are echoed by the Carlin and the Maiden. There are several locations in the Scottish landscape where this duality is shown in closely linked sites where those named after the Cailleach are generally above or to the north of those linked with Bride, and recently it has been shown that some of these are definitely linked with solar alignments.



Martin's Stone. Photo: Stuart McHardy

The Nine Maidens are linked to both aspects of the Mother Goddess and there are wells in various parts of the country named for them and some of these have been overlaid with Christian sites. Another nine that can be located in Scotland, which links to many other places in Britain are the nine sisters of Avalon mentioned by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his *Life of Merlin*⁵. The stories of Arthur were common to all the P-Celtic speaking peoples of Britain and this included the tribes in southern Scotland and the Picts to the north. All traditional stories and particularly those which have mythological components are linked to the environment of the communities that tell them to each other – how else could they register with children, particularly in a world where literacy was unknown? The nineteenth century fascination – still alas lingering in certain quarters - with finding an origin point for traditional tales is an exercise in futility – stories belong where they are told and none is more genuine than another. Thus the stories of Arthur in Brittany, Cornwall, England and Wales are every bit as 'authentic' as those that survive in Scotland, but they are no more so. In Scottish terms the Isle of Avalon, for the people of the Lothians and Fife at least, would probably have been the Isle of May in the Firth of Forth, its name,

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in Scots, meaning exactly The Isle of the Maidens. It is also a place that archaeology has shown to have been a place of pilgrimage from pre-Christian into Christian times. This Arthurian link is underlined by the fact that the earliest known mention of Arthur is in a poem written in Edinburgh circa 600 CE by a bard of the Gododdin, one of those P-Celtic-speaking tribes⁶. In other Arthurian material the Nine crop up in the story of Peredur who is given his final warrior training by the nine Witches of Caer Lyow whom later he destroys, something that is also said of Arthur's companion Cai.

But just as the Carlin tales survive in Scots alongside the Gaelic stories of the Cailleach so the Nine occur in other Germanic traditions. In Norse tradition they are the daughters of the Sea-God Aegir who become the nine mothers of Heimdall. These sea-maidens also occur in an ancient Irish tale, Ruadh, son of Rigdon, where there are hints of sacrifice, and as in so many other versions of the motif, the nine are linked with a single male figure⁷. The Norse traditions also include the white and black groups of nine who are involved in the killing of Thidrandi in a tale that some have seen as a Christianizing motif of pagan thought. They are also there in the story of Svipdag who meets Menglod, Goddess of Healing who has nine companions and there are other instances in other Sagas. Also in Norse tradition there is a reference to Nine Maidens of the Mill. This is the Mill in which the body of the Ice Giant Ymir was ground creating the earth itself⁸.

In recent times some female folklorists in Norway in particular have been working on the theory that the Norse Pantheon of Gods was in fact a creation of the early Christian scribes who were intent on hiding the reality that pre-Christian ideas of the world in Scandinavia saw the dominant force of the universe as being a feminine one, and that the most powerful of all the Norse supernatural beings was originally Freya.

Several nineteenth century folklorists noted that the motif of the Nine Maidens occurred in other places and one of these was the reference from the 2nd century Greek geographer Strabo who refers to the nine Druidesses of the *Isle du Sein* off Brittany who were called the Gallicenae⁹. They were known as healers, shape-shifters and seers,

motifs that recur with the Nine Sisters of Avalon and others. The more recent name for the island is *Isle des Druidesses*, suggesting that at least locally they were understood to be some kind of priestesses. This reflects various of the British nines, like the sisters of Avalon and even the witches of Caer Lyow while the presentation of the Nine Maidens as Pictish saints seems a later echo of this idea. The Gallicenae are matched elsewhere in Breton lore by the nine companions of the deadly spirit, the Korrigan, who, through shape-shifting, lures heroes to their deaths. In another similar tale the putative early Christian saint, St Samson of Dol, meets one of a group of nine aggressive women who seem almost demonic. In some cases it would appear that the Christian church absorbed the nine and in others demonised them.

In other European locations the nine show themselves, in Ireland, in Romania, and it is worth noting that the Valkyries of Norse and Germanic tradition are often nine in number. However the oldest European reference to them is a truly spectacular one. Recently research in Portugal has uncovered mainly Christianized versions of the nine but in Catalonia we have a visual representation of them of considerable antiquity. The Magdalenian cave painting at El Cogul, near Lerida, shows nine women dancing round a spectacularly priapic male and this depiction could be as much as fifteen thousand years old. Most commentators on this to date have remarked on the ritual appearance of this scene and it does point to the possibility that many of the nine groups as being some kind of priestesses¹⁰. As we shall see this is potentially not the oldest referent to the Nine Maidens.

Those folklorists who have, generally in passing, noticed the Nine Maidens have generally assumed that they are related to the Muses in Greek mythology. After all it has been a cornerstone of European academic thinking for a very long time that everything came from Greece, or later, Rome. This is why the study of the cultures of those two societies is referred to as the Classics, they supposedly set the standard. That this is due to the education of Christian scribes who created all early European literary sources is certain. By this way of thinking the Muses must have been the original groups of nine maidens. In fact Greece

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The dancers of Cugul – El Cogul, Catalonia, Spain

By Enric - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=43345836>

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itself had many different groups of nine females all of whom appear to have been priestesses and like many of their counterparts elsewhere are generally located on mountain tops or by springs. And many are associated with healing and prophecy. These include the Pierides, the Maenads, the Telchines and as the Greek scholar and poet Robert Graves pointed out, Lycaon the Pelasgian, son of the bear goddess Calisto, had a wife Nonacris, whose name appears to have meant the Ninefold Goddess¹¹. He mentions the possibility of an early matriarchal society in Greece and suggests that its origin may well have been in East Africa, an intriguing thought given that current thinking is that this is the original cradle of humanity.

Before following up that thought it is necessary to point out that the current investigations at the Ness of Brodgar in Orkney clearly show that as early as 3,000 BCE, long before the raising of the Egyptian pyramids never mind the rise of Greek culture, what was probably the biggest stone

structure on the planet was raised there. The investigation of this site is on-going but it clearly shows a highly sophisticated society in the north of Scotland before what many scholars have long liked to think of as the time when European culture actually began. The survival of a considerable number of remnants of pre-Christian belief in Scotland point clearly to a belief system focussed on the idea of a feminine Godhead, a system which appears likely to have encompassed these groups of nine females in some way¹². The idea that cultural development and the sophistication of ideas had to be imported into Britain is no longer tenable.

Recently there was bit of a stir in the British media about the idea that some folk tales could be shown to be more than five thousand years old. This was based on complicated linguistic and statistical analysis and was presented as a major discovery. Well, not really. As long ago as 1991 it was pointed out in Australia¹³ that Dreamtime tales of the indigenous tribes talked of giant

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marsupials, the bones of which had been found in several locations across Australia and sometimes alongside the remains of hearth fires. Because these bones were originally discovered during bauxite mining, a clear physical stratigraphy led to dates for the bones being put forward. In the 1990s it was thought some of them dated as far back as 40,000 BCE, though arguments exist that suggest they were long extinct even then. Stories of these giant creatures had continued to be told in non-literate traditions right up to the present.

Now I have already stated that stories live where they are told and that the search for origins for story-types is essentially futile. In general I believe this to be true but when it comes to the Nine Maidens motif – which incidentally does not feature in the main reference work for such material, the Arne Thompson Motif-Index of Folk Literatures - we may well have an exception.

In the course of my researches, I came across links to other cultures as far away as the Americas and the South Seas as well as noting the survival of the Nine Maidens motif amongst shamanistic beliefs in Siberia, but the most remarkable of them all is probably a traditional story from Kenya. There the Gikuyu people of Kenya claim descent from a group of nine sisters who, like so many of their counterparts, are linked to a sacred mountain, in this case Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak¹⁴. It is fascinating that the Gikuyu people live so close to that part of the world where the oldest remains of *homo sapiens* have been discovered. Current thinking sees modern humans as originally emigrating from Africa some time around a hundred thousand years ago and as we have seen stories can certainly last for forty millennia, it is worth asking whether the idea behind the widespread occurrence of these stories of Nine Maidens originated in Africa and accompanied *homo sapiens* as the species spread across the world.

However there is something else about the Nine Maidens. Having started out investigating the phenomenon in the mid-1970s over the years I have been led to many discoveries. Not least of these is the extent to which the Cailleach and the Carlin, remnants of the Mother Goddess, continue to exist in Scotland. It is not only in place-names but in story that they live on. Through

understanding that remnants of old belief can survive in place-names I have ended up making several archaeological discoveries, a couple of examples of which should suffice here. One of Scotland's mountains, Lochnagar, which acquired an odd fame through its association with Queen Victoria, has a couple of Cailleach place-names, Caisteal na Cailich and Allt na Cailleach. There are no extant stories of the Cailleach associated with the massif as the local population were 'cleared' by Victoria's predecessors to create the shooting estate that she bought. Thousands of years of human interaction with a sacred location eradicated to pander to the whims of the obscenely rich. However, what could not be eradicated were the two breast shaped peaks on the massif, Meikle Pap and Little Pap. As in many place in Scotland such paps appear to have been the foci of ancient belief in a Mother Goddess¹⁵ and it was in observing Lochnagar from a distance that I began to understand some of the ideas surrounding the Cailleach. The name means the veiled one – leading to the ironical adoption of the term for Christian nuns in Gaelic - and this is a fair description of the mountains of Scotland with so many of which she is associated. She is also a weather worker in an old belief and it was watching the weather change over Lochnagar from Glen Clova that this became plain to me. The high mountains she is associated with: Ben Nevis, Ben Cruachan, Ben Wyvis, set in different parts of Scotland, are all what can be described as weather nodes – they are where all too often the clouds descend before the rain, hail or snow spreads out across the land. This is myth as observation. There is also the interesting fact that every Midsummer

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The Lochnagar "Eyes". Photo – Stuart McHardy

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people from Aberdeenshire and Angus go up the mountain to see the Midsummer sunrise. This also happens on Ben Lomond, the Hill of Fire or Beacon Hill and Ben Ledi, translated as Leth Dia = with God by some and which has Cnoc a Cailleach on its summit. No one knows how old these ceremonies are but they continue.

Intrigued by this I went up Lochnagar with my son Roderick, not to the summit where the Midsummer pilgrims gather but to the top of Meikle Pap. It is crowned by dolorite, a rock that seems common to many such places of ancient ritual. And there on the highest point were two holes that look like eyes. The eye is a well enough known symbol of the Mother Goddess and to find these suggests this was possibly a spot of considerable sanctity. Now some may think these are bulluans, or naturally made holes and it's not beyond possibility. However we now know that people responded to locations in the landscape they found significant and either way it is a significant place. Meikle Pap overlooks Glen Muick, the glen of the Pig and as I have shown elsewhere¹⁶ porcine creatures have long been associated with Goddesses.

However the 'eyes' on Lochnagar have led me to a more recent potential discovery. I recently posted a digital work on You Tube called [MYTHOGRAM1](#). It is a geomorphological analysis of a specific location in the Lomond Hills in Fife. One of the locales I draw attention to in the mythogram is the Devils' Burdens, a group of rocks said to have been dropped on a coven of witches by the Devil and hence became known as The Devil's Burdens. Noticing that they too were dolorite and realising that this story of the Devil was simply a Christian reworking of the well-known Scottish motif of the Cailleach dropping her lippen or apronful of rocks, to create various parts of our landscape, I went to the Burdens to see if this dolorite outcrop also had a pair of eyes. The photograph is shown on this page. As yet I have had no confirmation that these 'eyes' are artificial, but I am unconcerned. If I see them, then others potentially also have and it may not be too much of a stretch to think that they were seen as a marker of the Goddess herself before the monks came. Whether further investigation of the site turns up anything more is in a way irrelevant. I was looking for the eyes and I found them, and I suspect Geomorphology is



The Devil's Burdens Eyes. Photo – Stuart Mchardy

going to lead to many more discoveries. I have recently been teaching a course on Geomorphology for Edinburgh University's Centre for Open Learning and an introduction to the subject can be found at <http://www.stuartmchardy.wordpress.com> and I have come to realise that the path the Nine Maidens put me on, all those years ago, goes ever on.

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Buying Pomegranates in Demeter's Supermarket

A short story by Carolyn Lee Boyd

For one glorious week each year, the rose and white-showered magnolia trees lining Main Street transformed the potholed, two-lane road into a processional as elegant in its own simple way as any gracing a medieval European or an ancient city. The town did festoon the street with flags and balloons for parades with the Mayor and town council, high school band, and Boy and Girl Scouts on special occasions. "But, it goes nowhere," Mary reflected as she drove home on a Friday evening during that magnificent week one year, and, indeed, it ended in an empty concrete courtyard of buildings long since abandoned.



As the sun warmed her arm through the car window for the first time that spring, an unexpected memory came to her of summer Saturdays when she and her mother would gather in her grandmother's kitchen to make jellies and jams from the fruits of her grandmother's farm. The thought "I'm almost the age my mother was then. She had my grandmother and me. How did I get to be so old and end up so alone?" came into Mary's mind unbidden.

Tucked into a strip mall at the corner where Mary waited for a green light was Demeter's Supermarket, a small grocery that had been established by Greek immigrants decades ago when the neighborhood was mostly families who had immigrated from there. Their children had moved out a generation ago, but a few of the original businesses still served the surviving elders.

Mary's arms turned the wheel and she was in the supermarket's parking lot even before she had finished thinking, "that's what I'll do this weekend, I'll make jelly. But I need some fruit."

When Mary entered, only one other woman was in the market, the shopkeeper restocking some pomegranates from a wooden crate. Mary examined various fruits, some of which she had never seen before, and asked, "Which would you choose for making jelly?"

"Have you ever tasted a truly fresh pomegranate?" replied the woman, holding out one sliced open with a mound of the seeds inside. "Just try some of the seeds, it's on the house." Curious, Mary picked out five or six of the seeds and ate them. She had expected them to be soft and very sweet, cherry-colored, tart and dessert-like, but the seeds were blood red, sweet enough to please but hearty and hard like a true seed, with all the nourishment inside that a plant would need to grow.

"They are different than I thought they would be, but I like them better," Mary said to the woman.

"Did you know it's the first day of spring today?" the woman asked. "Without pomegranates we would not have spring, or summer, fall, or winter. According to ancient Greek myth, Persephone went to the Underworld - some say she was kidnapped while others are sure she went willingly - while Demeter, Goddess of the Earth and Persephone's mother, wailed as any mother would, unable to find her beloved

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daughter. Earth became barren in Demeter's despair. Finally, Persephone was allowed to return to the Earth's surface, but only for a few months each year because she had eaten the pomegranate seeds, the food of the Underworld. When she is below, winter reigns, and when she rises to our realm, spring arrives, then summer, then fall and winter, when it is time for her to descend once again. Persephone and Demeter together make all life on Earth possible."

Mary stood quietly, a bit stunned. What kind of a supermarket was this?

"You can make a delicious jelly out of the seeds," the woman said. Mary filled a bag with several pomegranates and headed for the bread she would need to spread the jelly on when it was ready.

Just as she set off in search of the bread aisle, the lights went out, conjuring a darkness more absolute than any Mary had ever experienced. "That's odd," Mary thought. "Even if the power has gone out, light should still be coming in the picture window." She thought she should go towards the window, but wasn't sure of what she might stumble over, so she stayed in place.

"There go the lights again," the woman said as she rounded the corner with a flashlight. "I don't know why our lights go out so much more than anyone else's, sometimes once or twice a day, always when there is a customer here who has never been here before. What must you think of us?"

Mary took the flashlight and thanked the shopkeeper, then shone it on the shelf in front of her, filled with bread of all kinds though she hadn't remembered seeing it there before.

Some loaves were the usual brands, others were special Greek varieties, but two others especially caught her eye. One was in a cellophane wrapping with very old-fashioned writing that said "Our Daily Bread" while the other had a drawing of a housewife from the 1960s.

Mary said quietly to herself. "I don't understand. These were made by local bakeries hundreds of miles from here that closed decades ago." The "Our Daily Bread" brand was her grandmother's

favorite but because it was more expensive she served it only on Sundays when the entire family would gather for dinner. Her mother used to buy the 1960s bread for the family when Mary was a child. She had eaten it with peanut butter and grape jelly at school for lunch every day for years.

She held one loaf in each hand and stared at them, then thought of how small they seemed compared to how she remembered them. As she held them up to her face and gathered the scent into herself, a memory opened. She and her mother were sitting at her grandmother's kitchen table an hour or so after they had held vigil by her bedside as she died. They were sharing slices of the "Our Daily Bread" intended for the Sunday dinner that would now be a funeral gathering.

"I asked her how she had the strength to keep fighting, to hold on until the last possible day when life could no longer stay in that poor broken body and she told me that she was afraid to die because she thought she might go to hell," Mary's mother had told her. "What could she have ever done to make her think she would go to hell? She must have heard that as a little girl. Who would have told an innocent child that?"

Mary then remembered of her own mother's death, with Mary at her side, so peaceful, "like kicking off an old shoe that doesn't fit anymore," the hospice nurse had said. Her mother had only regretted not being able to do one thing after she became too ill to live her normal daily life. "All I want is to be able to walk into a supermarket and buy an orange, just get out of this wheelchair and pick up an orange, take it to the counter, buy it, and then eat it right there," she had said. "Maybe that's why I have liked oranges so much since then," Mary thought, "maybe I'm enjoying them for my mother."

The darkness veiled the tears that began to run down Mary's face. She walked quickly to a restroom she had seen by the entrance. She set the flashlight down so that it lit only her face as she splashed water on her eyes. As she looked in the mirror, for the first time she saw both her grandmother's and mother's faces in her own. She stopped seeing herself as she thought she was and instead, in the dimness, saw herself as she really was, and there they both were.

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"But the line stops here," Mary thought to herself. "I have no daughter."

The lights had come back on when Mary came out of the restroom. "I can check you out now if you like," the woman said, heading over to the counter. "But no hurry. Browse around as much as you like."

"No, I'm ready," Mary said. She first put both loaves of bread back on the shelves, then changed her mind and added them to her cart.

"Do you make jelly often?" the woman asked Mary as she weighed the bag of pomegranates.

"No," Mary said. "But still, I guess it makes me an old woman that I know how to do it."

"Well, I think it's too bad that people don't pay attention to what older women did in the past. They might learn something," the woman said. "In ancient Greece, when women were done raising children, they became doctors and midwives, they literally birthed the next generation just like Demeter and Persephone rebirth the whole world every year."

"What exactly kind of supermarket is this?" Mary asked again at this astonishing information, this time out loud.

"It's just like any other supermarket, with maybe a few more Greek foods for those in our neighborhood who enjoy them. Lamb, bread, pomegranates - nothing here you can't find in any supermarket, or anywhere in daily life, if you just look. Why do you ask?" The woman replied.

"No reason, no reason," Mary said as she took her bag of pomegranates and bread and headed for the supermarket's door.

"You know," the woman said, "even though Demeter and Persephone were goddesses, with all the fancy trappings that ancient Greece gave them, in the end it was their love for each other and their courage that saw beyond what they

were born into that rebirthed the world, the simple love and courage of a mother and daughter, no thunderbolts, no chases across the heavens, just two people with love and courage."

"She's right," Mary said to no one but herself as she drove out of the parking lot. "My grandmother rarely knew the sweetness of life; her own life was so hard. She was one of nine children in a family with never enough food on the table then living homeless through the Depression. No wonder she was worried about going to hell after she died, that's what she must have thought her Creator had already given her." She remembered a photo she had seen of her grandmother's family, one child without shoes and everyone too thin.

"But she must have taught her own daughter something about rising out of the Underworld because my mother lived her life to the fullest, leaving home to find adventure when she was still a teenager, learning to fly her own airplane, finally finding happiness in her family for decades, even after her own poor childhood. And my mother must have taught me to fly in my own way, because I've made my own way in the world, doing what I want to do, living life the way I want. I may not have everything she had, but I have what I have chosen for myself. Maybe that's what they were trying to tell me all those Saturdays making jelly, that with all its harshness, life is still sweet, life is still worth rebirthing, and how to do it."

As she walked out the door, the sun hit the picture window just right and Mary saw a reflection of her face, this time exactly as she remembered it. It was only her face, but her face never alone, a face whose turn it is to love the next generation of women, maybe not her daughters, but all the next generation of women, and rebirth the world again.



Be Your Own Herbal Expert: Part 8

Part 2: Healing sweets: herbal honeys, syrups and cough drops

by Susun S Weed

HERBAL SYRUPS

Herbal syrups are sweetened, condensed herbal infusions. Cough drops are concentrated syrups. Alcohol is frequently added to syrups to help prevent fermentation and stabilize the remedy. Cough drops and lozenges, having less water, keep well without the addition of alcohol.

Bitter herbs, especially when effective in a fairly small dose, are often made into syrups: horehound, yellow dock, dandelion, chicory, and motherwort spring to mind in this regard.

Herbs that are especially effective in relieving throat infections and breathing problems are also frequently made into syrups, especially when honey is used as the sweetener: coltsfoot flowers (not leaves), comfrey leaves (not roots), horehound, elder berries, mullein, osha root, pine, sage, and wild cherry bark are favorites for "cough" syrups.

USING HERBAL SYRUPS

A dose of most herbal syrup is 1-3 teaspoonfuls, taken as needed. Take a spoonful of bitter syrup just before meals for best results. Take cough syrups as often as every hour.

MAKE AN HERBAL SYRUP

To make an herbal syrup you will need the following supplies:

One ounce of dried herb (weight, not volume)

A clean dry quart/liter jar with a tight lid

Boiling water

Measuring cup

A heavy-bottomed medium-sized saucepan

2 cups sugar or 1½ cups honey

A sterilized jar with a small neck and a good lid (a cork stopper is ideal)

A little vodka (optional)

A label and pen

Place the full ounce of dried herb into the quart jar and fill it to the top with boiling water. Cap tightly. After 4-10 hours, decant your infusion, saving the liquid and squeezing the herb to get the last of the goodness out of it.



Measure the amount of liquid you have (usually about 3½ cups). Pour this into the saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat until the infusion is just barely simmering. Continue to simmer until the liquid is reduced by half (pour it out of the pan and into the measuring cup now and then to check). This step can take several hours; the decoction is not spoiled if it is reduced to less than half, but it is ruined if it boils hard or if it burns. Keep a close eye on it.

When you have reduced the infusion to less than two cups, add the sugar or honey (or sweetener of your choice) and bring to a rolling boil. Pour, boiling hot, into your jar. (Sterilize the jar by boiling it in plain water for a few minutes just before filling it.) If desired, add some vodka to preserve the syrup.

Allow the bottle of syrup to come to room temperature. Label it. Store it in the refrigerator or keep it in a cool place.

MAKE HERBAL COUGH DROPS

You must make a syrup with sugar, not honey to make cough drops, but you can use raw sugar or

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brown sugar instead of white sugar and it will work just as well.

Instead of pouring your boiling hot syrup into a bottle, keep boiling it. Every minute or so, drop a bit into cold water. When it forms a hard ball in the cold water, immediately turn off the fire. Pour your very thick syrup into a buttered flat dish. Cool, then cut into small squares.

A dusting of powdered sugar will keep them from sticking. Store airtight in a cool place.

MAKE THROAT-SOOTHING LOZENGES

Put an ounce of marshmallow root powder or slippery elm bark powder in a bowl.

Slowly add honey, stirring constantly, until you have a thick paste

Roll your slippery elm paste into small balls

Roll the balls in more slippery elm powder

Store in a tightly-closed tin. These will keep for up to ten years.

PLANTS THAT I USE TO MAKE HERBAL SYRUPS

Comfrey leaves (*Symphytum uplandica* x)

Chicory roots (*Cichorium intybus*)

Dandelion flowers or roots (*Taraxacum* off.)

Elder berries (*Sambucus canadensis*)

Horehound leaves and stems (*Marrubium vulgare*)

Motherwort leaves (*Leonurus cardiaca*) pick before flowering

Plantain leaves or roots (*Plantago majus*)

Osha root (*Ligusticum porterii*)

Pine needles or inner bark (*Pinus*)

Sage (*Salvia* off.)

Wild cherry bark (*Prunus serotina*)

Yellow dock roots (*Rumex crispus*)

EXPERIMENT NUMBER ONE

Make a simple syrup, using only one plant. Make it once with honey, once with white sugar, and once with a sweetener of your choice, such as barley malt, agave syrup, molasses, sorghum syrup, or maple syrup. (See list for suggestions of plants to use.)

EXPERIMENT NUMBER TWO

Make a syrup with three or more plants. Choose plants that are local to your area, or ones that you can most easily buy.

EXPERIMENT NUMBER THREE

Make three or more simple herbal honeys using different parts of plants, such as flowers, leaves, roots, or seeds. (See list for suggestions of plants to use.)

EXPERIMENT NUMBER FOUR

Make an herbal honey with a plant rich in essential oils (such as sage, rosemary, lavender, or mint).

Try it as a wound treatment. Try it on minor burns.

Try it as a facial masque. Record your observations.

EXPERIMENT NUMBER FIVE

Make one or more of the recipes in this lesson.

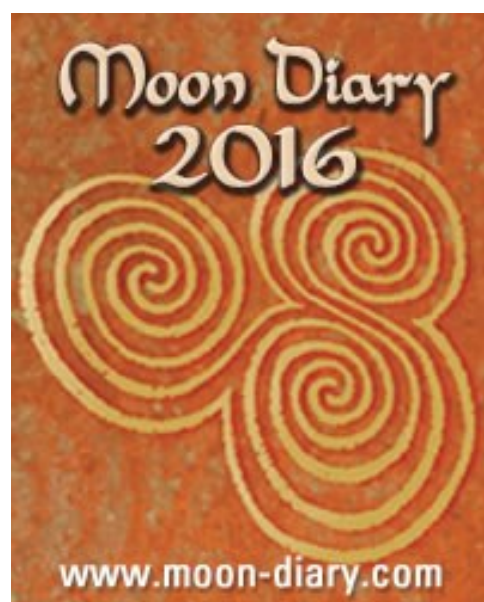
FURTHER STUDY

1. Make a yellow dock iron tonic syrup following the recipe in my book *Wise Woman Herbal for the Childbearing Year*.

2. Make "Peel Power" following the recipe in my book *New Menopausal Years the Wise Woman Way*.

ADVANCED WORK

Compare the effects of honey from the supermarket, organic honey, raw honey, and herbal honey by using each one to treat the same problems and carefully recording your observations.



The Amazon Woman of Kilda: Part 2

By Jill Smith

In the [Spring 2012 edition of Goddess Pages](#) I wrote of my visits to the Amazon House on St Kilda, which lies at least 60 miles to the west of mainland Scotland.

This archipelago has an almost mythical hold on many people, drawing them to visit, and in the past was almost legendary, as the islands disappear and re-appear faintly on the horizon like some version of Tir nan Og, tantalising viewers in the Western Isles of Scotland. I too was 'called' by them over several decades before finding an affordable way to physically reach them.

These remains of an ancient volcano, whose cliffs rise sheer from the clear deep bottle-green ocean, were inhabited from prehistoric times, being a likely stopping-off point as people hopped round the coasts from Scandinavia to Ireland. There is little early evidence as stone used in buildings was continuously re-used for later development, but advances in archaeology enable finds which push back the dates of habitation.

Populations probably changed over millennia, but one long-term group of people was visited by Martin Martin in 1695 and he was told by them of the legends of the Amazon, Giantess or female warrior of Hirte. (Hirte is now the name of the main island, but Gaelic speakers call the whole archipelago by this term). The people met by Martin were almost entirely wiped out by smallpox in 1727, and were replaced by others



The Amazon House—photo: Jill Smith



Inspired by how Jill 'saw' and experienced the Amazon in the Glen (You can see larger versions of most of this article's images online.)

from Harris who maybe knew less of the legends and traditions of the islands than those who had died. The last inhabitants finally left in 1930 and now the islands are only populated by a company running a radar tracking station for the MoD, the National Trust work parties in the summer, multitudinous birds and Soay sheep which are allowed to live wild.

My fascination with the place has largely been driven by this legend of the Amazon woman. This is what Martin wrote:

"Upon the west side of this isle there is a valley with a declination towards the sea, having a rivulet running through the middle of it, on each side of which is an ascent of half a mile; all of which piece of ground is called by the inhabitants the Female Warrior's glen: this Amazon is famous in their traditions: her house or dairy of stone is yet extant; some of the inhabitants dwell in it all summer though it be some 100 years old; the whole is built of stone, without any wood, lime, earth or mortar to cement it, and is built in the form of a circle pyramid-wise towards the top, having a vent in it, the fire being always in the centre of the floor; the stones are long and thin, which supplies the defect of wood; the body of this house contains not above nine persons sitting; there are three beds or low vaults that go off the

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side of the wall, a pillar betwixt each bed, which contains five men apiece; at the entry to one of these low vaults is a stone standing upon one end fix'd; upon this they say she ordinarily laid her helmet; there are two stones on the other side, upon which she is reported to have laid her sword: she is said to have been much addicted to hunting, and that in her time all the space betwixt this isle and that of Harries was one continuous tract of dry land". "Tis also said of this warrior, that she let loose her greyhounds after the deer in St Kilda, making their course towards the opposite isles." He finishes by saying: "There are several traditions of this famous Amazon, with which I will not further trouble the reader"!!

Otta Swire, author of 'The Outer Hebrides and their Legends', who got much information verbally from relatives, adds that she was "an Amazon Queen, a giantess of great prowess in war and possessed of many magic gifts".

Nowadays there are those who seek to de-mystify legends of ancient traditions in these Isles, citing the leg-pulling that Hebrideans are notorious for when speaking to gullible tourists, but I think not, on the whole, in this case. Why a Giantess? Why have a whole glen named after her – Gleann na Banaghaisgeach? Her house lies in the bottom of this deep glen, a place which is a magical world unto itself with an extraordinarily powerful atmosphere.

Her house is one of many strange and unusual structures existing only in this glen – ancient triple-form 'beehive' houses with long crablike arms



Tobar nam Buaidh—photo: Jill Smith

forming fore-courts. Some say these are 'lamb-folds'. There are long and curving dykes (walls), an oval enclosure, other odd stone formations and a beautiful clear, pure well – Tobar nam Buaidh (Well of Virtues). A river runs the length of the glen with several streams feeding into it. Here, the presence of the Amazon Woman, whoever she may have been – ancient goddess, creation ancestress, mythical power of place or memory of some real living warrior woman, is still powerful and at times overwhelming.

In 1983 the artist Keith Payne, who was illustrating a book 'Road Through the Isles' he was researching with the writer John Sharkey, stayed on St Kilda for two weeks. One late summer's evening as he returned from drawing the island of Soay, he paused to rest and looked down into the glen as the setting sun cast long shadows, and what he saw astonished him – the great figure of the Amazon lay there, drawn on the land, her features delineated by the houses, dykes and the oval enclosure. Her face was partly created by the evening shadows and solitary stones gleaming white; her great arms were outstretched, one formed by a length of scree reaching up the mountainside, the other holding the crystal-clear well of Tobar nam Buaidh. Payne made an intricate pencil drawing of what he saw, though this was not used in the final book.

Hearing of this I was utterly fascinated, but one cannot see something so huge from the ground. Where would one have to see her from? What should one look for? Did she really exist?

Payne's drawing 'disappeared' for decades, but following the death of John Sharkey it re-appeared in the original sketchbook among his possessions. I was humbled when the artist sent the whole thing to me – to do what I would with. I felt deeply honoured to have it in my care, the detailed drawing showing a clear and undisputed figure.

Of course, this meant I must now make another visit to St Kilda and the Glen.

Once again I booked my camping trip with the National Trust and Kilda Cruises, though the best laid plans when going to Hirte are very weather-dependant. Many day-trips are cancelled as the

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Boreray—photo: Jill Smith

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boat owners won't take passengers out when the wind is more than Force 5. Growing older, I was somewhat apprehensive about my ability to climb up the steep hill of Mullach Geal, down the steeper sides of the Glen into its depths, to walk round the river and then climb up the other side and back again. St Kilda is a very challenging landscape. To cap it all, in the weeks leading up to my trip I developed persistent tendonitis in my right foot, which not only made walking and climbing difficult and painful but prevented me from doing all the preparatory exercise I had planned. But I would not be deterred – the Amazon always tests me to my limits.

I felt barely prepared as I sped across the ocean, landing once more with a sense almost of disbelief at being back on the island I had last left five years before, not knowing if I would ever return. For my whole time there I had a sense both of unreality yet of total familiarity, as though I were in a lucid dream.

The next day I woke to depressingly low cloud – I only had two possible days to go 'up and over'. I was reluctant to go there again in deep mist and risk getting disorientated as I had the first time – exciting once, but I didn't want to get a reputation for getting lost! And anyway I wouldn't be able to see her in a fog.

Have faith. By midday the fog was lifting and I began to climb up the MoD road, a hard enough task in itself – up, up, past the Milking Stone where the people used to leave libations for the Gruagach – up, up, higher and higher, as the mist

thinned to smoke-like haar - clearing, then drifting back over the higher peaks, then clearing again. Go for it. The glen was clear as I looked down into this now familiar world. The sun was shining, the mist retreating, though it lurked teasingly as a white roll not far out to sea.

Even though I needed this time to go over to the 'other side' of the glen to find Keith Payne's viewpoint I felt compelled to return first to both the Amazon House and Tobar nam Buaidh, giving them thanks for allowing me back. It felt such a privilege to be there again. To the well I returned some of its own water from 5 years before, and gifted it some from Chalice Well in Glastonbury. In return I was allowed to refill my water-bottle. I neither left nor took anything else, for the slightest thing can change the ecology of this World Heritage site.

I had thought I would have to walk all the way round the river head, past the remains of a Wellington aircraft which crashed there on June 8th 1944, killing 10 airmen, its aluminium now being absorbed into the earth as are the bodies of the dead sheep which are left where they die. But this had already been a dry summer in the Hebrides and the river was little more than a trickle, so I could just step across. Even so, my tired legs were complaining. Up I climbed and turned at my first rest – and there she was – the Amazon figure lying there beneath me in the glen just as Keith Payne had drawn her, though I was seeing her at more of an angle. She is real! There was no doubt. There lay her great body stretched out along the glen, the curved lines of her sides, her breasts, knees, hips and vulva; her great arms reaching out sideways, one up the mountain, the other holding the well. She was absolutely clear with a pulsating living energy, just as Keith had drawn her.

I could not clearly see the details of her face for this was early afternoon and the sun was high, not casting those long evening shadows, and indeed her head seemed thrown back away from me. The delineation of her legs has gone, but there are lines of the storage cleits which cover the island and are peculiar to it, near where her legs would have been and it seems likely that her leg stones were 'borrowed' by later people as building

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material, people who maybe did not know she was there.

I had felt her presence so powerfully on my previous visits and now was looking down on her in physical reality. It was truly breathtaking. Keith Payne's drawing seems to have been made almost from a viewpoint directly above her – did he fly that evening, I wondered as I was dive-bombed by the beautiful bonxies (Skuas) which have moved to the islands since the human residents left. I climbed higher and higher, but the climb was not straightforward. I moved towards her feet, seeing her more and more clearly, but realised too late that I should have climbed higher while I was nearer the top of her body to see her more as he had done, but my own body was screaming with exhaustion and I couldn't go 'back'. It didn't seem to matter. I didn't need to see her exactly as he had done – I could see her and feel her as clearly as I needed to. I was being at last allowed to share what I had wondered might have been a momentary vision given to Keith all those years before. There she was – a Giantess, the warrior woman of Hirte.

In the bright sunlight which bleached the screen on my camera I attempted to photograph her, but technology cannot capture what the eye can see and the spirit feel. Looking down on her was so different from what can be seen in the pictures, though she is there in them.

Keith Payne's drawing (we've included a copy on page 18 - as large as we can make it!) is a treasure, a vision captured. I am unlikely to attempt any artwork myself which is directly inspired by what I saw, for his drawing cannot be bettered, but seeing her may change how I try to depict her in future.

I climbed higher, watching her shape change and become even clearer though more distant, feeling so honoured at being allowed this day.

How many others, in recent times, have walked the high ridge above her, looked down in the glen and not seen her? I would never have gone over that side had I not known of the drawing.

So – who built her? Who let her presence shape the form of the dykes and the positions of the strange dwellings? How ancient is she? Some

archaeologists say even these structures are built over earlier ones, so was she originally prehistoric? Was she consciously made to honour the myth, the legend, the ancestress, the presence which fills the glen? Or could she have been formed unknowingly, her energy guiding the people to mould their structures into her shape?

Do we want to know? Do we want to try to prove her existence archaeologically? Or shall we just let her lie there undisturbed and in peace? She is real. She is truly there, lying in full view for those who will see.

I struggled higher, to The Wall at the top of the glen, over to the road and down to my tent where I collapsed exhausted but fulfilled – mission accomplished.

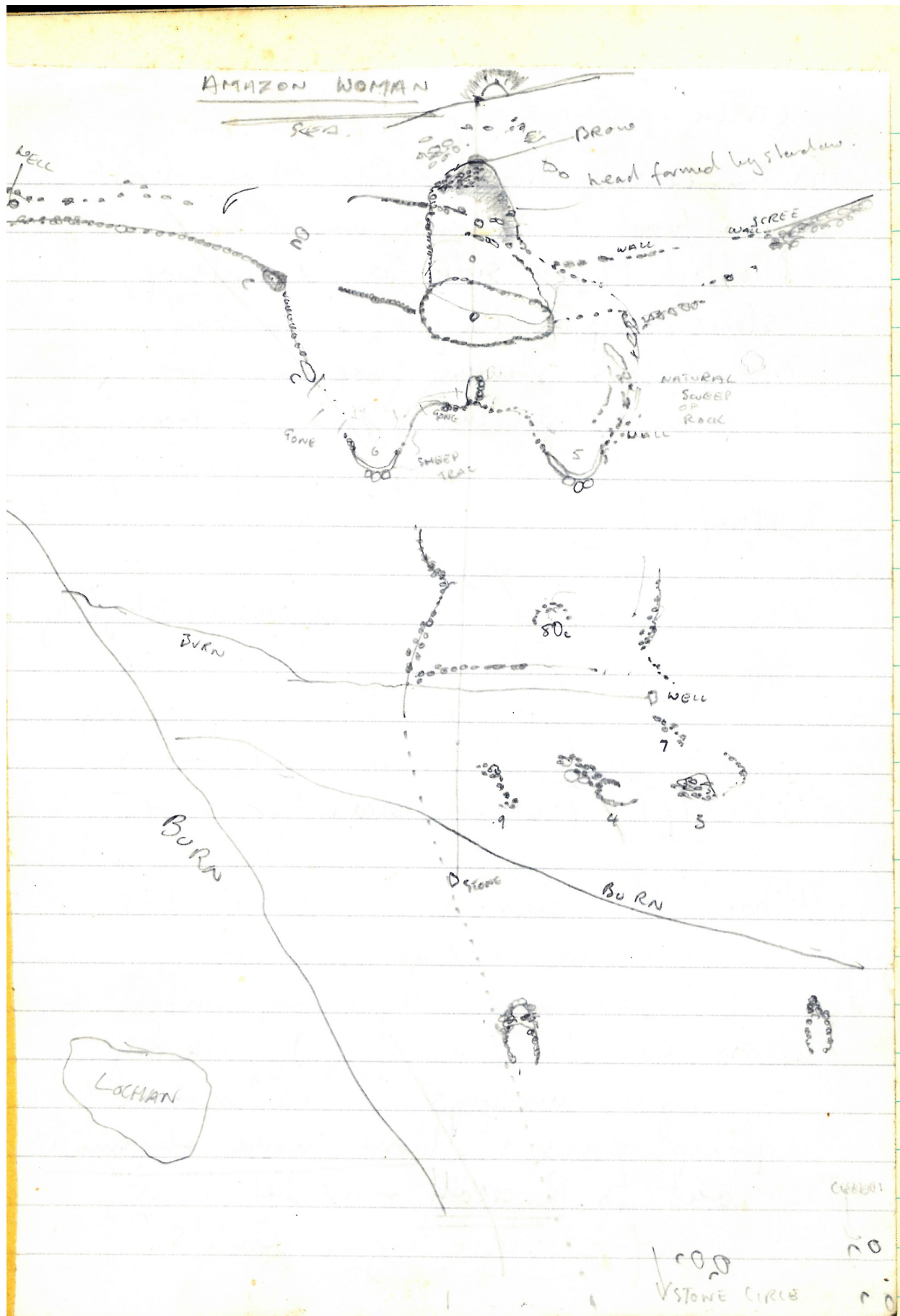
I did not go back to explore the details of her body – her face, her heart, though I had visited the oval enclosure which Keith Payne calls her breastplate, which to me seems more of a necklace or torc, but here are some of the words which he wrote at the time:

"When the sinking summer sun casts dark shadows up the glen... the head is formed by a 'big hollow' (Leacan an t-sluic mhoir, rocks of the big hollow) which casts eastward a shadow out of which the white stones of the facial features glow... the walls sweep round into voluptuous breasts – at the nipple of each is a 'horned' building, moonshaped for milking and feeding the stock... the waist is slim and the hips are swung as though the weight is on the right leg... the whole woman stands on the stone circle (a ring of small

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The Amazon's Glen—photo: Jill Smith



Keith Payne's drawing

Goddess Temple Weddings – an Interview

Until quite recently, if you wanted anything but a standard Church of England wedding in the UK, you were out of luck unless the registrar could also come along, and even then only if the building were recognised for marriages.

In many churches and other recognised locations, the “ceremonial” part of the wedding is then followed by the legally required registration. And it’s not uncommon in the UK for even Christian clergy not to be qualified to perform this part of the wedding.

If you were pagan, or wanted to join with your beloved in sacred space before the goddess, you were out of luck altogether, and most people had to be satisfied with a handfasting and a quick trip to the registry office for the legal bit.

How wonderful, then, not only to have a Goddess Temple – Britain’s first for thousands of years – recognised as a legal place for marriages and but also two trained Priestess Registrars!

Goddess Pages interviewed Dawn Kinsella, Sharlea Sparrow and Iona Jones, the women behind Goddess Temple Weddings.

Goddess Pages: Who originally had the idea of being able to have legally recognised weddings in the temple?

Dawn: I remember a conversation with Mike Jones, Kathy’s partner, during which he suddenly asked why it wasn’t possible to be married in the



The Goddess Temple, newly prepared for a wedding



Left to right: Sharlea, Iona and Dawn

temple, and not just have a handfasting. I remember thinking, “Well, and why not?” so I called the local Registry Office to ask how we could celebrate marriages in the temple.

They were really helpful and explained that I would need to shadow a superintendent registrar for one year: she would have to be present at all temple weddings to oversee the registration.

“It doesn’t feel like a job”

Goddess Pages: You also trained, didn’t you, Sharlea?

Sharlea: Yes, after two or three weddings we realised that we definitely needed to have two priestesses in order to hold the space and ensure all was done correctly.

The registrars at Mendip Registration Office were really helpful and supportive, many of them are women and it felt as though they were celebrating another step forward for women!

Goddess Pages: How did you get involved, Iona?

Iona: Before I moved back to Glastonbury and became more involved with the Temple I worked as an events planner, and had planned several weddings. So it was synchronicity, really!

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Goddess Pages: I have to confess to never having opened a Wedding magazine in my life so I've no real idea of what a wedding costs these days...

Iona: The average wedding in the UK costs about £20,000...

Goddess Pages: Ouch! Suddenly the Temple pricings seem very modest...

Dawn: Weddings are a rite of passage for most people, and important not only to the couple but their families and wider communities. After all, a wedding once involved a whole village, but now that so many of us feel like isolated "consumers" the temple weddings helps to bring back an older, better way. We do offer easy terms, like monthly payments, too!

Goddess Pages: How many weddings have you actually celebrated so far?

Sharlea: About eighteen to date and there has been a huge amount of media interest – for example from "Pagan Dawn", "Huffington Post" and "The Spectator".

Goddess Pages: Have you married any gay or lesbian couples yet?

Dawn: We've married two men and there is a lesbian couple scheduled for later this year.

Goddess Pages: I've been to enough handfastings to expect to see a ring and hoop featured in the ceremony. What do you do for two men, or two women?

Dawn: We enjoy coming up with creative ideas. Sharlea devised an "infinity loop" for the two men, a great idea, but of course the wishes of the couple come first and so they are extensively consulted and may, of course, have their own ideas.

Sharlea: We follow a handfasting format, but each wedding is unique.

Goddess Pages: Do you get nervous before the ceremony? Does anything ever go wrong?

Dawn: I was very nervous before the first wedding we did, which was of course that of Kathy Jones

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A temple wedding

(Continued from page 20)

and Mike, her partner. My mouth was so dry I couldn't even speak just before the ceremony started, had a grab a quick drink of water or I would only have been able to croak!

Sharlea: I was very nervous before the first wedding I celebrated, but not so much now. And of course things can go wrong. One time both our own stereo and a hastily borrowed one failed to work, we had to think quickly and improvise some drumming. It's great, though, doesn't feel like a job!

"The future? Delightfully busy"

Goddess Pages: What does a typical ceremony look like? Can you talk me through it?

Dawn: As Sharlea said, we structure the ceremony around a handfasting but of course based on the couple's own wishes.

Sharlea: We don't of course, impose the Wheel of the Year we use in Avalon, the couple can use whichever Wheel they feel most comfortable with.

Dawn: Usually, for the element of Air, we ask the couple to tell the story of how they met, then for Fire, which of course stands for passion in this context, they each make a confession of love. We use the Flame of Avalon* for blessing.

Sharlea: When we get to the Water element, vows and rings are usually exchanged. This is where the legally binding part of the ceremony occurs, and that is presented very clearly so everyone is aware that this is a little more than a standard handfasting. Finally, for Earth, there's the hoop and wand, or whatever has been agreed as a substitute for that, and the actual ribbon binding of the hands.

Goddess Pages: How on earth do you manage in the temple? It really is quite a small room...

Iona: It is a problem as it only holds 30 people – we hope to find a larger temple space one day soon, but with the same energy and feeling of intimacy that the temple can provide. We're always up for donations towards this excellent cause!***

Goddess Pages: And the future?

Iona: Delightfully busy!

I love the fact that people can marry in the temple, and that this can be legally recognised. How amazing that Sharlea and Dawn as the first priestesses EVER to celebrate marriages in England! But I wasn't completely blown away until later that week, when I happened to bump into some newlyweds I know, and persuaded them to show me their Certificate of Marriage. When I saw the names and details at the bottom: Dawn Kinsella, Priestess... Sharlea Sparrow, Priestess... suddenly all the implications of this document were clear – the powers-that-be recognised the Glastonbury Goddess Temple as a place of worship well over a decade ago, but somehow this made it even more real: a simple signature helped me see that from now on the government has to recognise the existence of Priestesses of the Goddess in England.

Geraldine Charles
July 2016

*<http://www.goddess temple.co.uk/flame-of-avalon/>

** If you would like to make a donation towards a new, larger, Goddess Temple in Glastonbury, please visit this page:

Read more:

<http://www.goddess templeweddings.co.uk/>

<http://wildhunt.org/2016/01/column-pagan-handfastings-legal-in-england-and-wales.html>

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/pagantama/2016/02/07/legally-binding-handfastings-i-do/>



Goddess Pages Poetry

Release

By Annelinde Metzner

Angry men carry guns
and everywhere they shoot.
Enraged, they shoot,
carrying away women, children,
everyday innocent people.
Far from feeling remorse,
they shout all the more,
proud, swollen with hate.
“We should all carry guns,” they cry,
meaning them, or men like them,
as if this world had somehow slighted
the muscular, the Caucasian, the loud.

If you are not afraid, you are somehow tired,
hearing of these senseless acts
day after day after day.
Like the bully on the block,
they take all the attention,
voracious for your gaze.

Thousands of years, we have found ways to live
integrated into Earth life, warm, colorful,
artistic, joyfilled, unique to each place.
Each corner of this perfect globe
has its arts, its languages,
its people ingrained in the life of that place,
seeds sprouting in native soil.
Yes, we were born for this!
A daily life of magic, of ingenuity,
creativity, days spent unearthing
the gifts of our soul's being.

Now I hear, “protect yourself,
shield yourself, be on your guard,”
caveats that seem to make sense
for these crazy times,
a natural response
to the ugly, the unwarranted,
the cruel, the violent, the unjust.



But here I sit beside the still waters,
pen in hand,
life still churning within me,
joy bubbling up from nowhere,
and I am on notice:
“I am coming,” the Goddess cries,
“and you will see...”

Soon I will bring the spring flowers to bloom,
the migrating birds to return to your window.
When did men, beautiful men,
turn themselves into weapons?
Why do they worship the gun, and forget Me?
Regenerate! is My call,
all you who are heavy laden.
Rebirth is My watchword, all we ever are.
Look to the East with Me,
the bright burst of sun in the sky,
and call out to Me with your urgent voice,
your ancient joy and pleasure,
with all the pure love you can wield.
Then human flesh will soften again
and guns will speak for us no more.”

©Annelinde Metzner, January 30, 2016

For Tara

by Penn Kemp

Goddess of Compassion and Wisdom, I need to recall,
reclaim you, invite you to return to my heart. Come
back
to my heart, Love, where you are home. There's room.

There is room enough for two, for multitudes. For you.
Become me, I beg you. Worry my concern into peace.
Shake this rag doll out of stiff contrition back to joy.

Till bones, blood, marrow, mind all leap up to dance,
to expand and mingle with the greater Presence, gift
we are heir to if we remember to remember the Whole.

The whole that made us, not that hole I fall into.
From her celestial seat in the Pure Land, Tara smiles,
extending a hand of pure blessing, her invitation. Up.



White Tara image by By KarlHeinrich (Own work)
[Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

The Tale and Trial of Tailtu

by Penn Kemp

Here's to Tailtu, foster mother to deity Lugh
whose day Lammass is. Tailtu prepared Ireland
for cultivation, clearcut demolishing all forest

so Lugh as Wind, as Lightning could open ways
to invention, new worlds of agriculture— laying
waste the trees to feed folk now at first harvest.

Tailtu lay down to die, exhausted. If she hadn't
sacrificed herself, great Druid oak and ash groves
would still be flourishing to protect and teach us.

In her end is our beginning. Lughnasadh is called
Brón Trogain (Sorrow of Sorrows) to honour all
that's gone before, all that dies so we may eat.



You can watch our Tales of Tailtu performance, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xg6PB6E9cHw>. With Eugenia Catroppa, Lyre Alice Jameson, Angela Rawlings (on Skype) Natalie Zina Walschots and Brian Walsh, Transac Club, Toronto.

Paeans to the goddess:

Helwa! (Beautiful), poetry chapbook, Pigeonbike Press, [Dedicated to Noot and Hathor. See www.pennkemp.wordpress.com; <https://pennkemp.wordpress.com/2014/11/18/celebrating-ancient-egypt-helwa/>.

THROO, poetry book, Moonstone Press. (Dedicated to 9 Goddesses, including Tara. Artemis, Hathor, Venus, Hecate, Demeter, Hera, Persephone, Changing Woman, and Sekhmet)
Night Vision, poetry CD, Pendas Productions (Dedicated to Noot and Hathor).

Luminous Entrance, poetry DVD, Pendas Productions (Dedicated to our beloved Gaia in all her guises)

Trance Form, poetry book, Pendas Productions, and *Trance Dance Form*, poetry CD, Pendas Productions (both dedicated to Tara)

All can be ordered from Penn Kemp direct:
525 Canterbury Road London ON Canada N6G 2N5

The Rainbow Kites

By Annelinde Metzger

Evening at the beach,
 six of us sing with delight, pouring ourselves into
 the surf, Aphrodite's lacy foam blessing us.
 Two turn back to home, because today, just this
 day, this Sunday June evening full of light, is the
 perfect day for wind.
 Two bright rainbow kites, one short, one long, un-
 furl into the sky as if born there.
 Higher and higher, released and released by loving
 hands on the strings, the brilliant tails whip and
 flutter, exulting in freedom, at home in Oya's
 winds.
 We loll in the unceasing surf,
 washed inland and out in the undertow's slow
 rhythm, leaning on one elbow, head tilted to the
 sky, as the evening sun and the two kites vie for
 our attention.
 I remember my son alive, whose kite this once
 was, and here he is, visiting these beloved women,
 laughing, untethered by string.
 For that moment, we connect, the kite and the
 spirit, the wind and the women lolling in the surf.
 The rainbow kite snaps its tail and shouts with joy
 for this windy day, as unsuspecting families pass by
 hand in hand, walking on the warm sandy Earth.



The Divine Feminine

by Maria Duncalf-Barber



The divine feminine
 speaks to me in poetry
 shows me love in words
 recognises my life in breath
 teaches me to live in action
 gives me courage
 touches me with wonder
 lets me see the truth
 of the divine all around me
 comforts me on my journey

The divine feminine
 walks with me in the desert
 sees me for who I truly am
 brings peace to my weary mind
 enthusiasm to my soul
 bestows riches upon me each day
 protects me in times of strife

The divine feminine
 honours me and all I do
 knows me
 reminds me of my beauty
 inside and out
 creates love in me
 that I can share



Clarissa the Corn maiden

By Lorraine Pickles

Clarissa the Corn Maiden
 Set off on her holidays
 On the Eurostar to France.
 She wanted to experience
 Different ways of being -
 She liked the way the gathered corn
 Was wound round and round in spirals
 Like an endless dance -
 This was how she wanted to live.
 She danced in the warm summer sun
 To the song of the cicadas
 Accordions, and Edith Piaf records
 Being played on wind up gramophones.
 And she would lie down, looking at the endless sky
 Drowsed by the scent of lavender
 Soothed by the poppies and sunflowers,
 Until it grew dark, and the sky was full of stars.
 One night, there stood in the moonlight
 A deer with soft eyes
 Who beckoned Clarissa to follow her
 Past all the wayside shrines
 Up to the millers house.
 Clarissa was wary -
 She heard millers tended to grind you down.
 She had a fear of becoming something different
 Of losing the essence of herself.
 The miller had a jaunty air
 and eyed her up hopefully
 He was enchanted by her long golden hair -
 And perfect ears...
 And he would watch her every morning from his
 window
 Dancing, always dancing.
 He had gathered so many like her
 Ripened by the summer sun -
 But this one was different -
 He wanted to keep her to himself
 To sit beside the fire with her
 On long winter evenings -
 To hold her in his arms
 And to read her the writings
 Of French existentialist philosophers -
 He prayed to the Great Mother
 That he would be saved from himself.
 And that things would not end
 The way they normally did..
 Clarissa was unaware of the millers struggle
 She was just enjoying her ripening
 And besides, she had a return ticket home.



On the last day of her holiday
 The miller gathered her up

And with a tear in his eye
 Put her back on the train.
 Thus Clarissa escaped certain death
 And the miller escaped inevitability.

Broken hearted, he gave up being a miller
 And instead became a poet
 And wrote endless poems about
 Clarissa the Lost Corn maiden
 He would give poetry readings in Paris cafes
 Eventually he became Professor of Poetry at the
 Sorbonne -
 But sometimes on warm summer days
 He would see his Corn Maiden dancing
 Out of the corner of his eye
 And he would say to himself
 If there was one good thing
 That I have done with my life
 It was to let her go.

©Lorraine Pickles – Lammas 2015



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Long Meg and Her Daughters

by Lynne Sedgmore

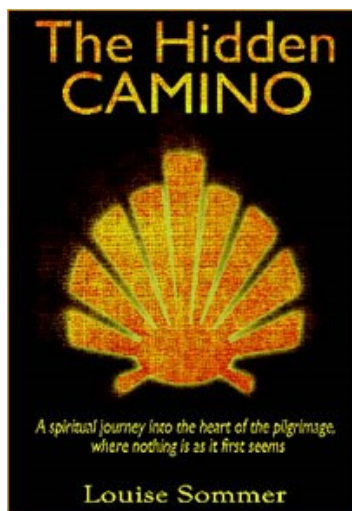


Long Meg - touching your stoney spirals
I am swirled by your towering magical
sculpture of timeless Goddess power -
Bowing to the grace of you
Flying in the space of you.

Playing and swaying with your daughters,
Temple dancers hon'ring our mother
who protects our sacred innocence.

Ancient cathedral for holy heathens
praising Mother Earth as she pours
her wisdom through nature's portal -
beating in more wild days
bringing back the old ways.

Photo above: Humphrey Bolton [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons



(Continued from page 17)

stones at the head of the river) like a burial on a shield... But the most important place is the heart... a boat-shaped structure... with the north wall still intact... the stone-work... open-work... the huge blocks used... set apart leaving large chambers between... I feel that this 'heart' was a communal burial-place... the perfect receptacle for the life of the community – the heart of the goddess... she holds in her heart the souls of the departed... and lies beneath 'Leathad na Guiltichean' – the brea of the weeping." (Keith Payne 1983)

She almost did not let me go. The wind came up on the day I was to leave, the day-trip was cancelled, but the crews venture out in worse weather for charters and I returned on the boat which had brought over some MoD engineers from the mainland – shell-shocked by the violent swell. I could have stayed another 3 days, but my body would not have allowed me to use the time well so I went home.

I had thought this might be my last trip to Hirte, but there is more to see and be with and I might someday still go for a better view, possibly on a fine-weather day trip.

I feel profoundly blessed to have had this gift.

Jill Smith, Isle of Lewis, June 2016

References:

- Mother of the Isles*, Jill Smith, Dor Dama Press 2003 (now available from Jill)
Road through the Isles, John Sharkey and Keith Payne, Wildwood 1986
A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland Circa 1695, Martin Martin, Birlinn 1994
The Outer Hebrides and Their Legends, Otta Swire, Oliver and Boyd 1966
An Isle Called Hirte, Mary Harman, Maclean Press 1997

There are many other books about St Kilda.



Eating a Peach at Fawn Lake

by Susa Silvermarie

The lake in early morning,
a wavy plate reflecting
an evergreen shoreline.
At its edge, I let
the juice of a peach
make joy in my mouth
and drip from my fingers
into the body of water.
Then I enter,
my own body feeling her silk,
as I glide quiet to the middle.
Timeless now,
I float in the lake's sparkling arms
under azure sky.

After forever
I emerge from the water,
a different person,
into birdsong, duck calls,
and the whirr of a zebra dragonfly
lifting from my shoulder.
Glad to be only the human,
the only human here,
I sit and send this peace
around our tiny planet.
May this buoyancy lift
the lives of those whose burdens
I heard in the car on the radio news.

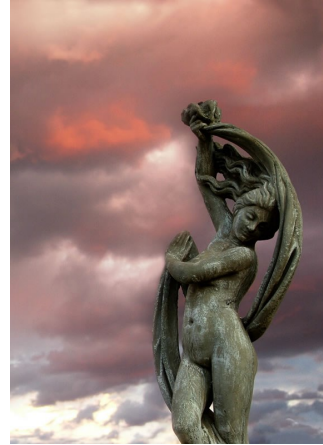
From this gentle place,
serenity I send to the teachers
behind the barricades in Oaxaca;
into the anguished hearts of shooters;
into the breath of soldiers,
into the sobs of mothers
who could not feed their children today.
From the accord of this pristine lake
I send dragonfly blessings
and the sweetness of peaches
to those I love
and to those I fear.
May this tranquil lake remind us,
it's time to wake from terror,
and claim our true harmonic
human nature.

©Susa Silvermarie 2016



Her Earthy Ethos of Eros

by Susa Silvermarie



Aphrodite, Star of Venus,
from your creased and handsome face,
your eyes blaze out and dance.
You who never settled
for love without erotic power,
You, Divine and always
seeking incarnation,
now you summon us
to the erotic celestial of flesh!

You invite us, Shining One,
to the common table to partake
in mortality's delights.
Teacher of Seasoned Desire,
You urge us into
the body's infinite cosmos.
Goddess of all longings,
You guide us to root our stories
deep in embodied aging.

Pleasure-loving Aphrodite!
You push into the world once more
between your powerful legs,
your earthy ethos of eros.
With strong and ancient arms,
you lift Desire's hidden wisdom
back into the light of day.
Aphrodite, Honored Elder,
I, your faithful priestess, bow
in reverence to your vigor.

At each and every miracle of love
that my life continues to unfold,
may I flex, robust and lusty,
the holy muscle of eros;
the power, fierce and elegant,
that you, Lover of Lovers,
have infused in our flesh
until its last and shining day.

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Goddess Pages Reviews

"Goddess and God in the World: Conversations in Embodied Theology", by Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow

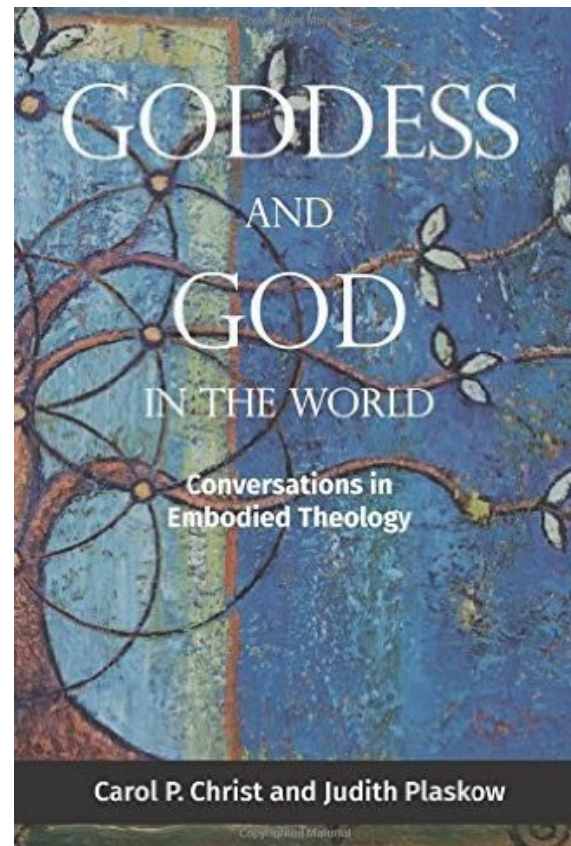
Reviewed by Carolyn Lee Boyd

Carol Christ and Judith Plaskow are foremothers of feminist theology who have shared a long friendship. Their insightful new book, *Goddess and God in the World: Conversations in Embodied Theology*, begins with a history of feminist and general theology, continues with their life experiences that gave rise to their individual theologies, and ends with a conversation about their common beliefs and differences.

It is clearly and entertainingly written with challenging ideas presented so as to be accessible and respectful of the reader's intelligence and beliefs. This, combined with their fascinating autobiographical stories, makes it a joy to read.

While Carol and Judith agree on the importance of one's experiences to the development of theological beliefs, that God and Goddess are in the world and experienced through the body, and that we must evaluate theologies on both rational and moral grounds, they disagree on significant questions. "Judith thinks of divinity as an impersonal creative power, while Carol thinks of divinity as an individual who cares about and loves the world. Carol thinks of divinity as intelligent, loving and good, while Judith thinks of divinity as encompassing all that is, including and supporting both good and evil" (p. xiv). Judith refers to divinity as "God" while Carol uses "Goddess." Carol left Christianity and has been instrumental in the development of Goddess spirituality while Judith has remained in Judaism and been essential to making it more inclusive of women and female imagery and language. These differences make for a lively and honest discussion in which both dig deep within themselves to explain what they believe and why.

The book also offers an innovative process for discussing theological and other issues. First, they state what is the same and different about their theologies, then ask each other questions to gain greater understanding rather than to persuade the other to change beliefs. This affirms the value of



each person's experience and does not require unanimity, but creatively leads to conclusions that express the complexity of the world we live in. It is an especially important model in this perilous time when feminists and others must respectfully come together on many potentially divisive issues to move forward towards a more peaceful, equitable, just and sustainable world.

Most readers of *The Goddess Pages* have, I think, pondered the nature of God or Goddess and have made the sometimes wrenching decision to stay within or leave childhood religions. They will find their own struggles and journeys in this book's pages and therefore come to better understand both their own theologies and how they came to them through having read it. *Goddess and God in the World* provides us, as individuals and as a community, with an effective model for clarifying and continuing the lifelong development of our beliefs and discussing them with others. Any new book by Carol or Judith, and especially one by both of them, is reason to celebrate and I highly recommend *Goddess and God in the World* to anyone on a feminist spiritual path.

**“Goddess Consciousness: Women’s
mysticism and sacred arts”,
by Marlaina Donato**

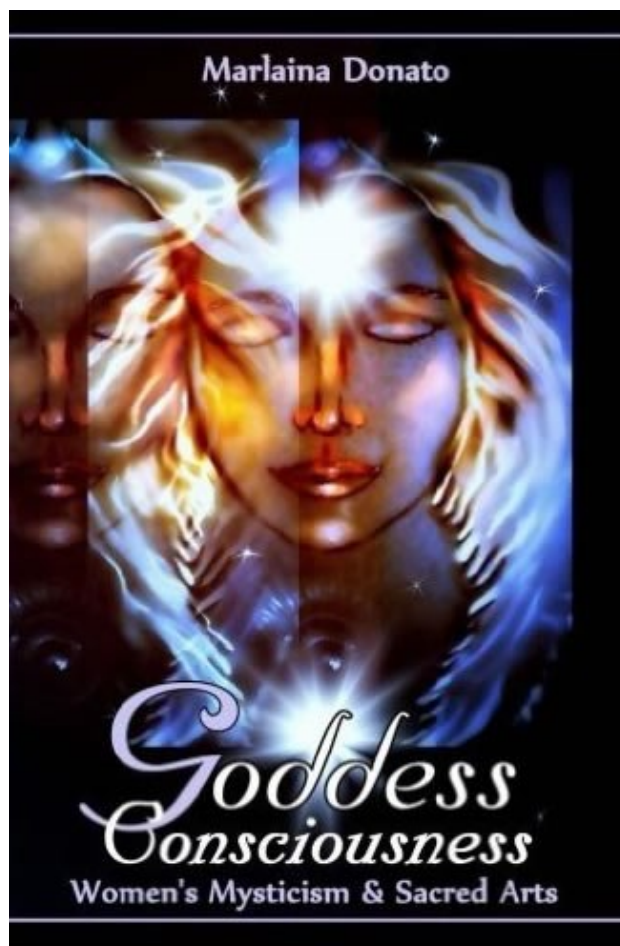
Reviewed by Laura Slowe

Marlaina’s style of writing is friendly and approachable, assuming no prior knowledge or experience in the sacred feminine. She uses a conversational tone, which gives an aura of having her in the room with you as you read. This is much more than just a “how-to” book, it is an introductory guide that reads like a one-to-one conversation with a mentor. Each chapter is laid out clearly, and every section of reading has an interactive portion – be it a meditation, recipe or visualization. This is a book that wants you to stop reading it and to involve yourself in the learning process.

As she guides you through her book, Marlaina covers a wide variety of subject matter from reclaiming your inner energy, honouring the inner and outer temple (our bodies, ourselves) and life ceremonies, to divination, Goddess symbols and herb lore. She does not overwhelm you with information or instructions, giving enough to whet your appetite on a topic, so you can move on to seek out further knowledge in your own time. Her resource lists and bibliography are wonderfully laid out and direct you to suppliers and other writers in a very easy to reference way.

One of the first things I noticed about this book (after the title) was the user-friendly font, formatting and quality of the paper and binding- an area where many books fall down, putting the reader off before she has even begun to read. This book is lovely. Despite the size, it is light and airy, with a lovely binding that makes it easy to open and leaf through. The font is clear and the formatting is beautiful. The only thing I would say, which may seem like a criticism, is that I personally would have preferred to have a little more artwork or illustration. That is, as I said, a personal thing and not a reflection on the book at all!

I cannot recommend this book enough, especially if you are the start of your journey with the divine feminine or if you are a teacher or circle facilitator. Even if you are not beginning your spiritual journey, there are still things that you can



take for your own path and personal development. I know that the chapter on altar creation and the section on morning and evening practices will be getting a thorough re-reading in my home!

Marlaina Donato is a writer, teacher, musician, artist and therapist hailing from the United States. She has over 27 years of experience, study and celebration of the sacred feminine, as well as facilitating circles, retreats and courses. For more information about Marlaina and her work, please go to <http://www.marlainadonato.com/>



"Crow Moon", by Anna McKerrow

Reviewed by Geraldine Charles

"Magic just got real..."

Goddess Pages readers will know Anna McKerrow as a poet (see her "[Aphrodite](#)", and "[Sea Mysteries](#)"), and she has now written this exciting and magical novel for young adults.



Set in a disturbingly not-very far-distant future, Britain is suffering the effects of a worldwide lack of resources and energy, and is at war to try and secure supplies. However, the south-west peninsula, basically Devon and Cornwall, has split off and is trying to be self-sufficient and non-polluting, in stark contract to the rest of the country. The

two worlds are distinguished by the names "Greenworld" and "Redworld", with the latter, of course, constituting the rest of Britain, still consumerist and increasingly controlled by criminal gangs.

Our hero, Danny, is a sixteen-year-old boy, much interested in girls and less so in politics, although he chafes a little under the rule of the powerful witches – mostly women – who run the Greenworld. But Danny has an important destiny – can he help the Greenworld survive the threat that is rushing towards them all?

Running parallel to this story is the budding romance between Danny and the daughter of another powerful witch – but you'll have to read the novel to see how that works out...

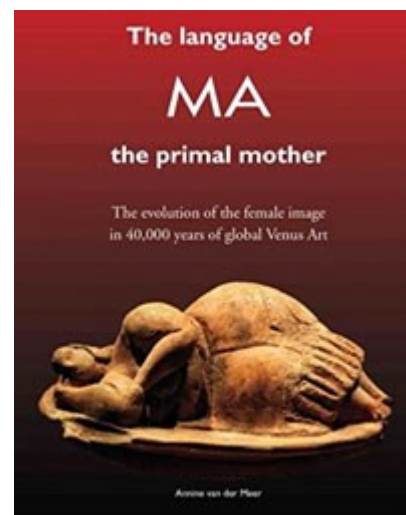
I have never had a sixteen-year-old son so cannot speak from experience, but Danny is a very believable and likeable teenage boy, whose journey towards a powerful adulthood I read with a great deal of sympathy, even when he was irritating.

It's a good page-turner. Despite being a science-fiction fan I'm altogether the wrong generation to get totally hooked on a coming-of-age novel aimed at young adults, but could not help being drawn in by the excellent use of humour and well-written magical

scenes, and was gratified that the novel doesn't avoid more difficult areas of gender and race while being exciting, with plenty of action. I believe a sequel is already out, and enjoyed this enough to look forward to reading that, too.

This would make an excellent Yule gift for the older teenager or young adult in your life!

"The language of Ma the primal mother: The evolution of the female image in 40,000 years of global Venus Art", by Annine van der Meer



Reviewed by Geraldine Charles

"Venus" is the operative word here – the name was originally given to those figurines dating from the Palaeolithic, the vast majority of which portray women. In the early days of such finds they were, perhaps ironically, named "Venuses", as many would be considered most unattractive by more modern Western standards. Or perhaps it was because of the often exaggerated sexual or fertility characteristics, but in either case the name tells us more about the archaeologists of the time than it does the figurines themselves, not to mention that the assumption seems to have been that the figurines were made by men, for their use and enjoyment, and certainly not by women, for their own purposes. As Kaylea Valdewettering* believes, "... we act as colonizers and appropriators of the past.". These ancient statuettes remain, of course, the subject of debate.

(Continued on page 31)

Annine van der Meer shows us so many of these wonderful figurines, not to mention large numbers of more recent "Venus" depictions, from around the world, and not just the West, tracing a history of the depiction of the female form. I love the way she is reclaiming the "Venus" name with this work.

Many of us have noticed startling similarities in the poses of figurines from widely-separated geographical areas, and Annine takes this further, showing us more of the iconography which seems to unite them, including not only the Palaeolithic figurines but through into the Neolithic and beyond, showing a surprising continuity in many cases.

In Part One, the author deals with the period from 40,000 BCE until the year dot, a time when hunter gatherers roamed the earth, or at least that part of it that wasn't frozen solid. Around 10,000 BCE the most recent Ice Age ended and as agriculture began to spread throughout the world, we start to see a very different iconography of the female form, with patriarchal ideas dominating.

Part Two looks at around 10,000 BCE to the year 0, but now we're following themes... and of course a decline in the status of women is hard not to see, reflected in the art and almost inextricably woven into our culture... so much so that until very recently we seem to have been unable to recognise what lay right before our eyes.

This isn't a book to sit and read from cover to cover, although I suppose you could! I've had the great pleasure of dipping into it, getting fascinated by a topic or theme and finding that an hour or so has passed. Or used the index to learn more about a particular goddess image, only to discover far more than I expected. I have no doubt that it will be read and used until it almost falls apart, rather like my copy of Marija Gimbutas' "The Language of the Goddess", to which the book makes an excellent companion. Very rich in images, this book is a pleasure to use, and I also enjoy the concept of "Language" as used here, including as it does both the language of the art itself, and our own use of words and imagery to describe and appropriate it to our own needs and desires.

In a word - indispensable!

<http://digitalcommons.wou.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1051&context=pure> accessed 1/9/16

Contributors

Annelinde Metzner resides in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, USA, where she devotes her work to the reemergence of the Goddess. Annelinde's poetry has been featured in the We'Moon Datebook as well as in Goddess Pages. She composes solo songs, chamber and choral music and produces concerts of her music and poetry including dance and puppetry. Her songbook of 21 praise songs for the Goddess called "Lady of Ten Thousand Names" is available at her poetry blog, "[Annelinde's World](#)". She directs two choirs, offers workshops and teaches privately. Annelinde can be contacted at annelinde@hotmail.com.

Carolyn Lee Boyd is a New Englander who writes fiction, poetry, essays, reviews, and memoirs celebrating the spirituality and creativity in women's everyday lives. Over the past three decades, she has published in women's and feminist literary, art, and spirituality magazines, both in print and online. You may read her occasional musings and published writings at her blog, www.GoddessinaTeapot.com. When she isn't writing, she grows herbs and native flowers, raises a family, and props up her constantly falling-down Victorian house.

Geraldine Charles is the founder and editor of *Goddess Pages*. She is also a Priestess of the Goddess, a founder member of the [Glastonbury Goddess Temple](#) and a former [Glastonbury Goddess Conference](#) ceremonialist.

A web designer and all-round computer person, Geraldine is responsible for a number of websites. In her spare time she writes articles and poems and loves researching Goddess in mythology.

Jill Smith is an artist and writer living in the Western Isles of Scotland. Known as Jill Bruce she was, in the 70s/early 80s, a celebratory, ceremonial, ritual Performance Artist, who then made ritual journeys through the sacred landscapes of the British Isles before settling in the Hebrides. For more of her story and work, visit her [website](#).

Laura Slowe is a priestess of the Goddess living in Folkestone, Kent. She has been involved in a pagan path for over 15 years and at present is nearing the end of her third spiral training with the Goddess temple in Glastonbury. Laura is the co-founder of the [Folkestone Pagan Circle](#), helping to facilitate ceremonies, temple spaces and much more - which can be found at and via Facebook. Laura's personal [website](#) details her work and celebrant services.

Contributors—continued

Dr Lynne Sedgmore, CBE: Lynne is a Poet and a Priestess Healer and offers service as Melissa in the Glastonbury Goddess Temple. She works as a healer, soul companion, retreat facilitator, leadership developer and supports the growth of women into their true power and potential. Her first collection of poetry "Enlivenment" was published in 2013 and in 2016 she was named as one of the UK's "100 Women of Spirit" by the Brama Kumaris. She is a mother, stepmother and grandmother and lives near Glastonbury in a beautifully restored Georgian Chapel. She recently retired from working as Chief Executive and corporate mystic in vocational education to focus on Goddess spirituality and soul companionship with others. Her Doctorate is in spiritual leadership.

Lorraine Pickles is a Priestess of the Goddess and of Avalon, self initiating in 2009. She is an active member of the Glastonbury Goddess Temple. Lorraine was also ordained this summer as an inter faith minister with One Spirit Foundation. Lorraine has always written to try to make sense of the world, and has been performing her quirky poems for over thirty years. 'Clarissa the Corn Maiden' is one of a collection of Goddess/seasonal poems to be found on her CD 'The Soul Catchers' produced and released at Yule 2015. Lorraine is currently in the process of completing Book 1 of 'The Old Crone Mysteries,' a Goddess crime novel featuring Keridwen, who is taking a gap year to solve murders.

Maria Duncalf-Barber comes from a large family in Liverpool, England and has lived in Muskoka, Canada since 1993. She is a counsellor and educational trainer, also a motivational speaker. She has written numerous short stories and poetry, magazine and newspaper articles in Britain and Canada. She writes a regular column for Muskoka Magazine. Writes her own column called "What's Up Bracebridge". She has published her first book of poetry called, 'Carrying Our Altars Within-Inspirational Sacred Poetry'. She is featured in eight anthologies of poetry and short story writing. She is involved with photography and has won prizes for her work. Maria loves the written word, loves being a storyteller and teaching writing and poetry workshops. Maria was a semi-finalist for the short story at the Moondance Film Festival 2009 and has reached the semi-finals again in 2010. She is presently writing and directing a documentary on Women and Aging - Aging A Work in Process. Maria loves people and is excited when she midwifes them towards change, she adores the work she does. Her key word is integrity and she is living her True, authentic life and loving every moment of it. Maria's involvement with personal growth stems from recognizing the holistic aspects of spirit,

Penn Kemp is the League of Canadian Poets 2015 Spoken Word Artist of the Year. As Writer-in-Residence for Western University, her project was the DVD, *Luminous Entrance: a Sound Opera for Climate Change Action*, Pendas Productions. Her latest works are two anthologies for the Feminist Caucus Archives of the League of Canadian Poets: *Performing Women* and *Women and Multimedia*. Most recently, there is a new collection of poetry, *Barbaric Cultural Practice*, available from [Quattro Books](#).

Stuart McHardy is a writer, researcher and lecturer on Scottish history and folklore. He is also a professional storyteller and musician, and worked for many years as a journalist and broadcaster. Over the past few years his work on the interface between folklore and archaeology/history has led to the development of a new approach to understanding our past as humans, called Geomythography, which he has been [recently teaching](#). A founder member and past President of the Pictish Arts Society, he was Director of the Scots Language Centre 1993-98.

Susa Silvermarie writes: **Susa Silvermarie** writes: By the time you read this I will have moved to Mexico (Ajijic, Jalisco) to begin a new chapter in this glorious life. Stay tuned by subscribing to my blog at [susasilvermarie.com](#). And I would love to hear from you. ([Contact Goddess Pages](#) and we will pass on your email to Susa).

All is one and we are One with She-Who-Is.

Susun Weed, green witch and wise woman, is an extraordinary teacher with a joyous spirit, a powerful presence, and an encyclopedic knowledge of herbs and health. She is the voice of the Wise Woman Way, where common weeds, simple ceremony, and compassionate listening support and nourish health/wholeness/holiness. She has opened hearts to the magic and medicine of the green nations for three decades.

Ms. Weed's five herbal medicine books focus on women's health topics including menopause, childbearing, and breast health. Browse the publishing site [www.wisewomanbookshop.com](#) for books, DVDs, audio downloads and gifts. Visit her site [www.susunweed.com](#) for information on her workshops, apprenticeships, correspondence courses and more! Go to: [www.wisewomanmentor.com](#) for Susun's free herbal ezine and also mentorship offerings for those who want to go deeper.



Write for us!

As ever, we would be really interested to receive your submissions. In general, we're looking for Goddess-focused work from all over the world and do ask that contributions are not too 'new age' in tone. We intend this journal to reflect a woman-centred, non-patriarchal Goddess spirituality – and submissions from Goddess loving men are also very welcome. If possible, please keep articles and fiction to around 2,000 words – or write first to discuss. We are also happy to receive reviews of Goddess-focused books, music, film, events – anything that can be reviewed really! However, please write first as we might be planning something ourselves. We try to keep reviews to around 500 words, although that certainly isn't essential if the material can't be adequately covered in such a short review. Of course, if you have something you'd like us to review, don't hesitate to get in touch.

While preferring work that hasn't previously been published elsewhere, that isn't a complete no-no, so please check with us. Wherever possible, please submit work electronically, in plain text (within the body of an email is fine). Please don't send articles in Microsoft Works format as we can't read them! If your article includes photographs or other images then by all means indicate where they should go but please also send high-resolution images where possible. We also need to be sure that we have rights to publish any pictures you include, so please let us have details of ownership and rights.

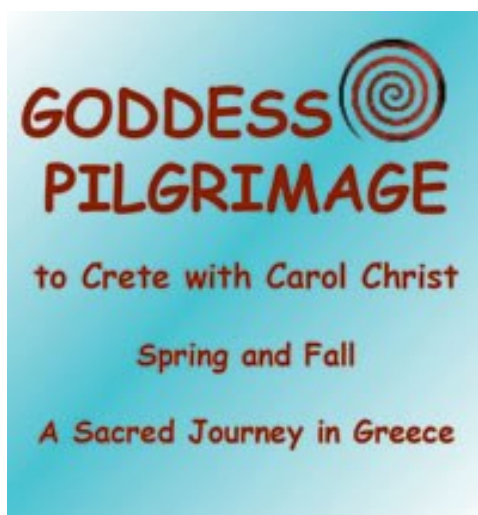
Submission dates are as follows:

Spring/Summer: 31 January

Autumn/Winter : 30 June

Poetry

We are sent so much poetry that we can now accept only one poem at a time, and as we're part-time we don't have the ability to read, critique, edit or advise.



Please also note that we prefer a slightly more formal style of poetry - that certainly doesn't mean it has to rhyme - but too much poetry (in the editors' view) is really prose broken down into verses, and in the worst cases the sort of jottings that really ought to be confined to one's personal journal

Length of poems isn't a big issue in an online journal although we may need to discuss length for the printed version.

See the [contacts page](#) for details of where to send your work. We do have a more detailed sheet of notes for contributors, available on request.

Advertising in Goddess Pages

We welcome advertising for suitable products. Ads are currently only being accepted for the online magazine.

Rates are as follows:

Banner Ads

Banner space is available on most pages of the website – banners rotate so that a different one is seen every 30 seconds or so. A maximum of three banners will be accepted, to give each one a fair chance of being seen! Banners are online adverts that are “clickable” to take the reader to the advertiser's website. Only goddess-related products, please.

Maximum banner size is 500 pixels x 100 pixels.

Banners, per issue : £25 (€28, \$40 approx) – discounts for multiple issues.

Small Ads

On the left-hand side of the online magazine you should see, below the menus, a number of small ads – these are approximately 200 x 250 pixels and cost £10.00 (€12, \$16 approx) per issue, with a discount for multiple issues. We reserve the right to show small ads on a limited number of pages, but they will always appear on the front page. At the editor's discretion, some ads – for groups, or free events – will be free of charge. We can help with design and layout of adverts if required. For further information, contact editor@goddess-pages.com.

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Editor : Geraldine Charles
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