

NEWS LETTER

£1 – to cover printing costs and small donation to temple



Temple Celebrations

Beltane Celebration

Saturday 4th May, 12:00. Free to attend. Help Goddess Temple priestesses celebrate the arrival of Spring. Please ring Airy Fairy, on 0114 2492090, to book your place, and food on the day if desired.

Summer Solstice Celebrations

Friday 21st June – 7:00 pm.
Saturday 22nd June – 7:00 pm.

Dates for the Diary

Monthly Guided Meditation

Friday 10th May, 12:00 - 1:00 pm. No booking required.

Moon Meets

Celebrate the energies of the moon - with Carmen Edwards
Sunday 5th May – 2:00-3:00 pm
Saturday 18th May – 3:30-4:30 pm

Felt a Barn Owl Workshop

Wednesday 8th May 2:00-5pm, with felt sculptor Meryl Skyrme.
Create an amazing 3D woodland animal, around 12cm x 6cm x 7cm – to keep or gift to someone. Three hour workshop - £25.

Learn to Read Tarot

10 week course – starts Thursday 9th May, 2:00-4:00 pm
First session £6 (inc. Tarot booklet). Subsequent sessions £2 each.

Spiritual Crisis Network – 18th May, 1:30-3:30 pm
– 15th June, 1:30-3:30 pm

Pagan Pathways – Talks, Discussion, Tuesdays, 8:00 pm

- 14th May: *Trip Out* – Visit to Graves Park sites
- 28th May: *Animism for Modern Pagans* – Silverspear
- 11th June: *Pagan Pathways 20th Anniversary Celebration*

To book events please ring *Airy Fairy* on **0114 2492090**



Goddess Arnetmetiae

On the *Northern Wheel of the Year*, Arnetmetia is our Goddess of the Sacred Grove whom we celebrate at Beltane (the May Day festival). She is the Beloved who calls to the Green Man, Lord of the Wild Wood, to join her in the *Hieros Gamos*, or Sacred Marriage. Beltane is the time of merriment, fecundity, love, passion and conception.



Image: https://i.ytimg.com/vi/kvVmJNjm_k4/hqdefault.jpg

The Celtic word Nemeton, refers to a sanctuary or sacred grove and elements of this word can be found in both ancient and modern place names across Western Europe and beyond.

The author Sheena McGrath has explored the historic importance of the link between goddesses and sacred groves in her 'We Are Star Stuff' online blog [see <https://earthhandstarryheaven.com/>], and her findings are included in her article on page 2 of this newsletter: *Nemetona: Sacred Groves and War-Goddesses*.



There is more information on Arnetmetiae and other goddesses in our *Northern Wheel of the Year* booklet

(see page 3).

Nemetona-

Sacred Groves and War-Goddesses

by Sheena McGrath

Nemetona, Goddess of the Sacred Grove, had her cult in those dense Germanic forests that the Romans feared so much.

Especially after the disaster in 9 CE, when three Roman legions and their auxiliaries were ambushed and cut down in the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest, they preferred open spaces to the forests in which the druids and others worshipped.

The Nemetes, Nemetona's people, were nowhere near that battle, but they named themselves and their goddess after the nemetons that were a major feature of Celtic worship, as well-known as the marble temples of the Graeco-Roman world.

Other Celtic deities also had names (or titles) that reflected the importance of the nemeton: the goddess Arnemetia (She Who Dwells Over Against the Sacred Grove) and the god Mars Rignonemetis (King of the Sacred Grove, from rigon + nemeton).¹ All three names suggest the deity owned the grove, and it was a centre of their cult.

Sacred Groves and Scared Romans

The word nemeton comes to us from Roman sources, but it is clearly a Celtic word. The Irish equivalent was fid-nemed,

Sacred Grove of Trees, from the Senchus Mor, or law-code of early medieval Ireland.

However the Celts felt about them, the Romans clearly found them eerie, as this description from Lucan shows:

'No bird nested in the nemeton, nor did any animal lurk nearby; the leaves constantly shivered though no breeze stirred. Altars stood in its midst, and the images of the gods. Every tree was stained with sacrificial blood. The very earth groaned, dead yews revived; unconsumed trees were surrounded with flame, and huge serpents twined round the oaks. The people feared to approach the grove, and even the priest would not walk there at midday or midnight lest he should then meet its divine guardian.'



Image: <https://earthandstarryheaven.com>

The grove he described was in Massila, modern Marseille.

(Belisama, a goddess from the south of France, also had a grove dedicated to her at Vaucluse.) Nemetons were widespread, going by place-names. Scotland and Devon have many places with Nympton or Nymet in the name, and continental Europe has them all the way from Brittany to Anatolia (Galatia).

The Nemetes

The Nemetes were the main worshippers of Nemetona, just as the Brigantes of northern England worshipped Brigantia. Both goddesses' followers left inscriptions linking them to Victoria. (Two of the seven inscriptions to Brigantia call her Victoria Brigantia; one from Eisenberg is dedicated to Victoria Nemetona.)

Unlike Brigantia, however, she pairs up with various forms of Mars, sometimes as himself, or as the Celticised Mars Loucetios (Bright Light/Lightning).



Mars seems to have been popular in the Rhine area, as we also have Ancamna paired with Mars or Mars Lenus, a healing god. Ancamna was a goddess of the Treveri, whose tribal centre was modern-day Trier.

Dedications to Nemetona come from Altrip, near Speyer, and she appears with just Mars at Pfalz, in the following inscription: Marti et Nemetona v.s.l.m. (Ross 228)

The last four letters are an abbreviation of *votum solvit libens merito*: "He has fulfilled his vow, willingly, as it should."

A War Goddess?

Some see in Nemetona's frequent appearances with Mars a similarity with the ferocious Irish war-goddess Nemain. Her name means something like "Panic" or "Frenzy", which, as Deo Mercurio notes, would put her at the opposite pole from Victoria, who deals with the peace after a battle. Still, you need to win a battle before you can have victory.

It should be noted that Nemetona also appears with another Roman god, Mercury, at Altrip, in an instance of divine polyandry. She may have some connection to Nantosuelta, who frequently pairs up with Mercury as well.

Nemetona also turns up in Britain; at the great temple complex at Bath. However, the dedication to her is from a man of Galia Treveri, so it may have come from a pilgrim or tourist. It reads:

PEREGRINVS SECVNDI FIL CIVIS
TREVER LOVCETIO MARTI ET
NEMETONA VSLM (Peregrinus, son of Secundus, a Treveran, to Loucetius Mars and Nemetona willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.)

Rossⁱⁱ thinks a relief from Bath showing a seated goddess and horned god may represent Nemetona and Mars Loucetios.

The Celtic name comes from proto-Celtic *louk(k)et-, "bright, shining, flashing", also "lightning,". "Light" suggests sky and

solar cults, and points to Mars the healer, but "lightning" indicates Mars in a warlike, stormy aspect.

Mars Loucetios was the consort of Nemetona, the grove goddess. He may well have brought a healing or fertility aspect to her cult. Others have pointed to the ancient connection between oak trees and lightning: "*Beware the oak; it draws the stroke*". This has a scientific basis, as oaks are taller and more full of moisture than other trees.

Its ability to survive lightning strikes probably contributed to its aura of sacredness. (In many European cultures it is the tree of the thunder-god, so a grove of oaks would be quite suitable for both Nemetona and Loucetios.)

However, elsewhere in Gaul Mars Loucetios was paired with the Roman war-goddess Bellona. She personified force, and was Mars' sister or wife. Since you would expect Nemetona to be associated with Diana, the goddess of wild places, with a

sanctuary at Nemi as Diana Nemorensis, if she was seen as Bellona-like she must be warlike than we know.

In Irish mythology, there is the god Nemed, who fought the Fomorians and settled Ireland. His name means something like "holy" or "sacred" and while there is no direct connection between his name and the word nemeton, perhaps the grove was his sacred place. These Celtic Mars-gods could be a similar sort of deity.

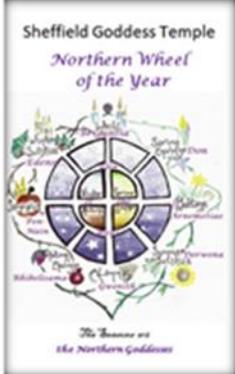
Perhaps Nemetona too could switch from the priestess-like grove goddess to the provoker of panic and frenzy. We have the Roman account of the druidesses at Mona stirring up

the fighters, so Nemetona's priestesses may have had the same role ☸

ⁱ Green, Miranda 1992: Dictionary of Celtic Myth and Legend, Thames and Hudson, p.144

ⁱⁱ Ross, Anne 1992: Pagan Celtic Britain: Studies in Iconography and Tradition, Constable and Sons, p.246

Sheffield Goddess Temple Booklets

Available in the temple (£4 each).

The temple is open each day, Monday to Saturday,
12:30 to 1:30pm, or ask in the Airy Fairy shop.

sheffieldgoddess temple.org is our new website.

Welcome to our new website. The aim is to make all our information easily accessible. We have festival days, courses, trainings and lots more to tell you about now, and we know that sometimes all of that can get lost in Facebook. Even so, we will still be keeping our Facebook pages up to date, and hope you enjoy having all our events on view here. Please let us know how you think we can make this website even more useful for you.



The Musings of an Old Druid

The Importance of Boundaries

The lovely purple Sambucus Elder tree in my garden has unfurled its buds and I am reminded of my dear old Dad who has crossed the threshold from this world to the next. He loved the Elder tree and used to make rocket fuel wine from the gathered berries. I miss him, but I don't miss the hang overs. The flowers will soon be scenting the hillsides and I think about all the medicinal properties of this wonderful and versatile plant in both the Spring and the Autumn, in youth and in age. In the Celtic system, the Elder represents old wisdom and healing.

With the passing of my elderly parents, I have shuffled up the generational hill and begin to contemplate what it means to be the oldest member of my family and therefore an Elder. As the exuberance of glorious spring graces our beautiful woodlands, I trust that Dad is held in peace and love, and that his soul is able to enjoy the wonders of springtime in Tír Na nÓg, the eternal land of youth. His soul has crossed the greatest of all boundaries.

Personally, I look forward to the future but I know that time on this beautiful Earth is finite, and I begin to consider all the gathered wisdoms which age brings. When I think of the thresholds between youth and age, winter and spring, the land and sea, the earth and the sky, I also think of the importance of boundaries. In my own spiritual and everyday life, the subject of boundaries has presented itself many times over, and at the age of sixty one, I have come to understand the importance of these accumulated experiences.

I am sure that you too will share an awareness of something which has reoccurred in your life until some hard won wisdom has been gained. It may be a very different theme to the one discussed here, but an important part of your own self-knowledge or spiritual path.

On the subject of boundaries, at a recent weekend Druid retreat, a discussion started about the importance of strong and wise leadership. Phillip Carr Comm, the Chosen Chief for many years, is finally retiring. People who know Phillip personally, stated that he had managed to head the Order, with honour and humility, strength and wisdom, kindness and compassion (all those qualities listed at the end of The

Charge of the Goddess). An experienced psychologist present at the discussion marvelled at the way Phillip had avoided ego inflation, despite being held in such high esteem. He had understood the importance of boundaries.

In the Peak District, we have many beautiful upland edges, clearly defining the threshold between upper sky lands and gentle valley pastures. Here at the cliff edges we must tread carefully in order to respectfully negotiate the safe crossing places. Likewise, a skilled Shaman will know how to travel between the worlds without disrupting the containers which hold them, and also his or her own psyche.

Now that we are all IT connected, how many of us are able to maintain a healthy boundary between our working life and our home lives? Our grandparents undoubtedly worked hard, but they were more able to 'clock off'. Stress and pressure leaks more easily into our personal lives because we may not feel able to insist upon the integrity of our own boundaries. We do however deserve the regular gift of quiet space and time in order to grow our spiritual life and to honour and nurture our relationship with the Divine.

Like many others who seek The Great Mystery, The Beloved, the Goddess (or the form in which we name and envisage our connection to Divinity), I have followed the ineffable, numinous

flow into and out of many pre-existing containers. These have included being baptised in a Roman Catholic church (I was a baby, I had no choice!), the Methodist chapel of a rural Pennine childhood, Hedge craft, Buddhism, Wicca, Celtic Shamanism, a Celtic order, the Goddess movement and finally and lastingly the safe harbour of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids. I have met wonderful people, all of whom have in common a genuine and authentic yearning for a deeper connection with the life affirming mystery of the Divine. In this, we share a commonality no matter what our faith is.

Sadly in the past I have also met those who have tried to exploit the hearts, minds and bodies of others and who have knowingly or unknowingly crossed moral and



Image: crystalinks.com

[continues on page 5]

[continued from page 4]

ethical boundaries in order to fulfil their own grasp upon power, status or money. There is a drive to fulfil the vision, and others must be recruited to the cause. The impetus is not to share the journey or to support others, but to create the base of a pyramid upon which to sit.

Each religion has its own Holy Grail, an often beautiful boundaried construct, created over time through the devotion expressed by the collective human consciousness. The Grail is a vessel, a safe container in which Divinity rests like a pure well spring, gently reflecting those who look into it. In order to remain alive, prevent stagnation and resist historical human codification, a pool must flow. In my own spiritual search, it has come as a revelation that it is not necessarily the grail itself which I seek, but that living mystical essence which it contains. Divinity is without boundaries.

Some of you may remember the scandal of the evangelical 'Nine O'clock Service' cult in the early 1990's which made regional and national news headlines. This primarily affected young people. Through the course of my work in one of the caring professions, I met intelligent, educated and trusting people who had been involved in the movement and who were deeply wounded by the process. I was and still am perplexed by the power of charismatic, spiritual individuals, to hold so much influence over others. How do good people unknowingly surrender their autonomy to another mere human, in the process of seeking a connection to divinity? This happens when boundaries lose integrity, when followers are overly invested in the group, are afraid to challenge the head, are ignored, or considered to be disruptive.

As Pagans, or followers of animistic, Earth based spiritualities, we are less likely to need conventional containers, and many of us do devotedly create our own Holy Grail into which we respectfully invite and meet The Beloved. We do not need a human mediator to get in the way of our direct relationship with Divinity. We do however value the support and shared insights of spiritual community.

Here in Sheffield, the Great Mystery of the Goddess came like the sudden bright rush of a waterfall, strong, insistent and beautiful. We were in the right place at the right time, and through communal work, the temple has become a Grail. As the

temple grows, we have moved beyond the first rush of creativity and now have to consider how to plan, organise and structure. If we are to honourably endure, our boundaries must be tested, held and nurtured without becoming codified and inflexible.

Our aim is to hold the form with clarity, dignity and integrity, to be inclusive and egalitarian. Growth comes of itself, but it is hard work and challenging. This is why a healthy community needs both the wisdom of age and the exuberance of youth. Youth brings energy, momentum, dynamism and freshness. Youth transitions into age, carrying life lessons with it. Age brings experience, a deeper understanding of human nature and memories of tried and tested solutions. Hopefully in age, the ego becomes a little less defensive, more able to take a long hard look at itself and its motivations. Some new souls are born old and wise, some old souls still have a youthful energy. The temple community needs all of those qualities, and it needs people to become more involved in holding the grail. Us oldies will not be here forever!

And what have I learned? Over many years, I have learned the importance of good boundaries. And there is an old saying in Yorkshire, 'Good fences make good neighbours'. The integrity of our own space is important, and boundaries need to have thresholds where we may cross to join each other. Professionally I have fought the corner for children and vulnerable adults who have been in bullying or abusive situations, to support the healing of their safe boundaries. In my spiritual life, I can spot a controlling individual a mile off. I know how to politely but firmly say 'No'. I don't need a human mediator to get in the way of my relationship with the Divine and I am happy following a more contemplative way of life. I do however very much celebrate and enjoy being part of an eclectic spiritual community and sharing ideas.

In closing, I invite you to write in to our editor Jamie to consider the themes which have been often present in your spiritual life, and how you have learned and grown from them. With the glorious midsummer solstice on the horizon, the theme of growth is very much present. There have been too many old Druid musings lately, don't be shy - have a say! Jamie's contact details are below.

TTFN everyone, hold your shape and be true to yourself. I'll shut up now ☺

Sheffield Goddess Temple Newsletter

Request for Articles

We would very much like to be able to publish a wider range of views and articles on Goddess related themes. We are therefore inviting submissions from any of our readers who would like to see their views, experiences, suggestions and thoughts shared with others. The newsletter is initially published in a hard copy paper format in time for each of the eight Wheel of the Year seasonal celebrations, and back copies are now also being made available to the world on our new temple website at

sheffieldgoddesses temple.org

You do not have to have your name published with your article if you do not wish it. Submissions can be in the form of an article (your favourite goddess? news of a group you are involved with? Information about your own path?), or simply in the form of a letter to the editor. We look forward to hearing from you ☺

Contact Jamie, newsletter editor, by email at:
temple@lovecat.com

or write to Jamie
(inc. your contact details) at:
Goddess Temple Newsletter,
C/o Airy Fairy,
359 London Road,
Sheffield S2 4NF.

Recipe Beltane Passion Cookies

Source: <http://recipesforapagansoul.weebly.com>

Ingredients

- ¾ cup unsalted butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup molasses
- 1¾ cups whole grain flour
- ½ tsp. salt
- 3 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1½ tsp. ground cloves
- 5 tsp. powdered ginger
- ⅛ tsp. granulated sugar
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- ½ cup crystallized ginger, coarsely chopped (optional)

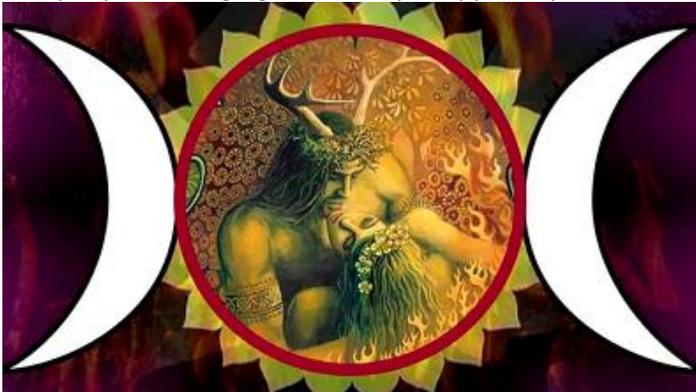


Image: <http://jennyheston.com>

Method

Preheat the oven to 350°. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper. Using a hand mixer, cream the butter with the sugar then beat in the egg and molasses. Sift all the dry ingredients into a medium bowl, then stir into the wet batter. Add crystallized ginger. Roll batter into 1 inch balls and dip one side into granulated sugar. Place sugar side up on baking sheet, about 3 inches apart. Bake 10 to 12 minutes. Cool on wire rack.



Image: shirleytwofeathers.com



Goddess Temple Melissas



Join our Sheffield Goddess Temple Melissas between 12:30 and 1:30 pm, Monday to Saturday, to experience the seasonal energies in quiet contemplation.

Temple Melissas are the people who hold space in the Temple between 12.30 and 1.30 pm every day, Monday to Saturday. It is a delightful job to do. If you would like to be part of the Melissa team please leave a message at Airy Fairy for Ann Staniland or Brian Harrison.

The Temple on the Web



[Welcome](#)
[Events](#)
[Gallery](#)
[Our Publications](#)
[Links](#)
[FaceBook](#)
[Twitter](#)
[Contact Us](#)

For all the most up to date information on what is going on at the temple, don't forget to check out our website which has all the latest news of events, and links to our Facebook and Twitter pages:

<https://sheffieldgoddess temple.org/>

Agree or Disagree?

"Listen to me, sister. Remember this: nothing is written in the stars. Not these stars, nor any others. No one controls your destiny."

Princess Nastoya –
Elephant Goddess

[Wicked, Gregory
McGuire, p.239]

✧ Merry Beltane ✧

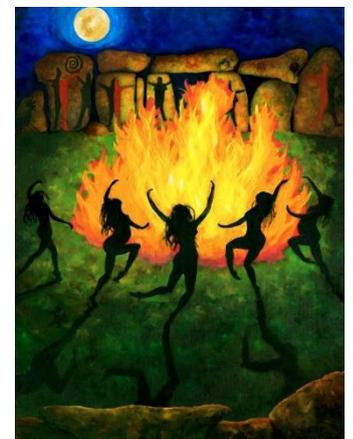


Image: innerjourneyevents.wordpress.com