

St. Brigid's Perpetual Fire

Legends say that before St. Brigid was born, a long line of Pagan Priestesses in Kildare kept ritual fires burning on a Kildare hilltop to invoke the Goddess Brigit.

After St. Brigid built her Monastery in Kildare she and her nuns kept this custom alive. For them it represented the lighting of the way from pagan ritual to new Christianity. It is said Giraldus Cambrensis, a 12th Century traveller to Ireland, noted that St. Brigid's Fire was still burning and tended by nuns at her Monastery. It is thought that it remained burning from St. Brigid's time until the 16th Century.

St. Brigid's Fire burns strongly each year in Kildare during the festival Féile Bríde.

The Brideog Doll

In an ancient custom, still practised in parts of Ireland, children would make a Brideog Doll for St. Brigid's Day. The doll was created as a physical representation of St. Brigid.

The doll would be walked around the town or village, to each household, where the woman of the house that was called upon, would offer snacks or money to those bearing the Brideog. This gift to St. Brigid was to welcome in the Light of Spring for the householder.

The money and food collected on the Brideog tour was used to hold a feast that evening for the participants, with the Brideog placed in the table centre.

Print and Colour St' Brigid's Perpetual Fire and the Traditional Brideog Doll

Print copies of the illustrations of St. Brigid's Fire and the Brideog Doll supplied within this pack. Find inspiration for colours, details, designs and motifs in the words of her story, in the woods that you visit and in the links listed below.

Learn more about St. Brigid's Fire and Brideog Dolls at the following links:

<https://www.duchas.ie/ga/cbes/4583339/4581046/4591521>

<https://www.duchas.ie/ga/cbeg/14980>

<https://brigidine.org.au/about-us/our-patroness/brigids-light-fire/>

http://www.kildare.ie/library/ehistory/2011/01/brideog_old_kildare_custom.asp

<https://solasbhríde.ie/feile-bríde/>

<http://www.folktunefinder.com/tunes/87774>

<https://www.brighid.org.uk/customs.html>

https://strawart.org/straw_art_items/brideog/

[https://www.museum.ie/en-IE/Collections-Research/Folklife-Collections/Folklife-Collections-List-\(1\)/Religion-and-Calendar-Customs/St-Brigid-s-Day](https://www.museum.ie/en-IE/Collections-Research/Folklife-Collections/Folklife-Collections-List-(1)/Religion-and-Calendar-Customs/St-Brigid-s-Day)