



BELTANE

FIRE FESTIVAL

EVENT
PROGRAMME
2023

Bring in the summer
with the Beltane Fire Society

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Produced by the Beltane Fire Society

FESTIVAL OVERVIEW:

The Beltane Fire Festival marks the changing of the seasons, bringing ancient Celtic harvest traditions and stories alive with a modern twist. Beltane is a procession that awakens the incarnation of the May Queen and Green Man and leads them on a journey that heralds the beginning of summer. Starting at the National Monument, referred to as the Acropolis, the symbolic Neidfire is lit as the spark that goes on to illuminate the Hill. The procession travels around the Hill, led by the May Queen who travels through the Fire Arch into the underworld, where she interacts with groups that embody nature's key elements: Earth, Air, Water and Fire.

Simultaneously, the Green Man, a symbol of rebirth and new growth, searches for what he needs to shed his winter skin, transform into the Green Man, and unite with the May Queen. Together, they end the procession by finding one another and sparking the birth of summer with a massive bonfire and celebratory toast.

Rhythmic drumming drives the Beltane procession, along with a cavalcade of acrobatics and fire play, to help stir up the earth and give a warm welcome to the new season.





HOW TO EXPERIENCE BELTANE:

There is almost no wrong way to experience Beltane, the exceptions being: you mustn't touch or interfere with the performers or their fire, or start any fires yourself!

Beltane is an experience and event which speaks differently to each person, and must be celebrated how you want.

You are invited to witness the procession of the May Queen as she makes contact with an assortment of characters, groups and performers all here to celebrate the turning of the wheel. We recommend starting at the Acropolis, then moving to wherever speaks to you throughout the night.

Perhaps at times, you may feel lost, but that's okay! Let the evening move you about the hill, and make sure to join in with the dancing and merriment! There will be plenty of overlapping and dazzling acts surrounding you. You may not see everything, but don't fret! You can still plan and witness your favourite chapters unfold. Our fire festival map below shares where each significant point will take place.



Waterloo Steps

TICKET HOLDERS ONLY

NO EXIT ROUTES



MAIN GATE
Ticket holders
Groups with Children
Ticket Buyers
EXIT ROUTE

Waterloo Place / Regent Road



BEINGS YOU MAY MEET ON THE NIGHT:

The May Queen
The Green Man

The Beastie Drummers
The Blues
Callhorn
Fire Point
Foxfire
Gairdeachas (Joyful Drummers)
The Goblin Republic (of Bower)
Myoinn (aka Cat Point)
The Processional Drummers
The Queen's Guard
The Reds
Seanchaidhean
The Torchbearers
Whimsy
Water Point

THE FESTIVAL IS ALSO CREATED BY:

The Stewards
Tech
Photo Point
Hillusphere Makers





F.A.Qs



Where should I arrive? Please have your QR code ready for scanning, either in print or on mobile. Enter via the Waterloo Steps (Ticket Holders Only) and Carriage Drive –no entry via Regent Gardens.

What time does the procession start and end? Festival gates open at 7:30pm (last entry 11pm) with the main procession beginning at dusk. We recommend coming along to enjoy the sunset! The procession will end around 12-12:30am.

What should I wear? Dress for the weather. This is a fire festival, so we recommend natural fabrics, which are safest near stray sparks. Loud drumming will take place throughout the night so earplugs are advised if you plan to get up close to the action.

Can I bring food and beverages to Calton Hill? Alcohol is not being sold on site, but you can bring your own drinks (Please, NO GLASS). We recommend bringing cash for our caterers in case, as there's no ATM on site.

Are dogs able to be on the Hill? Dogs are not allowed – nor would they particularly enjoy – this fire-focused event

What should the size of my bag be? Please only bring bags no bigger than an A3 piece of paper.

Are children allowed at this festival? Under-16s must be accompanied by an adult with a ticket. Parents and guardians please note: this event contains semi-nudity and uninhibited behaviour. Your discretion is advised. We recommend earplugs/ear defenders for little ones. Missing persons is located at the Welfare area.

Is this event being filmed? Yes! While not live streamed, we will later share a festival video on our social channels and website, as there will be film crews on-site (look out for purple!) capturing the action.

For the safety of our performers and audience, please **do not use flash photography**. The fire should light up your photos nicely.

Re-entry to the festival is not permitted.



ABOUT BELTANE FIRE SOCIETY

The Beltane Fire Society (BFS) is an independent community arts charity. We put on the annual Beltane Fire Festival and Samhuinn Fire Festival in Edinburgh, having celebrated these festivals since 1988.

BFS is run by a volunteer Board of Trustees who oversee the year-round operation of the organisation, and our many dedicated volunteers who keep the fire burning year after year.

The Society is funded entirely by donations, charitable grants and ticket sales. Help us put on more fire festivals by making a donation, at beltane.org/support-us .

Artwork: @tysen.arts
www.beltane.org
@BeltaneFireSociety

Taken some great photos? Tag us using #Beltane2023

HAPPY BELTANE!

