

## **Scottish Celtic Legal Handfasting.** *(could be adapted for use elsewhere)*

This is a work of fantasy, the names of the people in this ceremony do not exist and this ritual has never been used in the order it's seen here. Parts of the ceremony are traditional but most of the work, especially the calls to the three realms have been written by me, Siusaidh.

The event can take place anywhere, but this ceremony has been written to take place in the Clyde Valley and in particular in the Greater Glasgow area. The weather is warm and sunny with a gentle breeze.

The area chosen for the Handfasting should be cleansed with blessed water and with incense and declared sacred for the purpose of the ceremony.

A word should be given to the guests, the friends and family of the couple who are about to be Handfasted. Just to tell them a little about the ceremony and explain what is about to happen. The guests should then be asked to come and stand in a circle in the sacred area, leaving a gap for the Handfasting party, the Bride, Groom and the two supporters.

The Celebrants or Celebrant should stand in side the circle and wait while the Groom and his supporter approach the circle.

**The Female Celebrant:** (address supporter) Greetings friend, who are and who do you bring with you this day?

**Supporter:** My name is *George Brown* and I bring with me *Sam Goodlooking* who wishes to be Handfasted this day.

**Celebrant:** Welcome to you both, please come into the circle and stand near me.

*At this point the Bride with her supporter walks to the edge of the circle, the male Celebrant address her:*

**MC:** Greetings friend, who are you and who do you bring with you this day?

**Brides Supporter:** My name is *Emily Brown* and I bring with me *Bella Standalone* who wishes to be Handfasted this day.

**MC:** Welcome to you both please come closer into the circle and stand near us.

*One of the Celebrants takes a staff and walks around the outside of the circle, casting a circle as they go. At the same time the other Celebrant reads aloud from a card some words suitable to cast a circle. (In this way all the guests will be able to hear the words clearly and the circle will be cast quietly yet powerfully)*

### **The Calls to the three Realms.**

#### **Earth**

I am the earth under your feet

The solid ground into which you build your foundations

I am the dark earth which supports this dear green place.

Give me your seeds, I will nourish your roots and help your plants to bear fruit.

I am under your feet and I will help you stand firm!

### Sea

I am the sea which surrounds this Island, the water which fills the lochs,  
It is into me that Cluthas veins flow!  
Listen to my waves as they tumble over the shore.  
I will gather the rain from the sky and it is into my lap that your tears fall.  
I will wash you clean and carry you to distant shores.  
Feel safe for I surround you!

### Sky

I am the vault of heaven, the atmosphere always above this beautiful place.  
It is through and above me that the wind blows,  
Through me the gentle summer breeze brings fresh clean air to this space,  
It walks on the tops of the trees and ripples waves on the lochs,  
Turn your heads upward and open your eyes - I am here!

**Calls to Deity:** *(this can be changed for special words chosen for the patron's of the couple.)*

#### **The Call to the Lady.**

We ask you to be with us Lady, you have been called by many different names in many ages of men.

Maid, fresh from childhood, innocent girl bring your fresh young eyes and help us look at things from your viewpoint.

Mother, blooming and full of life,  
Nourish us with your loving care.

Wise women, elder with such a long passage of time behind you.  
Give us wisdom to understand the new steps we take now.

From seed and bud, from root and branch,  
As the leaves open, as they grow and blossom,  
As they darken, wither and die,  
As the wheel turns and the cycle continues,  
Come to us Lady, touch us, fill us,  
Open our minds and eyes, let our ears hear.

Hail Lady and Welcome!

All: **Hail and Welcome!**

**Call to the Lord:**

Welcome among us Lord! You who are known by so many names, from so many walks of life and time.

Young man, bring your energy and strength to us today,  
Love and consort, we call to you,  
Fill our bodies with your life giving magic.  
Wise man, soul friend, on whom we lean and turn to for advice,  
Open our eyes that we can see and understand.

From seed to bud, from root to branch,  
Bring us life, strength and wisdom,  
Stand with us as the wheel of the year turns,  
Strengthen us now as we take new steps forward.  
Come among us Lord,  
Fire us with your energy,

Hail Lord and Welcome!

**All:** Hail and Welcome!

**A Call to the spirit of place, to the ancestors of line and blood.**

*This would be better if it were either written by the Bride and Groom or at the very least had the names of the two families in it. Here is a general piece:*

**Celebrant:** I call with respect and ask the spirit of this beautiful place to come and protect this gathering today, I call to our ancestors of line and blood, we would not be here but for all you had done for us in the past, we ask you to be present at this Handfasting of Sam and Bella.

To those who have lived and walked upon this ground we now stand on, we greet you with warmth and ask that you too stand amongst us and protect this gathering.

We bid you all, Hail and Welcome!

**All:** Hail and Welcome!

**F. Celebrant:** Now that we are all gathered, our Deity called, our ancestors and spirit of place spoken to it is time to begin the main part of today's event, the binding and joining of these two persons.

**M. Celebrant:** Sam and Bella, can I ask you to turn and face each other and listen to our words.

*M. Celebrant continues speaking to the Bride.*

Women, look at the man you have chosen for your partner, he is the strength and the stability which you need, he has the fire and passion that stirs the Stag in the heat of the chase. In him you will find a foundation on which you can build a home, and if blessed a family. He is your representative of the God and it is through him that the power and the fertility will flow. Look into his eyes and feel safe!

**F. Celebrant:** *speaks to the Groom:* Man, look at the women you have chosen for your partner, she has the warmth and the calling that stirs the Vixen at full Moon, it is into her arms you will come at the end of the day and into her arms you will melt into

oneness. It is her strength that will protect you and it is from her that your name will live on from one generation to another. Look into her eyes and see aspects of the Goddess looking back at you, it is these arms that will always protect you and keep you safe.

### **The Vows and Exchange of Rings.**

*At this point we would ask the couple to read the vows that they have written to each other. There can be no set vows for any Handfasting, but as this is a work of fantasy, these are the vows that I feel Bella and Sam may have said.*

You are the one I have chosen to spend the rest of my life with, I love and trust you without question. You are the one I want to see when I first open my eyes in the morning and it is you that I want to give my last kiss of each night to.

I will always make every effort to be at your side whenever you need me, I will stay with you for as long as you will stay with me. I hope this will be for a lifetime.

As the Sun lights each day, and the Moon lights the night, I will be there for you through Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter.

I Bella Standalone declare that I take you Sam Goodlooking to be my lawful husband, in the presence of my Deity, Celebrants, Friends, Family and all spirits.

*Sam will then read his vows to Bella, which could be the same except the last line which would read:*

I Sam Goodlooking declare that I take you, Bella Standalone to be my lawful wife.....

*If there are rings, these are now blessed and the couple exchange the rings.*

### **The Binding of Hands.**

*The Celebrants step forward and takes each strand of the plated Handfasting cords in turn. Gold/Silver/Green or any colour the couple would like! Saying these words,*

**M. Celebrant:** May the Sun and the Lord bear witness that these two persons wish to be joined together.

**F. Celebrant.** May the Moon and the Lady bear witness that these two persons wish to be joined together.

**The two supporters together:-** May the Earth our Mother and all here present bear witness that these two persons wish to be joined together.

**Celebrant:** Bella and Sam, I now declare that you are husband and wife!

*The couple raise their bound hands in the air for all to see and the gathering clap and cheer, the groom kisses his bride and if possible some music is played.*

*The groom now takes the cords off their hands and gently ties the Handfasting cords around his bride's waist.*

*At this point it's possible to bless and pass around some mead and perhaps some bread, give a libation to the spirit of place and drink a toast to the Gods.*

### **The Closing and Bidding Farewell**

**Celebrants:** We call with thanks to the spirit of this beautiful place, to our ancestors of line, of place and blood. We felt your strength and your presence, go with our love; we bid you Hail and Farewell!

**All:** Hail and Farewell

*F. Celebrant Gives thanks to the Goddess:*

A blessing on you Lady,  
You have loved us and nourished us,  
We feel your gentle caress; your peace surrounds us,  
You saw us from the spirit realm,  
Go if you must, but stay if you will,

Hail Lady and Farewell!

**All** Hail and Farewell!

**M. Celebrant:** *Gives thanks to the God:*

A blessing on you Lord,  
You have filled us with vital life,  
Your arms hold us and strengthen us,  
You came to us when we needed you most,  
Go if you must, but stay if you will,

Hail Lord and Farewell!

**All** Hail and Farewell!

**Sky.**

I am above and around your head and my breath fills your lungs,  
Remember this gentle breeze that brings fresh air to this place!  
Turn your heads upwards and look at this Sky,  
I bless you now, Farewell!

**All:** Hail and Farewell!

**Sea.**

I am the sea which surrounds this Island,  
I have washed you clean and I have caught your tears as they fell into my lap,  
remember that I surround you and you are safe!

I bless you now, Farewell!

**All:** Hail and Farewell!

Earth.

I am that solid ground which supports you,  
The brown mud which holds the roots of all plants,  
With your bare feet, feel me, link with me!  
I bless you now, Farewell!

**All:** Hail and Farewell!

*Once again the M. Celebrant will read from a card some suitable words to close the ceremony and open the circle, while he does this the F. Celebrant will walk around the outside of the circle and open it. The gathering will be invited to take photo's and come and congratulate the couple.*