

Boadicea (pronounced like ‘boa + diss + ee + a’), **Boudicca** (pronounced like ‘boo + dick + ah’)

We are not certain what Boadicea’s name means but it is probably related to *buaidh*, ‘victory’. When the Romans invaded Britain, the entire island was Celtic. The queen of the Iceni, a tribe in the south of the country, was Boudicca, latinised as Boadicea. When the Romans attempted to annex her kingdom, she led a rebellion against them in AD 61. She forced their surrender in several areas but was eventually captured. To avoid the humiliation of being paraded in Rome, she is said to have committed suicide. The name is Buddug in modern Welsh.

Boann (pronounced like ‘bo + an’) Boann, whose name includes *bó*, meaning ‘cow’, was a goddess after whom the River Boyne is named. It is possible that she was an original mother god figure associated with food and fertility. The Boyne has been significant in modern Irish history because in 1690 William III’s army defeated the forces of the Catholic king, James II, at the Battle of the Boyne.

Bonnie, Bonny

In Scotland and parts of Northern Ireland, the adjective ‘bonnie’, which derives from French *bon*, *bonne*, ‘good’, means ‘pretty, attractive’. It is sometimes used as a name, partly perhaps as a result of the popularity

of Margaret Mitchell’s novel *Gone with the Wind* and of the film based on it: the nickname of Scarlett O’Hara’s daughter was Bonnie.

Brangaine (pronounced like ‘brang + gy + in + na’)

The Gaelic name Brangaine resembles the Welsh Brongwyn, which is made up of *bron* + *gwen* and implies ‘fair beauty’. Brangaine’s name may also be related to *brionglán*, ‘beam’. She was the handmaiden of Iseult (also known as Isolde and Yseult). She gave Iseult and Tristan a love potion that caused them to love each other for all eternity.

Brangwyn, Branwen

SEE: **Brongwyn**

Branna, Brannagh (pronounced like ‘bran + na’)

Branna may be the female equivalent of Celtic *bran*, meaning ‘raven’ and found in some form in all of the Celtic-using communities. It may also be a variant pronunciation of Brenna or a derived form of the surname Brannagh.

SEE: **Brenna**

Branwen

This name is more usually spelt Brongwyn or Bronwen and means ‘fair beauty’ or ‘white breast’.

SEE: **Brongwyn**

Breage, Breagg

These are variant forms of a Cornish saint who was a patron saint of

midwives. The name seems to come from an adjective *breagh*, meaning ‘fine, lovely’.

Bree, Breeanne, Brianne

(pronounced like ‘bree’ and ‘bree + anne’)

This name may be related to Bríd, who was a Celtic goddess whose name, in the form of *brighid*, came to mean ‘beautiful maiden’. The form Breeanne may be a blend of Bree and Anne or a feminine form of Brian, meaning ‘eminence’.

SEE: **Bríd**

Breege (pronounced like ‘breej’)

SEE: **Bríd**

Breegeen (pronounced like ‘bree + jean’)

This name means ‘little Bríd’.

SEE: **Bríd**

Brenda

Until this century, the name Brenda was virtually unknown outside Scotland. It is often thought to be the female form of Brendan, a name that may come from Welsh *brenhinol*, meaning ‘royal’. It is possible that Brenda comes from Brendan, who was one of the most popular saints of the Middle Ages; it is also possible that the name is a modified form of Viking *brand*, meaning ‘bright sword’.

Brenna

It is not easy to say whether Brenna is a form of Brenda, or a female form of Bran, or a form of Brynna, a female

form of Welsh *bryn*, meaning ‘hill’. It has been suggested that Brenna or *breana* is a name in its own right meaning ‘beauty with hair as dark as a raven’.

SEE: **Branna, Bran**

Briallen

Briallen is a Welsh floral name. It is taken over from *briallen*, the word for ‘primrose’. The Irish equivalent is *buidheachán*.

Briana, Bryana, Bryna (pro-

nounced like ‘bree + an + na’)

These are feminine forms of Brian and mean ‘noble, virtuous’.

Bríd (pronounced ‘breej’), **Bride**,

Bridie, **Brídín** (pronounced

‘bree + jean’), **Breegeen**,

Bridget, **Bridgeteen**,

Brighid, **Brigid**, **Bright**,

Brigitteen, **Brigitte**, **Bree**,

Breda, **Breege**, **Berc’hed**,

Biddie, **Biddy**, **Birgitta**

With the exception of names derived from Maria, no female name was more widely used in Celtic communities than Bríd. It seems likely that Bríd was a Celtic goddess, possibly of agriculture and healing, possibly of poetry and fire and sometimes known as ‘Brigid of the Holy Fire’. Her name is related to the noun *brígh*, meaning ‘power, strength, vigour, virtue’. Many of the attributes of the goddess were applied to St Brigid of Kildare who died during the first quarter of the sixth century and who is reputed to be buried in Downpatrick, in the