

'WE ARE WITCHES'

AN attractive, fair-haired Scots housewife admitted last night: "I am a Witch Queen."

And her husband added: "I also practise witchcraft. I am a high priest of our movement."

They were sitting together on a sofa in the living-room of their neat bungalow in Perthshire.

Then they spoke for the first time about the incredible sect that they claim operates underground in Scotland today.

A sect that . . .

● **MEETS** in covens of 13 in different parts of Scotland eight times a year.

● **PERFORMS** ancient spells of dancing ritual circles in the nude.

● **USES** white magic to help people in need.

They had agreed to meet me only after a promise that their identities would not be revealed.

HE is a senior executive with a big Scottish firm. He was a second world war fighter pilot. His witch name is Loic.

SHE was a secretary before they married. "In our circles, I am called Olwin," she said.

'They'd laugh

. . . at first'

A neighbour was polishing his car when I arrived at their trim bungalow. Their young daughter was playing in the garden.

"If our neighbours knew we were witches they would probably laugh at first," said Olwin.

"But the first time any child fell ill, they would blame us. We would probably be driven out of Perthshire."

"People just don't understand. Witches are probably the most misunderstood people in the world."

As she poured coffee, she

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said: "Ours is a religion. It is older than Christianity."

"We use methods that other people seem to think are mumbo jumbo. You could call them magic."

"There are black witches—but we are white witches. We cannot and would not use our power to do any harm. And we cannot use it to help ourselves."

Then she spoke of their strange rituals. "I am a Witch Queen," she said. "This means I rule over three covens."

Women are supreme

"Women are supreme beings in our craft. Men take second place."

"We meet in covens of up to 13, eight times a year. Halloween and Christmas are two of the occasions."

"I wear a bangle, a necklace and, because I am a queen, the witches' garter."

"In our ceremonies we dance around in ritual circles. This

is a way of creating the power we may need."

Her husband, Loic, said: "In our covens my wife is the superior being. But that makes no difference to our home life."

'Secret cells protect us'

"We became interested in witchcraft years ago. We read all we could about it and then wrote to a man we had heard was an expert."

"Later a stranger called to see us. That was how we entered the movement."

"Witches are only known to members of their own covens. We have a cell system for protection. That is how we survive underground."

But what can they achieve with their spells?

"On holiday this year we became friendly with a Scottish farmer whose crops were being ruined with constant rain," said Loic.

"We asked him how much sunshine he would need to harvest them. He said at least 10 days."

"Several of us were staying at the one place. We held an emergency coven and danced

the ritual.

Forty-eight hours later the sun was blazing down on his farm. It lasted for 11 days, but 25 miles away it never stopped raining.

Loic gave another example: "A young university student was near a nervous breakdown with worry about his finals."

"He kept failing in one subject. We said we would to help—one of our covens worked on him without knowing."

'We made a student pass'

"The day before his exam we wrote to tell him that if he was worthy of success he was certain to succeed. I knew he would."

"His tutors thought he might just scrape through. . . instead he took an M.A. degree—with honours."

"Other things we have achieved we cannot reveal. But we believe nothing is impossible."

As I left, Olwin said: "Blessed be." Her husband said: "You will have a safe journey." " . . . did . . ."