



Mr. Howard with the carved head of the god Atho, left to him by an old Romany woman.

## Room where witch *"Eastern Daily Press" March 6th, 1967.* would feel at home

**I**N A SMALL ROOM above his antique shop at Field Dalling, Mr. R. B. J. Howard has an unusual collection of articles, even for an antique dealer.

Mr. Howard is an expert on witchcraft and all the items on exhibition in his room have been used by witches, he says. His interest in witchcraft began as a child when he used to stay on a farm at Swaffham.

An old Romany woman, who used to park her caravan on the farm, left her belongings, caravan included, to Mr. Howard. Among these were several items which had withcraft connections.

### 2000 years

It was this chance legacy which set off his study of witches and their practices which has lasted over 20 years. Dominating the collection is a carved wooden head some 3 ft. high which has been proved by laboratory tests to be made of English oak and to be about 2200 years old.

This head of the horned god of witchcraft has been handed down through generations since pre-Christian times. It is hollow and has many witchcraft symbols carved on it.

When a small crucible of water, with a lighted candle under it, is placed in the back of the head, the result is awe-inspiring. The red

glass eyes of the head light up and steam emits from the tips of the horns.

The late Donald Campbell, who used to visit Mr. Howard, when he lived in Norwood Hill, Surrey, was interested in the occult and superstition and touched the wooden head for luck before his successful attempt on the world land speed record.

A second exhibit looks like a normal, if rather gnarled, walking-stick. It is a rune stick and was supposed to turn into a live snake and destroy the enemies of its owner's cult.

### White covens

The rune stick also had a much less sinister purpose. It was believed that if the owner put the stick in the soil of a newly planted field and then jumped in the air, the crops would grow to the same height that he managed to leap.

There are, according to Mr. Howard, ten white witch covens in Britain, including one in Norfolk. These white witch covens do good by using a primitive kind of psychology.

Mr. Howard said, "I have never been in a church which has given practical assurance of an afterlife. White witches, who know the old laws of nature, can do this by showing people an example of reincarnation or direct transference of thought from the dead."

He writes and broadcasts under the name of Howard-Franch, and has recently completed a book, "Legacy of Witchcraft." For two years he was editor of the magazine "Witchcraft."

Far from being a dying art, witchcraft is flourishing, said Mr. Howard.