

PENTAGRAM

AUGUST 1964

A WITCHCRAFT REVIEW

TWO SHILLINGS

"Pentagram" and the Witchcraft Research Association

Since the first announcements of the proposed formation of the Witchcraft Research Association, letters have been received from all parts of the world—with over 500 from the U.K. Replies have been written by people from every walk of life and the very great interest in Witchcraft in Britain has been almost overwhelming. An executive staff of two has had to deal with everything as best they can and some people have been concerned at not seeing tangible results immediately. Admittedly the plans were ambitious, but it was hoped that others would come forward to help share the load and assist in the administration of the proposed projects. Offers of help have been forthcoming from a number of professional people (solicitors, accountants, etc.) but the main—and unfulfilled—need has been for secretarial help and other assistance of a similarly unglamorous type.

As an act of goodwill, the sponsors of the Association have decided to proceed with the production of *Pentagram*—a newsletter which it is hoped will prove of interest and value to all who have gone so far as to return one of the original questionnaire forms. This first issue of *Pentagram* has been an expensive production, and its contents has been culled by a small group of supporters. Many will welcome it. If it is to progress, it must be supported both financially by subscriptions and donations—or even advertisements—and also by contributions from readers. It must break even, and unless enough support is forthcoming it may not be possible to continue as a *printed* publication. Contributions from any source will be considered.

Manpower limitations have meant that development of the Association, as originally conceived, must be postponed. Publication of *Pentagram* will, however, proceed. Supporters are invited to subscribe for four issues in the first instance: if worthwhile material for publication is forthcoming these four issues may appear quickly—but

they cannot be produced more often than, say quarterly (to coincide with the Festivals?) if the material is not available to print.

From the basis of *Pentagram* other activities could be gradually launched, and the suggestion has been made that there should be a *Pentagram* dinner in London on Saturday, October 3. The cost would probably be in the region of two guineas per head, inclusive of wines. Readers interested in attending such a dinner are invited to notify *Pentagram*.

LETTER OF WELCOME FROM DOREEN VALIENTE

The Editor,
Pentagram
BM/Eleusis, London, W.C.1.

BRIGHTON
July 9th, 1964.

Dear Sir,

I am glad to have this opportunity of welcoming the first issue of the *Pentagram*. It is a curious coincidence that 1964 is just thirteen years after the repeal of the last of the Witchcraft Acts in this country, which took place in 1951.

Ever since that date, the old Craft of the Wise has steadily progressed towards recognition as a genuine religious tradition. Nor is it merely a relic of the past; it has significance for people of the present day, disillusioned as they often are with more orthodox creeds, and "orphaned of the Great Mother", Nature, by the stresses of modern life.

Like every live movement, there are differing opinions among us—and a good thing, too. From brainwashed uniformity, may we long be preserved!

Owing to the years of persecution, the old traditions have become fragmented, with one coven or group of covens preserving certain aspects of the old beliefs, that have been handed down to them, while others retain and place emphasis upon other aspects.

I think we should take this fact into account, and recognise that no section of the cult has the right to say, "We, and we alone, are the genuine article; anyone who is different from us is wrong". Rather, we should respect each other's views, when sincerely held, whether or not we agree with them.

If we are willing to do this, then the way will be open for a truly great work to be performed; namely, the piecing together again of all the true parts of the ancient tradition, to make a coherent whole so meaningful in all its potentialities that it would at once command the respect of intelligent and thoughtful people.

I hope the W.R.A. may be able to help in this aspiration, by acting as a kind of United Nations of the Craft. I hope it will promote research, and the recording of traditions that might otherwise be lost; and I hope also that it will work for mutual understanding and unity of purpose, that will make such research possible.

Good luck, and "Blessed Be . . ."

Doreen Valiente.

IS THE CRAFT BETRAYING ITS OWN HERITAGE?

We have given considerable prominence to this article by ARIEL in view of the carefully-reasoned plea the writer makes for active co-operation between adherents of Witchcraft. We sincerely trust that the faultless logic of the writer's argument will elicit enthusiastic response from those to whom it is directed.

STUDY IS AN ESSENTIAL prerequisite to progress in every branch of the mysteries, and the great exponents of every occult system have arrived at their state of mastery not only by a determined course of personal discipline but also by an exhaustive study of published books and manuscripts, together with association with like-minded people. The Tarot and the Cabbala, for example, have inspired much scholarly writing by sages and mystics of every age: such writings, and the perpetuation of individual groups and lodges, have ensured the essential continuity of ideas, ideals and practice.

Witchcraft, however, has no similar store of standard literature or universally-available teaching on which to draw, on which to depend for continuity of tradition, of purpose or belief. The Craft in Britain is fragmented into many sections, some of which can be enumerated, but there is no way in which the tradition and practice of every "sect" can be examined, far less co-ordinated or used as threads by which a scholar can trace back to the common origin. Certain covens throughout the country are widely-known to be in a state of reasonable harmony, and between them there is considerable interchange of ideas, knowledge and information. In several separate localities there are associated covens which have no contact with any others; their membership may or may not be almost exclusively on an hereditary basis. Then there are several known covens which are entirely "independent" and which have no contact—and seek none—with others.

Such reluctant attitudes towards inter-communication may be, in the short term, explainable by expediency and the danger of betrayal. But is there not a far greater "betrayal" inherent in this situation?

The historical view is that what is now known as Witchcraft was the Old Religion embracing, presumably, theology, occult powers and ceremonial rituals—at one time universal within the limits of communications several hundred years ago—and which were driven underground by the onslaught of the emergent Church and associated power politics. This Old Religion was, it has been suggested, carried on in secret by groups of loyal adherents who perpetuated their knowledge hereditarily. In this way the old teachings were carried down to the present day.

It logically follows that during the past five hundred years or so those small and independent groups practising the Old Religion should have departed somewhat from the original and universal practice. In one part of the country the theology may have survived more strongly than elsewhere, yet much of the ritual and occult technique may have been lost or forgotten. Another area may be strong in ritual; another in practical ability.

Passage of time may have lost the Craft much of its powers and traditions; who knows? Who knows just how much of the Old Religion and its teachings are still perpetuated—or, indeed, will be left in another ten, or one hundred, years?

Circumstances of the day make it imperative that something be done, and soon, to ensure that the several remnants be brought together. Those who know must come forward; those who would learn await. Trust and confidence, love and charity—on the part of each—are essential.

If the opportunities which now exist, and are so vital, are neglected the Craft—in every section—will have only itself to blame for its own extinction. The heritage is endangered, and time is running out.

What to Read About Witchcraft

Many people have asked for a list of books that they can read in order to learn more about the subject. Most have discovered the late Dr. Gardner's books in their local libraries, and these are sometimes the only books catalogued on the subject. The titles of these books are, of course, **HIGH MAGIC'S AID**, **WITCHCRAFT TODAY**, and **THE MEANING OF WITCHCRAFT**. The following very brief reviews will be helpful to many who have asked for help with their reading; more books will be reviewed in the next issue of *Pentagram*.

SATAN'S DISCIPLES; Robert Goldston; Ballantine Books (USA); 3s. 6d.

The lurid cover would be more appropriate for one of Dennis Wheatley's black magic thrillers and the contents of the book, described as "A modern history of Satanism and Witchcraft from the Middle Ages to the present day", is mainly concerned with the "best selling" aspects of the subject-matter. Amusing reading for all—and a useful addition for anyone aspiring to build up a comprehensive Witchcraft library.

EXPLORING THE OCCULT; Douglas Hunt; Pan Books; 3s. 6d.

What is occultism? "The study of what is hidden that in no way implies a belief in the supernatural", is a definition suggested by the author. In this exciting and challenging book with chapter headings such as Hauntings, Astral Projection, Hypnosis, Clairvoyance and Black Magic, Mr. Douglas Hunt considers such questions as: Does man survive death? Can one be in two places at once? Can you remember a past life? Can hypnosis cure? Can you foretell the future? Is your doctor really necessary? Easy reading and a useful interest-kindler for the general reader.

WITCHES—Investigating an Ancient Religion; T. C. Lethbridge; Routledge; 21s.

One of the most important "independent" pieces of scholarly research into the history of Witchcraft, this book is highly recommended for the serious student. Many of the author's other interests have crept into the text—which makes its whole interest greater and more rewarding.

WHERE WITCHCRAFT LIVES; Doreen Valiente; Aquarian Press; 15s.

Mrs. Valiente writes interestingly about Witchcraft, past and present, in her native Sussex and one wishes that there were more of her books. In addition to covering Sussex Witch trials she includes interesting sidelights on modern witchcraft and black magic. There is an excellent bibliography included.

Other books on various aspects of the Craft are: Summers, M., **WITCHCRAFT AND BLACK MAGIC**; Rider, 1946, 28s. Williamson, H. R., **ARROW AND THE SWORD**; Faber, 1947, 10s. 6d. Davidson, T., **ROWAN TREE AND RED THREAD**; Oliver, 1950, 21s. Pennethorne-Hughes, C., **WITCHCRAFT**; Longmans, Green, 1951, 21s. Parrinder, G., **WITCHCRAFT**; Penguin, 1958, 3s. 6d. Michelet, J., **SATANISM AND WITCHCRAFT: a study in medieval superstition**; Trans. from the French by A. R. Allinson, Arco Publications, 1958, 18s. Williams, C., **WITCHCRAFT**; Mayflower Publishing Co., 1959, 12s. Robbins, R. Hope, **ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WITCHCRAFT AND DEMONOLOGY**, P. Nevill, 1959, 63s. Bouissan, M., **MAGIC: its rites and history**; Rider, 1960, 45s. Wedeck, H. E., **A TREASURY OF WITCHCRAFT**; Vision, 1961, 42s. Daraul, A., **WITCHES AND SORCERERS**; Muller, 1962, 36s. Briggs, K. M., **PALE HECATE'S TEAM**; Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962, 40s. Hole, Christina, **A MIRROR OF WITCHCRAFT**; Chatto & Windus, 1957, 21s.

MITHRAIC CULT?

The Grand Secretary of the Brotherhood of Light has drawn our attention to an inquirer writing in an occult monthly who asks if there are still any worshippers of Mithras. Should any readers of *Pentagram* know of any active Mithraic cult in Britain, perhaps they will kindly write to us so that their letters can be passed on to the poser of this interesting query.

Queries, observations and points of view on any aspect of Witchcraft are welcome. Please let us have your comments. But, if your letter requires a reply, enclose postage or a stamped envelope. Remember, we are not a commercial organisation and there are limits to which a small handful of people can be expected to subsidise *Pentagram* and any form of service for readers. Initial expenses have considerably exceeded £100; many people have made generous donations but these have only covered about a quarter of our expenditure to date.

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STREGA is a delicious Italian liqueur. It is also the Italian word for witch. The label from a bottle of Strega is reproduced here and the design includes an old and ugly witch with her broomstick and owl familiar. The design also includes a charming sketch of witch maidens and their horned escorts enjoying themselves. Witches' Coffee is made with Strega and hot coffee, with cold cream floating on the top. Try it sometime! Benevento, where Strega is made, is also the name of a game which Italian witches are said to have played at their meetings.

WHY THE MONOMARK?

"Why, when Witches give interviews to the newspapers, radio and television, do you use a Box Address?" So writes an inquirer.

The answer is simple. One prolific interview-giver has been evicted from a shop and two homes. A London Witch was evicted from her flat last year following certain press reports. The days of victimisation are certainly not dead yet!

Nearer "home", a mischief-maker who discovered the actual whereabouts of the principal sponsor of the WRA attempted to "extort money by menaces"—as the lawyers say.

The Monomark address has proved perfectly satisfactory for many correspondents and, already, useful work has been achieved. Anyone with reservations can be assured that confidential correspondence will be seen only by one person. No names or addresses are passed on to a third party without prior approval or at the writer's request.

PRESS COUNCIL BACKS WITCH

Full Text of Statement

In a national newspaper news story Mrs. Eleanor Bone, Tooting Bec, London, S.W.17, was said to have described how witches met and tried to invoke powers to do good. A photograph was published showing her robed, standing in an attitude of supplication.

On the following day the *South London Press* published a news story to the effect that the residents of Mrs. Bone's Rest Home were surprised to learn that she was a witch.

Mrs. Bone complained to the Press Council that a *South London Press* reporter gained admission to the Home by stating he was expected and that he had obtained her permission to speak to patients. His report implicated a personal interview with her whereas the remarks attributed to her had been taken from the national newspaper report. He had assured her staff at the Home that he would see her before his report was published but he did not do so. She had kept her business life and private life strictly apart and lived in a flat away from the Home. Other newspapers had respected her wishes that the name and address of the Home should not be disclosed.

Two members of Mrs. Bone's staff confirmed the statement that the reporter said he had permission from Mrs. Bone to visit the Home and that she would be "shown everything" before his newspaper was published. A patient informed the Council that the reporter asked her what she thought about Mrs. Bone being a witch.

Mr. C. Tipper, the reporter concerned, declared that after unsuccessful attempts by telephone to get into touch with Mrs. Bone he called at the Home and produced his business card. He was allowed to speak to three patients on the understanding that he contacted Mrs. Bone before anything was published. He understood that his story was not to be published until the following Friday but to his surprise it was printed in the Tuesday edition.

Mr. Eric Kinton, Editor, *South London Press*, told the Council it did not occur to any of the newspaper staff that Mrs. Bone, after all the national publicity she had received, would try to keep from her patients her association with witchcraft.

Mr. H. H. Wall, News Editor, told Mrs. Bone that had he known of her strong objection to the link he would have respected her request to suppress the name of her Rest Home.

At the request of the Press Council Mrs. Bone, Mrs. I. Barfoot, from her Rest Home, and Mr. Christopher Tipper gave oral evidence.

Mr. Tipper raised a new point—that when he telephoned his story to head office, he embargoed it so that it would not be published until he had spoken to Mrs. Bone.

A former staff man who wrote the story from the telephone dictation told the Council that Mr. Tipper told him he had been unable to contact Mrs. Bone but intended to telephone her later that day. Mr. Tipper did not make any request for an embargo line to be typed on his report.

The Press Council's adjudication, issued recently, was:

The "*South London Press*" is censured for publication of this article. The Council finds that the newspaper's reporter falsely represented to the complainant's staff that he had Mrs. Bone's permission to interview residents at the Rest Home and that subsequently he failed to make it clear to his newspaper that his report was subject to an embargo until such time as he had obtained complainant's permission for the publication of references to the visit to the Home.

BLACK MAGIC

Many inquirers have had reservations about the WRA in case it was in some way associated with black magic. They can set their minds at rest: the WRA is intended to assist in achieving a better understanding of the Old Religion, perpetuated under the modern name of Witchcraft; it has no desire to further the activities of any person or persons who may be concerned with the desecration of religious houses or burial grounds of any denomination.

A word of warning is appropriate here: it is apparent that there are various persons and groups throughout the country purporting to practice "Witchcraft" and who are soliciting membership for their "covens". Some of these are quite harmless, but there are others which are known to be "fronts" for groups which have no association with any aspect of the craft, religion, or magic. It is known that one such group, shortly to advertise for members, is organised by thoroughly undesirable people practising the most horrible sexual and other deviations. Please be extremely careful. Any reader approached by, or inadvertently approaching, such a group and who requires advice or assistance may write, giving full details, to the WRA.

"NEW DIMENSIONS" Occult Magazine Deserves Support

The WRA has no connection with the journal *New Dimensions*, or with the publishers, Helios Book Service Limited. Nevertheless *ND* is a brave venture and deserves support from all who are interested in the occult generally, and Witchcraft in particular. The following is an extract from the publishers' leaflet: *New Dimensions* believes that there is more to Man, more to the Universe, than "meets the eye". It wants man to expand his horizons—inwardly as well as outwardly. *New Dimensions* believes that man is greater than nature, that the proper study of mankind is man. That he needs a recognition and a knowledge of his own spirit and the means of its development through the channels of intuitional insight, mental realisation, emotional relationships, instinctual motivations and physical action in the world.

New Dimensions has published eight issues; it has been edited in England and printed in the USA for the first six; it is now wholly edited and produced in England. *ND* has included a number of articles on Witchcraft. *ND* deserves your support; a year's subscription (six issues) will cost you a guinea. The WRA can receive subscriptions for *ND*—send your guinea to BM/Eleusis, London W.C.1, clearly stating that it is for a subscription for *ND*. Those in doubt can send 3s. 10d. for a specimen copy.

PENTAGRAM

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BM/ELEUSIS, LONDON W.C.1.

By the way . . .

Among the many inquirers seeking help recently from a High Priestess known to us is a Roman Catholic priest.

A publication with the title "Complete Manual of Black Magic and Witchcraft" should be interesting—especially when the subtitle on the cover reads "Secret Rituals, Texts, Erotic Symbolism, etc."

Such a publication has recently appeared under the imprint of the Chapter Press for the Esoteric Lodge; the author is J. M. Alexander. The "Manual" is a 16-page quarto duplicated publication of which the first two pages are a Foreword by Dr Ludwig Gans. A number of interesting points are raised and discussed and the booklet is a useful addition to any comprehensive library on Witchcraft—but both the title and the subtitle are misleading. Expensive at five shillings.

Another publication during the past few months purports to contain all the Witchcraft rituals, together with other narrative material of an inconsequential—though vicious—nature. The author has gone to considerable trouble to misrepresent certain Witch personalities, even to the extent of reproducing part of a letter in such a way that the reproduction purports to be the whole letter. This sort of thing makes the whole publication highly suspect. Very expensive at twenty shillings.

The May 18 issue of *Life* contained a twelve-page feature on the Witches of Britain. While there may be many who question the desirability of this sort of publicity for Witchcraft, one must admit that the *Life* treatment was dignified and excellently-handled. Photographs of outdoor romps at the Rollright Stones and indoor rituals were skilfully shot and cleverly retouched. The text was intelligent throughout. The article has probably done much to counteract the sort of unfavourable publicity which has appeared in various publications in the past year.

A craftsman-silversmith living on a Scottish island is able to make items of jewellery to order. Pentagram rings, bracelets and pendants are popular lines. Inquiries may be made to *Pentagram* for forwarding.

Two museums of Witchcraft are worth a visit: the one at Castletown in the Isle of Man is best-known and was owned by the late Dr. Gerald Gardner. More convenient for readers living in London and the South/Midlands areas is the museum at Bourton-on-the-Water. A trip to the Bourton museum can easily be combined with a visit to the Rollright Stones.

Readers within convenient access to London and who are interested in the Celtic tradition generally, may like to know that the Ancient Druid Order holds a public lecture at Caxton Hall on the third Thursday in the month (not August) at 7.15 p.m. Guest speakers cover many topics of general occult interest. The quality varies considerably, but a visit is usually worth-while. Informal discussion afterwards, in a nearby refreshment house, is often more enlightening.

At a meeting of the Supreme Council on Thursday, July 9, 1964, David Sard was installed as Grand Hierophant of the Sovereign Imperium of the Mysteries. It is regretted that no new members can currently be accepted for the Sovereign Imperium of the Mysteries and appendant orders, including the Ancient and Mysterious Society of the Crata Repoa.