



# Children of CAIN

A Study of Modern Traditional Witches

MICHAEL HOWARD





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*Thus the Children of Cain became the inheritors  
of the Elder Worship, the Keepers of the Wisdom  
of the Elder Gods, and the True Custodians of  
Sacred Knowledge.*

Alogos Dhu'l-qarnen Khidir

## Preface

Over the last thirty years there have been numerous books written about Wicca, the modern form of neo-pagan witchcraft created by a retired Customs officer called Gerald Gardner in the 1940s and 1950s. Fewer books have been written about pre-Gardnerian and non-Wiccan 'traditional witchcraft' and today more and more people are becoming interested in this older version.

To counter-balance a lack of genuine information and misinformation on the subject, this book presents an overview of the modern traditional witchcraft, its various publicly known traditions and the leading personalities who were responsible for bringing them into the light of day. These include Robert Cochrane, Ronald Milland White and George Arthur Stannard, Evan John Jones, E.W. Liddell, Victor Anderson, Rosaleen Norton, Alastair Clay-Egerton, and Andrew D. Chumbley.

What is a witch? According to one modern book on popular Wicca a witch is 'a person who perceives vividly the connection between all aspects of life. Witches do not see spirit and matter as separate entities – they worship nature in stream and stone, plants and people. Witches are intensely aware of unseen natural energies [which they] make use mostly to help and heal.' (Moorey 1996). Compare this with the following description of witches in Wales as represented in popular belief at the beginning of the 20th century:

Welsh witches were divided into three main classes:

- 1) The black witches, male and female, who traded their souls in exchange for magical powers, using them for evil and cursing. Quick to take umbrage they were liberal with their use of curses
- 2) The white witches, who used their powers for the lifting of curses and healing. They sold love potions, foretold the future and were widely consulted by the gentry of the times as well as ordinary folk. They could, when aroused to extreme anger, curse people.

3) The third type were also practising white witches, always male, and called a wizard or wise man. He could also cure diseases and lift curses and usually travelled through the country selling his magical powers. In addition to these three types of witches there were men who could exorcise spirits by means of the cross and the Trinity and passages from the New Testament. They were classed as wise men and conjurors, but never referred to as witches, and were many times more successful at exorcising spirits than the clergy (Pugh 1987).

The differences between these two views of the witch divided only by a period of one hundred years is striking. To a certain extent, of course, they reflect the popular beliefs about witches and witchcraft at either end of the 20th century. However, the Welsh example does provide a clear insight into the nature of the Craft as it was before the modern revival. It also helps to illustrate the major differences between modern neo-pagan Wicca and traditional and historical witchcraft. These differences will become apparent in the contents of this book.

From the 16th century onwards there is ample evidence from historical sources, folklore accounts, legal records and later newspaper reports of the activities of witches and so-called 'cunning folk.' They were variously known to outsiders and their clients as witches, wizards (wise men), wise women, sorcerers, warlocks, enchanters, charmers, fortune-tellers, planet-readers (astrologers), pellers (from the Old Cornish for expellers or repellers) and healers. These magical practitioners operated widely in both rural and urban areas all over the British Isles until at least the beginning of the Second World War, and sometimes long afterwards.

These folk magicians were believed by their clients to possess the power of both the Second Sight (clairvoyance) and the Evil Eye (hexing or cursing), to be able to exorcise evil spirits and banish ghosts, locate missing persons and lost property by either divination or consulting spirit guides, cast spells to obtain love or money, heal the sick by the 'laying on of hands' or herbal remedies, foretell the future and, most importantly, counteract the malefic powers of the so-called 'grey' and 'black witches'. In the latter role the cunning folk sometimes assisted the local population as amateur witch-finders.

Although there are similarities between what the old-time witches did and some modern Wiccan practices (after all Gerald Gardner was initiated into a 'traditional' coven in the New Forest before the Second

World War), the belief system and range of magical techniques employed in traditional witchcraft are different in many ways. For instance the historical witch often practised dual-faith observance. Many of the charms and prayers they used were Roman Catholic in origin and predated the Reformation. They called upon Jesus, the Virgin Mary, the Trinity and the company of saints, rather than pagan gods and goddesses. Psalms were often used for magical purposes by the old cunning folk and still are by some modern traditional witches.

However, some elements of the old paganism did survive in traditional witchcraft and historians such as Professor Carlo Ginzburg have claimed that the medieval witch cult and its practice of the Witches' Sabbath was based on a mixture of demonology, Christian heresy and pre-Christian shamanistic beliefs (1990). Modern traditional witches, such as members of the Cultus Sabbati, continue to follow beliefs and practices based on the medieval version of the Witches Sabbath. The late Robert Cochrane, Magister or Master of the Clan of Tubal Cain, stated that traditional witchcraft was a surviving remnant of the ancient mystery religions, although he also affirmed that traditional witches were not 'pagans.'

Other aspects of the Old Ways survived in the popular folk belief in faeries. Some Victorian folklorists regarded the popular stories about faeries as degraded memories of the pagan Old Gods. There are numerous examples of historical witches receiving initiation and magical training from the Good Folk and the Queen of Elfhame ('Elf Home' or Faeryland). Some witches entered into 'faery marriages' with demon lovers and in return were granted the gift of the Second Sight, poetic inspiration, healing skills and a knowledge of herbal lore. This tradition of communion between witches and Faerie has also survived into modern forms of the Old Craft. Today many traditional witches revere the faery king and queen of as the witch god and witch goddess. It should be emphasised that the faeries, elves and goblins and the other elemental spirits recognised by traditional witches have nothing in common with the modern gossamer-winged New Age fantasy types.

In many instances in the Traditional Craft charms, prayers and healing techniques were passed down through families. Therefore we have historical evidence of hereditary witchcraft, sometimes known today in America as 'famtrads' or family traditions. The cunning folk also possessed a wide knowledge of astrology and plant and weather lore derived either from familial sources, written texts or spirit contacts. Many of the old-time witches were literate and educated. Several of the

famous cunning men or wizards of the past were doctors, schoolteachers or even clergymen who were fully conversant with medicine, botany, chemistry and astronomy.

Books on ceremonial magic (the stock-in-trade of the traditional witch or cunning person), fortune-telling and astrology were also available. These could be obtained from certain booksellers in London who specialised in the occult and pornography. In the 19th century several magazines featuring astrology, divination and magic were published and found a wide readership among those interested in such subjects. There is also evidence of home-grown grimoires or 'Black Books' circulating among practitioners of folk magic. These manuals of practical occultism contained spells, incantations to call on angels and summon demons, astrological data and herbal recipes. A famous example belonging to the 19th century Essex cunning man James Murrell. It surfaced in public a few years ago, having been owned by a local family for several generations and was offered to the Folklore Society. Cunning people, folk magicians and traditional witches also had access to famous medieval grimoires such as *The Key of Solomon*.

The modern traditions, groups and individuals described in the pages of this book claim to represent a continuity of practice and belief with the historical witchcraft described above. Many assert that their traditions pre-date the modern revival of the Craft. In some cases these claims are patently false. Familiar are the modern 'granny stories' from people who were initiated by their grandmothers and follow witch traditions with unbelievably ancient pedigrees.

Despite these fraudulent claims most of the publicly known traditions are genuine and can offer proof of their historical origins, although it is true to say that claims of a pedigree dating back before 1800 should be viewed with caution. This makes it difficult to assess the authenticity of the historical claims put forward by traditions such as the Pickingill Craft and the Order of the Shield described in this book. In these two lineages there are 'legends' or stories that have allegedly been passed down from Anglo-Saxon times or before.

However, as one modern practitioner of traditional witchcraft featured in this book, the late Andrew D. Chumbley, has said: 'The essence of the [Craft] tradition is not a doctrine, but a community of spirit that survives throughout the ages.' In relation to his own Old Craft tradition, the Cultus Sabbati, that can trace its history at least back to the 1880s, he said: 'We have inherited an oral tradition which relates an oath of historical descent to the present-day and leads onwards into a changing

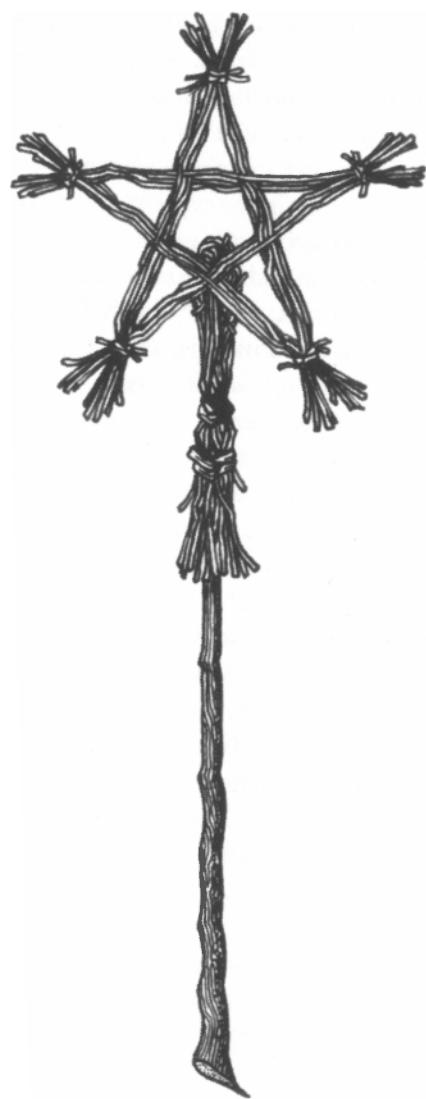
future. As part of this tradition we accept that each generation has its own version of practice and teaching.' (quoted in Hutton 1999).

In this sense the Traditional Craft has adapted to modern times while still retaining the traditional elements that make it unique and different from contemporary versions of neo-pagan witchcraft. It is still developing and evolving. In this book we will examine a wide range of Old Craft traditions and the talented people who inspired them. Sadly most of those featured are no longer with us in the physical world, but their contribution lives on in both the traditions they founded, which have survived their passing in one form or another, and in their continued influence from beyond the grave.

While they claim a historical and magical heritage from the old cunning folk and witches of earlier times, many of these modern practitioners have a more mystical and spiritual approach than their predecessors. They recognize that traditional witchcraft is an esoteric and gnostic mystery cult that has inherited elements of the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom. It has been claimed the Craft contains at its centre 'a spark of that mysterious dark angelic fire which first breathed life into the clay of this world' (Huson, 1970:18). As such it offers an alternative and legitimate spiritual belief system that is still relevant in the 21st century and that fact is emphasised throughout the contents of this book.

I would like to thank Soror TA and Frater AA of the Cultus Sabbati for their support during the initial writing of this book, which was a difficult time for me personally. My sincere and grateful thanks also go to Daniel A. Schulke, Graham King, Hannah Fox, Robert Ansell, Melissa Seims, Stuart Inman, Martin Lloyd, Dr Gillian Spraggs, the family of Ronald Milland White, and Shani Oates for their help with research and obtaining photographs.

Michael Howard



# 1

## Traditional Witch Ways

If you type the words 'traditional witchcraft' into a computer search engine you will come up with literally thousands of websites, forums and chat rooms on the Internet devoted to the subject. The websites about traditional witchcraft usually consist of miscellaneous and recycled information gleaned from old books on British folklore, history and mythology. Many also seem to draw their material from neo-pagan and Wiccan sources and some claim that traditional witchcraft is a kind of pre-Christian nature or fertility religion. Because of this they cannot be considered to be genuinely 'traditional' or representative of Old Craft. Other websites belong to specific individuals, groups, organisations and traditions claiming, with varying degrees of authenticity, to represent various forms of traditional or hereditary (family based) witchcraft.

It can be argued that Gardnerian Wicca has 'traditional' roots because Gerald Gardner was initiated into a pre-existing coven in the New Forest area of southern England in 1939. As we shall see later in this book, it has been claimed that this group originally contained members connected with the 19th century Essex cunning man 'Old George' Pickingill. Recent research by Craft historian Philip Heselton suggests the New Forest Coven had some members who followed a family tradition of occultism and witchcraft (2003). Also over the years several well-known Gardnerian Wiccans have claimed contact with traditional witches.

Patricia Crowther has said that in the 1960s she corresponded with a hereditary Scottish witch called Janet McDonald; Lois Bourne joined the White Goosefeather Covine in Norfolk in 1964; Eleanor 'Ray' Bone was allegedly adopted into an old hereditary covine in Cumbria in 194; and Doreen Valiente worked with Robert Cochrane and his Clan of Tubal Cain after she left Gardner's coven in 1957 and was also initiated into Charles Cardell's Coven of Atho in 1963. Valiente also claimed to have psychic contact with the spirit of a traditional witch from the past (1989: 99-117). Rosina Bishop, who initiated this writer into Gardnerian Wicca in 1969, knew Robert Cochrane through her friendship with Doreen Valiente. She had also been a student of an Oxfordshire cunning man called Norman Gills who knew Cochrane.

Many Wiccans also attended the open seasonal rituals organised by The Regency group in the 1960s and 1970s founded by two ex-members of Cochrane's covine. This was not unusual as at that time if you attended any neo-pagan, magical, druidic or Wiccan social event, conference or public ritual you were likely to meet the same people who belonged to all kinds of different groups and traditions. Therefore it can be seen that historically, if not practically, the demarcation line between Wicca and traditional witchcraft was often blurred.

What is real traditional witchcraft? One concise definition given by a modern practitioner says that it 'refers to a coterie of initiatory lineages of ritual magic, spellcraft and devotional mysticism' that operate as closed secret societies with formalised rites of entrance, an array of magical rituals, which are Christo-pagan or simply 'sorcerous' in their devotional character and have established hierarchies amongst [their] membership' (Schulke 2006).

A poetic description was given by Andrew D. Chumbley from the same Old Craft tradition, who said: 'The Traditional Craft is the nameless Way of the Arte Magical. It is the Path of Wytcha, the heart's calling of avocation to Cunning Man and Wise Woman; it is the Hidden Circle of Initiates constituting the Living Body of the Elder Faith. Its Ritual is the Sabbat of Dream-made flesh, below the feet of those who tread the crooked track of Elphame [the realm of Faerie]. Its Scripture is the Way of Wortcunning and Beast-changing, the treasury of lore remembered by those who revere the Spirits; it is the gramayre of ear-whispered knowledge, beloved of those who hold the secrets of the Dead and entrusted to they who look ever onward...If any ask about the Traditional Craft, their answer lies in its native land; the Circle of the Arte of Artes.' (Chumbley: Lammas 1997)

In slightly more prosaic terms, the same writer described traditional witches as 'guardians of the land' and their Craft as a magical 'path possessing a diverse array of aspects, ranging from the practical spellcraft generated at the level of folk magic – the artes of wortcunning and animal enchanting, through a learned spectrum of magical techniques, reaching to the heights of genuine mysticism' (ibid). Another traditional witch, who used to run a covine in Windsor in the 1970s, described it as follows: 'One of the most compelling experiences of the genuine mystery faith [of witchcraft] is that which awakens the dream of timeless reality – it invokes the old test of infinity or rebirth. We worship the Gods of wisdom, peace and natural power, which transcend all humanity.'

We practice old-age ways that go far beyond the scope of language from a time of no words.' (*Wax & Wane* magazine No. 1, Autumn 1975)

So in practical and more prosiac terms the term 'traditional witchcraft', as it is understood among its modern British practitioners, refers to any non-Gardnerian, non-Alexandrian, non-Wiccan or pre-modern form of the Craft, especially if it has been inspired by historical forms of witchcraft and folk magic. By 'pre-modern' is meant either before 1939, when Gerald Gardner was initiated into the New Forest Coven, or before 1920 when Dr Margaret Alice Murray's influential, but academically flawed, book *The Witch Cult in Western Europe* was published.

In her book, Dr Murray put forward her controversial theory that the descriptions of the practices found in accounts of the witch-trials actually represented the beliefs and rituals of an organised pan-European fertility cult surviving from prehistoric times. She claimed that the stories of witches worshipping the Devil were not evidence of a demonic manifestation, as the witch-hunters claimed, but obeisance given to the (male) chief witch of a coven dressed up in an animal mask and skins to represent a pagan horned god. In this respect she was partly right. However Dr Murray also believed that medieval witchcraft was the surviving remnant of a pre-Christian cult that had been demonised by the Church and persecuted as a heresy. She claimed it existed as an organised universal belief system all over Europe. Although modern academics working in the field of witchcraft history no longer accept Dr Murray's theories, her ideas heavily influenced modern Wicca and they still have their devoted followers among some neo-pagan witches.

The generic term 'Traditional Craft' or 'Old Craft' is also used today to refer to those witches, mostly following hereditary or family traditions, that claim to represent a survival of the historical witchcraft practised during the days of the Persecution. It should however be understood that there have been several revivals of witchcraft and neo-paganism over the last two hundred years, of which modern Wicca is only the latest. Many contemporary examples of 'traditional' and 'hereditary' Craft only date back to the early 1800s, although many claim an earlier historical pedigree. Some groups and traditions may be less than a hundred years old and it has been justifiably claimed that there was a significant revival of historical-type witchcraft just before the Second World War with several new covines being founded in the Midlands (McCormick 1968:174).

As a starting point to define the nature of the Traditional Craft, in the Oxford English Dictionary the word 'tradition' is explained as 'an opinion, belief or custom handed down from ancestors to prosperity, especially orally or by practice'. It can also mean 'artistic or literary principles based on accumulated experience and traditional usage.' In this respect the term 'traditional' refers to 'something based on or obtained by tradition, or resembling that of an earlier period of history'. This has been described in the context of the practice of witchcraft as 'an echo of an inner resurgence of knowledge' (Chumbley: Lammas 1997).

Therefore we have a tradition of knowledge, beliefs and rituals either passed down within the context of a family, a hereditary lineage, or based on experience and practices established over a long period of time by a group of people or individuals. This period could be fifty, a hundred or a hundred and fifty years. This also relates to the Hereditary Craft passed down through the generations of the same family and to beliefs and practices within an established group or tradition. The phrase '... resembling that of an earlier period of history' can mean a revival of historical witchcraft or, more controversially, a surviving tradition from the past. Obviously such a claim is easily made, but far more difficult to prove.

Having established what Traditional Craft is, it might be an idea to go back to the basics and discuss what exactly the word 'witchcraft' means as it comes with a lot of historical baggage attached. The term itself is of comparatively recent origins and dates back to the early medieval Anglo-Saxon period (approx 450-1065 CE). Before then practitioners of folk magic were described as sorcerers or by native terms that meant 'workers of magic'. Witch comes from the Old English *wicche* (plural), *wicca* (male) and *wicce* (female). It is related to *wiccan*, meaning to cast spells or perform magic, and *witega*, a diviner, wise man, prophet or seer. In Anglo-Saxon the phonetically pronounced word *wicca* ('witcha') became *wytche* or *witche* in Middle English and then 'witch' in modern English. Although in the witch-trials there were references to 'he-witches' or 'man-witches', the word 'witch' today is unisexual or non-sexual and can refer to either male or female practitioners of the Craft.

Witch and witchcraft are said to derive from the Indo-European root word *weik* that refers to both the practice of religion and of sorcery. It could therefore be said to mean 'the religion of the sorcerers' or magical religion. In general usage it was used to describe a magician, wizard or

soothsayer. It is related to the Old German *wigle* or sorcery and *wiglera* meaning sorcerer, the Middle High German *wik* or holy and the German *wihen* or *weilen* or consecrate, and *wikk* referring to magic and *wikken* or to predict. It also has connections with the Old Norse *wihl* or craftiness.

More controversially, modern Wiccans have claimed that the word 'witch' is related to the Anglo-Saxon *witte* or *witan* meaning wise. Hence they say that Wicca means the '[the Craft of the] Wise Ones', although most etymologists do not accept this definition. Despite this the term has caught on and is even used by some traditional witches. Another modern innovation incorrectly relates it to *wic*, meaning 'to bend or turn aside' derived from the Old Saxon *wikan*, Old High German *wichan* and Norse *vikja*. These words are the origin of 'wicker' and have nothing to do with witchcraft. Whatever its linguistic origins, in popular belief witchcraft is a term that seems to be historically linked with the practice of magical and religious rites, the acquisition of knowledge, and the practice of divination and seership. This sums up the craft and art of the modern traditional witch quite well.

Although the terms 'witch' and 'witchcraft' only date as far back as Anglo-Saxon times, there is little doubt that people of that era would have recognised the magical procedures practised in classical Greece and Rome. In those societies practitioners of sorcery (male and female) were reputed to meet at crossroads, in graveyards and remote parts of the countryside outside cities. They were believed to worship Hecate, the dark goddess of the underworld and the dead, with animal sacrifices. This deity still has an important role in some traditional witchcraft groups today.

The poet Virgil describes how the queen of the city of Carthage in North Africa consulted a 'woman of occult power'. This magical practitioner cast love spells and evoked the 'spirits that wander at night'. She achieved her results by calling upon Hecate and the Roman moon goddess Diana, another deity who is still revered today by some traditional witches. In Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the faery queen Titania is said to have been based on Diana. In the early 17th century King James I of England stated in his classic book *Demonologie* that contemporary witches worshipped Diana as the queen of the faeries.

Writing in the 1st century BCE, Horace said that female sorcerers called to the moon goddess Diana for help in their magical workings.

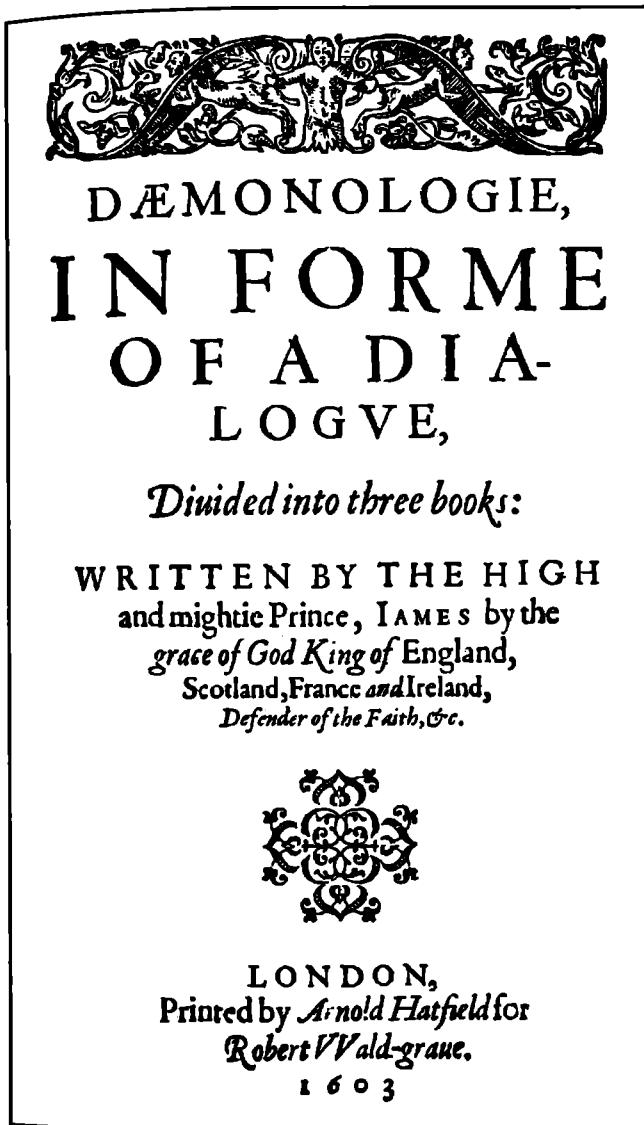
He described them as old hags with long wild hair who cast death spells on whoever offended them. Long and unruly hair was also seen as the sign of a witch in the Middle Ages. Horace also said that the sorcerers worshipped Persephone or Prosperine who gave them magical power. She was the daughter of the corn goddess Demeter and the wife of Pluto, ruler of the underworld.

The Greek and Roman witches gathered in secret at remote places in the countryside to perform their rites, just as their medieval counterparts did. At these ceremonies they spoke charms and prayers from a 'book of incantations', made wax images to magically blast or destroy their enemies and performed a secret rite to 'draw down the moon from the sky.' Similar rituals were practised by historical witches and still are by modern traditional witches.

The persecution of so-called witches did not begin with the arrival of the new Christian religion. Both the Greeks and Romans passed harsh laws against the practice of sorcery and any other forms of magic not officially sanctioned or condoned by the established priesthood of the state religion. In classical times the witch was regarded as both a social outcast and a dangerous threat to civilisation. The witch was quite literally 'beyond the pale' (the 'pale' being the fence or fortified palisade that divided a town or city from the wilderness beyond).

The witch was someone who opposed the established religion and social order, worshipped chthonic deities, worked illegal magic and was intent on undermining the moral fabric of society and thereby causing anarchy. As a result of these beliefs several thousand 'witches' or magical practitioners are known to have been executed in Rome and Greece. In early medieval times the first Christian laws against witchcraft were based on the old Roman ones.

It has been suggested that the folk image of the sorceress or 'wicked witch' of Greek mythology, such as Medea and Circe, may have originated in the worship of the ancient earth goddesses and the atavistic cult of their priestesses. An occult (hidden) knowledge of the visionary power and medicinal properties of roots, herbs and hallucinogenic fungi and plants may have been part of their priestly and magical training and would have singled them out as practitioners of sorcery. One classic example are the female pythonesses or seers who staffed the famous oracle at Delphi. It is believed that they sat on a stool above a fissure in the earth and intoxicated by the fumes that arose from it experienced prophetic visions. This tradition of witches being seers and using



1. Title plate the 1603 edition of *Daemonologie*, the witch-hunting apologia of King James I.

hallucinogenic plants in their magical praxis survived into the Middle Ages and beyond.

When the worship of the Olympian pantheon of deities became prominent in Greek religion these female followers of the old cult of the Earth Mother, who was also the goddess of the underworld, would have

been relegated to the status of witches practising folk magic. The conflict between new and old forms of religious belief has been a cause of social friction throughout history. The gods of the old religion always become the devils of the new one. This creates fear of so-called demonic forces and the ‘powers of darkness’ and the malefic power of their worshippers, whether we are dealing with pagan religions or Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism. Today in the modern Western world this attitude can be seen in the ignorant and xenophobic fear of Islam.

With the coming of Christianity, and the emergence of the Catholic Church as a new political force replacing the old system of the Roman Empire, paganism was suppressed and the Old Gods and nature spirits were transformed into devils and demons. The sites of worship used by the Elder Faith were taken over by the Church and laws were passed against such common magico-religious practices as swearing oaths at prehistoric standing stones, visiting wells and springs for healing purposes, gathering herbs at the correct lunar phase or planetary hour to cure the sick, wearing animal masks and costumes at the seasonal celebrations of the agricultural calendar, lighting lamps or candles at crossroads, making offerings at trees, or consulting those who communicated with the spirits.

In the 9th century CE the Anglo-Saxons specifically passed legislation to banish from the kingdom any *wicca* or *wicce* (male or female witch) or *wiglaer* (diviner). If they refused to be exiled they could face the death penalty. Aelfric, the abbot of a monastery at Cerne Abbas in Dorset, preached a sermon in the 10th century against pagan survivals. He said: ‘Some men are so blinded that they bring an offering to an earth-fast [standing] stone, and also to trees, and to well-springs, even as witches teach...’ (emphasis mine). In 1014 Bishop Wulfstan of York preached from his pulpit against the many ‘wizards and sorceresses’ who he claimed were infesting the land. In the same sermon he also denounced the continuing pagan worship by the peasantry of the moon, stars, sun, water, fire and the Earth itself as a female spirit.

Early laws against *wiccacraeft* (Old English for witchcraft) and folk magic formed the basis for the later draconian legislation when the Church demonised the Craft. Witchcraft was eventually outlawed as an anti-Christian satanic heresy and this directly led to the horrors of the witch-hunts across Europe. After the official persecution came to an end, with the so-called ‘Age of Reason’ and Enlightenment and the

repeal of the old Witchcraft Act in 1735, the unofficial persecution of alleged witches was still carried out under mob law. The courts also continued to legally prosecute practitioners of the Craft and folk magicians, usually for fraud, deception and obtaining money by false pretences. There were also court cases where ordinary individuals were charged with slandering and physically assaulting those they believed were witches and had bewitched them.

Several cases involved mobs of vigilantes taking the law into their own hands and attacking those they suspected of being witches. This included ducking or 'swimming' them in village ponds and 'scoring them above the breath' i.e. cutting them above the mouth in the belief that this would negate their power and lift curses. Before the old Witchcraft Act was finally repealed as late as 1951 and replaced by the Fraudulent Mediums Act several Spiritualists and gypsy fortune-tellers were prosecuted for allegedly pretending to have psychic powers. The most famous of these was the medium Helen Duncan who is sometimes incorrectly described by modern writers as a witch. It was her prosecution and that of another medium that led to the campaign by Spiritualists to get the old Act repealed.

There were several revivals of witchcraft in the 18th and 19th centuries. These drew on a wide range of esoteric influences including the contemporary interest in classical paganism, the practice of ritual magic, diabolism, Rosicrucianism, neo-Celtic druidism, Spiritualism and theosophical occultism, as well as the folk religion and magical beliefs of the surviving cunning men and wise women. This created a recognisable pattern of rural sorcery and folk magic combined with the more sophisticated practices and beliefs of urban occultists. This pattern can still be discerned today in many forms of traditional witchcraft. It is one of the hallmarks of its genuine nature and often represents the social make-up of the membership of traditional covines. One classic example was the pre-war New Forest Coven whose members were a social mix of middle-class Masonic-Rosicrucian occultists and local country people who were traditional or hereditary witches.

What are the major differences between modern neo-pagan witchcraft and the Traditional Craft, or what Doreen Valiente first referred to in public in 1964, the Old Craft? To answer this question we must risk the displeasure and even wrath of those whose beliefs and practices are not represented in this book or do not correspond to what is written here. They can speak for themselves if they so wish and it must be emphasised

### *Children of Cain*

that the writer is only speaking from his own personal knowledge and experience.

When discussing the 'Old Craft' we are using a generic term to describe many disparate forms of witchcraft. There is no unified organisation, no mysterious 'Council of Elders' (despite the grandiose claims made by cloak-flappers, charlatans and wannabes) no traditional witchcraft 'Bible' and no equivalent to the pope. What exists instead is a loose network of individuals, groups and traditions sometimes sharing common aims and contacts and perversely united in their diversity. While there are obvious differences between the various traditions there are also some, often striking, similarities. This will become clear in the contents of this book.

There are also, of course, groups and traditions that still prefer to remain underground and have no public profile or even contact with any others. Their privacy must be respected and that is why this book deals with only those Old Crafters who have emerged from the shadows into the light of the public gaze and revealed something of their beliefs and practices for all to see.

In general terms, the Traditional Craft differs from popular forms of modern Wicca because its methods of operation and working are based on a more informal and improvised structure. Although texts of practice and instruction are known, valued and used, there is less emphasis on the written word and 'doing it by numbers'. Traditionalists believe that too many written words and theatrical rituals get in the way of the real business of communing with the spirits. Procedures and scripts may be used as guidelines, but they are soon discarded when the power of Spirit quite literally takes over the proceedings. Having said that, in the past when traditional groups have inherited fragmented rituals they have not been reluctant to utilise the Wiccan or other ritual formats, including degrees of initiation, to give their workings a more formalised structure.

Probably because they work 'skyclad' or naked, Wiccans usually prefer centrally heated suburban sitting rooms for their rituals. Traditionals, on the other hand, usually meet outdoors. For this reason they prefer to wear special ritual garments such as hooded cloaks and robes, often worn over their ordinary clothes for warmth. For this reason in the past traditional groups were sometimes called 'robed covens'. Ritual nudity is however sometimes required for candidates at initiation or induction and for more rarefied magical purposes.

As one would expect from a tradition of working outdoors, the concept of the *genii loci* or 'spirits of place' is important in the Old Craft, as is the idea of the sacred or enchanted landscape. Traditional witches sometimes use the term 'blood, earth and ancestors' to encapsulate the numinous quality of the land and our past and present spiritual relationship with it. This reflects an emphasis on the use of the 'serpent power', 'dragon fire' or 'earth energies' at sacred sites or power centres for magical and spiritual purposes. Also acknowledgement and contact with nature spirits and elemental forces of the land.

Traditionally witches have always acted as the human guardians of ancient sacred sites and this can be found in folklore and fairy tales. In olden times it is claimed that witches used these special places and their natural energies for healing. This was done by dancing in circles or spirals on the 'holy ground' or around standing stones and tapping into the energy of the spirit paths or ghost roads (ley lines) that crisscross the landscape between ancient sacred sites. (Liddell: August 1998).

The person who first coined the word 'ley' to describe landscape alignments was Alfred Watkins in his seminal book *The Old Straight Track*, published in 1925. In his travels across the countryside as a representative for the family brewing company, Watkins noticed that ancient sites seem to have been deliberately aligned. These landscape 'markers' included megalithic circles, standing stones, burial mounds, springs, ancient beacon hills, Iron Age hill forts, groves of trees, henges or earthworks and even medieval churches and castles built on previously ancient sites or settlements. Anyone who has watched the popular British television series *Time Team* on Channel 4 will be aware of the continuity of use of sacred sites and settlements from prehistoric times to the Middle Ages and beyond. Some of the leys also seemed to follow the routes of the old 'green roads' or prehistoric trackways that became Roman roads and then pilgrim routes in post-Christian times.

Watkins' ideas about ley-lines were revived during the counter-culture of the 1960s by the hippies who called them 'dragon paths' and claimed that they were conduits for the so-called 'earth energy' flowing between the sacred sites or 'power centres'. Dowsers also claimed to be able to detect these energies using divining rods and said that the energy patterns fluctuated in accordance with the lunar phases. Scientific research has also revealed increased levels of background radiation at ancient sites and infra-red photography shows balls of light energy or 'orbs' emanating from standing stones. Some New Age followers believe

these orbs are actually manifested spirits. This modern concept of 'earth energy' was also known in the esoteric circles of the past. In Dion Fortune's occult novel *The Goat Foot God*, published in 1936, a character talks about 'sighting marks' on the 'lines of force' between 'power-centres' or ancient sacred sites.

In the 1990s Earth Mysteries researchers began to talk in terms of the linear landscape alignments being 'spirit paths' 'corpse ways', 'faery tracks' or 'ghost roads'. This new (old) theory saw leys as mythic routes taken by spirits through the enchanted landscape and it links in with the traditional witch's world-view. In fact as the research continued and expanded it took in such subjects as the use of threads and cords in magical practices, spirit traps, ritual sweeping, sacred kingship, shamanic initiations, astral travel, journeys to Faerie or the Otherworld, the Wild Hunt and the popular stories of witches flying through the air on broomsticks. (See Devereaux 2001 and 2003)

As a traditional witch has put it 'wherever the wanderer places his foot, there the power abides.' (Schulke: November 2006). The 'wanderer' is both the witch walking the Crooked Path across the land and, on an archetypal level the exiled first magician Cain wandering the pathways and byways of the world. The shrines encountered on the journey where the traditional witch works are Alfred Watkins' 'ley markers' such as former Celtic *nemetons* or ritual groves, individual old trees, holy wells and sacred springs, ancient hedgerows, standing stones, megalithic circles, old pre-Reformation churches, burial mounds and graveyards. These are the eldritch places where the witch communicates with the wights, or spirits of the land, and the shades of the ancestral dead so that an exchange of knowledge can be facilitated.

Wiccans revere and respect nature and many claim to be following a terracentric or earth-based nature religion. According to several of the American websites dedicated to traditional witchcraft, the Old Craft can be defined by its status as a 'nature religion'. None of the traditional practitioners that this writer has encountered over the last forty years or more defined their belief system in that way or classified themselves as 'nature worshippers'. In fact some of them were even reluctant to classify what they did and believed in as a religion at all.

Being a worshipper of nature suggests that humans are separate from it and in contrast traditional witches have an animistic view of the natural world. In practice this means that he or she has an important and intimate relationship with nature and the environment and its spirit

forces. They recognise the inherent magical properties and spirit forces in fauna and flora and work with them. The study and practical use of herbal and plant lore is an important aspect of traditional witch ways and this involves a magical and spiritual relationship with plant spirits or allies. Each covine (coven), group, clan or tradition also has unique totemic beasts that have a symbolic meaning and significance in their rituals and beliefs.

The old-style witch frequently lives either by birth or choice in a rural setting. In daily contact with their local environment and its realities, they recognise that nature is 'red in tooth and claw' and based on the law of the survival of the fittest. This realisation is reflected in the spirits revered in the Old Craft, who are 'twilight gods' often representing the primeval chthonic powers that were suppressed by the orthodox state religions of pre-Christian times. As one traditional witch told this writer: 'Nature has a sting in her tail. In dealing with the natural world there is always a price to pay, sometimes small, sometimes large. It depends upon the tariff that is set and it is non-negotiable.' (May 2006).

Because of the fragmentary nature of the Old Craft it would be incorrect to be too dogmatic about its beliefs and practices. However it is possible to identify certain hallmarks from published sources that make it very different from modern neo-pagan witchcraft. On the other hand it is impossible to convey to the reader the unique ambience that accompanies its practice unless they have actually experienced it. The major elements of Traditional Craft, as already discussed, include robed meets (gatherings) or magical workings; the importance of contact with the local spirits of the land and elemental forces; the use of 'earth energies' at sacred sites; and communion with the spirit world and the realm of Faerie.

As regards operative witchcraft, there is the use of magical dreaming, astral travel, psychic vision, trance-work, mediumship and divination, a personal relationship with familiars and spirit guides and the occult knowledge of plant lore and herbalism. In addition in some Old Craft groups and traditions there is the practice of dual-faith observance, such as the use of psalms and Latin charms in magical workings, saint worship, heretical Christian symbolism, demonological imagery and the practice of angelic magic.

The Horned God takes an important role and is sometimes exclusively worshipped and there is less emphasis on 'Goddess spirituality'. For this reason traditional covines are usually led by a male leader known as the

Magister (from the Latin for Master) or Devil and he initiates both sexes into the Craft. There is a use in spells and magical workings of controversial materials such as graveyard dust, animal and human bones; the adoption of ritual masks; shapechanging into animal forms; the ability to heal and curse; a belief in faery marriages; the spiritual concept of 'witch blood' or 'elven blood' descending through physical incarnations from the ancient past; the existence of 'the Mark' (sometimes known as 'the Mark of Cain') for recognising other witches and potential initiates; and specific forms of initiation including the magical transmission of occult knowledge and the physical and spiritual 'passing on of power'.

The Old Craft is also exemplified by close contact with the spirit world, an acknowledgement of the bright and dark aspects of the witch god and goddess and (in some traditions) the role of the Horned One as both Lord of the Wildwood and Lord of the Wild Hunt. These two aspects are sometimes represented by the Oak King and the Holly King, the twin gods ruling the waxing (summer) year and waning (winter) year respectively, based on an ancient Welsh legend. The witch god is also represented as the sacred king, the ancient vegetation god who suffers a sacrificial death at midsummer, descends to the underworld and is reborn at the winter solstice whose myth was borrowed by and adapted by Christianity. The God's death and rebirth reflects the journey of the sun through the seasons of the Wheel of the Year as it waxes and wanes. As the human priest-king he marries Sovereignty, the goddess of the land, who grants him kingship. At the end of his reign the sacred king suffers a ritual death for the well-being and fertility of his people and the crops.

'Old Hornie' is a potent and feral force and he demands respect from his worshippers. Robert Cochrane described how he had a vision of the Old One and said he appeared as vastly ancient and massive like a great and ancient tree in a dark forest. He felt he was in contact with an entity that was 'old from the beginning of the world'. (Valiente 1989:124). A few years ago this writer had a similar experience of the Horned God. His presence was terrifying and he appeared as a huge naked man with a stag's head and antlers exuding an aura of enormous power and strength.

In traditional witchcraft the dual-faced God is generally the ruler of fertility and death while the Goddess, in her many aspects and forms, has responsibility for birth, fate and the renewal of creation. Some传统inals regard the Goddess as the primary deity who gives birth to

the Gods, but in others there is an asexual or bisexual Supreme Cosmic Creator who exists behind the Lord and Lady and manifested them. As we have seen, in the classical world those magical practitioners who were called 'witches' followed the goddesses Hecate and Diana.

The Dianic cult spread across Europe with the Roman Empire and in Gaul, for instance, she was the supreme deity. Despite the protests of the Church, in the 5th and 6th centuries there was still the flourishing worship of Diana among the peasant class all over Europe. Diana was known variously as the 'maiden goddess', the 'guardian of hill and grove', the 'Queen of the Night' and the 'Lady of the Forest'. She was also called Lucina Lightbearer and Diana Trivia, as the goddess of the crossroads.

In the 4th century CE, the Church condemned the secret followers of the 'Society of Diana' as heretics. The clergy believed that these people had been deceived and led astray by Satan who had taken the form of the pagan goddess. In the 7th century when the Duke of Benevento was converted to the new religion his first pious act was to have a walnut tree cut down on his estate that was used as a meeting place by witches worshipping Diana. In 10th century references to the *Canon Episcopi* the clergy censured those 'wicked women who had been seduced by the Devil and believed they rode at night with the pagan goddess Diana.' In the Middle Ages the female leader of the Wild Hunt in Central Europe was often identified with Diana or the Germanic goddesses Frau Holda or Percht. During the 16th century a common name for the witches' Sabbath was 'the Game of Diana'. It was claimed that the witches 'adore the Lady of the Game and sacrifice to her as a god'. Diana was also the leader of the so-called 'good women' (witches) and led a supernatural army of spirits who rode across the night sky. The Italian historian, Dr Carlos Ginzburg, has claimed that these stories are folk memories of the ancient shamanic worship of a prehistoric goddess who was later identified with Diana and Artemis. (1990).

Other popular forms of the witch goddess found in European folklore include Habondia, Herodias (the name of the wife of the biblical King Herod Antipas), Sybille, Benzonia, Bona Domina (the 'Good Lady'), Nicnevin, Aradia and Mari, a Basque earth and sky goddess still worshipped by the modern Feri tradition in the United States. As the Roman Catholic Church's Holy Office of the Inquisition slowly convinced people that the Craft was a satanic cult, the old pagan goddesses dwindled in stature until they were eventually reduced to the minor status of the 'Queen of Elfhome' (Scottish dialect from the Old Norse for 'elf home') or queen of the faeries.

In Germany the witch goddess was popularly known as Dame Venus and she ruled the 'hollow hill' of the Venusberg. In 1630 a German sorcerer confessed that he had travelled to this mountain and had been taught the secrets of herbal lore by the goddess Venus, who he also called by the Germanic name of Holda. The cult of Dame Venus was widespread in southern Europe in medieval times and influenced both the romantic Grail legends and the troubadour tradition of 'courtly love' that was often associated with Christian heretics like the Cathars and the Albigensi.

Robert Cochrane said that the real name of the witch goddess was Fate and added that 'in the overcoming of Fate is the true Grail, for from this comes inspiration and death is defeated.' The Goddess is described as being 'as old as time and her face is as white and as cold as newly fallen snow. Her brow is as smooth and white as alabaster. Her hair is as dark as ebony, parted in the middle and hanging down to just below her shoulders. Beneath [her] thick black curving eyebrows are a pair of ice-cold, vivid blue eyes. The nose is long, thin and slightly hooked, while the mouth is large and generous with blood red lips' (Jones: February 1997).

The process of initiation or induction into witchcraft is a long and complex process. After initial screening, most traditions insist on the neophyte serving an apprenticeship or probationary training period of a year and a day. During this period a senior member of the group or tradition assesses them for their suitability and worthiness as a candidate for initiation. This period also gives the neophyte the opportunity of learning something of the outer nature of the tradition and a chance to meet its members socially to see if they are compatible. While few, if any, Old Crafters are primarily interested in this side of things, it is important that people who are working together magically can also interact socially with each other. In an ideal situation they will forge personal relationships with each other and bond as friends or become an extended 'family' or clan.

The year and a day is a period during which the applicant will be expected to keep a magical diary and a dream journal. He or she may also receive training in developing psychic powers, astral travelling, the attainment of trance states and the recall of past lives. In the later stages of the training the probationer may also be expected to carry out solitary rituals or join in with rituals practised by the group.

Initiation is defined as the admission of a person into a mystery, society or religion and it refers to a new beginning. In terms relative to the Craft,

it is a rite of passage and the first step on the quest for the Grail i.e. direct gnosis (divine knowledge) of the Godhead. As Robert Cochrane explained it: 'The Faith is concerned with the Truth, total Truth. It is one of the oldest religions, and also one of the most potent, bringing as it does man into contact with the Gods and man into contact with self.' (Cochrane, 1965). In purely spiritual terms, initiation into any form of witchcraft should lead to a heightened state of awareness. During this the initiate contacts the other realities that exist beyond the material confines of the material world. If the initiate has not previously experienced this realisation then this first contact with the Unseen can be an intensely emotional and traumatic experience and change their lives. In rare cases it can lead to mental or emotional instability and even physical illness.

There are certain key elements in traditional initiations, such as the probationary period during which oral teachings are passed to the candidate. In the actual rite of initiation or induction there may be an 'ordeal' that the candidate has to experience and suffer to prove their sincerity and they are worthy to enter the Craft. The central part of the initiation ritual is the 'passing on of power' from the initiator to the initiated. In the old days this might be through a sexual rite of induction performed by the witch master or the priestess depending on the candidate's gender.

Today it takes a variety of forms which, while different, are no less potent. This act links the initiate to the patron and ancestral spirits of the covine, clan or tradition and is followed by an oath of allegiance to the Craft. A new name is usually given to the initiate and he or she will then be known by it while in the circle. The ritual ends with the formal introduction of the new member to the assembled covine, followed by the communion or sacramental meal shared by all those present.

In the old days a formal pact with the Horned God was signed in the blood of the initiate and their name was added to the list of existing members in the covine's Black Book. They would also be given the *Diablo stigmata* or Devil's Mark, usually a small ritual tattoo on the arm or hand. This could be in the form of a spider, toad or snake or perhaps a series of dots or a magical symbol of significance to the covine or its parent tradition. Today some traditional witches, like those following the Whitestone tradition, still carry out these archaic rites, including sexual induction, but in practice these may cause (and has caused) problems in our modern society.

There are forms of initiation into the Old Craft that some consider are just as valid as the full physical version above. Others include the transmission of occult knowledge from an initiated witch to a student using magical texts or grimoires. Various home-made manuals of magical practice exist in traditional witchcraft and some of the historical examples are *The Devil's Granary*, *The Bonesmen's Bible* and *The Devil's Plantation*. Connected with this form of literary transmission is also the passing down or passing on of magical artefacts from one witch to another. These might be wands and staves, fetishes or spirit images or special stones. Such power objects may provide a physical and psychic link with past practitioners, or with the spirit forces that occupy them.

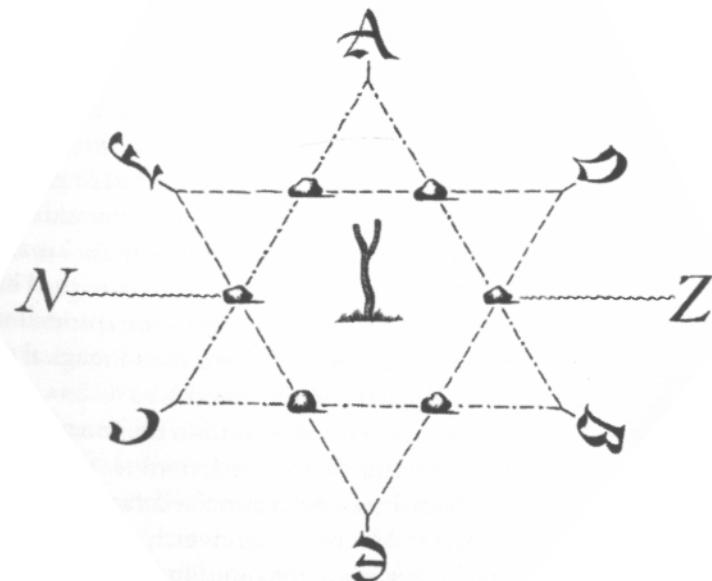
This leads us on to the vexed question of 'self-initiation', or more correctly 'self-dedication'. Opinions differ on this subject, but the late Evan John Jones, who was a member of Robert Cochrane's covine in the 1960s and revived the Clan of Tubal Cain several years after his death, was adamant that it was a valid form of entry into the Craft. He said: 'If a person is of serious intent, one night they can go out at midnight on the full moon and make their own pledge to the Goddess and the old Gods in truth, honesty and sincerity. This sort of pledge has as much validity as any formal oath sworn to the group' (1990:27). Not all Old Crafters will agree with this statement. They insist that the candidate must go through a proper initiation ceremony into an established and accepted group, lineage or tradition before they are recognised as being true members of the Old Faith.

Once a new member has been accepted into a covine and/or tradition they are given instructions on the symbolism and use of the various ritual tools of the Craft. In traditional covines the principal ritual tools are the stang, the besom or broomstick, the cauldron, a stone, the drinking cup and cords. Some covines also use a black-handled knife, a white-hilted knife, and sometimes a sword and the scourge. Additional ritual objects may include a stone head or a human skull, animal or human bones, crystals and magical gems, a scrying mirror, a censer, lanterns, masks and fetishes or spirit images.

The stang is the primary ritual tool in traditional witchcraft and is made of yew, ash or blackthorn depending on its use and symbolism. It is a forked staff and is sometimes carved at the top with the face or head of the Horned God. It usually stands in the north of the circle and represents the presence of Old Hornie and the divine authority he grants to the Magister as head of the covine. In some traditions, such as Robert

Cochrane's Clan of Tubal Cain, the stang is moved around the circle at each seasonal rite and stands at a different compass point each time. It is then garlanded with the relevant seasonal flowers, foliage and symbols appropriate to the festival that is being celebrated.

In other traditions the stang is symbolic of the Tau Cross on which the Lord of Light is sacrificed. When used in this way two crossed arrows and a small sickle are fixed to the shaft of the stang. They represent the weapons used to sacrifice the God or his human representative. A human skull and crossbones are also positioned at its base to represent death and resurrection. If the bones are crossed they symbolise death and if straight rebirth. In the fork of the stave a lighted candle or lantern is placed to symbolise the attainment of spiritual illumination, gnosis and enlightenment that is the ultimate goal of the spiritual path or quest. The stang can also represent *Yggdrasil* or the World Tree in Norse-Germanic mythology, the Cabalistic Tree of Life in mystical Judaism, the biblical Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the garden of Eden myth, the *Axis Mundi* or World Pillar of ancient shamanic belief, and the Pole or North Star, the symbolic Nowl or Nail around which the heavens revolve.



2. Magical diagram showing a stang, or witch's forked staff, set in the centre of a sixfold plot. Courtesy Museum of Witchcraft.

Some traditionals also use a 'blasting rod', which is usually in the guardianship of the Magister. This is a blackthorn staff and, as its name suggests, is used on the very rare occasions when a hex, curse or banishing may be required. The wand or 'conjuring stick' can be made of antler, bone (animal or human), or various woods depending on its magical use e.g. yew for necromantic rites, hazel for attaining wisdom or dowsing, willow for clairvoyance, birch for fertility, assisting easy childbirth and general healing etc. Some wands are phallic tipped, surmounted by a pine-cone or a spirit image or forked like a miniature stang.

The besom or broomstick is well known from medieval woodcuts and illustrations in fairy tales of old hags flying through the air with a pet black cat as pillion passenger. As we have already seen, there are many folkloric accounts of the 'Good Women' riding on forked sticks to meetings with Diana, Frau Holda and Dame Habondia. In the Middle Ages, and more recently, witches used the *Unguentum sabbati*, (Sabbatic ointment), 'flying ointment' or 'lifting balm' to facilitate astral travel. This preparation was made with narcotic herbs and smeared on the shaft or handle of the broomstick. When the witch 'rode' the stick the ointment came in contact with her skin and entered the bloodstream. We will be examining the use of the flying ointment in more detail in the later chapter on the Sabbatic Craft.

In modern times the besom is sometimes used to sweep the meeting ground or the precincts of the Circle of Arte before a ritual. This is a symbolic act of purification creating a sacred space 'between the worlds' and allowing access between Middle Earth and the Otherworld. In some traditions the Circle of Arte is entered by stepping over the broomstick or a crossed sword and besom laid on the ground at its edge. This is a symbol of the bridge that joins the mortal world to the spiritual realm. It is also an act that emphasises the role of the besom as a magical vehicle used by the witch for travelling 'between the worlds'.

The cauldron holds an important position within the inner mysteries of the Old Craft. It is a symbol of the divine feminine, the life force, creation, birth, fertility, spiritual transformation and regeneration. It is the cosmic womb of the Great Mother, from which all human beings and living things came at the beginning of time, and the void, abyss or magical well that has the power to restore the dead to new life. The cauldron also has the transformative power of rebirth and of initiation into the Mysteries. The cauldron is symbolic of the faery mound, the

cave and the Hollow Hill 'beyond the setting sun' ruled in some traditions by the Old Queen, the dark goddess of the underworld, and/or the Old Horned God. At the winter solstice the 'Child of Promise' or young Horned King is born as the 'star child' and Lord of Light and it is to the cauldron he must return for rebirth when he suffers the ritual death at the high noon of summer.

One traditional source has described this ritual object as follows: 'The cauldron...is one of the most extensive and important symbols of power...When the witch leaps over the cauldron, he or she is spanning the universe, Timelessness, Being and non-Being. We are acknowledging the Circle of Infinity – the same circular rhythm of sun and moon... the never-ending track of transmutation. The cauldron is the universe, and when it is upon the earth and covering the flames, it is powerfully transformed into all things. It becomes the four elements, the womb of the Great Mother, the fire of the Great Father, darkness, light, abundance and peace. It is the cosmic looking glass, reflecting external and internal change.' (*Wax & Wane* #1, Autumn 1975).

Some traditional witch groups will not allow any metal in the circle. This is because they believe that it interferes with the flow of 'earth energy' along the spirit paths and also disturbs and drives off the spirit guardians who protect the ancient sacred sites or 'power centres'. Instead of using metallic implements they mark out their meeting ground or circle with old-fashioned farm tools made from wood. They may also use an old-fashioned ritual knife with a wood, horn or bone handle and a flint or obsidian blade. Other traditions have no problem with metal tools and use them to cast the circle, direct power and control and subdue manifested spirits. They liken the sword, for instance, to the plough used to mark out fields from the surrounding wilderness and define or destroy boundaries.

The ritual knife, or athame, was originally a killing weapon used for sacrifices and blood offering. Reflecting this original use, in the medieval grimoire *Key of Solomon* the magus is instructed to consecrate it by dipping the blade in the blood of a black cat. An iron knife was also used by the old cunning folk to banish elementals, nature spirits, ghosts and demons. Ordinary people would place a knife or a pair of shears or scissors on windowsills or under the doormat to prevent witches and faeries entering the house.

It is probable that the coven sword is a comparatively recent addition to traditional witchcraft. It may have been borrowed from Golden

Dawn-type workings when ceremonial magicians joined the old covines. In former times only a wealthy gentleman could afford a sword. They were not carried by the average peasant and were the weapon of choice of a knight or noble. It is also a possibility that where the Magister of the local covine was also the lord of the manor or a wealthy landowner then he may have introduced a sword into its set of ritual tools.

The stone in the Craft can represent several different things. Sometimes it is the central altar on which the other tools are displayed and offerings are made. It can also be an actual stone head or standing stone, sometimes phallic in shape, referred to as the Godstane or God Stone. In this form stone is an omphalus representing the Axis Mundi. It symbolises the Horned One and his solar phallic energy and can be used in initiation rites and sex magic. It can also take the form of a whetstone used to sharpen the blade of the sword or athame.

Other forms of this ritual object are crystals used for scrying and healing, hagstones for protection, psychic self-defence and facilitating visionary dreams, and 'Troy stones' for trance work. The latter is a flat stone inscribed or painted with a spiral or maze design or any other suitable magical sigil. This symbol is meditated upon and slowly traced with a finger until a light trance is achieved allowing the user to contact the spirit world. In general stones are powerful magical objects and natural psychic batteries that can store magical energy.

Cords are used as symbolic items of ritual clothing, in initiations, as 'spirit traps' and in spells. In their latter use they are often knotted and used to bind a spell or, when the knot is undone, release the spirit force or the spell's inherent power. A cord that is used in this way is sometimes known as a 'witches' ladder' and may have feathers, bones or beads added to it. In Robert Cochrane's tradition cords are worn as symbols of the hangman's noose and are connected with the binding of Fate, the ultimate name according to Cochrane of the goddess of the witches. Cords are also associated with the witches' rosary, used for meditation and acquiring trance states, and as a symbol of subjugation, submission, surrender and discipline. In some traditional groups they are used with the scourge as a means of ritual purification and raising psychic power.

In Old Craft covines the modern trend towards running organisations by committees is not encouraged and for that reason they can appear to outsiders to be autocratic in nature. However, officers are usually elected by the members or chosen by the spirits to take specific roles in the running and administration of the covine or clan and its rituals and

magical working in accordance with their personal skills and natural abilities. These roles are usually the Magister ('Master') or 'Man in Black' or 'Devil', the Magistra (from the Latin 'Mistress'), Lady or Dame, the Maid or Maiden, the Verdelet, and the Summoner. There may also be other additional officers such as the Scribe, the Seer or the Mistress of the Robes whose functions are self-explanatory.

In most traditional groups it is the Magister, 'Devil' or witch master who rules the covine and is the MC or 'master of ceremonies' presiding over the rituals. The female Magistra or Lady takes the role of priestess and is also the channel through which the authority and power of the Goddess flows into the circle. Usually, not always, she will take a secondary position to the male leader or in some progressive groups the Master and Mistress will rule together equally. In his absence the Lady can take over his role completely. She may also have a younger female assistant known as the Maid or Maiden who can deputise for her when she is not present in the Circle of Arte.

In the Cochrane tradition, although the Magister nominally leads the clan, the real 'power behind the throne' is the Maid and she grants him his authority. Robert Cochrane explained this in terms of the esoteric truth that the outer (physical) world is the world of illusion, a mirror reflection of the inner (spiritual) world. A mirror reflects opposites so what is seen externally must be the opposite of the inner reality. Unfortunately Cochrane's critics have frequently misunderstood this explanation and as a result he has been falsely labelled as a male chauvinist. By contrast in the modern Pickingill Craft in eastern England all the rituals are led by women. Allegedly this practice dates back to the medieval French witch cult and to pagan Northern Europe where the priestess honoured the Horned God and was his bride and consort. Some traditional groups also followed the old practice of having a membership of six women with a male leader. According to Robert Cochrane, seven was always the number of members in the old rural covines.

Some writers on witchcraft have claimed that the casting of a circle for magical workings is a recent innovation borrowed from ritual magic. Others point out that the use of circles for ritualistic use was known in Anglo-Saxon times, the classical world and even as far back as prehistory when the megalithic culture built their rings of standing stones across the land. Those of the 'old school' claim that in the old days witches did not work in artificial circles, but used the existing stone circles and earthworks. Whatever the arguments for and against this claim, it is a

fact that the circle has been sacred to humankind since the earliest times as a symbol of wholeness, spiritual unity and physical and psychic protection.

One of the functions of the Circle of Arte is for keeping out evil spirits or negative influences and to act as a container for the psychic power that is raised, although obviously it has both those uses. However it is fundamentally the magical 'space between the worlds of men and the Gods'. It represents the bridge, the gate, the doorway, the portal, the stile, the 'gap in the hedge' through which entry can be gained to other dimensions beyond our own. It is cast or raised by using the rod, sword or knife or by a human hand or finger if no other ritual tool is available. It can be consecrated with the material representations of the elemental forces of water, fire (a blazing torch, a candle or lantern, ash and soot), and air (incense).

In the Cochrane tradition a physical boundary is actually created by digging a ditch or 'moat' around the meeting ground and filling it with water and/or wine. This symbolises the *rath* (Irish Gaelic 'fort') or earthworks used by ancient man and later associated in folklore with the homes of the Good Folk or faeries. The circle is entered by stepping over a stang or a crossed besom and sword laid on the ground at its edge representing the symbolic bridge between the worlds.

Some witch traditions call upon the watchers or guardians of the four quarters representing the elemental forces and symbolised by the Mighty Ones or four kings and queens. Recognition with suitable offerings of the *genii loci* or 'spirits of place' and the wights or land spirits is also made before a rite begins so that they can give their blessing on the proceedings.

The Old Ones, the Lord and Lady, or the Goddess and the Horned God, and the patron and ancestral spirits of the tradition or group are also requested politely to witness the rites and offer their protection and guidance to the proceedings. Candles or lanterns are usually lit and placed around the circle to mark the compass points. If a fire is required then it is placed in the center of the working area. Traditionally it is not lit until all the participants have entered the circle and the ritual proper is ready to begin. An improvised altar can be created by laying a cloth on the ground or utilising a natural feature at the working site such as a large stone or the base of a cut down tree.

In pre-Christian Northern Europe the important seasonal festivals of the year, which later transmuted into folk customs, were based on the

solar and agricultural calendar. At midwinter or the winter solstice in December the rebirth of the sun was celebrated. At the turning of the solar year, the liminal and transitional period of the Twelve Days, ordinary people dressed up in animal costumes to represent the chthonic powers of darkness and the spirits of winter who were banished at this time. This custom, although condemned by the early Church, survived into popular folk customs in the post-Christian period.

At the vernal or spring equinox in March the new growth of vegetation and the imminent coming of summer was celebrated with fertility rites and the 'sacred marriage' of the God and Goddess, which is depicted on prehistoric rock paintings in Scandinavia. This was followed at midsummer or the summer solstice by an acknowledgement of the zenith of the sun's power when it is at its highest point in the sky. Later in the summer the sacrificial death of the God was marked. At the autumn equinox rites of thanksgiving were performed to the Gods for the successful gathering in of the harvest. In the late autumn came the festivities marking the beginning of winter and the dark season.

Not all modern traditional witches celebrate the Wheel of the Year with seasonal rites. If the date of a meet or working happens to fall near a festival then they may include seasonal symbolism in it. Those who do recognise the festivals meet on Candlemass Eve (February 1st), Walpurgis Night or May Eve (April 30th), Lammas Eve (July 31st) and Hallows (October 31st). They may also gather at Yule, (December 21st/22nd), Twelfth Night (January 6th), Lady Day (March 25th) and Midsummer's Eve (June 23rd).

Esbats, smaller meets to discuss business or practice minor magical workings such as divination and healing, are held monthly, usually at the full or new moon. Some Crafters still follow the Old Calendar abandoned in 1752, which is eleven days out of alignment with our modern one, to time their celebration of the seasonal festivals.

One example of a Candlemass ritual as by traditional witches today has been given by Evan John Jones (1990:170-176). The rite is concerned with purification and banishing the old year so the new one can be welcomed in. This is done by scattering salt around the circle and then a seed of grain is planted in a container. This is representative of the fact that in death there is the promise of rebirth and new life. At Lammas the resulting plant will be harvested a symbolic of the sacrifice of the God. This Candlemass ritual also includes an enactment of the Wild Hunt with the Magister representing its leader and chasing the other witches across the countryside.

A member of a traditional covine that was based in Windsor in the 1970s referred to earlier has described how they celebrated Hallowe'en or Samhain:

The Wild Ride of Samhain crosses the gulf that is the 'day between the years'. It is led by the high priestess for the God is in the Otherlands. The meeting could be presided over by the Fox. Apples are dooked [ducked] and the Bale [fire] is lit. The cauldron sings and flickering candles will cradle unknown shadows. Hallowe'en is where we 'always meet again' and is that astonishing time in which we revive sad and happy memories; skulls, ghosts, cobwebs, ghosty and ghoulie, fortune-telling and unusual games and the incense of the Crone. Cutting through the symbols and the age-old traditions, Samhain's special significance lies in its unification. This magical feast, in which living and spirit re-meet, wherein bonding is free-bound, marks the end of the year. It is one of the major celebrations during the turn of the cosmic tide. Let the feast be a grand one. Let the rite be joyful. May we cherish our oneness and dispel all grief and fear at the Dumb Supper, for we have no tears...funerals are for the dead. Samhain is for the ever-living.

*(Wax & Wane No. 1, Autumn 1975).*

The Dumb Supper mentioned in this account refers to the old folk custom of laying an extra place at the table for departed spirits or the offering of food to the ancestral dead.

Where did the old-time witches, and their modern counterparts, meet to celebrate their rites? Traditionally it had to be close to running water, even though folk belief said it was impossible for a witch to pass over it, where two or three streams or rivers met, near a weir or waterfall, at an ancient tree, a prehistoric standing stone, or a crossroads. In the old days the place where three or four roads converged was often used for burials, especially of suicides, murderers and witches who were laid in unconsecrated ground. They were also a popular site for gallows and gibbets and where traditionally dark magic was practised, hence the popular term 'dirty work at the crossroads'. Crossroads often marked where the boundaries of several parishes met.

Liminal places like the edge of woods where they meet moorland or open countryside, and beaches or cliffs where the sea meets the land, were deliberately chosen by old-time witches for their rites because of their Otherworldliness. They were regarded as physical gateways

between the material world and the spirit world. Any hedge where oak, ash and thorn grew was also regarded as one of these liminal entrances. As we have seen, witches also convened at prehistoric sites such as wells and springs, burial mounds, earthworks, megalithic circles, hill forts and former Celtic nemetons or sacred groves.

Uncultivated plots of land, known in folklore as the Devil's Acre or No Man's Land, were also used as meeting places for the same reason. There is a village in North Devon called Nomansland or No-Mans-Land, which is so called because the boundaries of four parishes meet at its crossroads. In Scotland pieces of uncultivated land were known as the Gudeman's croft or Cloutie's Croft, both popular nicknames for Auld Hornie, Old Splitfoot or the Devil. At Elgin in 1602 several local men were called before the kirk (church) session to explain why they had reserved a plot of land for the Devil. They said it was a peace offering to the Old One so he would not blight their crops and animals. The Scottish novelist Sir Walter Scott compared the tradition of the Gudeman's Croft to the *temenos* in Ancient Greece, a piece of land that was set aside and regarded as sacred and dedicated to the worship of the pagan gods (McLellan 1957:62-63)

Historically churchyards and ruined churches were also favoured for witch meets, especially those built on the ancient sites of pagan worship. Unfortunately their use of such places gave the witches a bad reputation among the ignorant. Today if evidence of such places is discovered the newspapers react with sensational headlines about so-called 'black magic' rites and satanic practices. An example of was provided in the early 1960s when a series of magical working were carried out in several ruined churches in Norfolk. The newspapers at the time got over-excited because one of the churches used was on the royal estate at Sandringham. In 1963 evidence of a necromantic ritual was found in a ruined church on a hilltop at Clophill in Bedfordshire.

A media sensation was also caused in the 1970s when the Windsor cow mentioned previously was disturbed by a farmer while convening at a ruined church near the village of Bix near Henley-on-Thames in Berkshire. Although the story was picked up by the local press and a Sunday newspaper, which inaccurately claimed that local villagers were living in fear of 'black magic' rites, the farmer told the police that he had no objection to the witches meeting on his land. The church was on the site of a former pagan shrine and was well known locally for its powerful psychic atmosphere and associated paranormal phenomena.

### *Children of Cain*

From the description of the beliefs and rituals of the Old Craft in this chapter the reader will hopefully have obtained some understanding of traditional witch ways. As we shall see, when we examine the various publicly known traditions in detail, those who follow the Crooked Path of the Old Craft today do so because they are seeking the Grail – the archetypal symbol of the goal of spiritual illumination and gnosis that is the ultimate aim of the spiritual quest or journey. True magic is a manifestation of the yearning of the human spirit for mystical union with Godhead; the return of the divine spark to the Source from which it originally came at the beginning of creation.

If performed correctly, humbly and with sincerity, the Old Craft provides the means to conquer Fate and achieve that blessed state of union and completion whereby the soul can be liberated from the material cycle of death and rebirth. Concealed within the mythos, rites and rituals of the Old Craft are the keys to understanding the eternal mysteries of life, death and the universe. As it was once said: “Seek and ye shall find...”

## 2

### The Clan of Tubal Cain

The Clan of Tubal Cain, or the Royal Windsor Cuveen as it has sometimes been called, is the name of a traditional witchcraft group founded by the late 'Robert Cochrane' (1931-1966) in the early 1960s. He was one of the most fascinating, enigmatic and controversial figures of the modern Craft revival. He wrote no books and only a handful of articles in obscure magazines. Most of what we know about Cochrane's beliefs and practices comes from a series of letters written to several correspondents and the personal recollections of those he worked with. Over forty years after his premature death debate still rages as to whether he was a genuine hereditary witch, as he claimed, or a *poseur* who invented his own tradition.

Robert Cochrane was born into a large family of eight children living in West London. He stated that he lived in poverty in a slum and that comment upset his family as in fact it was a respectable working class area of the capital between Hammersmith and Shepherds Bush (pers.com Martin Lloyd, 17th November 2009). Cochrane may in fact have been referring to a period in his early life as an art student when he followed a bohemian lifestyle and lived in squats. Some of his other relatives lived in the Midlands and some emigrated to Australia.

Cochrane lived in London throughout his childhood and in the Second World War he experienced the Blitz when every night for several months the German Luftwaffe bombed the city. By his own admission, he was a bit of a tearaway when he was young and had a violent temper that frequently got him into trouble with his peers. In a letter to one of his correspondents, he admits that as a young man he was a threat to all those around him. He added that his broken nose and scarred face were a lasting testimony to a violent period in his life. This only ended when he met a girl that he later married.

Cochrane also served in the Army in the early 1950s, doing his then compulsory two years of National Service. Unfortunately military life does not seem to have suited Cochrane because he went absent without leave. As a result he was sentenced to ninety days imprisonment in a military prison at Colchester in Essex. His father, who had served in the Coldstream Guards and was mentioned in despatches during the Battle of the Somme in the First World War, was not impressed (pers. com Martin Lloyd, 24th November 2009 and 30th November 2009).

Cochrane spent his early working life as a blacksmith working for London Transport in a foundry. This has been since cited as the reason why Cochrane called his coven the 'Clan of Tubal Cain', after the biblical first smith. In the Industrial Revolution many of the old iron masters called their foundries either after Tubal Cain or the old Roman god of smithcraft and fire, Vulcan. In fact Cochrane had more esoteric reasons for choosing that particular name.

In the Old Testament the blacksmith and hunter Tubal Cain is said to be descended from Cain, the 'first murderer' agriculturist and city builder who is also credited with inventing weights and measures. In esoteric traditions, Cain was supposed to have been the result of a forbidden liaison between Eve and Samael (Lucifer). Tubal Cain is also a very significant figure in Esoteric Freemasonry and this may also link with traditional witchcraft as it has been suggested they influenced each other (see Liddell 1994).

Later Robert Cochrane and his new wife worked as bargees on the narrow boats that transported coal and other goods along the canals in the Midlands. They nursed one of the narrow boat owners through an illness and as a result were accepted into this closely-knit community. Because of their kindness Cochrane learnt about the customs and folklore of his new friends. He later claimed that traces of the 'Old Faith' could be found in the symbols used in the colorful folk art that decorated the boats. These included designs such as the rose and the castle and both these symbols featured prominently in the rituals of Cochrane's form of the Craft.

In 1997 writer Tony Steele provided a possible confirmation of Cochrane's belief that the boat people were connected with witchcraft. Steele claimed contacts among certain families who traversed the Trent and Mersey Canal and were popularly known as 'water witches'. Two of these families were the Kings of Hertfordshire and the Grooms of Bingham, who both later gave up the boats and went into the road haulage business. Steele specifically mentions the paintings of 'sun wheels', a circle with six spokes, on the narrow boats. He claims it is a symbol that has a special significance in traditional witchcraft (1997:33).

It is possible that Cochrane first learnt about the Craft while living in the narrow boat community or he could have discovered it through reading Robert Graves' seminal study of ancient British mythology and poetry *The White Goddess* in 1959, a book that remained an important influence on him throughout his life. In fact the two men actually

exchanged correspondence. (see Lindop: November 2009). According to one of Cochrane's aunts, he first became interested in witchcraft after he attended a talk at the Society for Psychical Research in Kensington. There "he met various people, got very interested in the Craft and the rest is history" (pers.com Martin Lloyd, 24th November 2009).

By the beginning of the 1960s Robert Cochrane was living with his wife and son, together with a pet minah bird and a cat Madam Jinxie and his familiar spirit Tomkins, on a council housing estate just outside Slough in Berkshire. It was owned by the old LLC or London County Council authority and was designed to take the overspill from the capital. Cochrane claimed it was on the site of a former witches' meeting ground and it was not far from Burnham Beeches, where his own covine used to meet.

He was obviously not happy living there as in one of his letters he sarcastically describes the other inhabitants of the estate as 'the biggest load of monkeys there have been trained since the Ark.' [sic] He laments the fact that he and his wife found it difficult to astrally travel as the group-mind of the locals was hindering them. At the time Cochrane was working in an office as a typographical draughtsman and this too was causing him problems. He did not like working indoors and told friends that he would "rather walk behind a plough."

The Clan of Tubal Cain seems to have been founded in the early 1960s and was the second group Robert Cochrane had started. The first one broke up when one member died and Cochrane fell out with another. Certainly by 1962 or 1963 Cochrane had established another working group consisting of factory workers, a schoolteacher (possibly Ronald 'Chalky' White who later founded The Regency), an artist and an engineer (Evan John Jones). Cochrane was the covine's 'Devil' or Magister and his wife acted as the Maid and Seer.

Cochrane had met one of the members, Ronald Milland White (1928-1998), after he had answered an advertisement Cochrane had placed in the *Manchester Guardian* requesting contact with people interested in Robert Graves' The White Goddess. Through White he was introduced to George Arthur Stannard (aka Winter), who was working as the manager of a betting shop near the Kings Cross railway station in Central London, and he joined the covine as its Summoner.

However Robert Cochrane may have been involved with other traditional or hereditary witches before he founded the Clan of Tubal Cain. An informant, who wishes to remain anonymous, has told this

writer that in the early 1960s he met Cochrane on several occasions. This was allegedly at Old Craft meets in Cheshire, near the border with Derbyshire, and in the Shropshire countryside. Those present recognised in Cochrane a distinctive state of 'awakeningness' associated with somebody who was 'hereditary-born'. Unfortunately, my informant said, Cochrane was often impatient at the progress of the teachings he was given and did not attend any further meetings. However he believed that Cochrane took some of the concepts of ritual and beliefs from the meets he attended and later developed them in his own way (pers.com, 1992).

With regard to Cochrane's alleged background in the Old Craft, Evan John Jones believed that he owed allegiance to other, more senior, members from whom he had gained his own authority (1997:166). It is true that Cochrane seems to have had some inside knowledge about the famous Long Compton witches in Warwickshire belonging to the 'oldest coven in England'. Jones also believed that in his travels around the country Cochrane may have encountered some 'old boys' or old-style witches. For instance, he told Jones about a network of six witch covines who met at special places along the ancient 'green roads' or prehistoric trackways that crossed southern England from Wales to East Anglia. These later became the drovers' roads along which herds of cattle and flocks of sheep were driven from the countryside to the livestock markets in the large towns and cities. Researchers into modern 'Earth Mysteries' believe these trackways also follow the routes of the leys, spirit paths or landscape alignments between ancient sites. There is a long tradition of witches meeting at such places and tapping into the natural energy that flows along them for magical purposes. It is possible, if these old witch clans existed, that they were the 'higher authority' that Cochrane referred to, learnt from and to whom he owed ultimate allegiance as his Elders in the Craft.

Cochrane first came to public prominence in November 1963 through an article that was published in the weekly Spiritualist newspaper *Psychic News*. Both Cochrane and his wife were interested in Spiritualism and this is not uncommon in Craft circles. In the 19th century when the movement was in its infancy it made a good cover for witches and cunning folk. They had both wanted to train as mediums, but were apparently rejected because they admitted to being witches. Cochrane, however, was told that he had the potential to be a physical medium.

This was the rare ability in Spiritualism to be able to manifest spirits in a physical form so they are visible to the naked eye. Cochrane

contributed his article anonymously because he had a wife and young son to consider and said he did not want bricks thrown through the window of his house.

In the piece Cochrane was evidently responding to some recent newspaper articles published at Hallowe'en about witchcraft. He began by stating that he was 'a witch descended from a family of witches' and added that 'witchcraft is not paganism, although it retains the memory of ancient faiths.' This last statement was, of course, in a direct contradiction to the party line based on the theories of anthropologist Dr Margaret Alice Murray about witchcraft put out at the time by the founder of modern Wicca, Gerald B. Gardner, and his followers.

In Cochrane's opinion, the Craft is 'a religion [that is] mystical in approach and puritanical in attitude.' Again this was in contrast to Wicca with its aspirations to be the survival of a prehistoric fertility cult and its advocating of such concepts as ritual nudity and 'free love'. Cochrane went on to say that the witch is a mystic following 'the last real mystery cult', one with a 'complex and evolved philosophy that has strong affinities with many Christian beliefs'. In fact a person could even be a witch and a Christian at the same time. This belief reflects the reality of the historical cunning folk who utilised Christian prayers and charms and those modern traditional witches who practice dual-faith observance.

As the article progressed, Cochrane provided his readers with a concise history of the Craft as he claimed it existed in the medieval period. He said that in the Middle Ages there was an influx of esoteric Islamic mysticism into Europe brought over by the adherents of various secret societies. He went on to say that there was evidence that these Eastern ideas influenced the witch cult. As we shall see later, this concept is also shared by the Pickingill Craft and had earlier been put forward by the Sufi master, and friend of Gerald Gardner, Idries Sayed Shah. Even earlier, in the 1930s, the occultist and magician Rollo Ahmed, who was the member of a surviving Golden Dawn lodge, made a similar observation. In a letter he wrote to Robert Graves (undated) Cochrane qualified by saying that he had not heard of this theory from any other source than Idries Shah and contact with Gerald Gardner's Wiccan covens. He also doubted the Islamic/Sufic influence was very widespread in English witchcraft. (Lindop, November 2009).

The article in *Psychic News* concludes with Robert Cochrane comparing Spiritualism with witchcraft. He strongly refuted an idea that had obviously been previously aired that the historical witches belonged to some primitive Spiritualist-type movement. He dismisses this in true

Cochrane style as a ‘pleasant day dream’ and says that the witch is not ‘primarily concerned with messages or morality gained from the dead.’ Instead they are involved with ‘the action of God and gods upon man and man’s position spiritually.’ He also confirmed that witchcraft was not a simple belief, although he did concede that some might think so from only a superficial examination of the subject.

One of the most interesting and highly controversial statements made in the article was Cochrane’s claim that he was from an old witch family who included his mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and great-grandfather. He also says that two of his ancestors were actually hanged for practising the Craft. Later Cochrane was to make other claims about his alleged hereditary status in his correspondence with the Cabalistic magician, William ‘Bill’ Gordon Gray (1913-1992) and with Robert Graves that appear to represent a classic ‘granny story’.

He said that his family were involved in witchcraft since at least the 17th century and his great-grandfather had allegedly been the ‘Old Man’ (High Priest) or ‘Grand Master’ of the Staffordshire witches. The house he was born in allegedly straddled the Staffordshire-Warwickshire border. If there was any danger of being arrested the family could move from one side of the house to the other to escape detection and capture. His great-grandfather was supposed to have presided over witch meetings ‘dressed in skins and horned head-dress...’ (Letter to Robert Graves quoted in Lindop, November 2009). Cochrane said the basic aim of the Staffordshire and Warwickshire witches was to ensure ‘Flags, flax, fodder and frig’, or a roof over their head, clothes on their backs, food, sex, and ‘good crops, healthy children and some power to strike back at the oppressor’ (*ibid*).

According to Cochrane, his grandparents decided to reject the Craft and they converted to Methodism. Because of this betrayal of the family’s heritage, his great-grandfather cursed them and this afflicted the family down the generations. Allegedly nearly all his relatives died in misery and by violence, which is interesting in the light of Cochrane’s own tragic end. Robert Cochrane’s nephew, Martin Lloyd, however has said: “My grandparents, or any other members of the family, were ever witches [sic] or had any Craft connections – they were all Methodists.” (pers.com. 17th November 2009). This may well be true, but there are many instances and examples where members of the Craft will hide their affiliation from even close family members.

When Robert Cochrane was born he said his father recognised the physical likeness to his great-grandfather. Allegedly Cochrane's father was opposed to witchcraft and made Cochrane's mother swear she would never tell her son about "the terrible truth" of their family's history and heritage. However, when he was only five, Cochrane had his first spiritual experience and after his father died he finally learnt the truth about his Craft background. His mother was supposed to have had connections to an old covine in Windsor whose last member died in late Victorian times. As a child she had allegedly helped this elderly lady, a Mrs Blomfield, in the traditional role of Maid and scryer.

After he had discovered the alleged truth about his family and their involvement in witchcraft, Cochrane allegedly went to see his 'Aunt Lucy', who he described in one of his letters as 'a terrible old woman'. She apparently owned a collection of magical objects that had been passed down through the generations. This aunt taught him about the 'five Arts' and admitted him into the Craft. This seems to have been around the age of thirteen.

Robert Cochrane did have an Aunt Lucy. She lived in the Midlands and was married to a train driver. However it has been claimed that there is no evidence she was involved in witchcraft and while she collected curios and had 'a room full of memorabilia of relatives who had passed away' that could have been mistaken for a 'witchy shrine', it is claimed that none of them were 'magical' in nature. (pers.com. Martin Lloyd, 17th November 2009) It is possible that 'Aunt Lucy' was a pseudonym for a non-family member or possibly a code word. Cochrane also said he was taught the Craft by a older male relative who may have been his great-uncle. He once showed a photograph of an elderly man sitting on a park bench to the Gardnerian witch Doreen Valiente and she believed this was the mysterious relative.

In another letter to Bill Gray, Cochrane described himself as a 'pellar' – a Cornish term for a cunning man, healer and exorcist. Elsewhere he had described himself as a 'man of Od [Woden]' He goes on to say that 'the People' (traditional witches) are formed into families or clans and describe themselves by the local name of the deity they worship. Cochrane said he came from "the country of oak, ash and thorn" and was a member of the 'People of Goda, of the Clan of Tubal Cain.' 'Oak, ash and [haw] thorn' was a reference to a sacred place where these trees grew regarded in folklore as the entrance to the faery realm. Other traditional names for witches, he added, were the 'Good People' (also

applied to faeries), 'Green Gowns' (women only), Jack and Jills, (from the popular nursery rhyme that possibly refers to an old Norse myth about the sun goddess and moon god), 'Horsemen' (in relation to the rural secret society of Horse Whisperers or the Horseman's Word either his father or grandfather belonged to) and 'wizards' (wise men). Strangely Cochrane never explicitly used the common historical term of 'cunning man' or 'cunning woman'.

The term 'People of Goda' used by Cochrane in this description of names for witches is a controversial one and has caused some debate as to its actual meaning. In an article written in *White Dragon* magazine No. 49 (August 2006), Gary Nottingham identified the name 'Goda' with the faery wife of a local Shropshire hero Wild Edric. He further suggested she was the tutelary goddess of the Clan of Tubal Cain. Goda, Guda or Godda was also the name of a Germanic goddess of agriculture, abundance and prosperity whose variants include Frau Holda, Old Mother Holle, Dame Habondia and Bertha.

There are many, including this writer, who adhere to the belief that the term 'the People of Goda' used by Cochrane refers to worshippers of a localised goddess regarded as the Queen of Elfhame or Faerie. This is backed up by the fact that Cochrane and his covine often worked at the Stiperstones in Shropshire. In local folklore that site is regarded as the haunt of the Wild Hunt traditionally led by the 'faery queen' Lady Goda or Godda and her human husband Edric the Wild. Coincidentally Ronald White and George Stannard both lived in Shropshire during their retirement.

The article in *Psychic News* marked the beginning of Cochrane's short writing career. The Cabballistic magician William Gordon 'Bill' Gray introduced him to the newly formed Witchcraft Research Association and he subsequently wrote several articles for its newsletter *Pentagram*. The WRA had been founded in 1964 by a London witch, using the pseudonym 'John Math', to research the Craft and attempt to bring together different traditions. In his daily life 'John Math' was actually a son of the Earl of Gainsborough, and he served as a captain in the Royal Marines during the Second World War. The first issue of *Pentagram* appeared in August 1964 and its editorial announced that a dinner for members and their guests would be held in a London hotel in October.

At this event the Gardnerians sat at one table and Robert Cochrane and his traditional friends occupied another. Bill Gray, who also attended, recorded that the meal that was served was one of the worst



3. Goat of Mendes, sometimes conflated with the fallen Angel Azazel, a Patron of Witches.



4. Ritual brooms, detail of image from the Richel-Eldermans collection, Museum of Witchcraft.

# PENTAGRAM

(4) AUGUST 1965

A WITCHCRAFT REVIEW

TWO SHILLINGS

## EDITORIAL

WITH THIS, our fourth issue, we can now look back—albeit with somewhat mixed feelings—on a year of publication. Readers will, we hope, forgive us a moment of reflection. Throughout its brief existence *Pentagram* has sought to sound out the feelings and ideas of the many hundreds now sharing the awakening interest in the whole subject of Witchcraft and to present the views of those who care to express them. It has endeavoured to do so in a quiet and dignified manner: without undue publicity or ballyhoo—both of which could easily have been obtained and, probably, would have made it a remarkably successful publication from a commercial standpoint.

It is impossible to cater for all tastes but among those objects we set ourselves was that of showing that the Craft is still a vital and living entity of indisputable antiquity. We believe we have achieved this and, if so, our thanks are due to those who have helped us by their writings.

As the Alchemist Jean d'Espagnet said "... truth lies hid in obscurity: for the philosophers never write more deceptively than when plainly, nor ever more truly than obscurely." So it has been with some of our contributors, who have left much to be read between the lines. The popular commentators on Witchcraft have seldom bothered with the truly mystical or symbolic side of their subject; such would not sell books or magazines—let alone the Sunday newspapers. This side of the Craft lies the deepest hidden and takes the longest search to find.

We have endeavoured to maintain a balance between the spiritual and the practical and we have had no complaints so far. Many of our readers will, we know, take what comes; but our future is in the balance. We are committed to another issue to honour our obligations to our many subscribers but for *Pentagram* to continue (in some modified form, perhaps) there must be a fair number who are prepared to write lines for us—and sometimes to read between them.

## THE FAITH OF THE WISE

*Our controversial contributor, who can trace his family's Witch connections back to 1734, reveals something of the mystical side of his beliefs*

It is said by various "authorities" that the Faith of the Wise, when they do believe in its existence, is a simple matter: a pre-Christian religion, based upon whatever Gods and Goddesses are the current vogue—full of simple, hearty peasants doing simple, hearty peasant-like things... things that in some cases complex, nervous sophisticates also enjoy doing in urban parlours. Consequently we have an interesting phenomenon: civilised sophisticates running round behaving like simple peasants—and simple peasants who have never heard of such things! It is also maintained by the same "authorities" that we follow a belief which, as one dear old fellow put it, is headed by a deity "Who is the sweetest woman, everyone loves her."

To quote someone else who is just a student of the Craft, "Witchcraft is about rituals," which I suppose to be true, if one cares to accept the definition as *witchcraft*.

All this worries me somewhat—since

I am not a peasant and neither am I particularly interested in being led by a sweet woman, and ritual to me is merely a means to an end. So what is the Faith all about? Admittedly I can only speak for myself, and what I write here are my own opinions, but here goes.

Unfortunately for authorities, students and "mere seekers after truth," the Faith is not about anything that has been written above. The Faith is finally concerned with Truth, total Truth. It is one of the oldest of religions, and also one of the most potent, bringing as it does, Man into contact with Gods, and Man into contact with Self. As such the Faith is a way of life different and distinct from any theory promulgated by the authorities or historians. Within the disciplines of the Faith, man may offer devotion to the Gods, and receive certain knowledge of Their existence by participation in something of the perfected Nature of Godhead, recalling that both within and without which is most true. The Faith is a belief

concerned with the inner nature of devotion, and finally with the nature of mysticism and mystical experience. It has, in common with all great religions, an inner experience that is greater than the exterior world. It is a discipline that creates from the world an enriched inward vision. It can and does embrace the totality of human experience from birth to death, then beyond. It creates within the human spirit a light that brightens all darkness, and which can never again be extinguished. It is never fully forgotten and never fully remembered. The True Faith is the life of the follower, without he is nothing, with it he has consumed something of all creation.

Force requires form at this level of being, therefore ritual exists to contain that force. Godhead demands worship, therefore ritual exists to give and formulate that worship. Man needs help, therefore ritual is designed to give that help. It is possible to comprehend Godhead or Force without ritual, since the First Principle of Godhead is present at all levels and in all things at all times—but total perception is not present in humanity all the time. Therefore ritual basically becomes a matter of increasing perception until something of Godhead is finally revealed, and that which is within and without is partially understood: comprehended in the spirit, the mind and in the physical person of the participant until it becomes one with his total being. The forces comprehended are part of the living person, incorporated into everyday life as part of a spiritual, mental and physical discipline that returns the devotee again and again to the original Source.

Devotion requires proof. Therefore that proof exists within the disciplines of the Faith. The nature of proof cannot be explained, since force can only be shown by inference and by participation, not by intellectual reasoning. The nature of the proof falls into many forms, but amongst the most common are these:

(a) *Poetic Vision*, in which the participant has inward access to dream images and symbols. This is the result of the unconscious being stimulated by various means. Images are taught as part of a tradition, and also exist (as Jung speculated) upon their own levels. They are, when interpreted properly, means by which a *lower* part of truth may be understood.

(b) *The Vision of Memory*, in which the devotee not only remembers past existence but also, at times, a past perfection.

5. Issue 4 of *Pentagram*, in which Robert Cochrane's article "Faith of the Wise" first appeared.



6. Robert Cochrane (1931-1966), Magister of Clan Tubal-Cain.





7. (opposite) Ritual candlestick given by Robert Cochrane to a magical associate in the early 1960s.

8. (above) Evan John Jones of the Clan of Tubal Cain, circa 1999.



9. Norman Gills in his study, 1972.

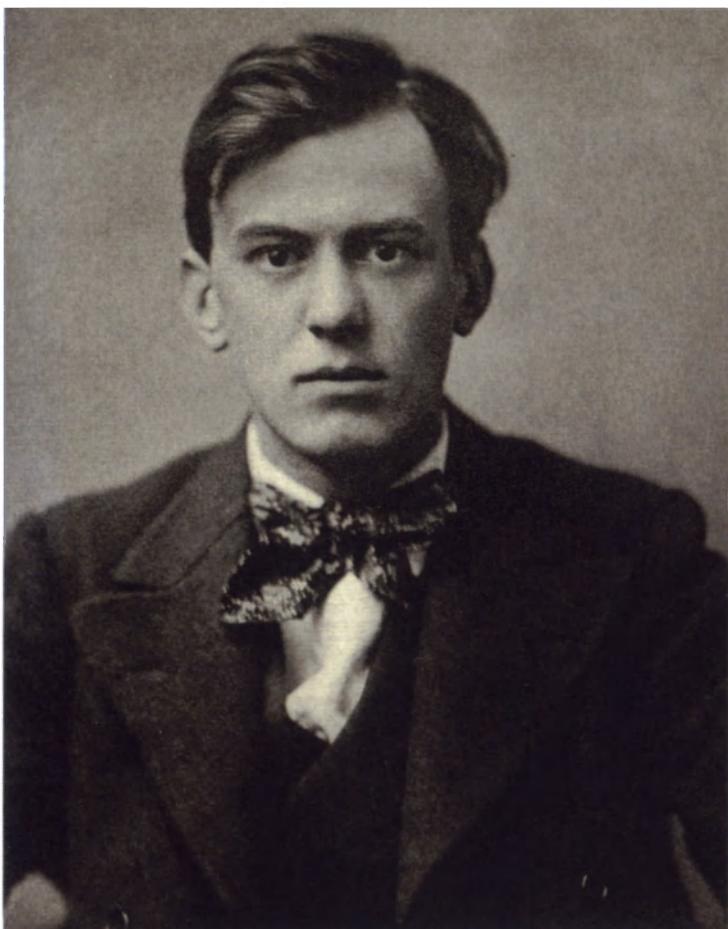


10. (above left) William Gray at the Rollright Stones, circa 1970.

11. (above right) Ronald 'Chalky' White, co-founder of The Regency.



12. George Pickingill of Canewdon, Essex, alleged Master of nine covens.



13. Aleister Crowley in a portrait of 1895.



14. Witch's ritual scourge with ithyphallic handle.

he had ever experienced in his life and better ones could be had in prison (Richardson and Claridge 2003:155).

In the first issue of *Pentagram* Doreen Valiente wrote an open letter of welcome to all members of the WRA. She claimed that due to the persecution of the past the old traditions of witchcraft had become fragmented, with one coven or group of covens preserving what had been handed down to them, while others retained and placed emphasis on other aspects of the Craft. She hoped that the Association would act as a 'United Nations of the Craft' and promote research into surviving traditions that might otherwise have been lost. She was also optimistic that it could promote the 'mutual understanding and unity of purpose' that would make this research possible. In hindsight this was an overly optimistic view as a serious division between members of the WRA who were Wiccans and the traditional witches was soon to become apparent.

The November 1964 issue of *Pentagram* featured a report on the dinner in London the previous month attended by fifty members and their guests. The grace spoken before dinner was described as a 'translation of a 12th century document of unknown origin.' In fact it was something written by Bill Gray especially for the occasion.

Valiente claimed that the WRA was now contacting covens that had no connection with Gerald Gardner at all. This indicated, she said, that the 'Old Craft' had survived all over Britain in a fragmented state. Because of the historical Persecution each had its own version of witchcraft and it was going to be an exciting project to compare the different traditions and see how they both complimented and differed from each other. Again, due to the in-fighting that was about to break out between the Wiccans and the traditional witches in the WRA, sadly this project never got off the ground.

Doreen Valiente had left Gardner's coven based at a naturist camp in Brickett Wood, Hertfordshire in the late 1950s because of her disagreement with his desire to seek sensational publicity. Also because she believed he had invented the so-called 'Laws' of the Craft. (1989:70-71). In the early Sixties she was a member of the traditional Coven of Atho run by Gardner's arch-rival Charles Cardell. In 1964 Valiente was introduced to Robert Cochrane by mutual friends at the annual midsummer gathering of the Brotherhood of Essenes (an esoteric group taking their name from the original Jewish sect of Essenes in biblical times) held on Glastonbury Tor. For some unknown reason this event always attracted occultists from all traditions.

She was initially impressed by Cochrane's charisma and his claim to being a follower of a hereditary witchcraft tradition. Valiente later lost faith in Cochrane and she became disillusioned with his claims to have had a family tradition. This seems to have been confirmed for her after Cochrane's death in 1966 when his widow told Valiente that Cochrane was not a hereditary witch and had invented the witch stories about his family. As we have seen, another relative of Cochrane's, his nephew Martin Lloyd, has also claimed that none of Cochrane's immediate family were involved in witchcraft. However, having undergone a difficult separation from her husband and his traumatic death by suicide perhaps Cochrane's wife was not the most unbiased of commentators on his legitimacy.

John Math, who subsequently became a member of Cochrane's covine, asked him to contribute some articles to *Pentagram* on his version of the Craft. The first of these contributions was 'The Craft Today' published in the November 1964 issue. In it he condemned the fact that witchcraft had become a form of escapism for people who wanted to reject modern society and return to a more simple way of life. In fact he described it as an attempt to deny the responsibilities of the 20th century. He went on to say that the 'student of the Mysteries' (the traditional witch) is a seeker for truth or wisdom. In his opinion, magic was a by-product of that search. As a development of Will it is a product of the soul in its search for ultimate knowledge or gnosis. This mystical and gnostic approach contrasted to modern Wicca, with its emphasis on being the Goddess-worshipping survival of an ancient nature and fertility religion.

According to Cochrane, elements of the ancient pagan Mysteries had survived in folklore, myth and legend and they were the means by which man can 'perceive his own inherent destiny'. Because of the persecution of pagans by the early Church, the surviving Mysteries were forced underground, joined forces with the folk beliefs of the masses and thus became 'traditional witchcraft'. Unfortunately what survived became static and remote from its original purpose, which was to provide spiritual enlightenment to its adherents. In his article Cochrane attacked the bigotry and dogma he said existed in some modern covens and criticised witches for turning their backs on the outside world, following rituals and beliefs parrot-fashion that had no relevance to modern times.

He concluded that the Old Craft still had a role in the present age because within it teachings and beliefs were the seeds of the old pre-Christian mystery cults. However Cochrane added that it needed to

undergo some radical and violent changes if it was to survive in the future. In his view modern traditional witches could not retreat from the world. There was no place in society for them if they had nothing valid to offer it and refused to participate in its social revolution. If they did not then the Craft will 'gasp its last breath under a heap of musty nonsense, half-baked theology and philosophy'.

This was fighting talk and was not appreciated by everyone who read it. Cochrane was presenting himself as a radical moderniser and reformer attempting to bring the Craft up-to-date. This role is reflected in comments he later made in a letter to the Oxfordshire cunning man Norman Gills. Cochrane says: 'I am trying to bring up what I know of the Craft, and apply it to the way of thought today. To do this I have had to read a tremendous amount about the old pagans and see what fitted and what didn't and shape the religion as it was originally.' He goes on to say that he had to change some of the 'old legends' and he acknowledged that altering the Old Ways is 'by Craft standards ... quite terrible' (Cochrane and Jones 2002: 148). In this quotation he is admitting that he is reconstructing the old forms of witchcraft and in the process has modified them. Yet this modification is based on earlier forms and in the same letter Cochrane claimed that 'the Old Craft is nearly dead' with '...just one or two small clans still surviving.'

His chosen role as a modernising influence led one correspondent to *Pentagram* to describe Cochrane as the 'Kier Hardie of the Craft'. This was a reference to a famous Labour politician who was renowned for his radicalism and reforming ways. Grevel Lindop has described Cochrane as an 'angry young man', comparing him with the trend created in the 1950s by the playwrights John Osborne and Harold Pinter, (pers.com. 30th November 2009). Evan John Jones also told this writer that Cochrane was a socialist in his political outlook and "a bit of an anarchist" who had written articles for the left-wing magazine *New Statesman*.

The second article penned by Cochrane for *Pentagram* was called 'The Faith of the Wise' and it was published in the August 1965 issue. This time he was described by John Math as 'our controversial contributor who can trace his witch connections back to 1734.' In fact '1734' was not a date, but as Cochrane explained in one of his later letters to his correspondents, a codeword for the witch goddess in his tradition.

The article itself dismissed the common conception of witchcraft as a survival of a pre-Christian fertility religion practised by simple peasants.

Instead he claimed it was concerned with 'Truth, Total Truth' and through its practice the seeker can offer devotion to the Gods and in return receive knowledge. He stated that the Craft was a 'belief concerned with the inner nature of devotion' and 'the nature of mysticism and mystical experience'. It was a complex philosophy that dealt with the nature of truth, experience and devotion.

Cochrane told his readers that there were several forms of devotion to the Faith. These were the 'Poetic Vision', in which access is made to images and symbols in dreams; 'The Vision of Memory', whereby past lives are remembered and also a past state of perfection; 'Magical Vision', by which the participants contacts certain levels; 'Religious Vision', during which the worshipper experiences, albeit briefly, the Godhead; and finally 'Mystical Vision', the ultimate aim of initiation (and the spiritual or magical path), divine union with the Godhead. He concluded that it was impossible for anyone to enter the Craft unless they could demonstrate a far memory of past lives, presumably within the circle or as a 'twice-born' or initiate, and a genuine mystical drive. Finally, he declared that the Craft was the 'True Faith' that exists '... beyond space, time and all human matters'.

In his article Cochrane had presented a vision of witchcraft that was in direct contrast to modern Wicca and far more sophisticated in its beliefs and philosophy. In fact Cochrane considered Gerald Gardner to be a fake who created his own version of witchcraft to cater to his own 'degenerate [sexual] habits'. In a scathing (unpublished) letter to a correspondent who was a young male Wiccan and occult magazine editor, Cochrane said: 'They are wrong, all bloody wrong. I have no intention of telling you what things means what and how and why, but just for the record, I couldn't care less what Mrs [Sybil] Leek, whom Gawd preserve (and whom I sent up once), Pat Crowther, Bill Gray, Uncle Gardner and [Charles] Cardell, Mrs [Eleanor] Bone, Mr [Ian] McKay, Mrs [Monique] Wilson and Uncle Tom Cobleigh and all say and have taught you about the 'secrets' of their 'art', your answers are all bloody wrong'.

Although Cochrane expressed a dislike of Gardner's followers bordering on hatred, there is evidence he received a first degree initiation into Gardnerian Wicca. Two separate and independent sources have told the writer that a couple who ran a small coven in West London and were well-known in Gardnerian circles were responsible. According to Doreen Valiente's private notebooks, the female half of the couple, who

described Cochrane to friends as “a necromancer”, took him and his wife to see Jack Bracelin, the then High Priest of Gardner’s Brickett Wood Coven. Although they corresponded for a while, Bracelin was apparently not that impressed with the Magister of the Clan of Tubal Cain. He liked his wife, but described Cochrane as a “weirdo” who talked garbage. (Copies of DV notebooks in Museum of Witchcraft archive at Boscastle).

Considering the radically different view of witchcraft that Cochrane presented in his articles it is no wonder that the next issue of *Pentagram* contained a letter from the members of a Gardnerian coven praising Cochrane and complaining that their Elders not only appeared disinterested in learning, but also had little to teach. However, not everyone was so complimentary about his writings and his strong views on the Gardnerians (a term Cochrane actually coined) upset some other members of the Witchcraft Research Association who were of the Wiccan persuasion. The storm clouds were gathering and the first sign of trouble came in the March 1965 issue. This featured an article written under the pseudonym of ‘Taliesin’ and the writer claimed to represent a traditional hereditary group in the West Country. In fact he was a friend of Cochrane and they had known each other for several years.

Taliesin was living in Buckinghamshire at the time and was the son of a well-known bandleader, composer and music-arranger who worked for the BBC in the 1940s and 1950s. In the article Taliesin said he had experienced the Hereditary Old Craft through his mother and aunt and Gardnerian Wicca through one of its High Priestesses. In fact he had been a member of Gardner’s coven at Brickett Wood and was initiated by Lois Bourne (nee Pearson) in 1962 (DV notebooks).

Although they were friends, Taliesin still criticised Cochrane and the version of traditional witchcraft he was promoting in his articles. He claimed that his views were not entirely representative of the Old Craft (and in fact nobody’s can be) and there should have been more emphasis on the Supreme Goddess and less of the type of ‘soul searching’ found in cults on the occult fringe. Interestingly, Taliesin took a pioneering political stance for the time by suggesting the Craft could be a force for good in fighting the modern evils of the damage to the environment in the name of progress and the vast waste of money on the arms race while millions starved in Africa.

In the next issue of *Pentagram* (August 1965) Taliesin wrote an article called ‘A Wood in the West Country’. He said the wood in question,

known locally as Annies' Wood and reputed to be haunted, was regarded as a sacred place by a small group of hereditary witches who owed their allegiance to 'the Lady'. They used it for initiations and the candidate was left to spend the night alone by three overgrown stones in the middle of the wood. Beforehand they drank a special potion and the next day they were questioned about their experiences during the night. Depending on their answers, they were either invited to stay in the group or banished to its fringes forever. In his previous article, Taliesin had discussed the ritual use of the 'sacred mushroom' *Amanita muscaria* or fly agaric as an aid to the knowledge of the Goddess and self; presumably it was included in the potion taken by the initiate into his group.

A similar all-night vigil was also a feature of initiation into Robert Cochrane's Clan of Tubal Cain, except that that the draught contained a small amount of belladonna. Such rituals are also a well-known feature of some other Old Craft traditions. Despite his own extensive ritual use of narcotic plants and their friendship, Cochrane criticised Taliesin because he was "too fond of the toad [fly agaric]".

However one of Doreen Valiente's reasons for leaving Cochrane's covine was his (apparent) cavalier attitude to natural hallucinogenics and poisonous plants, or as she put it 'his reckless use of herbal substances' (1989:133). She cites an incident when Cochrane did a handfasting or witch's marriage ceremony for Evan John Jones and his wife in a wood owned by the druid Ross Nichols, head of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids. At the climax of the ritual Valiente says that Cochrane gave the couple a 'large dose of the berries of Deadly Nightshade' to drink. This melodramatic act was apparently to see 'if the Gods would accept or reject them.' (ibid). Luckily all it made them do was be sick.

Taliesin explained in his article that the name Annies' Wood was probably a corruption of 'Annis Wood' after a pagan Celtic goddess who appears as 'Black Anne' or 'Black Annis' in Leicestershire folklore. She is depicted as an old hag witch living in a cave who eats children. The wood in question had a legend attached to it about a woman who lived there in the 17th century. Any man foolish enough to sleep with her was killed during the night when she transformed into a cat and ripped his throat out. Her killing spree was ended by a monk, whose silver crucifix saved him from her deadly charms.

He burnt down the hut she was living in and buried her body under the stones in the wood. Taliesin claimed that it was really 'the wood of

[the goddess] Annis', who traditionally appeared in the form of a cat. Old land deeds apparently showed that the land was also called 'Three Sisters Wood', and he claimed this is a reference to the trinity of fate goddesses who, has Cochrane had already pointed out in one of his articles, are the true objects of the witch's worship. The legend of the monk also suggests the eradication of a pagan shrine in the wood by the medieval Church.

Matters began to deteriorate further with the publication of the December 1965 issue of *Pentagram*, which was also its last appearance in a newsletter format. The Gardnerian High Priest, Arnold Crowther, the husband of Patricia Crowther of the Sheffield Coven and a professional puppeteer, stage magician and ventriloquist, wrote a letter attacking Taliesin for criticising the Wiccans for conducting 'cloak and dagger' initiations while going on to describe one that was even more so. He also condemned the whole concept of 'witch blood' and hereditary witchcraft, which was strangely ironic considering that his wife's later autobiography was called *Witch Blood* and she claimed a Breton grandmother who was a 'wise woman'.

In the conclusion of his letter, Arnold Crowther asked if the newsletter existed to bring together covens on friendly terms or to stir up hatred between different groups by 'publishing petty insults from nonentities'. Another letter was published in the same issue from a Suffolk witch defending Gardner, who said he followed a tradition going back at least three hundred years. He claimed that what he had inherited was very similar to modern Wicca.

Taliesin was given the 'right of reply' to both letters in the same issue and he savagely criticised both correspondents. This bad tempered 'debate' marked the end of the WRA as a viable organisation dedicating to bring together witches from different and, more importantly, differing traditions. One or two further issues of *Pentagram* were published in a glossy magazine format, but their contents reflected a wider esoteric subject matter. In fact at the time John Math told this writer that he could no longer produce a witchcraft magazine because there was not enough to write about the subject. When *Pentagram* finally ceased publication the ill-fated Witchcraft Research Association disappeared with it.

The last issue of *Pentagram*, however, was interesting for two reasons. Firstly, in his reply to the Suffolk witch, Taliesin suggested Middle Eastern influences had infiltrated the medieval witch cult and were

responsible for the fact that the (Old) Craft was primarily Horned God orientated. Cochrane had made the same observation in his article in *Psychic News* a year earlier. In a letter to Bill Gray, Cochrane expressed his belief that until around the 12th century CE indigenous British paganism and Roman Catholicism had mingled in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance. The situation only changed during the first crusade when 'Persian emissaries' (sic) arrived in England. It was then, under the influence of Middle Eastern (North African?) ideas, that the worship of the Horned God became prominent in the witch cult. Cochrane believed that in the late Middle Ages the surviving pagan nature worship with its fertility rites largely died out, were absorbed into traditional witchcraft or survived only in the guise of seasonal folk customs.

Also featured in the last issue was an advertisement in the 'Personal' section that said that a Mr Joseph Wilson of Wichita, Kansas, USA would like to correspond with anyone interested in the 'Old Religion, Druidism etc.' It added that the advertiser also published a duplicated news-sheet' and would send a copy for 1s (one shilling). Cochrane responded to this advertisement, evidently in the hope of contacting Old Crafters who had emigrated from the British Isles to America. Joe Wilson (1942-2004) and Cochrane began a short correspondence that lasted until the latter's death in June of the next year. Eventually copies of this correspondence were privately circulated by Wilson and they formed the textual basis for the foundation of the so-called '1734' modern witchcraft tradition in the United States.

When he started writing to Robert Cochrane, Joe Wilson was a young man of twenty-three, married with three children and serving in the US Air Force. Three years earlier he had been assigned to the MacConnell USAF base in Wichita and had auditioned for a part in its theatre company's production of the play *Bell, Book & Candle*, a comedy about a modern family of witches living in New York. The person playing the male lead was known as 'Sean' and he was half Cherokee and half Scots-Irish. Sean was eight years older than Wilson and studied political science at the University of Wichita. The two men began chatting about the subject of the play and Wilson foolishly boasted having a knowledge of witchcraft that he did not possess. Wilson said Sean just grinned indulgently and said that one day they would seriously discuss the Craft together.

A couple of weeks later Sean visited Wilson's apartment and they talked about Celtic mythology, witchcraft and magic. The older man

recommended some books for Wilson to read including such standard works as Robert Graves' *The White Goddess*, *Magical Arts in Celtic Britain* by Lewis Spence and *The Golden Bough* by Sir James Frazer. Sean and his wife, Siobhan, also showed Wilson how to perform some simple spells using roots and herbs. Sean later took him to his family home on a ranch in Oklahoma where they camped in the woods and discussed magical matters, some of which were based on Native American spirituality.

When Joe Wilson questioned his friend about the source of these he was told "it was just some things the old folks do." On a more mundane level, Sean, who claimed to have been a mercenary soldier in South America when he was younger, taught Wilson to shoot a pistol, use a knife, hunt animals for food and practice basic survival skills. Sean thus became a male role model as well as a spiritual teacher to the younger man.

On one of these trips, in September 1963, Sean, his wife, a woman called Barbara and another man called Phil took Wilson to a local cave. There he was initiated into the small group they belonged to that practised folk magic and psychic development. The initiation took the form of a vision quest and first of all Wilson was divested of all his clothes. He was allegedly left for four days without food and drink and was told to spend his time praying and listening to what the spirits had to say in answer. Wilson made a rough shelter out of dry leaves and fallen branches to keep warm and managed to get just enough water to survive on from the morning dew that developed on plants.

When Joe Wilson saw a notice in the American *Fate* magazine for *Pentagram* he sent off for a copy. When he showed it to Sean he was fairly dismissive and said the Witchcraft Research Association was "just another call to the covens." However he did point out to Wilson that there were similarities between the teachings and beliefs of Robert Cochrane and Taliesin and what he had been teaching him. Sean still told him to ignore the WRA but instead Wilson defied his teacher and contacted 'John Math' and placed his advertisement. As a result he was contacted by Robert Cochrane.

In his first introductory letter in December 1965, Cochrane asked Joe Wilson if he knew anything about a Sioux tradition of 'spirit paths' that was similar to the British system of ley-lines, spirit paths or landscape alignments. He also said that his family had told him that at one time members of Old Craft clans from England had settled in the American

Mid-West. He cited the state symbols of Texas, including the five-pointed star in a circle and the steer's skull, as examples of Craft influence. Cochrane also noted that the neo-pagan traditions of the American hill folk (Ozark and Appalachian) pointed towards a surviving belief in 'the religion of the Three Mothers'. In addition he also believed that English members of the Society of Horsemen had settled in the cattle and sheep rearing areas of the Old West. He concluded his letter by saying he was against 'Gardnerianism', and that the key to his religious beliefs could be found in the folk song *Green Grow the Rushes O* (aka The Archer's Song), and that he was both an admirer and critic of Robert Graves, the author of *The White Goddess*.

Joe Wilson never met Robert Cochrane because of his premature death, but in 1969 Wilson was posted overseas to the USAF base at Upper Heywood in Oxfordshire, England with the rank of staff-sergeant. This posting allowed him to meet several of the people who knew and had worked with Cochrane or with his covine members. These included Ruth 'Wynn-Owen', the founder of the neo-Celtic group Plant y Bran (Welsh for 'Children of [the god] Bran') and a member of The Regency. She was to become one of the influential sources in the foundation in the United States of what became known as the '1734' tradition because of the material she passed to Wilson. While he was stationed in England Joe Wilson also attended some public meetings of The Regency, the neo-pagan group founded by Ronald White and George Stannard after Cochrane's death.

Unfortunately, in the early 1970s Joe Wilson's stay in the United Kingdom was dramatically curtailed. He had been recruited by the USAF's Office of Special Investigations (OSI) to spy on fellow servicemen on the base who were actively protesting against the Vietnam War. At the subsequent court-martial of the protesters Wilson appeared as a witness for the prosecution in his role as an OSI informant. He refused to take the oath on a Bible because he said he was a 'druid'.

His admission in court created a sensation in the British press and also uproar in politically aware Wicca circles who were opposed to the Vietnam war. He was condemned as a 'traitor', even though he was not a Wiccan. Wilson's defence was that he had been pressured by the OSI into spying on his colleagues and had only done so with great reluctance. After the hearing Wilson was immediately transferred out of the way to a USAF base in Greece before eventually returning to the States.

When Joe Wilson arrived Stateside, he circulated photocopies of his correspondence with Robert Cochrane to friends and several covens he was in contact with. The letters formed the nucleus, with other information gained from 'Sean' and Ruth Wynn Owen, for the teachings of the 1734 tradition and they were passed to initiates as training material. Wilson later posted the letters on the Internet, albeit in a jumbled form. He later claimed his first wife had destroyed the originals and he had to rewrite them from memory.

Initially many of the early 1734 groups used a Wiccan structure for convenience, but since 1990 they have had the rituals provided by Evan John Jones, with the help of Doreen Valiente, and published in their joint book *Witchcraft: A Tradition Renewed*. Wilson in fact produced his own 1734 'Book of Shadows' (sic) that drew heavily on Wicca, basically just substituting the names Tubal Cain and (interestingly) Goda for the witch god and witch goddess.

Joe Wilson ran a website devoted to Cochrane until his own death in 2004 from lung disease. He also started to use the name Joseph Bearwalker Wilson and formed a new group called Metisa (later known as the Tolteg Tribe) following an Amerindian based neo-shamanic path. The 1734 tradition survived his death and today it has members in both the United States and Britain and its own Internet presence (see [www.1734list@yahoogroups.com](http://www.1734list@yahoogroups.com)).

The modern covens in the 1734 tradition share what Professor Chas S. Clifton of the University of Colorado has described a 'family feeling'. Compared with Wiccan and neo-pagan groups, he says 1734 is 'more of a mystery religion and less of a fertility religion', which aligns it more with its Old Craft roots. Another preference that marks them out is working outdoors in forests, caves and on hilltops. Also, as in some traditional groups and in contrast to the average Wiccan coven, the primary purpose of their existence is not to celebrate the seasonal festivals of the Wheel of the Year. As in the old Clan of Tubal Cain, there is an emphasis on spirit connection with the Old Ones and finding the path to the Castle of Rebirth (the Rose Castle). This is achieved by using trance, hypnosis, ritual working and 'the kind of poetic reasoning embodied in Robert Graves' *The White Goddess*. (Clifton in Telesco 2005:39)

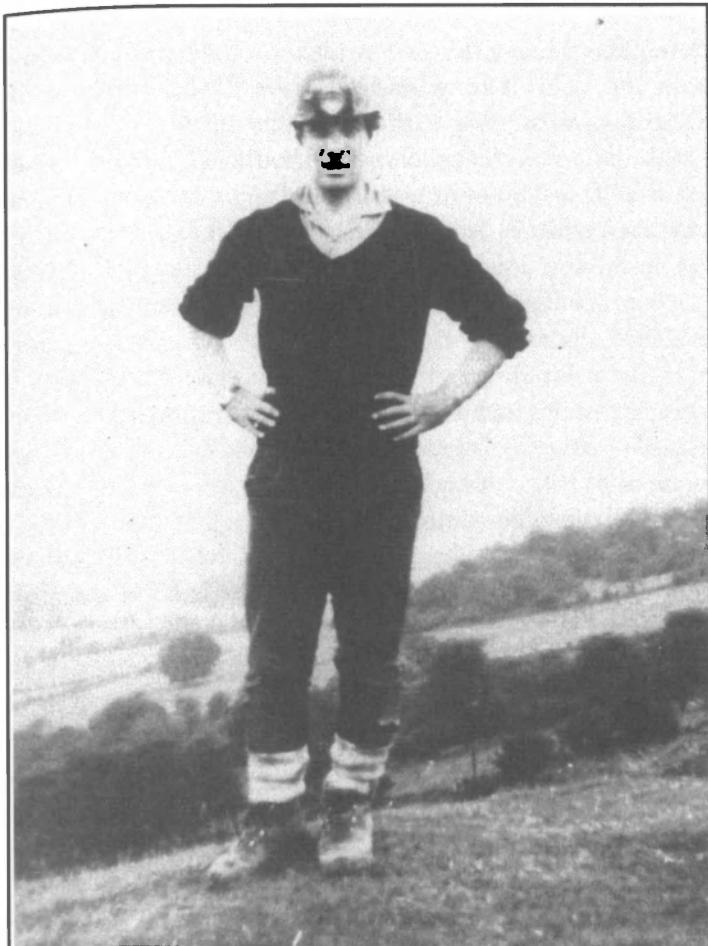
Stuart Inman, who was a British associate of Joe Wilson and now runs the 1734 tradition in the United Kingdom has said:

In his last years Joe Wilson was very aware that his deteriorating health meant that he would not live very much longer and he was concerned that his work should not disappear after his death. In some ways his group Metista and its successor Toteg Tribe should be considered as a corrective to what much of 1734 had become. They were the essence of the fundamental spiritual attitude behind his own understanding of what 1734 embodied, but were not concerned with the cultural specifics of that tradition, which derives from Robert Cochrane, Ruth Wynn Owen and 'Sean'. After the collapse of Metista, Wilson created Toteg Tribe and appointed several of his students as 'doyens' or elders of the clans within the tribe to form a Council of Doyens to continue his work.

For some time Wilson seemed content to leave the fate of the 1734 tradition in the hands of the Gods. He had already stated that one could be 1734 without formal initiation or lineage and had made it clear that the tradition did not 'belong' to anybody. Its lineages, degrees etc. were only relevant within the covens or clans in which they belonged and had no authority beyond that. Eventually, however, Wilson decided to appoint three Guardians of the 1734 Stream; Maureen Aisling Duffy-Boose, Kaerwyn Silverwood and myself. While the appointment of the Tolteg doyens was made formally and publicly, these were made informally and privately."

The virtue of the 1734 Stream was passed to all three Guardians by various means, but it was understood that they were not either individually or collectively in charge of the tradition, with authority over its members, but precisely Guardians, a position of responsibility rather than of power. Their roles is to correct public misunderstandings of 1734, promote a true understanding where appropriate, and help protect the privacy and security of the 1734 brethren, as well as to give advice when it is asked. In recent years a strong bond of friendship has grown between the 1734 tradition and the Clan of Tubal Cain [in the UK], while respecting the differences and autonomy of each tradition." (pers.com 27th November 2009)

In November 1964 a small esoteric magazine called *New Dimensions*, edited by the magician 'Gareth Knight' (aka Basil Wilby) published Robert Cochrane's article 'The Witches' Esbat'. This was based on a Clan of Tubal Cain working known as the Cave and the Cauldron. Cochrane was a caver and was therefore quite keen to use caves for rites. Although he says the ritual was fictionalised in the article, according to John Jones, it still represents the type of working the group was doing



15. Robert Cochrane in caving gear, early 1960s.

at the time. It has been rightly described as one of the best and most atmospheric descriptions of a witchcraft rite that has ever been published (see reprint of the article in Jones, Cochrane and Howard 2001).

At the time one of Cochrane's closest Craft associates was the Oxfordshire cunning man Norman Gills. He was an herbalist, gardener, photographer and artist whose work had been exhibited at the Royal Academy of Art. One of his paintings depicting the horned god Cernunnos is on display at the Museum of Witchcraft at Boscastle in Cornwall. When he knew Cochrane in the 1960s, Gills lived with his aged mother in a 16th century cottage in Abingdon near Oxford. The cottage had a well stocked garden that supplied the plants he sold to local

people to make a living. He also made and sold pottery garden gnomes as ornaments. In his latter years Gills moved to Brittany where he ran a garden center and herb farm.

Inside the cottage Gills had a magical 'workroom' that overlooked the back garden. It had an eerie atmosphere and featured a large bookcase and a table on which there was a witch-doctor's staff, an ancient sword, a hazel wand for dowsing, a small cauldron, painted candles, bird feathers, a pestle and mortar for grinding herbs for potions and various stones and fossils used for psychometry. The room also contained a bed, for teaching his students self-hypnosis and astral projection, and his photographic equipment. He used the latter to capture pictures of faeries in the garden using the modern techniques of photography and "olden day methods of summoning". Gills said that you could not claim to be a witch unless you could summon spirits.

Norman Gills claimed to have followed what he called the "Old Religion" since childhood. As a young man he had met members of the Old Craft who were gypsies or worked as shepherds in the Cotswolds area and in his twenties joined several 'underground' covines. Gills also dropped broad hints that he had connections with the old Long Compton covine near the Rollright Stones on the Oxfordshire and Warwickshire border. In an entry in one of her personal notebooks Doreen Valiente claimed that Gills belonged to a covine ran by a woman who owned an antique shop in London's Old Brompton Road. However, it seems that usually Gills worked alone as a cunning man and solitary practitioner of the magical arts.

Robert Cochrane committed suicide at the summer solstice in 1966 aged only thirty-five. In the months preceding it the problems in his personal life that were to finally trigger this tragic event were becoming apparent even to outsiders. He had begun an affair with a woman in the covine and eventually this led to a separation from his wife. She left him in May 1966 and started divorce proceedings. Cochrane was infatuated with the woman and, according to an entry in one of Doreen Valiente's personal notebooks, had allegedly contemplated performing a death ritual against her husband. This would apparently have involved the sacrifice of a black cockerel (Copies of DV notebooks in Museum of Witchcraft, Boscastle archives).

In Cochrane's covine, as in many other traditional ones, the power to heal was balanced on the darker side by the ability to curse. He was a powerful and successful healer who, following in the steps of the West Country pellars, took on the patient's illness and transmuted it through

his own body. This was dangerous work and only a person with the status of an adept should ever consider it. However, if the covine decided, instead of transmuting the positive power of good through a healing ritual a negative force could be transmitted as a curse using hate. It should be emphasised that this was rare and was only done when all other mundane methods of dealing with a serious or dangerous situation had been exhausted.

Cursing rituals were carried out at the dark of the moon by the Clan and the witch goddess was invoked to help in her guise as the Old Hag or as the Greek goddess of witchcraft, the underworld and the dead, Hecate. There was a great responsibility attached to the act and, according to Evan John Jones, always a heavy price to pay. In some cases the harmony between the members of the covine was broken and its magical work disrupted for up to a year. In other instances it was deemed necessary to perform a rite of purification to get rid of the residue of negative influences created by the cursing ritual (Jones 1990:44-45).

As a result of Robert Cochrane's wife turning against him because of his affair, Doreen Valiente believed that the magical power left the Clan (1989:129). Evan John Jones was of the same opinion and their fears were confirmed when the covine broke up. Cochrane had become increasingly authoritarian in attitude, both towards the Gardnerians and members of his own group. By this time Valiente had began to have doubts about his claims of belonging to a family tradition and being a hereditary witch and she left. She had also not been happy about the Magister's habit of inviting uninitiated 'guests' to the Clan's rituals, such as Bill Gray and the newspaper writer 'Justine Glass' (Enid Carroll), and as stated earlier the use of dangerous narcotic plants in its rituals. However, she still stayed in touch with events as they unfolded through mutual friends who supplied her with news of Cochrane's activities.

Things had been building to a head for some time as Cochrane became more and more dissatisfied with the direction of the covine. In a letter to Bill Gray as early as the end of 1964 he said that he felt that the group was holding him back. It was time, he said, for a new leader to take over. If this happened he and his wife could move on as Cochrane wanted to follow a more mystical path. It seems that the considerable pressure and responsibilities that go with the rank of Magister were weighing heavily on his shoulders.

Writing to Norman Gills in April 1966, two months before he committed suicide, Cochrane said that he was now without friends and

working quite happily on his own. However he also asks: 'Where do I go from here?' and added that 'I am at the bottom of a well with little or no hope for the future.' He was either on sick leave from his company or had left it. On the positive side, he was contemplating a possible new career as either a professional fortune-teller (to the extent that he had some business cards printed), a book author or a television scriptwriter. In fact Cochrane refers to a television play he had been commissioned to write for a fee of £300. He was also thinking of moving back to his childhood haunts in 'the Smoke' (London) to 'get away from this house [in Slough] which has many unhappy memories for us now'. (Cochrane, Jones and Howard 2002: 178-179).

In early 1966 Cochrane had been dropping broad hints to his friends that he might not be around after midsummer. In fact Valiente was told by a mutual acquaintance that he had informed members of the covine that he planned to take his own life then. Apparently they did not take it seriously. Allegedly his wife had left the marital home because she feared Cochrane might become violent towards against her and their young son. When his wife left him Cochrane was obviously in a depressed state and was prescribed tranquillisers and sleeping pills by his doctor.

On June 19th 1966 Cochrane visited John Jones and his wife at their London home. He told them that he would be with them for "an important date", but not in his body. He also said that he would soon be "hunting from the Other Side" (Jones 1990:16-17). In the Cochrane tradition midsummer was traditionally the time when the divine priest-king was symbolically sacrificed to the Goddess and it looked like he was planning to fulfil that role. Bill Gray was later to say that he believed that in this act Cochrane actually did take on the mythical role of the 'sacred king' (pers.com to the writer from R.J. Stewart, 28th November 2009).

On June 23rd, Midsummer's Eve, Cochrane took a concoction of belladonna mixed with the drug Librium that had been prescribed to him by his doctor for depression. He wrote two suicide notes to the coroner and to his wife's solicitor and also posted a letter to Doreen Valiente. In the letter he said that by the time she received it he would be dead. When the lawyers got his letter they immediately informed the local police. They went to his house, broke in and found Cochrane in the living room inside a sleeping bag and lying on the sofa. He was still alive, but in a deep coma. An ambulance was called and took him to hospital where he died nine days later. His passing was briefly reported

in the local newspaper as the death of a 'commercial artist and abstract painter.'

The police questioned several of Cochrane's associates about the circumstances of his death and the possible use of drugs in the covine. Evan John Jones and his wife were interviewed at Hampstead police station in North-West London where they were living at the time. The police eventually decided that there was nothing suspicious about his death and foul play was not suspected. At the coroner's inquest it was stated that Cochrane died from congestion of the lungs and heart and renal failure caused by atropine poisoning.

His wife gave evidence to the court that in 1961 Cochrane had suffered a nervous breakdown and since then had often been depressed and talked about taking his life. In one of the letters he left, Cochrane said he had decided to take his own life while of sound mind and referred to the fact that his wife had left him. The coroner duly issued a verdict of suicide. Cochrane was buried in an unmarked grave in a public cemetery in Slough and after his death his sister-in-law burnt all his private papers (Semple: November 2004).

What exactly did Robert Cochrane's Clan of Tubal Cain believe in and practice? In common with other traditional groups, they mainly worked outdoors. Their many ritual working sites included Burnham Beeches near Cochrane's home, the Sussex Downs above the Long Man of Wilmington hill figure, Witney Clumps in Oxfordshire, Newtimber Hill near Brighton the Cheddar Gorge in Somerset, the Stiperstones in Shropshire, the Brecon Beacons in South Wales (where Cochrane used to go caving), and a private wood in the Home Counties owned by Ross Nichols, the chief druid of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids, and also used by Wiccans.

The rituals held on the Sussex Downs and on Newtimber Hill were apparently instigated after Doreen Valiente joined. After these meets everyone stayed the night at her flat in nearby Brighton and sometimes took part in social events the next day. This writer's Gardnerian initiator, Rosina Bishop, who was a friend of Doreen Valiente, met Robert Cochrane and other members of the covine once at a picnic on the Downs after one of their meets. A photograph she took of this event as somehow found its way on to the Internet.

The ritual structure and mythos of the Clan of Tubal Cain was based on female and male mysteries that were known as the Grail Quest and the Order of the Sun. The latter was based on the myth of the Young Horned God or Horn Child born at the winter solstice and whose

symbol was the rising sun. In these masculine mysteries so-called 'manly' attributes and qualities such as skill, courage, bravery, honour and truthfulness were taught to the men by the Maid or priestess. The legends that were part of this teaching were those of the medieval outlaw Robin Hood and the once and future king Arthur.

According to Clan mythology, such traditional male pursuits as law-making, government, crafts and trades, surveying, astronomy and metallurgy were among the first arts of civilisation taught to early humans by the Gods. This echoes the legend of the Watchers or fallen angels mentioned in the Old Testament and the Book of Enoch and sometimes found in other Old Craft traditions. However, as Evan John Jones says: '...the presiding genius behind the first tentative moves towards all these male dominated creations was a woman cast in the image of the Goddess.' (August 2000).

The symbols associated with these masculine mysteries were the skull and crossbones, the hammer and tongs (derived from smithcraft and associated with Tubal Cain), a cockerel on a pillar (an ancient phallic symbol), a ladder with eight rungs (to climb to Heaven), a blackthorn stave (for cursing), a javelin or spear, shears and a sieve (used in divination) and a scourge (Glass 1965:145). All these connected with solar symbolism and the elemental force of fire.

In contrast to the above, the feminine mysteries were intimately connected to the element of water, the tides, fate and the cycles of creation and destruction ruled by the witch goddess. This is expressed through the medium of the physical plane in such traditionally 'female' emotions and feelings as intuition, sensation, empathy and imagery. This does not, of course, mean that men are not capable of these emotional states. The feminine mysteries were taught by a clan priest or Magister, hence the old Craft tradition of all-female covines being led by a male leader. John Jones claimed that Cochrane firmly believed that the old concept of the tradition being separated into male and female mysteries should be revived. The reasoning behind this was the still inherent 'mystery' in the sexual differences between men and women and how these needed to be understood in our modern age.

The symbols of the female mysteries in the Clan were a ring, a glove, a vase, vessel or flask, a besom, three nails (sometimes made into a ring), a spinner's distaff, and red and white cords. The flask was the vessel that carried the sacred potions that induced dreams and visions. Cochrane said it should contain a special 'witches' brew' made from belladonna, datura and fly agaric. The glove represented the pentagram or five-

pointed star, an important symbol for understanding the ritual structure and mythos of the Clan, and the distaff represented the witch goddess as the personification of destiny and the power of fate that controls both humans and Gods.

Connected to these male and female mysteries were a set of major rituals that were performed throughout the Wheel of the Year, although they were not specifically linked to the seasons. They were the Cave and Cauldron, the Chapel of the Grave (also known as the Rose beyond the Grave), the Stone Stile, and the Ritual of the Castle. Although it has often been claimed that Cochrane invented these rituals, along with the rest of his tradition, the late John Jones told this writer that a version of one of these rituals, the Rose beyond the Grave, was known and practised by another traditional covine he knew in Oxfordshire that had been founded in the 1940s. He had come across it when he met up after many years with an old school-friend who coincidentally was a member of it. When Jones wrote his book *Sacred Mask, Sacred Dance* he included in it some of the shamanic-style 'masking rites' practised by this old covine.

The symbolism of the Cave and Cauldron rite was based on a synthesis of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon/Norse mythology. This was one of the hallmarks of Robert Cochrane's tradition and one that has been criticised for its eclectic nature. In the Rose beyond the Grave the rite was an attempt to penetrate the mysteries of the afterlife. It was Cochrane's belief, allegedly passed down through his family, that during their incarnation here the witch creates his or her own version of the world beyond death. After they die they go to a place formed by the collective belief and faith of the ancestors of their clan. They cross over a moat to an island where stands Caer Sidi, or the four-square Castle of the Rose, the underworld home of the Goddess.

The ritual of the Stone Stile deals with the important, if not essential, relationship in traditional witchcraft between the practitioner, the land, its spirits and the people who live on it. This is reflected in other traditions of the Old Craft by the myth of the first magician Cain as the exiled wanderer. Its practice was connected with the spiritual or psychic waymarkers in the sacred landscape. In the material world, and in the mirrored shadow land of the spirits, these appear as prehistoric trackways, hilltops, streams and rivers, crossroads and ancient sites of the elder worship. Some of these are connected with so-called ley lines, spirit paths or ghost roads. When this Rite of the Stone Stile was performed in the old days several circles were used. The assembled

witches danced their way through the trees and past the enthroned 'Devil' or Horned God or his male representative.

Finally, the Ritual of the Castle was about 'the four square castle of the winds' with its four elemental gates. In Cochrane's tradition, as in others belonging to or based on the Old Craft, teaching was done through poetic inference, dreams, visions and symbolic imagery. In a sense the initiate acts as his or her own teacher. In this way they receive omens, signs and messages from Spirit through the medium of the natural world and the elements. The most important of these elemental forces are the winds that blow from the four quarters (the Castle) bringing news, inspiration and information. If the witch works with the trees of the forest they can also grant the gift of power and the waters offer patience and omniscience. (Jones after Cochrane: August 2000)

During rituals and workings the covine wore black, hooded robes and this is why Doreen Valiente described the Clan as a 'robed coven' (1989:118). The circle was cast by driving a stang or ritual knife into the earth and tying a cord to it. At the other end of this was attached a second knife. By keeping the cord taut a circle could then be inscribed on the ground. A 'moat' or ditch was then dug around the circle and filled with wood ash, vinegar, wine and water. The Guardians, or Shining Ones, were then summoned and the faery hounds of the Wild Hunt were called to patrol the outside of the circle as guardians or protectors (Jones 1990:152). Finally, the Lady of the Night and the Old Lords of Hill and Mound were invited to attend and witness the rites (F.P. 1987). Power was raised by the covine dancing around a central fire and they also performed a form of silent meditation by pacing around the circle in silence.

In the first edition of his book *Western Inner Traditions*, published by Weiser Books in the USA, Bill Gray gives a rather romantic description of Cochrane's covine as he experienced it as a guest. He says that it was led by a 'Master' and 'Mistress' (Magister and Magistra), met on hilltops at the dark of the moon in honour of the goddess of life, death and wisdom and cast a circle in a widdershins direction. The group practised magical workings for both healing and cursing and in the former the leader took on the illness into his body and banished it. They celebrated the four major festivals or 'feasts' and called them by their Christianised names of Candlemass, Beltane, Lammas and Hallows. At these meets the Master presided over the rites wearing a mask (presumably representing the 'Devil' or Horned God of the witches).

### *The Clan of Tubal Cain*

A 'blessing prayer' was also performed in which the human face was imagined to be the foliate face of the Green Man and a special prayer was recited. Although, significantly, Gray considered that the group was following an authentic form of the old medieval witch cult, he also said they had taken on board more sophisticated occult philosophies such as the Jewish Cabbala.

The rites of the covine ended with the traditional houzel or sacramental communion when those present were offered 'cakes and wine'. It was important that the light of the moon was reflected in the wine that filled the horn cup. To achieve this effect the Maid held up a small mirror to catch the moonlight and reflect it on to the surface of the wine. While she was doing this the covine paced around her nine times. The Magister then stepped forward with a lantern held aloft in his left hand and the ritual knife in his right.

He ritually sharpened the blade of the knife on the whetstone and stirred the wine with it three times. He then used it to sprinkle drops of the liquid at the four quarters of the circle. A charm was then spoken based on one used by the 17th century Scottish witch Isobel Gowdie. This referred to the sending forth of the witch's fetch (astral double or spirit body) from her body in animal form. Finally, the Magister kissed the Maid, drank from the cup and passed it around. A platter of small spiced cakes or homemade bread was blessed and handed out. (Valiente 1989:123) Sometimes a human skullcap would be used as a drinking vessel.

The main ritual tools used in Cochrane's covine were the knife, stang, sword, cauldron, cup, cord, besom, stone, and a human skull. The knife represented the virile power of masculinity, the cutting edge of the intellect, the strength of experience, wisdom, sexual love, conflict and victory. The stang was made from ash wood and symbolised the World Tree or the Tree of Life, the Old Horned God as the 'king of the forest', and death and transformation. It was forked at the top to represent the horns of the God and pointed at the other end so it could be placed upright in the ground. For this reason the bottom end was often shod with iron to protect it. (Valiente 1989:123) In the old days a common or garden pitchfork, either wooden or with metal prongs, would be used. Evan John Jones owned many examples of these that were used in his own covine in Sussex in the 1990s. Photographs of these are on display at the Museum of Witchcraft in Boscastle, Cornwall.

When placed at the edge of the circle, the stang became a symbolic gateway or doorway and a link between the spirit world or realm of the

Goddess and the Old Gods and the working space in the mortal world. However, at the Great Sabbats it stood in the north or was moved around the compass points. Traditionally the stang was garlanded with the relevant seasonal flowers and leaves of the festival. At Candlemass, it was either left bare or decorated with ivy and snowdrops to represent new life. On May Eve it was garlanded with hawthorn blossom, hazel, birch and willow, while at Lammastide it was wheat ears, red poppies and bindweed (*convolvulus*) . Finally at Hallows yew and elderberries were used (Jones 2001: 61-63 and Green 1991:65-66).

When the sacrificial death of the priest-king/God was remembered and honoured by the Clan, the stang became the 'altar of sacrifice' or the Tau Crux or kerm oak upon which the body of the chosen one hanged. Crossed arrows and a sickle were added with the skull and crossbones at the base. This recalls the myth of the sacrificed god and ancient times when the divine king suffered the 'threefold death'. He was shot with arrows, strangled or had his throat was cut so the blood flowed into the ground and was drowned. After death his body was dismembered and then buried in the four corners of his kingdom.

As Evan John Jones said: 'It reminds us that the [Old] Craft stems from a past that...was primitive, dark and bloody and very much different to the suburban Wicca of today.' (2001:64). Today there is no place for such atavistic practices in the Craft and, while the symbolism of sacrifice remains an important one, it is only considered in terms of its esoteric significance.

Each traditional covine according to John Jones was supposed to own a sword that was in the guardianship of the male leader. Its hilt was shaped like the Hand of Fate with its one pointing finger and it was symbol of divine justice. It was sometimes used to draw the circle and to put people 'under the ban' i.e. banish them from the covine or tradition for transgressions. When not in use it was placed downwards with its blade in the earth. Sometimes it was pierced through the skull at the end of a ritual or magical working in order to ground the magical energies that had been raised.

In modern traditional witchcraft the cauldron is a vessel of rebirth and the womb of creation that brought forth the Gods and humankind. It was also the famous 'Cauldron of Inspiration' associated with the Welsh witch Ceridwen and as such is a symbol of initiation into the Mysteries and the spiritual transformation that comes from it. Robert Cochrane saw the Craft as a mystical mystery cult concerned with the pursuit of

wisdom, knowledge and truth. Wisdom was 'the reward that spirit gained in the search for knowledge'. Therefore the spiritual quest was the means by which humankind could strive to overcome the control of the Gods and Fate. This could be achieved, like the dwarf Gwion Bach did, by stealing the Awen, or the drop of divine inspiration, from the Cauldron of Ceridwen in the Welsh legend. In another metaphorical sense it was symbolised by the Promethean theft of fire from Heaven and the fall of Lucifer to Earth.

In ancient times the cord was another sacrificial tool. It was the garrote, noose or halter used to send sacrificial victims to meet the goddess of death. The famous Iron Age 'bog bodies' found preserved in peat all over Northern Europe had a cord tied around their neck indicating that they were human sacrifices to the earth goddess. On the physical level it is the umbilical cord, cut at birth when we incarnate on Middle Earth, and spiritually it is the 'silver thread' that breaks at death to separates the soul from the body. The cord is ultimately a sign of the subjugation of the witch to the Craft and the power of Fate during his or her life incarnated in the mortal world.

The besom or broomstick was, as we have seen previously, the vehicle or 'horse' upon which the initiate 'rode' when travelling 'between the worlds'. It also represented the transmutation of energy, especially that of a sexual nature, in certain of the magical workings of traditional witchcraft. Finally, it was the symbolic crossing point in the circle between the mortal world of the mundane and the mystical realm of the spirits. (F.P. 1987) In the Clan rites during Cochrane's time a crossed besom and sword were laid at the edge of the circle as a symbolic gateway through which all had to pass. Traditionally the besom had an ash wood shaft, birch twigs as the brush and they were bound to the stick with willow withies.

Another ritual tool used by Cochrane was known as the 'pula'. It was a wand that had been naturally formed from either a branch or root that had formed a circle. When cut and seasoned it was ritually blessed for use to gain the Second Sight (clairvoyance). It was also used with a 'certain substance' that was poured through the circle with the symbolic meaning of transferring it from this world to the Otherworld and back again. The substance was then utilized for either healing purposes or for cursing (pers.com Jeremy Crawford, 21st February 2010).

The deities revered by the Clan of Tubal Cain were many and diverse in their nature and origin as one would expect. Principally they were the

Lord, the Old One, the Old Horned God as the ruler of death and fertility, and the Lady or Goddess who has dominion over fate and is the giver of life and death. The Horned One was a goat-foot god of fire, craft, and lower magics and was usually identified with Tubal Cain. He was also known as the Celtic giant god Bran, the Anglo-Saxon smith god Wayland (an English version of Tubal Cain), Herne the Hunter (a form of Woden or Odin) as the leader of the Wild Hunt with its hell-hounds, and the 'star crossed [ill-fated] serpent' Baal, the Canaanite god of the storm and fertility.

In the Clan mythos in Cochrane's day the 'sacred marriage' or union of the Lord and Lady was a ritual enacted at Beltane. It symbolically gave birth at Yule, or the winter solstice, to the Horn Child or Young Horned King, the mabon (Welsh for 'divine son') and sun god. The Goddess was sometimes seen conventionally in her lunar aspect as the Maid, Mother and Crone, a concept that seems to have been borrowed from the writings of Robert Graves.

The witch goddess was also associated with the Greco-Roman goddesses Diana, Hecate and Prosperine. More usually she was known as the ruler of fate in her triple form as the Three Mothers, Three Ladies or Three Sisters as depicted in Romano-British art. In this form she has obvious similarities with other triplicities of goddesses of destiny such as the Fates in Greek mythology, the Norns in the Norse pantheon and the Weird (Wyrd) Sisters in Anglo-Saxon paganism and folklore. The latter appear in human form in Shakespeare's Scottish play as the three witches on the blasted heath who call upon Hecate.

The original Clan of Tubal Cain also recognised several other deities or aspects of the God and Goddess. According to its mythos the Gods were born from Nox or Night, sometimes called Lady Night, at the beginning of creation. Ruling the east and the elemental power of fire was Lucet, in the west (water) was Node or Nodens, in the north (air) was Tettens and in the south (earth) was Carenos. Lucet was described as a being of flame with fiery wings and is obviously Lucifer. He was identified with the Young Horned God and also known as the 'Son of the Morning Star' (Venus). In Cochrane's covine the Magister held the title 'Lord of the Morning Star' as the human representative of the witch-god as Lucifer.

Node or Nodens was a Celtic water and sea god associated in the Clan mythos with King Arthur. His most famous shrine in Britain is at Lydney in the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire. He is also the father

of the Welsh warrior and hunting god Gwyn ap Nudd, who is associated with the Wild Hunt and the 'Hollow Hill' of Glastonbury Tor as one of the entrances to the underworld in Celtic belief.

Tettens was the 'Lord of the Mound' and the ruler of the dead represented by the waning or setting sun (symbolically represented as the Young Horned God and the Old Horned God and also by the Holly and Oak Kings). He can be identified with Cain in his psychopomp role as the 'Man in the Moon', with the phallic Hermes-Mercury and the Northern European Odin-Woden, the Norse-Germanic shaman god of the runes. Cochrane describes Tettens as appearing in physical form as a small dark man accompanied by a cold (north) wind.

Carenos (Cernunnos?) is the 'Lord of the Animals', the god of the woods (the Oak King or Green Man/ Jack-in-the-Hedge) and the Wild Hunter (Herne). He appears as a virile looking man with ram's horns and dressed in a cloak of leaves. There were also four kings, minor gods or male spirits who ruled the castles of the elements, and four queens, minor goddesses or female spirits who represented life, maturity, wisdom and death.

The Clan mythos as taught by Cochrane was that in primeval times there had been a union between the Gods and humans. This would have been before the Fall or the Great Separation as it is called in the shamanic tradition. This was the 'Golden Age' of classical mythology and the biblical myth of the Garden of Eden when Gods walked on the Earth and humans understood the language of the animals and the birds. From this ancient symbiotic relationship between spirits and mortals the magical arts were developed.

This idea can also be found in fairy tales, faery lore, the biblical myths of the Garden of Eden, the Tower of Babel, the Flood and the Watchers or fallen angels, the Arthurian legends, and in the creation myths of all cultures worldwide. It also features in the mythos of other Old Craft traditions, especially those practising Luciferian witchcraft. This is a yet another clear indication that Robert Cochrane was in contact with those 'in the know' and had inherited esoteric knowledge from genuine traditional witchcraft sources.

Beyond all these different god forms there existed an Unknowable or Nameless One, a force or energy that existed beyond all the other deities and was the Godhead. Cochrane believed this Supreme Cosmic Creator was feminine in nature. It was never approached through prayer or ritual, but only through the witch goddess as an intermediary. Although the Old Gods were not evil per se, they were seen as capricious and

amoral entities capable of good or evil. As Cochrane said, nothing in creation is purely good or purely evil. These are relative terms that humans use to describe and identify unacceptable mysteries. To Cochrane the Goddess could represent both light and darkness, good and evil. These terms, he said, did not really matter. What did matter was the total Truth, the Godhead, and the acceptance of the Will of the Gods, of spiritual Truth as opposed to the illusion of the material world. Again this is a typically gnostic world-view that is also common to other Old Craft traditions.

Over forty years after Robert Cochrane's premature passing controversy still rages over his Craft legacy. His critics still claim that he was a charlatan who invented a spurious tradition and then falsely claimed it had been passed down to him through his family. Evan John Jones admitted more than once that Cochrane was a trickster who used his so-called 'grey magic' to trick, baffle and confuse people, especially if he disliked or despised them. Cochrane had mentioned this psychological technique in the article he wrote for *Psychic News* in 1963 in relation to witches desiring power. He said that the basic tenet was 'that your opponent should never be allowed to confirm an opinion about you, but should always remain undecided. This gives you greater power over him, because the undecided is always the weaker.'

Robert Cochrane may or may not have been economical with the truth about his hereditary roots and in that respect the jury is still out. However the proof of whether or not his tradition was genuine rests on whether it produces results when it is actually worked. Many of those who worked with Cochrane, and those who are still following his system outside of the official Clan of Tubal Cain, have attested to the fact that it does. They say the rituals cause changes in the consciousness of those who practice them and in many cases tangible spirit manifestations are experienced in the circle. Despite her reservations about his Craft background, Doreen Valiente was on record as saying that she gave Cochrane credit for 'having given me the opportunity to take part in some of the best Sabbats [sic] I have attended' (1989:125).

Bill Gray also said that, from his personal experience in the circle with him, Cochrane possessed real power and he had seen him transfigured by 'supernatural energy' during the rituals he attended. Gray also had no doubt from his own personal experience that Cochrane was a gifted healer. He further described the rituals of his covine as 'real magic' that 'touched upon something deep within the land and the psyche.' (Richardson and Claridge 2003: 151 and 160).

Marian Green, editor of the long running *Quest* magazine and a lecturer, workshop facilitator, conference organizer and writer of popular books on witchcraft and magic, met Robert Cochrane in 1964 and for a while she was on the fringes of his covine. After his death she became a member of the 'inner circle' of The Regency, whose origin and history we will examine in the next chapter. Green had this to say about the rituals she experienced:

Although quite complicated rituals were performed, I was never given a script but a list of moves or prayers which had to be learnt by heart... It [the ritual] could be a seasonal celebration or a meeting to call on the Ancestors or the spirit of the land to give an oracle, for example... The rituals were often very long with stamping dances, invocations and prayers, building up a powerful and magical atmosphere. They were far louder, wilder and more primitive than anything I have ever written down... It was the feeling of raw and ancient energy and the visions of things half-seen by firelight that stuck with me, almost half a century later. Cochrane may not have been all the things he claimed, or that have been claimed about him since his death, but he did really know how to work with the forces of the land, and with time, and with elemental beings, in what still feels like an authentic ancient way. I have never come across any other situation where the elemental forces and the wild beings of the land, both visible and invisible, were brought into the fire-lit circle to be experienced for healing, knowledge and power' (pers.com to this writer and quoted in Cochrane, Jones and Howard 2001:36-39).

When he was a member of Cochrane's covine John Jones admitted that 99% of their workings were 'an illusion created by words, action and atmosphere. Even so at some part in the ritual the illusion stopped and reality took over. From that point on things used to happen' (Richardson and Claridge 2003:151). Jones was convinced that Cochrane had what genuine occultists call the 'inner contacts' and in the circle he was a very powerful magician, psychic and healer (pers.com from Jones to the writer)

It is pretty clear from the foregoing description of his life that in many ways Robert Cochrane was a flawed and even dysfunctional character. He was not the first, and he will not be the last, magician or occultist who suffered from that handicap. However, it cannot be denied that Cochrane was a powerful and accomplished magician, healer and ritual

practitioner. As such he had a tremendous and positive influence on those around him.

Even Doreen Valiente, who had questioned his historical claims and left his group as a result, said that when he died it was 'a great blow'. She also praised him as the most powerful personality in modern witchcraft. Valiente sincerely believed that if he had lived longer, Cochrane would have matured into a great leader of the Craft. Robert Cochrane was a highly intelligent and talented man and because of that Valiente claimed he would have learnt patience and judgement as the years passed and he got older. (1989:136.)

Shani Oates, the present Maid of the Clan of Tubal Cain, who was granted the title by Evan John Jones in 1998, has said of Cochrane: 'Like any craftsman he was able to mould raw material into a magickal synthesis, creating a marvellous working system, which at once was instinctively true and intrinsically beautiful' (February 2007). She has also said that because Cochrane was convinced that he had 'the responsibility of three centuries of hereditary gnosis, he proselytised a surprisingly 'modern' perspective of Traditional Craft practices. His idiosyncratic expositions accentuated his innovative flair for evolutionary and militant interpretation' (May 2007).

Certainly Robert Cochrane's influence from beyond the grave (sometimes quite literally) on the present revival of interest in traditional witchcraft has been considerable. Also, as we shall see, many of the ideas he put forward about the historical origins of the medieval witch cult and his ways of magical working are shared by other Old Craft traditions that have no apparent link to his Clan of Tubal Cain. Despite the many claims that he 'made it all up', Cochrane seems to have possessed a great

knowledge of genuine traditional witch ways. This suggests that he must have had some contact with authentic practitioners of the Old Craft when he was a young man and was instructed in its inner mysteries. The other alternative is that he was telling the truth all along and had been born into one of the few historical witch families to survive into the 20th century.

Perhaps the last word on whether Robert Cochrane was the real thing or not should be left to Professor Ronald Hutton of Bristol University, who has made an academic study of witchcraft and written an acclaimed study of the history of modern neo-pagan Wicca. He has said: 'If he [Cochrane] did compose the rituals and their underpinning ideas himself, then the word for him is surely not 'charlatan', but genius.' (1999:316)

# 3

## The Regency

Because of his personal problems by the spring of 1966 Robert Cochrane's covine had effectively ceased to exist. An entry in Doreen Valiente's notebooks early in that year contains a report of a Candlemas Eve ritual in that year where she acted as the High Priestess (sic). Evan John Jones is listed as the Summoner and his wife as Maiden – not Maid. Two other unnamed men, one called in Wiccan terms the High Priest (sic), were also present together with a third unknown woman. The stated object of the rite was to 'help found a centre for the Craft' and had the rather nebulous aim of 'Life, joy and happiness for everyone', which considering what was going on elsewhere was probably a good idea.

Generally the ritual appears to have followed the standard pattern laid down in the old covine. A list of ritual tools used includes a horn, a wine cup made from hoof, six horn cups, an athame (described as 'the old one'), a broomstick, the cauldron, a three-legged stool, a table with a white cloth on it as an altar, lanterns and candles. The 'wine cup made from hoof' is the same one featured in a photograph, along with two candlesticks made from deer hooves, that were published in Justine Glass' book *Witchcraft, the Sixth Sense – and Us* (1966) and in Doreen Valiente's *Witchcraft for Tomorrow* (Robert Hale 1978). It is described as a 'Sabbat wine-cup of horn in a bull's hoof holder, on the rim of which is engraved a pentagram.' These ritual objects were found among Valiente's personal belongings after she died in 1999. (Valiente 2000: 32 and 59).

Twelve willow twigs were used to mark out the main circle, which had been cast deosil. The Old Ones (the Lord and Lady or witch god and witch goddess) were called upon to give a blessing to the rite and its participants and then the circle was paced by those present in a traditional widdershins (anticlockwise) direction. The report specifies 'one candle per person' and notes that the coven sword was consecrated. A charm that was evidently used for casting the circle is included. It is typically the work of Doreen Valiente and asked that "by the knife may all ill dispel". It hoped that the Old Ones wished the group well and ended with the words "by the power of Hecate and Pan." As far as is known, this odd combination of god forms was not used in Cochrane's original covine.

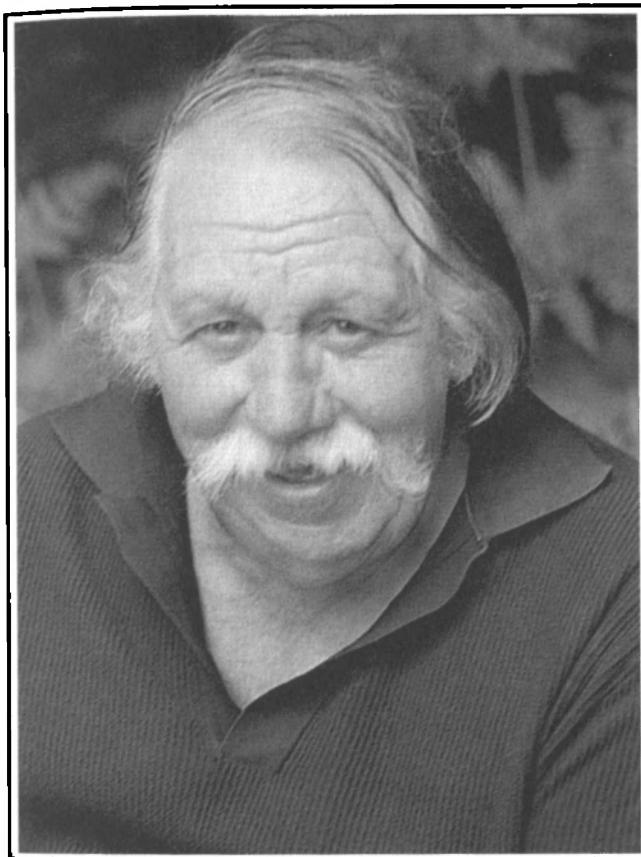
Another entry in Valiente's notebooks for early 1966 says that John Jones had been warned by Robert Cochrane that there would be a "big bust-up" involving two members of the covine, Ronald Milland White and George Arthur Stannard (sometimes known as 'George Winter'). Cochrane recommended that Jones leave the covine before it happened. In 1968 Doreen Valiente wrote to Ronald White and told him that Evan John Jones and his wife were not interested in continuing with the 'Royal Windsor Cuveen' or getting involved with The Regency. White expressed disappointment about this turn of events and Valiente commented "I think they are just settling down to a 'normal' family life." (pers.com from Dr Gillian Spraggs, 4th August 2010, quoting letter from Doreen Valiente to Ronald White in her possession). Jones also told this writer that at this period he and his wife took time off from the Craft to raise their family.

After Doreen Valiente persuaded John Jones to write his book *Witchcraft: A Tradition Renewed* (Robert Hale Ltd) published in 1990 however he was running a small coven in Sussex. Sometime after her husband's death Cochrane's widow had evidently passed the authority of the Clan to Jones. He in turn passed it on to Shani Oates and her husband shortly before he died making them the new Maid and Magister. Previously in the 1980s he had also inducted an American couple into the Clan, an act he later regretted (pers.com from EJJ).

In an interview with the magazine part-work *Man, Myth and Magic* in 1968, Ronald 'Chalky' White said that mid-October 1966 he and his friend George Arthur Stannard, both ex-members of Cochrane's covine, were having a pint of beer in the Dick Whittington and Cat public house on Highgate Hill in North London when they decided to form a new group. This was to preserve Cochrane's legacy and continue the Clan's work in a new, more public and, as it turned out, neo-pagan form. Like many occultists of the time, White and Stannard believed they were living at the beginning of a new age of paganism.

In fact it seems that the two men were already making plans to form The Regency a month earlier and White had began to draft the document that was to become 'The Reading of the Festivals.' 'John Math', the editor of *Pentagram* magazine, also took part in these preliminary discussions and put White and Stannard in touch with several people who were invited to the first Regency ceremony held at Hallowe'en 1966 (pers.com Dr Gillian Spraggs, 18th November 2010).

Ronald 'Chalky' White, who had served in the Royal Air Force during the war, had got his nickname because he was an art teacher. According



16. George "Winter" Stannard of the Regency.

to a letter from Robert Cochrane to Bill Gray, Winter was an 'old country witch' and had been inducted into an old covine in Norfolk before they met by a couple called 'Willum and Mary' (2002:111). George Stannard himself claimed that he had been taught traditional witchcraft lore by an old gypsy woman in Norfolk called Mrs Winter and he had adopted her name. Despite this apparent rural background, Stannard was described as 'very sophisticated and astute' by someone who met him in the late 1960s. (Holzer: 1971). He had also fought in the Second World War and had been a member of the British Expeditionary Force evacuated from the beaches of Dunkirk in 1940.

The new group founded by Ronald White and George Stannard in 1966 was called The Regency. In its mission statement Ronald White described it as a religious society with a central belief in a goddess as the

Mother and Creatrix of all things. She represented the stable feminine principle while the Gods, who are her emanations, were the active male principle. It goes on to say that the group is called The Regency because at present none of the living members (sic) are of sufficient spiritual stature to speak with the authority of the great religious leaders of the past. It added that 'Arthur still sleeps in Avalon' but that he was expected to return. Arthur was the name given to one of the aspects of the god in The Regency as the Lord of the Dead who ruled the waning year. The idea was that each person in the group would be their own Regent in relation to their personal relationship with the Gods.

It also said that there had been a 'man of outstanding quality who before his early death was able to point our way.' The group called itself by its name in preparation for 'someone greater to take up our present task.' This was obviously a reference to Robert Cochrane and also to his teenage son, who the group hoped would take up the role of his successor when he reached adulthood. As it turned out he was not interested in following his father's path (pers.com. Rosina Bishop 1969).

The Regency consisted of an 'inner circle' made up of people who had mostly been members of or where associated with the old covine founded by Robert Cochrane. These members attended special rites by private invitation only. In practice this 'inner circle' was actually operating like a traditional covine. A few days before each of the seasonal festivals this group comprising a 'Committee of six' met privately. The purpose of this meet was to meditate on the action, roles, settings and props needed for the coming celebration. The group had no titular head as in the interview with *Man, Myth and Magic* Ronald White said The Regency has "no dogma, no creed and no leaders". However, it has been claimed that in the late 1960s its inner circle still retained the traditional roles of officers from the old covine such as the Magister, Maid and Summoner ('John of Monmouth' : November 2008).

Although The Regency was a new venture, and was designed to appeal to a wider range of people than the old covine, including Wiccans and neo-pagans, White was at great pains to point out that the roots of its beliefs were ancient. Again this was a less then coded reference back to the original Cochrane group and his tradition. He said that the new group believed that pagan beliefs and customs have a permanent relevance for humanity and evidence of this was provided by their worldwide survival.

The Regency believed that, while humanity had a collective psyche, there were also regional differences based on that belief. These required

different forms of expression that were suited to variations in climate, environment and 'inherited ancestral pattern'. Because the founders of the group, and presumably the future membership, were British they would practice and promote the ideals, beliefs and ceremonies found among the indigenous population of these islands. This part of the mission reflected the ethos of many other neo-pagan groups and witch covens of the time.

White also conceded that even within the British Isles there were regional variations in pagan ceremony and belief. He also noted that the Christian Church had absorbed much of this, although some had resisted the 'erosion of clerical propaganda'. He concluded that this country lies at 'the core of a living myth and theology fitting to our people'. These comments about Christianity may have prompted one prominent Gardnerian High Priestess to say to this writer that she thought The Regency were "just a bunch of closet Christians" and other observers to comment that the group was 'Christian in tone' (Rees: Beltane 2004) or practised a form of 'Christian necromancy' (sic).

The ethos of The Regency was outlined in its mission statement in terms of a new religion that anyone who was a honorable and honest pagan could join. To this effect the group practised and promoted the ancient virtues of honor to oneself and others and honesty in all things.

As part of this ethic, and presumably because of the emphasis on the divine feminine, women were held in the highest esteem in the group because their religious role was so important. Ronald White went on to affirm that by revering The Mother (Goddess) humans 'assured the fundamental stability of the universe' and by worshipping the (male) Gods they identified themselves with 'the process of which we are part'.

The written word, apparently, was useless to describe this experience and 'outside the mystic communion' human beings cannot fully comprehend this process. What understanding that can be gained is 'ultimately inexplicable'. However, by 'following the Path of the Gods throughout the year' people can come close to the 'real knowing which is of the heart, as distinct from 'merely knowing about.' The 'Path of the Gods' was a reference to the celebration of the seasonal festivals of the year and they were at the centre of The Regency's ritual structure. At the end of the mission statement these festivals were listed as the traditional ones of Candlemass, the Spring Equinox, May Eve, Midsummer, Lammas, the Autumnal Equinox, Hallowe'en, Midwinter, and Twelfth Night. These were more than the four Grand Sabbats marked by the old covine and, with the exception of Twelfth Night,

followed the ritual pattern of the eightfold seasonal ritual year of neopagan Wicca borrowed by Gerald Gardner from the modern druids.

The statement ended by stating that The Regency was operative at 'a number of levels of experience.' This was a reference to the fact that, as well as the seasonal rites it organised that were open to the general public, there was also the 'inner circle' of initiates who had their own ritual agenda. It also said that the group recognised that the Gods are valuable extensions of the human psyche and that any religion that includes this factor should not be subjected to derision. For that reason The Regency was tolerant of all religions and saw no problem with its members adhering to any faith. Enquirers were then invited to write to Ronald White at his home address in London N19 for more information and details of meetings.

In an atmospheric article on The Regency in *Spectrum* magazine in 1971, White begins by describing how a group of devotees meet in a wood of oak, hazel and holly in the Greater London area. One by one they come forward and kneel to the deities to solemnly pour their libations. Once this is done they resume their places in the circle. As the last libation is poured, an owl hoots in the trees and the God and Goddess (presumably the priest and priestess presiding over the rite) step forward. They then distribute spiced cakes and blood red wine to the assembled worshippers and the ritual ends.

This description, said White, was of a meeting of The Regency, which he said was 'an organisation with no name' and a group with no leader. He accepted that the rite had its instigators, those who express and explain its simple significance. However there was no autocracy and not even a compulsion to participate as the diffident could merely spectate. Initially, said White, The Regency met indoors until the lack of suitable premises meant that it had to seek new sites outdoors for its rituals. Unfortunately, he lamented, they were unable to light a fire and had to make do with candles around the holly tree at Yule and a single black one at Hallows. Simplicity was at the heart of the rites and the ceremonies were spontaneous and lacking written scripts, as in the old covine. This may have been true of the later Regency meets, but originally, when it worked indoors, the rites were scripted in advance and written down.

In his article Ronald White goes on say that the group bears its name because 'we are all regents in our outer selves for that centre of being where the Goddess and the Gods dwell.' The Regency meets on the

seasonal festivals of the ritual year because they represent 'a repeated allegory of our lives'. He noted that some critics believed the group was puritanical and he admits there are no 'spells, no cackling crones. No devils and no voluptuous orgies', which must have disappointed a lot of seekers who, having read sensational stories in the Sunday newspapers, equated the practice of modern witchcraft with copious sex. White says that what matters is the 'communication with oneself under the trees' and the atmosphere of 'sincere worship and solemn joy' created by the performance of the rites.

Ronald White mentioned in the article that originally The Regency had met at indoor venues until their unsuitability had forced them out into the woods. In the late 1960s the group had convened at various addresses including George Stannard's studio at The Angel, Islington in North London, a large flat in Ealing, West London and a maisonette in Purley near Croydon in Surrey. The Purley address was rented by this writer's Gardnerian initiator, Rosina Bishop, and she was the appointed 'guardian' of a small terracotta statue of the Goddess made by Chalky White and used in the rites.

These rites were sometimes held in the large overgrown garden at the back of the Purley property. The curious neighbors who enquired what was going on in their quiet suburban backwater were told it was the rehearsals of an amateur dramatic group. In typical English style they apparently accepted this explanation rather than probe any deeper into what they told other neighbors were "the strange-goings on next door".

The flat in Ealing, West London used by The Regency was on one floor of a large house that had been converted into bed-sitters. It was owned by an ex-actress, voice coach and drama teacher who went under the stage name of Ruth Wynn Owen. She used it as her base in London when not living at the family home in Yorkshire. Among her friends was the famous actress Dame Peggy Ashcroft and she had also been a close associate of the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas. They exchanged love letters, but never consummated their relationship (Paul Ferris 1993: 93,101). Wynn Owen was born on the isle of Anglesey, North Wales, although strangely she did not speak Welsh. She claimed her grandfather's brother was a clergyman and diocesan schools inspector called Elias Owen, who wrote books on witchcraft and folklore.

In the 1950s Wynn Owen lived permanently in Yorkshire, England and she ran drama classes for would-be thespians at a local school. Two of her students were the now famous actors Brian Blessed, who first

achieved fame in the ground-breaking 1960s television police series *Z-Cars*, and Patrick Stewart, who went on to the Royal Shakespeare Company at Stratford-on-Avon before achieving worldwide fame as Captain Jean-Luc Picard in the US television series *Star Trek-the Next Generation*. Brian Blessed had been friendly with Wynn Owen's family and he was told by local people that she was a 'white witch'. When he mentioned this to her she told him her family in Wales had come from 'an ancient line which is full of legend and mystery.' She was later to claim her ancestors were descended from a marriage between the Celtic god Bran and a 'faery woman'.

Ruth Wynn Owen also told Brian Blessed that she had inherited psychic gifts from her family. She added that she shared their long-held belief in the importance of having a balance between the male and the female (Blessed 1992:377-378). When the actor was featured as the subject of the popular television programme *This is Your Life*, Ruth Wynn Owen came on it as a guest and was introduced as his former drama coach. Her half-brother, who was a RAF pilot during the war and one of 'The Few' in the Battle of Britain, was also featured in the Channel 4 television archaeological programme *Time Team* in 1999. He had been shot down over France in May 1940 and the team excavated his Spitfire fighter plane in the field where it had crashed. The programme also showed his grave in a nearby cemetery.

In the late 1960s Ruth Wynn Owen began running a small pagan neo-Celtic group called Plant y Bran from her flat in Ealing and her family home in Yorkshire, where her husband and daughters lived. Although privately she always denied she was a witch or that the group practised witchcraft, she wrote articles on the Hereditary Craft for Marian Green's *Quest* magazine and a small booklet Green published of questions and answers on the subject under the Welsh nom-de-plume of 'Gwenfran'. Wynn-Owen later retired to Wells-on-Sea on the north Norfolk coast and died after a long illness with throat cancer. In fact she had the same pioneering operation as the English actor Jack Hawkins to have an artificial voice box fitted to allow her to speak. The Plant y Bran still exists and is based in Yorkshire with a branch in the United States.

Several writers on The Regency have claimed that Ruth Wynn Owen had an important influence on its rites and beliefs. One has said '...the influences of Robert Cochrane and Ruth Wynn Owen formed an important backdrop to the latter Regency rites' (F.P. 1987). Professor

Ronald Hutton has also said: 'The Regency subsequently combined ideas drawn from he latter [Cochrane] with those of [Ruth] Wynn Owen and a fresh infusion of inspiration from the works of Robert Graves, to produce a sophisticated and fast-evolving set of rites' (1999:317).

Those who were around at the time and knew Ruth Wynn Owen would disagree with these claims. This writer's Gardnerian initiator Rosina Bishop briefly rented one of the rooms in the Ealing house in 1968-69 and she came to know Wynn Owen very well. Rosina told this writer that in reality it was Cochrane and The Regency who influenced Plant y Bran, not the other way round. She was present on one famous occasion when Wynn Owen told members of her group to remain silent during a forthcoming meeting with other witches because that way "they will think you know something." In a letter Wynn Owen told Ronald White that the first Regency meeting she attended was her first experience of a group ritual (pers.com from Gillian Spraggs, 4th August 2010 quoting a letter from RWO to White). In one letter Wynn Owen begged White to send her a copy of a Regency document called 'The Reading of the Festivals', but he was reluctant to do so for some reason. She stopped attending Regency meetings after Candlemass 1968 (*ibid*).

Following some anti-social problems at the Ealing flat, as Ronald White says in his article, The Regency began to work outdoors at various locations in the London area and further afield. Their main working site was Queens Wood in Highgate, North London, which was within easy reach of the two leaders' homes. Special permission had been granted to the group by the then London County Council (LCC) for the holding of seasonal festivals in the wood. Rituals were also held on Hampstead Heath in north-west London, at the Rollright Stones, a prehistoric megalithic circle on the Warwickshire-Oxfordshire border near the famous 'witch village' of Long Compton and Meon Hill, the site of an alleged 'ritual murder' in 1945, Runton Woods in Norfolk (possibly connected with George Stannard's Old Craft roots), the Stiperstones in Shropshire and in North Wales.

Ronald White records that one Hallowe'en ten members of the group went to the Rollright Stones and were greeted by a large crowd of people who had been attracted there in curiosity by 'the call of the season'. The Regency members deterred some vandals from uprooting trees and, despite the gibes of onlookers, impressed the assembly with their sincere ceremony. So much so that fifty people took a place in the circle that

night and all shared the traditional houzel of spiced cakes and wine at the end of the meet.

As part of his post-graduate research work in the neo-pagan and Wiccan community of the 1970s, the writer and lecturer Kenneth Ian Rees belonged to The Regency from 1974 to 1976. At that time Rees says Ronald White had become the departmental head of a local comprehensive school in North London. By the time that Ken Rees met him, White had allegedly distanced himself from the popular and incestuous occult scene in London and the people he had known from the past. According to Rees, he did not seem interested in communicating with the wider neo-pagan movement, or even with ordinary society.

Although Ken Rees was obviously impressed by The Regency, as he described it as 'a pagan group consisting of both a nucleus and a periphery of refreshingly stable, balanced and healthy minded individuals holding down responsible jobs in the wider society' (Spring Equinox 2002), he also had some serious issues with it. Some of these were connected with the nature of the rituals they practised and the structure of the group's mythos. Rees mentions a guest he took to one of the rituals who also had a problem with it as they were not sure exactly what it meant or if it achieved anything.

The guest said that the ritual suffered from being "over theatrical" and compared it unfavourably with indigenous tribal rites he had seen on a David Attenborough television documentary. In this programme the featured tribe had a unity of purpose and displayed experience. In contrast the Regency rite was of a "fragmented character." Rees added to this observation by saying that he had his own reservations about the rites and the mythos behind them. He was particularly concerned that the historical semi-mythical characters of Robin Hood and King Arthur were invoked as god forms by the group in the roles of the Oak and Holly Kings. As an apparent purist in such matters, Rees saw this juxtaposition of deities from Old English folklore and Celtic/medieval legend as a bad example of mixing mythologies, even though this is a popular practice in modern traditional witchcraft.

The importance of these two viewpoints, and whether they are valid criticisms or not, depends on several factors. Firstly, the comments by the guest can only be correctly assessed if one knew the extent of the person's own knowledge and experience of ritual. It is also a fact of life that many of those attracted to paganism and witchcraft have little idea

about how to perform rituals, or their underlying magical rationales. Sadly this is as true today as it was back in the 1970s. This is why public rituals are often a complete disaster or just fall flat. This should not have happened with The Regency because at its core were experienced practitioners and initiates, but on the other hand a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. If you invite in outsiders with little or no knowledge of ritual working you cannot be surprised if the end result is negative.

Ken Rees criticism of the use of two god forms from different mythic backgrounds illustrates a general lack of understanding of Robert Cochrane's ability to synthesise different cultural beliefs, which The Regency inherited from the old covine, and also the inherent nature of traditional witchcraft. For instance, behind the exoteric legend of the outlaw Robin Hood lurks the universal and archetypal image of the Green Man as one of the aspects of the Old God of the woods (and also a version of Cain). Arthur as the 'once and future king' who descends to the underworld to steal the Cauldron of Inspiration and is borne to Avalon after his death on a barge by three queens (goddesses) would seem to reflect many of the characteristics of the traditional god of the witches.

To outsiders it may have seemed strange that both Robert Cochrane and The Regency worked with the Arthurian legends. However, during the Second World War the famous occultist Dion Fortune sent out from the London headquarters of her Society of the Inner Light a series of weekly letters to its members all over the country. In January and February 1943 the particular subject covered in these missives was the Arthurian mythos.

Fortune said that within these tales and the associated Grail Mysteries were elements derived from Celtic Christian mysticism, ancient druidism and the medieval witch cult with its ancient worship of 'Queen Venus'. She identified the Roman love goddess with the Middle Eastern deity Astarte or Ashtaroth and said her worship drew its inspiration from Greco-Roman, Egyptian and Persian sources. She added, reflecting Robert Cochrane's idea, that the ancient mystery cults survived after the Roman legions were vanquished by the barbarian hordes and were driven underground to become witchcraft. Fortune also linked the pagan cultus of Queen Venus with the 'courts of love' and the troubadours in southern France who were involved in the gnostic Cathar heresy. (1993:107-110). To these sources we can add the Luciferian and faery lore that is also found concealed in the Arthurian legends and the Grail mythos and that influenced the medieval Craft.

The second major problem Ken Rees had with The Regency concerned its (alleged) political ideas and aims during the time he was a member. In our politically-correct times the allegation of racism is a serious one to make, yet Rees claims that the group showed signs of it. Ronald White allegedly told him that in its early days many of the members had fascist tendencies and he was worried The Regency might become extreme right-wing in nature.

In fact White has been described to this writer as a "left-wing teacher" and a "Guardian-reading Labour voter" so this statement seems doubtful. In the interview that he did with *Man, Myth and Magic* White was described by the interviewer as tending towards left-wing politics. It would therefore have been highly unlikely he would have tolerated or supported right-wing or racist ideas in The Regency.

Ken Rees also claimed that Ronald White believed his mission in this present life was to take the role of a merlin (this being a hereditary title in the Old Craft rather one just one historical personage) as a kingmaker and restore Arthur, 'England's [sic] rightful son'. As an example of some of the daft conspiracy rumors circulating about The Regency, Rosina Bishop told this writer she received a visit one day from 'a man from the Home Office' (i.e MI5 or the Security Service). He said he was investigating an anonymous tip-off (apparently originating from a disgruntled member inside the group) that The Regency was plotting a coup to overthrow the monarchy and install a puppet king. She told him it was absolute nonsense and she did not take this seriously. He agreed, but said that that the Security Service had to follow up every message they received, however ridiculous or cranky, that suggested there might be a threat to the monarchy, the government and national security. He went away accepting that the allegation was completely untrue.

Despite his reservations about The Regency, Ken Rees believed that its contribution to the contemporary pagan scene had been underplayed. At the time when it was active and flourishing it afforded, he says, one of the few pagan alternatives to the secrecy of Gardnerian Wicca, the flamboyance of Alexandrian Wicca and the "hippiedom" of the Pagan Movement in Wales. Rees says that its affirmation of the male and female mysteries within the same ritual structure (inherited of course from the old covine) was unique in its day.

He also congratulated the group on its accessibility and its open public festivals, which were innovative and refreshing compared to the secrecy and elitism of the others of the time. Rees concludes romantically (and

optimistically) by hoping that 'one day –like Arthur – it will be restored, the Halloween dancing ground once more echoing to the haunting whistling evocations, the old skull tapped once more, the humble stream magically transformed into the River Styx and the Queen of the May being crowned under that special oak...' (Spring Equinox 2006).

In fact the triumph of The Regency, if it can be seen in those terms, was that it managed to combine neo-paganism with traditional witchcraft in an accessible form that appealed to a wide audience. Ironically this audience included many well-known Wiccans who attended its pioneering outdoor rituals in the 1960s and 1970s that were open to the public. It therefore provided a platform for the dissemination of Old Craft beliefs and philosophy and as such it was one more important legacies of the work of the first Magister of the Clan of Tubal Cain, Robert Cochrane. How much the Regency rituals influenced modern Wicca is a subject that is still keenly debated. At least one gathering of modern Wiccans held annually at Hallowe'en at the Rollright Stones draws heavy on Regency symbolism for its ritual (pers.com Julia Phillips).

The ritual structure of The Regency was centred on the seasonal festivals of the Wheel of the Year. In the early days, when they were being held indoors, Rosina Bishop told this writer the rituals were usually produced by a 'committee'. Meetings were held beforehand to discuss what form they would take and once agreed 'scripts' would be typed up on sheets of paper and glued on to pieces of thin card. These were then handed out to the celebrants who each took specific parts, under the guidance of a 'master of ceremonies,' in what was essentially the enactment of a ritualised drama based on role-playing. In practice the rites were fairly simple in nature and took the form of 'plays' based on the mythic theme of the festival and its seasonal symbolism. They have been described as 'a beautiful synthesis of earth mysteries, ritual drama and the natural year, becoming a vehicle of expression of pagan spirituality.' (Rees: Spring Equinox 2003).

The input of different people into the ritual creating process seems to have worked fairly well. One observer described it as 'a synthesis of different strands...performed anew at every meeting', which meant that everyone present could participate in the genesis of the Mystery. (F.P.1997). A letter written by Ronald White to one of the participants in a forthcoming midsummer ritual indicates that although the rites were scripted and orchestrated there was still some flexibility in their

execution. He says: 'Please be free to add or amend in the movement as the spirit moves and in the part that concerns you we will follow. If at the conclusion of the solemn part of the ceremony you feel the spirit of the meeting calls for any further expression, say the starting of the dance, or a spontaneous speech it would be much appreciated [sic]' (Letter in the archives of the Museum of Witchcraft at Boscastle). Again, we can see the influence of Robert Cochrane's old covine and its Traditional Craft way of working.

The decision to work outdoors led to a different emphasis in the rituals. As one participant has said, holding them in a wooded area enabled the natural landscape to be incorporated into the symbolism of the festivals and their mythic theme as it could not be indoors. This reflects the way of working outdoors by the Traditional Craft. In practice, '...there would be a special oak tree for rites of the Lord of the Waxing Year; a holly for Arthur; a part that was the 'Land of the Dead' –crossed by a ditch at Hallows and so on'.

Significant or symbolic objects were also hidden in the wood and the celebrants had to undergo a 'quest' to find them. One example was when the man representing the God had to win the hand of the woman who was the Spring Maid by passing a series of tests. Another was the obtaining of gifts, previously concealed in the trees and bushes surrounding the meeting ground, when the Lord and Lady were married in the greenwood at Beltane.

The cycle of the rituals began with 'The Reading of the Festivals of the Year' by the light of a single candle, which took place at 'the Time of Promise' about a month before Yule on Advent Eve. It was called this because 'these things are the promise of the Goddess'. The Reading began with a statement describing the Lady as the creative element in the universe representing its totality, both seen and unseen. She is the Great Mother from whom all life flows and the unifying spirit in creation. She also embodies the Greater Mysteries and from her all things come and all things must return. She gives life, she fosters it and she takes it away. The Goddess is the source of wisdom, the fount of beauty and enchantment, the inspiration of poets, the spirit of prophecy, the mistress of knowledge and the alpha and omega – the beginning and the end. According to The Regency's theology the Goddess is also the embodiment of physical desire. This desire should be seen as inherently sacred and holy because it is part of her divinity. For that reason it is part of her worship and is not incompatible with religious veneration.

The Goddess is 'young and old as she pleases' and therefore has her dark and bright aspects in traditional witchcraft. In fairy tales and myths there are stories of how a young prince or hero encounters an ugly old hag and loves her unconditionally despite her physical appearance. The foolish and prejudiced would refuse to embrace her, but when the hero kisses the 'loathsome dame' she is transformed by his love into a beautiful young woman. In this form, as Sovereignty or the goddess of the land, she is a kingmaker and gives the hero the keys to the earthly kingdom. In the Arthurian legends she appears as the faery Lady in the Lake who gives the young Arthur the magical sword Excalibur representing his authority and power to rule the land as rightful king.

The goddess of the land is also a warrior queen. Her sacred weapon is the double-bladed axe or the sickle that ultimately spills the life-blood of the chosen ruler when she decides his reign must come to a bloody end. She is also the banshee, the bean sidhe or faery woman, the sinister Washer-at-the- Ford, who prophesies the wyrd of kings and heroes and their death. Finally, she is both the Queen of the Dead and the Queen of Elfhame and has control over the land, its spirits and the cycle of the seasons and their rituals. That is why the Wheel of the Year is dedicated to her.

As regards the male mysteries in *The Regency*; the seasonal cycle represented the solar journey undertaken by the God. He was seen as Robin Hood with his Merry Men in the summer and King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table in the winter. These two aspects are comparable in other Old Craft traditions to the dual aspects of the witch-god known as the Lord of the Greenwood (or Wildwood) and the Lord of the Wild Hunt. In *The Regency*, Robin and Arthur were respectively the Oak and Holly King, the bright and dark twins or the gods of the waxing and waning year who meet in ritual combat and whose modern myth is based on an ancient Welsh legend.

The victor continues to rule the overworld, Middle Earth, while the loser is banished to the underworld until his time comes around again. In ancient Roman paganism the 'rite of combat' was carried at Diana's Grove at the Lake of Nemi in Italy. In this *nemeton*, or sacred grove, the ruling priest, known as Rex Nemorensis or 'king of the wood', had to fight an annual battle with a challenger. This rival always vanquished the reigning priest and ruled in his stead, that is until he in turn was challenged by another (younger) claimant, who then replaced him as guardian of the sacred grove. This is yet another example of the sacred relationship between the priest-king and the goddess of the land.

In The Regency's mythos, Robin was the Lord of Life and Arthur was the Lord of Death. The Young Horned God, known as the Star Child, was born at the winter solstice when a single candle or lantern was lit under the holly tree to represent his coming into the world. The spirit of the Old Horned God returned from the underworld on St Stephen's Day (December 26th) in the form of a wren, the 'king of the birds', and was the prey of a ritual hunt by Robin and his Merry Men.

During the magically liminal Twelve Days from Yule to Twelfth Night, the Star Child grew to maturity with each day representing a year in his life. At the end of this period he was crowned as the Sun King and given the symbols of his kingship. He was also armed by the Goddess with the 'arrows of desire' (reeds), a spear made from holly wood and a club of oak. Ironically in the ritual giving of these it is said 'yet by these weapons shalt he die.'

At Candlemass the feminine mysteries were enacted as the Goddess took on her aspect as the Maid or Maiden. At the spring equinox she was betrothed to the young God and becomes his 'flower bride' (Blodweudd in the old Welsh legend). Their union was consecrated on May Eve with the 'sacred marriage' of the Lord and Lady or God and Goddess. Unfortunately their happiness is fleeting and transitory because at the summer solstice Robin faced a ritual death. In symbolic terms he accepted the apple and drained the poisoned chalice and was replaced by Arthur, who pulls the sword from the stone or anvil and becomes the new king. But as the words of the ritual say, Robin and Arthur are essentially one as the light and the dark are only aspects of one power making up the personality of man. They 'mirror forth our inner state, finding the strange balance of ourselves between the Gods of Light and Shade... the dark self balanced by the light.' Those who realise and recognise the unity of the two Gods in the midsummer rite will attain the knowledge of the Goddess, who loves them both.

With the coming of Lammastide, the Goddess was revered as the Great Mother who is responsible for the harvest. She is also known as the Crone who cuts down the Corn King with her crescent-shaped sickle. In the old days, and sometimes still today, the last sheaf of corn or wheat left in a harvested field was carefully cut. This sheaf, sometimes called the Corn King, the Corn Maiden or the Old Hag, was then carried in procession back to the farmhouse. There it stayed, sometimes made into a corn dolly or corn baby, until the next year when it was ploughed back into the land to bring a good harvest.

At the autumn equinox the God was honoured in his role as the Corn Spirit or the Harvest Lord, the 'father and keeper of the seed' that would create next year's crop. With the coming of Hallowe'en or Hallows, the God was established in the underworld as the dark Lord of Death – the light concealed in the darkness. In traditional witchcraft, in his role as the goblin Jack O' Lantern and the Lord of the Wild Hunt, he was called upon to 'open the bridges and the roads' (the spirit paths or ghost roads) allowing the Mighty Dead, the Hidden Company and the Ancestors to return to the world of the living and participate in the Dumb Supper.

From this brief description of the seasonal festivals practised by The Regency we can see similarities with the mythos of Robert Cochrane's covine and also with other modern traditional witchcraft and Old Craft beliefs. In the case of The Regency, it is difficult to know how much of its mythology, symbolism and ritual was influenced by the works of Robert Graves and Sir James Frazer. It was also been heavily hinted by Evan John Jones and others that some of the more controversial aspects were 'watered down' for public consumption.

Ultimately it does not really matter that much, as Ronald White and George Stannard, and its other members, created a series of rituals for celebrating the passing of the seasons that are some of the most powerful, evocative and atmospheric ever produced by any modern pagan group or individual. However the main reason why they were so successful is that they were rooted in a traditional form of witchcraft represented and as practised by the old covine founded by Robert Cochrane in the Sixties.

How did the Regency rituals work in practice? At Yule (December 21st/22nd) the members of The Regency met at the holly tree and the women cleansed it with fire and water. The Maid or Maiden then carried the 'Candle of Promise' from the Hallowe'en dancing ground to the tree. Candles were then lit from this and deosil or sun-ways were placed on the ground around the base of the holly tree to form a hexagram or six-pointed star. This was followed by a 'quickenning dance' by the women around the tree and the birth of the Star Child would then be announced. The men were invited to offer a libation to the new-born one and each was given a holly wand and one was given a mistletoe one. He was then singled out, accused of being an intruder and chased by the women out of the clearing where he stood in the shadows observing the rite.

The men were then told that a man was needed to rule as the regent until the Star Child was of an age that he could rule as king. The men's wands were then presented to the women and they made lewd comments about them. The banished man with the mistletoe one was then invited back and his wand was praised. He was then chosen by the women to be the Regent and he led a Fool's Dance through the wood. Finally he had the job of making sure everyone got cake, wine and kiss at the feast that ended the Yule rite.

On Twelfth Night (January 6th) the assembly returned to the holly tree in the clearing. There the Maid would chose the man who would be king. He was armed with his 'wand of office' and silvered holly spears by her. The new king would then drive the Regent or Fool from the wood and afterwards cast his four spears to the four compass quarters.

At Candlemass (February 1st) The Regency always met indoors to celebrate the season. This was probably because the British weather is usually inclement at this period of the winter. Working outdoors at this period is only for the very brave or hardy. The members of The Regency gathered before black draped altar lit by a single black candle and decorated with a sculpture of a veiled head of the Goddess. The women, dressed all in black, stood behind the altar. The men were instructed to leave the room and meditate on the mystery of the Goddess' renewal.

While they were outside the women stripped off their black dresses and donned white ones. The altar was re-draped with a white cloth and the head of the Goddess was covered with a white veil. A cascade of white candles was then lit and the altar was decorated with snowdrops. The men were then invited one by one to come back into the room. At its door each one was challenged and his purity and allegiance to the Goddess and her human representative the Maid was questioned. If his answer was satisfactory, he was cleansed with fire and water and allowed to enter the room and see 'the Mystery'. A quiet and reflective feast then followed when all the men had successfully returned.

At the spring equinox (March 21st /22nd) the God as Robin drives the spirits of the darkness and winter from the land. The celebrants gathered at the holly tree with the women standing on either side of the Maid holding bunches of primroses. The Master of Ceremonies (MC) gave a short description of the mythic events that had occurred since the Star Child was born at Yule. After partaking of wine, the men circled the tree widdershins. The Regent then told them, that if one of their number was to win the hand of the Lady (Goddess) at Beltane, they must first pass a test.

The men had to go away and collect 'wands of office' - sprigs of holly - and crush them in their hand. They then presented them in turn to the Maid or Maiden. Each time she refused it and rejected the giver. Then the men had to gather daffodils and present them. Only then did the Maiden choose who was going to be her mate and consort. The 'Chosen One' was decked with ivy and oak leaves, presumably to resemble the Green Man or Lord of the Wildwood. He then made offerings of cakes and wine to the Maiden in her role as the human representative of the goddess of the spring.

The offerings had to be found by the other men in the surrounding wood and the Regent led them in the search. This involved a symbolic journey to visit all the different sites that were to be used during the year to celebrate the seasonal rites; the oak tree at midsummer, the 'Land of the Dead' and dancing ground at Hallows, the stream representing the River Styx dividing the world of the living from the spirit realm etc. Once the men returned to the site of the ritual, the new 'king' could be garlanded and make his offerings. The cakes and wine were shared among the assembly, there was back-to-back dancing and a final libation was made to the spirit of the holly tree.

On May Eve (April 30th) the man and woman taking the part of the Lord and Lady (the witch-god and witch-goddess) became Robin and Marian. This festival not only celebrated the mating of the God and Goddess, but also the imminent arrival of summer. It was therefore a time for merrymaking, fun and games, dancing and feasting. Again the participants gathered at the holly tree and danced around it deosil. The Regent or the MC addressed them to explain the meaning of the time of the year and the festival. The consort of the goddess proposed to her human representative and was challenged by the other men present. The Maiden was crowned with wild flowers and her consort with leaves. A ritual procession of the 'wedding party' then wound its way to the oak tree where the man and woman had their hands tied together with silver ribbons and rose petals were scattered at their feet. A toast was made to the bride and groom and the men gathered sprigs of oak and water as offerings to the newly-weds. After the 'wedding' the assembly swore allegiance to the couple and games and dances then took place.

The midsummer rite was held on Midsummer's Eve or St John's Eve (June 23rd) and marked the sacrifice of the God, although in other Old Craft traditions this was at Lamas. The Goddess rejected the God and he accepted his wyrd or fate by taking from an apple, the fruit of the

underworld, from her hand. Everyone gathered at the oak tree and the MC told them to listen to the sounds of the wood around them as a form of meditation or purification before the rite proper. Two or three of the women went to a nearby stream, representing the River Styx. The rest of the company feted Robin (known as by the phallic name of 'Cock Robin' as in the famous nursery rhyme) before he took his last journey.

There were toasts and dances, including that of the Lame God executed with a shuffling, limping step. Robin was then dragged, kicking and screaming, to the stream, the symbolic gateway to the underworld, where the women stood wailing and invoking the Dark Goddess as the Hag or Old Queen. One of the women played this role dressed in black and veiled. She welcomed Robin with a kiss and he was led away with an honour guard of Merry Men. He was then symbolically sacrificed by being castrated, blinded and finally dismembered in a copy of the Celtic 'threefold death'. His severed limbs were then offered to the Goddess at the four quarters by her priestesses. The priestesses then subjected Robin's Merry Men to a series of tests and ordeals by the elements and a mock death before they were returned to the world of the living.

The final part of the rite was the triumphant return of Arthur from the underworld. The Maiden, who was wearing a red gown to symbolise the spilt blood of the sacrificed God, greeted the returning men when they arrived back at the oak. Three women, representing the lunar aspects of the Goddess, then went into the wood and returned with the man playing the part of Arthur. The new king was then greeted by the assembly, toasts were made in his honour and libations offered. Finally, cakes and wine were passed around and dancing concluded the proceedings.

Lammastide (August 1st) was basically a time for mourning the God as he made his journey to the Hollow Hill or underworld. At the oak tree the MC explained the significance of the season and then everyone knelt in front of the Lady and made offerings and libations to her. One of the women would emerge from the darkness with her lips stained with blackberry juice to represent blood. Other women processed carrying a bloodied spear, a bowl of blackberries and a goblet of blackberry juice representing the blood of the slain God.

A bramble was collected by each person and offered up. In return they were given a blackberry, cake and plums. The man representing the God was then led into the clearing by a crimson cord around his neck and

with his face covered in blackberry juice. As the representative of Arthur, the Lord of the Dead, he purified the women while the Lady or Maid administered to the men. The rite ended with the 'Harvest Supper' and the traditional back-to-back witches' dance performed in a widdershins direction.

At the autumnal equinox (September 22nd/23rd) those attending the rite were led by the Maid by a labyrinthine or spiral route through the wood to stand under the oak tree. The representative of the God or King Arthur was not present because he was supposed to be in the underworld. The women would emerge from the darkness of the wood and presented a bowl of hazelnuts to each of the men. A feast of a quiet and reflective nature would then be held to conclude the proceedings.

At Hallows or Hallowe'en (October 31st) the primary symbolism of the rite was one of death and of contact between the world of the living and the land of shades. The participants gathered back at the tree and circled it nine times deosil. The women then led the men blindfolded in procession to the stream that symbolically represented the River Styx dividing the land of the living from land of the dead. There they were challenged at dagger point and asked to pay a coin as a fee "to the ferryman" (Chiron) or face death. This was placed in a bowl and each man was purified with fire and water before being allowed to cross the stream to the Other Side. Then finally a woman representing the Old Hag Goddess gave every man an apple to eat. The blindfolds were removed and the whole party then adjoined to the nearby dancing ground that symbolised the 'Land of the Dead'.

In some versions of the Hallows ritual two circles were used, as they had been in the old covine, to represent the world of the living and the dead. Dice were thrown to allow entry into the second circle. The MC made an address about the festival's meaning and announced that it was "the season of the Games of Death". Libations were made to a human skull with a candle on its top was placed on the altar made from a fallen oak. The skull was to represent the Old God as it is in Old Craft traditions. There was also a cup, a bell, a ritual knife and a plate of apples and cake. The altar was then circled nine times widdershins and this was followed by a meditation on the nature of death. While this was going on, the MC walked slowly around the circle holding the skull and made several marks (symbols or sigils?) on the ground.

The dark goddess Hecate was then invoked, as the "queen of the dead lands and the cutter of life's thread", to release the shades so they could

speak to the living. A circle was cut around the men on the ground and the 'spirit roads' were opened. The MC then declared that "the bridge has been dropped and the roads are open". The gathering turned outwards from the circle facing the trees and invited the dead to join them. The women then led a dance forming a double spiral and maze pattern. The skull was tapped, the bell rang and the assembly whistled to call up 'the ghosts'. After 'whistling up the wind', the group partook of food and drink after first making an offering of it to the Mighty Dead. Hallowe'en games of divination were then played. At the end the MC then went round the circle presenting the skull to each celebrant in turn and telling them to remember their ancestors. After a closing dance, the shades were thanked for their attendance at the rite and then dismissed. The 'doors' to the spirit world were then ritually closed (after Rosina Bishop, Ken Rees and John of Monmouth).

Another account of a Regency rite practised by members of its inner circle, as witnessed by an outsider, was provided by the American writer and parapsychologist, the late Dr Hans Holzer. In 1967 Dr Holzer visited England to make a television documentary on witchcraft and research a book on the subject for an American publisher to accompany it. He was invited to a cocktail party held at George Stannard's house where he was introduced to the Cabalist magician Bill Gray and an ex-Alexandrian witch called Robert Turner, who as a child had met Gerald Gardner at his museum on the Isle of Man. Turner had left the Craft to join a ceremonial magical group in the Midlands called the Order of the Cubic Stone. The party was followed by a ritual, probably organised by Gray as he was keen on bringing together practitioners from various magical and Craft traditions in such a ritualistic and social context.

Following this meeting, Dr Holzer was invited back to attend a Hallowe'en ritual held by what he describes as a 'robed coven' to which George Stannard and Marian Green, later the editor of *Quest* magazine, belonged. This presumably was the 'inner circle' of The Regency mentioned before that was not accessible by the general public and performed its rituals in secret. Everyone present was wearing black robes and the rite was led by a couple described as the Master and the Lady and assisted by a young woman known as the Maiden. At the beginning of the ceremony, all those present were lightly scourged to "absolve them of their sins." Then blue flowers were offered up, symbolising death, and the Lady purified the circle by sweeping it with a besom.

The besom and a sword, which Dr Holzer was told was the symbol of the Master's power in the circle, were crossed and laid on the floor. This formed a symbolic stile and the coven then entered the circle by stepping over them. The Gods were called upon and the spirits of the dead were contacted. A new athame (sic) was consecrated using some 'holy oil' made from herbs regarded as having magical properties. The rite ended with the eating of small spiced cakes and the drinking of red wine.

Dr Holzer was told the coven was interested in researching the 'old traditions' so that the Craft did not die out. Their main objective though was to gain knowledge and for that reason they were not interested in power. The group obviously did not follow the precepts of the Wiccan Rede with its law of Threelfold Return, as Dr Holzer was told they worked rituals for both healing and cursing. During the rituals the covine practised mediumistic trances and these were induced by either the use of psychoactive plants, chanting or walking silently around the circle to create a state of self-hypnosis.

It seems clear from this description of the group's activities that it was still following closely in the footsteps of Robert Cochrane. Also it seems that the rites and practices of the 'inner circle' of The Regency were quite different from the more neo-pagan festivals that were performed for the benefit of the public. This has, in fact, been confirmed to the writer by both Rosina Bishop and Evan John Jones. In fact it has been claimed that its 'inner circle' was directly 'an evolution of the 'Cochrane Coven" (John of Monmouth, November 2008).

At Hallows 1974 Ronald White suddenly announced that he was resigning his office as The Regent of the group. He said that as he had ruled The Regency for seven years "the king must bow the knee to one virile and younger than he". This decision seems to have been based on the Frazerian/Murrayite concept that the priest-king or Magister of a traditional covine ruled for seven years before he was sacrificed or replaced by a younger more virile version. The Regency apparently continued after Ronald White allegedly stepped down as Ken Rees has said he attended at least three meetings between 1974 and 1977. Allegedly a personal friend of his had acted as co-ordinator at two of them (Rees: Beltane 2004 and Spring Equinox 2006). John of Monmouth has stated that The Regency continued to meet publicly until 1979. After that it met privately and attendance was strictly by invitation only (November 2008).

Ronald White and George Stannard subsequently retired from their respective jobs and they left London to live in the Church Stretton area of Shropshire . While living in retirement in the Shropshire area Chalky White used his artistic talents to design and paint a sign for a local public house called The Royal Oak. It depicted the trunk of an oak tree surmounted by a foliate mask of the Green Man shown wearing a golden crown as the divine king. More conventional signs for the pub name usually illustrate the story of King Charles I hiding in an oak tree from his enemies after a famous English Civil War battle.

George Stannard discarnated in 1983 and Ronald White followed him to the shadowlands in 1998. An official Ronald White website now exists on the Internet and his unpublished writings, images of his artwork and transcripts of Regency rites have been made public for the first time ([www.ronaldchalkywhite.org.uk](http://www.ronaldchalkywhite.org.uk)). This website has been set up with the permission of Ronald White's surviving family and keeps alive the heritage of The Regency, perhaps the most important and influential public pagan group in the history of the modern witchcraft revival.

## 4

## The Pickingill Craft

One cloudy day in 1909 in the remote village of Canewdon on the Essex marshes an old man walked up the lane towards the ancient church of St. Nicholas. A gust of wind swept up the road and removed the battered hat from his head. It flew over the churchyard wall and came to rest on the steps of the church. The old man hesitated and looked around to see if there was anyone around who would fetch it for him. There was nobody, except that several curtains twitched as curious villagers secretly watched to see what he would do next.

Finally, as there was obviously nobody going to help him, the old man reluctantly entered the graveyard and slowly walked up the church path. He stepped into the porch and bent to pick up his wayward hat. As he did so a shaft of sunlight broke through the clouds. It shone on the stone cross near the church door and its shadow fell across the old man's face. A moment later he collapsed and fell to the ground. He allegedly died on the spot cursing God and the Church with his dying breath.

So, we are told, ended the wicked life of 'Old George' Pickingill and the legend began. The old man who allegedly died on the steps of the church was born in nearby Hockley in 1816 and worked as a farm labourer for most of his life in the Canewdon and surrounding area. However he was best known to the locals as a notorious cunning man, sorcerer and 'master of witches'. According to the stories about him, Pickingill possessed incredible magical powers and psychic gifts. His family and ancestors were feared all over East Anglia as 'a race apart' and he allegedly came from a long line of witches, wizards and warlocks. They were supposed to have been practising sorcery and satanic rites since at least the days of Merlin (Lefebure 1970:51).

In the 1950s people in Canewdon were still telling tales about George Pickingill. These came to the notice of an amateur folklorist called Eric Maple, who for his day job worked for the National Gas Board. In 1960 he wrote an article about the witches of Canewdon that was published in *Folk-lore*, the journal of the Folklore Society based in London. He followed it up in 1962 with a book on the Essex 'witch country' called *The Dark World of the Witches*. In it he described Pickingill as the 'Wise Man of Canewdon' and repeated the tales about him told by local people.

In his article Maple refers to him as 'George Pickingale' and this was one of the many variants of the family name. Confusingly they were also known as Pettingale and Pittengale. The nomenclature 'Pickingill' comes from the Old English and Old Norse *picing* or 'people of the hill' and *gille* meaning 'a dweller in the valley'. The combination suggests a marriage in the distant past between two families to create a new surname. 'Pett' means 'a dweller in a hollow' and Pettingale meant someone who was originally a native of Portugal.

Eric Maple relays that in his later years Pickingale or Pickingill was a widower with two sons, one of whom was also called George and is sometimes confused in the local witch stories with his infamous father. Old George lived in an old cottage near the Anchor Inn in Canewdon once situated on the lane that leads up to the church of St. Nicholas. A few of these old cottages still survive in the village, but in recent years the place has been taken over by modern housing estates.

In his old age Pickingill was a tall and unkempt man with long fingernails and intense eyes who looked like a hobo. Maple describes him as 'a gaunt and ragged creature'. (1962:185). He was a solitary man who did not talk much to other villagers and was both widely respected as well as feared. This respect was largely due to his reputation as a 'cunning man'. Allegedly, he had the power to find missing objects and lost property and could charm away warts and heal other minor ailments by muttering incantations.

Fear of the old man was driven by the fact that there was a darker side to his magical powers. If Pickingill wanted some water drawn from the village pump the young boys used to run to fetch it because they believed he could make you ill with just a stare of his 'terrible eyes'. The afflicted person stayed ill until the wizard decided they would be well again. Local farmers gladly gave Pickingill beer money because otherwise he would threaten to make their machinery break down.

However he was also known as a good worker and could cut a field of corn in only half an hour. Rumour had it that this was not the old man's work as he employed his imps or familiar spirits to do the job for him. While they slaved away Pickingill sat in the hedge puffing on his pipe and drinking a jug of beer. Villagers reported that Pickingill sometimes had visits from strangers 'from away' who also gave him gifts of money. One brave soul who looked through the grimy window of the cunning man's cottage saw Pickingill dancing with his familiars. It was like a scene from Walt Disney's cartoon film *Fantasia* featuring Mickey

Mouse as the 'Sorcerer's Apprentice'. Clocks, ornaments and furniture were joining in the merry dance and flying around the room.

Eric Maple gives a different version of Pickingill's death. Towards the end of his life in 1909 he became too sick to live alone. Although he resisted it, the old man was sent to the infirmary. Shortly before he died a woman who visited him said he was lying on the bed looking like a skeleton. She swore that his imps were sucking on his nipples in the shape of white mice. Another story says that the wizard had to move out of his cottage after a mysterious lightning strike came out of a clear blue sky and set it alight. The next day he was dead.

Before he died Pickingill vowed he would not go to his grave quietly. On the day of his funeral the village streets were thronged with sightseers wanting to be sure the cunning man was really dead. In those days, especially in country areas, hearses were still drawn by horses. As they trotted towards the church, the animals and the hearse parted company. Its back doors flew open and the coffin fell on to the road. The shocked driver was surprised to find that the tethers had not broken, but looked as if they had been undone. He attempted to drive the hearse forward, but again the same thing happened. Finally the coffin had to be carried into the graveyard.

According to legends and tall stories told about Pickingill around the fireside in Essex farmhouses and cottages on winter nights, he had made a pact with the Devil in exchange for his magical powers. This enabled him to summon up the powers of darkness and command them to do his bidding. He had also discovered the famed 'elixir of life' and the secret of eternal youth. That is why, for those days when life expectancy was shorter than today, he had lived to such a ripe old age. Pickingill also had relatives who were Romany (gypsies) and when they visited the village he held Black Masses in the churchyard.

The old vicar was too scared of the old wizard to challenge him, but when a new recumbent arrived in the village he decided to face down Pickingill and his devil-worshipping kin. One night the vicar heard strange noises coming from the churchyard and went to investigate carrying a riding crop as protection. When he got there he was greeted with silence. All he could see in the moonlight were thirteen white rabbits peeping out at him from behind the gravestones. The villagers knew this was one of the animal forms taken by the local witches and what the vicar saw were Pickingill and his gypsy relatives.

The 15th century church of St. Nicholas in Canewdon seems to be a paranormal 'hot spot' and it features in many of the witch stories and supernatural happenings reported from the village. It is said that there will always be six witches living there while the church tower stands and 'three will be in silk and three in cotton'. In other words, they would be of different social classes — both rich and poor. Every time a stone falls from it a witch in the village will die and another will take her place. Only recently the tower has been repaired to prevent the stonework crumbling away.

Eric Maple suggested that this legend came from an old Spanish saying that every stone in a church built with ill-gotten gains has a demon living in it (1962:188). Anyone who walks around the tower, which was built to commemorate the English victory over the French at the Battle of Agincourt, three times at midnight will conjure up Old Nick himself. It is said that the real significance of the church in the local witch legends is that the original Canewdon covine was founded in the 15th century by a local landowner. He was allegedly inducted into the Craft in France while serving there as a soldier. (Liddell 1994:89)

Local children danced around the churchyard as a charm against bewitchment as the act was said to nullify a witch's power. It was even said that the Devil lived under one of the tombstones. This tradition may be linked with the alleged use of the area by Pickingill's covine. It also has its own resident ghost who appears as the faceless or headless wraith of a witch executed in the 17th century. She is said to have had some family connection with Canewdon. She has been seen gliding across the graveyard to the west gate. The spectre then crosses the road, hovering above its present level, and goes down the lane to a stream where she vanishes.

The area near this is known as 'the Witches' Field' because another practitioner of the Craft is supposed to be buried there. No grass will grow on the alleged site of her grave and it is haunted by toads. This is because the witch used to shapeshift into the form of that animal. Local witches often visited the grave to 'renew their power'. At a nearby crossroads yet another witch was said to have been interred with a stake through her heart. This barbaric practice was to stop her 'walking at night' or haunting the living.

When George Pickingill went for his regular walk to the public house frightened mothers gathered up their children and ran indoors with them. People crossed the street to avoid him and nervous villagers drew

their curtains when he passed by in case he put the Evil Eye on them. It was also believed that all cunning man had to do was to touch somebody with his curiously carved blackthorn walking stick or 'blasting rod'. He would mutter a few words under his breath and within a few hours they would fall ill from some unknown malady. It was no use calling a doctor as he would be baffled by the nature of the illness and unable to cure it.

Pickingill also used to enter the village shops and demand free food. Any request he made for a jug of beer, a loaf of bread or a joint of meat was never refused because the shopkeepers feared the terrible consequences. He even lived rent-free in his cottage because the landlord was too scared to ask him for payment or evict him. Like so many of the old-time rural 'cunning men', Pickingill seems to have taken full advantage of the superstitious fear he generated among the local people and lived well on it.

One of Eric Maple's informants in the village was a local woman called Lillian Garner. In his book he describes her as 'Granny' and 'a much loved character'. Elsewhere he refers to her as 'the last white witch of Canewdon' and that she was following her in her mother's footsteps. He said that she came from old Dutch stock and was descended from the Hollanders who came over in the 17th century to help drain the Essex marshes to create new farmland. Maple describes Garner as an 'adept in white magic' who was consulted by the villagers if they believed they had been bewitched. She told those who thought they were under psychic attack to place a pair of scissors or an iron knife under their doormat to stop any suspected witch from crossing over the threshold.

Maple tells a story that, even though she was a witch, Lillian Garner used to work in the church. One evening she was preparing the oil lamps for the evening service when a misty figure entered and knelt in prayer. In the fading light she could see it was a woman who had no face and was dressed in a grey shroud. When she looked again it had vanished. On returning home she recounted her strange experience to her family who said she had obviously seen the village ghost, who they described as "a terrible creature". Granny Garner however was not scared of ghosts and when she was an old lady she used to tell her grandchildren: "There is nothing to fear dears, only your own shadows."

When I first visited Canewdon in 1977 and told the old vicar about my interest in the local folklore, he sent me to see Lillian Garner. She invited me in for tea and we discussed the stories of witchcraft in the village and Pickingill. It was pretty obvious from our conversation that she knew

nothing about modern Wicca and had never read any books or magazines about witchcraft. She remembered the cunning man from her childhood as a village character and eccentric whose photograph was taken next to the first car to come into Canewdon. She also revealed that her mother talked about another, secret, side of Pickingill as the master of an old covine in the village to which she belonged.

Lillian also volunteered the information that her mother told her that the cunning man had "many visitors" who came to his cottage from "a long way away" seeking his "great knowledge of the occult". Before I left she gave me a copy of Philip Benton's *History of the Rochford Hundred* and the original of the photograph of George Pickingill that was reproduced in Eric Maple's book. Why she gave this to a stranger who came knocking on her door one autumn afternoon is a mystery. A photograph of 'Granny' Garner standing at the door of her home at Vicarage Cottage accompanies an article by Maple in the magazine part-work *Man, Myth and Magic*.

Eric Maple's version of the Canewdon witches and George Pickingill remained the accepted one for twelve years after the publication of his book. Then in 1974 the John Score, the editor of *The Wiccan*, the official newsletter of the Pagan Front (now the Pagan Federation), was in correspondence with a British-born man, E.W. 'Bill' Liddell who was living at the time in Auckland, New Zealand. He claimed he had relatives in southern England who ran Hereditary Craft covines. Not only that but Liddell said he was also a descendant of George Pickingill and had been inducted into the family tradition as a young man in Essex twenty years earlier.

John Score obtained permission to publish some of Bill Liddell's letters in *The Wiccan* and they appeared as articles under the by-line of 'a well wisher'. In these articles Liddell made some sensational and quite extraordinary claims about Old George Pickingill and his family. Among other revelations, the articles claimed that while he was studying at Cambridge University in the late 1890s Aleister Crowley had been a member of a Pickingill covine in Norfolk. He had allegedly been expelled because he would not convene regularly and complained that he did not want "to be bossed around by a woman" (the High Priestess of the covine). She apparently regarded Crowley as a "vicious sadistic monster". This information had been passed on to Liddell by three old ladies who were members of the Pickingill Craft tradition.

There is also an apocryphal story that while Crowley was studying at Cambridge he had made a wax image of a tutor he disliked. He and his coven (sic) had gone into a field and stuck a pin in one of the image's limbs and a few days later the man fell over and broke his leg. Crowley in fact had told Gerald Gardner when they met that he had been in the witch cult when he was younger. According to Bill Liddell's sources, Crowley drew heavily on the rituals of the Pickingill Craft when he was compiling those for his own magical groups the A.A. and the OTO (Ordo Templi Orientis).

Bill Liddell also claimed that his Elders in the Pickingill Craft had told him that George Pickingill had helped the Rosicrucian-Masonic writer and researcher Hargraves Jennings to compile the occult knowledge that later formed the basis for the magical workings of the famous Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. The articles also claimed that the New Forest Coven that Gerald Gardner joined in 1939 was connected with a network of 'Nine Covens' founded by Pickingill in the 19th century. It was also alleged that when Crowley and Gardner met in 1946 (or several years earlier according to some sources) they exchanged notes on their common Craft background. In the biography of Gardner, published under the by-line of Jack Bracelin but in fact ghost-written by the Sufi master Idries Sayed Shah, the Great Beast told him at their meeting that he had been "on the edge of witchcraft" as a young man (1960:158). Crowley had also repeated the same story to his friend the novelist Louis Wilkinson.

I had started my own witchcraft newsletter called *The Cauldron* in 1976 and a year later, almost coinciding with my visit to Canewdon and meeting with Granny Garner, Bill Liddell wrote to me. He said that his Elders had now instructed him to submit any future articles on the Pickingill Craft to *The Cauldron*. From 1977 to the present date Liddell has submitted a series of articles, at first using the nom-de-plume of 'Lugh' and later under his own name. This material has described the differences between the Hereditary and Traditional Craft and Wicca, the Old Craft's supposed connection with druidism, Scandinavian and Germanic paganism, medieval French witchcraft and Freemasonry, and the influence of Arabic beliefs on the witch cult.

Predictably the content of these articles has caused considerable debate and controversy. However, Liddell's critics have not realised that many of the more sensational stories about Pickingill, especially those about the Golden Dawn, were Craft legends passed down by his Elders in the

family tradition. Unfortunately this was not made clear at the time and has therefore led to much confusion, misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

Bill Liddell's presentation of historical witchcraft based on what his Elders had told him was very different from the version in popular Wiccan books. In his correspondence with Professor Ronald Hutton of Bristol University, Bill Liddell claimed that the witch cult proper emerged in 15th century France as a result of popular disenchantment with the Roman Catholic Church. (1999:291). The early French covines were, he said, connected with the stonemasons who built the Gothic cathedrals such as Notre Dame and Chartres. Both churches built on ancient sites of pagan worship. The masons, he said, understood the occult lore of the geomantic forces and had built cathedrals and churches on the ley- lines and at power centres in the countryside.

The stonemasons, the Compagnonage, and the medieval French witches allegedly both followed a Luciferian tradition and they shared an allegiance to Lucifer as the Lightbearer. They refuted the Roman Catholic Church's concept of the rebel archangel as a satanic being and instead believed that he represented 'the indwelling spirit' in the human body. The myth of Lucifer was seen as the incarnation of divinity in mortal flesh or the descent of spirit into matter. Likewise the biblical story of the Watchers or fallen angels mating with the 'daughters of men' also reflected the same 'Mystery'. In the later forms of Speculative Masonry King Nimrod, the biblical 'mighty hunter' and builder of the Tower of Babel, was allegedly substituted for Lucifer to avoid accusations of 'devil worship' being levelled at the Freemasons. Liddell claimed that many traditional (Old Craft) covines he knew that were still operating today revered Lucifer as a Christ-like figure who was the saviour and redeemer of humankind.

It is interesting that Bill Liddell connected Freemasonry with the medieval witch cult and that many traditional witches believe that the Old Craft was influenced by Middle Eastern ideas. In 1737 Chevalier Andrew Ramsey, a prominent Scottish Freemason, prepared a lecture to give to the members of the Grand Lodge of France in Paris. Unfortunately the government censor refused to pass it and the talk was never given. In the lecture Ramsey was to have claimed that during the Crusades a form of Freemasonry was brought back from the Middle East by knights returning to Europe, although he also stated that the Masonic Order was 'founded in remote antiquity.' We have already

mentioned that Tubal Cain, as revered by Robert Cochrane and his covine and by other modern traditional witches, was important to the early speculative lodges of Freemasons.

In 1775 another Freemason called William Hutchinson published a book called *Spirit of Masonry* in which he stated that the crusaders in the Holy Land formed secret societies. The crusaders' priests, and here it seems probable Hutchinson was referring to the monks who were Knights Templar, were 'possessed of the mysteries of masonry', 'the knowledge of the ancients' and 'the universal language which survived the confusion of Babel.' (Cooper 2006 128-130 and 146-147). It is a well-known fact that the Templars financed the building of many of the Gothic cathedrals in France. Also that the historical and traditional witch cult shares many of its symbols with Freemasonry.

These Masonic symbols included the skull and crossbones, the sword, the maul or hammer, the cockerel on a pillar, the ladder, the five pointed star or pentagram, the six pointed star or hexagram, the seven pointed star, the sun disc and crescent moon, and crossed keys. The cockerel-headed Gnostic god Abraxas and the symbol of the skull and bones were also important symbols to the Templars. In traditional witchcraft a human skull represents the God in the circle and is used as an oracular device. Both witchcraft and Freemasonry were also heavily influenced by Neoplatonism, Hermeticism and theurgic magic (ibid: 37-41 and 44-52).

In his first articles in *The Wiccan*, Bill Liddell claimed that George Pickingill's family had originated in Saxon times and its first historically documented member was 'Julia of Brandon', a village on the Suffolk-Essex border. In the 11th century Julia was allegedly the witch killed by the English rebel forces led by Hereward the Wake after she was hired by the Normans to defeat them using magic. In the legendary story of Hereward it is said that Julia of Brandon was in fact a French witch. Liddell said that historically the Pickingill family always owed their spiritual allegiance to the Horned God and they adopted an amalgam of Danish paganism and French witchcraft beliefs. He claimed that when French and Flemish weavers migrated to East Anglia the local witch beliefs were influenced by dualistic and gnostic elements from the Cathar heresy and the 'Old Religion' (sic) as it was practised in France in the Middle Ages.

The Pickingill covines were led by women as priestesses and in that way they differed from the other Hereditary Craft traditions that had

male leaders. Liddell explained this was because in ancient Scandinavian paganism only women served and worshipped the God, while the men revered the Goddess. This can be compared with Robert Cochrane's comments on the leadership of the male and female mysteries in his tradition. In the old Pickingill Craft the priestess was regarded as the 'bride of [the] God', while the priest was the husband and consort of the witch goddess. Historically this can be seen in the Germanic cult of the earth goddess Nerthus, who was only attended by male priests, and the Norse god Frey who had priestesses who practised a form of sorcery called seidr.

In the old Pickingill Craft, Liddell alleged, the four primary deities were the Germanic earth goddess Nerthus, the Norse goddess of love and magic Freya, the horned fertility god Frey, who was her twin brother and consort, and the trickster fire-god Loki. The German tribes regarded Nerthus, or the 'Powerful One', as a representation of Mother Earth. Liddell has also claimed in personal correspondence with this writer that some modern traditional covines in East Anglia still worship Odin or Woden with animal sacrifices.

The Roman historian Tacitus described in his *Germania* how a veiled image of the goddess Nerthus was kept in a sacred grove on an island in the middle of a lake. Once a year the image was placed in a wagon or cart and accompanied by her male priests she was then processed around the countryside. This ritual was to bring fertility to the land and a good harvest. During this time weapons were put aside, there was no warfare and peace reigned. In another ceremony the image of the goddess was ritually bathed in a lake. Afterwards the slaves who had assisted in this rite were sacrificed by being drowned.

Freya and Frey belonged to the family of gods and goddesses known as the Vanir, who were sometimes denigrated as 'elves' in the post-Christian period. In fact Frey is popularly known as the 'lord of the elves' or faery folk. The Vanir were chthonic deities connected with the land, fertility, childbirth, sex and the fecundity of humans, livestock and crops. Because of their primitive nature they demanded sacrificial offerings of blood and sexual fluids. The priestesses of Freya were renowned as gifted seers and when 'stepping out of the body', or projecting their fetch or spirit double, they used animal forms. Because of this some writers believe they were the prototypes of the later medieval witches.

In the Hereditary Craft, as in other Old Craft traditions, Bill Liddell said the witches regarded themselves as stewards of the 'Powers' or Old

Gods. In this role they were the guardians of the Earth and had a sacred duty to protect the environment and the ancient sites of elder worship. They venerated burial mounds, standing stones, springs and the megalithic circles erected by the pre-druidic people and convened at these places, where the veil between the worlds is thin. Quartz crystal spheres, called by the ancient druids 'serpent's eggs', were used by the witches to boost the 'earth energies' on the leys and at these power centres (Liddell 1994:68-70). They also communicated with the Good Folk or faeries, the *genii loci* or 'spirits of place', the wights or land spirits, the elemental guardians of the ancient sites and the 'Powers' or rural deities of the countryside (Liddell: Beltane/Midsummer 1995).

Bill Liddell claimed that Old George Pickingill founded a network of 'Nine Covens' across Southern England. Over a period of years he selected suitable women with the 'witch blood' and 'passed the power' to them. They then independently formed their own traditional covines based on the teachings they had received from the Essex witch master. Liddell says that Pickingill was not the illiterate drunken farm labourer as presented in the stories the Canewdon villagers told to Eric Maple. Instead he was an educated man who, in accordance with his Romany ancestry, was a horse dealer. Pickingill travelled across the country following his profession and this allowed him to recruit the priestess of the Nine Covens. It was only in his later years when he retired from horse dealing that he worked in the Canewdon area as a farm laborer.

Unfortunately this image of Pickingill as an educated man is disputed by one of his descendants who has recently been in contact with this writer. She has researched the Pickingill family history and uncovered documentary evidence relating to births, baptisms, marriages and deaths. One of the documents she has found in the Essex parish records is Old George Pickingill's marriage certificate. He signed it with a cross, possibly indicating that he was not able to write his name (pers.com 28th October 2010).

According to Bill Liddell, each of the Nine Covens was an autonomous unit and once they were established Pickingill had no direct control over them. He did however sexually induct the priestesses and gave them a 'Black Book' that taught them the basics of how to cast a circle and summon and control spirits and elementals. It also provided information on astrology, mediumship and geomantic divination as well as a few simple rules for administering a covine. This all sounds like the typical magical workings of the contemporary cunning folk. The rituals

practised by the Nine differed considerably from the old-style Pickingill family tradition. For instance they worked naked in their rituals, adopted special Craft names and took the 'measure' when initiating new members.

In the Nine the Magister or Master delineated a physical circle using a staff or wand and sealed it three times against baneful influences. The assembled witches then danced around the circle widdershins to banish any negativity. The Master then went around the circle consecrating it with fire and the Magistra. Mistress or Lady repeated the procedure using water. The covine members were blessed as they entered the circle and took up position standing alternatively male and female. The Magister stood in the east facing the Lady in the west. He 'calls down the moon' on her and she reciprocates by 'calling down the sun' on him.

The Nine Covens adopted the French Craft practice that only a man could initiate a woman and a woman initiate a man that is practised in modern Wicca. In the historical Traditional and Hereditary Craft however it was the Magister who was responsible for bringing in both sexes. Initiations usually took place at May Eve or Hallowe'en and the candidate was hoodwinked, bound with cords and scourged. Then the initiator breathed on certain parts of the candidate's body in a magical practice adopted from the Moorish or Saracen Craft. The concept behind this was to stimulate the psychic centres, or chakras in the Eastern traditions, in the initiate's body.

In the Nine Covens there was a tri-gradal system of initiation similar to the Three Rites of French witchcraft as used by George Pickingill's own covine in Canewdon. The minimum age for induction for men was eighteen and for women it was either nineteen or twenty. This was because in the old days sexual induction was a feature of the initiation process and was carried out by the Magister for the females and the Magistra or Lady for the men.

In the Old Craft this sexual induction was regarded as a legitimate method for 'passing the power' to a chosen person of the opposite sex. It was probably the traditional reason why homosexuality was frowned upon by some old-style witches. The 'power' included psychic abilities, familiars and spirit guides, and ancestral knowledge that were actually transferred to the initiate during the sex act. At the end of the rite the new witch was presented with a cord as a sign that he or she was now an initiated member of the Brotherhood (of the Craft), as it was called (Liddell 1994:60)

At entry into a coven of the Nine a 'Charge' or 'Legend' was read out that, Liddell claims, was similar to the one used today in modern Wicca. It was based on the description of the visitation of the Egyptian goddess Isis taken from the classical work *The Golden Ass* together with material from the Greek Mysteries of Demeter and Persephone. According to Bill Liddell, this 'Charge' was inspired by magical neo-pagan rites devised in 1805 by a group of academics at Cambridge University. They allegedly formed a so-called 'coven' using Masonic-Rosicrucian rites mixed with the ancient pagan Mysteries.

The then-recent pioneering archaeological excavations at Pompeii and the publication of Sir Francis Barrett's modern grimoire *The Magus* (1801) had allegedly inspired the formation of this group. They believed the Old Gods could be invoked and contacted by using reconstructed rituals based on those of the ancient mystery cults. (Liddell 1994:98). Another group was also founded at Cambridge of the 'Hellfire Club' type around the same time practising sex magic and devil worship. Liddell claims that both groups are still active today and it is possible they may have influenced Crowley's magical career when he studied at Cambridge University (ibid:107).

In his book *Witchcraft and Black Magic* (Rider and Company 1946), the Roman Catholic demonologist Montague Summers claimed that Francis Barrett 'founded a small sodality of students'. One of these students was 'a Cambridge man' and Summers claimed that the 'Barrett tradition' still existed at Cambridge University at the time he was writing (224-225). In fact Cambridge and its university has a long history of involvement with both witchcraft and magic (ibid: 90-92).

George Pickingill was allegedly exposed to the rituals of the 'Cambridge Coven' at a lodge meeting he attended as a member of the Order of Ancient Woodsman. Controversially, Liddell has claimed that Freemasons, Rosicrucians and witch masters of the rural Craft came together to form so-called 'cunning lodges' that practised a hybrid mixture of ceremonial magic and traditional witchcraft. The East Anglian landowners who belonged to both the Masonic and cunning lodges allegedly acquired copies of the neo-pagan rituals written by the Cambridge Coven. In this way they became known to the Old Craft and were utilised by the Nine (ibid). It has to be said that there is scant historical evidence of the existence of these so-called 'cunning lodges', although the Cornish pellers or healers are reported to have gathered in groups where members were instructed in the magical arts.

Unlike the traditional practice in the old Hereditary Craft, metal ritual tools were used in the Nine Covens. The ritual tools consisted of two knives (black and white handled), a scourge, a cup, a wand, a staff, a besom and a cord. Swords were not used. The staff or stang was placed in the north outside the circle when it was not in use and the besom or broomstick in a similar position in the south. The wand was placed in the east, representing the phallus, and the cup was placed in the west, symbolising the womb of the Great Mother Goddess who gave birth to creation. The cord was also positioned in the north and indicated that humans belonged to the Gods and are protected by them in this life and those to come.

Possibly the cords also symbolised the binds of Fate and the noose or garrote used to strangle sacrificial victims in Bronze and Iron Age times as in the Cochrane tradition. In one of his articles published in The Wiccan newsletter Bill Liddell referred to the so-called 'bog bodies' found preserved in Northern Europe peat bogs. Each one had a halter or cord tied around their necks and in his article Liddell claimed this meant they had been sacrificed to the Goddess.

The similarities of the rites of Pickingill's Nine Covens to Gardnerian Wicca are interesting and Bill Liddell claims this was not mere coincidence. He says the New Forest Coven into which Gerald Gardner was initiated in 1939 was connected with the Nine Covens. Pickingill had allegedly helped form a coven in Hampshire that ceased to meet in the First World War. A few of its elderly members tried to revive it after the war in the 1920s, but without much success.

Then some old-style Hereditary Crafters and several solitary practitioners joined and in the 1930s there was an influx of middle-class intellectual occultists. They were associated with a group of Masonic-Rosicrucians called the Crotona Fellowship of the Rosy Cross (CFRC) in Christchurch. (Liddell 1994:150). When Gerald Gardner returned from the Far East in 1938 and moved to Christchurch just before the Second World War broke out he joined the CFRC and encountered the witches from the New Forest Coven who belonged to it.

The New Forest Coven, according to the information provided to Bill Liddell by his Elders, preserved some of the distinctive features of Pickingill's Nine as well as being influenced by the then-recent writings of Dr Margaret Murray on the historical witch cult. They practised sexual induction, the High Priestess or Maiden took prominence over a male leader and the Goddess was accorded more reverence than the God.

(ibid). However it did retain some traditional practices such as the 'dance and drop' technique for raising power, thumb pricking and soaking the 'measure' with blood at initiation, the dedicating of the candidate to the God (known by his French name of Janicot, possibly derived from the Roman two-faced god of the doorway Janus.) by pledging everything between the crown of the head and the soles of the feet to him, the use of a 'flying ointment' and the fly agaric mushroom, a 'Black Book of the Devil's Art', an oath of allegiance and the 'witch's mark' (Liddell:May 2000).

Liddell says that, like other cunning men and practitioners of the Old Craft, Pickingill borrowed extensively from the medieval grimoires. He added that folk magicians and cunning folk compiled their own spell books and magical manuals that drew on this material. They also used the psalms, Latin charms and 'barbarous words of power' from classical sources. Many of the cunning folk were also witches and the village 'wise man' was often also the master of the local covine. Liddell claims that the witches borrowed sigils, names and rituals from the grimoires long before Pickingill was even born.

In an article called 'Witchcraft in Britain' by Allen Andrew published in *The Illustrated* magazine in September 1952 the 'Southern Coven of British Witches' was described, which was New Forest. It said that hereditary witches, who have had their lore handed down to them, form the main proportion of the coven. Their numbers were made up by inviting 'certain known enthusiasts' to join them – presumably these were the Crotona Fellowship members. The newcomers had made a wider study of witchcraft than the locals and formed the 'intellectual wing' of the group. Interestingly, the article also said that the coven was led today by a woman because there has been a recent theological shift from the Horned God as the Lord of Death to the Goddess as the Lady of Life. It also said that the practitioners of the Craft base their rituals on 'instructions passed down from their elders' with additional material from the medieval grimoire called the Key of Solomon.

Bill Liddell claimed that, as well as his membership of the New Forest Coven, Gerald Gardner had separate contacts with several Old Craft traditions and groups. He pretended that he had Scottish ancestry and used to dress in Highland costume compete with dirk and kilt. Liddell says that in fact Gardner had contact with traditional groups in Scotland and that these covines used a 'Black Book of Rites and Rules'. Gardner adopted this as a template for his own 'Book of Shadows' (Liddell

1994:146-147). Crowley, another magician with Scottish pretensions, had also allegedly told Gardner about survivals of historical witchcraft in Scotland that he had come across while living at Boleskine House alongside Loch Ness in the 1900s.

It is also claimed that Gardner had passed through the Three Rites of induction into the Hereditary Craft in East Anglia and has such was recognised as having the rank of Magister in the Pickingill Craft. In 1945 he allegedly joined a Hertfordshire covine that was a remnant of one of the Nine. He had contacted this group through his membership of a Co-Masonic lodge (Co-Masonry was a form of 'heretical' French Freemasonry open to men and women). Liddell also says Gardner was sponsored to join this Masonic lodge by the astrologer, magician and taromancer 'Madeline Montalban' (aka 'Dolores North' or Madeline Sylvia Royals), who this writer has been told by several independent sources had her own connections with the Old Craft before the Second World War.

Bill Liddell adds that in 1941 Gardner also became a member of one of the cunning lodges through a male colleague in the New Forest Coven. This lodge practised a mix of Freemasonry, ritual magic and traditional witchcraft. Liddell claimed he was inducted into the same lodge in the 1950s. It featured pseudo-Masonic rites led by the master of the lodge who was a ceremonial magician. The circle was cast using a sword and 'charged' with passages from the *Key of Solomon*. Liddell says that Gardner's exposure to this lodge reinforced his focus on the Horned God and the prominent role of the Magus or Master in the circle (ibid:158).

Historian and researcher of Wicca Melissa Seims has written about a collection of Gardner's early writings currently in the possession of Carl Weschcke, the owner and managing director of Llewellyn Publications in the United States. Among these papers, probably compiled in the 1940s, is a ritual procedure for casting a circle. The Magus (sic) casts it with a sword and summons the Mighty Ones or elemental guardians of the quarters. Seims notes that an identical procedure can be found in Gardner's occult novel *High Magic's Aid*, written in 1948-49, and a manuscript he compiled called *Ye Bok of Ye Art Magical*, that was a prototype of the *Book of Shadows*. Both of these manuscripts feature extracts from the *Key of Solomon* and this famous grimoire also appears in the novel as a source book for those of its characters who are ceremonial magicians.

Melissa Seims says that in *Ye Bok* the titles of 'Magus' and 'Master' are used to indicate the male role in the circle. However in the 1950s (possibly through the influence of Doreen Valiente) the two titles were replaced by 'High Priest' and it is the High Priestess who became responsible for casting the circle – without the use of a sword. She also notes that the initiation rite in *Ye Bok* calls for the Master to initiate a male witch. Seims believes that the ritual in the Weschke document represent a transition from a male-orientated form of Craft to a more female-based way of working. This suggests that elements of ritual practice derived from the Old Craft did not survive into the form of Wicca that Gardner developed in the early 1950s with the help of Doreen Valiente who rewrote the *Book of Shadows*. (Seims: May 2006).

This writer has also been told by several independent traditional sources that Gardner had some contact with an old covine on the Isle of Man where the witchcraft museum he bought from the Devon cunning man Cecil Williamson was later based. One of these sources has said that Gardner was fully aware of the true "secrets" through this contact. However, he knew that the public would never accept the Old Craft and its practices and beliefs. Despite this he was eager to publicise and promote witchcraft and this had already caused him problems with his parent coven. Gardner evidently decided to sanitise the Craft and change it into a neo-pagan religion that would be more publicly acceptable and also have mass appeal to a wide range of spiritual seekers. His creation of modern Wicca has certainly had that result.

In his correspondence with Professor Ronald Hutton previously cited, Bill Liddell presented a version of historical witchcraft based on its alleged contacts with Arab magical sources. As we have seen other writers, such as the Sufi master Idries Shah and the magician Rollo Ahmed, had already made this connection. Ahmed said: 'Another effect of the Crusades was the mingling of Eastern and Western ideas and beliefs; men who were prisoners of the Saracens in particular bringing back the theories and practices of Oriental magic, upon which much of the current witchcraft came to be based.' (1936:71). Ahmed goes on to refer to the heretical Knights Templar who were charged with secret dealings, both spiritual and political, with the Saracens and worshipping a hermaphrodite goat-god Baphomet.

The Moors were supposed to have introduced the North African cult of the 'Two Horned' to Europe. This cult worshipped a goat-headed god wearing a blazing torch between its horns to symbolise spiritual

illumination. According to Idries Shah, wandering holy men from this cult traveled from North Africa to southern Europe via Moorish occupied Spain.

In one of his letters Robert Cochrane also refers to the time when the English Craft accepted the 'Eastern Gods' and followed 'the walnut and the almond rather than the rowan, oak and blackthorn' (2002: 151-152). Some of the Dervish Orders displayed symbolism that was similar to the medieval witch cult. For instance, one of the leading dervishes of the 14th century was Barak Baba. He led a group numbering over one hundred members and sported a red turban decorated with buffalo horns. In the early 15th century, a Spanish traveller saw dervishes carrying horns and a black woollen banner surmounted with a crescent moon ornament. Below the banner hung deer and goat horns and the traveller was told this was a sign of the dervish brotherhood. (pers. comm. from Nigel Jackson 2007).

The Moors invaded Spain from North Africa and Bill Liddell says that the teachings and magical practices of the Saracen mystery schools influenced the witch cult in southern France. During the period in the Middle Ages when the Arabs occupied Spain the country was known as the occult centre of Europe. The Moors were famous as magicians, astrologers and alchemists and they attracted seekers from far and wide who wanted to learn the secret arts. Moorish magicians were skilled in the Jewish and Arabic Cabbala, Hermetic philosophy and necromancy. They were able to conjure up the spirits of the wind and control the elemental forces of fire, earth and water. The Arab alchemists claimed to have inherited their knowledge from the Ancient Egyptians and their astrologers taught the celestial science as it had descended from ancient Chaldea.

Moorish Spain was also a centre for more conventional forms of learning. Cities like Toledo, Granada, Corbora and Seville boasted schools and colleges teaching geometry, mathematics, poetry and literature. The seventy libraries founded by the Arabs in Spain in the 12th century were far superior to any of those found in other European countries. Arabic became the master language for thousands of Spanish people living under Moorish rule. Even the sacred canons of the Roman Church were translated into Arabic for those Christians who spoke no English. Scholars travelled from all over Europe to study at the Moorish universities and Arabic poetry was recognised as the purest in the world and influenced the native Spanish romances.

Medieval Islamic artists produced intricate decorative patterns for their mosques using geometric designs that baffled Western mathematicians until the late 20th century. The patterns they created were of a type known today as 'quasicrystalline' and they can be extended indefinitely. The geometric and mathematical principles behind this form of advanced artwork was only calculated by the well known British mathematician Roger Penrose in the 1970s, yet Muslim artists were using it hundreds of years ago (The Times 27.02.07). It is possible that the Knight Templars brought back Islamic knowledge of geometry to Western Europe, where it influenced the guild of stonemasons who built the Gothic cathedrals the Order financed and were the forerunners of the later Masonic lodges.

It is probable that it was through the teachings of the Saracen mystery schools that the Jewish and Arabian Cabbala entered the historical Craft. Bill Liddell has said traditional 'knowledge' covines studied the Jewish sacred texts of the *Zohar* and they modified the symbol of the Cabbalistic Tree of Life to suit their own beliefs. These covines concentrated on accessing and transcending the various types of elemental consciousness represented on the Tree.

Once attuned to the forces of earth, air, fire and water the Old Craft initiate can respond to the outpouring of spirit symbolised by the 'temple not made with human hands', which is either the Tower of Babel or the temple of King Solomon in the biblical stories. Then the 'inner god', represented by Lucifer and Queen Venus, can manifest through the initiate's consciousness (Liddell: May 2007). Robert Cochrane also used Cabbalistic references in his teachings and Dion Fortune talked about the medieval cult of Queen Venus.

Bill Liddell credits the so-called Saracen Craft with several innovations that were introduced into the witch cult in medieval times. They included the use of cords, the concept of the 'second temple', the five-fold kiss (on the lips, breasts or chest, genitals, knees and feet) and various techniques of sex magic. The five-fold kiss, also known as the 'Saracen kiss', was a method used by the Arab adepts of breathing on specific parts of the body to activate the psychic centres. This was misunderstood by Westerners and became actual physical kissing. The Arab magicians breathed on the mouth to activate the head chakra and on the phallus and yoni to quicken the solar and lunar forces and control the sexual function.

In the Middle Eastern mystery schools the section of the body from the throat down to the sex organs symbolised the 'middle self'. The feet were the 'lower self' or unconscious mind. They were breathed upon to remove impulses and fears inherited from previous lives. It also facilitated the flow of 'earth energy' or 'serpent power' that passes upwards from the ground into the human body through the soles of the feet.

In addition there was sometimes an extra breath (or kiss) that was applied to the root chakra at the base of the spine. This was used to increase the psychic powers of the initiate such as clairvoyance and allow far memories of past incarnations to be recollected. Unfortunately this practice was wide open to misunderstandings and may have given rise to the stories of the *osculum infame* or 'obscene kiss'. The witch hunters claimed this was applied to the bare buttocks of the Devil at the Sabbat as a sign of adoration and obedience. In the Spanish Inquisition's records of the 17th century Basque witch trials the accused were said to kiss the Horned One on the breast and 'under the tail.' Also in the charges made against the Knights Templar their priests were accused of kissing certain parts of the bodies of the knights when they were initiated.

Recent genetic research into the racial origins and identity of the British suggests that several thousand years ago this country was colonised by immigrants from the Basque region of Spain and North Africa. Bill Liddell refers to these ancient settlers as the 'Old Race' and says they are mentioned in the Craft legends he was told. They were matriarchal Goddess worshippers with highly developed psychic powers and first introduced the concept of the dark and bright aspects of the divine feminine principle to these islands. Our African ancestors also introduced the circle dance and used it for healing, sex magic and raising power. The men specialised in hunting magic and these male shamans were usually solitary practitioners. Real magical expertise was in the hands of the women and female shamans gathered together in small bands to perform their rituals. They were widely feared by the men because of the secrecy surrounding their rites and their magical powers.

The Old Craft legends, Liddell says, tell of climate change, frequent attacks by predators such as sabre-toothed tigers and cave bears and genocide by other human species virtually destroying the Old Race. A few managed to survive because of the lunar magic practised by the female shamans who recorded menstrual cycles and the stages of pregnancy. Women of childbearing age mated with the strongest and

most intelligent of the conquering races. The female shamans continued to practice sexual rites and circle dancing conducted at the full moon. The legends say that folk memories of these Stone Age practices were responsible for many of the features of the later witch cult. (Liddell 1994:130-131).

Bill Liddell claims that it was the Berbers who were the first to introduce African magical practices into historical witchcraft. Many of them still followed pre-Islamic beliefs and practices including the veneration of women and the worship of a goddess of love. They sacrificed goats and chickens at crossroads, used drumming to alter states of consciousness and combined ecstasy with the pursuit of knowledge to attain spiritual salvation. These magicians only paid lip service to orthodox Islam and banded together in small military groups of ten or twelve called 'companies' to protect themselves from persecution by fanatical mullahs. These companies formed the basis for the coven system in the medieval Craft. They also used secret passwords and identifying marks to recognise each other and recruited young local European women to their cause. At this time many of the peasant class were still clinging tenaciously to semi-pagan beliefs that included communion with the dead and making offerings to nature spirits. It was only a short step from this to a secret society of initiates practising more sophisticated magic.

The Moorish bands of magical practitioners were led by male leaders known as 'captains' and they were often mercenary soldiers who hired their martial skills out to the highest bidder. Others were magicians, astrologers and alchemists who worked for the European aristocracy or royal courts. In time the military term was changed to the Arabic *rahibin* meaning 'master' or 'teacher' and this was corrupted in English to 'Robin', one of the traditional names of the witch god. These early forerunners of the covine masters had the power to summon and command spirits, control elementaries, charm animals, predict the future and use magick to change events. Each member of the companie swore absolute loyalty to its leaders and their fellow members and swore to take their own life before they would betray the secrets of the Brotherhood.

Many of the leaders of the Moorish bands led a nomadic lifestyle and in their travels they founded small groups to whom they taught the secrets of the Saracen mystery schools. These included the keys to salvation and how to attain Paradise on Earth and in the afterlife. Sex

magic was also taught as a way to expand and transcend the limits of human consciousness. Liddell comments that when a Christian priest claimed that the Devil in the form a 'Black Man', or a blackamoor, had arrived in a rural area and began initiating women it may not have been totally a figment of their imagination (1994:136).

The anthropologist Vincent Caprazano did fieldwork in Morocco in the 1960s and there he encountered a secret brotherhood who worked with the jinn (elemental spirits of fire often identified with the fallen angels of biblical myth). They performed dances to facilitate trances and worshipped the queen of the jinn, Aisha Qandisha, who could appear as either an old hag or a beautiful woman. The followers of this sect communicated with Aisha in their dreams and she told them how to diagnose illnesses and suggested cures. (Magliocco 2004:171)

The Arab masters taught their initiates how to become a *Cathari* or 'Perfected One' through the Luciferian concept of the indwelling god or spirit. Only by its liberation could the spiritual seeker attain mystical union with the Godhead, which was the ultimate goal of the magical path. In the initiations into the Saracen Craft the candidate was expected to renounce the Christ. This was not a specifically anti-Christian act, but recognition they could not revere any god but the one within (Lucifer). The only saviour who could grant salvation was their own latent divinity.

When the candidate kneels before the Magister of the covine in the Old Craft according to Bill Liddell he or she pledges themselves to the Horned One and says: "Master, I have come to the altar to pledge fealty as your new vassal. Robin, I abjure my birth faith. I acknowledge you as my principal male God. Robin, I will serve you faithfully with my body and heart." (Liddell: February 2007). It is no wonder that in the old days the Inquisition accused witches of selling their souls to Satan and worshipping the powers of darkness.

What of the Pickingill Craft today? Bill Liddell has said that only two of the original Nine Covens are still active, in Hertfordshire and Norfolk. He has also told this writer of a traditional Pickingill covine that still meets in a seaside town in Essex. Another independent source in the 1980s claimed that there are two others that convene on the Suffolk-Essex border near Brandon and, coincidentally, on the edge of the New Forest.

Recently Ralph Harvey, a retired theatrical armourer who runs a Wiccan group called the Order of Artemis in Sussex, has publicly

claimed he was initiated into an old covine at Storrington in Sussex, southern England in the 1950s or 1960s that was a surviving remnant of one of the Nine Covens. Harvey says he contacted it through an advertisement in the *Brighton Evening Argus* newspaper that read 'Witch wanted to remove family curse.' It had been placed by a distant relative and friend of his, the Duke of Leinster. A witch responded to the advertisement who belonged to the Storrington covine and at that time they only had four elderly members. The group had connections with another covine at Willingdon that allegedly also had links with George Pickingill. All the members of that group were also elderly and the youngest was seventy-two. They told Harvey that they had not initiated anyone since the Second World War. Its last surviving member died in 1979 in her nineties.

Bill Liddell has also revealed some of the 'secrets' of the Old Craft as it is practised to his knowledge today. He has described how novices are taken to graveyards by a parent or grandparent to be 'introduced to the ancestors'. A suitable past relative is selected by psychic means to watch over the neophyte. The person's thumb is pricked and three drops of blood are sprinkled on the ancestor's grave. Then they have to kneel and pledge an oath of allegiance to the Horned One. A 'power stone' was buried in the earth where the blood had soaked into the ground. This stone was first placed in the left hand of the new witch and he or she circled the grave nine times widdershins. The circuits commenced with the left foot as it and the left hand are symbolically associated with Old Hornie.

Controversially, Liddell has also discussed the role of blood sacrifice in the Old Craft. He claims some old family traditions killed a small bird or animal to obtain 'witch power' from the Gods. This ritual was carried out at a spring, well, sacred tree, crossroads or churchyard. In some initiation rites the candidate was 'blooded' by being smeared with the blood of the sacrifice. The old-time witches believed that the release of life force gained the favour of the Old Ones and in return they would grant 'gifts' such as the Second Sight, the ability to leave the body at will and familiar spirits.

Also elementals have always been attracted to blood and semen and if regularly 'fed' will become the witch's servitors. Sometimes the spirit of the dead bird or animal was enslaved by the witch and used as a familiar. As we have seen earlier, Liddell has also claimed that there are traditional covines in eastern England today that still offer blood sacrifices in rites

of worship to the god Woden. However, he states quite clearly that today the surviving members of the Pickingill Craft do not practice such atavistic blood rites to gain magical power or spirit contact.

In two other articles published in *The Cauldron* in 2002 Liddell described the roles taken by the Horned God in the Old Craft and the Pickingill tradition. He claims that the stag god was the principal object of worship by witches in England and Scotland. In this form the God often materialised during rituals just as he did in the medieval Witches' Sabbath. Some traditional covines still 'marry' female witches to the Horned One and he copulates with them on the astral plane. A few of these 'brides of God' even claim to have been sexually satisfied by him on a physical level. Others are visited in their dreams by the God and given teachings. Many of these women passed the knowledge they received in this way to their descendants or even legitimately founded family Craft traditions. In one of his letters to this writer Liddell claimed that he was finding it difficult to recruit women to his own covine in Australia because all they were interested in was Goddess spirituality.

Liddell says that the Pickingill Craft recognise four animal forms taken by the Horned God and representing the four elements – the bull, the goat, the stag and the ram. The bull god was worshipped in parts of the West Country (south-west England), hence perhaps the Dorset Ooser or 'Christmas Bull' in local folk tradition, but in North Devon it was traditionally the stag that was honoured. This is not surprising considering the herds of red deer that roam on Exmoor and the long tradition of stag hunting in the area. The Devon covines knew the stag god as the 'Ancient One', used no magical tools, cast no circle and held their meets at new moon.

In the Museum of Witchcraft in Boscastle there is a notice written by its founder Cecil Williamson describing an old witch tradition he knew about on Exmoor in North Devon. He said it was based around the villages of Dulverton and Bampton and featured the local legends of the spectral Black Dog and the Wild Hunt. Not far from these villages is in fact the hamlet of Black Dog, named after a public house. Every November a folk custom is enacted 'for locals only' involving a nocturnal torchlight procession and the carrying through the streets of an effigy of a Black Dog.

Bill Liddell says, covines of traditional witches existed in rural Yorkshire until the beginning of the First World War. In some parts of rural Yorkshire, Co. Durham and Northumberland, Liddell says there

were 'stag covines' led by a man with a female deputy. Inductions were sexual in nature and the horned god was worshipped specifically as the Devil in the form of a king stag. He was known as the 'Bright Champion', opposed authority and the Church and fought on behalf of the weak and helpless against the Establishment. These are all typically Luciferian qualities. The North Country covines worked at both new and full moon and their meetings ended with feasting, drinking and sexual activity. A few of the traditional God orientated covines in Northern England were led by women with a male subordinate - who did what he was told. They also practised sexual induction woman to man and man to woman. (November 2002).

Many critics, including those who have never read his articles, have dismissed Bill Liddell's material on the Pickingill family tradition and the Old Craft as the product of a liar and a fantasist. This writer keeps an open mind about the information he has provided over the years as, to date, no real independent evidence has been offered by Liddell or anybody else to confirm what he has claimed. However having corresponded with him for over thirty years I do not believe he is either a liar or a fantasist and what he has said about the Craft is fairly consistent.

Although Bill Liddell and his Craft Elders are critical of Wicca, they have ironically provided a historical authenticity for it that sadly was previously lacking. Some Gardnerians, such as Doreen Valiente and Vivienne Crowley, initially accepted Liddell's claims for that very reason. Both eventually backtracked and Valiente expressed her considered opinion that the articles were a mixture of fact and fantasy and truth and disinformation (1989:206). Crowley also deleted any reference to the Pickingill material in later editions of her book.

Some other writers, such as Aidan Kelly (1991), have openly and publicly accused Bill Liddell of being the front man of some kind of disinformation campaign. This conspiracy has allegedly been organised by either traditional witches to discredit Wicca by creating a pseudo-history for it that turns out to be false, or by certain Gardnerians to provide their new tradition with an air of historical legitimacy. No doubt this writer fits into one of those categories as he published Bill Liddell's articles and also edited an anthology of them for the UK publisher Capall Bann Ltd.

The image of George Pickingill that Bill Liddell offers his readers of course contrasts sharply with the local folklore about the cunning man.

In fact a local historian called Sylvia Webster, who used to live in Canewdon, has claimed to this writer that all the folklore is false and George Pickingill had nothing to do with witchcraft. She said that the villagers invented the stories about witches to impress a gullible outsider (Eric Maple) and told him what he wanted to hear. Considering the wealth of legends and stories circulating in the area about the activities of practitioners of the Craft, past and present, this seems highly unlikely.

Bill Liddell claims that some branches of the Hereditary Craft in eastern England were only too happy to promote a false image of George Pickingill. He held extreme anti-Christian views and was dedicated to overthrowing the power of the Church as it was in his day. To this end he allegedly collaborated with Satanists to ensure its destruction and thereby associated the Old Craft with satanic beliefs and practices. Despite this image of Pickingill as a satanic anti-Christian he did get married in church, although this may have been for social rather than religious reasons.

Liddell claims many Crafters were also horrified when Old George launched his Nine Covens led by women. This was totally alien to the practices of historical and traditional witchcraft where a man (the Magister or witch master) led the rites. They feared this was yet another way the old wizard was introducing so-called 'satanic' practices into the Craft. He also broke his oaths by giving his occult knowledge freely to outsiders such as Rosicrucians, Freemasons and ceremonial magicians. In fact in his time it would appear that George Pickingill was just as controversial as Robert Cochrane. Also, like Cochrane, he was a reformer and moderniser whose radical attempts to bring the Old Craft up to date were not accepted by those who resist change at all cost.

## 5

## The Horse Whisperers

Some years ago Hollywood superstar Robert Redford appeared in a movie called *The Horse Whisperer*. It was based on a novel of the same name, which in turn had been inspired by the real-life career of an American 'horse whisperer' called Monty Roberts. He was a horse trainer who developed his own alternative method for breaking and taming wild horses. Roberts' technique received considerable media coverage and spawned a cottage industry as training courses for would-be horse whisperers were set up both in the States and the United Kingdom.

However, down the centuries, people who have worked closely with horses have always had their individual and special techniques to calm, control and train these animals. Many of the professional secrets of training horses have been surrounded by an aura of myth and mystery and suggestions that magical or supernatural powers were involved. The most famous of these trainers were the original horse whisperers who belong to a rural secret society known the Guild of Horseman or the Society of the Horseman's Word. This flourished between the 1850s and 1930s and it is rumored it still exists today.

The mythical history of the Horseman's Word, like so many other secret societies, places its origins in the distant past. Horses were first domesticated as far back as 8000 BCE and it is believed that the tribes of Eastern Europe were the first humans to tame the indigenous wild horses that roamed the steppes. Originally the prehistoric hunter-gatherers only regarded horses as just another food crop and hunted them for their meat. With the emergence of a pastoral lifestyle among ancient peoples they were domesticated and used as pack animals or for human transport. Horse training is believed to have originated on the European and Asian steppes and then spread to from there to Persia, Greece, Rome and Egypt.

In the mythology of the Guild of the Horseman's Word its origins are traced back to the biblical character Cain, the son of Adam and Eve (or Samael/Lucifer and Eve) and the 'first murderer'. Cain was also supposed to have been the first horseman and his descendants inherited his knowledge of horsemanship. The Romany people claim an ancestry

that dates back to Cain and that is why gypsies have always traditionally been horse dealers. In the Horserman's Word the candidate for initiation is told the story of how Cain was travelling in the deserts of Arabia when he saw a mare drinking at an oasis pool. Using guile and cunning, he managed to catch her and made a collar and horseshoes for her feet. Not only was Cain the first horseman, but he was also the first smith. In some forms of the Horseman's Word Cain's traditional role as the first horseman is taken by his descendant Tubal Cain, who is described in a Masonic manuscript dating from 1891 as a smith skilled in crafting gold, silver, copper and iron (Fernee 2009:152). We have already seen that Tubal Cain is an important figure in traditional witchcraft.

Since ancient times the blacksmith has been regarded as a natural magician. This was because he worked with metal and fire and could transform them in an almost alchemical process into tools and weapons. Primitive people saw this as a magical act and this belief continues in some traditions of the Old Craft where the hammer and tongs and the anvil used by smiths are ritual objects. The metalworker's alleged supernatural powers were reflected in the worship of smith gods in ancient cultures such as the Greek Hephaestos, the Roman Vulcan, the Norse Volund, the Welsh Gofannon, the Irish Goibniu and the Anglo-Saxon Volund or Wayland. Magical beliefs about the blacksmith survived into the post-Christian era and we have seen he is one of the aspects of the witch-god revered in modern traditional witchcraft.

Superstitious country folk said that a good smith must have sold his soul to the Devil in exchange for his skills and there are many folk tales of blacksmiths outwitting the Old One. The folklorist George Ewart Evans quotes a Suffolk blacksmith who told him: "The smith is the next best thing to the Lord. For the Lord changed water into wine and the smith changed old iron into new." (1966:167). This refers to the magical and alchemical transformation of one material into something else.

Despite its mythical pretensions to an ancient and legendary origin and history, it is almost certain that the Society of Horsemen began in south-east Scotland in the 18th century. From there it moved southwards into Northern England, East Anglia, the West Country and Wales. Alternatively, it has been claimed, the Word started in East Anglia and flourished there long before it reached Scotland and elsewhere. From eastern England it moved west and north to the other areas of the country. British immigrants also took it to Canada and US states such as Texas, Kentucky and Wyoming. Monty Roberts was not the first

American horse whisperer to achieve fame in this country. In Victorian times several professional horse trainers from the States toured England giving public demonstrations of their skills to large and attentive audiences.

Similarities have been noted between the rituals and ceremonies of the Horseman's Word and Freemasonry. This may not be coincidental as the 18th century was the heyday of Masonry and the Grand Lodge of England was established in London in 1717. It is also probable, as we shall see, that the Horsemen may have developed from another rural secret society known as the Miller's Word that was exclusively for grain millers. Some writers on the subject have also clung to the idea that the Horseman's Word had its origins in or connections with ancient paganism and the survival of pagan beliefs.

Russell Lyon, who has studied and written about the Horseman's Word in Scotland, mentions its use of names from Greek mythology in rituals. However, he also points out that the farming families who made up the society's membership were often educated people. He cites as a famous example the Scottish poet Robbie Burns who was taught both Latin and Greek at school. Burns was also a member of another rural secret fraternity called the Society of Ploughmen as well as a leading Freemason (Lyon 2003:3).

In his book *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft* (1999), Professor Ronald Hutton of Bristol University discusses the Horseman's Word and the theory that it derived from a pre-Christian religion or was a pagan survival. Although he says that its rituals and initiations have about them 'a whiff of magic and diabolism', he refutes any idea that the society had links with pagan beliefs or was associated in anyway with historical witchcraft. Professor Hutton compares the rituals and organisational structure of the Word to Freemasonry, but then adds that unlike the Masons 'it did not pretend to a more general esoteric knowledge'.

This is a debatable comment, especially in the light of Professor Hutton's later comment that the Horsemen believed that not only were they older than the Freemasons, but were in fact the oldest secret society in existence having been founded by Cain (Hutton 1999:62-63). Also, as we shall see, the similarities between the rituals of the Horseman's Word (and its offshoot the cult of the Toadmen) and historical and traditional witchcraft are quite striking. In fact they are so similar that it seems impossible to believe that this is merely coincidental.

The membership of the Horsemen's society was exclusively all male and restricted to stable lads, wagon drivers, blacksmiths and farriers, wheelwrights, ploughmen, harness makers and anyone else who worked with horses on a daily basis. As with other secret societies (and the witch cult) there was an elaborate organisational structure with a hierarchy, a probationary period before initiation, nay-words or secret passwords, melodramatic rituals and the imparting of 'secrets' and arcane knowledge to new members by those more senior in the fraternity. After initiation the novice member would be told the actual Horseman's Word that was used to control horses and other animals, along with the special practical techniques that accompanied its use.

A prospective candidate for initiation was known as a 'halflin' or a 'loon' and he had to be aged at least eighteen. He was informed his peers had selected him for the honour by being sent anonymously a single horsehair in an envelope. As he puzzled over the significance of this strange gift, he was approached by a senior Horseman and officially invited to join. As is also traditional in the Old Craft, no prospective member ever asked to join. If he did then he was immediately refused as he had failed the first test. He had to wait to be asked and this was only after he had been judged a worthy candidate. In fact he would have been secretly watched for some time and his behaviour observed and recorded.

Only those with the right moral character, who also showed some skill with handling horses, even if it was latent, were considered suitable. They were promised control over horses — and also over women. For a virile young man setting out on his career and hoping to progress in it this was a tempting offer. Few actually refused initiation for they knew that the Horsemen acted as a powerful and clandestine prototype trade union in rural areas. Anyone who refused to join might find that their future livelihood was in jeopardy. In return for the benefits offered by the society, the new member had to swear absolute loyalty to the Guild. They also promised, like the Masons, to render help and assistance to any of their fellow brothers who were in trouble. This would be at any cost to themselves and their own wellbeing.

Initiations into the Word were usually carried out at the nearest full moon to Hallowe'en or Martinmass (November 11th) and traditionally had to be after the first frost. The ceremony took place at the witching hour of midnight and at a different farm to the one the candidate usually worked at. This was because it was important that he made a special

journey to reach the place of initiation. On the journey he was accompanied by an escort of several Horsemen, usually four but sometimes only two. Possibly they were there as minders in case a reluctant candidate became scared and decided to run away or acted as guides if the rendezvous point was not known to the neophyte..

The candidate was brought to the meeting place by the 'crooks and straits' or in any direction that was not a straight line (the 'crooked path'). He had to bring with him offerings of a loaf of bread, a bottle of whisky, a pot of jam and a candle. For a stable lad or farm labourer earning a small wage a bottle of whisky would have cost a fortune. However, it was the price he had to pay for admission and a payment he would have been willing to make.

When the party reached the meeting place, usually a barn or other large outbuilding, the candidate was 'hoodwinked' by having a bag placed over his head or blindfolded with a cloth or scarf. His arms were pinioned to his sides and held by two of the escort. If at this stage he became frightened they whispered in his ear that no harm would come to him, providing he trusted in the Brotherhood and did what he was told.

At the door of the barn the oldest of the Horsemen accompanying the candidate knocked three times. He then scratched on the door with a horseshoe and made a neighing sound imitating a stallion to gain entry. Before this was granted certain questions were posed by the Chief Horseman inside the building. The candidate would have been tutored beforehand as to the required responses so that he gave the correct answers. This question and answer session differed from area to area and also underwent several changes over the years as it was modified and modernised. The following is a composite of several versions. The first four questions were addressed to the sponsor and the rest to the candidate.

Q. "Who is there?"

A. "A brother".

Q. "A brother of what?"

A. "Horsemanship"

Q. "Where were you made a Horseman?"

A. "In a Horseman's Hall where the sun never shone, the wind never blew, a cock never crowed, and the feet of a maiden never trod."

Q. "Who is with you?"

A. "A blind man."

Q. (To the candidate) " Did you come of your own free will and accord?"

A. "Yes"

Q. "Who told you to come?"

A. "The Devil"

Q. "Which way did you come?"

A. "by the hooks and the crooks of the road."

Q. "By which light did you come?"

A. " By the light of the stars and the moon."

Q. "What do you want?"

A. "Information and more especially to get than to give."

Q. "How did you come here tonight?"

A. " I saw the light"

Q. "What colour was the light?"

A. "Blue"

Q. "Why was it blue and not red?"

A. Because red is danger and blue is the heart's true."

Q. "Where did you come from?"

A. "The East."

Q. "Why from the East?"

A. "Because all wise men come from the east and only fools come from the west."

The Chief Horseman then enquired from the sponsor if the candidate was above the age of eighteen and below the aged of forty-five. These were apparently the age limits for entry into the society. If the answer was in the affirmative then the door was opened and the party were invited to enter. Inside heavy curtains or a black cloth were drawn across the windows to prevent any light entering and also to deter spies trying to secretly observe the proceedings. An altar was improvised from a wooden box or a large sack of corn and covered with a cloth. The whisky, bread and jam were laid out on it ready from the communal meal at the end of the rite. Behind the altar stood the 'Devil' or master of ceremonies, the Chief or Master Horseman. He would be wearing a ritual costume consisting of a calf skin and a horned mask resembling a ram or a goat.

Once inside the barn, the candidate was divested of all the metal items on his person such as coins and rings etc. He was then either stripped to the waist or all his clothes were removed. Dubbin, used to polish horse brasses and harnesses, was smeared over his exposed body and he had a mare's collar placed around his neck. Various 'ordeals' were then carried out to test the candidate's dedication, courage and trust in those present. He had previously been told he would not be hurt if he trusted in his initiators. These ordeals were designed to test his resolve and to see if he truly believed what he had been told.

The tests included having to walk while blindfolded along a beam suspended above the floor of the barn. When he reached the end, the candidate was told to jump off it into space. If he hesitated or refused then he was not regarded as a 'worthy personage' to join the society. Still blindfolded he would have been bundled out of the barn with the jeers of the Horsemen ringing in his ears and taken home in disgrace. If he did what he was told and obeyed the command the candidate would fall softly into a deep pile of straw bales or into the arms of the Horsemen standing below.

A similar method of testing new recruits is still practised by the British military's Special Forces. The recruit is taken up in a helicopter and told to jump out without a parachute. In fact unknown to the recruit the aircraft is actually hovering only a few feet above the ground. If he or she refuses to obey the order their career in the Special Forces is prematurely terminated.

Another of the tests carried out by the Horsemen took place before the initiation ceremony. The neophyte was told to go to a local churchyard, usually a remote one, at midnight. He had to travel there without a light and taking a certain route along a designated footpath. He was told to find the grave of a former Horseman and lying on it would be a riding crop or a whip. This would give him the power over any horse, however wild or uncontrollable. He was also told that whatever happened he would come to no harm.

When the candidate arrived at the grave he groped about in the dark for the whip. Unbeknown to him, a Horseman was hiding behind the gravestone. As he reached out for the whip his wrist was seized in a vice-like grip. One can imagine the shock of this as the terrified boy must have thought it was either the ghost of the dead Horseman or the Devil. The lesson that the candidate was being taught by this test was that nothing bad would happen if he trusted the members of the society. Of course, if the candidate panicked and ran away then he had failed.

If all the ordeals were passed successfully to the satisfaction of the assembled Horsemen and the presiding 'Devil', then the oath of allegiance was taken. Before this the MC said: "The oath I require you to take is a very solemn one before God and man and these witnesses. The candidate was then told to repeat the following words:

"I [name] of my own free will and accord do solemnly vow and swear before God and all these witnesses that I will always hele, conceal and never reveal, nor dite, nor recite, nor cut, nor carve it on wood, stone, clay, iron, paper or parchment, nor on anything moveable under the canopy of the heavens, nor so much as wave a finger in the air to none but another Horseman any part of this secret of true horsemanship, which may be revealed to me this day or any day hereafter. Furthermore, I vow and swear that I will never give the secret, nor see it given, to any tradesman of any kind, excepting a blacksmith, a veterinary surgeon or a horse soldier. I further swear that I will not give it to any farmer or farmer's son, unless they be working their own horses or their father's. Furthermore, I will not give it to any winch [wench], my father, brother,

sister, mother or wife or to any womankind whatsoever. Nor will I give it to any madman, fool, drunkard [alcoholic] or a revealer of secrets. I will never give it, or see it given, after sunset on Saturday and before sunrise on Monday. I further vow and swear this, my solemn oath, that I will not use it to abuse or bad use any man's horses. If I see a brother Horseman doing this I will point out his fault to him. Furthermore, I will not give it or see it given to anyone under eighteen-years-old or over forty-five-years-old. I will never see it given unless there be at least three of my brethren present. Furthermore, I swear and vow as my solemn oath that I will attend all meetings of the brethren, calls, signs and summonses, within a distance of five miles if I receive twenty-four hours notice, excepting that I be sick or there is sickness in my family or I be going for a doctor or my house is on fire or I am about my master's business. I break any of these commandments or fail to keep any of my promises made under solemn oath, may I stand before a meeting of Horseman duly met for that purpose, there to confess that I have broken my oath taken before God and man and be punished by them as I deserve and as they see fit. May my right arm be cut off at the shoulder, my heart cut out with a Horseman's knife, my innards be torn out and my body ripped apart by two wild hoses, taken to the seashore and hung up so the birds eat my flesh and my bones buried where the tide ebbs and flows so that there may be no remembrance of me among the lawful brethren of the Horsemen. Let this be also a solemn warning to others that I have been a deceiver of God and man and made myself a worthy companion for the devil and all his angels. May God help me to keep the secrets and my promises as I have performed my vows. Amen."

After the initiate had taken the oath, the presiding Horseman asked in a soft voice if he would now like to write it down in case he forgot it. This was the final test because if he was foolish enough to obey he had already broken his oath to the society. The candidate would be hit across the knuckles with a belt or chain, roughly thrown out of the barn and had to find his own way home. He was told that if he revealed what had happened to him to anyone outside the society he would be killed.

If the final test was passed then the new member was helped to get dressed. They were then formally presented to the Devil, who was variously known in the society as the 'Auld Chiel' (Old Chief), the 'Auld Guideman' (Good Man), the 'Auld Gentleman' or the 'Auld Ane' (Old One), and told to "shake his hand". This was a cloven hoof from a dead calf, deer or ram and he was told to grasp it to the accompaniment of

rattling chains, groaning and spooky noises. The blindfold was taken off and the first thing the new initiate saw looming over him from the shadows was a shaggy and horned figure. Sometimes the Devil's costume was smeared with phosphorus so it glowed in the dark with an eerie green light. Once the new member had recovered from this shock he was introduced to his fellow brothers.

Then a toast was made to Cain, as the first horseman and the patron of the society, and the initiate was also told the legend of how he tamed the first horse. The new member was also informed that he could call on the Devil's help by going to a crossroads and reciting certain passages from the Bible backwards. Finally he was given the Horseman's Word that gave him mastery over any animal. It could also enchant women and the society was blamed, perhaps unfairly, for the high rate of illegitimate births among unmarried young women in the north-east of Scotland in the 19th century.

The initiate was also shown the secret 'Horseman's Grip' or handshake used to recognise a fellow brother, given a new name from Greek mythology that he would be known by at meetings and the 'mark', usually in the shape of a crescent moon, possibly representing Cain as the 'Man in the Moon'. Finally the initiation ceremony ended with a sacramental meal of bread and jam washed down with whisky. More alcohol was produced by the other Horsemen and was drunk until everybody was merry. At cockcrow the brethren staggered back to their homes by the early dawn light.

The oath taking contains several magical elements that are interesting in the light of a possible link between the Horsemen and witches. The last part is bloodcurdling in its description of the penalties that faced any member who betrayed the Brotherhood. It seems to be based on similar Masonic pledges, but the removal of the heart with 'a Horseman's knife' and the dismemberment of the oath breaker's body lends a sacrificial tone to it. The burial of the bones on the seashore is connected with the magical belief in liminal places 'between the worlds' that are portals or gateways to the Otherworld. Actually burying the remains where 'the tide ebbs and flows' is a direct reference to the superstitious belief that if somebody died a violent death they should be buried under running water. This was to prevent their ghost becoming a 'night walker' and haunting the living. In the Cornish legend of the Celtic saint Nectan it was said he was buried under the flowing waters of a river.

Actual initiation into the society was only the beginning of a Horseman's training. He was taken under the wing of a senior brother

who became his mentor and teacher. This Horseman taught the initiate the corpus of secrets, techniques, rituals and legends of the society that were known collectively as 'the Knowledge'. One of the first things the new member was told was that the initiation ceremony had represented the Twelve Labours of Hercules and the Seven Deadly Sins. Also that the Chief Horseman or 'Devil' was supposed to represent Hercules. It was then explained to the new member that there were special names used in the Word and they each meant something.

These names include Gabriel, the archangel who announced the conception to Mary and represented the angel who came from the 'son of God' to the Horsemen; Selene, who was a Greek moon goddess symbolising the night and the west; Perseus, the son of the Greek father god Zeus, who taught the Horsemen how to be brave, gallant and heroic; Apollo, the Greek sun god who cared for animals, especially horses, and made the crops grow. He represented reason and intelligence; Lucifer, who was sometimes called 'Old Nick' or the Devil, symbolised winter; Helios, another sun god who represented daytime and the east; and finally Hercules or Herakles, another son of Zeus. Even the secret Word itself was related to Greek mythology as it was connected to the mythical centaur and healer Chiron, who was half-man and half-animal.

However it was not only the Word that gave the members of the society their power over horses. It was also a practical knowledge and experience of animals built up over many years. In addition there were various 'tricks of the trade' taught to the Horsemen that made their working lives easier. Most of these were based on simple psychology and the horse's acute sense of smell. This is why the Horsemen used to blow into the animal's nostrils so that it recognised the distinctive odour of his breath. This created a rapport between man and animal that the horse would not forget.

Various recipes for so-called 'jading oils', hexing oils', 'drawing oils' or 'stopping oils' were known and used by the Horsemen. They were a closely guarded secret within the society and passed down through the generations orally from member to member. If the recipe was ever written down for some reason a key part of it, such as an essential ingredient, was deliberately left out. Rumours persist of books of traditional medicines and recipes for cures being offered for sale by renegade Horsemen. If they existed then they sound very like the 'Black Books' or magical manuals owned by witches.

Despite the atmosphere of intense secrecy surrounding the subject many of the components of these recipes are known. They included such

substances as aromatic herbs, pig excrement, cat and stallion urine, pepper and dried stoat's liver. The last item may have been added as a piece of sympathetic magic as stoats fascinate and paralysis their victims by just looking at them. Horsemen were usually also skilled herbalists and they grew their own plants for use in the various oils. The favoured ones were aniseed, cinnamon, nutmeg, origanum, thyme, fennel and tincture of opium. George Ewart Evans also mentions cumin seed, celandine, white bryony (the English mandrake), burdock, meadow rue, fenugreek, feverfew and horehound.

One recipe for a 'stopping oil' used by Horsemen in East Anglia was made from dried rabbit and stoat's liver mixed with a red resin called 'Devil's Blood'. To get the horse moving again another substance would be used to neutralise the smell of the first one. Sometimes herbs were mixed into a cake made of oatmeal and treacle. The Horseman placed this under his armpit so it absorbed his sweat. Once fed to a horse it was said that it would follow him anywhere. An alternative method of using the oils was to sprinkle them on a handkerchief and then wave it under the horse's nose.

The Guild of Horseman was also closely associated with another rural secret society known as the Toadsmen (see my book *Welsh Witches and Wizards*, 2009) and they often shared membership, especially in the East Anglian counties of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. Although the Horseman's Word was regarded by the superstitious as 'black magic' or 'devil worship', the Toad cult was condemned as the practice of dark witchcraft. This was because it involved a magical ritual where the practitioner allegedly sold their soul to the Devil in exchange for the power over horses and other animals.

Batrachia (toads and frogs) have been highly prized in magical operations for centuries and in medieval times they were one of the traditional familiars of witches. In the biblical Book of Revelations there is the mention of 'unclean spirits like frogs', although Coptic Christians regarded the amphibian as a symbol of rebirth and Christ's resurrection. An apocryphal source also says that the forbidden union between the first man Adam and Lilith (originally a Babylonian goddess) spawned a frog who taught the language of the animals and birds.

The Roman writer Pliny made one of the earliest references to the use of a toad bone for magical purposes. These included making coldwater boil, restraining aggressive dogs, 'stirring up lust' and curing fevers. Reginald Scot also mentions the magical toad bone amulet in his

*Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584). He describes a ritual to obtain one by allowing a toad or frog to be eaten by ants and then 'swimming' the bones in water to reveal the desired one.

To become a Toadman in the 19th and 20th centuries a live toad or frog had to be captured. George Ewart Evans says that to assess the prospective Toadman 'had the power' he had to gather the spores of bracken, known as fernseed, from a piece of uncultivated land, the so-called 'Devil's Acre', at midnight. When the seed was picked a thunderstorm might suddenly break out as it was associated in folklore with lightning (1979:149-150). The toad that was selected for the ritual had to be a special black one with a white star on its back. The white star, incidentally, was one of the symbols of the first horseman Cain.

The toad was then killed by being impaled on a blackthorn. Its body was then placed in an anthill until the insects had devoured all its flesh and the bones were clean. When the skeletal remains were retrieved, they were taken to a stream at the full moon and floated in the water. Whichever of the bones floated upstream against the direction of the current was claimed as the one with magical properties. Some Toadman reported that the bone actually screamed and that was how they recognised it. At this stage the Devil would make an appearance and try to wrestle the precious bone from the Toadman's grasp. Sometimes a thunderstorm would also suddenly break out or a strong wind would start blowing.

If he survived this terrifying ordeal and kept the bone then the Toadman had attained the magical power over animals, such as horses and pigs and to be able to see in the dark that it granted its owner. The Toad Rite also offered power over the opposite sex as in the Horseman's Word. The toad bone or boon was taken home, placed in a box and anointed with certain oils. In practice it would have been the ilium, a bone from the creature's pelvic girdle. This was an example of sympathetic magick because this particular bone resembles the v-shaped part in a horse's hoof. A variant of the rite also granted the malefic power of the Evil Eye. To gain this power nine toads had to be captured, tied together on a string and left to starve to death. They were then buried in the ground and the magician acquired the power to 'overlook' his enemies, to bind them and sometimes even to kill them with his stare.

In Pembrokeshire in West Wales it is commonly believed that drovers or horse dealers introduced the rite of the toad bone from England. Originally the practice was supposed to have been brought by the gypsies

when they arrived here from India in the 14th century. In Pembrokeshire the Toad Rite is associated with a Neolithic burial chamber called Tellyfaint or 'Toad town' that is supposed to have been the burial place of an Iron Age chieftain. Gerald Cambrensis (Gerald of Wales) tells the story of a young man in the 12th century who lived on a nearby farm and was harassed by a plague by huge toads. So persistent were these attacks on his person that his friends hung the poor lad up in a bag from a tree to escape their malicious attentions. Unfortunately they 'crept up the tree in great numbers and consumed him, even to the very bones.'

According to local folk tradition, if a person wanted to become a Toadman he had to take the bones of the animal to Camlan Brook, a stream that forms one of the boundaries of the ancient churchyard at St Brynach's in the village of Nevern, a few miles from Trellyfaint. Previously the churchyard had been a llan or Bronze Age earthwork and it lies in the shadow of an Iron Age hillfort. Once the special toad bone had been obtained it had to be carried on the person for three days and nights. Each night the prospective Toadman went to the burial chamber and walked around it three times widdershins. On the third night the Devil would materialise and try to get the bone away from him. If he resisted and won the struggle then he became a Toadman. The modern Essex witch and cunning man Andrew Chumbley, who practiced part of the toad bone rite at Trellyfaint, gave a ritual account of his work in his grimoire *One- The Grimoire of the Golden Toad*. This book has become highly sought after on the second-hand book market commanding high prices and is a significant modern contribution to the ancient cult of the Toadman (Chumbley:2000).

The connection between the Toad cult and the Horseman's Word is fairly well documented and the obtaining and use of the toad bone amulet was well known in the society. For instance, George Ewart Evans describes an old Norfolk horseman, born in 1896, who described the ritual poetically as 'The Waters of the Moon'. He had even used powdered toad bones as an ingredient in his drawing and jading oils (1966:217). Evans speculates that the 'Devil' who appears and tries to seize the bone may have in fact been the Chief Horseman representing an ancient horned god (ibid:221). In an article in the *London Mystery Magazine* in 1950, the folklorist Christian Hole mentioned a blacksmith's assistant who was able to do anything he liked with any horse, however bad tempered it was. When he was asked what his secret was he said he had done the Toad Rite and sold his soul to Old Nick.

When his employer expressed an interest in following his assistant's example he was warned off because "You will never rest if you do." This suggests that, like all magical working, the acquisition of the toad bone amulet came with a heavy price that had to be paid by the practitioner. Russell Lyons cites the case of a man who began to suffer nightmares after performing the rite. He dug a hole and buried the bone in a tin filled with milk and vinegar. Only then did the bad dreams stop (2003:66). In East Anglia it was said that anyone who was foolish enough to perform the toad rite was risking insanity or was destined to suffer a sudden or violent death. In fact all magical rituals, if performed correctly, have their dangers and risks to the practitioner.

Unlike the Horsemen, the cult of the Toad was also open to women. One of the most famous of these in the 19th century was Tilley Baldrey of Huntingtoft in Cambridgeshire. Her magical powers gained through the Toad Rite were quite impressive. Once her husband ran away with another woman and they lived together in a neighbouring village. Tilly used her powers on her errant spouse and he was forced against his will to walk the sixteen miles back home. She also managed to obtain a lock of his lover's hair and burnt it. The cursed woman consulted a cunning man for help, but all he could recommend was to try and recover the ashes of the hair. She failed and gradually sickened and died away. On the day of her funeral Tilley Baldrey turned up at her graveside and contemptuously threw the ashes of the burnt hair on to the coffin. (Pennick 1995: 60-62).

There were various other forms of folk magick associated with the Society of Horsemen's Word. In the Stowmarket area of Suffolk the afterbirth from a mare was highly regarded as a magical charm. It was taken to a remote part of the farm and hung on a thorn bush. It was left there until it rotted away so as to ensure that the mare would be capable of breeding again in the following season. It also meant that any foal she dropped would grow into a strong and healthy animal and in turn be successful for breeding purposes. In other parts of East Anglia a holed stone or flint known as a hagstone was placed over the stable door by the Horseman. This was a charm against the malefic powers of witches, evil spirits, the Good Folk (faeries) and the 'mare who rides by night.' She was a far memory of ancient pagan goddesses such as Epona and Hekate who were associated with horses.

In 2010 it was reported that the police in the south of England and the West Country were investigating complaints by horse owners. It was

alleged that horses were being found in a distressed state in the morning with intricate plaits in their manes. Mysteriously there was no sign that anyone had broken into the stables to carry out these acts. Police blamed horse stealers, mostly gypsies, and claimed that the plaits had been placed on the horses to mark them for future stealing. It was not explained why they should go to all this effort and not take the animals at the same time. Black magicians and witches were also suspected with the plaits being some kind of ritual involving alleged pagan horse worship.

In the old days these plaits were known as 'elf locks' and were said to be the result of the activities of goblins or night-riding witches borrowing the horses to go to their Sabbaths. In a recent book on Somerset faeries Jon Dathan mentions a modern horsewoman he met who lives in the village of Bampton on the Devon and Somerset border who herself had experienced the phenomena of 'elf locks'.

When she was a teenager going out for a morning ride she would often find the horses in the stables in an agitated state and flecked with foam as if they had been ridden hard during the night. Also their manes and tails had been heavily combed and were tied with "tiny intricate plaits". When she asked her mother about this she told her: "The Little People have come in the night and ridden the horses. It does them good." Dathan's informant also said that local farmers would still decorate the bridles of their plough horses with brasses featuring the sun, moon and stars to protect them from being "night ridden by the pixies". (Dathan 2010:72-73)

George Ewart Evans quotes an account told by Rachel Young, a tutor at Cambridge University, about the time when she was working in the Women's Land Army during the Second World War in Lincolnshire. She and the farmer were just about to start milking as usual one morning when he noticed that the hagstone he always kept on the windowsill of the dairy was missing. He insisted that it had to be found before they started work. Eventually it was discovered in a pile of straw where it had fallen from the sill. Another farm worker told Young that if it had not been found "The milk wouldn't have come down [from the cows]" (Evans 1979:149). It has been claimed that the holed stone is a symbol from the All-Seeing Eye of God. This is an important symbol in Freemasonry and links the fraternity with the Horseman's Word.

Horse skulls and bones were also buried in the foundations of houses, usually at liminal places like doorways, to ward off bad luck, illness and evil spirits. Horse skulls have even been found buried in the foundations

of Llandaff cathedral in Cardiff and have been dated as medieval in origin. This suggests that at that late time the workmen at the cathedral were still dedicated to the old beliefs. Ewart Evans mentions seeing the image of a horse carved on the chimney of a 16th century house in Cambridgeshire. This was also believed to possess the power to ward off evil. In traditional witchcraft a horse's skull surmounted on a stick, known as a 'niding pole', was used in cursing rituals. For the spell to be effective the skull had to be positioned facing the house of the person who was to be ill-wished.

It has been suggested, as we saw earlier, that the Guild of Horsemen was connected with, or originated from, another secret society called the Miller's Word, which itself has some interesting beliefs, rituals and symbolism reminiscent of the Old Craft. Before being initiated the candidate was expected to absent themselves from attending church for a year. In our secular society, where less than 10% of the adult population still attend church services every week, this is not a hardship or a cause for social censure. However, in the time when the Miller's Word flourished everyone was expected to go to church. Stories are told of estate workers failing to attend a service on Sunday and being fired on Monday morning.

During his probationary period the candidate into the Miller's Word was also expected to show his peers that he could recite the Bible backwards starting with Revelations and ending with Genesis. He also had to learn to say the words "Father, Son and Holy Ghost" in Latin, Greek and Hebrew. This was because if a mill wheel stopped it could be started again by hitting it with a mell (mallet or hammer) three times and reciting those words over it. Again these are words that are found in some forms of traditional witchcraft that practice dual-faith observance.

For the initiation ceremony into the Miller's Word, three or four of the brethren assembled at the designated place, usually the local mill, to prepare for the ritual. A lantern or candle was brought to symbolise light, some phosphorus, a cow's foot, a leather apron, an iron fetter, a sack of oatmeal, and a bucket of water were also provided. One of the brothers guarded the door from the threat of intruders in the same role taken by a tyler outside a Masonic lodge. When the sponsor of the candidate for initiation arrived with him outside the mill he knocked three times using his mell. At this sign the mill wheel was set turning and then stopped when the sponsor gave three more knocks. The brother guardian inside

the mill then responded in turn with three knocks and shouted out: "Who goes there?" and the sponsor replied: "A blind man", because the candidate was hoodwinked. The door was opened and they were allowed inside.

The candidate was then divested of any metal objects and handed over a bottle of whisky and paid a membership fee of five shillings. Some oatmeal was given to him and he was told it had been ground as he arrived outside the mill. He then had to remove one stocking and a shoe from his right leg and foot and was told to sit in the chair. The apron was tied around his waist and the iron fetter was put in his hand. He was then asked if he had come to the mill of his own free will and if the response was in the affirmative he took the oath of allegiance to the society, which was very similar to the one in the Horseman's Word. After this the initiate was tipped back in the chair as if he was about to fall and doused with the bucket of water. Finally the blindfold or hood was removed and he had to shake hands with 'Old Cloutie' (the Devil) by being offered the phosphorus soaked hoof. A cloth was then thrown over the initiate's head and when it was removed the Devil had vanished and was replaced by a lighted candle representing the triumph of the light over darkness.

Once inside the society, the initiate was taught the actual Miller's Word and the secret signs, symbols, marks and nay-words that the brethren used to recognise each other in ordinary life. He was also taught how to magically stop a mill wheel from turning. He had to visit a graveyard in the evening between 'sun and night sky' (dusk) and once there take 'three steps backwards in the Devil's name'. Some grave dust was collected and taken to the mill. As he crossed the river the dusk was sprinkled on the miller's shoe and into the water. Once this reached the mill the wheel would stop. It could be only started up again by reciting over it the charm the brother had learnt and the secret Miller's Word. Another method used to accomplish the same result was to dig up the bones of an executed murderer. One bone was selected and was dipped into the water near the mill to stop the wheel.

Various other magical techniques were taught to the initiate. One of these was a spell for stopping horses in their tracks. The trick was to get between the animal and the sun. Once he smelt the body odour of the miller he would stop. Alternatively, a nut and bolt and a human skull from a grave had to be procured. Both objects were taken to where the horse had passed by. The screw was pushed into the animal's hoof print

and turned in a widdershins direction. Then by 'saying your lessons' (prayers) while holding the skull the horse would either be stopped or forced to obey the miller from a distance.

Another spell used the bone from the murderer to make clods of earth fall from a clear blue sky on to your enemy's head. To make a 'cloak of darkness' that rendered a person invisible the miller took a gun and fired it over his left shoulder without looking back. When he did look he would see that a black crow had been felled by the shot. When the crown of the bird was cut open three peas would be found inside it. The miller then went to a mirror, placed one of the peas in his mouth and stared into the looking glass. If he could still see his face he threw it away. This procedure was repeated and by the third attempt the miller should have become invisible. All the time he kept the third pea in his mouth the miller could enter any room and eavesdrop any conversation without being seen.

The pea could also be used for purposes of astral travelling. The miller had to take it to a place where three or four roads crossed dividing four parishes and the land owned by four lords. A hole had to be dug and the pea was buried. It was left in the ground for the three nights of the last quarter of the moon. On the third night the miller would see a shoot poking up and this was picked and kept. While it was on his person the miller just had to wish and he would be magically transported to any of the four corners of the world he wanted to visit.

If the miller was attracted to a young woman and wanted her to force her to speak her mind about him he had to catch a frog during spawning time. He then cut out its tongue using an improvised instrument 'not made with human hands' such as a piece of broken glass. Only three cuts were used to obtain the tongue or the spell would not work. The miller then carried it and when he visited the object of his desire he placed it in her hand. If she did not immediately run off screaming in shock, she would be forced against her will to answer any question the miller asked.

To make a woman follow him, the miller went out at dawn and caught a red worm. This was cut up with a knife 'not made with human hands' and then the tool was used to cut an apple that the miller offered to the girl. Once she had eaten it the woman would be under the miller's control and would stay with him as long as he liked. To break the spell the miller had to cut her apron strings with the improvised knife. Unfortunately when the garment fell to the ground and she was released from his power the woman would realise her folly and turn on the

enchanter. An alternative method for dominating women was to acquire a needle and thread from a woman who made shrouds for a living. If this was then drawn through a woman's apron she would be instantly under the power of the magician.

To procure the gift of the Sight the miller must gather female fernseed on Midsummer's Eve (June 23rd). However one had to be careful as the Devil was out and about that night and if he caught you he would blind you. The seed was kept in a white neck cloth and when worn it granted the wearer the ability to see the past, present and future. The detection of thieves was also taught in the Miller's Word and used a divination method known as the sieve and shears that was also employed by witches and cunning folk. To make a person dance the miller used an 'elf bolt' or prehistoric flint arrowhead. If he could not find one splinter of wood from a coffin could be substituted. This was taken to the person's house and was placed above the door. Then the miller gave his 'standing fiend' (the Devil) the order to make the person dance and they would continue to do so until the spell was lift or they dropped dead from exhaustion.

The brothers of the Miller's Word were no strangers to what some God-fearing people might call 'black magic'. If the miller wanted to lame the horse of his rival or enemy he went to the graveyard and obtained a nail from an old coffin. He waited until the horse had passed by and then plunged the nail into its hoof print. Other tricks-of-the trade were placing tallow into the 'eye' of the mill stone to prevent it grinding corn, putting a piece of lead in a blacksmith's fire when he was trying to wield iron together and spiking milk with peppermint so it could not be properly churned by the farmer's wife. To stop a cow giving milk a 'witch bottle' was made containing water, a teaspoonful of sugar and a piece of zinc attached to a twisted wire. This was hung in the window for eight days and would have the desired effect (Singer MDCCLXVI: 10-26).

One classic example of these miller wizards was John Fraser of Whitehill in Aberdeenshire who was active in the early 1800s. Local people credited him with magical powers because he was supposed to have sold his soul to the Devil in an infernal pact when he joined the Miller's Word. He was said to be so powerful and versed in the ways of sorcery that he could still operate a mill wheel without an essential part of the machinery known as a clapper. He could also stop any wheel at a distance and nobody could start it again unless he decreed it.

### *The Horse Whisperers*

Many writers have denied any link between the Society of Horsemen and the Miller's Word and historical witchcraft. This is despite the fact that, as we have seen, their rituals are similar to those reported to have been practised by the witch cult. Members of the Horseman's Word were also often called 'horse witches' and the Toadmen were known as 'witch men'. Clandestine meetings in remote rural areas involving secret ceremonies and initiations presided over by a horned and masked figure sound very much like the old descriptions of the Witches' Sabbath. Added to this the baptism of the initiate with a new name taken from pagan mythology, magical rites at crossroads, pacts with the Devil, cursing, the reciting of passages from the Bible backwards and spells to control people and animals. Another link with the Horseman was that witches were often credited with the power to stop horses and wagons in their tracks. The spell was only broken when the witch decided to release the animal from his or her control.

As to the claim that the Society of Horsemen did not pass on any 'esoteric knowledge' to its members; from this writer's research into the subject, his contacts with people who have known Horsemen and one person who was unofficially trained by a member in recent years, the Guild did possess occult knowledge and had a mythos influenced by Hermetic, Gnostic and Cainite beliefs. The author also knows of several modern witch traditions claiming historical origins, including the Cultus Sabbati, who have inherited elements from the Horseman's Word and include them in their practice. It therefore seems evident that the Horsemen and the Miller's Word were influenced by traditional witch beliefs and that in turn these rural secret societies had an impact on later revivals of the Craft.

Das ist die abschriftt von dem brief  
den got selvert geschrsben hat.



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niemant wulff waran er hangt vñ schreibt gar wunderlich. vñ ist mit guldin buchstäben ge-  
schriben. vñd ist in dem land Batania vor den bies angeschissen. vñd von dem weiche er vñnd  
wec in abschreben will zu dem noigte er sich vñ thilt sich gegy im auf-secht andz gepot dz got  
durch den engel sant michael gesandt vñ großem bar hat. Wie am sonntag arbeit dñt von got  
gepannet vñd verflidt. Also geputz ich euch das je am sonntag mit arbeit in euren gäerten.  
vñd sonst kein arbeit nit thut. Je soll auch zu der kirchen geen vñd mit andacht beten. vñ soll  
wolpungen das je die ganzen wochen verfaumt habt. Je soll eure anfleig am sonntag mit wa-  
schen oder eure har stralen nach hoffart der welt vñd je sollt nit wunderliche ding wiedchen  
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nünfungen thiat. Ich hab euch in der wochen aufgeschitzt sechz tag zu wolpungen euer arbeit-  
vñd den sonntag zl seyen vñd je sollt auch zu der kirchen geen sonder zu der predig. Vñd wollt  
je nit geafft werden. so wil ich euch chaffen pestilenz vñ der ewazung. Ich gebet euch das je  
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stözen wil. Ein yeder sol den andern mit tödten mit der zangen binden seinem rugk. Hat freut  
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eugen nachstil als euch selter vñd gebt mit falsche zeugnus. so gib ich euch geschenk vñd  
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den. Und weliche soul sind het gethan. als sand jm möt vñd soul laub vñ graub auf erd  
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was der brief euch leinet. vñd weliche das nit glauben will der wict verprimmen vñd flecken  
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euch oder je weest ewigklich gepryngt werden in der hell. vñd ich wied frage am jüngsten  
tag vñd je weest mir mit art wo er geben von einer grossen sind wegen. Vñ welcher den brief  
in seinem haubt hat. oder bey jm trefft der soll erhözt werden von mir vñd kein donner noth  
wetter indgen jm nit schaden. auch soll er vor feuer vñd wasser behalt sein. Und welche Frau  
diesen brief bey je trefft die bringt am lebliche frucht vñd am seidlichen amplisch auferden. Und  
holt also meine gepot die ich euch durch meinen engel sant Michael gesandt hat. durch den  
ich kunde hab gethan. Ich warer Iesu cristus. Amen.

17. *Himmelsbrief* ("Heaven's Letter") a talismanic text used for protection, fortune, and magical power in the Pow-wow traditions of the Pennsylvania Germans.

# 6

## American Traditional Witches

When the first European settlers arrived in North America in the early 17th century many were religious non-conformists and heretics fleeing persecution in the Old World. However, the Pilgrim Fathers were not the only minority religionists seeking a new beginning in the newly founded American colonies. As well as various types of Protestant Christianity, the colonists from the British Isles and Europe also brought a wide variety of magical practices and occult beliefs with them. Assorted alchemists, Rosicrucians, Freemasons, Cabalists, Hermeticists, Christian mystics and astrologers also arrived in America on the first ships and were joined by rural cunning folk and witches. There was a flourishing tradition of healing, hexing, fortune-telling, astrology and folk magic in the colonies before the subsequent witch hunts wiped it out or drove it underground.

These cunning folk were also supplemented by practitioners of voudon and obeah from among the black slave population imported from Africa. In fact one of the most prominent of those accused in the Salem witch trials was a black slave called Tabitha. In 2008 the civic authorities in Annapolis, Maryland excavated a crossroads near the State Capitol Building. Four feet down they came across the remains of a parcel of clay. It was about ten inches high, six inches wide and four inches thick. Near it were fragments of cloth that were probably used to wrap it. The object was dated to the early 1700s and after x-raying it was determined to be an example of an African 'spirit bundle'.

Originally the bundle had contained 300 pieces of lead shot, twenty-five pins (some deliberately bent), twelve nails and the remains of a small statuette tipped with a metal blade representing a prehistoric African axe.. This was identified as an image representing Eshu Elegha or Eshu Elegba, a god of the Yoruba tribe of West Africa. He is the guardian of magically liminal thresholds and crossroads, and the keeper of gates. The spirit bundle was put on display at the Center of African-American History and Culture in the Banneker-Douglas Museum.

This was not the only archaeological evidence of African-American magical practices in Annapolis. In 2000 a ritual deposit of coins, buttons, beads, doll parts, scraps of fabric and a perfume bottle filled with soil, seeds, seashells and a matchstick were found under a brick floor of an

eighteenth-century house beneath the former slaves' quarters. Archaeologists said the objects had been deposited in the nineteenth-century as the coins and buttons dated from the Civil War.

Following further excavations the archaeologists discovered a 'ritual space' composed of a circle inscribed with a cross. Other ritual objects were found deposited at liminal places around the room such as doorways and fireplaces. Jessica Neuwith of the Historic Annapolis Foundation said the deposits were similar to others found at another site associated with slave ownership four years before. She claimed they were evidence of the practice of hoodoo, a fusion of African religious beliefs with American folk magic ('African Magic in the USA', *The Cauldron* 138, November 2010).

Local historians have noted that prior to 1750 the city newspaper *The Maryland Gazette* contained many articles on surviving witchcraft practices and beliefs among the European inhabitants of Annapolis. These stories stopped appearing in the newspaper as apparently the influence of the Enlightenment caused the intelligentsia to reject the belief in witchcraft and the power of witches. This, of course, does not mean that ordinary people ceased to believe.

Earlier in the 17th century New England witches and cunning folk 'used magic to predict the future, heal the sick, to destroy enemies and to defend themselves against occult attack' (Godbeer 1992) The type of magical practices that were widespread in the colonies included divination by the sieve and shears, Bible turning, palmistry, Latin charms for healing, the use of wax puppets and rag dolls for cursing, summoning spirits, 'witch bottles' for counter-magick and necromancy. Some of the charms used by early American witches were of a dual-faith nature. They were derived from Roman Catholic sources and invoked the company of saints for help.

As in their home country, many of the practitioners obtained their knowledge and techniques from magical instruction manuals that circulated between the cunning men and women. Experts on the occult arts also taught others one-on-one, and in 1679 a sailor in Newbury said a Quaker farmer had instructed him in magic.

Magical practices extended to all levels of society from farmers to politicians. The son of the governor of Massachusetts was said to have owned an extensive library of alchemical works and may even have written books on the subject. (ibid:22). Another leading follower of the secret arts was Henry Adams, whose descendants later served as

presidents of the United States. In 1630 Adams was living in the Glastonbury area of Somerset in England and he fled religious persecution to live in America. Although his family claimed they were High Anglicans, it has been alleged that they were members of a secret cult called the Dragon Society. This esoteric group was dedicated to reviving the ancient wisdom of the megalithic culture and worked with telluric or earth energies at ancient monuments in the West Country. Other notables allegedly associated with the Dragon Order were the royal astrologer and magician Dr John Dee and the buccaneer Sir Walter Raleigh, who also ran his own secret society called the School of the Night that was suspected of practising witchcraft. (Rothovius: May and August 1977).

The Christian ministers had a powerful political influence in the early American colonies and they condemned the widespread practice of magic as the 'false manipulation of supernatural forces'. They also saw it as a direct challenge to their own spiritual authority as religious and community leaders and to God's omniscience. They therefore decided to purge the colonies of the heretics and blasphemers who 'worshipped devils and evil angels'. The inherent religious intolerance and racism of the Puritan faction among the colonists soon surfaced in the witch-hunts.

The Puritans believed that the native Amerindians were 'devil worshippers' and that prior to the arrival of the European settlers the wilderness had literally been 'the realm of Satan'. The attempts by the colonists to deforest the virgin land and cultivate it were allegedly thwarted at every turn by the Devil's minions, who sent storms and disease to destroy their work. These satanic agents were identified as the local Native American tribes and those heretical and immoral colonists who practised witchcraft or consulted cunning folk.

This equation by the religious elders of the indigenous religion with European ideas about witchcraft and devil worship was also reflected in the attitude of the Spanish conquistadors in Central and South America. Later in the 19th century it was also an attitude displayed by Christian missionaries working in Africa. In 1655, for instance, Elizabeth Goodman of New Haven in Connecticut was accused of having carnal relations with an incubus spirit in the form of a Native American man and taking him as her spirit husband.

Mary Staples of Fairfield was also suspected of witchery after the 'Man in Black' visited her in the shape of an Amerindian and gave her small

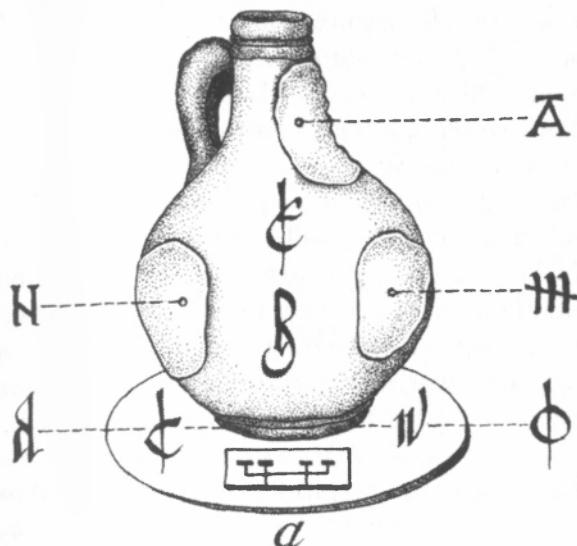
images of his gods. The infamous New England witch-hunter Cotton Mather, who was heavily involved in the Salem trials, claimed that the native religion was really witchcraft. He said that the Amerindians “worshipped evil spirits in their wigwams”, shapeshifted into bears and snakes under the influence of the Devil and were “conjurors and sorcerers who converse with demons.”

It is a common fallacy with regard to the English witch-hunts that the belief in witches and the practice of witchcraft ceased when the official persecution ended. In fact in the 18th and 19th centuries people continued to consult ‘white witches’ and the cunning men and women. Suspected witches also faced summary justice from lynch mobs and prosecution in the courts for fraud. In the so-called Age of Rationalism some intellectuals may have dismissed witchcraft as a primitive superstition from a less enlightened bygone age, but many God-fearing folk still believed in witches because to say they did not exist was to deny their own religious beliefs.

The same situation existed in the American colonies and in 1728 the pastor of Medford in Massachusetts condemned young people for dabbling in the occult and practicing palmistry and astrology as parlour games. At Salem several members of the local church congregation were said to have consulted a witch who ‘pretended to the art of fortunetelling’. In 1755 a minister condemned one of his parishioners for seeking advice from a ‘wise man’ when his child went missing. The Reverend Ezra Stiles, the pastor at Newport in Rhode Island, recorded in his diary that a local cunning woman called Old Granny Morgan used to perform divination using flour cakes mixed with her own urine into which she stuck pins (Godbeer 1992:228). The clergyman described this practice as a relic of “antient mysteries”.

In the 19th century magical practices and a belief in the power of witchcraft still lived on in rural areas of America often in the form of hoodoo and hexcraft. Farmers who suffered from bad luck, family problems, sick livestock and diseased crops sometimes blamed them on the activities of malefic witches. Counter-magic was seen as a popular form of defence against psychic attacks of this kind. For instance, if the milk did not thicken during the making of butter a red-hot metal rod was plunged into the churn. This was supposed to burn the person who was responsible and force them to lift the spell.

In one case in New Hampshire when this technique was carried out using a hot poker a neighbour of the afflicted farmer was reported to



18. Salt-glazed jug of the Bellarmine type associated with 17th-century witch bottles. From a manuscript in the Richel-Eldermans collection, Museum of Witchcraft, Cornwall.

have mysteriously suffered burns on her leg. Witch bottles were also used and in 1802 a man was convicted of assault in New York after cutting an elderly woman's forehead three times. In his defence the accused said that he believed she had bewitched him and this was the tried and tested way of negating the witch's power. (ibd:230).

The historical practice of witch-bottles, well-documented in early modern England, but disputed in North America on the basis of lacking archaeological evidence, was recently established in New England with the exhumation of an artifact in Essington, Pennsylvania (Fig.16). Within the gold-patina'd glass bottle were found six round-headed pins, the vessel being stoppered with a hand-carved wooden plug. The bottle had been buried about 1745 in an inverted position, accompanied by the bone of a bird and black-glazed potsherd. The 18th century find dates about a hundred years later than the mainstay of witch-bottles in their British context (Becker, 1980).

Even some unexpected members of society consulted with witches and practised the magical arts. In the 18th century the owners of trading ships using the East Coast ports employed astrologers and diviners for advice on the best day to set sail or buy goods. In the early 1800s Joseph Smith,

the founder of the Mormon religion, began his spiritual career as a treasure hunter using a 'seer stone' and dowsing rods. He and his family practised ritual magic, communicated with spirits and angels and had an interest in Hermeticism, Gnosticism, Antediluvian or Enochian Freemasonry and alchemy.

In the 1850s Mormon missionaries visited England on a mission to seek new members and subsequently some converted English Mormons emigrated to America. Among them were a certain group of people from Staffordshire who practised ceremonial magic and astrology. They were said to have possessed grimoires that 'had been handed down for many generations' and scrying stones 'the size of goose eggs'. When they wanted to gain information they used these stones to evoke a spirit they called Sameazer.

Another homemade magical book was used by Mormon converts from Warwickshire and had apparently been written between 1690 and 1792. It held recipes for creating dyes, making wine, herbal remedies and plant lore. It also contained extracts from the writings of the medieval occultist Albertus Magnus or Albert the Great on the magical properties of herbs and the planets. A grimoire called *Le Petit Albert* accredited to the magician is still in use among modern American hoodoo and pow-wow followers. The American Mormon elders destroyed these grimoires because at this time they were trying to distance themselves from the new religion's occult roots (Brooke 1994).

A speculative account of pre-modern witchcraft in the United States, allegedly dating back to the 1800s, was provided to this writer by a Colonel Lawrence (aka 'Merlin the Enchanter') in correspondence in 1988. At that time the colonel was running a small witchcraft museum in Galveston, Illinois that he claimed was founded by his grandmother, Atsie Beckett Lawrence, and his great-grandmother, Lydia Beckett, in the 1930s. The museum's collection of magical artefacts included a blackthorn walking stick used as a 'blasting rod' and said to have been owned by the Essex cunning man Old George Pickingill. Following the closure of the museum in the 1990s and the sale of the collection this object is now in the hands of modern witches.

How this stick came to be exhibited in the museum is a story that takes a lot of believing. Colonel Lawrence said his family originated in Scotland and emigrated to America in 1720 after living in England for some years. His great-great grandmother, Lydia Beckett's mother, was known to people where she lived in England as a 'herb woman'. She

made a good living by telling fortunes using playing cards and tea leaves, making love charms and protective amulets against the Evil Eye. Lawrence claimed that these arts had been passed down in his family on the distaff side “for at least seven or eight generations”, which would take the tradition back to about the 16th century.

In America Lydia Beckett founded the Unicorn Coven in 1884 based on material she gleaned from a book called *Museum of Antiquity Illustrated, Being a Description of Life 3000 Years Ago* by L.W. Yaggy MS and T.L. Hanes AM. It was published by the Western Publishing House in Chicago in 1883 and had over nine hundred pages. According to Lawrence, who said he still owned the book, it contained information on the Greek and Roman gods and goddesses and various ancient magical practices. This book, rather than any form of inherited witchcraft tradition, formed the basis for the coven founded by his great-grandmother.

As a young woman, Lydia Beckett made several trips to Europe to visit relatives in England and also went to Italy and Greece to pursue her interest in art. During one of her vacations in Italy she tried to buy some marble for the altar of her covenstead from a ruined temple dedicated to Venus, but failed. Later she was able to acquire a suitable piece from a temple to the moon goddess Diana. On the same trip while travelling to England from Italy she allegedly met up with an American folklorist and journalist called Charles Godfrey Leland, later the author of the famous book *Aradia: The Gospel of the Witches* (1899).

They discovered a shared interest in witchcraft and Leland allowed Lydia to copy his research notes on the witch beliefs of Tuscany. Lydia was so impressed by Leland and stimulated by meeting him that on her return to America she changed the devotional focus of her coven from the goddess Venus to Diana. She also believed that her discovery of the marble in the moon goddess's temple had been an omen or sign that she should do this.

If this meeting was not sensational enough, Colonel Lawrence said that when Lydia was visiting her English relatives they gave her an introduction to George Pickingill. Lawrence's grandmother, Atsie, told Lawrence that while Lydia was staying in Canewdon she also met a young Aleister Crowley when he visited the cunning man. Crowley allegedly gave her several magical objects of a 'personal nature' and these ended up in the museum. This gift was apparently a part repayment for a loan of several thousand dollars that Lydia, who was evidently a

wealthy woman, had given the Great Beast, who despite inheriting a family fortune as a young man was always short of money.

If it is true that witchcraft covens based on classical paganism were being founded by wealthy people in 19th-century America, then traditional folk magic was also still surviving among the poor folk in rural areas. In the early 1700s German, Swiss and Dutch settlers arrived in Pennsylvania and they brought with them magical beliefs and practices that created the so-called 'hexcraft' or 'pow-wow' tradition. The latter term is said to come from a corruption of the English word 'power' and the Native American 'powow', meaning 'one who dreams'. In practice pow-wow consisted of the employment of angelic magic, incantations, occult symbols, healing, a knowledge of plant lore, herbal remedies and the manufacture of amulets and talismans. The incantations were largely Christian in origin and some were in Latin to confuse and impress outsiders.

Pow-wow practitioners or *brauchers* were variously known as 'bone setters', 'water witches' (dowsers), 'faith healers', 'witch men' and 'witch women' or just as 'granny women'. Some of the pow-wow practitioners and German hexenmeisters used grimoires or manuals of magic such as the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*, Albertus Magnus' *Egyptian Secrets*, Agrippa's *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, the more recent *Long Lost Friend* (1819) and, of course, the Bible. More recently it is reported that Wiccan and neo-pagan practices have crept into its practices. In some areas, though some pow-wow practitioners and hexmeisters make an effort to distinguish themselves from both Wicca and witchcraft (Herr: 2002).

In the Dutch or Deutsch country of Pennsylvania descendants of the Swiss-Germans who emigrated to the United States in the early 18th century can still be found. Most of these are either farmers or rural craftspeople and simple God-fearing folk, but some of them are also practitioners of hexcraft or pow-wow. Although they are usually church-going Christians, often belonging to the Lutheran Church or obscure historical sects such as the Moravians, the Amish, or the Mennonites, they also practice a form of folk magic that usually involves healing rites and the curing of illness and disease employing spells and charms.

To achieve healing the braucher or hexenmeister faces north (a sacred direction in traditional witchcraft) with the person he is to heal standing or sitting in front of him, facing south. The healer then pronounces the spell or charm and makes the sign of an equal-armed cross (not the

unbalanced Christian cross) three times over the patient. There is a pause for a few minutes and then this procedure is repeated. This is followed by another pause and then the ritual is done for the third and final time (Herr 2002: 22-23). As in European traditional witchery hexcraft also includes the use of the biblical psalms for magical purposes

A truly remarkable account of one hexenmeister, Lee Gandee, can be read in his *Strange Experience: The Autobiography of a Hexenmeister*, published in 1971. Gandee grew up in rural Virginia, where the magico-religious practices of 17th and 18th century immigrants flourished in relative obscurity. Though the hex practices, or 'Pennsylvania Dutch white magic', have traditionally arisen in the context of rural Christian communities, they contain elements often found in traditional witchcraft such as angelic summoning, dream augury, exorcism, magical use of herbs, runes, use of the left hand for malevolent magick and ongoing communication with the souls of the dead. Of particular interest in the hexenmeister practice is the strong presence of dual-faith observance in both magical charms and spiritual outlook. Remnants of this feature also persist in a number of surviving traditions of the Old Craft.

Though some hexenmeisters distinguish their magic from witchcraft, they are also aware that others, sometimes within their own community, view them as witches (Gandee 1971). Hexenmeisters were also renowned for their ability to 'stop blood' or 'command blood'- that is to staunch profusely bleeding wounds by incantation or gesture alone. Similar charms to heal serious burns were used as well, most frequently invoking the angels of the four directions, some of which 'bring fire' and others 'bring frost'. Dozens of variants of this charm, which is also well known in the British Isles, have been documented in modern use in rural areas of Arkansas, Louisiana, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Michigan (Kirkland 1992).

In the Appalachian Mountains folk magick survived among the British immigrants who settled the area in the 18th century. The first arrivals were in the 1740s when Highland clansman loyal to the Stuart dynasty fled Scotland after the defeat of the royalists at Culloden. Other migrants came from the English cities of London, and Liverpool and Dublin in Ireland to escape poverty or the long arm of the law. These different ethnic groups brought with their own folklore and magical beliefs, often practised within a conventional form of Protestant Christianity, and these eventually became mixed with concepts from Amerindian spirituality as a certain amount of social communication and intermarriage took place between the races.

The magic of the Appalachian mountain folk largely consisted of omens, portents, curses, cures and psychic protection. It was based on a dualistic philosophy of the existence of good and evil forces, an animistic belief in the spiritual essence in all things, a belief in the Devil, Mother Nature, Jack Frost and Father Winter, a belief that magic can be worked for positive and negative reasons, that certain individuals are blessed with supernatural powers, that the dead and burial places have an inherent magical power that can be harnessed, that curses work, and that the natural world provides omens and portents for the future that can be used for guidance.

When a child was taken ill, there were complications with childbirth or somebody was dying the 'witch doctor' or the 'witch man' or 'witch woman' was called in to deal with the situation. Among the ritual tools used by these folk magic practitioners were a forked stick for dowsing for water and finding buried treasure, lost property or missing people. It was generally made from the wood of a dogwood, peach or apple tree. A ritual knife was sometimes used or substituted by the blade of a woodcutter's axe or a tomahawk. Cauldrons, mirrors, besoms, pottery bowls and baskets were also used for various purposes by the witch folk in rites and spells. Divination was carried out by scrying in a bowl of water, reading the Tarot or playing cards, examining tea leaves and analysing the changing shape of clouds.

This belief in the powers of the dead and burial grounds, both Christian and Native American, gave rise to some related folklore of a magical nature. It was believed that the last person to be buried in a graveyard would become its guardian spirit until replaced by the next internee. For this reason cemeteries were to be avoided at the dark of the moon as anyone who saw the guardian then would die and become their replacement. If people had to walk through a graveyard they protected themselves by picking a stone up at one end and only dropping it when they left. Garlic cloves were also worn on a string around the neck to ward off the restless and earthbound spirits of the departed.

In rural Britain the guardian of the churchyard was usually a 'Grim' or phantom black dog. It was associated with Old Shuck or the Barget, a large spectral canine with glowing red eyes that roamed the lanes at night and was regarded as an omen of death. The Black Dog was linked with Cain and it was seen as both a psychopomp, guiding the dead to the netherworld, or as the guardian of its gates. These British beliefs were mirrored in Appalachian folk traditions that said that if you met a white

or a black dog on the road it was a sign of your impending death. This may be based on the legend of the Scottish cu sith or faery dog. Another omen of death was to see your fetch or spirit double. Its appearance let the person know that they would be shortly fetched to the land of the dead. Usually the fetch materialised standing behind the doomed person as they looked in a mirror or a natural reflective surface such as a pond or lake. When they turned around it had vanished, but when they look again into the mirror or water it is there again.

The graveyard as an important magical place features prominently in Ozark folklore and witchcraft. In the 1940s Vance Randolph claimed that he had met witches in the area who told him they had been initiated in a graveyard at midnight. They had to remove all their clothes, promise their soul to the Devil in exchange for magical power and occult knowledge and then have sex with their initiator. This ritual had to be witnessed by three other initiated witches and was sometimes repeated for three consecutive nights. The new witch was then taught the secret 'conjure words' and the 'old sayings' that made up the 'mystery' of the Craft. These words could only be taught by a blood relative, or someone the witch had known carnally. For that reason most of the Ozark witches were in fact trained by their relations or lovers.

While witchcraft existed in certain families it did not always manifest in every generation. It might lie dormant for a time before appearing again. This process was also known in the English Hereditary Craft, according to E.W.Liddell. He claims that sometimes a whole generation would be 'passed over' because the status and continuation of the hereditary witch families depended on the grace and favour of the 'Old Powers'. (1994:119).

In June 1939 the American magazine *Life* published a series of photographs of the Ozark mountain folk by D.F. Fox and captioned by Vance Randolph. One of the pictures illustrated the dark side of Ozark witchcraft. It depicted a 'witch woman' holding a poppet or wax image made from dirt and beeswax. This allegedly depicted one of her enemies and nails were driven into the doll to cause injury to the corresponding parts of the victim's body.

Image magic seems to have been imported from Europe with a wide range of other magical beliefs and witchcraft practices. However sometimes other objects were substituted for the traditional poppet. The American writer, adventurer, psychic researcher and occultist William Seabrook mentioned an account by Ben Lucien Burman in 1939 of the

modern use of a photograph of the victim in cursing rituals instead of the traditional poppet. Burman had collected folklore from the crew of a Mississippi River steamboat and was told that the way to kill somebody was to place their photograph under the eaves of a house during rainy weather and let the elements destroy it (Seabrook 1942/1970).

Another substitute was a large piece of meat with the bone in it that was buried under the victim's window to rot away. A report published in the *Omaha Evening World Herald* also in 1939 described a case involving this form of curse. Alfio Laferia, president of a local Italian society, accused one of its members of practising witchcraft against his mother-in-law. At a special meeting of the society Laferia accused the alleged witch of burying a joint of meat with incantations so "the worms would eat the meat off the bone" and his mother-in-law would sicken and waste away. After careful consultation the society's ruling committee decided the case was proven and they expelled the accused woman from their ranks. In response she claimed she was innocent and sued the society for damages.

In October 1926 in Woodbridge, New Jersey a woman called Terese Czinkota was accused by her neighbors of practising witchcraft and transforming herself into a werewolf. The case came before the local court and witnesses claimed that they looked through the window of Czinkota's house and had seen her making "magical brews" and performing rituals. One of the witnesses testified that she had seen the alleged witch's body change and "horns appeared on her head, and she went on all fours like an animal." However another witness said the woman had not changed into an animal and in fact was wearing the skin of an animal and the 'horns' were streams of light behind her head. This was confirmed by another witness who also said Czinkota was dressed in an animal costume. The presiding magistrate however was unconvinced by any of the witnesses' testimony and he threw the case out. (Seabrook 1942/1970:272).

As well as the pow-wow and hexcraft practitioners, the traditional African influence in American folk magic and witchcraft among some white people was and is still represented by hoodoo. This consists of a mix of African religious and magical beliefs, Native American botanical knowledge and European folklore. One of the most important magical beliefs that hoodoo shares with traditional witchcraft is the occult importance of the crossroads. It is not only regarded as a suitable place

for all types of magical workings, but is also a neutral area for disposing of the detritus of rituals such as candle wax, ashes or ritual waters.

Most importantly in hoodoo the crossroads is the place to go to learn a new skill such as playing a musical instrument, becoming proficient at poker or any other game of chance, dancing, public speaking etc. Successive visits would be made to the crossroads at the liminal times of sunset or dawn and sometimes a black coloured animal, such as a rooster, hen, dog or cat, was sacrificed to the spirits. On the last visit a 'black man' would appear who was variously known as 'The Dark Rider', 'The Old Boy' or the Devil. If the person doing the ritual did not show any fear at this manifestation and did not run away this spirit would become his teacher, either by example or the transference of his power. Although the spirit teacher at the crossroads was popularly identified as the Devil some modern experts on hoodoo, such as Catherine Yronwode, believe it was a memory of the West African trickster god Eshu. As we have seen there is archaeological evidence of this African god's worship and invocation for magic by slaves in 18th century America.

As well as rural folk magic there also existed small covens and magical groups, sometimes based on hereditary family traditions, operating in urban areas. These practised folk magical practices and traditional witchcraft mixed with a sophisticated occultism derived from Rosicrucian, Masonic, Theosophical and Spiritualist sources. Aidan Kelly has described a pre-modern coven of this type in Los Angeles whose membership was made up of Jewish-Russian immigrants. They practised both black and white magic, evoked demons and worshipped a male deity equated with the Christian concept of the Devil. A member of this group claimed that her mother and her Ukrainian grandmother also belonged to "local covens which reflected the Cabbalistic ceremonial magic that was popular in Victorian England." (Kelly 1991:22-23). Presumably this was a reference to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

Aidan Kelly also mentions another coven that active in Louisville, Kentucky during the 1930s. It claimed to follow the 'Old Ways' and its members were trained in meditation, the use of energy, visualisation and herbal lore. None of the women members were allowed to cut their hair for magical reasons, they worshipped an androgynous god, 'drew energy from the sun' and ate only natural health foods. At their rituals candles were lit and the spirits were evoked at the four compass points of a circle. One of the members of this coven later moved to New York where she joined a similar group during the Second World War.

Before her initiation she had to undergo a month of preparation and then a three-day fast to purify herself. This group also said they followed the 'Old Ways' and they had a healthy, and very liberated for the time, view of sexual matters. Rituals were conducted either in normal everyday clothes or special robes. In a room set aside as a temple there was an altar with images on it of the 'Lord' and 'Lady'. A ritual black-handled knife, a sword, incense and coloured candles were used in the rites to celebrate the seasonal festivals and the phases of the moon. Many of the members believed in reincarnation, but they also attended church services as well. Kelly was told that there were other similar groups in the city and they operated like communist cells with initiates recruited by invitation only and then sworn to absolute secrecy.

Italian immigrants also brought their own folk traditions and witch beliefs to America. Known as the *strega* (witch) or *streghe* (witches), the Italian practitioners claim to follow La Vecchia Religione or the 'Old Religion'. Evidence of Italian witch beliefs emerged in reports issued by the Associate Press agency in the 1930s concerning so-called 'witchcraft murders' in Philadelphia. Details of cursing rituals were described using a powerful magical object known as the 'Hand of Glory' or 'Hand of Power'. This was either an actual severed human hand taken from a corpse and then mummified or a small hand made of ivory or bone (sometimes human) with the two middle fingers closed and the index and little fingers extended to make the sign of the Horned One.

Alternatively another magical object known as a 'knife' was used, although it was never used as a cutting tool or physical weapon. An occult practitioner called Morris Bolber who lived in Philadelphia in the 1930s described how the magical knife was buried for three days and three nights in the earth. The blade had to point downwards so that the 'spirits might penetrate its steel point'. The knife was then taken from the ground and placed under the magician's pillow for three nights. On the seventh day the knife was then ready to be used for cursing by being pointed at the witch's enemy. Bolber also claimed that if it was pointed at a car engine the knife had the magical power to stop the vehicle (Seabrook 1942/1970: 27-28).

One of the most prominent, vocal and pioneering of modern Italian-American witches was the late Dr Leo Louis Martello. He claimed to be a descendant of the 18th century occultist, and alleged member of the secret society of the Illuminati beloved by modern conspiracy theorists, Comte Cagliostro. Dr Martello also said he had been inducted into an old Sicilian coven in 1951.

Although he was brought up as a Roman Catholic, as a child Martello soon became aware that members of his family were involved in the Craft. He says he kept his own beliefs secret for over twenty years until he went public in 1969 by forming the so-called Witches Liberation Movement. This was the first political grouping to advocate civil rights for witches and protest against persecution and harassment by the Church and the media. At Hallowe'en 1970 the WLM held the first public gathering of witches in the United States in New York's Central Park and as a result received nationwide publicity that turned Dr Martello into a 'celebrity witch' overnight.

Another more recent claimant to an Italian-American witchcraft tradition uses the pseudonym 'Raven Grimassi' and has published several books on the subject. His ancient family tradition however seems to be based on a hybrid mixture of Italian folk magic and Gardnerian Wicca with input from the works of American folklorist Charles Godfrey Leland and the British anthropologists Sir James Frazer and Dr Margaret Murray. A website promoting Grimassi's own unique Italian-American Aricia tradition claims that Italian witchcraft is pagan in origin and, as Leland stated in his books, goes back to Etruscan times.

Grimassi rejects any form of Italian witchcraft that is connected with diabolism or dual-faith observance yet ironically he reprints an article by J.B. Andrew from the *Folk-lore* journal of March 1897 on 'Neopolitan witchcraft' that describes just this form of traditional Craft. Grimassi believes that Catholic material corrupted the inherent paganism of Italian witchcraft, but this pattern is found in all forms of traditional practice and belief. It would therefore seem that Grimassi is popularising a neopagan form of American-Italian witchcraft that has more to do with modern Wicca than any historical survival from the past or his native country.

The article in *Folk-lore* mentioned above provides a completely different picture of Italian witchcraft than the one presented by many of its modern practitioners in the United States. The Arte was passed down in a hereditary line on the distaff side of the family from mother to daughter. However anyone could become a strega merely by standing in front of a mirror on Christmas Eve and calling on the Devil to appear and initiate them. Also, as in English traditional witchcraft, a witch could not die until she had passed on her knowledge and power.

Italian witches in the 19th century were still believed to sell their souls to Old Nick, use the flying ointment to travel to the Sabbath (where

they worshipped the goddesses Diana and Herodia), shapeshift into the form of cats and use human bones obtained from graveyards in their spells. Italian witches also used invocations to the saints, Christian prayers and holy water in their spells. Their beliefs and practices appear to be very similar to British forms of traditional witchcraft.

Roma Lister, an Italian writer and occultist writing around period of the First World War, told of her own experience as a child when the servants in her household believed she had been cursed. While her mother was out for the day a local 'wise woman' called Sora Tuta was smuggled into the house by Lister's governess. The drawing room was cleared of all tables and chairs and a white sheet was placed on the floor with a bundle of aromatic herbs at each corner. A straw-bottomed chair was placed in the center of the sheet with a small wooden table behind it. Lister was placed in the chair with every button and knot in her clothing undone and her hair let loose. The Venetian blinds were drawn and only the governess and the wise woman remained in the room with her. On the table was placed a clean new plate and a new cup containing black and white beans — the symbols of life and death in the ancient classical world.

Under her breath the wise woman recited some kind of magical formula in the local dialect. As she did she took a bean from the cup and threw it over the child so it landed on the plate behind her. When this was completed she counted the beans on the plate, separating the white from the black. She was evidently pleased because the white (life) outnumbered the black (death).

A new soup plate was then filled with water and into this was placed several drops of olive oil. This was to divine whether Lister had been influenced or affected by the *Malocchio* or Evil Eye. When they looked into the bowl they could see that while the water was mostly quite clear in the center the oil had shaped into the form of an eye. Also small droplets of the oil had gathered at the edges of the plate and they also resembled smaller eyes. This convinced the wise woman that Lister was under the influence of a spell or curse placed by another occult practitioner.

A *scaldino* or small receptacle for hot charcoal embers was produced. The charcoal was lit and sprigs from the four bundles of herbs at the corners of the sheet were burnt together with the 'witch's herb' rue. The room began to fill with smoke and Lister felt dizzy. The wise woman swung the scaldino around her until her hair and clothes were penetrated by the fumes. At the end of the ritual handfuls of unhusked wheat were

thrown over the child's head and scattered all around the chair. The water and oil was poured into the earth at the kitchen doorstep and the cup, soup bowl and plate were broken while the wise woman said further incantations. Eight days later Sora Tuta returned secretly to the house and in one of the servant's bedrooms a further rite was performed. Again olive oil was poured into a soup plate and this time there were no 'eyes' to be seen. The wise woman announced that the curse had been successfully lifted and the little girl was now cured (Lister 1918: 34-35).

In Charles Leland's *Aradia, Gospel of the Witches* (1899) the nineteenth-century Tuscany witch cult is said to have worshipped the moon goddess Diana (who Leland equated with the Sumerian goddess and Hebrew 'she-demon' Lilith), her brother and lover the sun god Lucifer and their daughter Aradia or Aridia, who incarnated on Earth in medieval times to teach witchcraft to her devotees among the Italian peasantry. Both Diana and Aradia were seen as the divine 'Queen of the Witches' and were protectors of the poor, the oppressed, social outcasts, outlaws and apostates. Diana was also called the 'Queen of the Night' and was described by the Tuscan witches as the goddess of the hunt 'with the moon on her forehead'.

Her totem animal was a dog (also associated with Hecate) and she was in some way related to Cain, who was described as 'a prisoner in the moon.' He suffered the cold there because originally his home had been the sun (was this really Lucifer who in the esoteric tradition was a solar archangel before his fall from grace?). There was a strong gnostic element in Tuscan witchcraft that manifested in an anti-Christian attitude. Leland said the witches regarded the Roman Church and its priesthood as just as corrupt as the feudal lords. They rejected the Christian God, Jesus and the Virgin Mary as 'three devils' and told the Christians "the true God, the Father, is not yours". This was a reference to the 'Great Father God' (the Cosmic Creator) who in *Aradia* is said to have changed Diana into the moon and her brother Lucifer into the sun.

The Italian witches used their magical powers and occult knowledge against the nobles who were oppressing them. This included curses and blasting their crops by creating gales and hailstorms. Among the other magical powers granted to the witches by Diana-Herodias-Lilith and her daughter Aradia were the ability to do good and evil, bless friends and curse enemies, commune with spirits and summon demons, find buried treasure from the past in ancient ruins, conjure the shades of priests who had left secret hoards of money, understand the voice of the

wind, change water into wine as Jesus did and wine into blood 'to drink the strength of Diana', divine by cards, know the secrets of the hand (palmistry), heal diseases and sickness, make the ugly appear beautiful and charm wild animals.

In northern Italy today local witches have integrated the old paganism with Roman Catholic beliefs and practices. The incantations they use are Christianised so that the names of the Old Gods have been replaced with the company of saints. Occasionally the names of pre-Christian deities are still used such as Diana, Tinia or Tana, Folletti and Redcap. Rituals for removing the Evil Eye, cursing, the blessing of houses and objects and healing are carried on under the cover of a form of Christian folk religion.

Mario Pazzaglini cites the walled castle town of Mondaino (Mount of Diana or Deer) where a crescent-shaped piazza has a image of the moon inlaid in its paving stones. The open end of the crescent faces south and is centred on the church tower, which is askew to the building and Pazzaglini says 'functions in the worlds of both the old and new religions, paganism and Catholicism. In this gesture both worlds are noted and united in a scheme that can be seen as a 'moon dial', a device that relates in a symbolic geographic way to the various cycles and changes of the moon. This entire town is still a temple to the moon and thereby Diana' (1998:95)

The Italian witches obtain their knowledge, often as children, by daily practice and initiation. They are taught the pantheistic and Hermetic philosophy that the world is a living organism 'where stars, planets, birds, plants, stones and humans interact with each other in the interplay of life within the march of time.' (ibid:100). Everything is believed to possess a soul and has a special spirit name. Once the witch discovers this name he or she had power over its owner.

Magical practices are basically techniques for obtaining a desired result using chanting, symbols, gestures and 'power objects'. The latter can be charged with magical power or psychic energy and are used for specific purposes. Ritual tools are also employed to focus energy and attention upon the desired end result of the magical operation. Supernatural entities ranging from goddesses like Diana to saints and spirits like the folletti (goblins) can be petitioned to facilitate changes in situations and the environment that correspond to their specific field or sphere of influence (ibid 100-102).

Patricia Pothier, an Elder in a modern witch tradition known as the 'Keepers of the Ancient Mysteries', claims to have encountered American-Italian witchcraft when she was a teenager in the 1940s. While living in San Francisco she became friendly with a family of Italian immigrants. As a result she was invited to attend full moon rituals of the *Vecchia Religione* (Old Religion) that they followed. In 1986 Pothier moved to the District of Columbia and was briefly hospitalised. As she lay in bed one day one of the nurses noticed she was wearing a piece of jewellery in the shape of the witch symbol of a five-pointed star or pentagram.

The nurse's name was Barbara Leipelt and it transpired she was high priestess of a local witch coven. Leipelt had been born in Germany and had come to the United States after the Second World War. She was the only survivor of her family, who had been executed by the Gestapo because they supported the underground anti-Nazi resistance movement. Frau Leipelt and some of her German friends had formed a group to study and practice the Eleusinian Mysteries in secret and she brought these teachings with her to America. Leipelt eventually became mentally ill as the result of her traumatic wartime experiences. When she died in the 1960s the coven disbanded. (Davies and Lynch 2001: 40-41).

Another early practitioner of a traditional type of witchcraft in the United States was Dr Herbert 'Herbie' Sloane. He was a retired barber in his hometown of Toledo, Ohio and also worked as a professional Tarot reader. In addition he ran a group called Our Lady of Endor Coven of the Ophite Gnostic Cultus. Dr Sloane's beliefs seemed to have dated back to the early 1900s, although he did not actually start his coven until 1946. By the 1970s, when the parapsychologist and writer Dr Hans Holzer met him, the group was practising a fairly modern form of the Craft with a ritual year based on thirteen moons and the standard Celtic pagan festivals.

Despite this neo-pagan overlay, the teachings of Our Lady of Endor Coven were controversially Luciferian and Gnostic in nature. When Dr Holzer was invited to attend one of its full moon rituals, held in the evocatively named Dragon Temple in Dr Sloane's house, he was told the climax would be a communion rite. It featured a chalice filled with apple juice and Dr Holzer was told this represented the apple that the serpent had used to seduce the 'Blessed Mother Eve'. However, according to the coven's ophidian theology, the serpent was Lucifer the Lightbearer in

disguise. To them the seduction of Eve was not an evil act, but represented the first gnosis or self-knowledge experienced by the early human race as a gift courtesy of the serpent of wisdom.

Another pioneering American witch was Victor Anderson (1917-2001), the founder of the modern Feri tradition. He claimed to have joined the Harpy Coven in Ashland, Oregon on the West Coast of America in the 1930s. This was a traditional coven ran by a high priest and priestess called Jerome and Maybelle Warren who originally came from the Southern States. This coven certainly existed as the granddaughter of one of the original members contacted the Feri tradition recently. The Harpy Coven practised a mixture of folk magic and the Hawaiian belief system of Huna and they worshipped a male horned god who was 'opposed to Christianity' (Kelly 1991:22) and a moon goddess.

In an open letter to his followers in August 1991 referring to the Harpy Coven Anderson said: '[The] worship of the Goddess was the very heart of our religion and magic. Lilith was one of the names used in our ritual worship of the Lady.' Lilith was an ancient Sumerian goddess who was transformed into a night demon by the Hebrews. It is possible she was originally a prehistoric bird goddess dating from the Neolithic or New Stone Age period. Some modern traditional witches revere her as the consort of Lucifer as the witch-god.



19. Victor & Cora Anderson as newlyweds in Ashland, Oregon, circa 1944.

The Harpy Coven also revered certain pagan deities who were called the 'the Old Ones' or the 'Old Powers', both terms that are used in British traditional covines. It has been claimed that the magical emphasis of the coven was on the development of psychic powers, direct contact with the Gods and sexual communion. They also attacked the hypocrisy of orthodox Christianity and saw themselves as following an alternative occult belief system, rather than a pagan 'nature religion'. (Spurlock: May 2005). The Harpy Coven apparently broke up around the time the Second World War ended in 1945.

Victor Anderson also claimed that he had met an old African woman in 1926 when he was only nine and she had initiated him into

the Craft. He used to tell a romantic story of his initiation that some of his critics claim never happened and was in fact either a dream or visionary experience. According to Anderson's account, the old woman sat naked in the center of a circle surrounded by a number of brass bowls filled with herbs. He was told to take off all his clothes and was then initiated by a "full sexual rite". After this the old woman whispered the "[god] names of our tradition" and then Anderson blacked out.

The young boy then experienced a vision in which all he could see was his initiator and they were floating together in space. Then he heard a female voice in the distant calling and it said: "I am Tana.". Then suddenly he was looking up into a tropical sky filled with glittering stars. The moon hung in the sky, but it was green in colour, and all around him were the sounds and smells of the jungle.

A man stepped out of the trees and Anderson described him as "beautiful and effeminate". He had horns, an erect phallus and a blue flame came out of his head. Without hearing any words, Anderson realised he was being told that this was "the Mighty Horned God" and the he was the lover and consort of the witch goddess Tana, who represented all the principles and potencies of nature.

The darkness disappeared and Anderson found himself back in the circle. Then the old woman instructed him in the secret teachings and rituals of her tradition. She also showed him how to use the herbs in the bowls. Finally she ritually washed his body in a mixture of butter, oil and salt. He was told to get dressed and return home. Next morning Anderson says, perhaps significantly: "I knew it had happened, but it seemed kind of a dream." (Adler 2006:123-124).

In an article in *The Witches Voice* magazine (January 2002), Victor Anderson said that at the age of twelve he had met some people who had moved to Oregon from the Appalachian Mountains. They taught him magical practices that were rooted in American folk magick with elements of African, European and Native American spiritual traditions. Presumably this was the Harpy Coven described above.

Victor Anderson was born on a ranch in Clayton, New Mexico the year that American troops entered the First World War in 1917 and when he was a young child his parents moved to Oregon. A childhood accident left him virtually blind, but this physical disability did not inhibit his considerable psychic and magical abilities or his prolific output of poetry. In 1944 he met and married his wife Cora Ann, who was born and lived in Alabama and came from a Christian family who

also practised folk magic. It was not until 1954 that, after reading Gerald Gardner's book *Witchcraft Today*, Anderson decided to form his own coven with his wife.

Cora Ann Anderson was born in 1915 and her maternal grandfather, Pete Rivers, 'was one of the old faith' and carried a bag of herbs everywhere with him for healing the sick. Apparently he had been taught herbalism by some local Cherokee Indians. Rivers had emigrated to the United States from Ireland where he was popularly known as a 'druid'. When Cora Anderson was two years old he cured her of a severe case of dysentery and she claims saved her life. (Anderson 2010:19-21).

In the 1960s the Anderson's teenage son, Elon, brought a classmate home from school called Thomas DeLong (1946-1982). Another version of the story says that the Andersons broke up a fight in the neighbourhood between the two boys. DeLong, who later changed his name to the more romantic and Welsh sounding 'Gwydion Pendderwen', was to become an important influence on the emerging Feri tradition, as it became known. In fact the name 'Faery' or later 'Feri' was allegedly Pendderwen's invention in the 1970s. The unusual spelling that was officially adopted in the 1980s was to avoid any confusion with neo-pagan and Wiccan groups using 'Faery' or 'Faerie' to describe themselves.

Originally the Anderson tradition was called simply 'Witchcraft' or 'Kruthin' – a word derived from the Gaelic *Cruthni* meaning 'Picts'. The mysterious *Picti* or 'Painted People', so called by the Romans because they covered their bodies in ritual tattoos, inhabited the area now called Scotland from the Iron Age to the early medieval period. Before 1950 the terms 'Wiccia', pronounced as 'Vee-chee-uh' and sometimes written as 'Vichia', was also used. It has been claimed that Feri comes from 'Fe' (Fay) or faery and 'ri' meaning royalty. This was a reference to the folk tradition that the Good Folk are led by an aristocracy and ruled by a king and queen. (Spurlock: May 2005). Possibly Victor and Cora Anderson saw themselves in that role as heads of the Feri tradition.

In 1970 Gwydion Pendderwen founded a neo-pagan group called Nemeton (from the Celtic for a sacred grove) with fellow Feri initiate Alison Harlow and seven years later instigated one of the earliest environmental pressure groups known as Forever Forests. Nemeton became influential in Wiccan and neo-pagan networking and in 1978 it merged with the Church of All Worlds, founded in the 1960s by Oberon and Morning Glory Zell.

In the early 1980s Pendderwen was prominent in the neo-pagan scene and as a musician did concerts and rituals and got involved in environmental work, networking, political activism and anti-nuclear power demonstrations. As a result of one of these protests in 1982 he was arrested along with another Feri initiate who called herself 'Starhawk' (Miriam Simos). A few months later Pendderwen was killed in a motor car accident.

His poetic gifts and interest in Celtic mythology inspired and influenced the modern Feri tradition. When he visited England Pendderwen met Alex Sanders, the founder of Alexandrian Wicca, a hybrid blend of Gardnerian Wicca and ceremonial magic. As a result of this meeting Wiccan elements were introduced into the tradition and to a certain extent diluted the original teachings Victor Anderson received from the Harpy Coven.

Victor Anderson told his followers that the Picti had been taught magic by the Gods, not just the God and Goddess, but also mysterious entities known as the 'Lords of the Outer Spaces'. They could be contacted by spirit travelling through their respective 'Wells' that reach beyond the foundations of reality and into the 'Outer Seas' of space and night. In the Feri tradition these Dark Lords were the equivalent of the Watchers or fallen angels in other Old Craft traditions who taught early humans the arts of civilisation. (Spurlock: May 2005).

The Left Hand Path nature of Feri is apparently confirmed for many by the fact that the deities it reveres are described as monads having both light and dark aspects. The primary male god form in the modern Feri tradition is the androgynous 'Blue God' called Melek Taus. He is also known as the Peacock Angel and is worshipped in regions of the Middle East including Kurdistan, Iraq and Syria by the Yezedi sect. The Blue God is variously known as the 'Winged Serpent', 'The Rainbow Serpent' and 'The Lightbearer' and symbolises the spring, youth and sexual virility. The primary goddess form in Feri is the 'Star Goddess' or Mother Nox (night). She is depicted as a black lioness-headed woman with stars in her hair and is both the sister and wife of the Lightbearer. As Anderson said, she can be identified with the Sumerian goddess Lilit or Lilith who was demonized in Hebrew mythology.

In addition to the God and Goddess a pantheon of deities is recognised by the tradition. They seem to be broadly 'Celtic' in nature and suggest the modern influence of Gwydion Pendderwen from his neo-pagan and Wiccan contacts. They include the Great Mother, an

earth goddess identified with the Basque deity Mari, who is the consort of the Harvest Lord. He is identified with Crom, an Irish god who demanded human sacrifices in exchange for healthy crops. He is represented as stag headed and has solar attributes. There is also a young goddess known as the Corn Maiden and she symbolises the waxing and waning of the moon.

There are also two other darker divinities known as the Winter King and the Crone. He is known as Atho, Arddu (Welsh for 'Black One' or 'Dark One') and Ankou (the 'Lord of the Dead' in Breton folklore) and is the spirit of winter. His titles are the Dark Lord, the Shepherd of Souls, the Guardian of the Mysteries and the Bringer of Death and he grants his worshippers wisdom and knowledge. He is depicted with a goat's head and bat wings and his symbol is the skull and crossbones. He is very similar to the Horned God revered in traditional witchcraft.

Finally, the Crone is known as Anu, Ceridwen and the Morrigan. She is the Queen of the Dead and is depicted as an old woman with long white hair wearing a black cloak. She carries a sacrificial sickle to cut down the Harvest Lord in his prime. Again her image closely represents the dark aspects of the witch-goddess in Traditional Craft who is the ruler of the underworld and fate.

As well as these gods and goddesses there are also the lesser (Luciferic) deities who may be the 'Lords of the Outer Spaces'. They are known as the Guardians and are also called the Cloud People, the Nephelim or the Watchers. Originally they 'came from the stars' and mated with primitive humans to create the hybrid race of the 'faery blood'. These Elder Gods can be regarded as the ancestral spirits of the Feri tradition and they are invoked during the casting of the circle. Although, like most spiritual beings, they are androgynous in nature, when working with them in the circle the Guardians of east and south are regarded as 'male' and west and north are 'female'. Obviously they are same as the 'fallen angels' mentioned in Genesis who are said to have mated with the 'daughters of men'.

In the process of initiation into Feri the lineage passes either directly down from Victor and Cora Anderson or sometimes from Gwydion Pendderwen or other prominent early initiates. To become a prospective candidate the applicant must demonstrate that they are of a feral nature, described as being a 'child of nature', and possess the 'warrior ethic'. Feri is not a tradition for pacifists, despite the radical political direction that Starhawk and Pendderwen took.

Before a candidate is brought into the circle for initiation it is cast beginning in the north and is then sealed with the following words:

*“By the power of thirteen times thirteen, I draw down the moon,  
My knife has dawn the circle round,  
My feet have walked the holy ground,  
Let those within the airy wheel  
Bear witness to my magickal seal [draw pentagram]  
And those without be turned about,  
And never hear my final shout:  
By which eye? [whispered]”*

The final line refers to a common British folk tale about a human midwife who is asked to deliver a faery baby. She touches her eye with an ointment that she has been forbidden to touch by its father. Immediately she sees that the peasant's hovel she has been brought to is in fact a faery palace. Late she meets the child's father in the local market. When he realises she can actually see him he enquires: “With which eye?” When she tells him he pokes her in that eye and she is blinded. This is likely to have been another innovation by Gwydion Pendderwen based on his interest in British folklore and the time he spent in the United Kingdom.

When the blindfolded candidate is brought to the place of initiation there is a dialogue between the priest and priestess representing the God and Goddess. She asks: “Why art thou fallen into sorrow Malik?” and he replies: “It repenteth me that we have made man in our own image”. The Goddess responds: “Because the Lord of the Painted Fan [the Peacock Angel] is proud, let us worship him.” It has been suggested that this fragment of the ritual comes from a Yezedi source (*ibid*). It is based on a passage in The Qu’ran where the rebel angel Iblis (Lucifer) challenges Allah by refusing to bow down and worship his creation, the clay-born father of the human race, Adam.

On its websites the Feri tradition is at pains to distance itself from modern Wicca. Despite this Feri has sub-divided into many different groups over the years. A few of these have retained the original Anderson teachings and ethos while many follow Wiccan practices and concepts from the Gardnerian and Alexandrian traditions. Others have drawn on the writings of J.R.R. Tolkien, the English author of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, and even take inspiration from the rock god (and Wiccan initiate) Jim Morrison of The Doors.

Other myriad and eclectic influences on the modern Feri tradition include Huna, Voudon, Eckankar, Tibetan Buddhism, the fictional Cthulu myths of horror writer H.P. Lovecraft, Greek, Mesopotomian and Welsh mythology, Basque witchcraft, the Cabbala, Santeria, Sufism, Satanism and Native American spirituality. This means that the newer groups have deviated from the original teachings of the Andersons that were based on the traditional principles inherited from the old Harpy Coven and representing the Old Craft. In that respect, it is debatable whether they can be classified as traditional witchcraft.

One possible public manifestation of traditional witchcraft in the United States in the late 1960s was the so-called 'Hollywood Coven' that operated in Hollywood, Florida. It was run by a man called Tanssan who claimed to have been initiated into another coven in Birmingham, Michigan that had allegedly been established in the early 1900s. Tanssan became head of the coven shortly before it was forced to disband allegedly because of police harassment. He then moved to Florida and founded the Hollywood Coven based on the teachings and practices of the original group. In the 1960s its public spokesperson was a woman called Kitty Lessing who edited the witchcraft magazine *The Black Lite*.

The coven was a robed tradition and used a magical circle. Initiation was granted after a probationary period of the traditional year and a day and during this time the neophyte had to study all the aspects of witchcraft and occultism. There were no 'high priests' or 'high priestesses', but once initiated members could form their own covens and take the title of the Lady or Grand Master. The deities revered were a horned god, who was 'father of the gods' and the guide to the dead, and an earth goddess. The Hollywood Coven celebrated only the seasonal festivals of Yule, Candlemass, Lammas and Hallowe'en. In the 1970s Kitty Lessing moved to California and at that time the Hollywood Coven seems to have gone underground.

Another American witchcraft tradition that appears to be a genuine form of the Old Craft originating in the British Isles is the Order of the Skull and Bones. This has nothing by the way to do with the secret student fraternity of the same name founded at Yale University in the 19th century that often features in political conspiracy theories. This Skull and Bones is a family tradition that first came to public notice in the 1990s in a series of articles in the British witchcraft magazine *The Cauldron* written by the late Douglas McIlwain.

McIllwain said he been brought in to the tradition by his uncle when he was a teenager. In 1967 his Uncle Sid travelled from New Jersey to Ohio where Douglas was living because he knew he only had a few years left to live. Before he died he wanted to pass on "the old family ways" as he had no children of his own. The words 'witch' and 'witchcraft' were never used by Douglas' relatives to describe the family tradition and its members were just known as 'walkers'.

Douglas' great-grandfather, Edward, who lived in Philadelphia and spoke the Romany language, had also preserved some of the old family ways. He had a rabbit's foot in the band of his hat, always wore something green (the faery colour) in the form of a ribbon or a sprig of evergreen and had a pin on his jacket from which was suspended a conch shell. Edward owned a billiard parlour and was the state champion of the game in Pennsylvania. He had never been beaten and put his success down to his powers. He could put 'energy in the balls' and then directed them wherever he wanted them to go. Edward's wife, Martha, was a pow-wow healer and a follower of Mary Baker Eddy. In fact all the family were Christian Scientists and they apparently used it as a cover for their secret beliefs.

When Douglas was inducted into the Skull and Bones, his uncle first produced a large canvas, which he unfolded to display a circle painted on it. This was called the 'compass' – a name that is sometimes found in the records of Scottish historical witchcraft to describe the witches' circle. This canvas was placed on the floor and a wooden stave (stang) with its tip carved as a phallus was set up. The other end was placed in a flower pot filled with soil. If outdoors it would have been planted in the earth. To the top of it were attached two horns lashed to the stave with twine and a lighted candle was placed between them.

Douglas and his first cousin Mark, who was also going to be inducted, were told to remove all their clothes. The circle was then entered by walking around the outside of it nine times in a deosil direction and then stepping over a besom placed on the ground at its edge. A noose was placed around their necks and they were lightly scourged across the back. The words: "Be that you be, see that you see" were intoned by their uncle.

After this initiation Douglas and Mark were taught that the witch goddess was never to be named. She was just called the 'Great Queen' and her symbol was a key. However, Uncle Sid did later identify her with a Central European pagan goddess called 'Bigfoot Bertha'. Douglas

realised that this was Berchta, Holda, Perchta or Frigga whose symbol was the 'goose-foot cross' or the pentagram. Dame Holda was represented in the children's fairy tale as Old Mother Goose and she was also the female leader of the Wild Hunt. In the Skull and Bones tradition the witch god was known as Robin, the Hooded Man (a nickname for Woden), the Black Monk or simply Old Hornie.

Uncle Sid told the two boys that one day as 'walkers' they would travel to the 'Black Mountain'. They would hear the call at midnight and when they took the journey they would encounter things that would make their understanding complete. This was to be an actual physical journey to a place where this world and Faerie met. In fact Douglas has said that this did happen in 1988 and it was an experience involving the planet Venus, dawn and the inner form of the Great Queen cloaked in blue with a robe decorated with golden stars. The 'Black Mountain' sounds either a reference to Venusberg, where Dame Venus taught witches, or the Brocken, where the sisterhood flew to attend the Witches' Sabbath on Walpurgis Nacht.

Douglas said that his uncle distinguished between two types of people in the world who were those "of the blood" and ordinary people (the clay-born). The former did not cease to exist after death, but mortals did and they just turned to dust. After his uncle died, Mark used to visit his Great-Aunt Esther and she passed on some more of the family tradition to him as she had been taught by Douglas' grandfather Warren. Mark was given a piece of meteorite in a matchbox by his aunt and she said it was a symbol of the 'Old Faith'. The skull and crossbones was another important symbol representing the Lord of Death and Everlasting Life and was adopted by the family tradition as its name. (McIwain: *Candlemass/Eostre* 1997).

In subsequent issues of *The Cauldron* Douglas McIwain elaborated on the nature of the God and Goddess in the Skull and Bones tradition. He stated that the witch goddess was also known to the tradition as Ceridwen or 'the Crooked Woman' and is depicted with a limp. Douglas identified her with the Hindu serpent goddess Kubjika, Kuja or Kundalini. The goddess was also known as Cuda and was often shown with three small hooded dwarves known as the *genii cucullati*.

In the Skull and Bones tradition she was identified with both Ceridwen and Cundie, the Grail messenger in Wolfram von Eschenbach's medieval romance *Parsifal*. The witch god as the 'Hooded Man' was compared with Herne the Hunter and Robin Hood, who was sometimes called

Old Carl Hood. He was also connected with the Germanic god Woden, who the Romans identified with Mercury and the Greeks with Hermes, and with the mysterious 'Man in Black' mentioned in the witch trials.

Douglas McIlwain concluded that the Skull and Bones contained elements derived from traditional British witchcraft, Romany lore, German-American hexcraft, the Grail mythos and Arthurian legends and teachings of an unknown origin that were similar to those taught by Robert Cochrane. He also linked its beliefs with an old coven that the Arthurian and Celtic writer John Matthews has claimed he was inducted into as a teenager at the Iron Age hill fort and former sacred grove of Chanctonbury Ring in Sussex, England.

At the times when it faced possible opposition and persecution the Skull and Bones tradition expressed itself through the more acceptable spiritual philosophies of Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry and Christian Science (McIlwain: February 2001). In this way it resembles many of the other underground Old Craft traditions described in this book.

In 1997 a unique form of traditional witchcraft quietly began to make its way to America from Essex in England, focused largely on the lore and sorcery of the Witches' Sabbath, the Horseman's Word and the mythos of the Wild Hunt. Though British in origin, this form of the Old Craft, true to its partial roots in cunning-folk practice, was syncretic in outlook and embraced diverse magical influences including European, Near Eastern, North African and indigenous American. In their limited public writings its English practitioners embraced what they called 'the transcendental Sorcery of the Crooked Path' – the spirit roads which twisted between blessing and cursing; illuminating an unseen third path of initiatory consciousness.

This tradition called itself *Cultus Sabbati* and a formally empowered lodge of its outer court, called the Companie of the Serpent-Cross, was established on the West Coast of North America in 1998. Its preceptor was Robert Fitzgerald, an American practitioner of the Enochian angelic magical system of Dr John Dee. Initially working with a small lodge of two men and two women, he brought Daniel A. Schulke, a botanist and herbalist with magical roots in Brujeria and spiritism, into the Companie. One year later, Fitzgerald was initiated into the Cultus in Chelmsford, Essex by its then presiding Magister, the late Andrew D. Chumbley (1967-2004), and he carried the tradition to America at the cusp of the new millennium.

## 7

## The Sabbatic Craft

The term 'Sabbatic Craft' was coined by Andrew D. Chumbley to describe the quintessential forms of traditional British witchcraft into which he had been initiated. He also devised the term 'cunning craft' to apply specifically to the remnant forms of British folk magic under his stewardship. These were a hybridisation of rural cunning folk practice and more urban forms of occultism, often with an overlay of medieval witch topology. In September 2004 Chumbley passed to the spirit world at a comparatively young age.

He never believed that he would make 'old bones' and, as Dion Fortune once remarked, true adepts often know when their time is coming to depart this world. Indeed in the months leading to the event he had premonitions of his fate and one of the last conversations he had with this writer was on subject of his impending death. Probably because he believed that he had only a limited time, Chumbley drove himself in his work as a magus, writer, poet and artist. In a short period of years he reified a body of magical work, on both the outer and inner levels, that has created a powerful and lasting legacy for generations to come.

Andrew Chumbley's first book and magnum opus was *Azoetia: A Grimoire of the Sabbatic Craft* (Xoanon Publishing 1992 and 2002). It has been described as a major work of magical genius comparable to anything written by Samuel MacGregor Mathers, Aleister Crowley or Austin Osman Spare. That it has since been imitated, both in style and content, is a backhanded compliment to its author's visionary insights into the Arte Magical.

Chumbley began working on it as a teenager and it was finally published when he was only twenty-four years old. The book presents a unique vision of modern traditional witchcraft for the 20th century firmly based on the beliefs and principles he had received via a hereditary lineage from West Wales, dating back at least to the 1880s or 1890s, and a pre-war cunning folk tradition from Buckinghamshire, plus his own magical experiences as a practising sorcerer.

The text also drew on symbols from other magical systems and witchcraft traditions to provide an expression true to sorcery's eldritch past, yet also suitable for modern practitioners. This material, and the

other influences on Chumbley's own magical praxis, were varied and eclectic. They included Sufism, left-hand Tantra, Thelemism, Aztec, Sumerian and Egyptian mythology, Voudon, Yezidism, Gnosticism, and Arabic magic. He was also inspired by the work of the psychic artist and magus Austin Osman Spare and in the 1990s Chumbley operated a magical lodge affiliated to Kenneth Grant's Typhonian OTO (Chumbley 1998). He was also an initiate of a medieval Tantric order from India called the Uttara Kaula Sampradaya.

This eclectic approach to the Arte Magica was successful because of the universal nature of occult and mystical practices from differing cultures and, most importantly, Chumbley's knowledge of world religions and talent for synthesis. He summed up this approach by saying: 'In all contexts one may find pieces of magical lore and belief from many disparate times and places, but all are brought to function within the trans-historical arena of the sacred dimension.' (August 1996).

In 1995 Chumbley published his second work, a slim volume called *Qutub* or *The Point*. This he described as a poetic evocation of the 'Crooked Path' of sorcery in the Sabbatic Craft. It was in the form of seventy-two verses accompanied by eleven talismanic illustrations. Inspired by the Yatukih sorcery of ancient Persia, the Yezedi cult of the Peacock Angel and Sufism, this book contains some of the most beautiful poetry Chumbley wrote.

In the annotations at the end of the book Chumbley embraced the idea put forward by the Sufi master Idries Shah and others that the medieval witch cult had been influenced by Middle Eastern esotericism. Specifically he mentions the *Dhu'lqarnenî*, a sect of Berber sorcerers in the Atlas Mountains of North Africa. Their pre-Islamic rites paralleled the Witches Sabbath and were led by a form of the European 'Man in Black' called *Dhu'l-qarnen*, or literally 'the Two Horned One'.



20. Spirit-grylli from *Azoëtia*, *A Grimoire of the Sabbatic Craft*.

Chumbley's third and perhaps most famous book, certainly his most controversial, was based upon an ancient magical ritual he had recently performed in West Wales and Essex. This was *One: The Grimoire of the Golden Toad* published shortly after he had completed the series of rituals called 'The Waters of the Moon' that it contained. These Chumbley described as 'an exposition of the Antient Wiccecraft Initiation of the Mysteries of Toadmanship' and his personal copy had a cover made of toad skin. Today *One* is a highly regarded magical book and can command prices on the second-hand market of several thousand dollars a copy.

*One: the Grimoire of the Golden Toad* is a unique and personal account by Chumbley of the archaic toad-bone rite that is associated with the rural Society of Horseman's Word. It was just one example of Chumbley's gifted ability to revive and energise dormant or semi-dormant Old Craft traditions. During his lifetime he achieved this goal several times and the nature of traditional witchcraft today is richer for his efforts.

Andrew Chumbley was once asked why he wrote articles and published books if the form of Craft he practised was a closed circle, admitting only those who were deemed worthy by its initiates to receive its inner teachings by invitation only. It is a question all those who follow the Old Craft in private and adopt a public persona or mask have to ask themselves at some stage. Chumbley's answer was twofold; that his published work had allowed several surviving Old Craft traditions that might otherwise had faded away to communicate, share information and cross-fertilise. Also the publication of books and articles can inspire seekers and even create a spiritual awakening in them.

Contrary to popular belief and idle gossip, Chumbley did not make much money from his publishing enterprise. In fact he was bemused as everyone else when they started to command high prices on the second-hand market. Chumbley, like all true magicians, was not interested in making money from his magical work and that was not the aim of his writing career. In an interview given in 2002 he said that he "never sought to write books 'about' magic, but rather to write magical books – to reify texts and images which are the vessels for spirits, powers and specialised kinds of knowledge. Such books are genuine Grammers of the Arte and are possessed of a life beyond the apparent manifestations of author, reader, page and ink".

Chumbley distributed his books to a list of private subscribers through his own publishing house, Xoanon, in limited editions and as high quality productions because they were truly magical works. Each one had its own attendant familiar or spirit force and the idea, as he stated above, was that they were practical magical grimoires that were specifically designed to be used and worked by their owners. They were never meant to be collector's items to be just displayed and never opened or used. Today Xoanon continues to produce magical works to the same high standards of quality and production and with the same publishing aim set out by its founder.

Some of Andrew Chumbley's critics complained that his articles and books were inaccessible, that he wrote in an old fashioned flowery style or an over-scholarly way. In that respect he very much belonged to the 'old school' tradition of the occultists of the past who taught that the student should work for any gnosis gained. It is true there may come in the life of the seeker a 'road to Damascus' moment when the lightning flash comes down from Heaven, but these are few and far between.

Usually it is hard graft, discipline and learning so that the magical language and esoteric symbolism of the Arte can be understood. Indeed these are still the keynotes of the tradition to which Chumbley belonged, known in the outer as the Cultus Sabbati, and they mark it out from less serious and rigorous systems of magical training. Sadly in our push-button age of instant selfish gratification the path of spiritual attainment does not appeal to many people because it is just too much hard work. Few wish to devote several years to the study and practice of the Craft and the Arte Magical before being accepted into a group or indeed have the commitment and discipline such a probationary period demands.

In his latter years, Andrew Chumbley was working within both a magical and academic framework. He had achieved a degree in comparative religion and philosophy and at the time of his death was studying for a doctorate. Those close to him believe that if he had achieved that distinction he would have made a major contribution to the growing field of the academic study of magic.

If he had lived longer, this writer believes that Chumbley could also have taken on an essential role as a communicator and mediator, bridging the gap of understanding that exists between the occult world and academia. His encyclopaedic knowledge of magical, religious and folkloric beliefs in cultures from all over the world and his vast experience as a magical practitioner would have made his role invaluable. Sadly it was not to be.

Despite the academic and intellectual side to his personality, Andrew Chumbley was first and foremost a 'man of the land', rural in both birth and character and he fitted the archetypal image of the English 'cunning man' or wizard. In addition he also took on the difficult and challenging role of the 'Man in Black' or witch master to a traditional covine. This was a position he took very seriously and he was painfully aware of its pitfalls, responsibilities, obligations and burdens. To his everlasting credit, despite many tribulations and obstacles placed in his way, it was a role he took to as if born to it.

On a personal level, Chumbley to strangers could sometimes appear aloof, serious and intense to the point of obsession. Those of us like the writer who had the privilege of knowing him and calling him a friend saw another side to his personality that existed behind the public mask. He had a mischievous and sometimes quite wicked sense of humour and a love of life that was infectious. It is true to say he did not suffer fools or charlatans gladly. However this was because he was sceptical and critical of the fakery that he encountered on the few rare occasions when he ventured forth from his native Essex and encountered the popular London occult scene.

He despised those who by their words and deeds denigrated the Craft and the Arte Magical and they deserved his censure and contempt. In contrast to this attitude towards charlatans and mountebanks, if Chumbley met someone who he regarded as sincere, genuine and honourable and who was seriously seeking the Path he would go out of his way to help them. To that extent he was generous with his time and knowledge. With this great knowledge came a natural modesty that was sometimes quite touching.

In the early 1990s Andrew Chumbley had taken up the Magistry of his own traditional witchcraft sodality, the Cultus Sabbati. This generic name referred to the amalgam of genuine Old Craft lineages from which he had received the formal 'passing on of power'. He described the Cultus as 'a body of magical initiates who practice both solitary and collective rituals, whose lineal traditions descend, in both oral and textual forms, from surviving 19th century cunning folk and ritual magic practice.' He goes on to say that it practices 'the spells and customs which generations past have bequeathed' such as healing, divination, toad bone magick, the use of knotted cords for magical purposes, Words of Power and the use of witch bottles'. To this list can be added such historical and traditional magical practices as circle-casting, wortcunning (the magical use of herbs and plants) and spirit congress.

The Cultus also practises dual-faith observances derived from cunning folk sources including Latin charms, the use of the psalms for magical purposes and biblical divination. As Chumbley pointed out, the old cunning folk, those practitioners of folk magic who were called 'witches', pellers or charmers by outsiders, employed the rituals of the predominant religious culture of their land, Christianity. In the Middle East folk magicians use Islamic beliefs and practices and Oriental sorcerers employ Hindu and Buddhist iconography and rituals. Modern African religions and their cultic offshoots, such as Santeria, macumba, voudon, hoodoo and obeah, also combine ancient beliefs and practices with Roman Catholicism.

A central motif in the Cultus Sabbati and the Sabbatic Craft in general is the spirit flight to the Witches Sabbath. From an esoteric viewpoint Chumbley described it as 'an astral or dream convocation of the witches communing with a vast array of animal spirits, faeries and Otherworldly beings.' As the present Magister of the Cultus, Daniel A. Schulke, has put it: 'By going forth upon the *via oneira* [the dream way] do the Brethren of the Good [witches] convene by night, and the wordless pact of the Sabbat is honoured.' (2005: 255)

Andrew Chumbley described the location of the Witches' Sabbath as 'the crossroads of waking, sleeping and mundane dreaming', a place that is literally 'between the worlds' as is the Compass or Circle of Arte. It is a place that can be accessed by the initiated practitioner in sleep, in dreams or trance. This concept of the witch meet, the faery convocation of humans and spirits, and the atavistic myth of the Wild Hunt forms the ritual and spiritual basis for the mythos, imagery, symbolism and practice of the Cultus Sabbati and the Sabbatic Craft tradition. These elements reside in the realm of initiatic understanding.

As Chumbley pointed out, the defining feature of the Cultus Sabbati was its specialised use of the mythos of the medieval and early modern European tradition of the Witches Sabbath as the idiom for its ritual practices. The whole complex of imagery that is the Sabbath is esoterically understood as a temporal reality of ritual. When it is perceived through praxis, dream-as-ritual and spirit mediumship its myriad forms yield new wisdom. This symbology serves as wholly apposite ciphers for the teachings on oneiric flight, atavistic transformation, wortcunning, divination, ritualisation, dual-faith observance and spirit worship that forms the practical basis of the Sabbatic Craft. (May 2002).

In an essay entitled 'Provenance, Dream and Magistry', Andrew Chumbley outlined the mythos of the Sabbatic Craft. (see [www.xoanon.co.uk](http://www.xoanon.co.uk)) He described it in terms of 'an ongoing tradition of sorcerous wisdom' and 'an initiatory path proceeding from both immediate vision and historical succession.' In other words the Craft has beliefs and practices that have been passed down from previous generations of practitioners, but it is ever changing and being informed by an ongoing praxis. It would be wrong to think of modern traditional witchcraft forms as static or totally immersed in the past as they are always evolving and developing to suit changing conditions.

Chumbley pointed out the cunning man or woman, the witch and the folk magician used universal and timeless methodologies and the tools of established magical ritual from historical sources – the casting of a circle, the use of wand, knife, cord, knot, sigil and charm. In addition there is the esoteric knowledge of stellar lore, the occult correspondences of fauna and flora and the skills of spirit evocation and exorcism. The modern practitioners of the Sabbatic Craft have inherited all these tools and methods from their ancestral and initiatory forebears.

A defining feature of the Sabbatic Craft is the oneiric or dream realm. Today dreams are usually treated by the average person as jumbled products of daily anxiety and that is, of course, true of the majority of them. Most psychologists believe they are a mental technique used by the brain to process and collate the memories stored during waking hours. Some dream therapists may interpret them in crude Freudian terms, while those following the teachings of Carl Jung and depth psychology give them a more esoteric and symbolic meaning.

The ancients had a far more enlightened view of dreams and saw them as messages from the spirits or Gods. To this end dream incubation was practised in the temples of Babylon, Rome, Greece and Egypt. Worshippers slept overnight in the inner sanctum in order to facilitate prophetic dreams sent by the Gods or communicate directly with them while asleep.

The 16th century magician Henry Cornelius Agrippa, author of *De Occult Philosophia*, said of true or magical dreaming: 'Now I call that a dream, which proceedeth either from the spirit or phantasie and intellect united together, or by the instruction of the agent intellect above our souls or by the true revelation of some divine power in a quiet and purified mind; for by this our soul receiveth true oracles and abundantly yieldeth prophecies to us; for in dreams we deem both to ask questions and learn to read and find them out.'

The Australian aborigines say that when humans dream our 'spirits go walkabout'. They believe that dreaming can be used for travelling around in this world and also as a contact point between the land of the living and the realm of the dead. In dreams they say we can contact ancestral spirits, spiritual teachers and guides. These entities can appear in either human or animal form or as a hybrid of both and in the Dreamtime they escort their pupils into the Otherworld and reveal its mysteries and secrets. Descending into a cave, crossing an ocean or ascending a special tree are all ways we can access this alternative reality. All these are outer symbols in the material world of gateways or portals to the inner realm and are well documented in the shamanic beliefs of indigenous people worldwide.

Robert Moss, a former professor of ancient history at the Australian National University, has said that since the Christian missionaries arrived in Australia with the white settlers the spirits of the Dreamtime appear in forms that are recognisable to the nominally converted aborigines. He quotes a story of a Yolngu woman who dreamt about the ancestral spirits of her tribe. In it they were dancing in bird feathers and were joined by a smiling Jesus. Together they showed the dreamer a 'place of power' in the landscape and she was told her people had used it for fertility rites in ancient times. The tribal elders had forgotten this place and the rites that took place there, but her spirit contacts urged the woman to revive its use as a special site of worship. (Moss: January 2007). This dreaming experience combining elements from both indigenous religion and Christianity mirrors the use of dual-faith observance in the Sabbatic Craft.

The Scottish folk musician and writer on faery lore and Celtic mythology, R.J. Stewart, has said that 'Certain dreams, which are identified by their content and their feeling of illumination, or highlighted quality of meaning, are magical in nature...The magical dream was often used as a hallmark in education and initiation...When the student dreams of material that is part of the tradition, but has not been available for study, the leader is aware that the seed has taken root.'

Stewart goes on to say that magical dreams are often followed in the waking state by visions and these are in turn superseded by what he terms 'occult seership'. The magical dream, he says, can also allow the initiate to 'learn from beings that exist within the Innerworld' (1985:46-48). The same can be said about the use of magical dreams in the Sabbatic Craft, where contact can be made with the patron and ancestral spirits and spirit guides of the tradition.

In modern Corsica there exists a sect of magical practitioners known as the *mazzeri* or 'death's messengers'. These are people endowed with occult powers and psychic gifts who dream that they travel at night in a parallel world hunting animals. They claim to see the faces of living people on the animals they kill in the dream state and shortly afterwards the victims of the astral hunt will die. This is explained by the fact that when the spirit animal is killed the human soul is severed from its physical body. The person then sickens and dies. Some of the *mazzeri* have dreams that are premonitions, others practice folk medicine, banish curses and cast spells for healing. The nocturnal activities of these dream walkers has been compared with the medieval Italian *benandenti* who travelled at night in spirit to fight witches and took on the form of animals. (see Carrington 1995 and Ginzburg 1983). They can also be compared with the ritual activities of the Sabbatic Craft tradition.

Various magical techniques are used within the modern Sabbatic Craft to create a magical state of 'true dreaming', that is dreams that do not merely regurgitate the mundane events of the day, but are set apart 'by the presence of spirit, imparting knowledge, prophecy and further veiling of the Mysteries.' (Schulke 2005: 455). Plants such as mugwort, chamomile, jasmine, rose, viper's bugloss, lavender, Queen of the Meadow, violet, and loosestrife are also employed for their oneirogenic properties. In a practical way such plants can be added to teas, philtres, balms, pillows, chaplets and flower essences.

Other methods include a dream pouch filled with fragrant herbs or flower petals and placed beneath the pillow of the sleeper or the use of drops of perfume or essential oil on bedclothes. Alternatively a consecrated magical vessel is filled with magically symbolic objects such as owl feathers, the claws of a nocturnal animal, soot, a moonstone, broomstraw, obsidian, a walnut shell, dead moths, hemlock leaves and the seeds of *hyoscyamus* (ibid:463). These methods, like other Sabbatic Craft techniques, such as trance, possession and mediumship, can aid the practitioner to make direct contact with the spirits so as to inform their magical work by transforming dream into ritual.

Andrew Chumbley recommended a physical approach to dreaming. He suggested that the practitioner abandon human haunts and walk alone in the countryside, the fields and woods. They should then ask the *genii loci* or 'spirit of place' for a sign or omen, which might be used in a dreaming practice. This could be an encounter or sighting of an animal or bird, such as a stag, hare, fox, buzzard, geese or owl, weather

phenomena or some contact with a passing stranger who says or does something of significance.

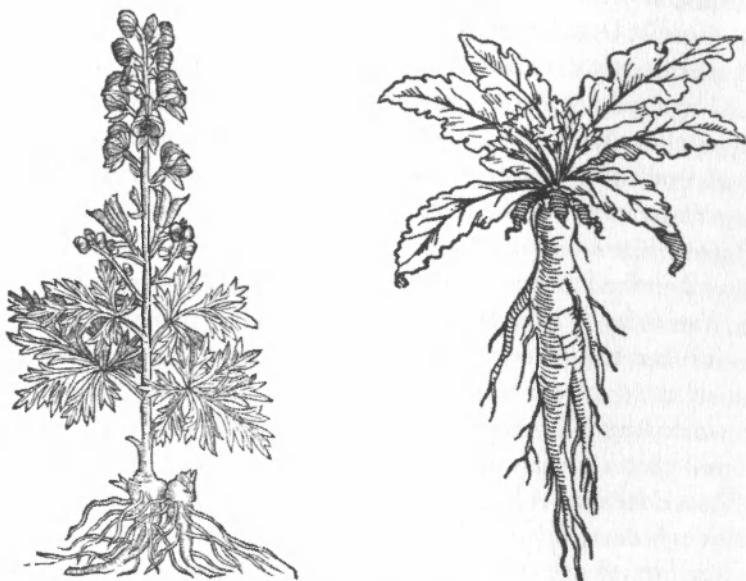
By this means the sleeper will be led to the 'fields of night' and the dreaming body will be awakened. In this way the Sabbatic Craft 'employs the Arcana of Dream as a vehicle for the reification of spirit knowledge' and 'the materialisation of the spirit and the spiritualization of the material' (Chumbley, February 2002).

The technique and practice of magical dreaming in the Cultus Sabbati is directly linked to the medieval tradition of the Witches Sabbath. This was a meeting where members of the Craft gathered together to celebrate fertility rites associated with the agricultural calendar and the seasonal cycle, to revere the Old Horned God and the Queen of Elfane and work magic. By the reference to 'fertility rites' it should not be inferred that such practices were a relic or direct survival of some prehistoric fertility cult or religion.

Although descriptions of the Sabbath were distorted by the warped imaginations of sexually repressed monks and clerics, modern writers, such as Dr Carlos Ginzburg, have however recognised in it genuine remnants or memories of ancient shamanic rites and goddess worship. Ginzburg has claimed that these pagan elements were demonised by the Church's propaganda so that the Witches' Sabbath was transformed into a satanic rite with all its fantastical and obscene additions (Ginzburg 1990).

One of the most persistent stories told about medieval witches was that they flew to their Sabbaths on broomsticks, forked sticks, pitchforks, hurdles, distaffs, fennel stalks and on the back of animals such as goats, rams and wolves. If it is conceded that people cannot actually fly unaided, what is the symbolic or metaphorical meaning behind such stories? One explanation, that links it with the modern practice of the Sabbatic Craft, is that the witches had the psychic ability to leave their bodies at will and travel to other physical locations and the Otherworld. In occult terminology they could project their astral or spirit bodies and 'travel on the astral'.

As a short cut to facilitate this experience the evidence suggests they sometimes used psychoactive natural drugs made from narcotic plants. These were administered in the form of the so-called *Unguentum sabbati*, 'flying ointment', 'lifting balm' or 'Devil's salve' given to them by the Man in Black (the Devil or male leader of the covine) when they were initiated into the witch cult. By using these preparations the witch could



21. Monkshood (left) and Mandrake (right), two European herbs implicated in the *Unguentum Sabbati*, or Witches' Flying Ointment.

project her 'fetch' (astral body or spirit double), sometimes in the shape of an animal, and experience the sensation of flying through the air and attending the Sabbath. One of the earliest references to the use of a 'flying ointment' is to be found in the classical work *The Golden Ass* by Apuleius. In it the central character **watches** a sorceress undress and smear her naked body with an unguent from a small box. She is immediately transformed into an owl and flies off.

The various instruments used to travel through the air seem at first glance to be fantastical and fanciful, yet each one has an esoteric symbolism that by its very ordinariness is concealed from the profane and the cowan. Pitchforks and forked sticks are obvious symbols of the Horned One and two of his sacred animals are the ram and the goat. The historical annals of lycanthropy are full of stories of witches and wizards transforming themselves into wolves. In some modern Old Craft traditions a three-pronged staff or stick represents the witch goddess.

Hurdles are representative of the fence or hedge that forms the boundary on the physical level between the village (civilisation) and the heath or forest (the wilderness) inhabited in popular belief by witches,

wizards, nature spirits, demons and 'heathens' (pagans). Symbolically the hedge is also the dividing line between this world and the spirit realm, between the everyday and the Other. Hence the archaic Germanic term *haegtezza* or 'hedgewitch' meaning on who 'rides or straddles the hedge' or esoterically a 'rider between the worlds.' In 2010 archaeologists discovered a new earthwork near Stonehenge in Wiltshire and evidence of a stone circle. They believed that at one stage it had been surrounded by a hedge.

Distaffs are significant because they are a female tool and also the primary symbol of the witch goddess in her role as Mistress Fate. The distaff is a cleft stick used for holding wool or flax in spinning and weaving and this is a symbol in the Old Craft of the 'Web of Wyrd' (fate) that permeates and binds the universe.. It can also refer to the female side of a family, the 'distaff side', and relates to the tradition of matrilineal descent that is important in some witch families. Finally, the fennel is associated in plant folklore with psychic protection, which is very important if the spirit body is 'out and about' on its travels.

There are many recorded references to the 'flying ointment' in the witch trials and several recipes have survived, indicating that it was not just a figment of the witch-hunters' imaginations. As is to be expected these recipes include extracts from hallucinogenic plants, as well as more sensational ingredients either added for purposes of sympathetic magick or invented by Christian propaganda to make the recipes sound more horrific than they really were.

The plants the witches used included belladonna (deadly nightshade), wild lettuce, smallage, wolfsbane (aconite), cinquefoil, henbane, hemlock, opium, sweet flag, wild parsley and mandrake root. These were allegedly mixed with baby's fat, bat blood and soot. Albanian witches made a flying ointment from boiled toads and mare's milk. These are both totemic animals sacred to the witch goddess and toad skin contains a powerful hallucinogenic.

The main ingredients in the recipes are representative of a wide selection of highly poisonous plants renowned for their narcotic properties. They also include plants that are associated in folklore with psychic and occult powers. Aconite, for instance, is sacred to Hekate and is said to have come from the poisonous saliva of Cerebus, the three headed hound that guards the gates of Hades. On a physical level it depresses the cardiovascular system causing irregular heartbeats. Atropine, the principal toxin in belladonna, was named after one of the

Greek Fates whose task was to cut the 'silver cord' at death and release the soul from the body. It can cause hyperactivity, delirium and unconsciousness and in small doses produces hallucinations. In larger doses it causes paralysis, coma and death.

Cinquefoil was renowned among medieval herbalists for inducing dreams and increasing the powers of communication. Parsley was sacred to Persephone, the Greek goddess of the underworld and love of Hades-Pluto, the god of death. Henbane was another plant of death and incense made from it was used by the Romans to evoke ghosts and evil spirits. Mandrake increases psychic perception by opening the Third Eye and hemlock, another underworld plant, was sacred to Saturn. The medieval grimoire the Key of Solomon recommends that the sacrificial knife known as an athame should be anointed with hemlock juice during its consecration for magical work. Lettuce is also a natural soporific. Finally, in terms of sympathetic magical belief, soot disguises the naked body at night and bats are able to navigate in the dark.

Several methods were recommended to apply the Devil's Salve or *Unguentum sabbati* to the body. The 16th century lawyer and writer on witchcraft, Sir Reginald Scot, said the witches rubbed the ointment into the pores of their skin until it looked red and hot. The French writer, Gillot de Givry, claimed that the witches used a small wooden wand to smear the palms of their hands and also placed it between their legs. Another method was to anoint the shaft of the besom and then 'ride' it between the legs like a hobbyhorse. The purpose of this was to transfer the ointment on to the body by rubbing the handle against the perineum, the area of sensitive skin between the genitals and the anus, which is the site of one of the most important psychic centres in the body. It was also a place where the ointment could permeate through the skin and enter the bloodstream of the witch.

In modern times the traditional witch master Robert Cochrane advocated that the witch abstain from food, salt and sex before using the flying ointment. Then 'lots of grease had to be applied everywhere, and 'lots of violent exercise'. This created, he claimed, a hypernormal mental state due to the toxins being trapped in the body due to the application of the ointment. The lack of salt caused higher blood sugar levels in the brain. It also cut down on the amount of water in the bloodstream and stopped a small amount of oxygenisation. With physical exertion the end result would be to cause what outsiders would interpret as hallucinations, but a magical practitioner would recognise as visionary experiences. (2002:139).

Cecil Williamson, founder of the witchcraft museums on the Isle of Man and Boscastle, said that the reason why old-time witches smeared themselves with goose fat was because it was symbolic of flight. He added that the goose represented the 'spirit flight paths' across the land. This was because witches had long noted that migrating geese followed particular routes. The goose is also the sacred bird of the winter goddess Frau Holda, a Central European deity who as we have seen was often associated with the ancient practice of witchcraft. In nursery rhymes she survives in the form of Old Mother Goose who flies through the midwinter sky scattering snowflakes from her wings. Frau Holda is also the female leader of the Wild Hunt and at Yule (December 25th) brings gifts to children who have behaved themselves throughout the year. Those who have been naughty however she kidnaps and takes back to her lair for punishment.

In the early 1960s, a German university professor, Dr Erich Will Peuckert, carried out an experiment with a flying ointment made up from a recipe in Johannes Baptisa Porta's book *Magia Naturalis* (*Natural Magic*), written in 1568. The salve was made from thornapple, wild parsley, wild celery, henbane and belladonna. Instead of the recommended baby fat, Dr Peuckert used ordinary lard. The doctor tested the unguent on himself and a friend who was a lawyer. The two men applied it to their armpits and foreheads and within a short time he had fallen into a deep sleep. This lasted for nearly twenty-four hours and during this period they experienced vivid dreams of flying through the air, landing on a remote mountaintop, dancing wildly with naked women and orgiastic rites presided over by a huge horned figure.

Dr Peuckert believed that the knowledge of the *Unguentum sabbati* had come to Europe in the Middle Ages with the Romany people. He further claimed that its use was disseminated by secret groups of women in southern France who represented a survival of an ancient matriarchal culture. (Dunning 1963). This would seem to link with the theory that Middle Eastern or North African beliefs and practices infiltrated the medieval witch cult.

The legend of the Wild Hunt is another significant aspect of the Sabbatic Craft tradition and, as with the flight to the Witches Sabbath, it represents a magical link between the mortal world and the spirit realm that can be used by the witch. Traditions of the Hunt are found all over Europe and it has many names in localised folklore such as Wutan's Army (Germany), the Family of Harlequin (France), the Oskovei

(Norway), the Odensjakt (Sweden), the Wild Host (England) and the Rade of the Sidhe or Shee (Ireland).

It can be led by either a male or female leader and if the latter it is usually a pagan goddess such as Holda, Perchta, Bertha, Freya or Diana. In the 10th century the *Canon Episcopi* condemned wicked women who, deluded by the Devil, rode at night with Diana, 'the goddess of the pagans'. These so-called 'night riders' were sometimes called 'good women' (i.e. witches). In Greek mythology the goddess Hecate was described as having a pack of 'swift hounds of Hades' who were 'devourers of life' and 'death spirits'. They were said to hover in the air and swoop down on the living. Sometimes Hecate herself took the form of a black dog and even when in human form she was said to have 'howled like a hound'.

The goddess who leads the Wild Hunt steals the souls of unbaptised children and they are forced to join her nocturnal retinue. During the Twelve Days of Yule she also punished children who did not leave gifts out for her. Any woman who dared spin or weave during that liminal transition period at the turning of the year also faced her wrath.

In the Tyrol as the goddess of winter, Perchta, the Wild Huntress even chased and tore apart those humans who engaged in the Perchtenhof, a masked procession that was held in her honour at midwinter. In Sweden, Germany and the Swiss Alps the Wild Hunt was led by a male leader and sometimes it was seen chasing a wild haired and moss covered woman. This figure is usually identified as a wood-wife, elf or one of the hulder (faery) folk. It has been suggested that this chase was a far memory of the Norse gods' favourite sport of hunting down female giants.

The Wild Hunt is often led by the Teutonic god Odin or Woden or in post-Christian times by the Devil. He is described as a one-eyed black clad rider, sometimes horned, wearing a broad brimmed hat and a cloak and may have a red beard and hair. He rides a black, white or grey horse with eight legs and gallops wildly through the night sky followed by a pack of hell-hounds with fiery red eyes who breath out flames.

The Wild Hunter may also be accompanied by a host of demons, elves and goblins, half-human and half animal spirits, shades of the departed in shrouds, the souls of the unbaptised and apostates, and dead warriors still showing their battle wounds. If a mortal has the misfortune to encounter the Hunt riding on the ancient trackways he or she should shut their eyes and throw themselves face down in the middle of the

road until the ghostly procession passes. If the traveller accidentally sees the Host they will either die or be swept up and carried away to spend eternity with the Wild Chase.

The common belief that the Wild Hunter harvests the souls of the dead is illustrated in a grisly folk tale from Devonshire. One stormy evening a farmer was returning across Dartmoor after a day at the fair. He was rather the worse for drink having had a good time with his friends. Suddenly a rider dressed from top to toe in black came into view and the man recognised him as the local leader of the Wild Hunt. In an act of bravado caused by the alcohol he cried out: "Hey Old Dewar [a local name for the Devil and the *genii loci*] what sport have you had? Give me some of your spoils" The rider replied: "Here is some fresh meat" and threw a bundle at the farmer's feet. He then rode off laughing. When the farmer unwrapped the bundle of cloth inside he found the cold body of his own small child.

Sometimes the Wild Hunter not a supernatural or divine figure but a well-known or famous mortal. This can be a noble who had led a wicked or evil life and has been doomed to ride the skies for eternity as a punishment for his earthly crimes. Usually he has enjoyed hunting as a sport during his life. Alternatively he is a warrior or hero and some examples are Wild Edric in Shropshire, and King Arthur, and Sir Francis Drake in Wales and south-west England, Theoderic the Great in Germany, the Emperor Charlemagne in France and King Christian II in Norway.

An alternative version of the Wild Hunt is found in the legend of Herne the Hunter whose ghost still haunts Windsor Great Park in Berkshire. Centuries ago, in the days when it was still a royal hunting forest, its gamekeeper was a man called Richard Herne or Horne. One day he was out hunting with the king when they wounded a stag. Enraged with pain the animal charged the monarch. Herne bravely threw himself in its path and killed the deer, but he was mortally injured in the process. As he lay dying a stranger suddenly appeared from the trees. He told the king he was a wizard and the only way Herne could be saved was to cut off the stag's antlers and attach them to the keeper's head. This the king did and Herne was miraculously revived.

After this event, depending on which version of the story you read, Herne either lost all his hunting skills or was caught poaching. Either way the king, although he was grateful for the keeper saving his life, did not want to show him any special treatment as his other servants were

saying he favoured the forester. He therefore dismissed Herne from his service. The hunter was so depressed at this turn of events that he hanged himself from a lightning blasted oak in the evocatively named Fairy's Dell.

Ever since his death Herne's ghost has haunted the forest as a Wild Huntsman. He wears a helmet made of a stag's skull with branching antlers and on his left wrist is an iron bracelet that glows with an unearthly light. An owl flies above him as he leads his pack of demon hounds in a wild chase through the woods. Shakespeare mentioned Herne in his *Merry Wives of Windsor* (1597) and says 'takes cattle and makes milch kine [milk cows] yield blood'.

Sightings of Herne were reported only in the winter months and coincided with times of national crisis or tragic events affecting the royal family. He was seen in 1939 just before the outbreak of war and in 1952 shortly before the death of King George VI. In 1962 a group of teenagers allegedly saw him after finding an old hunting horn lying on the ground. They blew it and Herne and his pack of demon hounds came riding out of the trees whereupon they fled in terror.

Another Wild Hunter whose appearances were regarded as an omen of disaster was 'Wild Edric' in Shropshire, who we have mentioned before in association with Robert Cochrane and his covine and The Regency. Edric was an Anglo-Saxon lord who owned extensive estates on the Welsh Border in the 11th century and rebelled against the Norman invaders. While out hunting one day in the Forest of Clun he met Lady Goda, the Queen of Elfshame, and kidnapped her. She eventually agreed to marry him providing he treated her well and did not mention her faery origins. They lived happily for many years until Edric broke the taboo. Goda left him and returned to her own folk and the lord died of a broken heart. After his death the noble and his faery bride rode across the Shropshire hills as leaders of the Wild Hunt. In the 1850s, shortly before the outbreak of the Crimea War, a man and his daughter saw them out hunting. The father had also seen them previously just before the Napoleonic wars.

If the mythos of the Witches Sabbath and the Wild Hunt are the key motifs that makes the Sabbatic Craft different from other forms and traditions of witchcraft, then Andrew Chumbley's approach to magic and what he called 'Crooked Path Sorcery' was also unique, though firmly rooted in established historical praxes. Many definitions of magic have been put forward in the past by famous occultists and Chumbley's was that 'Magic is the transmutability of the quintessence of all nature'

and it is 'the all-potential power of change denoting the root-nature of all that has existence.' He distinguished the practice of magic from that of sorcery in terms of 'the means of manipulating power through knowledge'. In other words sorcery is the knowledge of the universal points of transmutation. As such 'its art is to cultivate the ability to manipulate these foci of power in accordance with Will, Desire and Belief.' (1992).

However, in common with some of the ritual magicians and cunning folk of the past, Chumbley saw no division between so-called 'low magic' and 'high magic'. Fundamentally the practice of magic (or sorcery) is the power and means to bless, curse, heal, hurt, bind or liberate. In its practice the Sabbatic Craft 'unites both mystical and pragmatic dimensions to form 'Transcendental Sorcery'.' Whether the magus is practising high magic or low grade sorcery, its practice brings one 'to meet Death before dying', connects the spirit to location and bestows wisdom. (*ibid*). Ultimately, of course, the practice of any genuine magical system however it is defined should lead to the realisation of Truth and the gaining of gnosis or divine knowledge.

On a practical level, the ritual tools used in the rituals and magical practice of the Sabbatic Craft as described by Andrew Chumbley in his grimoire *Azoëtia* follow the pattern of other old witch traditions. They are broadly based on traditional historical precedents, yet they also have an individual symbolism and use within the tradition. The primary instrument of Arte is the forked stave or stang. In the circle it is a symbol of the Grand Master of the Sabbat, the Black He-Goat, between whose horns brightly burns the flame of illumination, wisdom and enlightenment.

The Horned God is the sacrificial ram or Roebuck in the Thicket and the white hart or stag of seven tines, the messenger between the worlds of humans and spirits. The stang is always traditionally carried by the witch master, the Man in Black, the Magister or Devil of the covine. If for any reason he is unable to attend the meet, then the horned stang is the visible symbol of his authority and the power vested in his deputy, whether they are a man or a woman.

Traditionally the stang is made from different woods depending on its nature and purpose. In practice it is usually of oak, yew or blackthorn. As in other Old Craft traditions, if so required it can be wreathed or garlanded with the relevant flowers and leaves of the season and 'masked' with the skull of the appropriate totemic animal or a human skull representing the God or the patron or ancestral spirit of the tradition or

covine. Placed in the north of the circle it can have a candle or lantern resting between its 'horns' to represent the 'Light of the World' and the flame of illumination. The stang is traditionally shod with iron to 'fix' it in the ground. On a practical level this also stops the end of it rotting through contact with the wet ground.

As well as the riding pole or stang, a horse-headed rod is sometimes used. This fetish object is concerned with the mysteries of Cain, the ancestral patron spirit of the Sabbatic Craft, in his role as the first horseman, blacksmith, magician and master of crafts. It represents human beings as the steed of the Gods for 'The God descendeth upon the flesh of Man. To mount it as a Horse, to go forth among the Living and the Dead.' (Chumbley 2003:104).

This rod is the symbol of the magical steed that carries the night-flying witch to the Sabbat of Dreaming and it is similar to the use of the besom. In the old days the end of the broomstick that was concealed in the brush would have been carved in the shape of a horse's head or a phallus. The rod can also be used as a drumstick to beat out the rhythm of the Sabbat dance, or, if the head is an actual horse's skull, as a 'blasting rod'. In Norse magic a horse's skull was mounted on the top of a staff and was known as a niding or nithing pole. It was used in a cursing ritual that involved the staff being placed in the ground and the skull pointed towards where the victim lived. Alternatively the horse-headed rod can be transformed into a scourge by adding thongs woven from horse-hair.

In solitary rituals and workings of the Arte the individual witch or sorcerer may use a sceptre or wand, sometimes known by its archaic name as a 'conjuring stick'. It is traditional within the Sabbatic Craft that this is passed to the new initiate by their initiator when they first enter the circle. There are two basic types of wand known as the concealed or crooked and the revealed or straight. The former should be cut at noon with the ritual knife known as a burin and by using a single stroke. One of the most suitable woods for its making is the *Salix tortuosa* or crooked willow. As a branch of this tree takes a natural serpentine shape it provides a wand that is ideally suited to working with Ophidian or Draconian energies. In contrast, the straight wand is suitable for the evocation of these energies associated with the attainment of gnosis and enlightenment.

Another ritual weapon in the magical arsenal of the Sabbatic Craft tradition is the black-handed knife, sometimes called the athame as described in the medieval grimoire known as *The Key of Solomon*. It is

a word that is either of Old French origin from *arthame* or possibly derived from the Arabic *ad'hamme* or 'bloodletter'. As its ancient name suggests, it was originally used for sacrificial purposes.

According to a myth passed down in the Sabbatic Craft tradition, at the creation of the human race the spirits carved the openings of the body of the first clay-born man, Adam, out with the athame. However, only into the souls of those bound by the 'Covenant of the Blood of the Wise' (the witch or elven blood) did the fire of Spirit pass, binding their souls forever from form to form (incarnation to incarnation) to the circle of the Sabbat.

Originally the athame was used in sacrificial rites, along with the sickle and the labrys or double-headed axe. In ancient times its blade would have been made of sharp flint or obsidian, and it still is in those traditional covines that eschew metal in the circle, or of a magical amalgam of the seven planetary metals.. It should not be confused with the white-hilted knife that is exclusively used in the making of ritual tools, for carving fetish or spirit images and inscribing sigils on power objects. According to tradition the blade should be consecrated with the blood of a black cat. Today a few drops of the witch's or the magician's own blood are used.

As in other Old Craft traditions, the chalice or cup is symbolic of the spiritual vessel that contains the *Azoth*, the supreme occult agency of change that is subject to the will and desire of the witch or magus. It is the key to the manifestation of magical energy in the Circle of Arte. It is also conceived of by many practitioners as a symbol of the Graal or Grail, in which the essence of male and female principles are united and distilled in the Great Work. On a purely practical level, it is the physical container that holds the sacramental communion wine – the 'blood of the Gods' – at the houzel at the end of the Sabbat or any other fluids that may be used for magical purposes. In another form it is the cauldron, the receptacle for spirit manifestation in the Circle of Arte and a symbol of spiritual transformation, regeneration and rebirth.

Although not all covines may use it, the pentacle is another ritual tool known in the Sabbatic Craft. Symbolically it is the microcosmic representation of the Cosmic Creator work and it encompasses the elemental forces of the universe, seen and unseen. Traditionally it is a disc made of wood, wax, pottery or metal. It is engraved with a pentagram representing the cosmic and elemental forces or powers of earth, air, fire, water and ether or spirit existing in balanced equilibrium.

The star is enclosed within a circle to signify cosmic unity, wholeness and the horizon of the Earth that symbolically limits our incarnated existence on the physical plane. Overall the pentacle is indicative of the manifestation of spirit in matter (sometimes represented as the inverted or upside down pentagram), the human body as the microcosm of the macrocosm (represented as the upright pentagram), and the magical and Hermetic axiom: 'As above, so below.'

In the ritual ordeal of the Sabbatic tradition the *cingulum* or cord is used to 'take the measure' of a prospective initiate's body. In the old days, the Magister kept this and if the initiate seriously transgressed or betrayed the covine it could be used in a 'blasting' or death ritual. If the misdemeanour was not too serious then the cord was used in a ritual to put the member 'under the ban' or to ritually banish them from the covine or tradition.

Cords in general are symbolic of the umbilical cord that joined us to our earthly mother, the silver cord that unites us with the All-Mother, and the garotte or hangman's noose that leads to the grave and what lies beyond. It therefore reminds the initiate of the journey he or she takes from birth to death and rebirth in the circle of witch blood. It also teaches that the brothers and sisters of the Craft are bound together, one to another, by Fate. A knotted cord can also be used to create the magical objects known in folklore as a 'witches ladder' and a witch's rosary for meditation and contemplation.

In addition to the ritual tools described above there are two others described in Andrew Chumbley's modern grimoire *Azoëtia* whose occult symbolism is linked – the Fetish Tree and the Godstone. The tree, like the stone, is a phallic symbol. In the Circle of Arte it stands for the Axis Mundi or World Pillar that ascends to the North or Pole Star (the Nawl or Nail) and around which all the stars of the heavens revolve. Traditionally it is an ash pole and carved upon it are the sigils, signs and seals of the patron and ancestral spirits of the tradition. Hanging from it are also the symbolic representations of the totemic animals of the covine or tradition in the form of skulls, bones, claws, paws, fur and feathers. In addition it may be decorated with hagstones, cords, threads, colored ribbons and spirit masks that are empowered during ingress.

The Godstone is sometimes called the 'Stone God'. This term refers back to the archaic use of the artificial phallus in the sexual rites of the Old Craft by the Magister and it represents the virile member of the old Horned God. For that reason it should be larger in size than a human

penis and it is sometimes hollow to accommodate power objects associate with male sexual energy. It is consecrated at noon, when the sun's strength is at its most potent, and the male witches of the covine make an offering to it of their own life force.

In magical practice the Godstone has several uses. It can be employed by female witches in conjunction with the Devil's Salve to travel in spirit to the astral Witches Sabbath. It can also be used by the priestess in her role as the 'Queen of the Sabbat' to summon forth the spirit children born of her sacred marriage with the Horned One. As 'dreams made form', they manifest within the Circle of Arte. Finally, the Godstone can also be used by the covine members of either gender in sexual rites to conjure forth incubi and succubi.

Some traditional covines link the Godstone with an actual stone head used to represent the male divine force. In the Sabbatic Craft a human skull usually takes this role to signify the 'Hidden Master' and his presence in the circle. It may also be used for the gaining of oracular wisdom. If an actual skull is not available then it is permissible for one made of stone or wood to be used as a substitute. If made of wood the chosen materials are oak or blackthorn.

To consecrate the skull it is anointed with oil of myrrh and the blood of the practitioner, either female moon blood or drawn from the practitioner's own body using the sharpened blade of the athame. The inside of the skull is then packed with fragrant herbs and flowers such as dried rosebuds, lavender, tansy and sweetgrass (Schulke: May 2005). Other minor ritual tools and magical objects are used in the Sabbatic Craft tradition. They include the horn and a silver whistle (for summoning spirits and the Wild Hunt), the drum and the rattle and the bone trumpet (for calling the ancestral dead). Also the skulls, bones, skins, antlers and horns of various animals and birds that serve as magical links to the totem and sacred creatures of the tradition, clan or covine. Used in conjunction with animal masks, they feature in the rites of metamorphosis, transvection and shapeshifting.

An important officer in any covine or clan of the Sabbatic Craft is the Verdelet, the 'Green One' or 'Green Man'. His allotted task in the tradition is to teach its initiates the secrets of 'green magic' such as wortcunning and plant lore and to guard and preserve these green Mysteries. He is a practitioner of occult herbalism, which encompasses an active magical connection with the spirit force of plant allies and their uses for healing and cursing as circumstances dictate. For that reason the

Verdelet must have an extensive knowledge of all aspects of botany relating to both harmful and poisonous plants and those with the power to heal.

Daniel A. Schulke, who became the Verdelet of the Cultus Sabbati in 2001, has described occult herbalism as 'the Sorcerous Art of calling forth and receiving power from plant spirits, as well as the devotional worship and mystical understanding thereof.' In addition to these responsibilities, the Verdelet occupies a position similar to the Summoner, acting as a deputy to the Magister and assuming leadership of the covine and the rites if he is unable to or absent.

The tradition of herbalism and plant lore in witchcraft is an ancient one. Some of the first clerical prohibitions on the practice of magic involved the gathering of herbs at the planetary hours or during specific phases of the moon while reciting prayers or incantations. In the 14th century a handbook for Inquisitors condemned the collecting of herbs on bended knee while facing east and reciting the Lord's Prayer. In the following century a Bavarian witch was charged with gathering 'certain herbs for medicine' in the 'name of his devils' on the feast day of St John the Baptist (June 24th) or Midsummer's Day.

In the 17th century a male witch in the Tyrol was accused of being 'skilled in herbs and roots' and we have seen how historical witches used narcotic plants in their flying ointments. (Schulke: November 2005). There are also historical references to witches receiving information on herb and plant lore from the faery folk or even entering the Hollow Hill and being taught by the Queen of Elfhame herself.

In the Sabbatic Craft mythos it is taught that the arcane knowledge of 'green sorcery' or the 'green gnosis' goes back to ancient times when the secret lore of trees, plants and herbs was given to early humankind by the 'Gods who walked on Earth'. It was in fact part of the occult teachings given by the Watchers to their mortal brides. These Mighty Ones were also aligned to the nymphs, dryads and woodland genii. The spirits of the trees and plants, and the land they grew on, became the teachers of those humans who wanted to learn the secret mysteries of the green world (Schulke 2005).

As we have seen, the initiates of the Sabbatic Craft trace the existence in the mortal world of the 'witch blood', 'faery blood' or 'elven blood' back to the intervention in human affairs and destiny of the Fallen Ones. The Company of the Watchers was led by Azazel, who was originally a Semitic goat-god and is an aspect of Lord Lumiel (Lucifer). In the

Sabbatic tradition there is a 'gnostic faith in the Divine Serpent of Light, the Host of the Grigori [Watchers], the children of Earth sired by the Watchers [the Nephilim], in the lineage of descent via Lilith, Mahazael, Cain, Tubal Cain, Naamah and the Clans of the Wanderers...onward to the present day initiates of the Arte' (Chumbley: February 2002).

It should be clearly understood that the 'witch blood', 'elven blood' or 'faery blood' is not a reference to the physical transmission of powers and knowledge through hereditary witch families. Instead it refers to its passing down in a spiritual way through the incarnations of the 'Children of Cain'. However, there is no 'witch gene' or 'witch DNA', although psychic powers and magical abilities can be inherited. Hence there is the popular legend of the 'seventh son of a seventh son' or 'seventh daughter of a seventh daughter' who is born with psychic gifts.

In the lore of the Cultus Sabbati reverence for Cain as the first horseman, blacksmith and wizard is shared with the Society of the Horseman's Word, while the first blacksmith Tubal Cain and his sister Naamah in the Bible can be found in the allied myths of Freemasonry. Naamah means 'the charmer' in Hebrew and refers to her role as an enchantress and caster of bewitching spells. In the Jewish Talmud she is described as a cymbal player and a singer whose alluring voice seduces the listener into the worship of pagan gods. She is also credited with inventing the craft of weaving and spinning, an occupation that links her with the witch goddess as Fate.

Naamah is supposed to have had love affairs with Azazel, the Semitic goat-god and leader of the fallen angels, with the legendary King Solomon, and with the dark angel Samael, the alleged father of her ancestor Cain. Often identified with Lilith, or represented as one of her daughters, Naamah is said to have spawned the elemental race of elves, goblins and faeries and been the mother of the demon Asmodeus.

Because the traditional witches in the past drew upon material from the medieval grimoires, alleged 'demonic' figures such as Asmodeus have also entered Sabbatic Craft lore. However, the use of such names should not be taken as any indication that the tradition is associated with so-called 'black magic' or Satanism. They are used, as Andrew Chumbley said, as 'part of a cipher to convey a gnosis of Luciferian self-liberation.' He added that the Sabbatic Craft uses 'sorcerous teachings of a specialised gnostic character' that contain 'a coded use of both Luciferic and Christo-pagan terms' and it also has a Cainite mythos inherited from Chumbley's initiators.

In the Sabbatic Craft of the Cultus Sabbati, Cain and Lilith are regarded as the primogenitors of the tradition and the Bearers of Light from the Ancient Serpent, Lucifer. Cain is revered as the ancestor and initiator of the tradition because he represents 'the key of transformation between day and night, between ignorance and wisdom'. The overcoming by Lilith, as his first wife, of Adam, his rejection of her and the myth of the murder of Abel by Cain 'signify the transformation of the uninitiated condition of 'clay' into the 'fire of magical knowledge" (Chumbley: February 2002). In a symbiotic relationship, Cain, the Man of Fire, transforms Abel, the Man of Earth, into Seth, the Man of Light –an arcanum of the Cainite mythos as practised in the Sabbatic Craft.

In the Cultus Sabbati, and in some traditions of the Old Craft, Qayin or Cain is the first witch and the sire of all the other witches that followed him. In his role as a Luciferian avatar Tubal Cain and 'his sister Naamah-Lilith, the mother of all witch blood, transmitted the divine fire to mortal humans...' (Jackson 1996:146). In the Sabbatic Craft the archetypal first man, Adam, originally possessed the 'fire of the Ancient One' and because of it he became the transmitter of the Seed of the Elder Gods through the lineage of Cain, but he became bereft of the 'fire' and as such is the 'mere clay and the father of the profane' (Chumbley 1995:68).

Daniel A. Schulke, present Magister of the Cultus Sabbati, has suggested that the position of Tubal Cain in traditional witchcraft was probably due to his adoption, possibly from Freemasonry, by the old 'cunning lodges' founded by the cunning men. These lodges practised a hybrid mixture of traditional historical witchcraft and ceremonial magic. The cunning men assimilated Tubal Cain's archetype with that of the Horned God as represented by the 'coal black smith' in the popular folk song *The Two Magicians*. (Schulke May 2001). In certain old covines a hammer and tongs is placed on the altar in his honour and under the name *Tubalo* he was a blacksmith god revered by the Romanies, who considered themselves to be 'children of Cain.' (Jackson 1996:143)

Biblical and other sources identify Cain as a 'tiller of the soil', a ploughman or farmer. In the apocryphal Book of Adam and Eve a description of his birth says that he 'rose up and ran and bore a blade of grass in his hands and gave it to his mother...' He was the first to plough the earth and the dispute between Cain and his brother that led to the 'first murder' was over the appropriate offerings to make to Yahweh and the different roles of Cain as a farmer and gardener and Abel as a

herdsman. In fact on a material level the biblical myth could represent the transition of early humans in the Middle East from nomadic herdsmen to settled farmers.

The murder of Abel by Cain may be interpreted on a purely material level as symbolising the growth of agriculture while the third son of Adam and Eve, Seth, represents the evolutionary process whereby both crops were grown and animals domesticated. This made possible the beginnings of civilisation and it is recorded that Cain and his descendants built the first cities and establish kingship. Cain was therefore an important cultural exemplar and civiliser credited with the invention of weights and measures, metallurgy and commerce as well as farming.

On a mythical level the physical struggle between Cain and Abel is a spiritual metaphor. The clay-born Abel is killed by the half-angelic Cain, is real father being Samael/Lumiel. This struggle between the dark and bright 'twins' is reconciled by the nature of the third brother Seth, the 'Man of Light' or 'Perfected Man' (no gender bias is suggested by these terms and they should be regarded as unisexual in nature). In some forms of modern traditional witchcraft the bright and dark twins Cain and Abel are represented by the Oak and Holly Kings and the Green Man and Lord of the Wild Hunt who rule summer and winter.

In the Sabbatic Craft tradition Cain is seen as an aspect of the European folk figure known as the Green Man or Green Jack, the Lord of the Wildwood or Greenwood or the God of the Forest and the corn spirit John Barleycorn who is sacrificed at harvest time. Both Chumbley and Schulke have compared Cain with the Sufi saint, and former pre-Islamic North African deity, Al-Khidir, or the 'Green One'. Schulke says that this saint is similar to both the Green Man and the vegetation god Adonis. Like the exiled Cain, Al-Khidir wanders the Earth and he only returns to the same place every five centuries. The linking of this patron saint of Islamic mysticism with Cain also connects the Sabbatic Craft with the Arabic influence that permeated the medieval witch-cult and helped to create the Traditional Craft as we know it today...and so we come full circle.

# 8

## The Old Craft Today

Despite the adverse opinion of some academics, the magical arts of the old cunning folk and witches survived into the 20th century and manifested in both organised covine witchcraft and solitary magical practice. One of those who followed the last path was the Devonshire cunning man Cecil Williamson (1909-1999). Although born into an upper middle-class family, Williamson made contact with numerous rural wise women and cunning men during his occult studies.

Williamson was born in Paignton, Devon, and his father held a high rank in the Royal Navy and then in the newly formed Fleet Air Arm. The family owned a country house in the New Forest and a town house in London's wealthy Mayfair district. Williamson's grandmother shared a flat in Kensington with a female astrologer and her friend was a palmist, taromancer and Spiritualist. At an early age he became involved in occult activities as the three ladies chose him to be the scryer at their séances.

As a young boy Williamson stayed for the school holidays with an uncle who was a vicar in North Devon. While he was there one summer he intervened to save an old woman suspected of witchcraft from a drunken mob. In gratitude she taught him about the Craft. Later in the 1920s, when Williamson was doing voluntary work at a soup kitchen in East London, he became friendly with the local 'wise women' who were still widely consulted by local people. He also spent some holidays with his grandmother in France and as a result he became aware of the flourishing occult scene there.

Before the Second World War Williamson worked as a tobacco farmer in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and on returning to England started a new career as a film producer making documentaries. In the 1930s he became involved in the occult scene in London and met such people as Aleister Crowley, the excommunicated Catholic priest and demonologist Montague Summers, the psychic researcher and ghost hunter Harry Price, the Egyptologist Sir Wallace Budge and Dr Margaret Alice Murray. Williamson was also busy investigating the rural village witches of south-west England he called 'Auntie Mays' who used herbal remedies to heal the sick, acted as midwives and layers out of the dead, sold amulets, charms and love potions to their clients and, if paid enough, would curse their enemies.

In 1938 Cecil Williamson was recruited by MI6 or SIS (the British Secret Intelligence Service) because of his knowledge of the occult. On MI6's behalf Williamson visited Germany several times to investigate possible links between magical secret societies and the Nazi leadership. When war broke out in September 1939 he was seconded to a 'black' propaganda unit run by the Political Warfare Executive based at Woburn Abbey in Bedfordshire. This top-secret unit broadcasted disinformation to the German U-boats patrolling the Atlantic to try and break their morale.

The MI6 officer who recruited Williamson was Lt. Colonel Edward 'Ted' Maltby and coincidentally he was married to the sister-in-law of the occultist Dion Fortune. Maltby and another MI6 officer, Anthony Daw, worked magic with Fortune's one time heir-apparent Christine Hartley and her magical partner Colonel Charles 'Kim' Seymour. When war broke out in 1939 Seymour joined the War Office where he analysed intercepted messages to ensure there were no links between German and British occult secret societies. He also worked with Section P8 of the SIS as a liaison officer with the SOE (Special Operations Executive), who were responsible for acts of sabotage in Nazi-occupied Europe. Later he became the head of SOE's Dutch section. Williamson, Maltby and Seymour are only three examples of occultists who were recruited during the war by the intelligence services because of their expert knowledge of esoteric matters. (Richardson 2007:298)

In 1951 Cecil Williamson set up a witchcraft museum at the old Witches Mill in Castletown on the Isle of Man. The building was so named because it had allegedly been used by a local coven in the 19th century. He had previously met Gerald Gardner in 1947 while visiting the famous Atlantis occult bookshop in London and Gardner joined him in the venture as his financial partner. After a couple of years when the two men fell out Williamson sold the museum to him.

Williamson then relocated his witchcraft collection to Windsor until he was warned off by a visit from two officials representing the British royal family. In 1955 he moved again to the picturesque village of Bourton-on-the-Water in the Cotswold, but local opposition to the witchcraft museum, including an arson attack, forced him to move on again. He finally settled in Boscastle in North Cornwall in 1960 and ran the museum there until a few years before his death in 1999. Three years earlier he had decided to retire and sold the museum and its collection to a businessman called Graham King, who still runs it successfully today.

As well as knowing many folk witches, Williamson actually practised as a cunning man himself. In 1974 he told the author of a book on the supernatural in Cornwall that he would not introduce him to a witch as he would be introducing him to a "lawbreaker and possibly a murderer". Williamson added that they had no scruples and would use their magical powers to kill if a client paid them enough money. In such death rituals black instruments and bones from dead animals or humans were employed. Sometimes a small animal, like a mouse, snake or bird, was sacrificed to the spirits by being starved to death and its released life force was used to aid the spell (Williams 1974:26-27).

In 1951 Williamson demonstrated how a death spell worked in an interview with Allen Andrews in *The Illustrated* magazine. He had been consulted by a woman who believed she was being ill-wished by a former friend. Williamson made a poppet representing the alleged witch using clay from a riverbed. He collected saltwater worms for the witch's entrails, pine gum for blood, ivy berries from a churchyard for eyes and quartz pebbles from a cliff for the teeth and bones. He then burnt the bodies of three toads, a pregnant rat and a black cockerel and mixed the ashes into the clay.

The poppet was then symbolically had life breathed into it through a straw and it was consecrated by the elements of earth, air, fire and water. Finally, glass splinters were thrust into the image, it was wrapped in a shroud and sent to the person who believed she had been cursed. Williamson told her to bury it in a shallow grave near the witch's house, light a fire over it and then recite a counter-spell he had composed. This would sap the witch's power and the curse would fail.

Evidence of the activities of another 20th century cunning man and his links with organised traditional witchcraft were exposed in 1945 when a seventy-four-year-old farm labourer and hedger called Charles Walton was found murdered in a field on the slopes of Meon Hill in Warwickshire. His throat and chest had been slashed in the form of a cross and his body was pinioned to the ground with his own hay fork. When Scotland Yard detectives were called in to help the local police investigate the case they thought it bore all the hallmarks of a ritual killing. Wild rumours were flying around among newspaper reporters that the old man had been the victim of a human sacrifice, despite the fact that because of his age he was a very unlikely candidate for that role.

The local area had a reputation for the practice of witchcraft and this was linked with the nearby prehistoric stone circle called the Rollright Stones on the Oxfordshire-Warwickshire border. In the reign of King

Charles I a woman from the village of Little Rollright was hanged in Oxford. She had confessed to attending the Witches Sabbath at the stones. In local folk tradition the circle was said to be a Danish king and his invading army who were transformed into standing stones by a local witch. This tradition of witchcraft being practised in the area survived into modern times and it was allegedly revived before the Second World War (McCormick 1969).

On May Eve 1949 hidden observers watched by the light of a full moon as a group of cloaked figures, led by a man in a goat mask, chanted and danced around a monolith known as the King Stone that stands outside the circle. Reports of rituals involving animal sacrifices became so prevalent in the 1950s that special police patrols were organised at the site. The nearby village of Long Compton is supposed to have 'the oldest coven in England' and it allegedly had links with Robert Cochrane and one of his correspondents, the Oxfordshire cunning man and herbalist Norman Gills. During the 1940s the locals claimed that the coven consisted of three men and four women and they were survivors of a pre-1900 one that used to meet on Meon Hill. (*ibid*).

Charles Walton had a reputation locally as a cunning man and he was a solitary character who it was said could communicate with birds and animals. Gossip said he had attended witch meets at the Rollrights as a young man, had psychic powers and possessed the Evil Eye, which he would use against anyone who upset him. When the police heard these stories they began to speculate that someone who feared his powers might have killed him. There were stories in the village about a cow dying and crops failing. In the 19th century there had been a similar murder in the area when a young man killed an old woman because he believed she was a witch and had cursed him.

One of the mysteries surrounding Walton's death was the apparent theft by the killer of an old pocket watch case from the dead man's money belt. It was of no value and inside it Walton only kept a small, round and flat piece of glass. In fact Cecil Williamson told this writer that this missing glass was the key to solving the murder. When he was living in the Cotswolds in the 1950s Williamson met a local man who said he had some inside information on the Walton case. He claimed that in 1939 or 1940 the old man was given this object on loan for safekeeping while its owner was abroad on war duty. It was made of obsidian and Walton called it his 'charm stone'.

Charles Walton had been specifically selected to look after it by a coven that had been set up in the 1930s in the Vale of Evesham. Walton was

chosen to be 'the keeper of the stone' because the group valued the cunning man's powers as a horse whisperer, 'toad talker' and animal charmer. They regarded the stone as 'the key to the door between the worlds of here and hereafter' and used it for scrying when practising the Enochian magic of Dr John Dee. Walton was so impressed by the stone's powers that when the time came to return it he refused. This decision, Williamson's informant claimed, was to lead to his violent death when the stone was finally recovered from his possession.

In either 1943 or 1944 the coven's male leader was killed by enemy action. Two of the female members decided to carry on the group, but to do so they needed the 'power stone'. They approached Charles Walton, explained what had happened to the leader of the group and politely asked for the return of his property. To their dismay and anger the farm labourer refused to give it back. The women kept badgering him and in return Walton made excuses as why he could not hand it over. Finally, in 1945, tempers began to fray and the coven lost patience with the stubborn old man.

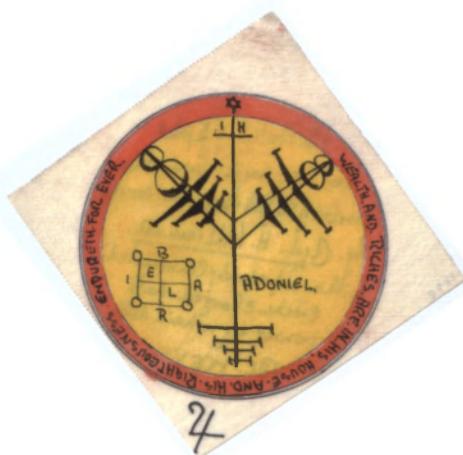
On the day of the murder a witness told the police they had seen two horse riders, a man and a woman, near the field where Walton's body was found. Williamson's informant claimed that these two riders were members of the magical group and had argued with Walton. "In a moment of madness" they fought with him for possession of the stone with tragic consequences. In 1978 Williamson was told that the stone was still in magical use near Stratford-upon-Avon and was owned by a person referred to as 'the Man in Black', the traditional witch name for somebody who controls several covines in an area.

Despite extensive investigations by the Warwickshire CID and Scotland Yard's Murder Squad the killing of Charles Walton remained unsolved. Some locals claimed that it had nothing to do with witchcraft. In fact they claim somebody who owed him a debt murdered him during a violent argument over money. The killer had then tried to put the police off the trial by making Walton's death look ritualistic in nature. The identity of this person, who is now dead, was known locally but the rural code of silence prevented villagers from informing on him to the police. It is also true that many people lived in fear of the cunning man and his alleged powers and were not sorry to see him dead.

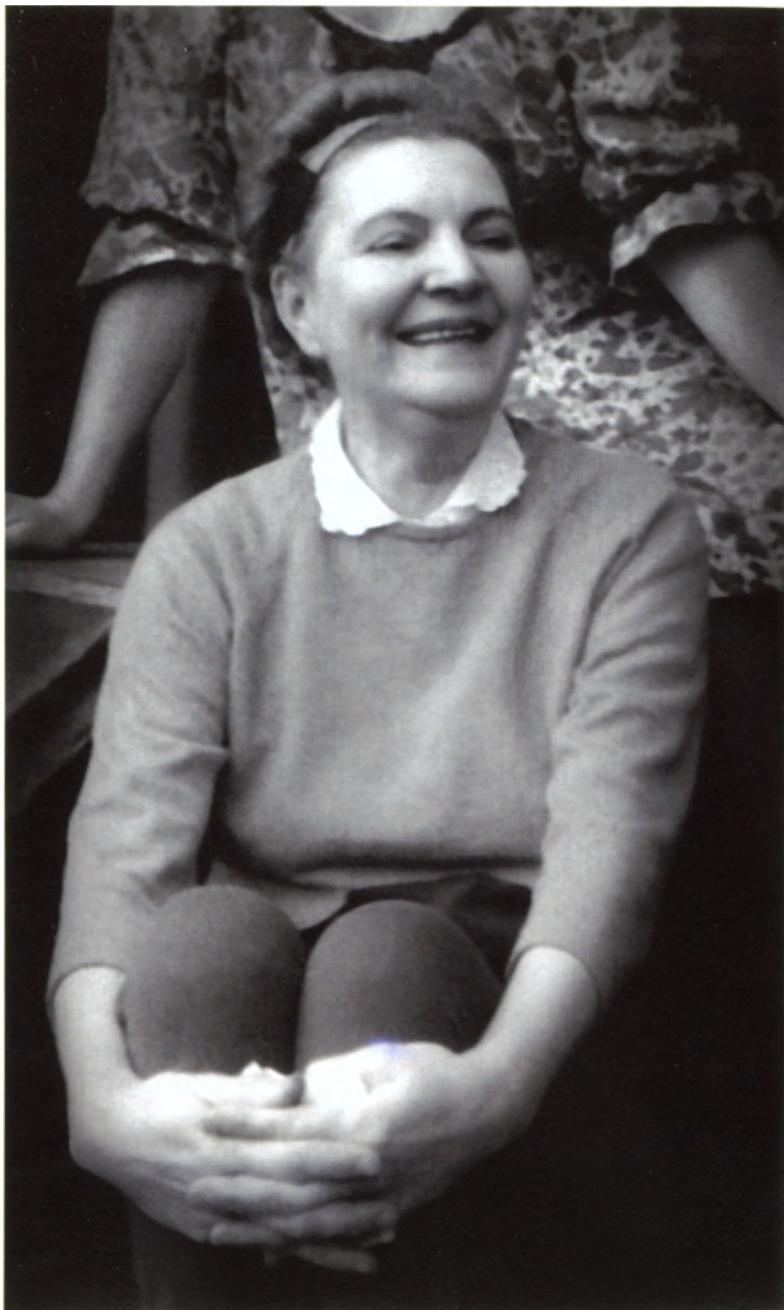
Another prominent 20th century occultist, magician and psychic artist who in many ways took on the persona of an urban 'cunning man' was Austin Osman Spare (1889-1956). In recent years Spare has become the



22. Cecil Williamson in Brisith Army uniform, circa 1940



23. Magical Seal of Jupiter drawn by Williamson.



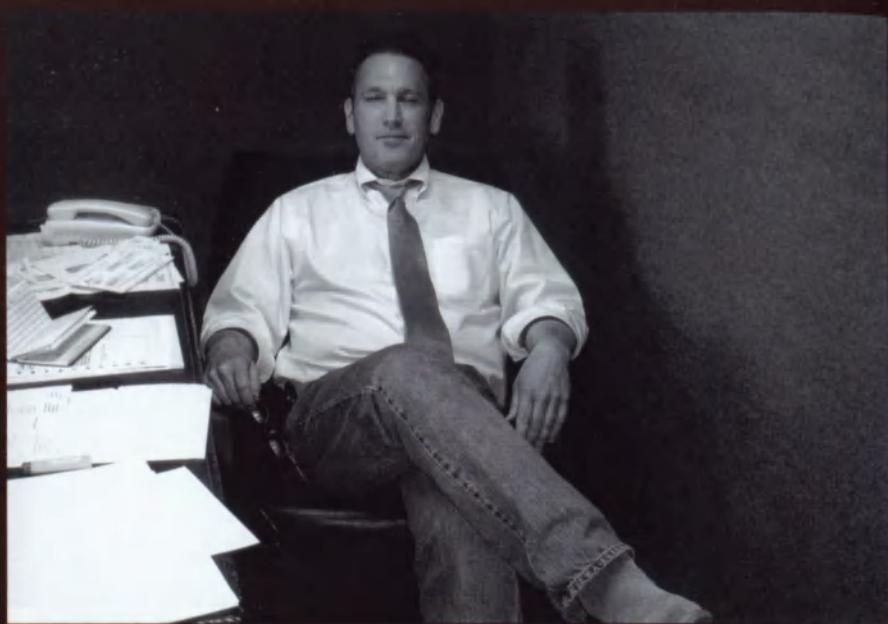
24. Madeleine Montalban, founder of the Luciferian Order of the Morning Star, in a photograph taken in the early 1960s.



25. Witch Bottle excavated in Governor Printz State Park in Essington, Pennsylvania dating to between 1730-1750. The bottle contained six pins, a bird bone, and a potsherd.



26. Iron nowl, or traditional witch's ritual nail.



27. Douglas McIlwain, Master of the Pennsylvania Skull and Bones tradition.



28. Talisman binding the Goetic demons Agares and Malthus, by Andrew D. Chumbley, 1995.



29. *The Witches Sabbath*, woodcut  
by Hans Baldung Grien, 1510.



30. Godstone of Amerindian origin.



31. *Spirit-Field of Alogos: Magical Self-projection through the Three Rites*, by  
Andrew D. Chumbley, from *Azoëtia*, 1992.



32. *Incident at the Witches' Sabbath* by Austin Osman Spare, circa 1952.



33. Kenneth Grant, circa 1972.



34. The beech woodlands of Alderley Edge, where Alastair Clay-Egerton and his coven met in the 1940s.



35. *Lilith*, by Rosaleen Norton.

patron saint of modern chaos magic, yet his real significance lies in his influence on modern traditional witchcraft, including such groups as the Cultus Sabbati. Spare also became well known in Spiritualist circles from his séances, automatic drawings and mediumship through his spirit guide Black Eagle.

The son of a City of London policeman, who he hardly saw as he was always on night duty, Spare came from a working class background, but by the age of twenty he had published his first book and held a private exhibition of his artwork selling his drawings to wealthy patrons. His work had also been featured in the Royal Academy of Art's summer exhibition, the youngest person to have that honor and he was given the nickname of the 'Cockney genius'. During the First World War Austin Spare was an official war artist for the British government and some of his work is still exhibited today in the Imperial War Museum in London.

Although he illustrated ordinary books and magazines, some of Spare's paintings and drawings depict the spiritual twilight zone that exists outside the range of our ordinary senses. He used pen, pencil and paintbrush to artistically evoke the denizens of the elemental realm and the participants in the Witches Sabbath. Strange therianthropic creatures writhed across the pages of his drawing book. Goblin faces peered from the serpentine trunks of aged and twisted trees, demonic forms danced in erotic abandonment with naked young women, satyrs and fauns gambolled in the woods, old crones were transformed into beautiful sirens in the magical glamour cast by the spell of ancient witchery.

He claimed this artwork was largely the result of his friendship as a young boy with an elderly lady called Ruth Paterson who was a friend of his parents. She was married to a doctor, had Romany blood, was a Spiritualist and clairvoyant who told fortunes for free and a devout church-going Christian. The old woman, who allegedly lived to be over a hundred, was regarded by Spare as a 'witch' and his second mother. He described her as "one of the finest women I have ever met or desire to meet. She was full of love and kindness towards everybody" (Swaffer 1950).

According to Spare, Mrs Paterson had the extraordinary ability to externalise thought forms representing future events and project them into a dark corner of the room where her clients could see them. Spare admitted she was a natural hypnotist who could make people see what she wanted them to see. She taught this magical technique to her protégé and on one occasion Spare summoned an elementary at the request of

two occult dabblers. Unfortunately it seems that they did not really believe in such 'things'. When it materialised in the corner of the magician's living room they fled the house in terror. Spare told of how he took Mabel Beardsley, sister of the famous artist Aubrey Beardsley, to see Mrs Paterson. She told her to be careful about her health and to have courage. After Mabel left, the old lady confided in Spare that she did not have long to live. Only two years later Beardsley died in a nursing home from cancer (*ibid*).

Many of Spare's works had a high erotic content reflecting the artist's interest in the magical use of sexual energy. Their content seems tame by today's standards when hard-core pornography is openly on sale in the local newsagent. However the sexuality in some of the drawings shocked the London art galleries and they refused to sell or stock Spare's work. Before the First World War Spare had privately printed his book *Earth Inferno* and sold five hundred copies at five shillings each. He also edited a literary and artistic magazine called *Forum* before joining the British Army and working as a war artist. Although he managed to survive the horrors of the trenches when he returned to England the world had changed.

For a while Spare became a disciple of Aleister Crowley but eventually the two men fell out. Crowley, rather ironically, condemned the artist as a 'black magician'. This was not unusual as anyone who crossed Crowley was likely to be called this. Spare had also been rejected by the art establishment and he eventually retreated to a small flat in the slums of south London where he became a recluse, eking out a meagre living on the poverty line by drawing portraits of the local characters in public houses near where he lived at the Elephant and Castle.

In 1936 an official from the German Embassy in London brought a self-portrait of Spare from the artist and sent it to Adolf Hitler. The Fuehrer was so impressed by the painting that he asked Spare to travel to Berlin and paint him. Spare refused and he responded to the invitation by writing to the German dictator and telling him: "If you are superman, let me be for ever animal."

Ironically considering this exchange with Hitler in May 1941 disaster struck when the South London house Spare was living in was bombed by the Luftwaffe. His studio and most of his artwork was destroyed in the resulting fire. Spare never fully recovered from this traumatic event. When the Spiritualist medium and Fleet Street reporter Hannan Swaffer met Spare in 1946 the artist's right hand was paralysed, he was in poor

health and 'dressed in rags'. After the war and in the early 1950s Spare earned a meagre living making and selling talismans to occultists like Gerald Gardner and continuing his work doing portraits of local characters.

Austin Spare adapted ancient witchcraft techniques into his unique magical system. These involved periods of fasting, sleep deprivation and bouts of excessive sexual activity to the point of exhaustion and physical collapse. It is possible he learnt the latter practice from his time working with Aleister Crowley. Spare claimed these practices for raising power were the esoteric secret concealed behind the orgiastic rites of the historical Witches' Sabbath. In fact he said it was the real reason why the witch cult had been condemned by the medieval Church and its adherents ruthlessly hunted down. He described the Sabbath as 'a concentrated assimilation of unlimited wish fulfilment' and its dark ceremonies as 'an extensive hypnotic to overwhelm all psychological resistances.' Spare believed that the art of sorcery was 'a deliberate act of causing metamorphoses by the employment of elementals. It forces a link with the powers of middle nature, the astrals of great trees and animals of all kinds.'

Austin Spare presented his idiosyncratic magical system to the outside world in a series of privately published grimoires. Central to them was the use of sex for magical purposes, psychic contact with the spirit world and the elemental realm and the adoration of the witch goddess. Spare always tried not to limit the goddess by any anthropomorphic image, but his friend and sometime magical colleague Kenneth Grant, head of the Typhonian OTO, said that the artist sometimes did personify her as either the Canaanite goddess Astarte or the Egyptian goddess Isis.

It is possible that Spare was influenced by Kenneth Grant's theories regarding historical witchcraft as the degenerate offspring of more ancient legitimate esoteric traditions. However, Grant does admit that the popular ideas about it have been adversely influenced by its distorted anti-Christian manifestation in the Middle Ages. He has gone on to say that its mysteries, debased and perverted as he claims they are, can only be fully understood by reference to the ancient beliefs from which they are derived. Grant believes that the first witches were an elder race of Mongol origin whose descendants are the modern Sami people of Northern Europe. Historically the Lapps, as they were then called, were always regarded by their neighbours as powerful magicians and wizards. In fact students of sorcery used to visit them to be taught in the magical arts.

Grant believes that this elder race of sorcerers were in fact pre-human and of extraterrestrial origin. Those of the 'witch blood' possessed extraordinary psychic powers that included the ability to shapeshift, or project their consciousness, into animals and manifest elementaries or thought forms to physical appearance as both Mrs Paterson and Spare could do. The witch cult, Grant claims, is the debased remnants of the chthonic lunar religion of the ancient Dark Goddess of the underworld. In mythological iconography she often takes the shape of a frog or toad, a cat or a snake and these are all totem animals associated with the historical witch. Some well-known examples of this female deity of witchcraft are the Black Isis, Bast, Sekhmet, Heket, Renenutet and Hecate.

With the coming of Christianity Grant said the pagan Mysteries of the Dark Goddess and the forbidden magical techniques taught by her priesthood were driven underground. They only survived in historical times under the guise of witchcraft and Grant theorises that the medieval witches inherited much of the occult knowledge of this old pagan religion. He claims that the psycho-sexual techniques of the witch cult originated in the left-hand Tantra rites that have now been revived by several modern magical groups.

Grant also sees a connection between European witchcraft and African obeah and Haitian voodoo. He speculates that forms of African religion influenced Ancient Egyptian spirituality in its early stages. In later times a distillation of these was imported into southern Europe from North Africa and mixed with the indigenous pagan survivals to create medieval witchcraft (Grant 1973:96-112). As we have seen this is a theory that has been put forward by others such as Rollo Ahmed, Idries Shah and E.W. Liddell.

Austin Osman Spare's magical system was also influenced by his initiation into a Chinese secret society that operated in South London in the 1920s. This advanced group of occult adepts revered a serpent goddess, possibly Kundalini, who was represented by the high priestess of the cult. During rituals she was possessed by the spirit of the goddess and emanated etheric aspects of her. These physically manifested in the temple as so-called 'shadow women', equivalent to the succubi demons of European witchcraft.

These astral entities interacted sexually with the male devotees of the snake goddess who sat in a dream state in a circle around the entranced priestess. Having witnessed and experienced this ritual, Spare was

convinced that a similar practice was a central feature of the Witches' Sabbath. It formed, he claimed, the basis for some of the almost unbelievable stories told by the witch-hunters of women having physical relations with the Devil and demons.

The founder of modern Wicca, Gerald Gardner, was introduced to Austin Spare by Kenneth Grant in 1954. Grant described Gardner to the artist as an authority on witchcraft connected with a coven in southern England and concealing his activities under the respectable cloak of folklore (Letter from Grant to Spare dated September 20th 1954 in Grant 1998: 95). At their first meeting the two men argued about the nature of the Witches Sabbath and Spare concluded that Gardner had never attended a real one. Spare complained that Gardner's witches thought all it meant was fertility rites and dancing around a Maypole.

However Gardner did buy a talisman from the artist for a guinea (21 shillings), which no doubt pleased him. Although he did not have a good opinion of him, after their meeting Spare sent another magical object to Gardner and asked for a 'sacrifice' in return of a check for ten shillings, which he then passed on to an animal charity. This seems to have been some sort of magical act as Spare told Grant that it was a specific technique and the money was sent to the charity for a definite purpose (Letter from Spare to Grant dated 27th September 1954 *ibid*).

One of Gerald Gardner's main rivals in the 1950s was a traditional witch called Charles Cardell (aka Maynard). In fact there rivalry was so great that Cardell even persuaded a young woman who called herself 'Olive Green' to befriend Gardner. When she was initiated Green passed a copy of the Book of Shadows to Charles Cardell and he subsequently privately published it in 1964 under the title *Witch*. In the 1960s Cardell lived in a large house called Dumblecott at Charlwood in Surrey, not far from Gatwick Airport. He had been a major in the Indian Army, was an ex-stage magician and later worked as a psychologist with consulting rooms in Harley Street. He also ran a small mail-order company called Dumblecott Productions from his house selling magical supplies.

Charles Cardell lived with a Welsh woman called Mary who he passed off as his sister, although in reality they were not related. Cardell claimed his mother had initiated him into witchcraft and in the 1950s and 1960s he ran his own group called the Coven of Atho. Many well-known occultists of the time allegedly belonged to this coven and some of its inspiration seems to have come from Atlantean esoteric lore and the

occult novels of Dion Fortune. The coven took its name from a wooden head of the Horned God owned by R.B.J. 'Ray' Howard, who worked at one time as a handyman for the Cardells.

Howard claimed an old Romany woman called Alicia French had bequeathed the image to him. He had met her, he said, while staying with relatives on a Norfolk farm in the 1930s. French befriended the boy and when she died left him several magical objects including the Head of Atho. An alternative version originating from his son says that Howard actually made the head himself and passed it off as an ancient artefact. In fact it turns out that the son only saw his father in the garden shed 'working on' the head. He may not have actually been making it. Whether the head of Atho was of ancient or of relatively modern origin does not really matter. What is important is that it was and is regarded as a magical object by the followers of the Coven of Atho.

The head was very crude and had been carved from a single piece of ancient oak. It looked rather primitive in design with two bull's horns and a face inset with silver and jewels. The horns were inscribed with the signs of the zodiac and on the forehead was a diagram of the 'five rings of witchcraft' as mentioned in the Robert Cochrane letters. The nose was in the shape of a chalice with a pentagram on it and the head was decorated with twin serpents. Apparently it was hollow so that a small lamp could be placed in the back making its eyes made from red glass light up. Doreen Valiente, who belonged to Cardell's covine claimed the name Atho was an English version of the Welsh *Arddu* or 'Dark One' (1973:25-26).

In the late 1960s, Ray Howard owned an antique shop at Field Dalling in Norfolk where he exhibited the Head of Atho. An interview with Howard was featured in the *Eastern Daily Press* newspaper in March 1967. A photograph of Atho was also published with Howard standing next to it holding a 'rune stick' he claimed he had also inherited from his 'witch mother' Alicia French. Shortly after the article appeared the shop was broken into and the head was stolen. It has never been recovered although rumours persist that it was fake head that was stolen and the original is in safe hands somewhere in Devon.

The article mentions that speed racer Donald Campbell and his wife used to visit the Cardell's handyman Ray Howard when he lived in Norwood Hills, near Horley in Surrey. Campbell was apparently interested in the occult and he allegedly used to touch the Head of Atho for luck before his many attempts on the world land and water speed record.

Ray Howard eventually fell out with the Cardells when he divorced his wife and they took her side. In 1961 he led a journalist from the *London Evening News* to a Surrey wood where they spied on a meeting of the Coven of Atho. For some unknown reason the Cardells waited six years until 1967 before they decided to sue the newspaper for libel. They lost the case and had to pay £5000 in costs, which bankrupted them. During the court case the journalist said he had witnessed a "sinister ceremony" carried out around a stone altar in the wood by a group of twelve hooded and cloaked figures. They were led by Charles Cardell as the high priest, known in the covine as Rex Nemonrensis or the 'King of the Woods', and his alleged sister Mary, who was called 'Beth, the Witch Maiden'.

The reporter remembered seeing a small glass sphere and a shrivelled animal's head on the altar. A large silver sphere was placed at the base of a tree and stars and other symbols were hung from the branches of other trees. The covine members entered the clearing and one carried a lantern on a pole to light the way. Charles Cardell as the high priest of the coven drew a circle on the ground with a large sword while the other witches danced around him chanting. He then took a hunting horn and blew four blasts "in different directions." He also fired an arrow from a longbow into the trees. At the end of the rite a goblet was passed around the circle and everyone drank from it. The coven then left the clearing by the same way they had come with the lantern-bearer leading the way.

Later, when the journalist confronted Charles Cardell, he told the court that the psychologist tried to hypnotise him so as to persuade him that the ritual had not taken place. In their defence the Cardells said that not only did not practice witchcraft, but they did not even believe in it. Their only interest in the occult they claimed was in helping people who had been misled by bogus clairvoyants or fallen into the clutches of covens.

Charles Cardell even claimed in court that there was no such thing as witches. He then added that the ritual could not have taken place as described by the journalist because witches (who he previously said did not exist) did not wear cloaks and hoods as they "took all their clothes off". The jury was unconvinced by the Cardells' testimony and decided to accept the statements by the journalist and Ray Howard about what they said they had seen in the woods. The presiding High Court judge dismissed the action and told Cardell and his sister they would have to pay all the legal costs of the case. Later Howard claimed that Cardell had also sent him a curse in the form of a poppet or wax image.

It is an odd paradox that at a time when many people were denying the existence of traditional witches modern revivalists like Gerald

Gardner were in contact with people like Austin Osman Spare. In fact if all the rumours are true Gardner himself knew traditional Crafters and it has been claimed that several joined his coven at Brickett Wood in Hertfordshire out of curiosity 'to see what was going on'. These included 'Taliesin' and 'Damon' already mentioned earlier.

One of the most interesting of these infiltrators was Monica English (1921-1979), also known as Mary E. English, of the Grey Goosefeather Coven from rural Norfolk. This writer's first knowledge of this covine dates back to 1967 when he read a book by the late Cottie Burland, who worked for the British Museum for many years as a porter, called *The Magical Arts*. In it was published a charcoal drawing of the Greek goat-foot god Pan attributed to an artist called Monica English.

Ten years later the writer attended a talk given by Cottie Burland at the annual Quest Conference in London organised by Marian Green. In it Burland mentioned Monica English and provided details of the old covine he said she belonged to in Norfolk. He said that he first met her in the early 1960s when she was a member of Gardner's coven at Brickett Wood. English told him that she also attended meets of an older group of witches based in the village where she lived and gave him a little information about them.

They apparently used little ritual and met in each other's houses to dance in a circle and raise power. The male leader of the covine stood in the centre of the dancers and projected or directed the energy they created. At the end of the meeting they had 'cakes and wine' to ground themselves. The last 'Master' of the group was also a Roman Catholic and he had died some years before.

The covine was made up of both landowners and agricultural workers, which follows the social pattern found in other Old Craft traditions. The members who were "poor farming folk" wanted nothing to do with other witches. This faction was annoyed that Monica English had joined Gardner's coven as they did not think he was a real witch. Burland said that Monica English made the rather wild claim that the Norfolk covine had been founded in Saxon times and had been practising in an unbroken line in the area ever since. Again such 'origin myths' are not uncommon in the Old Craft.

Interestingly Cottie Burland mentioned that the Norfolk covine used a grey goose feather as its symbol. In a book called *Tales of the Fens* a folklorist recounts a story told to him in 1963 by a local man called William Barrett. The story in turn had been told to him by a man called

Chafer Legge in 1900. In ancient times the Fenmen banded together and formed a secret society known as the Brotherhood of the Grey Goose Feather. Any of its brothers who was in distress or danger had only to send a feather to any of the brethren and they would hurry to his aid. When during the Civil War King Charles I was forced to flee from his temporary capital at Oxford he took refuge in the Fens. He then decided adopt a disguise and rejoin his army in Cambridgeshire and employed a local innkeeper called Potter as a guide. Allegedly, he initiated the king into the Brotherhood and promised that whatever their allegiances its members would render him help and assistance.

While they were journeying to Huntingdon the two men were stopped by a patrol of Roundhead soldiers. When Potter produced a grey goose feather from his pocket the men, who were locals, waved them on. Eventually, as we know, King Charles was captured and taken to London for execution. On the night before his death the story goes that the king sent General Oliver Cromwell a grey goose feather. Charles knew that the military dictator was also a member of the Brotherhood and would recognise its significance. Apparently Cromwell sat at his desk looking at the object all night, but he ignored the royal plea for help and the king went to the scaffold the next morning.

This writer has been told that the Order of the Grey Goose Feather still exists and membership is passed down through local families and estate workers associated with the Sandringham royal estate. It was supposed to date back to the reign of King Charles I. Its members are loyal royalists dedicated to the protection of the monarchy if it is threatened by civil disorder, a revolution or war. Apparently their task is to smuggle the royal family out of the country to safety through one of the East Anglian ports. My informant said that he had learnt this information while working for civil defence and as a result had met a man with close links to the Sandringham royal household.

Nothing more was heard about Monica English and the old Norfolk covine until the publication in the UK of Lois Bourne's autobiography *Dancing with Witches* by Robert Hale Ltd in 1998 where she is featured under the pseudonym of 'Margot'. Bourne (nee Lois Pearson) had been a leading member of Gardner's coven in the late 1950s and after his death in 1964 she briefly served as its High Priestess. As a member Bourne met Monica English and they became friendly.

In 1959 Bourne says that English was aged about forty and she describes her as 'the aristocratic witch'. She had honey-coloured wavy

hair, grey green eyes 'like a cat', long tapering fingers and spoke with a cultivated voice. She also exuded a 'strong sexual attraction' and the male members of the coven, including Gardner, were fascinated by her. When she danced skyclad (naked) during the coven's rituals in the 'witch's cottage' at Beckett Wood and made wild vocal calls, Bourne says owls came from miles around to sit on the roof and answer her. Strange shapes and shadowy forms also appeared in the circle in response to her calls. When Bourne drew attention to this English just laughed and said it was "real witchcraft".

Lois Bourne and Monica English became friends and they met socially together with Cottie Burland. English belonged to the 'hunting and shooting' set in rural Norfolk and her husband, a former Royal Air Force officer, was the Master of the local Hunt. Bourne eventually visited her old manor house in a small village near Kings Lynn. At the back of the house were stables for horses and kennels for a pack of foxhounds. After this visit Monica English revealed that she secretly belonged to a local covine with "an unbroken tradition of over two hundred years". She had apparently 'discovered' the covine after moving to the area in either 1953 or 1954. English told Bourne that she had been instructed to join Brickett Wood to find out if it was a threat to the Old Ways, as her parent covine had become concerned over Gardner's love of publicity. They believed it was bringing the Craft into disrepute.

Lois Bourne was eventually asked by Monica English to join the Norfolk group. Her recollections of it are very different from those of Cottie Burland and she makes it sound very grand. English invited her because she said that Bourne would learn a lot more about witchcraft because what Gardner taught was "the shadow and he does not possess the substance." At first Bourne turned down the offer, but after Gardner died she accepted the invitation and was inducted at Hallowe'en 1964. At the time Monica English was the Magistra (Mistress) of the covine and was assisted by a man Bourne calls 'Bertram' (not his real name) who was the Magister and a wealthy businessman. Although they were the primo facto leaders the eminence gris behind the covine were an elderly couple known as the 'Lord' and the 'Lady'.

Although Lois Bourne says the group had over thirty members (a large number for a rural group), not everyone attended each meet, although every member was expected to convene at the four Grand Sabbats. The covine was geared towards the celebration of the agricultural year and, while the Goddess was acknowledged, it was the Horned God who had ultimate power.

Another source, who claims inside knowledge of the covine but wishes to remain anonymous, has told the writer that horses were an important totem animal to the group and that they worshipped the Celtic horse goddess Epona. He claimed that when the covine met outdoors the members rode to their meets on horses and the animals were included in the ritual. According to my source, the children of the original members of the covine still keep it going today.

Bourne said that meets were held, weather permitting, in the grounds of a large country house, in woods and a local spring near the village where Monica English lived. If was too wet or cold the coven used a large barn on farmland belonging to one of its members. Inside rituals were presided over by the Lord and Lady sitting on chairs on a raised dais overlooking the circle. The Lady wore a shimmering silver robe tied with a plaited belt of the same material and large silver earrings.

Unlike the Dionysian nature of the rites at Brickett Wood, the rituals of the Norfolk covine were often conducted in total silence and there was also a lot of meditation. When she was brought in Lois Bourne was told: "Silence is the ultimate and final initiation. The Gods are silent. Everything comes out of silence. The true bliss of experience is without words." (Bourne 1998: 48-55 and 94-102).

Monica English (whose maiden name was Monica Mary Barnes) was quite a prominent and well-known figure in the locality and also further afield, both as a socialite and as a professional artist and sculptor. In a 1960s booklet listing local artists she was described as 'a painter of two worlds. One is a world of myth and legend, peopled with the gods, warriors and ghosts of the past, and springs from a study of anthropology, folklore and primitive religions. The other is of [the] rural reality of landscape and animals, particularly horses, whose beauty and pride of movement fascinate her.'

The booklet also says that Monica English was a self-trained artist and had mounted seventeen exhibitions, three at art galleries in London and at St Martin's Art College. Other exhibitions were planned for the future in Norfolk and Suffolk. She had also appeared on television and been interviewed by national and local newspapers and magazines. In 1968 she had an exhibition in an art gallery near the royal palace of Hampton Court on the River Thames and this was reported in the Court Circular section of *The Times* newspaper. It also said in the booklet that she had her own private gallery at home exhibiting her art work that was open to the public.

The booklet added that Monica English was married with one son and her hobbies were listed as gardening, horse riding and collecting gramophone records of international folk music. An address in a Norfolk village near Kings Lynn and a telephone number was provided (only well off people had private telephones in those days), but there was no mention of Monica English's interest in witchcraft. However it is known that she joined the Folklore Society in 1962. It was at the same meeting of the FLS as P. L. Travers, the author of the *Mary Poppins* books, who was interested in Theosophy and the teachings of Gurdjieff. Monica English and her husband moved to Yorkshire sometime in the 1960s and she died there in 1979.

Other alleged traditional witches who joined Gerald Gardner's Brickett Wood included Robert Cochrane's friend 'Taliesin' as mentioned previously. Another called himself 'Damon' and lived in Kingston-on-Thames in Surrey. As we have seen, he claimed in Rider Haggard style to follow a witch tradition that originated in primeval times with a mysterious white tribe in Africa. From his description of his tradition to this writer, it sounded very much like the medieval witch cult. Damon took the role of the Horned God very seriously. In fact his exclusively female followers had to give him the *oscalum infame* or 'obscene kiss' on the buttocks as a mark of their respect and loyalty to him as Grand Master of the covine.

As we have seen, Monica English was not born into the Craft and only joined the Norfolk covine when she moved to the area in the 1950s. There are many examples of people being invited, almost accidentally, to join Old Craft traditions, although one presumes other forces are also working in the background to facilitate these events. One example was Alastair 'Bob' Clay-Egerton who was initiated in 1943 into a pre-Wiccan covine in Cheshire that allegedly dated back to the 19th century. Bob Clay-Egerton was a colorful character who died in 1998. He was an ex-Hells Angel motorbike gang member, ex-paratrooper and a Luciferian who founded the *Templi Luciferi* (Temple of Lucifer) in 1987. He was also, like Robert Cochrane, a keen caver and a founder member of the Derbyshire Cave Rescue Group. This writer first contacted him and his wife Miriam in the 1960s when they were running the Moonraker Coven in Warwickshire. Bob and Miriam were forced to leave the area when the existence of the group was accidentally discovered and they received death threats.

Bob told me that his father, Sir Robert Egerton, was a senior civil servant and the wealthy family owned a weekend house near Alderley Edge in Cheshire. The area was well known for an Arthurian-type folk tradition about a farmer who met a wizard and was taken to cave under the Edge where a company of knights were sleeping. Allegedly they would awake when Britain was in danger. Clay-Egerton had stumbled upon the covine when out of curiosity he followed one of the family's maids into the woods.

When it was realised that the girl's job was in jeopardy the covine's leaders decided to initiate him so Bob could be sworn to an oath of secrecy about the goings-on. He kept this oath so well that his family disinherited Bob when his father Sir Robert died because he refused to give up his occult interests. Before he had been initiated into the Craft Bob claimed he had already been a member of a magical order. This was called the *Wardensi Adredsley* or the Wardens of Alderley and was named after the original Saxon name of the village near the Edge.

He told this writer that the Alderley covine was founded around 1860 at a time when Welsh copper miners came into the area to work the cupiferous deposits in the local sandstone. The mines in the area in fact date back to the Bronze Age and were also worked by the Romans. Bob said that these workers were already practitioners of the Old Craft and some of them joined a pre-existing covine in the locality. Bob also cited another old covine he knew in Shropshire and one in Llandudno, North Wales whose members were quarry workers. There was also a Scottish covine he was in contact with whose members were oil slate workers and another in Derbyshire with lead miners employed by the London Lead Company.

The Alderley group Bob belonged to had no 'Book of Shadows' as used by Wiccans and they did not work skyclad, although Bob said the Shropshire covine he knew did. The Alderley witches used three ritual knives; one had a black handle for rites to do with the Lady (the moon goddess) and a white handled one was reserved for rites to do with the Lord (the sun god). The third, a gray handled one, was used for non-magical purposes such as the cutting of cords, carving wands or slicing up the communal fruit cake eaten at the end of a meet. The circle was symbolically swept before the rituals with a besom. A chalice was used along with egg cups to hold salt and water for consecrating the circle and the ritual tools. A rod and staff symbolised the Horned God.

At initiation the measure of the candidate was taken and a nine-fold kiss was administered to the new initiate's body. This entrance ceremony to the covine took place in one of the disused copper mines on Alderley Edge and at its conclusion the new witch was 'presented' to the eight compass points, the heavens and to earth and finally to the other members of the covine. No children were initiated or allowed to attend the rituals as the acceptable age of admission was eighteen. The covine was led by both a male and a female leader known as the High Priest and High Priestess and there was also a 'Man in Black', who in this case was the Summoner.

The disused mine workings were extensively used by both the Alderley covine and the Wardensi. The magical order used the Great Audit cave for their initiations where the candidate was transported by boat deep into the hill to a sandy beach where the entry passage widened. The so-called 'womb chamber' of the CCH Mine was used by the covine for initiations that involved an all-night vigil. The so-called 'Druids' Circle' was also used for rituals and allegedly the Welsh miners had constructed it in the 1860s. From the 1960s onwards the Alderley Edge caves also became a popular place for Wiccans to perform their rites. These included Alex Sanders, who Bob had known.

The children's fantasy writer Alan Garner has claimed that the Druid's Circle was the work of his great-great-great grandfather, Robert Garner, a stonemason who restored Victorian churches. In the middle of the nineteenth-century Garner also carved the face of an old man with long hair and a beard on the cliff face above an ancient well at the Edge. Alan Garner said his ancestor carved the image to mark that fact that it was called Wizard's Well after the character in the legend of Alderley Edge who is identified with Merlin. (Interview with Alan Garner in *The Times*, October 1st 2010).

One of the many legends told about the Edge was that its woods were haunted by eldritch creatures that the locals called 'night demons'. This story is only about sixty years old and Bob believed it originated from the activities of the Alderley covine in the 1940s. During the war one of the witches who belonged to it was employed at the A.V. Roe aircraft factory in Manchester. There they had access to a new form of plastic known as Perspex that was used for the cockpits of fighter planes. Another covine member also had access to tins of luminous paint. Eyes were painted on pieces of Perspex with the paint and triangular slivers of red and green glass were glued to them.

Small holes were drilled for thread and the resulting 'devil masks' were hung in the branches of the trees on either side of the path leading to the covine's working site and swayed in the wind. When a torch was shone on them it illuminated demonic eyes staring out of the glowing faces in the trees. When he revisited the site in 1994 Bob was surprised to find a small piece of discoloured Perspex in the undergrowth. Although some have cast doubt on the stories about the Alderley covine, such anecdotal evidence supports the account given by Bob Clay-Egerton and suggests he was telling the truth about his experiences in the Old Craft (1993 and November 1998).

Another person who seems to have stumbled accidentally into a genuine form of traditional witchcraft is the late Tony Newman, the founder of the modern Whitestone tradition. In the 1970s Newman lodged with a mother and daughter whose family name was Dark in a town in Surrey. They obviously recognised he had abilities that were suitable for the Craft as they invited him to join their hereditary covine because they needed 'new blood'. The Dark family were of Romany descent and the covine met at various sites in the area, including the Ashdown Forest on the Surrey-Sussex border. They convened indoors in barns and outdoors on land owned by local farmers with their agreement and at 'places of power' in the landscape marked by prominent old trees and ancient stones.

A circle was cast with a rowan wand as no metal was permitted. The 'altar' was a forked stave or stang to represent the Horned God (echoing the Robert Cochrane tradition). The witch god was depicted in animal form as a buck, stag or faun and had twin aspects as the Green Man and John Barleycorn. Originally the object of worship in the Dark family tradition was a male deity who, Newman told this writer in a telephone conversation, was identified with Lucifer. They did not recognise any type of Wiccan Rede and if necessary would practice cursing by calling the Horned One in his dark aspect to unleash the hounds of the Wild Hunt "to bring miscreants back into order or enemies into disarray."

It is possible a similar concept to this summoning of the Wild Hunt existed in Robert Cochrane's old covine. Evan John Jones mentions an incantation for circle casting that says: "I summon forth the faery hounds/ Sharp-fanged, white-coated, red of ear/To prowl beyond the circle's bound/And put intruder's hearts in fear". (1990:152). Doreen Valiente, an ex-Gardnerian witch and another member of Cochrane's covine in the 1960s, was also no stranger to the art of cursing as she

owned a blackthorn 'blasting rod'. She wrote a poem called *Widdershins* and in it she refers to the 'red-eared hounds of Hell' who are let loose against a person who has been cursed to 'hunt you to your doom' (2000:86 and 42).

Although Tony Newman says he eventually became the Magister (Master) of the Dark covine, he decided to break free of the restrictions and secrecy of the Old Craft. As a consequence he decided to form his own Craft tradition called Whitestone and went public with it. Allegedly this did not meet with the approval of the Dark family and especially its matriarch Mrs Dark, who died a few years ago. At first the new Whitestone group only published a newsletter and through it offered a correspondence course. Later, with advances in technology, it had its own website on the Internet. In 1996 Tony Newman made an ill-fated attempt to launch a 'British Council of Elders' to bring together different witchcraft traditions.

However, despite its public profile, Whitestone still retained some of the old traditional practices that are deemed controversial by modern Craft standards. These included sexual induction and the *Diablo stigmata* or 'Devil's mark'. This was a ritual tattoo given when the new witch was inducted. These archaic practices brought them into conflict not only with the neo-pagan Wiccan movement, but also the law.

Prospective candidates for initiation were warned in advance of what they could expect at the ritual. However, things did not go to plan with one female initiate as she got cold feet when it came to be initiated. She then made an official complaint to the police claiming that she had been sexually and physically assaulted by the Whitestone group. The local police CID (Criminal Investigation Department) in Guildford, Surrey investigated the case, but no charges were brought. Despite this Whitestone became a pariah in neo-pagan circles. It was condemned by the national neo-pagan organisation the Pagan Federation and a so-called 'Whitestone Survivors Support Group' was even started.

Shortly after this unfortunate incident Tony Newman separated from his wife and he formed a new relationship with a younger woman who was a Wiccan. This led to the introduction of modern concepts of neo-pagan witchcraft into the traditional Whitestone tradition. Newman had already founded the Arcane Temple of Magick in the 1990s, a group of ceremonial magicians practising Cabballistic and Enochian magic, and he had also become the chairman of the Council of British Druid Orders.

As a result of splits in the group following his marriage break-up and students graduating from the correspondence course, several sister groups hived off from Whitestone. They included Crowstone based in Sussex, Hagstone in northern England, Moonstone in southern England, and Arddhu in Cornwall. Newman later claimed in a telephone conversation with this writer that Whitestone has returned to its original roots. Certainly the sub-groups and individuals that came from Whitestone have publicly claimed that they are following an authentic Old Craft tradition.

As we have seen, Whitestone attempted to launch a so-called 'British Council of Elders' and this idea is one that is periodically taken up by other groups claiming to publicly represent the Old Craft. One of these was the Coven of Greenwood Arden in the 1980s. Ken Rees, who as we have seen had been a member of The Regency and has written magazine articles about his experiences, answered an advertisement the Arden witches placed in a witchcraft newsletter announcing the formation of a new project called 'Greenwood Britain'.

Rees received a reply from somebody using the pseudonym of 'Cefyn' who said he wanted to bring together the different Craft traditions under one umbrella organisation. Cefyn told Rees his great-grandmother had been a Spanish Romany and his great-grandfather was a Welsh sea captain. He had been born in Warwickshire and his Craft tradition, known as Arddun Wicce, followed the ways of the Forest of Arden witches and the Hwicce, an Anglo-Saxon tribe that inhabited the Mercia area in the 8th century CE.

Cefyn said he had been initiated into the original Arden Coven in the 1960s, but had not achieved the full status of a witch until 1972 after a long series of graduations. These took place while he was serving in the Royal Air Force at various bases in the Midlands. Initially Cefyn worked alone until he got married and initiated his wife. In 1978 a new 'Greenwood Coven' was founded and was followed by a second in Hazelmere, Buckinghamshire. This was eventually disbanded, and Cefyn then divorced his first wife and married again. In 1983 another new group was formed where he was living in Kent and it was called the 'Coven of Greenwood Arden'.

Cefyn made various interesting, if speculative, claims about the Arden tradition. He said it was one of the so-called 'Gartered Covens', one of the main thirteen covens of Britain who met at the Rollright Stones, Meon Hill, Chalcote, Henley-on-Arden and other places. Arddun or

Arden was the county covenstead for Mercia and the Royal Windsor Cuveen (presumably Robert Cochrane's group?) was the Berkshire 'hold'. Unfortunately in the 20th century the latter had become penetrated by Masonic and other 'taints' (sic). As a result Cefyn said it had lost much of its 'shamanistic charisma' and had become 'subservient to matriarchal imagery'.

Cefyn also claimed that the Arddun tradition had inspired Shakespeare and that the king and queen of the faeries, Oberon and Titania, in *A Midsummer's Night Dream* were quite close to the deities it worshipped. Oberon features in some of the old witch trials as a spirit conjured up by magicians to find buried treasure. Cefyn also claimed that Thomas Malory's Arthurian romance *Mort D'Arthur* (The Death of Arthur) had similarly been inspired. In terms of the concept of the sacred or enchanted landscape, like other Old Craft traditions, Arddun believed that the Mysteries 'lay between mound, hedge, tree and standing stone' and they predated the earliest recorded human cultures. These Mysteries were seen as matrilineal rather than matriarchal as the Arden tradition favoured duality and equality.

It was evident that, like Ronald White of The Regency, Cefyn saw himself in the role of the merlin. He claimed that the historical or mythical Merlin of Arthurian legend was not one single person, but instead 'merlin' was a title passed down through the centuries. It was used by a long line of shaman priests chosen by birthright. Certain special signs accompany the birth of a 'merlin'. Cefyn said he had been born with a caul over his head, face and shoulders and this was a sign of his rank. Apparently the holder of this title acts as a messenger between the three worlds; the underworld, the world of men and the Otherworld.

As with Robert Cochrane's tradition, and others the writer has encountered, Greenwood Arden drew on different cultural sources for its theology and cosmology. These sources included the Arthurian legends, the Welsh legends of the *Mabinogion* and Scandinavian and Germanic pagan beliefs. All this was appended to a central symbolic construct that they called the 'Wisdom Tree'. This had aspects comparable to the Norse World Tree Yggdrasil and the Cabbalistic Tree of Life. Other material was also taken from folklore, Literature and the natural environment to form what Cefyn called 'the pre-initiatic teachings'. Various totemic animals were also revered in the tradition in a shamanic way as divine messengers. These included the stag, the bear, the eagle, the swan, the serpent and the dragon and each one had its own symbolic meaning.

The Arden Coven did not recognise the Wiccan three degrees of initiation. However, candidates were expected to work within a coven environment for at least three years and prove themselves worthy in the Craft before calling themselves a witch. They also had a well defined grading system based on the ranks of 'holde' or novice, 'ceorl' or initiate and 'thegn' or disciple, which are based on Anglo-Saxon terms and the Freemasonry degrees of Entered Apprentice, Journeyman and Master Mason.

The training for new initiates encompassed the setting up of a grove and altar work and the study of occult subjects like astrology, Tarot, psychometry and clairvoyance. There were also the ranks of 'thule', a priest or priestess, and the merlins, who were hierophants or shamans. Other positions in the tradition took the form of obligations of service rather than ranks. These were the sword-bearer, light-bearer, wand-bearer and cup-bearer.

The primary ritual tools used in the tradition were based on the legend of the Thirteen Treasures of ancient Britain. They were a sword or alternatively an athame (sic), a *cingulum* or cord worn as a belt in the manner of the Knights Templar, the Horn of Plenty, the Holy Grail, represented by a chalice, the altar and a salver or platter to represent the Round Table. In addition wands, silver pentacles, robes and candles were used in ritual.

Seasonal festivals were celebrated and each one was given the name of an Anglo-Saxon month. A circle was cast ideally a threefold one, and the Powers, Gods or spirits were called to dedicate the dwelling if the rite was indoors. If working outdoors the meeting place had to be either close to or on an actual ley or spirit path. Much of the work of the group was associated with the old Pilgrims Way in Kent that runs from Canterbury to London and was probably originally a 'green road' or prehistoric trackway as well as a ley line.

Once erected the circle in the Arddu tradition acted as a power house or storage area for the elemental powers of nature. Once inside its confines it could be used for healing, divination, summoning and banishing. All the work within the circle was ultimately based on the Anglo-Saxon concept of *wyrd* or fate, which the Coven of Arden believed even the witch god and goddess were subject to. Charms and talismans were made using the Anglo-Saxon runic alphabet as a magical script and herbs and spells were also employed.

In common with many other Old Craft traditions, Cefyn believed that successive waves of immigrants had reached the shores of Albion in the ancient past and influenced the indigenous witch beliefs. All of them had contributed in some way to the ethnic and spiritual mix of historical witchcraft and created a diverse synthesis of belief and practice. This is why the Arden tradition was partly pre-Celtic (Bronze and Stone Age), partly Celtic (Iron Age) and partly Anglo-Saxon (the so-called Dark Ages). Cefyn said that the difference between Wicca and traditional witchcraft was that the latter had grown organically through a fusion of disparate elements, while the former was a modern artificial construct based largely on the work of one of its redactors (i.e. Gerald Gardner).

The Greenwood Arden Coven drew on Germanic beliefs to the extent of using Anglo-Saxon names for its initiates, officers and the seasonal festivals. A similar tradition emerged into public view in the 1960s called the Order of the Shield and it claimed to practice a historically derived tradition of ancient Saxon witchcraft. The published history of the Order said it had been founded in the Viking city of York in the 9th century CE. At that time there were supposed to be covines based in Harrow, Middlesex, in Norwich in Norfolk, Winchester (sic), Windsor in Berkshire and Merton in Surrey. By the 15th century it was only operating in Nottingham, Berwick in Scotland and in Newcastle. During its early history most of its members worked as smiths, stonemasons, weavers, printers and bookbinders and belonged to craft or trade guilds.

Because of the persecution of suspected witches in the 16th and 17th centuries the Order went underground and survived as only a hereditary family tradition. At the end of the 18th century it underwent a revival and this resurgence continued into Victorian times. It was said that the decision was taken in 1965 to release some information about the Shield after a meeting of Old Craft elders in southern England. They decided to encourage new membership as the old traditional groups were in decline.

The main god and goddess worshipped in the Order were the Norse deities Woden and Freya. A male leader called the High Thegn led the tradition assisted by a high priestess known as the Faun Chantress. She was a seer skilled in prophecy, divination and the ancient Norse art of galdr or magical sayings and in turn was assisted by a younger woman known as the Maid or Maiden. Other roles in the Order included the Bard, responsible for archiving the history and preserving the myths, and the Scribe, who recorded all the meetings, compiled the teachings

and kept membership lists. Each of the separate covines operating within the Order consisted of a Thegn or Master and four couples.

Meets took place at the eight seasonal festivals of the Wheel of the Year and also monthly at the time of the full moon. The ritual tools used included the cudgel, used to subdue spirits; the broom for sweeping negative influences out of the 'Castle' or circle (n.b. this term 'Castle' in relation to the witches' circle is also found in the Pickingill Craft and the Robert Cochrane tradition); a drinking-horn made from a deer's hoof; a God and Goddess stone; bronze and copper daggers; an iron chain, to serve as a protective barrier around the outside of the circle; four bowls representing the four elemental forces; and a seax or short-bladed sword of Anglo-Saxon design that was only used by the Master. All the male members of the Order wore special robes similar to a monk's habit in various colors denoting their grade or rank. The women dressed in long medieval-type dresses.

How much of this detailed information about the Order of the Shield can be taken at face value is difficult to know. As with the Pickingill Craft, it is almost impossible for any traditional witch group to prove its origins go back more than a thousand years. The use in the Order's published material of modern terms like 'the Burning Times' to describe the historical persecution of witches and references to the Inquisition are obviously incorrect in an English context. Also the celebration of eight seasonal festivals is a modern innovation that must have been borrowed from Wicca as Gerald Gardner first introduced this concept in the late 1950s. However other aspects of the Order of the Shield are compatible with known traditional witch beliefs and practices.

Since the publication of the book about the Order under the auspices of the 'Coven of the White Hart and the Coven of Barnsdale', nothing has been heard of it. Then in 2005 a small publishing company in the United States specialising in limited editions of occult works, Ars Obscura Press, released a book called *Old Tradition Craft*. Written under the popular nom-de-plume of 'Robin Artisan' it had first been published in 1986 and purported to describe an authentic and traditional form of English and Scottish witchcraft dating back to Dr John Fian and the Aberdeen witches the 16th century that was still being practised today.

The book is divided into three parts and the first describes working with the seasons, the elements and the phases of the moon. It also contains information on the use of stones to guard against the Night

Mare (the dark aspect of the witch goddess), for attracting the opposite sex, for binding and psychic protection, rendering enemies powerless, inspiring prophetic dreams and summoning entities. Book two claims that when the persecutions of suspected witches began the genuine Old Craft covines went underground and disguised themselves as trade and craft guilds. In 1727 the Guild or Order of York was organised along semi-Masonic lines with each of its members following a trade or craft in the city to sustain his family and help others.

The rituals and working tools used by this Order of York and as described in the book are similar to those of the Shield. It cannot be coincidental that both Orders were derived from traditional witchcraft and founded in the same city. The Guild of York was led by a Grand Master and a Mistress of the Sabbat, a term derived from the medieval French witch cult. They revered a trinity of male deities called the Green Man, Red Cap (the medieval name for a Scottish goblin) and Herne (the Hunter) and used a circle known as a 'Castle'. The Order's beliefs, practises and teachings are not pantheistic or neo-pagan and, like many traditional witch groups, they reject the label of 'pagan'. There is no modern feminist concept of 'Goddess spirituality' and their only deities are masculine and aspects of the Horned God. Unfortunately, the book also talks about 'the Burning Times' and the activities of the 'Inquisition' in Scotland, where it never existed.

Part three of the book is a miscellany of magical and historical material including an account of the trial of the Aberdeen and North Berwick witches in the 1590s. It also covers such traditional matters as initiation into the witch cult, the Sabbats, divination by playing cards, scrying in a bowl of water or a shewstone, the obtaining of familiars, making witch bottles, cord, knot and thread magic, the use of puppets, love spells, casting the Evil Eye and binding and cursing.

In early 2007 some information surfaced on an American-based internet forum on traditional witchcraft about the alleged survival of 'Dr Fian's Coven' today. It was alleged that 'Robin Artisan' was in fact Edward Fian and he claimed descent from the 16th century wizard. He was running a traditional style covine in Washington State, near the border with Canada. The person posting this information had met with him and was told that his tradition descended from the Old Scottish covines. The group revered an 'early British goddess' who was subservient to the primary Horned God, but they also practised dual-faith observance and in fact several members of the covine were actually

practising Christians. Another source familiar with the author of *Old Tradition Crafte* claims he is not Fian at all, but a reclusive Canadian bookbinder, musician, and polymath, whose actual involvement in witchcraft is questionable.

In 1981 a small book bound in leather and limited to one hundred copies called *Faerye Invokation* was privately published by a group calling itself the Order of Northumbria. The material was supposed to date back to Saxon times and was first published in 1463. The content had many similarities to the books on the Order of the Shield and the Order of York, but claimed to be a female version of medieval ceremonial magic for calling forth and binding faeries. The person who wrote the modern introduction to the book said that she did not agree with the contemporary trends towards militant political feminism and Goddess spirituality and that her tradition of witchcraft represented the 'the Saxon way of Pagan Womanhood'.

The magical tools used for faery invocation according to the book were a wand, chalice, bell, dirk (Scottish Gaelic for a small dagger), bell and a crystal mirror. The metal tools had to be made from copper (presumably because the Good Folk do not like iron or steel) and the wand and the handles of the dirk and bell from oak wood as it attracts faeries. The mirror was to be of amber, amethyst or quartz crystal, but not lead crystal. The female practitioner wore a white linen robe with a bodice made of red linen and worked the rituals barefoot. The book contained evocations of the faeries of the four quarters of the circle or Castle (sic) as well as drawings and descriptions of the king and queen of faerie and their elven attendants.

Another controversial traditional witch group whose very existence has been challenged is the Derwent Amber Wove. This is based in Staffordshire, but also has members in the United States who were allegedly inducted into it by one of its number who emigrated to that country. This hereditary covine was named after the convergence of the two rivers in the area, the Derwent and the Amber and it allegedly dates back to the 17th century.

In 1984 a British-born woman living in America called Linda Dice contacted this writer and in letters and a trans-Atlantic telephone conversation told me that her family had been involved in the covine for many generations. Her grandmother, she claimed, had a Craft background, as did her grandfather who originally came from Lancashire. The family were prominent owners of pottery factories in

the Staffordshire area. Dice had been inducted into the Craft when she reached puberty at the age of fourteen. She also claimed that a well-known British-born writer on witchcraft and the Tarot who is now living in the USA had been a member. It should be pointed out and underlined that this named person has since denied any knowledge of the group or that he was ever been initiated into any form of the Craft.

The Derwent Amber Wove allegedly practised a hybrid mixture of witchcraft, druidism and ceremonial magick. They had a cube-shaped altar in the style of those used by ritual magicians and cast the Circle of Arte using salt as a purifier. The covine had five grades or degrees of initiation called the Neophyte, Initiate, Adept, Zelator and Adeptus Major. A Magister of the covine had allegedly introduced these grand sounding titles in the 19th century. He was interested in or involved in the magical system practised by the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn who used these titles. Each of the grades represented one of the five elemental forces of fire, earth, air, water and spirit.

In the first stage of Neophyte the candidate was introduced to the other covine members in a mundane social setting. This was part of the vetting process before he or she was even told about the Craft and was to gauge their worthiness for initiation. Once accepted as an Initiate an extensive training programme began based on such subjects as Craft theology, reincarnation, symbolism, occult correspondences, mundane astrology, magical alphabets and methods for raising power.

In the Adept stage, the new witch was instructed in such matters as the symbolism and use of the ritual tools, the significance of the Circle of Arte, herbal and plant lore, making incense, numerology, talismanic and lunar magic, and the evocation of elementals and spirits. Following this was the Zelator grade where more higher teachings were given out concerning esoteric astrology, sex magick, the Cabbala and necromancy.

Finally, if the initiate reached the rank of Adeptus Major, they were instructed in advanced trance-work, spirit communication and possession, the use of the 'basilisk gaze' (Evil Eye) and the mechanics of the 'cursing cup'. With the permission of the covine Elders, they could also hive off to form an independent, yet also still associated, group.

The Derwent Amber Wove was an English form of witchcraft that was apparently taken to the United States by migrants. Since the 19th century British people have been travelling to Australia to live, initially deported as criminals, and then later for economic or family reasons. It would have been strange if some of these immigrants had not been

members of the Craft. According to Keith Richmond, in the 1950s ‘there were a small number of very secretive witchcraft groups or covens active in Sydney [Australia], a few of which may exist today. Some apparently represented particular streams or traditions within witchcraft –notably the Germanic and Basque...’ (in Norton 2009:x).

One famous, some might say infamous, modern Australian witch claimed that her ancestors were just that. Rosaleen ‘Roie’ Norton (1917-1979) said that immigrants had brought her version of witchcraft, known as the ‘Goat Fold’, to Australia in the 19th century from the rural areas of Wales and England. She was born in Dunedin New Zealand and her parents immigrated to Sydney, Australia in 1924. Her father was an English merchant seaman and a cousin of the composer Vaughan Williams. Even as a child Norton claimed she had glimpses of an alternative world haunted by ‘mysterious powers’ and ‘daemonic presences’. She was educated first at a private school and then at a public girls’ grammar school before being expelled because of her “depraved nature” that the headmistress said was corrupting the other pupils. Norton went on to study art at the East Sydney Technical College. She also worked as a cub reporter for a Sydney newspaper and for a while was an artist’s model. In that role she sat for the famous Australian painter Norman Lindsay, who described her as “a grubby little girl with great skill who will not discipline herself.”

Rosaleen Norton’s macabre and surreal artwork was based on fantasy and supernatural themes and it featured pagan gods, ghosts, naked witches, elementals, half-human and half-animal demons, wizards and ghouls. These seemed to have been drawn from experience as in an interview with a magazine in 1957 Norton described how her first drawings were of creatures she had seen psychically as child called ‘Nothing-Beasts’ and ‘Flippers’. Apparently the Flippers looked like conventional white sheeted ghosts, but they were kept at bay by the Nothing-Beasts who protected her. She described them as having animal heads surmounted with a mass of octopoid tentacles that they used to propel themselves through the ether on the astral plane.

Unfortunately, like the British occult artist Austin Osman Spare, Rosaleen Norton’s unusual artwork and bohemian lifestyle attracted unwelcome attention and criticism. This was because her drawings and paintings were very unconventional and sometimes erotic in nature. In the puritan atmosphere of Australia in the late 1940s this led Norton into confrontation with the Sydney Police Department’s Vice Squad.

She was prosecuted for obscenity after the police raided one of her public exhibitions held at the University of Melbourne. It was claimed that her paintings were "decadent and obscene, and likely to arouse sexual appetites in those who saw them."

In court Norton said that her art was based on visionary experiences and images she had seen in the trances created by her magical rituals. She said she also produced automatic writings using a planchette (a wooden board on rollers with a pencil attached) and had astrally travelled to the spirit world and other planets. One painting seized in the police raid was called *The Witches Sabbath*. It depicted a naked woman embracing a black panther and Norton told the court it represented the initiation of a witch into the "infernal mysteries" by the powers of darkness. Her defense counsel argued that her art would only corrupt those with minds that were already "open to immoral influences." The magistrate agreed, the charges were dropped and he ordered that Norton's legal costs should be paid by the Sydney Police Department.

In the 1950s Rosaleen Norton was living in a rented flat in a three-storey house in Kings Cross, the 'red light' district of Sydney inhabited by drop-outs, drug dealers and junkies, bohemians, prostitutes, pimps, petty criminals, artists, musicians and anyone seeking to follow an alternative life-style on the edge of conventional society. The Vice Squad raided the flat and Norton and her boyfriend Gavin Greenless were arrested and charged with vagrancy because they were both unemployed. The court ordered them to find gainful employment within fourteen days or go to jail. Luckily a publisher called Wally Glover offered to employ them and publish a book of some of Greenless' mystical poetry illustrated with Norton's artwork.

The limited book entitled *The Art of Rosaleen Norton*, with poems by Gavin Greenless was published in August 1952. However the police intervened again. The book was condemned by the Postmaster General, who was in charge of censorship matters, as a 'indecent publication' because some of the female figures in it displayed pubic hair. When the case came to court Greenless was fined five pounds and copies of the book were censored by having some of the images in it blacked out. Copies exported by Wally Glover to America were also confiscated in New York by the US Customs and burnt.

After the court case Rosaleen Norton accentuated her new public image as 'the Witch of Kings Cross' by dressing goth-like all in black and draping a blood-red scarf around her shoulders fixed with a silver

brooch in the shape of a bat. Earrings in the shape of human skulls with green jewels for eyes, leopard skin boots and an exotic cigarette in a mother-of-pearl holder completed the eccentric look. In one photograph she is shown wearing an embroidered Chinese smock and silk trousers.

Norton was a striking woman with very prominent teeth. Obviously she had a sense of humor as a self-portrait depicts her as a half-human rabbit. She also possessed several unusual physical attributes that she said would have condemned her to be burnt at the stake as a witch in olden times. These include pointed ears, two small blue dots on her left knee (which she claimed were "traditional witch marks" that mysteriously appeared when she was seven), a pair of extra muscles on both sides of her body extending from under her armpit to her pelvis, and a cat-like ability to see in the dark.

Her unusual physical image and eccentric mode of dress was added to by the fact that her flat was used as a magical temple for meetings of her coven. In the sitting room for instance was an altar laid out for rituals. It was complete with ceremonial black-handled knives, an incense burner, a human skull, stag antlers and an African tribal mask. On the wall of the sitting room above the altar was a life-sized mural of the Greek goat-foot god Pan, the main deity worshipped by Norton's coven of witches.

Norton told the curious reporters who flocked to interview her after the court case involving her book that she practised an ancient pre-Christian religion based on witchcraft with added elements of the Cabbala, Gnosticism, Greek mythology and even Zoroastrian dualism. This eclectic belief system was informed by her extensive reading of books on Jungian psychology, Madame Helena Blavatsky's Theosophy, Eastern philosophy, and the magical works of Dion Fortune, Eliphas Levi, Aleister Crowley and Papus. It also was influenced by her many psychic visions and astral experiences in other universes and realms. The hard bitten Aussie journalists went away scratching their heads in bewilderment because they were more interested in Norton's erotic paintings, alleged satanic beliefs and unconventional lifestyle.

She told them she believed in an archetypal planetary being who was a horned god and the ruler of the Earth. Norton identified him with the Greek goat-foot god Pan as the 'master of all-living' and the 'true god of the world'. He was responsible for the weather, the reproduction of animals and humans, the growth of vegetation and the control of nature spirits. She also acknowledged the Greek goddess of witchcraft and the

underworld Hecate, the goat-headed god Baphomet worshipped by the medieval Knights Templar and the voodoo god of death Baron Samedi. Several of her paintings also featured images of Lucifer and his consort Lilith who she also revered.

Norton also claimed astral contact with the 'Elder Gods' or 'Great Gods', who she said existed 'between the planets and the stars', and said she had several familiars or spirit guides. These included a cowled monk-like figure called Brother Jannicot (Janicot was a French name for the witch god, possibly derived from the Roman dual-faced god of doorways Janus), an elemental spirit called Belpignet and a 'storm demon'. Brother Jannicot was the most important of these spirit guides as he managed Norton's occult activities, guided her into and out of other realms of existence and supervised her trances.

Rosaleen Norton's coven worked magically with the elemental kingdom, other dimensions and the Dreamworld, which she described as "beyond the comprehension, or at least the descriptive powers, of the conscious mind. It took place in realms where concepts like time and space were either of no relevance, or functioned in a manner quite different to the mundane world." As well as physical celebrations of the Witches' Sabbath the coven members claimed to have travelled astrally or by spirit-flight to the Brocken in the Hartz Mountains in Germany. This was historically a traditional site of witch revels on Walpurgis Night or May Eve. (Richmond in Norton 2009: xi and xii)

Norton's coven in Sydney had seven members, which is a traditional number for a rural coven in the English Old Craft. They usually wore hooded robes or aprons in their rituals, although sometimes they worked naked. In certain special rites animal masks were worn. Incense was burnt, herbal potions and drugs were partaken and evocations made to the four quarters of the compass or circle. Initiates had to take an oath of allegiance to the coven and the Craft kneeling with one hand resting on the crown of their head and the other on the sole of their left foot. Everything between their hands was then dedicated to the Old Gods. A new name was taken by the initiate and they were presented with a talisman to wear around their neck and a cord known as the 'witch's garter' (Richmond in Norton 2009: xi).

Having deliberately sought out publicity Rosaleen Norton had, as we have seen, become a soft target for the Sydney Police Department and the press. In September 1955 a newspaper story claimed that she had sacrificed a rooster during a performance of the Black Mass. The story

had been sold to the paper by a female migrant from New Zealand who had been arrested by the Vice Squad in the Kings Cross area for vagrancy. She claimed she had attended sadomasochistic and bisexual orgies at Norton's flat involving the witch priestess and her lover.

The allegations were strenuously denied although privately Norton did have affairs with both men and women and was a masochist. However under cross examination in court the girl admitted she did not even know Norton. The next month the police raided Norton and Greenless' flat after two men sold a photograph to the newspapers of them allegedly performing an 'unnatural sex act during a magical ritual'. In fact the pictures were faked as a joke that had been staged at Norton's birthday party. The two men, who already had criminal records, were found guilty of fraud and jailed.

Shortly after the court case involving the migrant, students from Sydney University staged a 'Black Mass' wearing black robes and using a skeleton taken from the university's medical department. Rosaleen Norton was identified in newspaper reports as being involved in the ritual, even though she had never met any of the students. The Vice Squad also raided a café where some of Norton's paintings were being exhibited and charged its owner, Norton and Greenlees under the Obscene Publications Act. The case dragged on for two years before coming to court and the artist and the poet were convicted and fined.

More bad publicity came in March 1956 when sensational Sir Eugene Goossens, an English composer and the conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, was arrested at the city's airport. He was born in London and worked as a young man as an assistant to the famous conductor Sir Thomas Beecham, founder of the summer Proms held at the Albert Hall. After moving to the United States during the Second World War, Goossens became the conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and commissioned Aaron Copeland's famous *Fanfare for the Common Man*. When he emigrated to Australia Goossens soon established himself as a leading figure in high society. He nurtured the career of the famous Australian opera singer the late Joan Sutherland and initiated the founding of the world-famous Sydney Opera House.

When he was arrested Goossens was in fact returning home from the United Kingdom after being knighted by the Queen for his services to music. Acting on a tip-off from a newspaper reporter, who had followed him to England and spied on his activities there, Customs officers at Sydney Airport detained Sir Eugene and opened his suitcase. Inside they

found pornographic books, films and photographs the conductor had been seen by the journalist purchasing in a Soho sex shop. Also in the suitcase were several rubber masks. These were later described as 'ceremonial masks for use in pagan rituals'.

Goossens confessed to the Vice Squad officers who interviewed him that he had bought these items in England for Rosaleen Norton. They were for use in magical rituals and he was a member of her coven. Subsequently love letters between Goossens and Norton surfaced in the press (either supplied by the police or stolen from Norton's flat). The correspondence gave details of how they had performed rituals together involving sex magic and the worship of Pan. The purpose of these rites was apparently to inspire Goossens in his musical work. Apparently he, Norton and Greenless were planning to work together on a musical based on Edgar Allan Poe's classic horror story *The Fall of the House of Usher*.

The conductor was charged with importing prohibited goods, fined £100 and sacked from his position at the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. He did not appear in court as a letter from his doctor was presented saying the conductor was suffering from a physical and mental collapse and was unfit. In his defence Goossens' lawyer claimed that Rosaleen Norton had blackmailed him into getting the material from England and that was why he was trying to smuggle it into the country.

Sir Eugene Goossens returned in disgrace to England, where he eventually got work with the BBC, although his personal reputation never recovered from the court case or his relationship with Rosaleen Norton's coven. His reputation, career and marriage had been effectively destroyed by the revelations about his occult activities. His wife was pursued where ever she went by reporters and eventually fled abroad to take sanctuary in a French convent. It has been claimed that Goossen's downfall came about because the conductor had upset people in the Australian establishment and the government was keen to see him disgraced (article in a Sydney newspaper *The Guardian* by David Fickling, 30th October 2003).

In the late 1960s Rosaleen Norton was describing herself to journalists as a 'coven master' (sic) and she told them her group met on the traditional four Grand Sabbats of Candlemass, May Eve, Lammas and Hallowe'en. She also boasted that her witches were capable of putting curses on people and that was how the Craft had survived through centuries of persecution and was still so strong today. Visitors to her flat

were shown her familiars – two rats called Percy and Moonstone and a turtle she had rescued from a city park. Norton was making her living at that time by selling charms and being paid by clients to put curses on people. Despite the fact that in the 1950s she was in correspondence with Gerald Gardner in England, as a traditional witch she obviously had no time for the Wiccan Rede.

By the 1970s Rosaleen Norton was telling any news reporter who could be bothered to listen that she had hundreds of followers all over Australia, but this seemed highly unlikely. Norton gave her last media interview in 1975 when she commented on a report by the Anglican Church about an increase in young people in Australia becoming interested in witchcraft and the occult. The 'Witch of Kings Cross', as she was called in the media, warned of the dangers of indiscriminate dabbling and summoning up spirits, but she disagreed on the grounds of freedom of personal choice with the Church's recommendation that the sale of ouija boards to schoolchildren should be banned by law.

Rosaleen Norton died of cancer on December 5th 1979 and ironically spent her last days in a Roman Catholic hospice. The irony of that would not have been lost on her. Her long time partner Gavin Greenlees had been committed to a mental hospital some years earlier after suffering a nervous breakdown because of all the press and police harassment. He coincidentally died on the same date in December four years later.

Another form of traditional witchcraft was allegedly brought to Australia in the 1960s or 1970s from England and became popularly known as 'Sussex Craft'. It was called this because it was supposed to have originated from Etchingham, a small village in Sussex. The so-called Sussex Craft was promoted publicly in Australia by a controversial character using the pseudonym 'Simon Goodman'. He ran a group called Coventus Quercus ('Coven of the Oak'), wrote articles for several occult and neo-pagan magazines and compiled a historical archive on Australian witchcraft that still exists today after his premature death.

The original coven in Sussex sounds as if it was a genuine form of traditional witchcraft. Goodman said it was led by a Man in Black or Magister, who was called 'the Devil' and he initiated both men and women. Their working tools were the besom, cauldron, stang and a human skull and their rituals included the 'dance of the limping god' and the recitation of the popular folk song *The Coal Black Smith*. Goodman claimed that the Sussex covine had some connection with the Essex cunning man George Pickingill. However when Goodman met Bill

Liddell of the Pickingill Craft tradition the latter was less than convinced at the claim. It sounds from the description as if the Sussex group might have been connected with type of traditional witchcraft practised by Robert Cochrane.

In this chapter, and the others in this book, we have examined and discussed a whole variety of different individuals, groups and traditions that claim to be following modern forms of ancient witchcraft. In the descriptions of these certain factors keep recurring. These include claims of historical continuity from the past and hereditary lineages, the – sometimes exclusive- worship of a horned god ruling death and fertility, who is often called the 'Devil' (or any of his variant nicknames) and sometimes identified with Lucifer, and takes the form of a goat, bull, stag, ram or black dog, and a goddess with dark and bright aspects associated with the moon, the earth, the underworld and fate sometimes known as the Queen of Elfhame (Faerie). There are specific forms of initiation, including sexual induction, the 'passing of power' and the *Diablo stigmata*, the spiritual concept of 'witch blood' passed down through incarnations and 'the Mark'. Some covines also have various forms of the legend of the Watchers or fallen angels teaching early humans in their mythos.

Membership of traditional covines is often made up of people of different social classes and there are also connections with the Romanies or gypsies. In fact there is an old saying "Where there are gypsies you will find witches nearby." Most important is contact and communion with the spirit world, the ancestral dead, the realm of Faerie and spirit ingress. Robes or hooded cloaks and sometimes masks are worn for rituals and often only the four Grand Sabbats of Candlemass, May Eve, Lammas and Hallowe'en are celebrated. 'Flying ointment' made from narcotic plants is used to facilitate astral projection or spirit travel.

Outdoor workings involving 'earth energies' are held on or near ley lines or spirit paths, at old trees, crossroads, ancient prehistoric sites such as stone circles, burial mounds and standing stones that are 'power centres' and in churchyards built on former pagan shrines. There is the ability among traditional practitioners of the Craft to cure or curse, the use of herbal and plant lore for healing and other magical purposes, a knowledge of natural hallucinogenics, the adoption of totemic animals, shapeshifting, the ownership of familiars and contact with spirit guides, and the practice of dual-faith observance and ceremonial magic.

One of the lesser known aspects of traditional witchcraft is the connection it has with the various secret societies associated with the trade guilds of craftsmen dating back to the Middle Ages. These include Freemasonry, the Society of Horsemen, the Miller's Word and the Society of Ploughmen. These groups have contributed to the close-knit nature of many modern traditional covines, their 'clannishness' and the difficult tests, ordeals and initiations the neophyte has to endure to gain admittance to the Old Craft.

It is very difficult to express in words the unique ambience of practising an Old Craft tradition. Imagine standing in a grove of ancient beech and oak trees, in a circle of masked, robed and hooded figures. The horned Master comes forth from the shadows, rousing the elementals of the land, the ancestral dead and the spirits in the old tongue, the language of the witches, a voice that moves about the grove of its own accord. The only light comes from a gibbous moon scudding through the clouds, guttering candles in lanterns and the flames of a small central fire.

The air is filled with the smell of damp leaves, smouldering perfumes, incense, wood smoke and the earth beneath your feet. All around you are the sounds of the wood at night. Tree branches creak and sway in the wind, animals scuttle through the undergrowth, an owl hoots mournfully and in the distance the eerie cry of a vixen is carried on the night air.

In the circle's heart, shadowy forms flit to and fro; grotesque faces emerge from smoke and shadow. At the margins of vision you see obscure, shady figures watching at the edge of the darkness, beyond the circle's bound; and unseen whispering presences pass you by. The whole place is alive with life, from this world and the realm beyond.

This is the dark essence of the Old Craft and it is beyond words or explanation, although you know within your very flesh that you have been here before in some distant past. You also know deep in your being that you have come home, that this is where you belong, with your brethren, your brothers and sisters in the magical Circle of Arte.

## Glossary

Every social, cultural and religious grouping has its own special terminology and traditional witchcraft is no different in this respect. The following is a glossary of the commonly found words in the text of this book, in the literature on the subject, and in general usage today by modern traditional witches.

**ADEPT or ADEPTI** (Latin, pl.): A person (male or female) skilled in the magical arts or witchcraft.

**AETT:** One of the four compass points of the **CIRCLE OF ARTE** associated with the elements and the four winds and four **CASTLES**.

**ALBION** (Archaic): A name for England as a mythical and archetypal place and sometimes also used to describe Britain as a whole.

**AL-KHIDIR** (Arabic): 'Green One'. Sufi saint and 'wanderer on the Earth'. See **CAIN** and **GREEN MAN**.

**ALRAUN:** Image made of rowan wood used in talismanic magic. In traditions of German witchcraft, a carved mandrake fetish, or, alternately, the tradition of image-making from carved roots.

**ALTAR:** Literally a raised structure, flat stone slab, wooden box or table 'used to make offerings to a deity'. The word comes from the Latin *altus* meaning 'high'. Altars can be square, rectangular, round or triangular. Traditionally the altar stands in the north – the abode of the Old Gods. On it are the ritual tools, incense, candles and their holders, spirit images or fetishes and anything else needed for the rites.

**AMULET:** A consecrated magical or power object, mascot or lucky charm worn or carried to protect against evil, bad luck and general misfortune.

**ANCESTRAL DEAD:** The ancestors of witches, especially in a family tradition. See also **HIDDEN COMPANIE**.

**ANGEL OF THE EARTH:** Alternative title of **LUCIFER**.

**ANOINTING OILS:** Perfumed essential oils made from plant extracts and used for offerings to the spirits, purification, blessing and healing.

## *Glossary*

**ANNWN:** Welsh name for the UNDERWORLD used by some traditional witches.

**ANDRASTE or ANDRED:** Iron Age hare-goddess evoked by Queen Boudica for victory against the Romans. Name for the witch goddess. See RUNES OF ANDRED.

**ARADIA or ARIDIA:** Daughter of LUCIFER and DIANA. Name of the witch goddess. Patron deity of the 19th century witch-cult in Tuscany, Italy. Allegedly, she incarnated on Earth in human form in the Middle Ages to teach and guide humankind. See AVATAR.

**ARBOREAL** (Latin) Relating to trees e.g. arboreal spirits. See DRYADS.

**ARCANE:** (Latin) Mysterious, secret, OCCULT.

**ARCANUM:** (Latin) Mystery or a secret thing.

**ARTE, THE:** (Archaic) Term for the practice of magic (as in the Arte Magical) and traditional witchcraft. See also CRAFT, THE.

**ARTHUR:** Historically and mythically, the 'Once and Future King' of ALBION. In The Regency he represents the Lord of the Dead and the god of the waning year. See also PENDRAGON.

**ASMODEUS:** Bull-headed spirit or DEMON. Traditionally the son of LILITH and SAMAEL. Name for the DEVIL or HORNED GOD when he appears in the animal form of a bull or a bull-headed man.

**ASTRAL TRAVEL:** Projecting the FETCH or 'spirit double' from the physical body to travel this world and into the spirit realm. Also known as 'spirit travel' and by modern parapsychologists as 'remote viewing'.

**ATHAME:** (Arabic or French) 'Blood-letter'. Black-handled ritual knife used for drawing the CIRCLE OF ARTE and summoning spirits. Mentioned in medieval GRIMOIRES and has an ancient history in magic and folklore.

**ATHO:** (Welsh?) Arddhu or 'Dark One'. A form of the HORNED GOD in Charles Cardell's witchcraft tradition.

**AVERSE:** Opposed or negative e.g. 'An averse magical action'.

**AURA:** The energy field surrounding the human body that can be seen by psychics and CLAIRVOYANTS and can now be photographed.

**AUTOMATIC WRITING:** A written communication from a spirit or SHADE using the writer's hand.

**AVALON:** (Poetic) or **AFFALON** (Welsh). Mythical name for the area around **GLASTONBURY** in Somerset, England meaning 'Isle of Apples' and referring to the **UNDERWORLD**.

**AVATAR:** Incarnated deity or spirit in human form. See **ARADIA**.

**AXIS MUNDI:** (Latin) 'World Pillar'. See **TREE OF LIFE**, **WORLD TREE** and **YGGDRASIL**.

**AZAZEL, or ASAEL:** (Hebrew and Arabic) Semitic goat-god. The name of the leader of the **WATCHERS** or fallen angels (see **LUCIFER** and **LUMIEL**). In Islam he is the Angel of Death and it is the name of the witch-god in some Traditional Craft COVINES. See also **SAMAEL**, **SHEMYAZA**, **SHAMASH**, and **TUBAL CAIN**.

**AZRAEL:** The 'Angel of Death' in Islamic lore.

**BACAULUM:** (Archaic) A witches' **BESOM**, wand, staff or rod.

**BAAL:** Canaanite fertility and storm-god.

**BALEFIRE or NEEDFIRE:** A special ritual fire lit from significant or sacred woods. See **ELF FIRE** and **WILDFIRE**.

**BAN:** To banish, expel or curse. 'To put under the Ban.'

**BANISHING:** 1) To expel a spirit 2) Close a magical circle 3) Ritually expel a person from a group or tradition i.e. Place under the **BAN**.

**BANE:** Any destructive or poisonous substance or thing used in magic e.g. henbane

**BAPHOMET:** (Arabic) 'Baptism of Wisdom'. Hermaphrodite, ithyphallic, goat-headed deity allegedly worshipped by the medieval Order of the Knight Templars. The 19th century French occultist Eliphas Levi claimed it represented the Greek goat-foot god Pan. Some modern

## *Glossary*

**traditional witches** see Baphomet as a form of the fallen angel **LUCIFER** and he is form of the witch god in some traditional COVINES. See 'The Devil' in the major arcana of the **TAROT**.

**BARQUEST:** Popular name for **BLACK DOG** in northern England.

**BEL** or **BELENOS** Irish god of fire and light. Demonised as Beliel or Belial in the medieval grimoire tradition.

**BELTANE** or **BELTAINE** (Irish Gaelic) 'Bright fire' or 'Bel' fire'. May Day (May 1st).

**BELLARMINE:** Named after the historical Cardinal Bellarmine. Brown colored, slat-glazed pottery bottle with a bearded face on it. Used as **SPIRIT VESSEL** or **WITCHES BOTTLE**.

**BEN ELOHIM** (Hebrew) 'Sons of God' or more accurately 'Sons of the Gods'. The angelic hierarchy See also **Fallen Ones**, **SONS OF HEAVEN**, **HEAVEN**, **WATCHERS**.

**BENANDANTI** (Italian) 'Good Walkers'. Medieval Italian magical practitioners who fought nocturnal spirit battles with malefic witches believed to harm the crops.

**BESOM:** (Old English) Name for the witches' broomstick.

**BEWITCH:** Place under a spell, **GLAMOUR**, **ENCHANTMENT** or to curse.

**BID:** 1) A **FAMILIAR** spirit; 2) Ask , call or summon spirit.

**BIDDING:** Praying to a god or calling on a spirit.

**BIND:** 1) To cast or seal a spell 2) Prevent a person from doing harm by magical means or restrict or limit their actions.

**BIND RUNE:** Two or more **RUNES** combined to make a **CHARM** or **SPELL**.

**BLACK Book:** Traditional name for a **GRIMOIRE**, **BOOK OF SECRETS**, or manual of the magical arts.

**BLACK DOG:** Spectral hound associated with the **WILD HUNT** and

regarded as an omen of death, paradoxically also as a protective guide, and a psychopomp in folklore. There is a witchcraft tradition on Exmoor in North Devon that is connected to the legends of the Black Dog and the WILD HUNT. The Black Dog is regarded in the SABBATIC CRAFT as an animal form taken by CAIN or his FAMILIAR, or the DEVIL when he appears at the WITCHES SABBATH. See also GRIM and HELL HOUNDS.

**BLACK MAN:** Historical name for the DEVIL or the male leader of a COVINE. See also MAN IN BLACK.

**BLACK SHUCK:** Popular name for the BLACK DOG in eastern England.

**BLACK WITCHCRAFT:** The use of magical power to cause harm and death. See also CURSE and SORCERY.

**BLASTING:** Harming by cursing.

**BLASTING ROD:** Blackthorn WAND or stave used for cursing.

**BLOT:** (Norse) Any sacrificial offering involving the spilling of blood.

**BLESSING:** 1) To consecrate or sanctify an object, place or person 2) An act of healing.

**BOOK OF SECRETS:** Magical manual used by witches and CUNNING FOLK. See also GRIMOIRES and BLACK BOOK.

**BOLINE:** Ritual dagger with sickle-shaped blade used for gathering herbs.

**BROOMSTICK:** Traditionally made from a stave of ash for the handle and a birch brush bound together with willow withies. See also BESOM.

**BROTHERHOOD, THE:** Archaic name for the CRAFT.

**BROWNIE:** Domesticated household spirit. See also FAMILIAR and HOBGOBLIN.

**BUCCA (Cornish):** Name for the witch god or the DEVIL. See also PUCK.

**BULL'S NOON:** (Poetic) Name for midnight. See also WITCHING HOUR.

## *Glossary*

**BURIN:** 1) White-handled knife used for practical purposes e.g. carving SIGILS on a candle or wooden magical tool. 2) Flint-bladed knife. 3) Awl or needle-like implement for drawing blood by pricking.

**CABBALA or QABALAH (Hebrew):** 'Word to ear'. Secret, esoteric, mystical and magical teaching of Judaism. Regarded as heretical by orthodox rabbis. Followed by some traditional witches and incorporated into their beliefs and PRAXIS.

**CAIN (Hebrew) or QAYIN (Arabic):** In the Old Testament the first son of Adam and Eve who killed his brother Abel. In the SABBATIC CRAFT he is the first magician and a cultural exemplar born from a union between Eve and the angel SAMAEL (LUCIFER) In Sabbatic Craft as a gardener and farmer he is associated with AL-KHIDR, the CORN KING, JOHN BARLEYCORN and the GREEN MAN.

**CALLEACH or CAILLEACH (Scottish Gaelic):** Name for the witch goddess in her Old Hag or CRONE aspect.

**CASTLES:** As in the Four Castles of the Robert Cochrane tradition, where they are ruled by the Four Kings and the Queens, the Skull and Bones tradition, and the Pickingill Craft, where they are associated with the four animal aspects of the Horned God: The Goat, Ram, Stag and Bull. Sometimes they are also connected with the four winds and the four elements and they represent OTHERWORLD locations that the witch can travel to 'out of body'.

**CASTLE OF THE ROSE:** In the Robert Cochrane tradition, the UNDERWORLD domain of the witch goddess.

**CATHAR:** 'Perfected One'. Heretical Christian-Gnostic sect in medieval southern France. Some of its followers were said to worshipped LUCIFER (called Lucibel) as the LORD OF THE WORLD and their saviour and redeemer.

**CAULDRON:** A metal pot with three legs used to boil up potions or hold water during rituals. Symbol of the feminine principle, spiritual transformation, regeneration and rebirth.

**CELTIC TREE CALENDAR:** Allegedly of ancient druidic origin and based on the esoteric and magical significance of trees. See COELBREN and OGHAM.

**CINGULUM** (Latin): 'Belt'. A witch's cord or girdle either worn around the waist or the neck. Can sometimes be in different colors to denote rank in a COVINE.

**CHAIN DANCE**: A spiral dance enacted to start a ritual or magical working. It can be used also in MASKING and GUIISING and SHAPESHIFTING rites. See also MEETING DANCE.

**CHALICE**: A special consecrated cup made from wood, pottery, metal or glass used for ritual purposes.

**CHARM**: 1) Short magical rhyme or incantation 2) Magical power object.

**CHARMING**: The act of putting a SPELL, curse or GLAMOUR on a person.

**CIRCLE OF ARTE**: A circle either drawn or marked on the ground symbolically representing 'the space between the worlds' i.e. a gateway or portal between the material or mortal world and the spirit realm.

**CLAIRVOYANT**: (French) 'clear-seeing'. A psychic person who sees visions.

**CLAN** (Scottish Gaelic) A group of traditional or hereditary witches, especially from a family or ancestral tradition. As in the Clan of Tubal Cain.

**CLAY-BORN**: In the SABBATIC CRAFT, a term for a person who is not of the WITCH BLOOD. And have not been 'awakened' to the reality of the spiritual world. They are still 'asleep' and dreaming the dream of materialism. This does not mean that the 'divine spark' cannot be fanned within every human being. From the clay-born Adam formed from the 'dust of earth'. See also COWAN.

**CLOAK OF FLESH**: The human body in which the spirit or soul temporarily incarnates in the physical and mortal world.

**COELBREN**: (Welsh) Magical alphabet used by some Welsh traditionalist witches and based on the CELTIC TREE CALENDAR. Promoted as ancient druidic in origin, but it was possibly the invention of the Welsh bard and neo-druid 'Iolo Morganwg' (Edward Williams). See also OGHAM.

## *Glossary*

**COMPASS:** Traditional name for the **CIRCLE OF ARTE**.

**CONJURING or CONJURE:** To summon a spirit or **SHADE** of the dead, especially to physical manifestation.

**CONJUROR (Archaic):** Popular name for a folk magician or **CUNNING MAN**.

**CONJURING STICK:** Traditional name for a **WAND**.

**CONTACT (Inner):** A spirit or deity who acts as a guide and teacher to humans.

**CONSECRATE (Latin):** 'To set apart' and 'sacred'. Dedicate or devote a place, person or object for a magical or spiritual purpose.

**CORN KING or CORN SPIRIT:** Name for the sacrificed God at Lammas who is the spirit of the harvest. See also **CAIN** and **JOHN BARLEYCORN**.

**COVINE, COVEN or CUVEEN (Anglo-French):** from 'covent' or 'convent' meaning a religious community or assembly. Traditional name for a group or assembly of witches.

**COVINEDOM of COVENDOM:** The area of a league (three miles) around a **COVINESTEAD**.

**COVINESTEAD or COVENSTEAD:** The regular meeting place or any working site of a **COVINE** or **COVEN**.

**COWAN:** A non-initiated person. See also **CLAY-BORN**.

**CRAFT, THE:** Generic name for witchcraft and its followers. Indicates that witches are craftsman and craftswoman of the Arte Magical. Possibly borrowed from Freemasonry in medieval or later times. See also the **OLD CRAFT**.

**CRAFTER:** Initiated member of the **CRAFT**.

**CROOMSTICK:** Magical stave with a hooked end, similar to shepherd's crook. Used to 'gather in power'.

**CRONE 1)** The Hag aspect of the witch goddess **2)** Female **ELDER** of the Craft who is over sixty years old.

**CROOKED PATH, THE:** Term coined by Andrew D. Chumbley, to describe a transcendental ethos of Traditional Witchcraft, uniting the paths of the Left Hand (cursing) with the paths of the Right Hand (blessing) in a continuum of gnosis.

**CROSSROADS or CROSSWAYS:** Where three or four roads meet. A favorite site for magical workings by traditional witches. See also **FOURWAYS**.

**CUCULATTI** (Latin): 'Hooded ones'. Dwarvish earth spirits and **GENII LOCI**. Often associated with the Celtic goddess **ROSMERTA**.

**CULTUS** (Latin): A system of worship, devotion, homage or reverence expressed usually in ritualistic terms to a person, deity, spirit or image, usually secret, or a mystery-tradition.

**CUNNING CRAFT:** Term created by the late Andrew D. Chumbley, to describe the **OLD CRAFT** traditions he inherited from his initiators.

**CUNNING FOLK:** Practitioners of folk magic and **SORCERY**.

**CUNNING LODGE:** Historically, small all-male groups practising a mixture of traditional witchcraft and ceremonial magic with Masonic overtones. Their membership was usually drawn from rural cunning men, ritual magicians, Freemasons, members of the Society of Woodsmen, and Rosicrucians.

**CUNNING MAN:** From the Old English 'skilful', 'crafty' and 'knowing'. Male witch or **WIZARD** with knowledge of divination, healing, spells, herbal lore, exorcism and summoning spirits. See also **MAGUS** and **WARLOCK**.

**CURSE:** To use magical power to cause harm or death.

**CUVEEN** (Archaic): See **COVINE**.

**CWN ANNWN** (Welsh): 'Dogs of the **UNDERWORLD**'. Faery dogs with white coats and red ears.

**DAEMON or DAIMON:** See **DEMON**.

**DAME** (Latin): 'Lady' or domina meaning 'mistress'. Title for the female leader of a **COVINE**, especially if she also holds the rank of **ELDER**.

## *Glossary*

**DAME VENUS:** Central and southern European name for the witch goddess.

**DANDO:** Name of the leader of the Wild Hunt in Devonshire.

**DANDY DOGS** or Dando's Dogs. See **HELL HOUNDS**.

**DARK OF THE MOON:** When the lunar disc cannot be seen in the sky at all. Dedicated to **LILITH** it is a time for scrying and when some female witches feel they can work their most powerful magics.

**DEDICATION:** 1) Consecration of a neophyte to the **CRAFT** or a **COVINE** or tradition 2) Ritual act during which a person makes individual contact with the spirits and dedicates themselves to the Craft.

**DEMON** or **DAIMON:** Generic term for any non-human spirit. In Christian propaganda it is exclusively a evil spirit.

**DEOSIL:** Moving in a sunways or clockwise direction around the **CIRCLE OF ART**.

**DEVA** (Sanskrit) 'Shining One'. Superior rank of nature spirits or **GENII LOCI** associated with large, ancient trees, rivers, lakes, hills and mountains.

**DEVIL** (Greek): 'diabolus' or 'opposer', 'accuser'. or (possibly) derived from the Romany 'duval' or 'little god'. Archaic term for the male leader of a traditional **COVINE** and the **HORNED GOD**.

**DEVIL'S ACRE** or **PLOT:** 1) Piece of land left deliberately uncultivated and said to belong to the **DEVIL** or be an offering to him so that the rest of the land remains fertile and free from his (alleged) malefic influence. 2) A name for the **CIRCLE OF ARTE**.

**DEWER:** Local name for the male leader of the **WILD HUNT** on Dartmoor in Devonshire. Name of the witch god in Devon Craft. See **DEVIL**.

**DIABLO STIGMATA** (Latin): 'Devil's Mark'. Traditionally a ritual tattoo given at **INDUCTION** or **INITIATION** into the **CRAFT**.

**DIANA:** Roman goddess of the moon, hunting and forests.

**DIVINATION:** (Latin) Foretelling the future using a crystal ball, tea-leaves, coffee grounds, palmistry, the RUNES, playing cards, the TAROT, the PENDULUM, GEOMANCY, casting bones, interpreting dreams and visions etc. and OMENS.

**DIVINE KING:** The priest-king who is traditionally sacrificed at the end of his seven year reign. See **REX NEMORENSIS**.

**DIVINE PARENTS, THE:** The witch god and witch goddess.

**DJINN (Arabic) or JINN:** Spirits of fire that can be summoned and forced to do the magician's BIDDING. Also known as genies in fairy tales and pantomimes like Aladdin.

**DOD:** A forked stick or stave allegedly used to mark out **LEY-LINES** by DOWSING. See **DODMAN**.

**DODMAN:** Ancient priest-magician who allegedly plotted or surveyed the **LEY-LINES** in the prehistoric landscape.

**DRACONIAN RITES:** Advanced stellar-ophidian magic in the Sabbatic Craft tradition, venerating the Dragon as The Great Serpent of Divine Wisdom. See *The Dragon Book of Essex* by Andrew Chumbley (Xoanon Publishing, forthcoming).

**DRAGON BLOOD:** 1) The spiritual bloodline of witches. See **WITCH BLOOD**.

**DRAGON BROOD:** Traditional witches who revere **LILITH**.

**DRAGON, THE OLD:** Biblical term for **LUCIFER**.

**DRAGON PATHS:** Earth energy lines across the countryside.

**DRAGON'S BLOOD:** A natural red resin used in spells.

**DRAWING DOWN THE MOON:** A ritual in the Robert Cochrane tradition where the rays of the full moon are reflected in a cup or bowl before the **HOUSEL**.

**DRYADS (Greek):** Tree spirits.

## *Glossary*

**DUAL-FAITH OBSERVANCE:** The inclusion of Christian prayers, symbols and images (often in a heretical, inverted, reversed or **VERSE** way) in traditional witchcraft.

**DUMB SUPPER:** Special meal left out as offering to the **ANCESTRAL DEAD** and **SHADES** at **HALLOWS**.

**DOWSING:** The psychic ability to find water, oil, natural gas, archaeological remains, buried treasure etc. by using dowsing rods or twigs.

**DWARVES:** (Old English, Old High German) Small elemental spirits of the earth associated with smithcraft and metal-working who forge the weapons of the **OLD GODS**.

**EARTH ENERGY:** Mysterious natural (or supernatural) energy or power believed to flow across the land along **LEY-LINES** and concentrated at **POWER CENTRES**.

**EARTH MAGIC:** The knowledge, skill and art of manipulating or utilising **EARTH ENERGY** for magical purposes.

**EARTH MYSTERIES (Modern):** Term for the study of ley-lines, crop circles, alternative archaeology, 'earthlights', 'earth energy and Ufology'.

**EIDOLON:** Alternative name for a **FETCH**.

**ELEMENTALS:** Spirits of the elements and nature spirits e.g. **GNOMES**, **UNDINES**, **SYLPHS**, etc.

**ELEMENTARY:** A magically created thought form or **FAMILIAR**.

**ELDER:** Senior member of the **CRAFT**. Usually at least forty years old and with at least twenty years experience. In practice most Elders are over sixty. Takes the role of a consiglieri or advisor and counsellor. See also **DAME**.

**ELDER FAITH:** Traditional witchcraft or the pre-Christian pagan religions.

**ELDER GODS:** Those primeval deities, usually of a cosmic nature, that have existed before the 'gods made by men'.

**ELEMENTAL:** nature spirit.

**ELFHAME:** (Scottish dialect from the original Old Norse) 'Elf Home'. The hidden realm of the faeries. See also OTHERWORLD and UNDERWORLD.

**ELF:** Small trickster spirit.

**ELF FIRE:** Flame used to light a BALEFIRE without using metal.

**ELF LOCK:** Small intricate plait found in mane or tail of horses that have allegedly been ridden at night by witches or the faery folk

**ELVEN:** pertaining to the faery race of ELVES.

**ELVEN BLOOD:** See WITCH BLOOD.

**ELVEN FOLK:** The faeries.

**ELVEN RACE:** Hybrid human-faery descendants of the mating between the WATCHERS or fallen angels and the 'daughters of men'.

**ELVES:** (Old English and Germanic) Superior faery beings, often human size. In Norse myth there are both 'bright' and 'dark elves' with corresponding attributes.

**ENCHANT** (Gallo-Roman): Bewitch.

**ENCHANTER:** Magician or male witch who practices the art of ENCHANTING or ENCHANTMENT i.e. using spoken spells or charms.

**ENCHANTRESS:** Female enchanter.

**ENCHANTING:** The magical act of BEWITCHING.

**ENCHANTMENT:** To place under a spell or GLAMOUR.

**ENOCH:** First-born son of CAIN 'who walked with God and was not'. Recorder of the myth of the WATCHERS.

**ENOCHIAN:** The 'language of the angels' spoken by the WATCHERS and NEPHELIM. It was lost when the TOWER OF BABEL was destroyed and recovered by the Elizabethan magician Dr John Dee and his SEER

## *Glossary*

**Edward Kelly.** Sometimes known as the 'witches' language'. See ENOCH.

**EOSTRE or OSTARA (Anglo-Saxon)** The Christian festival of Easter or the pagan festival of the vernal equinox. Named after the Roman goddess of the dawn, Aurora, and associated with the hare-goddess ANDRASTE. Hence the 'Easter Hare' or 'Easter Bunny' and Easter Eggs.

**EPONA:** Iron Age horse-goddess worshipped and revered by some traditional witches in eastern England. See also RHIANNON.

**ESBAT (Persian):** Monthly meeting of a COVINE to discuss business or do magical workings, divination, healing or cursing. Usually held at the full or new moon.

**ESOTERIC (Greek):** 'For the few'. Knowledge or information that is not for the uninitiated and is generally private and confidential. See SUB-ROSA.

**EVIL EYE:** The belief that a glance or stare can injure or kill. See also OWL BLAST and OWL BLINK.

**EYE BITING:** See EVIL EYE.

**EVOCATION:** Summoning ELEMENTALS, spirits and SHADES.

**EXORCISM:** Magical operation to banish negative influences, earthbound spirits and evil entities. Also performed by the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches.

**FAERY BLOOD:** See ELVEN BLOOD, ELVEN RACE, and WITCH BLOOD.

**FAERY PATHS:** Routes across countryside used by the faery folk.

**FAERIE:** Faeryland or ELFHAME.

**FAIR FOLK:** Polite euphemism for faeries.

**FAITH, THE or THE ELDER or OLD FAITH:** Traditional witchcraft.

**FALL, THE:** 1) Expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden 2) Expulsion of LUCIFER from Heaven and his fall to Earth 3) Incarnation of the WATCHERS in human form.

**FALLEN ONES:** The fallen angels. See **WATCHERS**.

**FAMILIAR:** 1) Spirit, elementary or elemental servitor used by the witch for magical purposes 2) Small animal or bird trained by the witch and kept as a pet or animal companion such as a cat, mouse, rat, weasel, ferret, raven, crow 3) **TOTEM ANIMAL of a COVINE**.

**FAMTRAD:** American slang term for a 'family tradition' of hereditary witches.

**FARSEER:** (Farseerer) Psychic person with ability to see what is happening a distance away or divine the future.

**FASCINATE:** (Latin) Cast a **GLAMOUR** or **SPELL** on somebody, especially by projecting sexual energy or using sexual wiles or physical charms.

**FATE:** According to Robert Cochrane, the real name of the witch goddess. He said that the ultimate goal of the witch was to overcome Fate and escape from the Wheel of Life.

**FATHER CHRISTMAS, OLD:** Popular folk culture form of **WODEN** as leader of the **WILD HUNT**. Before the 20th century Old Father Christmas was a gnomish or goblin-like figure wearing a green robe and a wreath or crown of holly and mistletoe on his head. He was often depicted carrying a club or staff made of holly wood and a large **WASSAILING** bowl.

**FAUNUS** (Latin): Roman god of the forest. See also **SYLVANUS**.

**Fay or Fey** (French): 1) A faery 2) Relating to Faerie 3) Being psychic.

**FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS:** Candlemass (February 2nd)

**FETCH:** (Norse and Anglo-Saxon) 1) The projected spirit of a witch, sometimes appearing in animal form i.e. a hare, a white rabbit, a mouse, a weasel, a bat etc. 2) **ELEMENTARY** or thought form projected by the witch to do her **BIDDING**.

**FETISH** (Portuguese): Inanimate object or image imbued with magical power or properties or inhabited by a spirit.

**FETISHISM:** The worship, adoration or magico- spiritual recognition of a **FETISH**, especially in a ritualistic or religious context.

## *Glossary*

**FLAGS, FLAX, FODDER AND FRIGG:** Abbreviated to FFFF and used by Robert Cochrane to sign off his letters. Flags represents the hearth or home, flax is clothes, fodder is food and frigg is sex, so it is wishing the person an abundance of all these.

**FLY AGARIC or *Amanita muscaria* (Latin):** Red-capped, white-spotted toadstool featured in fairy tales with hallucinogenic properties. Used by traditional witches to facilitate spirit travel and contact with the Otherworld (Very poisonous and should only be used under expert guidance from an experienced person).

**FYLGJUR:** 1) the witch's Fetch 2) Domesticated household spirits, sometimes in animal form. See BROWNIE.

**FLYING OINTMENT:** Also known as the UNGUENTUM SABBATI 'Lifting Balm' or the Devil's Salve. A mixture of narcotic or hallucinogenic herbs and plants used to facilitate spirit travel. See also UNGUENTUM SABBATI.

**FORBIDDEN WISDOM:** As taught to the first woman and 'mother of humankind' Eve by the serpent and to early humans by the WATCHERS.

**FORTUNA (Latin):** Roman goddess of good fortune and luck. Ruler and patron spirit of the TAROT. Popularly known as 'Lady Luck'. Associated with the witch goddess in her aspect as FATE.

**FOURWAYS:** Crossroads.

**FRATERNITY:** (Latin, Old French and Middle English) A guild, society, magical order or COVINE whose membership is exclusively all-male.

**FRATERNITY OR BROTHERHOOD OF THE GOAT:** Name for traditional witchcraft COVINES who worship or revere the witch god in the form of a goat or a goat-headed man. See GOAT, THE and AZAZEL.

**FREY (Norse):** 'Lord' Horned or antlered, ithyphallic fertility god. Consort and twin brother of FREYA. The witch god in some OLD CRAFT traditions.

**FREYA (Norse) 'Lady'.** Twin sister of FREY. The witch goddess in some OLD CRAFT traditions.

**FUTHARK: (German)** The runic alphabet. See RUNES.

**GABLE RATCHETS:** North country dialect name for BLACK DOGS or the HELL HOUNDS, the pack of spectral dogs who run with the WILD HUNTER and the WILD HUNT.

**GALDR (Norse):** Magical art of casting SPELLS by singing or chanting.

**GALDRASTAFR (Norse):** Staff carved with BIND RUNES and other magical SIGILS and symbols. See STANG.

**GANDR (Norse):** A magical WAND carved with RUNES and other magical symbols.

**GARM (Norse):** name of the hound that guards the gates to the UNDERWORLD. See BLACK DOG.

**GARTER:** Traditional symbol of the female leader of a COVINE worn above the left knee.

**GEOMANCY:** Divination by earth forces or the art of placement (as in the Eastern system of feng-shui)

**GENIUS or GENII LOCI (Latin):** or 'spirits of place'. Localised land or earth spirits. See CUCULATTI and WIGHTS.

**GENTRY, THE:** Polite euphemism for faeries, especially the SEELIE COURT and the faery aristocracy.

**GHOST ROADS:** Paths across the countryside used by spirits.

**GOHUL (Arabic):** A non-human spirit that preys on the dead.

**GIBBOUS.** (Middle English) 'Humpbacked' or 'humped'. The waxing or waning moon when its bright part is greater than a semicircle, but less than a circle.

**GLAMOUR:** (French) A spell or charm using illusion and FASCINATION.

**GLASTONBURY TOR:** Artificial looking hill in the Somerset town of Glastonbury believed by the Iron Age people to be an entrance to the UNDERWORLD or the OTHERWORLD and as the HOLLOW HILL. See GWYN AP NUDD.

## *Glossary*

**GOAT, THE:** Title for a witch-master who adopts a goat-mask for rituals.

**GOAT-FOLD, THE:** Name for a form of traditional witchcraft allegedly imported into Australia by early British colonists.

**GOAT OF MENDES:** Ancient Egyptian name for BAPHOMET. Mendes was a city in Ancient Egypt where a sacred goat was mated with a priestess.

**GOBLIN WOOD:** Traditional name for woodland haunt of arboreal sprites who are sometimes tricksy and malicious.

**GOBLIN CROSS:** name for the PENTAGRAM.

**GODA or GODDA (Germanic):** Witch goddess as the Queen of Elfhame and female leader of the Wild Hunt. See HOLDA.

**GODHI or GOTHI:** (Norse) Priest.

**GOETIC:** Pertaining to medieval magic, especially the summoning of planetary spirits and DEMONS, and SORCERY.

**GOOD FELLOW:** Reference to someone who can be trusted or is worthy or is a member of the CRAFT.

**GOOD FOLK or GOOD PEOPLE:** Euphemism for faeries.

**GOOD WOMEN:** Early medieval term for witches believed to ride at night with DIANA and HOLDA.

**GOOSEFOOT, THE:** Name for the PENTAGRAM.

**GNOME:** 1) Dwarfish spirit from subterranean race who guards buried treasure 2) Elemental spirit of earth. See DWARVES.

**GNOSIS (Greek):** The realisation of spiritual mysteries or divine knowledge. Traditional witchcraft in its purest form is often described as a gnostic path.

**GRAIL or GRAAL:** Symbolic, metaphorical and mythical sacred vessel. Gaining a vision of the Grail after a quest represents reaching the end of the occult path and gaining Gnosis and spiritual enlightenment. See also Cauldron and Chalice.

**GREAT RITE:** The sacred marriage between the witch god and witch goddess. Ritual sex between the male and female leaders of the COVINE. Can be symbolically represented by inserting an **ATHAME** into the **CHALICE**.

**GREEN JACK:** see **GREEN MAN**.

**GREEN MAGIC or GREEN SORCERY:** Practical lore and use of herbs, plants and trees for magical purposes. See **VERDELET**.

**GREEN MAN:** 1) In folklore the foliate masks found carved in pre-Reformation churches 2) Folkloric character dressed in leaves and flowers featured in the May Day revels 3) The title of the witch god in his summer role as the Lord of the Wildwood or **GREENWOOD**. See **ALKHIDIR, CAIN. And ROBIN HOOD**.

**GREEN ROADS:** Prehistoric trackways often taken over by the Romans to build their famous highways and often marking the route of **LEV-LINES** across the countryside. Used by traditional witches for magical purposes and as **SPRIT ROADS**, See **GHOST ROADS, DRAGON PATHS and FAERY PATHS**.

**GREENWOOD:** Mythical and archetypal wood or forest based on far memories of the ancient woodlands of primeval times. See also **WILDWOOD**.

**GREY MAGIC:** 1) Cursing and curing, hexing and healing 2) The ability and practice of confusing, tricking and misleading people. It was said Robert Cochrane was an **ADEPT** at this type of magic.

**GREY WITCH:** A practitioner of the **CRAFT** who both curses and heals. See above entry.

**GRIGORI (Greek):** Alternative name for the **WATCHERS**.

**GRIM:** (Old Norse, Old English, Old High German) 1) Version of the **BLACK DOG** that haunts and guards churchyards and other burial places 2) **NICKNAME** for **WODEN** meaning 'Masked One' or 'Grey One' i.e. one of his other nicknames was 'Greybeard'.

**GRIMALKIN:** 'Grey she-cat'. Popular name for **FAMILIAR**, especially if it just so happens to be a grey female cat!

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**GRIMOIRE** (Medieval French): 'Gramarye' or 'Grammer'. A manual or guidebook of the magical arts. See also **BLACK BOOK**.

**GUISERS**: Masked and disguised performers and dancers who participate in midwinter seasonal customs and rites. See **MUMMERS**.

**GUISING**: The wearing of ritualistic costumes in seasonal customs and to represent either the **TOTEM ANIMALS** or patron spirits of the **COVINE, CLAN**, or tradition. See also **MASKING**.

**GWYN AP NUDD** (Welsh): 'White son of the Night' (the moon). Son of Nudd or Nodens. Version of the Lord of the **WILD HUNT** associated with **GLASTONBURY TOR** as an entrance to the **UNDERWORLD** or **OTHERWORLD**. In Christian times he was called the 'King of the Faeries' and was allegedly exorcised from the Tor by a Celtic saint who was living on its slopes. Regarded by some traditional witches in Wales and the West Country as a form of the witch god. His consort as witch goddess is said to be **MORGAN LE FAY**.

**Gwydion** (Welsh): A legendary **WIZARD**, teacher of magic and wisdom to humans and shape-changer. Name of the witch god in Welsh Craft.

**HABONDIA**: Germanic female deity of fertility, love and abundance and a traditional form of the witch goddess. See **HOLDA**.

**HAEGESSA** (Old German): 'Hedge rider' or 'HEDGE WITCH'. Somebody who 'rides the hedge' as representing or symbolising the liminal boundary between the everyday and the Other, the material world and the spirit realm.

**HALFLING**: Human-faery or angelic-human hybrid. See **ELVEN BLOOD** and **WITCH BLOOD**.

**HALLOWS**: Hallowe'en. October 31st. Also known as Samhain (Irish Gaelic) or 'Summer's End'

**HAND OF GLORY**: Severed hand of an executed criminal used in former times for magical purposes.

**HARVEST HOME**: Autumnal Equinox. September 21st/23rd

**HEATHEN**: Literally 'dweller on the heath'. Germanic term for a follower of a pre-Christian religion.

**HECATE** (Roman) or **HEKATE** (Greek): Goddess of witchcraft, the dark moon, the underworld the crossroads, and the dead.

**HEDGEWITCH** (Modern): A solitary practitioner (usually female) of the **CRAFT**. See **HAEGESSA**.

**HEL** (Norse) Goddess of the **UNDERWORLD**.

**HELWAEG**: (Norse) 'Hel's Way' Any **SPIRIT PATH** leading from **MIDDLE EARTH** to the **UNDERWORLD**.

**HELEL BEN SHAHAR** (Hebrew): 'Son of the Morning'. Canaanite sun god and forerunner of Lucifer.

**HELL HOUNDS**: The canine retinue of the **WILD HUNT**. See also **BLACK DOG**.

**HERLA'S HOUNDS**: Phantom dogs who accompany the **WILD HUNT**. See above.

**HEREDITARY CRAFT**: Form of traditional witchcraft followed by witches belonged to a witch family. See **FAMTRAD**.

**HEREDITARY WITCH**: Anyone born into a witch family or adopted by a **HEREDITARY CRAFT** tradition.

**HERMES**: Greek god of magic, roads, travellers, healers, merchants and thieves. See also **WODEN** and **TETTENS**.

**HERMETIC TRADITION**: The spiritual, magical and mystical teachings passed down through the centuries allegedly from the mythical **HERMES Trismegistus** that have influenced traditional witchcraft.

**HERMETIC**: Relating to the teachings of Hermes Trismegistus ('Thrice-Greatest') The Hermetic tradition is believed to have influenced the medieval witch-cult.

**HERODIAS or HERODIANA**: Wife of King Herod Antipas. Medieval name for the witch goddess in France. Also known as 'Lady Goosefoot'. See **MOTHER GOOSE**.

**HERNE** (Anglo-Saxon): Name for the guardian arboreal spirit or god of the woods and forests and the witch god in English in Anglo-Saxon

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**Craft**, especially when he appears as stag or stag-headed man. After the royal forester Richard Herne or Horne. Version of the Germanic god **WODEN** (Norse Odin). See also **ROBIN HOOD**.

**HERTHA**: Germanic earth goddess.

**HEX or HEXE**(German): 1) A witch 2) A curse 3) a spell or charm 4) to practice witchcraft. See **CURSE**.

**HEXENMEISTER** (German): American practitioner of hexcraft or *braucherei*.

**HEXAGRAM**: (Greek) The Star or Seal of Solomon. A six-pointed star.

**HIDDEN COMPANY**: Discarnated witches who remain earthbound as spirit guides and teachers.

**HIDDEN PEOPLE**: Faeries. See also **SECRET PEOPLE**.

**HIVE OFF**: When members of a **COVINE** leave with permission to form a new one in a tradition.

**HOB** (Archaic): Popular name for the **DEVIL** or **HORNED GOD**.

**HOB'S LANTERN**: See **WILL O' THE WISP**.

**HOBGOBLIN**: Hearth or domesticated spirit. See also **BROWNIE** and **ROBIN GOODFELLOW**.

**HOLDA**: 'Bright One'. Central European goddess who leads the **WILD HUNT**. Goddess of the **UNDERWORLD**. See **HABONDIA** and **HEL**.

**HOLLOW HILL**: Traditional name for the **UNDERWORLD**, especially associated symbolically with 'faery hills' or prehistoric burial mounds. See also **OTHERWORLD**.

**HOLLY KING**: The God of the Waning Year from **HALLOWS** to **BELTANE** or **YULE** to **MIDSUMMER**. See also **ARTHUR**.

**HORNED GOD or HORNED ONE**: The witch god. He is depicted usually in ithyphallic human form with the head of a goat, stag, ram or bull, a tail, hairy animal legs, and cloven hooves. See **OLD HORNIE**.

**HORSEMAN'S WORD or GUILD or SOCIETY OF HORSEMEN:** An all-male rural secret society whose members were drawn from farm workers who had daily contact with horses, ploughmen (although they also had their own secret guild) stable lads, veterinary surgeons , blacksmiths and farriers. Membership of the Horsemen gave power over animals, especially horses, and women! The Guild or Society of the Horseman's Word was believed to have associations with traditional witchcraft. See **TOAD MEN**.

**HOUZEL:** (Old English for 'sacrament') The communion of 'cakes and wine' at the conclusion of a **SABBAT** or **WORKING**.

**HYDERMOLDER** (German): 'The Elder Tree Mother'. Name for the witch goddess in her **CRONE** aspect.

**HYTERSsprite:** Any benevolent earth spirit. See **BROWNIE**.

**IBLIS** (Arabic): Islamic name for **LUCIFER**.

**ILLUMINATI** (Latin): 'Illuminated ones'. Spiritually advanced **ADEPTS** or enlightened persons. Not to be confused with the infamous secret society beloved of modern conspiracy theorists! See **PERFECTED MAN**.

**IMP** (Old English): ' Little devil'. Popular name for a **FAMILIAR** or **ELEMENTAL**.

**INCUBUS** (Latin): Incubo or 'nightmare'. Male spirit, **FETCH** or **SHADE** who is a sexual predator. Plural *incubi*.

**INDUCTION:** Introduction or **INITIATION** of a Neophyte into a **COVINE** or Craft tradition.

**INITIATE:** A person who has undergone a ceremony to join a **COVINE** or Craft tradition.

**INVOCATION:** A prayer or request to a deity or spirit.

**JACK O' LANTERN:** (Cornish and Devonshire) The form of the witch god invoked at **HALLOWS** to open up the **GHOST ROADS** and **SPIRIT PATHS**: See also **WILL O' THE WISP** and **JOAN OF WAD**.

**JANICOT:** Medieval French name for the witch god.

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**JOHN BARLEYCORN:** Folkloric name for the witch god at harvest time and associated with CAIN. See also CORN KING.

**JOAN OF WAD** (Cornish and Devonshire): Version of the witch goddess and consort of JACK O'LANTERN. Small metal or pewter images of her used to be sold commercially as a 'lucky charm'.

**JORD:** (Norse) Primeval Earth Mother Goddess. See NERTHUS.

**KAFTAN:** or Caftan (Turkish) Long garment with girdle or belt around waist. See ROBE.

**LADY:** 1) Traditionally the witch goddess 2) Female leader of COVINE

**LADY OF THE EVENING STAR:** Alternative title for LILITH.

**LAME GOD:** Term for the witch god, especially in his aspect as a smith god. See WAYLAND and VULCAN.

**LEY-LINE or LEY:** (Old English and Anglo-Saxon) 'Lea' or clearing. Word coined by Alfred Watkins in the 1920s to describe straight alignments between ancient prehistoric and medieval sites in the countryside. Today they are often referred to as 'spirit lines', 'ghost roads' and 'fairy paths'. They have been associated by modern EARTH MYSTERIES writers and researchers with witchcraft and witches flying on broomsticks (i.e. astrally travelling).

**Liberation (Latin):** To make a sacrificial offering of alcohol or spring water to the spirits, gods or faeries.

**Ligature (Latin):** 1) Cord used for magical or ritualistic purposes. See CINGULUM 2) Magically binding a person to prevent them causing harm or to limit their actions. See BINDING.

**LILITH:** Sumerian-Babylonian goddess of the dark moon. She was demonised in Hebrew mythology as a vampiric night demon, SUCCUBA and alleged baby killer because of her sexual nature and non-maternal instincts. She is depicted as a beautiful, unearthly woman with long hair, green cat's eyes, bat wings, hairy legs and owl's feet and is sometimes accompanied by a snake, lizard or dragon (LUCIFER). Consort of LUCIFER-LUMIEL and first wife of Adam before Eve. Also believed to have spawned the elves, goblins and faeries. See also QUEEN OF SHEBA.

**LILITH'S LANTERN:** (Poetic) The full moon.

**LIMINAL:** Relating to boundaries and edges where two or more places or landscape features (e.g. seashores, where the moorland and woodland meet, river banks, doorways, windows, chimneys, parish borders, churchyard walls, hedges, fences etc) meet to create a natural boundary or division. Also relating to divisions of time such as noon, midnight, dusk and dawn, the lunar phases and solar cycles and tides. Liminal places and times are regarded as very potent in magical workings as places that are portals or gateways to the OTHERWORLD.

**Lineage** (Latin, Old French and Middle English): The CRAFT tradition witches are initiated or inducted into and its 'family tree'. Lineal descent, pedigree or ancestry of a witch family.

**LINK OBJECT:** Material objects or substances, such as nail parings, a lock of hair, drops of blood etc., used in sympathetic magic, healing and cursing.

**LINKING:** making a psychic or magical contact (specifically) with the HIDDEN COMPANY, with patron spirits or SHADES, or with a person you are directing a spell or curse towards.

**LOGAN STONE:** 'Rocking stone'. Used by Cornish and Welsh traditional witches for INITIATIONS.

**LOKI:** Norse androgynous trickster god of fire worshipped and revered by some traditional witches.

**LORD and LADY:** The witch god and witch goddess. Not used as a human title in front of your magical or mundane name unless you happen to belong to the British aristocracy!

**LORD OF MISRULE:** A name for the witch god in his winter and trickster aspect. Also the name of the person chosen by lots to rule over YULE and the TWELVE DAYS, the so-called 'Days of Misrule' when anarchy is the order of the day and social norms are overthrown or ignored. See GUIERS and MUMMERS.

**LORD OF THE MOUND:** In the Robert Cochrane tradition the UNDERWORLD god represented by TETTENS. The witch god as Lord of the Dead and the UNDERWORLD.

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**LORD OF THE MORNING STAR:** Alternative title for LUCIFER.

**LORD OF THE WORLD:** Alternative title for LUCIFER or BAPHOMET.

**LUCET:** The name of the YOUNG HORNED GOD in the Robert Cochrane tradition. Comparable with LUCIFER.

**LUCIFER** (Latin): 'Lightbearer'. The Roman god of light, and traditionally the witch god in his solar aspect as the guide, enlightener and teacher of humankind. In the Bible and the Koran he appears as a rebel angel who defies Yahweh because he refuses to worship Adam and is cast down to Earth to become the planetary regent. Regarded by some traditional witches in this role as 'Lord of the World' as their saviour and redeemer. Not to be confused with the Christian bogey SATAN. See also LUMIEL. Depicted and appears as a beautiful, androgynous, ageless man with long hair, violet eyes and golden wings. See also AZAZEL, HELEL LUMIEL, IBLIS, SAMAEL, SHAHMAH, and SHEMYAZA.

**LUCIFERIAN or LUCIFERIC CRAFT:** Term created by Michael Howard in the 1990s to describe those branches of the Traditional and Hereditary Craft that revere LUCIFER or LUMIEL as the witch god. Now widely adopted.

**LUMIEL** (Hebrew) or **LUMIAL**: (Arabic) 'Light of God' Esoteric names of Cabalistic origin for LUCIFER.

**LYCAN** (Latin): 'Wolf'. A WEREWOLF.

**LYCANTHROPY:** (Greek) 'Wolf man'. Transformation of a human being into a WEREWOLF.

**MASKING:** The wearing of masks to represent either patron or tutelary spirits or **TOTEM ANIMALS**. See also SHAPESHIFTING.

**MAGICK** (Medieval English): Archaic and alternative spelling of 'magic' used to distant it from conjuring tricks and stage illusions.

**MAGISTELLUS** (Latin): 'Little master' Name for a FAMILIAR spirit or elemental SERVITOR.

**MAGISTER** (Latin) 'Master'. Male leader of a traditional COVINE as the human representative of the HORNED GOD or DEVIL.

**MAGUS** (Greek and Persian): Term for 'magician' from the Persian 'Magi', as in the Three Wise Men who brought their symbolic gifts to the baby Jesus. A male practitioner of the magical arts in the OLD CRAFT.

**MAID or MAIDEN** Young assistant or deputy to the LADY (2). In hereditary groups she may be the LADY's daughter or niece.

**MALEFICIA** (Latin): The magical art of cursing or hexing.

**MAN IN BLACK**: Popular name for the MAGISTER or SUMMONER, especially as the leader of several COVINES or an OLD CRAFT tradition.

**MANDRAKE**: Narcotic plant used for psychic and magical purposes.

**MANDRAGORE** (Greek): Alternative name for the MANDRAKE plant.

**MANIFESTATION**: Physical and visible appearance of a spirit or psychic phenomena, especially in the CIRCLE OF ARTE.

**MAN IN THE MOON**: Folkloric name for Cain. In the mythos of SABBATIC CRAFT and Italian witchcraft Cain lives in the moon and it is a half-way house for the spirits of the dead travelling to the UNDERWORLD.

**MARK OF CAIN**: 1) Special identifying feature given to CAIN, the 'first murderer', by Yahweh to protect him from the revenge of the children of his half-brother and victim Abel. Said to be a physical deformity such as horns, extreme hairiness or a lame leg. 2) A special symbol or sign seen in the AURA of those with the WITCH BLOOD.

**MASTER**: Title for the male leader of a COVINE. See MAGISTER.

**MARY MAGDALENE** or the Black Madonna: Some traditional witches who practice DUAL-FAITH OBSERVANCE regard the alleged wife of Jesus as an incarnation or AVATAR of LILITH.

**MASTERS OF WISDOM**: See WATCHERS.

**MEAD**: Ancient sacred drink made of honey and apples often used in the HOUZEL.

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**MEASURE:** Cord or thread used during INITIATION or INDUCTION to measure the candidate's body. Blood from their pricked thumb is then smeared on it. It is kept and could be used to bind, ban or hex the initiate if they betray the COVINE or Craft tradition.

**MEET:** Traditional name for a gathering of witches. Probably derived from the English rural tradition of fox or stag hunting where gatherings of hunters are called 'meets'.

**MEETING DANCE:** Spiral dance used to open a circle. See CHAIN DANCE.

**MERLIN:** 1) Arthurian Wizard and kingmaker 2) Guardian spirit of Albion 3) OLD CRAFT title as 'the merlin' 4) Hereditary, anointed or reincarnated priesthood. See 3)

**MICHAEL OR MIKAEL (Hebrew):** This archangel and saint is revered by some traditional witches. He is depicted as a young man in shining armour holding a flaming sword and a shield. As the commander-in-chief of the heavenly forces he defeated LUCIFER. He also banished Adam and Eve from the Garden and in Christian mythology guards the gates of Hell. For that reason churches dedicated to this angel were built on former pagan sites, especially on hills in the West Country of England e.g. GLASTONBURY TOR.

**MIDDLE EARTH (from Norse 'Midgard'):** The material or mortal world. See MIDGARD.

**MIDGARD (Norse):** 'Middle Earth'.

**MILLER'S WORD:** An all-male guild or secret society practising folk magic whose members were exclusively millers.

**MIGHTY ONES:** 1) THE WATCHERS 2) the NEPHILIM 3) The ANCESTRAL DEAD 4) The HIDDEN COMPANY 5) Elemental guardians of the circle.

**MISSAL:** Prayer book used during magical or witchcraft rituals. See also BLACK BOOK, BOOK OF SECRETS, and GRIMOIRE.

**MISTRESS:** Title for the female leader of a COVINE.

*Children of Cain*

**MISTRESS OF ROBES:** Female officer of the Covine responsible for looking after and maintaining the ceremonial robes used by members.

**MOLE COUNTRY: THE UNDERWORLD.** ‘To go to the Mole Country’ is to die and pass over to the spirit world.

**MOMMET:** Alternative name for POPPET or PUPPET or wax image.

**MOON BLOOD (Poetic):** Menstrual blood when used in spells and as a personal sacrificial offering.

**MOON DEW (Poetic):** The female sexual secretions when used in spells and other magical workings.

**MOTHER GOOSE:** Nursery rhyme version of HOLDA.

**MOTHER'S NIGHT:** See YULE.

**MUMMERS:** Masked dancers who participate in semi-pagan Christian ‘mystery players’ at Yule and Esotre. See GUIERS and GUIISING.

**MUMP (Old English):** Name for a hill or mound, especially if associated in local folklore with faeries, ghostly hauntings or reputed to be a witches’ meeting place. See TOOT HILL.

**MUNDANE (Latin, Old French and Middle English):** ‘Of this world’ or worldly. Relating to MIDDLE EARTH or the material plane.

**MYSTERY TRADITION:** The corpus of Esoteric and Occult teachings and knowledge that have been passed down through the ages in secret and underground. Traditional witchcraft is often referred to as a ‘mystery Cultus’. See also WESTERN MYSTERY TRADITION.

**NAAMAH (Hebrew):** Biblical sister of TUBAL CAIN. The AVATAR or sister of LILITH who taught human women the craft of spinning and weaving and could ENCHANT by the use of songs. Seducer of AZAZEL or SHEMYAZA.

**NAYWORD:** Password given at initiations into the Craft.

**NECROMANCY (Latin from Greek):** ‘Divination by the dead’. Evocation of the SHADES of the dead.

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**NEMETON (Latin):** Sacred grove.

**NEOPHYTE (Greek):** 'Newly planted'. Beginner in the Craft prior to INITIATION or INDUCTION.

**NEPHILIM (Hebrew):** The biblical 'mighty men of old, men of renown'. A giant race of ancient magicians who were the hybrid offspring of the mating between the WATCHERS and the 'daughter of men'. They were supposed to have been destroyed in a prehistoric global cataclysm (Noah's Flood in the Bible and also found in the myths of other ancient cultures worldwide) allegedly sent by Yahweh to punish early humanity for its wickedness.

**NERTHUS (German):** Primordial earth goddess worshipped by some traditional witches. See JORD.

**NEW MOON:** The first night when you can see the crescent of the new moon in the sky is the best time for performing magical workings for new projects and putting new ideas into practice.

**NICKNAME:** 'Devil name' from OLD NICK. New name the initiate is given or baptised with when he or she enters the witch-cult.

**NIDHSTANG (Norse):** see NIDING POLE.

**NIDING or NITHING POLE (Norse):** Staff mounted with a horses' skull and carved with RUNES used for cursing.

**NIGHTMARE:** 'Night Mare'. Version of the witch goddess in horse form. See also SUCCUBA, HECATE and LILITH.

**NIGHT WALKERS:** Witches, especially when projecting their FETCH or spirit travelling.

**NIMROD:** 'Mighty hunter'. Codename for LUCIFER in Esoteric Freemasonry. Descendant of CAIN and the NEPHILIM or even one of them. Also associated with Orion the Hunter and SHEMYAZA. See TOWER OF BABEL.

**NICNEVIN:** Scottish name for the witch goddess.

**NIXIES (Greek):** Water spirits or ELEMENTALS.

**NO-MAN'S LAND:** Piece of empty or uncultivated land at a crossroads. See **DEVIL'S ACRE**.

**NORNS:** (Norse) The Wyrd Sisters, Three Fates or Three Mothers. Triplexity of goddesses ruling fate and destiny. They appear in Shakespeare's Scottish play as the three witches on the blasted heath who predict the king's destiny and fate.

**NORTHWAYS:** In a northward or anti-clockwise direction. See also **WIDDERSHINS**.

**NOTT** (Norse): Primordial goddess of the night. See **NOX**.

**NOWL:** Nail or navel, in reference to the Pole or North Star as the 'Nail of the Heavens'.

**NOX:** (Greek) Goddess of the night and supreme creatrix in the Cochrane tradition.

**OAK KING:** God of the Waxing Year from May Eve to **HALLOWS** or Midsummer to **YULE** and Lord of the **GREENWOOD**. See **GREEN MAN** and **ROBIN HOOD**.

**OAKMEN:** Wood sprites that are guardians of wildlife and hostile to humans. See **WOODWOSES**.

**OBERON:** Spirit invoked in medieval magic to find hidden treasure. Folkloric name for the king of the faeries and a traditional name for the witch god. See also **TITIANA**.

**OCCULT** (Latin): Hidden, mysterious, secret, concealed, or beyond the range or understanding of ordinary knowledge or perception.

**OD** (Norse) 'Wanderer'. A consort of **FREYA**. Associated with **WODEN** and **CAIN**. Robert Cochrane said he was "Od's man", probably referring to Woden or Odin.

**ODIN** (Norse): Version of **WODEN**.

**OFFICER:** Member of **COVINE**, with specific role e.g. **MAGISTER**, **LADY**, **MAID**, **SUMMONER**, **VERDELET**, **ETC.**

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**OGHAM:** Ancient Irish alphabet of the so-called 'Dark Ages' used for magical purposes by some modern traditional witches.

**OLD CRAFT:** Traditional witchcraft i.e. any non-Wiccan or pre-Wiccan form, especially if its takes its inspiration from historical witchcraft and claims a heritage older than the 20th century.

**OLD BIDDY:** Derogatory name for an elderly woman popularly believed to be a witch.

**OLD CROCKERN:** Guardian spirit or **GENII LOCI** of Dartmoor . Name of the witch god in Devon Craft.

**OLD GODS, THE:** 1) Any pre-Christian deity 2) the witch god and witch goddess.

**OLD HORNIE:** Popular name for the witch god.

**OLD JACK:** Popular name for the witch god in his dark winter aspect. See also **JACK O' LANTERN**.

**OLD LAD:** North Country name for the Devil.

**OLD LASS:** North Country name for the witch goddess.

**OLD MOTHER REDCAP:** Generic name for a witch or **CUNNING WOMAN** from the distinctive headgear worn by some sisters of the Craft.

**OLD NICK:** The **DEVIL**.

**OLD ONES, THE:** The witch god and goddess.

**OLD SERPENT:** In the **SABBATIC CRAFT**, a name for **LUCIFER-LUMIEL** in his form as the tempting serpent in the biblical Garden of Eden myth who gave Eve wisdom.

**OLD SPLITFOOT:** **THE DEVIL OR HORNED GOD.**

**OLD WAYS, THE:** Traditional witchcraft or the old pagan religions.

**OND:** (Norse) 'vital breath'. The life force, prana or ch'i permeating all living things.

**OMEN:** Occurrence or object of prophetic significance. See DIVINATION.

**OOSER:** Local version of the HORNED GOD in bull form and the witch god in Dorset Craft.

**ORACLE:** 1) Place where the spirits are consulted 2) Prophetic utterance by a spirit 3) Psychic person who is a seer and diviner in a COVINE.

**OORLOG:** (Norse) Primal law of the universe ruling WYRD. European equivalent to the Eastern concept of karma.

**ORM:** (Norse and Old English) 1) The World Serpent who encircles the Earth 2) An ELEMENTAL or ELEMENTARY in the shape of a dragon or serpent (sometimes a winged serpent) who guards burial mounds.

**OTHER SIDE, THE:** The spirit world.

**OTHERWORLD:** 1) The spirit realm 2) ELFANE 3) The realm of divine archetypes 4) Alternative dimensions or levels of reality 5) The UNDERWORLD 6) The collective unconscious 7) Aspects of all the preceding!

**OVERLOOK:** Cast the EVIL EYE. See also OWL BLAST.

**OUTER COURT:** A group of probationers or NEOPHYTES being trained and taught for possible INITIATION or INDUCTION into a Covine.

**OWL BLAST:** or OWL BLINK See EVIL EYE.

**PACT:** A signature in blood given freely by the new initiate and recorded in the BLACK BOOK or other COVINE records. It was believed in historical times that this pact was made to the DEVIL or HORNED GOD and the witch exchanged their soul (given up at their death) for magical powers

**PADFOOT:** Popular name for BLACK DOG in northern England.

**PAN:** Greek goat-foot god.

**PARENT COVINE:** The group a witch is first initiated into.

**PASSING THE POWER:** The act during initiations or inductions into the OLD CRAFT where the initiator passed on his own her 'virtue' and the

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initiate is connected to the ancestral and patron spirits and the group-mind of the COVINE or tradition.

**PEACOCK ANGEL:** In the SABBATIC CRAFT and LUCIFERIAN CRAFT a title for LUCIFER-LUMIEL and SHEMYAZA. See also YEZEDIS.

**PENDRAGON** (Welsh Pendraig): 'Head Chieftain'. Ceremonial title for the sacred priest-king of ALBION married to the Goddess of the Land. (See also MERLIN and ARTHUR and SOVEREIGNTY).

**PENDULUM** (Latin) Device made of crystal, stone or wood on the end of a cord or thread used for DIVINATION.

**PENTACLE** (Latin): A wooden or metal or slate disc carved with a PENTAGRAM and representing the element of earth.

**PENTAGRAM** (Greek): Five-pointed star symbolising the four elements of fire, earth, air, water and ether or spirit. See GOBLIN CROSS and GOOSEFOOT.

**PERFECTED MAN** or **PERFECT ONE**: Term used by the CATHARS for an enlightened human being of either gender who when they discarnate will be free from the cycle of birth, life, death and rebirth. It is a term that entered the medieval witch-cult from Catharism. See also ILLUMINATI.

**PHILTRE** (Greek): 'To love'. Archaic name for a love potion.

**PISKY**: Cornish dialect name for a PIXY.

**PIXY**: Devonshire dialect name for a faery, elf or nature spirit .

**PLANT ALLIES**: The spirits of plants contacted through GREEN MAGIC.

**POPPET** (Middle English): 'Puppet'. Wax, clay, wool or cloth image or doll of a person used for cursing and healing. See MOMMET and PUPPET.

**POSSESSION** or spirit ingress. The process by which a person is taken over or controlled by a spirit or SHADE.

**POWER ANIMAL** (Modern): See TOTEM ANIMAL.

**POWER CENTER:** Special and often sacred place in the countryside where several LEY-LINES meet and used by traditional witches for magical workings. See also GREEN ROADS.

**POWER OBJECT:** (Modern) Any material object charged or imbued with spiritual power or magical or psychic energy. See also FETISH.

**PRAXIS** (Greek): An accepted custom or regular practice or the performance of an art.

**PSILOCYBIN** (Greek): Active chemical principle of the so-called 'magic mushroom' (*Psilocybe* spp.). A hallucinogenic fungi used by modern traditional witches. (Should be only used with extreme care and under expert and experienced guidance.)

**PUCK or POOK** (Old English, Welsh and Old Norse): *genii loci* or 'spirit of place'. Traditional name for the witch god. See also BUCCA and ROBIN GOODFELLOW.

**PUPPET:** See POPPET and MOMMET.

**PURIFICATION:** Blessing or casting out or cleansing impurities and negative influences from people, places and objects. See also BLESSING and CONSECRATION.

**RATATOSK** (Norse): Squirrel who runs up and down YGGDRASIL as a messenger between humans and the Gods. He features in the masking rituals of an old Oxfordshire COVINE discovered by Evan John Jones.

**REX MUNDI:** (Latin) 'King of the World'. Alternative title for LUCIFER or BAPHOMET as LORD OF THE WORLD.

**REX NEMORENSIS** (Latin): 'King of the Woods'. Title for the priest-king. See also DIVINE KING and PENDRAGON.

**RHIANNON** (Welsh): Version of EPONA as horse-goddess of the UNDERWORLD.

**'RIDING THE WIND'**: Astral or spirit travel.

**RUNES, THE** (Norse runa 'to whisper'). 1) Secular alphabet used for magical purposes in Northern Europe 2) A general word for any form of spell, incantation or CHARM.

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**RUNES OF ANDRED:** Magical alphabet claimed to be used in traditional Sussex Craft. See **ANDRASTE**.

**QUARTERS:** The four compass points of the **CIRCLE OF ARTE**.

**QUEEN OF ELFHAME:** (Scottish) or **QUEEN OF FAERIE:** Traditional name for the witch goddess in her faery aspect. See **GODDA**.

**QUEEN OF SHEBA:** Semi-mythical and historical character mentioned in the Old Testament as the lover of King Solomon. She is supposed to have ruled over the country of Sheba (modern Yemen, Ethiopia or Saudi Arabia). As she is described as having hairy legs, she has sometimes been identified as an **AVATAR** or incarnation of **LILITH**.

**QUEEN OF THE SABBATH:** Honorary title for the **LADY (2)** or **MAID**. It may sound sexist in these politically correct days, but the Queen of the Sabbat was chosen for her beauty and became the 'Bride of the (Horned) God'.

**REVENANT:** see **SHADE** and **WRAITH**.

**RATH** (Irish Gaelic): 'Faery fort' or burial mound/hill fort. Some traditional witches use this word to describe their **CIRCLE OF ARTE**, **COVINESTEAD** or meeting ground.

**ROBE** (Middle English and Old French): Loose fitting garment made of cotton or wool sometimes with an attached hood used in traditional witchcraft as ritual wear. Usually black or can be white, green, brown and red. See **KAFTAN**.

**ROBIN** (Middle English, Old French and Arabic and Hebrew): Possibly from the Arabic *rabbin* and the Jewish *rabbi* meaning teacher. Name of the witch god in the historical English witch cult and the **SARACEN CRAFT**.

**ROBIN GOODFELLOW.** Folkloric version of the witch god in his trickster aspect. See **PUCK**.

**ROBIN HOOD** In some **OLD CRAFT** traditions, such as that of Robert Cochrane, the legendary medieval outlaw is regarded as a form of the witch god as **OAK KING** and **Lord of the GREENWOOD**. He has been associated in popular culture with **HERNE THE HUNTER** and in Craft terms with **WODEN**.

**ROEBUCK IN THE THICKET:** (Poetic) Term in the Cochrane Craft to describe the Sacrificed God. See **WHITE STAG**.

**ROSMERTA:** Celtic goddess associated with the CUCULATTI or 'Hooded Ones' and regarded by some as an aspect of the witch goddess.

**RUNES** (Old German and Old Norse): *Runa* or *Roon* (Old English) or 'whisper'. Germanic alphabet used for magical purposes or any form of charm or **SIGIL**.

**SABBAT** See **SABBATH**.

**SABBATIC CRAFT:** Term created by the late Andrew Chumbley to describe the **OLD CRAFT** traditions he was initiated into as a young man. The name alludes to their character of rituals and sorcery as resonant with the **SABBATHS** of medieval European witchcraft.

**UNGUENTUM SABBATI** (Latin): Flying ointment.

**SABBATH** (Hebrew) or **SABBAT** (Modern): Gatherings of traditional witches, sometimes including seasonally themed rites. Held on Candlemass (February 1st), Lady Day (March 25th), May Eve or Walpurgis Nacht (April 30th), Midsummer's Eve (June 23rd), Lammas (August 1st), Michaelmass (September 29th), Hallows (October 31st), Yule (December 21st/22nd), and Twelfth Night (January 6th). Also known as the 'Nine Knots of the Year' or the 'Wheel of the Year'. See also **MEETS**.

**SACRIFICE:** Offering to a deity or spirit for reasons of supplication. In ancient times this was usually in the form of an animal or human sacrifice. Today it can be any form including a few drops of the supplicant's own blood or other bodily fluids containing their life force (e.g. semen), a lock of hair, eggs, flowers, sweets (especially chocolate), alcohol, tobacco, candles, incense, essential oils, or any personal material object of some value. See **MOON BLOOD** and **SOLAR SEED**.

**SACRIFICED GOD:** In some **OLD CRAFT** traditions the God is sacrificed at Midsummer or **LAMMAS**, descends to the Underworld or into the **HOLLOW HILL** in the autumn and is reborn at **YULE**. In human terms he is represented by the Divine King. See **STARCHILD**, **YOUNG HORNED KING**, **ARTHUR** and **PENDRAGON**.

**SALAMANDERS:** Elemental spirits of fire.

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**SAMAEL** (Hebrew): Angel of Death and Jewish version of SATAN. Real father of CAIN. See also AZAZEL and AZRAEL.

**SAMHAIN** (Irish Gaelic): 'Summer's End' Pronounced as 'So-win' Celtic name for HALLOWS.

**SARACEN CRAFT**: Allegedly introduced into southern Europe by the Moors and based on the teachings of the Arab mystery schools. Influenced the medieval witch-cult.

**SATAN** (Hebrew): 'Opposer' or 'tempter'. In Christian mythology the supreme principle of evil. When the Christian Church suppressed the old pagan religions they transformed the Old Gods into demons and borrowed the physical characteristics of the HORNED GOD to describe Satan. Not to be confused with LUCIFER.

**SATYR** (Greek and Old French): Half-human, half-goat creatures in Greek mythology used a template for physical descriptions of SATAN and the DEVIL by the early Church.

**SCOURGE** (Latin and Middle English): Small whip sometimes made with a wooden or bone handle and horse hair or knotted leather thongs used to raise power and gain the SECOND SIGHT.

**SCRY** (French 'descry'): To foretell the future or communicate with spirits using a crystal, magic mirror or bowl of water, ink or blood.

**SEAL**: The symbol or SIGIL of a DEMON or spirit.

**SECOND SIGHT or THE SIGHT**: Psychic ability to see visions or predict future events. See also FARSEER and SEER.

**SECRET PEOPLE**: Faeries. See also HIDDEN PEOPLE.

**SEEING STONE, SHEW STONE or SHOW STONE**: A crystal ball.

**SEELIE COURT** (Irish Gaelic): 'The Blessed Assembly'. The court of the king and queen of Faerie.

**SEER**: Psychic person who can foresee the future , practice spirit contact and ingress, and sees visions. See also FARSEER.

**SEIDR**: (Old Norse) 'Seething' referring to potions brewed in a CAULDRON. A form of magic practised by the seer-priestesses of the

goddess Freya and believed to be a prototype of medieval witchcraft.

**SEIRIM** (Hebrew): Satyr-like entities in the retinue of AZAZEL and regarded by the ancient Hebrews as demons of the desert; regarded as a classification of DJINN in Arabian traditions.

**SERVITOR:** (Latin) 'Servant'. See FAMILIAR.

**SETH:** The third son of Adam and Eve. In the SABBATIC CRAFT he symbolises and represents the enlightened, transmuted, or spiritually aware man or woman. See PERFECT MAN.

**SHADE** (Old High German and Middle English): An earthbound human spirit or 'ghost' who is attached to its previous surroundings while incarnated. See also REVENANT.

**SHAMASH:** Babylonian sun god of the UNDERWORLD known as the lord of treasure and artificer of metals. See AZAZEL and TUBAL CAIN.

**SHAPESHIFTING:** The ability for a witch to appear in the form of a were-animal or project the FETCH in animal form. See also LYCANTHROPY and WEREWOLF.

**SHEMYAZA, SAMYAZA OR SEMJAZA:** A fallen angel and aspect of AZAZEL and LUMIEL. His voluntary punishment for defying Yahweh was to Sacrifice himself by hanging upside down for eternity in the constellation of Orion the Hunter. See NIMROD and the major arcane card 'The Hanged Man' in the TAROT.

**SHIMMERING** (Old English): 'Shining' See SHAPESHIFTING.

**SIDHE** (Irish Gaelic, Pronounced 'Shee'): 'Shining Ones'. The faery folk. Some folkloric sources regard the Sidhe as the spirits of the fallen angels.

**SIGIL** (Latin): A single letter or character designed to represent a word. Magical figure, character or symbol.

**SIMPLE** (Old French and Medieval English): A herbal remedy.

**SO MOTE IT BE** (from Old English): Traditional affirmation at the end of a charm, evocation, or spell to seal it and send it on its way.

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**SODALITY** (French): A guild or association of traditional witches, sometimes from the same tradition or lineage or often from different ones.

**SOLAR SEED**: Male semen when used in magical workings and as a personal sacrificial offering.

**SOLITARY or SOLITAIRE (SOLO) WITCH**: One who works alone or just with a magical partner and does not belong to a CLAN, COVINE or witch family. See also HEDGEWITCH. Of course witches who do belong to a group may also work solo at times and do their own private practice.

**SONS OF ABRAHAM**: Followers of the three patriarchal Middle Eastern religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

**SONS or SEED OF ADAM**: Ordinary human beings. See CLAY-BORN.

**SONS OF GOD**: The fallen angels.

**SONS OF HEAVEN**: The angelic hierarchy or the fallen angels.

**SORCERY**: (Latin) 'Divination by lots' Term for the magical arts, especially 'low magic', practised for material gain and of an averse, dark or malefic nature.

**SORCERER**: (Latin) Male magician, especially one practising 'low magic'.

**SORCERESS**: (Latin) Female magician, especially one practising 'low magic'.

**SOUTHWAYS**: See DEOSIL.

**SPECULUM**: (Latin) 'Mirror'. Magical mirror.

**SPELL** (Middle English and Old French): 1) magical act or words designed to cause changes in consciousness and influence events and people. 2) Act of attracting or fascinating a person, sometimes against their will. See also FASCINATION.

**SPIRIT**: Any non-human entity or god.

**SPIRIT FLAIL or WHIP**: Used to control unruly spirits. Made from bramble, holly, or rowan wood .

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**SPIRIT-GUIDE:** Discarnate human or spirit teacher. See **DAIMON** and **HIDDEN COMPANY**.

**SPIRIT-PATHS:** Straight-line alignments or **LEY-LINES** across the countryside used for astral projection or spirit travel by witches (hence 'flying on a broomstick') and also as routes in **MIDDLE EARTH** for non-human spirits to travel to and from the **OTHERWORLD**.

**SPOOK** (Middle Low German) : 1) Ghost or **SHADE** 2) Nature spirit 3) Elemental or elementary 4) Frighten with psychic phenomena.

**SOVEREIGNTY:** The Goddess of the Land who grants the priest-king rulership. See **ARTHUR** and **PENDRAGON**.

**ST JOHN'S EVE:** June 23rd or Midsummer's Eve. A liminal magical time when the 'veil is thin between the worlds' and faeries and spirits are out and about. With **MAY EVE** and **HALLOWS** it is one of the three 'Spirit Nights'.

**STANG** (Old Norse): 'Pole'. Traditionally a forked staff used to represent the Horned God in the circle and carried by the **MAGISTER** or his deputy as a symbol of their power and authority as leader of the **COVINE**. Can also act as a portable **ALTAR** and in the Cochrane tradition it is garlanded with seasonal flowers and symbols and moved around the circle to mark the **WHEEL OF THE YEAR**.

**STARCHILD:** The God reborn at **YULE**. See **HOLLY KING** and **YOUNG HORNED GOD**.

**STAR OF ISHTAR:** Seven-pointed star. Symbol of **LILITH**.

**STREGA** (Italian): Witch.

**SUB-ROSA** (Latin): Roman expression referring to confidential or secret information talked about in rooms with a rose-patterned ceiling. Relates in Traditional Craft to any secret, confidential or oath-bound material or information passed from one initiate to another 'sub-rosa'.

**SUCCUBA** (Latin: 'Prostitute'): Female sexually-predatory spirit, **FETCH** or **SHADE**. Plural *succubi*.

**SUFISM:** Heretical and esoteric branch of Islam retaining some pre-Islamic beliefs. Some Sufi beliefs and practices are believed to have

influenced the medieval witch-cult.

**SUMMONER:** Male officer of COVINE responsible for arranging MEETS and also may act as Scribe, Keeper of Archives and Recorder.

**SUPERNATURAL or SUPRANATURAL:** Above or beyond the natural world.

**SYLPHS (Greek):** Elemental spirits of air.

**SYLVANUS (Latin):** Roman god of the woods and a name for the witch god.

**TALISMAN (Greek):** Magical Power OBJECT for attracting good fortune and luck.

**TAROT:** (Italian) Pack of fortune-telling cards historically used by witches.

**TEMPLE:** (Latin, Old English and Middle French) Specially consecrated room or building used exclusively for magical purposes.

**TETTENS:** the LORD OF THE MOUND in the Robert Cochrane tradition. Comparable with HERMES, WODEN, and CAIN.

**TITIANA:** (Greek) Queen of the Faeries and a traditional name for the witch goddess. Mentioned originally by Ovid and taken up by Shakespeare.

**THEBAN:** Magical alphabet allegedly invented by Pope Honorius, who was supposed secretly to be a magician, and named after the Ancient Egyptian city of Thebes. Very popular with modern magicians and witches.

**THURIBLE:** (Latin) Censer or incense burner.

**TOAD BONE RITE:** A magical working found in eastern England and Wales for achieving magical powers and the control of wild animals and horses through contact with the DEVIL and the use of a special bone from a toad.

**TOAD MAN or WOMAN:** Someone who has performed the toad rite and as a result has achieved power over animals, especially horses. See WATERS OF THE MOON.

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**TOOT HILL:** (Old English or Anglo-Saxon) Common name for a hill rumoured to be used by witches as a meeting place. See also **MUMP**.

**TOTEM** Animal or natural object of symbolic and spiritual significance to a **COVINE**, **CLAN** or tradition and sometimes used as their emblem.

**TOTEM ANIMAL:** Any animal, bird, amphibian or reptile that has special magical or spiritual significance to a person or group e.g. hare, owl, toad, cat, peacock, fox, badger etc. See **POWER ANIMAL**.

**TOWER OF BABEL:** A ziggurat or temple built by **KING NIMROD** to 'reach Heaven'. A symbol of humankind's search for spiritual enlightenment, perfection and freedom from the **Wheel of Life** that was thwarted by the tyrant god Yahweh. See the major arcane card 'The Tower Struck by Lightning' in the **TAROT**.

**TRADITIONAL WITCH:** 1) Initiate of a group or tradition claiming to pre-date modern Wicca 2) **SOLO** or solitary witch or member of a **COVINE** following a non-Wiccan tradition based on historical witchcraft.

**TREE OF LIFE:** In mythologies worldwide an allegorical blueprint of the cosmos or universe. See also **AXIS MUNDI** and **YGGDRASIL**.

**TRIANGLE OF ARTE:** Triangle drawn or marked on the ground outside the circle in medieval magic into which are **CONJURED** spirits to physical appearance.

**TROLL (Norse):** Malevolent earth spirit.

**TUBAL CAIN:** The first smith mentioned in the Bible. Descendant of **CAIN** and a traditional name for an avatar of **LUCIFER** or **AZAZEL**. See also **Tubalo**. Known as the 'Hairy One' and he sometimes appears as a goat-headed man.

**TUBALO, OLD:** Romany name for **TUBAL CAIN**.

**TUTELARY SPIRIT (Latin):** A guardian or patron spirit of a **COVINE**, **CLAN** or tradition.

**TWILIGHT:** A **LIMITED** time at dusk or dawn when the 'veil between the worlds is thin'. It is a good time for spirit contact, scrying and astral travel.

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**TWELFTH NIGHT** (January 6th): Celebrated by some traditional witches when **WASSAILING** is performed and the **LORD OF MISRULE** is elected.

**TWELVE DAYS, THE:** The **LIMINAL** period between **YULE** and **TWELFTH NIGHT** when all normal rules of social and moral behaviour are ignored or broken. See **LORD OF MISRULE**. It is also the time when the **WILD HUNT** is most active during the year and when the chthonic powers of darkness reign supreme.

**TWO HORNED CULT:** Tribal sect in North Africa in medieval times with pre-Islamic beliefs who worshipped a horned god and practised **SORCERY**. It is believed they may have influenced the European witch cult. See **SARACEN CRAFT**.

**VANIR** (Norse): Fertility, agricultural and household spirits or gods worshipped and revered by some traditional witches.

**VINDALOS:** (Central European) Name for **WODEN**.

**UNDEAD, THE:** Collective term for **VAMPIRES**.

**UNDERWORLD:** Land of the Dead or domain of departed souls. Sometimes compared with **ELFANE** or the **OTHERWORLD**. See also **ANNWN**, **CASTLE OF THE ROSE** and **HOLLOW HILL**.

**UNDINES** (Latin) Elemental spirits of water.

**VAMPIRE** (Magyar and Turkish) 1) Predatory spirit or **SHADE** 2) Living person who drains the life force or vitality from other living things i.e. a 'psychic vampire' 3) Mythical demon or creature who I believed to drink the blood of its human victims. 4) Predatory sexual spirit. See **INCUBUS** and **SUCCUBUS**. 5) Witch (In Romanian folklore witches became vampires after death).

**VANIR** (Norse) Ancient race, clan or family of earth and fertility gods and goddesses.

**VE** (Norse) A sacred enclosure or triangular place for worshipping the Gods. May be the origin of the **TRIANGLE OF ARTE** in the medieval magic.

**VENUSBERG:** German version of the **HOLLOW HILL** where the **QUEEN**

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**OF ELFANE**, depicted as the Rona goddess Venus, reigned and taught witches the secrets of herbal lore.

**VERDELET** (Old French) 'Verderer' meaning a royal officer who is a forester. Officer in a traditional COVINE who is a herbalist and teacher of 'green magic' or plant-lore.

**VITKI** (Norse) 'Wise One'. A witch or **WIZARD**.

**VOLVA** (Norse) A priestess-seer of **FREYA**. Prototype of the medieval witch.

**VORTEX**: See **CONE OF POWER**

**VULCAN**: Roman smith god. See also **TUBAL CAIN** and **WAYLAND**.

**WALPURGIS NACHT (NIGHT)**: German name for May Eve (April 30th) After the mythical St Walburga who is originally believed to have been a pagan moon goddess. This was the night that German witches were traditionally supposed to gather for their **SABBATH** on the Brocken Mountain.

**WAND**: Small rod or baton used for magical purposes to direct power or psychic energy.

**WANING MOON**: When the moon is seen to be decreasing in size in the sky it is a good time to do magical workings to banish negative influences and unwanted things, people or conditions.

**WARD**: 1) banish as in 'ward off' 2) Protect a place or person by magical means 3) Discarnated human or spirit guardian of the circle 4) protective spirit or spirits, sometimes **SHADES**, who guard the boundaries of a settlement i.e. hamlet, village, town or city.

**WARDSTAFF** A staff of office or authority. See also **STANG**.

**WARLOCK** (Scottish from Old Norse) Magician or **CUNNING MAN** skilled in exorcism and banishing and binding spirits. War(d)lock?

**WASSAIL** Charming the spirits of the apple tree and other fruit-bearing trees at Midwinter or on **TWELFTH NIGHT**.

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**WATCHER (S)** 1) Rebel fallen angels led by **AZAZEL** or **LUCIFER** who incarnated in human bodies to mate with Earth women and teach them magic and the arts of civilisation. From their offspring came the legend of the **WITCH BLOOD**. Their chosen mission was to lead humanity from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge. To do this they gave up their angelic existence and form to incarnate as humans in **CLOAKS OF FLESH**. See also **FALL**. 2) Elemental guardian of burial mound or graveyard. See also **GRIM (2)**

**WATCHTOWER:** One of the four quarters of the circle. See **CASTLES**.

**WATERS OF THE MOON:** (Poetic) Name in eastern England for the **TOAD BONE RITE**.

**WAYLAND or WELAND:** Germanic or Scandinavian smith god revered as the witch god in some **OLD CRAFT** traditions.

**WAXING MOON:** When the lunar disc is seen to be increasing in the sky is a good time to perform magical workings to attract material things, people and positive influences to you.

**WERE-HARE:** Witch or **FETCH** in the form of a hare.

**WEREWOLF:** Witch or **FETCH** in the form of a wolf.

**WESTERN MYSTERIES or WESTERN MYSTERY TRADITION:** Corpus of folklore and mythology passed down through the ages from ancient times relating to British and European pre-Christian religions and magical beliefs and practices, including traditional witchcraft.

**WHEEL OF THE YEAR:** The four Grand **SABBATS** and any other festival celebrated or marked in traditional witchcraft.

**WHITE LADY** 1) A title for the witch goddess in her lunar aspect. 2) Form taken by an earth spirit, **GENIUS LOCI** or **WIGHT**.

**WHITE STAG , THE:** Symbolic animal form of the Horned God, specially as a messenger or guide between Middle Earth and the **OTHERWORLD**.

**WICCA or WITCHA or WYTCHA** (Anglo-Saxon) Male witch, **CUNNING MAN**, sorcerer or **WIZARD**. Today used almost exclusively to denote and describe the idiosyncratic version of modern neo-pagan witchcraft

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created by Gerald Gardner. Some traditional witches (e.g. Andrew Chumbley) have tried to reclaim this word, but it is so closely associated now with modern neo-pagan witchcraft that it is almost impossible. That does not mean they should not stop trying!

**WICCACRAEFT** (Anglo-Saxon and Old English) Witchcraft or the 'craft of the witch'.

**WICCE** (Anglo-Saxon and Old English) Female witch, **CUNNING WOMAN, WISE WOMAN or SORCERESS**.

**WIDDERSHINS or WITHERSHINS** (Middle High German) To move around the circle in a anticlockwise or **NORTHWAYS** direction.

**WIGHTS** (Anglo-Saxon and Old English) Land or earth spirits, especially those haunting burial mounds and graveyards. See also **GRIM**.

**WILDFIRE** See **BALEFIRE**.

**WILD HUNT or WILD HOST or FURIOUS HOST or RADE OF THE SIDHE.** Procession through the sky of spectral riders and hounds or just hounds led by a male or female leader and often accompanied by **DEMONS** and **SHADES**. In Ireland the **SIDHE** ride out of the **HOLLOW HILL** on **SAMHAIN** and May Eve and **GWYN AP NUDD** rides forth from **GLASTONBURY TOR** at Midsummer.

**WILD HUNTER:** The leader of the **WILD HUNT**.

**WILDWOOD:** See **GREENWOOD**.

**WILL O' THE WISP:** The faery light-bearer 1) Land and earth spirit associated with bogs and swamps who leads travellers astray. See **JACK O' LANTERN** and **WIGHT** 2) Folkloric name for the natural phenomena of marsh gas.

**WISE WOMAN:** Female witch or **CUNNING WOMAN**.

**WITCH BALL:** Silvered, shining and reflective globe of glass hung in a window or at a doorway to **WARD** off negative influences and unwelcome spirits.

*Glossary*

**WITCHES BOTTLE:** Glass, metal or pottery container filled with urine, nail parings, hair and bent pins or nails. It was either boiled until it exploded or buried to thwart the powers of malefic witches.

**WITCHES' LADDER:** Knotted cord, sometimes with beads and feathers, used for spells.

**WITCHES' PYRAMID:** Not a physical object, but four simple rules or principles of the OLD CRAFT: Imagination, Will, Faith and Secrecy. Also summed up in the magical maxim: 'To Know, To dare, To Will, and To keep ecret.'

**WITCHING HOUR:** Midnight.

**WIZARD or WISARD** (Medieval French and Old English) 'Wise man' or male magician or **SORCERER**.

**WODEN:** Germanic storm god and inventor of RUNES. Patron god of magicians and wizards. Male leader of the WILD HUNT in England. Worshipped and revered by some traditional witches in eastern England who offer animal sacrifices in his honour. Equivalent to the Norse ODIN, but with slightly different characteristics. See HERNE.

**WODENHAEG:** (German) Woden's Way or Road 1) The Milky Way – the edge of our home galaxy. 2) Any SPIRIT PATH ridden by the WILD HUNT led by WODEN.

**WOODWIVES:** Female arboreal spirits chased by WODEN and included in the retinue of the WILD HUNT. Also known as Moss Maidens.

**WOODWOSES:** (Old English) 'Wildmen' who inhabit forests and woods. Could be compared to Bigfoot in North America, the Yeti in Tibet and other similar creatures worldwide, who some witnesses believe could be spirit entities.

**WORLD HEDGE:** Symbolic boundary between MIDDLE EARTH and the OTHERWORLD.

**WORLD TREE:** See AXIS MUNDI, TREE OF LIFE and YGGDRASIL.

**WORKING:** Meeting of traditional witches to perform magic. See also ESBAT.

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**WORTCUNNING** or **WORTKENNING** (Anglo-Saxon) Herbalism and plant lore.

**WRAITH** (Scandinavian) 1) Ghost. See **REVENANT** and **SHADE**. 2) Projected astral body of witch. See **FETCH**. 3) Person's spirit double seen shortly before they die by loved ones, relatives or friends.

**WYRD** (Norse) The inescapable cosmic power of **FATE** and destiny that even affects the Gods.

**YARTHKIN**: Malevolent earth spirit. See **HYPERSPRITE**.

**YERTH**: The earth.

**YEZEDI**: A tribal people of Iran (Persia) and Kurdistan who worship the **PEACOCK ANGEL** (Melek Taus). It is believed that elements of their beliefs may have permeated the medieval witch cult at some stage.

**YGG**: (Norse) 'Terrible One' Nickname for **WODEN** as the **WILD HUNTER**.

**YGGDRASIL** (Norse) 'Steed of the Terrible One' or 'Terrible One of the Gallow's Tree'. Refers either to **ODIN** riding down to the **UNDERWORLD** or seeking the wisdom of the runes by beings sacrificed on the **WORLD TREE**. The Northern European version of the **TREE OF LIFE** supporting or encompassing the universe and the Nine Worlds of existence.

**YYNYS WITRIN** (Welsh) 'The Glass Isle' Ancient name for **AVALON** and **GLASTONBURY TOR**.

**YOUNG HORNED GOD**: In the Robert Cochrane tradition, the child of the union at **BELTANE** between the witch god and witch goddess, who dies sacrificial death at Midsummer and is reborn again at **YULE**. See also **STARCHILD**.

**YULE** (Old Norse) 'Wheel'. (December 21st/22nd) Midwinter festival.

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