

History and Beliefs of Magick, Witchcraft and Wicca

Lesson 1

Magick is the process of causing change to occur by the application and direction of energy through the use of your true Will.

Magick is a very general term which describes something that is unknown or not yet understood. The working of magick is a very personal undertaking. A process that works for one person may not work for another. There are many types of magick and many different ways to perform magick. Magick can be compared to the study of any broad subject such as engineering or medicine. Within each broad subject there are disciplines such as Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, General Surgery, Pediatrics, etc. In turn, within each discipline there are specializations; for example, within Electrical Engineering students can specialize in power systems, electromagnetic wave theory, or computer architecture, to name just a few. Within a given specialization it is possible to specialize even further. For instance, within power systems a student might further specialize in the transmission of vast amounts of power, or within computer architecture a student might specialize in microchip design. Magick is very much the same. Areas within magick include Elemental Magick, Sympathetic Magick, Herbalism, Aromatherapy, Healing, and many others. One of these areas is Witchcraft.

Witchcraft is a branch of magick that tends to deal with healing, home/hearth magick, protection, fertility, and many more topics. It is a branch of magick that is centered on techniques to improve the life of the practitioner and those around them.

Witchcraft is also a religion. Witchcraft as a religion is a nature-oriented religious system that believes in and worships the male and female creative divine force, the God and Goddess. It also recognizes and can use magick.

History

The origins of Witchcraft are impossible to state. It is generally believed that Witchcraft had its origins in the beliefs of nature and animism held by primitive man during the Paleolithic era and earlier. The earliest humans were part of a hunter/gatherer society. To this level of culture, the things most important to survival were the ability to find food (either through hunting or gathering from the land) and the reproduction of the species (fertility).

Early man most likely had very highly developed senses, including what we today would call the "sixth sense." These heightened senses allowed early man to survive. Further, the forces of nature, while awesome, dictated how things were done. Good weather aided in the ability to hunt and gather food; poor weather hindered it. Early man recognized the forces of nature and the spirits that governed them. This recognition led to animism, the belief that the forces of nature are spirits, and that there were also spirits in all of the things within nature. In addition, it was recognized that other events unrelated to climate, such as hunting and reproduction, were also governed by spirits.

If the hunt were controlled by a spirit, and the animals had spirits, then a successful hunt could be aided by "hunting" an image of the animal and "killing" the image, or by making offerings to the spirit or god of the hunt. This is an excellent example of sympathetic magick work. Examples of this type of ritual can be seen in ancient cave paintings (25,000 years old) such as those found in the Caves des Trois Freres at Ariège, France (the figure in the painting is known as the sorcerer) and Fournieu de Diable in Dordogne. In addition, clay figures of bison have been found, some of the most famous of which are at Le Tuc d'Audoubert, Ariège. These figures have puncture marks where the figures were stabbed repeatedly and "killed." In more recent times, we can look at the practices of "primitive" tribes in Africa, Australia, and the Native Americans to find examples of these practices. The offering of gifts and food to the "Horned God of the Hunt" eventually developed over time into a religion.

In addition to hunting, reproduction was of supreme importance. Early man did not understand the "magick" of reproduction, other than that the woman mysteriously became with child at certain times. Looking back 20,000 years, we find figurines of pregnant females. These figurines were most likely representations of the spirit, or goddess, that governed

reproduction. The figurines are most often referred to as the "Venus figurines," and they depict female forms with extended breasts, bulging stomachs, wide buttocks, open vulvæ , etc. One interesting aspect is that these figures are either headless or faceless heads; one would think that if an artist were doing a figure of a person, some type of face would have been made on the figures. Some other famous figures of this type are the Gravettian "Venus" figurine found at Willendorf, Austria; the Venus of Laussel ;and the Venus of Sireuil. These figurines all have the standard "Venus" features mentioned above.

In time, mankind changed from a hunter/gatherer society to an agricultural society. Instead of being nomadic, groups began to settle down, grow food, and domesticate animals. With this shift in culture, the God of the Hunt slowly assumed the role of the God of Death, and the Goddess of Fertility assumed the role of an agricultural Goddess. As humankind became more advanced, the rituals and beliefs governing the worship of the Goddess of Fertility and the God of the Hunt also became more detailed and defined.

This is a very brief overview of early history. For further information there are wonderful books on archaeology, anthropology and cultural anthropology. In addition, cultures from "modern" times should be explored for more information.

Witchcraft and Wicca

The most common forms of modern Witchcraft center heavily on the history, culture, and practices from Europe, especially the Celtic traditions. The God of the Hunt in Celtic traditions was Cernunnos; his name is sometimes shortened to Cerne and Herne. The priesthood of the Celts were the Druids. The Druids were "wise men" and "magicians," and were common in many European areas. Irish Druids used the names of Hu and Cerridwen for the God and Goddess; they were also possibly known as Lud and Deva. Very little information on the nature of the Druids exists, because the Druidic tradition was mainly oral. Written communication systems, such as Greek and ancient Irish Ogham, were also available.

Early Witchcraft most likely borrowed freely from Druidic tradition. Both traditions have common holidays: Beltane, Samhain, and the Summer and Winter Solstices. The members of both traditions served as the wise ones: healers, diviners, lawyers, judges, farmers, hunters, religious leaders, etc. Both traditions were nature-based, and many of the practices were centered around the changing of the seasons.

To bring us to modern Witchcraft we must bring in another major influence: Christianity. Christianity is a very young religion (2,000 years) and is based on an older religion, Judaism. Judaism and Christianity borrowed heavily from then-existing religions. For example, the death and resurrection belief can be seen from many existing cultures of the time, one of those being the Sumerian/Babylonian myths of Dumuzi/Tamuz. These "myths" predate Christian beliefs by more than 4,000 years. It has been proven that one of the most effective ways to take over a culture is to absorb some of the beliefs of the captive culture and to vilify its deities. Christianity is very adept in this practice.

A great deal of the early history of the Church of Rome was concerned with subjugating the masses. A very effective way of doing this is to make everything "wrong" and deserving of severe judgment. Looking at the Old Testament of the Christian Bible, we can see how this is easily done.

The conversion of the populace of Europe to Christianity did not occur overnight, as the Church would have everyone believe. The first people converted were the upper classes and the monarchs; the common people were the last ones to be converted. For the first 1,000 years or

so, Christianity, for the most part, coexisted with the other "old" religions. Beginning around 1000 A.D., there was a major push to eradicate all of the old religions in Europe and the rest of the world. This push was probably motivated as much by politics as by religion. One group of people particularly targeted were the "Witches", the wise women who were knowledgeable in herb craft and midwifery. The Church initiated a massive campaign of lies blaming Witches for all the ills that befell a community. If crops failed, then it was because of a Witch. If the animals did not produce, it was because of a Witch. If children were stillborn or died early, it was because of a Witch. It didn't take long for these lies, combined with the hellfire and brimstone attitude of the clergy, to give Witches a very poor reputation. This is a rather interesting accusation, since not long before, the "Witches" were respected; besides, if they actually were guilty of these acts, then—as members of the village—they, too, would suffer. These beliefs eventually spread to include all of the rituals of the old religions, and all of the festivals and ceremonies. Very quickly, the major belief in the Church became that if something were not Christian then it was anti-Christian. And of course, if something were anti-Christian, it must be associated with the Devil and therefore it was Satanic! This practice continued and increased in ferocity for over 400 years, until the appearance of the major blow against all the old religions: the Bull of Pope Innocent VIII in 1484.

The Bull was a general denunciation of all non-Christian religions, especially those dealing with fertility. The Bull of Pope Innocent VIII was released in December of 1484, and named two German monks, Heinrich Kramer and Jakob Sprenger, both professors of theology, to be inquisitors of the heretical. Further, the Bull declared that all obstacles to the performing of their duties be removed. In short, these two men were given absolute authority over the ferreting out and judgment of Witches. Most popes since the 1200s had issued some type of Bull against Witchcraft- and fertility-based religions. With the advent of the printing press in 1452, religious doctrine could be spread at a much faster rate.

From a control standpoint, one of the quickest ways to subjugate the masses was to declare sex—except for procreation, and even then only during certain times and without pleasure—to be sinful. Until that time, this activity was most likely one of the few things that the common person could enjoy without guilt. After all, a good number of the "pagan"

or country festivals dealt with fertility of some type (fertility of the land, animals, people—and then there were the harvest festivals).

The Bull of Pope Innocent VIII led to the creation of one of the most notorious books in history, *The Malleus Maleficarum*, or *The Witches' Hammer*. This book was written by Heinrich Kramer and Jakob Sprenger. The book was to become the *de facto* standard text for hunting Witches, extracting confessions from them, and then prosecuting them.

The book is divided into three parts:

- The need to understand Witchcraft thoroughly and to accept all evidence against it, whether or not normally acceptable
- The types of Witchcraft encountered and countermeasures that might be taken
- The very precise rules governing the trials of the Witches.

Moreover, the Bull of Pope Innocent VIII was included as the preface to the book. To give it even further credibility, Kramer and Sprenger forged the Official Letter of Approbation from the Theological Faculty of the University of Cologne. In 1898, the forgery was discovered by Joseph Hansen, the archivist of the University of Cologne.

There were many tests to determine if a person were a Witch:

- Supposedly, a Witch possessed a hidden mark given to her by the Devil when she signed her name into his Book of Souls. This mark could have been the infamous "third nipple." Usually, any blemish on the skin was treated as a "devil mark." It was perfectly acceptable to use knives and hot pokers to try to make the marks visible, because "the Devil could hide his mark from others to protect them."
- Another test was the "swimming" test. A Witch would be bound hand to foot and dumped into a large body of water. If she sank then she was not a Witch, but if she floated then it was through some outside influence—obviously, the Devil. Often, the test was performed with the person fully clothed. When she was thrown into the water, air would be trapped in the clothing, helping to keep her afloat.
- Another test was to weigh the suspect Witch against the town Bible. If she weighed less than the Bible then she was a Witch (at

the time the town Bibles were very large and heavy. [This method was given a comedic twist in the movie *Monty Python's Search for the Holy Grail*.]).

- Often, the Lord's Prayer was used as a test—supposedly, Witches could not utter it. Of course, this test depended on the illiterate person's knowing the prayer, or—if the person were literate—being able to read it in a non-faltering fashion (there are many degrees of literacy).

Inquisitors were allowed to go to any length to obtain a confession of guilt. Torture was a common tool used to make the guilty confess and repent their evil ways. Some of the methods used were: flogging, scourging, thumb and toe screws, racks, iron maidens, red hot pokers, pincers, sleep deprivation, starvation, water deprivation, water torture, stappado (pulling the arms from their sockets), large metal boots into which boiling oil or water would be poured, disemboweling, and pouring water into the stomach until it swelled and burst. After reading this, one must question if there is any length to which man will not resort to achieve the desired result. While these outright forms of torture are very rare today, they have been replaced by other means just as effective.

Assuming that the person survived the torture (or multiple tortures) the usual sentence was death by burning (in Continental Europe) or death by hanging (in England and America).

It took very little to be labeled a Witch. Disagreeing with the church on any belief; attempting to block the investigation of the inquisitors; accusation by *anyone*; owning a black cat (or *any* cat during some points of the burning times); owning a cock; saying something in defense of someone being charged with Witchcraft—all were offenses that could get one labeled as a Witch.

As the Inquisition slowly ended, another blow to Witchcraft occurred. This was the Witchcraft Act of James I (James VI of Scotland), passed in England in 1604, which made Witchcraft an offense punishable by death.

The Witch craze eventually followed the colonists to America. Until 1692, there were only a few (around 12) cases of Witchcraft in the colonies, most in Massachusetts. The Witch hysteria surfaced in the colonies in 1688 with the case of the Goodwin children. The laundress of the Goodwin home, Goody (Goodwife) Glover, was accused by

Martha Goodwin of stealing some linen. Glover began spouting curses at Martha, who then fell down in a fit, and the other children followed suit. The fits continued; they would bark, howl, pretend to be deaf, run around on tiptoes trying to levitate, complain of being pricked with pins, and other such acts. One of the most infamous American Witch hunters and prosecutors, Cotton Mather, was involved in the case.

The most famous of the Witch trials in the American Colonies was the Salem Witch Trials. This case involved the Reverend Samuel Paris, his wife, his seven-year-old daughter Betty, his nine-year-old niece Abigail Williams, and two black servants, Tituba and her man John Indian. It transpired after the Reverend Paris took the position of pastor for Salem. Tituba and John Indian were from Barbados; did most of the household work, but the story goes that Tituba was lacking in energy at times and often convinced Betty and Abigail to help. She was easily persuaded to tell the children stories of Barbados; the stories, often told in the kitchen, became an entertainment for several of the village children. The group eventually included Ann Putnam, Mary Walcott, Elizabeth Hubbard, Elizabeth Booth, Susannah Sheldon, Marry Warren, Sarah Churchill, and Mercy Lewis. Ann Putnam quickly became leader of the group.

In 1692, Betty Paris began having episodes where she would stare off into space for long periods. When she came around, she would sputter, cough, and make sounds similar to a barking dog. Abigail began doing the same things shortly thereafter. The Reverend Paris prayed over the girls, to no avail, and the town doctor, Dr. Griggs, could not do anything to help them. He therefore determined that the fits were caused by Witchcraft! Other symptoms of the fits would include running, screaming, shouting, and throwing things (including the Bible). Soon, the other girls from the kitchen group joined in. The town elders were called to pray over the girls, but this did not help either. Clergy from the surrounding areas were called in. By this point, the girls were so caught up in their lies that they could not get out of them, so they kept the charade going.

The assembly of elders and other clergy kept asking the girls who had bewitched them. Eventually, Betty Paris mentioned Tituba's name. Tituba was arrested and charged with Witchcraft. Once the first name was given, the other girls quickly agreed and other names were rapidly produced. Some of the accused were Sarah Goode, Sarah Osburn, Martha Corey, and Rebecca Nurse. For every name given, the children

were praised. Often, the people named were those whom the children (or their parents) did not like or for whom they held a grudge. In short order, 125 people had been arrested in the case and charged with Witchcraft. (To illustrate the prevalence of the hysteria: early on, John Willard had spoken out against the girls, saying that they were fabricating the entire story and should be sent to the gallows; he was immediately charged with Witchcraft!) The trial for these people was conducted by William Stoughton, Samuel Sewell, John Hathorne, and Jonathon Corwin; the latter two were also the magistrates for the pre-trial hearings.

During the hysteria, many horrible things happened. On the September 19, 1692, a most unusual death sentence was executed against Giles Cory. When a man is brought before court, he must plead innocent or guilty to the charge. If he did not plead, the trial could be prevented from taking place. To circumvent this, the law provided a terrible punishment, the *peine fort et dure*, literally "a severe and harsh punishment." This punishment involved laying the person on his back and stretching his limbs as far as they could be stretched. Heavy iron and stone weights were then piled upon his chest until he either pleaded or was crushed to death. Giles Cory became the only person in American history to suffer this fate; he was crushed to death after refusing to enter a plea.

The Witch craze started to wind down when very prominent people began to be charged with Witchcraft. Eventually, people realized what was happening, and in May of 1693 Governor Phipps ordered the release from jail for all those awaiting trial for Witchcraft. Five years later, Judge Samuel Sewell stood up in the Old South church and acknowledged his shame and repentance. Fourteen years later, Ann Putnam confessed her guilt and remorse over sending all those people to their deaths because of her actions.

By the 1700s, the Witchcraft craze which had swept Europe and America was almost over. In 1717, the last official Witchcraft trial in England took place; in Scotland, however, the trials lasted until 1727. In 1736, the Witchcraft Act of James I was repealed, but it was replaced by others in later times.

This period, from the 1200s through the 1700s, is commonly known as the "burning times." Though Witches were burned only in certain parts of Europe, the persecution they faced was rampant in both the Old World and the New. But even though the craze ended in the 1700s, it

was another 200 years before Witches could finally publicly acknowledge their beliefs.

During the 1800s, many archeological expeditions took place, especially to Egypt. In England and many parts of Europe, it was the fashionable thing either to undertake or to support an archeological dig. I believe that this exposure to other cultures was partially responsible for laying the groundwork for Europe and America to be more open to other, older cultures. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, several works dealing with "folklore" and history were written. Some of these included *The White Goddess* by Robert Graves, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* and *God of the Witches* by Dr. Margaret Alice Murray. Also during this time one of the most famous early outspoken Witches, Gerald Gardner, was writing.

Gerald Gardner was born in England on June 13, 1884. During his early life, he traveled a good deal and worked at many different jobs. He was very interested in other cultures, and, wherever he lived, he spent a good deal of time learning about the local populations. In 1925, he obtained a position as a government inspector of opium establishments in Malaya. While there, he studied the culture and magick of the Malays, the Saki, and the Borneans. His job as an inspector allowed him a good deal of free time, during which he wrote his first book, *Kris and Other Malay Weapons*. (A *kris* is a wavy-bladed knife), and he quickly became the world authority on the subject. In 1936 he retired and returned to England, where he met several people interested in the occult. His interest in anthropology, weapons, and magick made an ideal match. His grandfather Joseph's second wife was rumored to have been a Witch. Further, one of his other ancestors, Grizell Gairdener, had been burned as a Witch in 1640 in Newborough, Scotland. Obviously, he must have mentioned these names to the "right people at the right time," because he was soon initiated into one of the surviving Witchcraft covens near Christchurch a few days after the beginning of World War II.

You can imagine Gardner's delight in finding a surviving coven in Europe. He initially wanted to share the knowledge with the world, but was not allowed to do so. This was partly due to the historical need for secrecy for, and partly because, until 1951, the Witchcraft Act of 1735 was still in effect. Gardner was permitted to reveal some of the truth in a work of fiction, *High Magick's Aid*, which was written under his Witch name, Scire. In 1952, he purchased an old mill historically associated

with Witchcraft. This eventually became home to his vast collection of weaponry and magickal apparata. After the old high priestess of the coven died, he convinced the other members to let him publish a true and factual book dealing with Witchcraft. In 1954, *Witchcraft Today*, the first book dealing with Witchcraft as a religion and a living system, was published. In 1959, Gardner published a second volume, *The Meaning of Witchcraft*. With the success of his books and his museum, he effectively became the world's first public expert on the subject of Witchcraft and, to a great extent, became the unofficial leader of European Witchcraft. By the middle of the 1950's, courses in Witchcraft were beginning to appear at colleges and universities. On February 12, 1964, Gardner died at sea while returning home from a winter vacation in Lebanon. Despite any personal feelings one may have, whether good or ill, the contributions of Gerald Gardner to modern Witchcraft must be recognized. Without his pioneering work, Witchcraft probably would still have resurfaced, but its re-emergence would have been greatly delayed. It is important to note that, after Gardner "came-out of the broom closet," many other people rushed to follow him. Alex Sanders came forward and claimed to have been initiated into a coven by his own grandmother. There was also Leo Martello's *Sicilian Wicca*, which appeared to be very similar to Gardner's works.

In 1964, Raymond Buckland established a coven in New York. His workings, in part, led to the awakenings of Witchcraft in the United States. Soon after he started his coven (an offshoot of one of the Gardnerian covens), many other covens began to appear. Naturally, this led to some friction between groups, and eventually led to a good deal of "my coven is better than your coven" mentality. There were sharp differences in opinion of how things should be done (such as initiation, length of learning period, etc). These differences, in part, led to the many denominations or traditions of Witchcraft and Wicca in existence today.

Both Witchcraft and Wicca are "new" religions. They have their roots in older beliefs, but the Witchcraft and Wicca of the modern era cannot trace a direct lineage beyond a certain point. This does not invalidate in any way the religion of Witchcraft or Wicca. As new religions, they spawned many new traditions, or denominations. A few of these traditions will be discussed briefly a little later.

A great deal of time has been spent in the discussion of the possible original beliefs that led to the development of Witchcraft, as well as on

the history of persecution. Many people would ask, "Why do you do this?" I do it, because I feel it is important to have at least a general idea of where the ideas came from.

Further, at least in the United States, public opinion has the tendency to perform overnight, 180-degree shifts in thought. Witchcraft, Wicca—Paganism in all its forms—is just beginning to gain a secure foothold, but this foothold could very easily be lost. The religious right-wing people in the United States are constantly funding political campaigns to get their people into positions of power. In the past two months before this writing, in October of 1999, court cases have sprung up which challenge the theory of evolution, the right of a woman to obtain an abortion, etc. The rights of people in military service are being challenged in Texas. The Department of the Army Pamphlet No. 165-13, "Religious Requirements and Practices of Certain Selected Groups: A Handbook for Chaplains," gives instructions regarding the religious rites of Wiccans (as well as other groups). Wicca is an "official" religion recognized by the military, and yet there are several senators who want it removed from military installations!

Videos

YouTube

Witches: A Century of Murder Part 1 of 2
(Witch Trial Documentary)

Beliefs

Witchcraft, Wicca, and many of the pagan belief systems today share many similar beliefs. Unlike Christianity, with all its "Thou Shalt Not" rules, pagan systems are usually less rigid. Both Witchcraft and Wicca are firmly rooted in nature and have a respect for all that is in nature. The major holidays (Samhain, Winter Solstice, Imbolc, Spring Equinox, Beltane, Midsummer's Eve, Fall Equinox, Lammas) are seasonal celebrations tied to planting and harvesting. Both Witchcraft and Wicca recognize a higher creative force manifest in the archetypes of the Goddess and the God, and possibly through their various aspects. Both recognize the energy of all things and attempt to work with these energies through what is commonly called magick. Both Witches and Wiccans believe that one must take responsibility for individual actions, that one should avoid hurting others if at all possible, because all actions will return in some form. Further, many Witches and Wiccans

believe in some form of reincarnation. These are just a few of the general ideas that will be discussed.

The root of the Wiccan belief system comes down to three basic ideas:

- An it harm none, do as you will; that shall be the whole of the law.

(It is important to note that the word "An" is an archaic English word meaning "if" or "as long as." This word should not be confused with the modern conjunction "and.")

- Whatever you do shall return threefold.
- Do nothing to interfere with the free will of another.

Notice that all three of these ideas address the same basic belief: treat others the way you would like to be treated. No one really *wants* to be attacked, demeaned, manipulated, etc.

It should be noted that these are beliefs, not absolute holy writ. They are, however, a set of ideas by which people should strive to live. In addition, these ideas stress that YOU are responsible for your own actions. YOU have the ultimate choice of whether you want to do something. True, one can be coerced or manipulated into performing an action, but the individual nevertheless bears the ultimate responsibility for his/her actions.

Many people take exception to the first idea, "An it harm none, do as you will." They claim that by following this precept, one cannot do anything, because every action taken harms *something*, perhaps even one's very existence. This, of course, takes an argument to an absurd extreme in an attempt to invalidate a belief. Some people would prefer to leave off "An it harm none," thereby creating the belief "Do as you will; that shall be the whole of the law." Using that reasoning, Hitler was perfectly justified in torturing and executing over 12,000,000 Jews during World War II. Or that Jim Jones acted properly in the Guayana tragedy. Or that Jack the Ripper owed no accountability to his victims. They were, after all, simply following their will were they not?

There will be outraged cries that this is not really the intent, but that it is supposed to be True Will (or Higher Will), and "True Will" would never

be guilty of such evil. The only logical response is, "How can you really know the True Will of anyone, even yourself?" Last time I checked there was no such book called, "The True Will of Everyone," available at the local bookstore for \$9.95.

"An it harm none, do as you will," is a goal by which to live. The word "harm" seems to be what troubles people—after all, how does one define harm? Is harm limited to physical harm? Does it include mental harm? Is a parent who spans a misbehaving child doing harm? And, conversely, is a parent who DOES NOT spank a misbehaving child doing harm? If someone hits you, are you prevented from striking back? There can be no ultimate definition of harm without creating a system similar to the Islamic laws or the Christian book of Leviticus, wherein an attempt is made to define every situation that can occur and what actions to take. Such an attempt would create a hopelessly complex series of laws—and the inevitable exceptions, exemptions, and loopholes.

"Harm" must be defined by the individual, but based on some common ideas. Webster's dictionary defines harm as "physical or emotional injury or damage." This sounds good, but it does create a problem, i.e., wouldn't the existence of Witches cause emotional damage to many Christians? What about the existence of, and intermingling with, other races? Or the existence of people who are homosexuals? It seems that all of these issues cause emotional injury to *someone*. Therefore, we need to go a bit further in trying to assess harm.

Without initiating a discussion that would last for many weeks and fill multiple volumes, I would prefer to base the definition of harm on "any action that prevents, restricts, retards, or impedes the physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual growth of another individual." While this is not a perfect definition, and still leaves many things undecided, I must hope that there is some common sense used in the application of this idea.

I believe that each individual has the right to exist, to grow, to learn, to experience, and to advance. The rights of each individual extend to the point that they interfere with the rights of another individual.

When applying any idea by which to live, one must use common sense. For every "law" and belief, there can be postulated some situation wherein the idea does not work. Does this invalidate the idea? No. It just

means that in that particular situation, the application is not quite so clear cut and requires some refining.

You must decide for yourself how far you will take the meaning of the word "harm." Generally, you are pretty safe in your actions if you follow the idea of, "Would I want someone to do this action to me under normal circumstances?" If someone breaks into my house to kill me, then they'd better expect to be killed themselves, because the boundaries of individual rights have been overstepped. However, were I to enter someone else's house to kill them, then I'd better expect to be killed myself. *Remember that the ultimate decision on whether or not to do something rests with YOU.* Taking responsibility for your actions is a major point, whether or not it is explicitly stated.

The second major belief is commonly called the "Threefold Law" and is really a restatement of the idea of Karma. The "law" states that whatever you do will return to you threefold. This does not mean that if you give someone in need a dollar, you will have three people give you a dollar, or one person give you three dollars. It means that your act of kindness will result in an act of kindness being done to you. Some people do not like this idea, because they cannot see, or claim not to see it in action. I think they just haven't looked and refuse to see what is there before them. In magick, one of the basic ideas is that "like attracts like" and "as above so below, as below so above." In the study of Hermetic Philosophy, we will see these ideas in more detail.

Does something return threefold? It's hard to say. If the ideas of karma were strictly adhered to, then a threefold return would create an imbalance. Is it really that important how many times something returns? Or is it more important to know that your actions will have consequences? I think the latter is the more important idea. Doing something for others should not be done with the express intention of "getting something in return." You do something for someone else simply because you can.

The third major belief, "Do nothing to interfere with the free will of another," is yet another restatement of the belief that one should treat people the way one wishes to be treated. However, this can become an interesting problem. For example, how much can one do for someone else without interfering with their free will? How much would *you* want or allow someone else to do for *you* without your express permission?

Keep these questions in mind; in a later lesson we will deal with magickal ethics.

When the three basic ideas are taken together, we have a concise statement of a set of values by which we should strive to live. These ideas are not meant to be an absolute statement in every circumstance, nor should they be applied in the extreme. They are simply guidelines, and—as with all guidelines—the intent or idea can be taken too far. When applying these criteria, the individual must take into account the time, location, and circumstances under which the situation occurs. Just remember to ask yourself if you would really want someone else to do the same action to/for you?

Witches, Wiccans, and many Pagans recognize that we, as human beings, are part of nature and nature is part of us. Generally speaking, they have a greater respect for the Earth and the environment in general. Also, much of the work of the Witch is based on the seasonal cycles. The seasonal cycles and holidays will be discussed in more detail in later lessons.

Wiccans and most Witches also accept that there is a higher creative force in the universe, which manifests in two main aspects, one male and one female. These aspects are generally referred to as the God and the Goddess, and the aspects are either revered and worshipped in their archetypal forms, or they are viewed in a more granular system as specific deities.

The God force is generally thought to have two aspects: the Young King and the Old King. The Young King aspect is the young man just coming to power; he may have children, and he is just beginning in his reign. Normally, this aspect holds sway over the spring and summer months of the year. The Old King aspect is the man in his later years, at the end of his power, no longer quite so strong in body as in earlier times, but stronger of will and possessed of great amounts of knowledge. The Old King is generally thought to hold sway during the winter months. Often, when specific deities are used, Pan takes the aspect of the Young King and Cernunnos takes the aspect of the Old King. Generally, the male aspect of deity is seen as the sun.

The Goddess force is generally thought to have three aspects: the Maiden, the Mother and the Crone. The Maiden is the young woman just coming into the true aspects of womanhood; she is young, beautiful,

and sexual but has not yet borne children. The Mother aspect represents the mature woman; she has borne children, is wiser, and is generally more settled. She is also the nurturing aspect. The Crone aspect represents the older woman; she has raised her children and moved on to the life stage wherein she has amassed a great amount of knowledge and personal power. This aspect is often called upon in matters of justice and legal issues. The Goddess is normally seen in the phases of the moon, i.e., each phase is a different aspect. Some deity associations for the Goddess aspects are as follows: Maiden/Diana, Mother/Selene, Crone/Hecate.

This breakdown seems to be a bit lopsided. I personally work with three aspects of deity: Prince, Young King, and Old King. The Prince is the male aspect of the Maiden. The Young King is the male aspect of the Mother. The Old King is the male aspect of the Crone. However, there are as many aspects of the God or Goddess as an individual needs. In some traditions you may find a fourth aspect of the Goddess worshipped: the male Warrior aspect or the female Dark aspect.

Witches and Wiccans also recognize the forces and energy within nature. These forces are generally divided into four main element energies: Earth, Air, Fire and Water. Some traditions, mainly Eastern, will use a fifth element, Spirit. Each of these element energies has its own hierarchy and beings that are native to that element. These energies can be used for a wide variety of magick, and the native beings may be asked for assistance. In general, each element has its own characteristics. Normally these basic characteristics and their associations are defined as follows:

<u>Element</u>	<u>Direction</u>	<u>Attribute</u>	<u>Color</u>
Earth	North	Strength, Foundation	Brown or deep green
Air	East	Beginnings, Thought	Yellow
Fire	South	Change, Swiftness	Red
Water	West	Life, Cleansing	Deep blue and light green
Spirit	Center	Combining force	Purple

There are other systems that use different associations for the elements and directions.

Many Witches and Wiccans believe in reincarnation. Reincarnation is the belief that the soul, the Higher Self, is eternal and manifests in physical form to learn and interact with other souls. The soul goes through many manifestations as a physical form until it finally achieves a state of spiritual enlightenment that allows it to move on to the next stage of existence. Some Wiccans and Witches believe that the final destination of the soul's journey is Summerland. Summerland is ruled over by the "Horned God of Death," and everyone goes there. It is a place of rest and peace.

Organization

Witches and Wiccans can work either as solitary practitioners or in a coven. Each type of working has its benefits and drawbacks. For example, in a coven there are the psychodynamics of a group, but one generally has more energy with which to work. As a solitary practitioner, one doesn't have to be concerned about other people; however, the amount of available energy may be less.

A coven is a group of people who have agreed to work together. It takes at least two people to constitute a coven. In older books and in Hollywood it is thought that there must be 13 people in a coven; that is not so. Some covens believe that there must be a balance between the number of men and women; others think that the male and female aspects of the individuals themselves should be balanced. In the past, covens usually operated in a small area called a covendom, generally three miles; in modern society, that limit is rarely observed. A coven usually meets in a defined location known as a covenstead. Members of a coven gather for the high holidays and on predetermined meeting times, such as the phases of the moon. The holidays are often called Sabbats, and the phases of the moon meetings are usually called esbats.

The coven is led by a high priestess and, usually, a high priest. It is important to note that in Wicca all believers are inherently both priest and priestess—there is no need for an intermediary to interact with deity. High priest and priestess functions require a great deal of knowledge and training, and most covens require that their individual members go through some form of training or be able to demonstrate

equivalent knowledge. I say "most," because there is no single or centralized governing body for covens, Witches, and Wiccans. There is no national register, but there are many online services for locating covens and magickal people. Once a person is accepted, there is usually some type of initiation ceremony; the ceremony form differs from coven to coven, but it is an outward dedication of the individual to the beliefs, to the deity, and to the other coven members. Some covens require that members be secret about their association, and some do not. Covens and coven dynamics will be discussed in more detail in a later lesson.

It is important to note that Witches and Wiccans make the separation between "white" and "black" magick. This would more appropriately be termed "positive" and "negative." A Witch is by definition a "white" Witch, or concerned primarily with working positive magicks. A person who continually performs negative magicks and claims to be a Witch is not really a Witch but, rather, a person playing with magick.

Followers of Wicca are called Wiccans or Witches. However, not all Witches are Wiccan. In part, this has to do with how people wish to identify themselves. There are many similarities between Wicca and Witchcraft. Generally, Wiccans follow a more defined ethical code than that of a follower of the religion of Witchcraft, but this is not always true. *The difference lies in how one wishes to be identified.*

There are many different "denominations" of Wicca and Witchcraft. The denominations vary in *how* things are done, *when* they are done, etc. Listed below are some of the major denominations and general statements about them:

Gardnerian: Founded by Gerald Gardner in the 1950s, formed from part of the coven into which he was first initiated. It is a degree-oriented, very structured system.

Alexandrian: Founded by Alex Sanders in England in the 1960s. Alex Sanders took the title "King of the Witches." Very similar to Gardnerian. I believe that this tradition prefers to use a sword as opposed to an athame.

Ceremonial: Combination of Wicca and ceremonial magick. Draws heavily on Egyptian beliefs. Also draws on Qabbalistic ideas.

Dianic: A very Goddess-oriented form of Wicca. Some Dianic covens are extremely feminist in nature; others are more balanced.

Eclectic: This is the hardest group to pin down. They follow the basic Wiccan beliefs, but tend to be very relaxed and informal. This denomination has no qualms about using ideas from other cultures, belief systems, or any age of time that suits their needs. It is the "Chinese buffet" of Wicca ... pick and choose what you like, so long as you stay within the basic framework.

Frost's Wicca: Created by Gavin and Yvonne Frost in the early 1970s. Degree-oriented system. It is also a system which uses sex as part of its ritual. They also advocate that a child's first sexual experience should be with the parent to make the experience less traumatic.

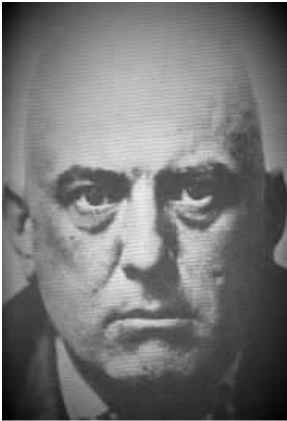
Pictish: A Scottish variation of Witchcraft and Wicca. Most followers tend to be solitary. It is a very nature-oriented denomination.

Seax: Developed by Raymond Buckland in the 1973. Based on the Gardnerian tradition. This is not a degree based system.

Strega: An Italian version of Witchcraft.

These are just a few of the major denominations of Witchcraft and Wicca. Please consult the reading list for more information.

Aleister Crowley (1875-1947)



Written and compiled by George Knowles.

Aleister Crowley was perhaps the most controversial and misunderstood personality to figure in the new era of modern day witchcraft. Known by the popular press of his time as “The Great Beast” and “The Wickedest Man in the World”, Crowley was a powerful magician, poet, prophet and famed occultist. He was also a one-time witch, though most of the elders of the craft would discredit him the title.

Crowley like many great men before him, was a man before his time. He lived in a society that could little understand him or appreciated his latent genius. His writings so shocked the peoples of his era that he was robbed of the praise that it merited, and as a poet he never received the recognition he deserved.



Schoolboy, aged 14

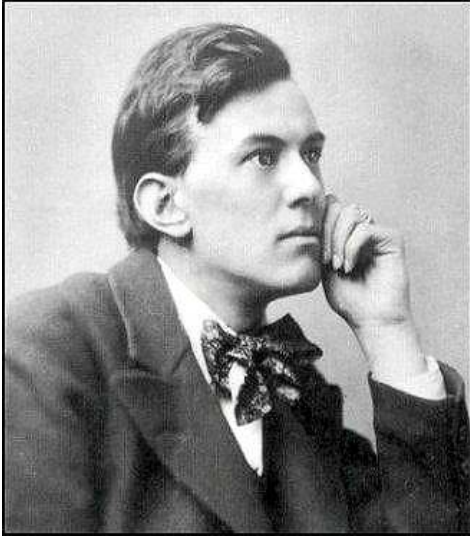
Crowley was born on the 12th October 1875 in Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. His parents Edward Crowley and his wife Emily were wealthy brewers and the epitome of respectability. They were also devout Christians and staunch members of the Plymouth Brethren sect. They brought up young Crowley in an atmosphere of pious religious narrow-mindedness, against which he constantly rebelled. His whole life thereafter seems to have been a revolt against his parents and everything they stood for. His father died when he was 11 years old.



Crowley's Father and Mother

After the death of his father, Crowley inherited the family fortune and went on to be educated at Trinity College Cambridge. There he wrote and studied poetry. He loved the out-doors life and was a capable mountain climber, in pursuit of which he attempted some of the highest peaks in the Himalayas. In 1898 he published his first book of poetry called "Aceldama, A Place to Bury Strangers In", a philosophical poem by a 'Gentleman of the University of Cambridge' in 1898'. In the preface he describes how God and Satan had fought for his soul and states: "God conquered – and now I have only one doubt left – which of the twain was God"?

It was while he was at Trinity that Crowley became interested in the occult and with his roommate [Allan Bennett](#), they began to study whatever they could. Crowley soon discovered that he was excited by descriptions of torture and blood. He liked to fantasize about being degraded and abused by a 'Scarlet Women', one who was dominant, wicked and independent.



A youngish Aleister Crowley - Allan Bennett

One of the books he read about this time was by the author 'Arthur Edward Waite', entitled "The Book of Black Magic and of Pacts". It hinted at a secret brotherhood of occultists and Crowley became even more intrigued. He wrote to Waite for more information and was referred to "The Cloud upon the Sanctuary – By Karl von Exkartschausen". This book tells of the 'Great White Brotherhood' and Crowley determined he wanted to join this group and advance to its highest levels. Later that year on the 18th November 1898, he and Bennett both joined the 'Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn', the elusive Great White Brotherhood (see 'S.L. MacGregor Mathers and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn').

In 1899 Crowley is reported to have become a member of one of "Old George Pickingill's" hereditary covens situated in the New Forrest, although apparently he was not welcome for long (see 'Old George Pickingill'). It is alleged that he obtained his 'Second Degree' before being dismissed due to his contemptuous attitude toward women, failure to attend rituals with regularity, his personal ego and sexual perversion (Crowley had a bias toward homosexuality and the bizarre, shocking during his time even amongst witches). The priestess of his coven later described him as "a dirty-minded, evilly-disposed and vicious little monster!"

As well as being dismissed and outcaste by the New Forrest witches, all was not well within the Golden Dawn. By this time Crowley had moved out of Trinity College without earning his degree, and taken a flat in Chancery Lane, London. There he renamed himself 'Count Vladimir' and began to pursue his occult studies on a full-time basis. Crowley had a natural aptitude for magic and advanced quickly through the ranks of the Golden Dawn, but the London lodge leaders considered him unsuitable for advancement into the second order. Crowley went to Paris in 1899 to see 'S.L. MacGregor Mathers', the then head of the Order and insisted that he be initiated into the second Order. Mathers at the time was experiencing growing dissension to his absolute

rule from London, and sensed in Crowley an ally. To the consternation of the London lodge he readily agreed to Crowley's request and initiated him into the second order.

However their allegiance was an uneasy one, for Mathers like Crowley was a powerful magician and both were intensely competitive. Mathers taught Crowley 'Abra-Melin' magic but neither attained any of the grades of the A\A\.. They quarreled constantly and allegedly engaged in magical warfare. Mathers is said to have sent an astral vampire to attack Crowley who responded with an army of demons led by Beelzebub. In April 1900, Mathers due to problems within the London lodge, dispatched Crowley back to England as his 'Special Envoy' where he made an abortive attempt to regain control. Shortly thereafter both Mathers and Crowley were expelled from the order.

Crowley began to travel, mostly in the East studying Eastern Occult systems and 'Tantric Yoga'; he also studied 'Buddhism' and the 'I Ching'. Then for a time he lived in an isolated setting near to Loch Ness in Scotland. In 1903 he met and then married Rose Edith Kelly, sister of the well-known artist Sir Gerald Kelly. She bore him one child. While they were on holiday in Egypt the following year, April 1904, he and Rose took part in a magical ritual during which he alleges to have received a message from the God's. As a result of this communication he wrote down the first three chapters of his most famous book "Liber Legis, the Book of Law". This book contains his oft-quoted dictum: "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. Love is the Law, Love under Will", upon which Crowley based the rest of his life and teachings.



Rose Edith Kelly - Crowley's first wife

In 1909 Crowley began to explore levels of the astral plane with his assistant, a poet called "Victor Neuberg"; they used 'Enochian' magic. Crowley believed he crossed the Abyss and united his consciousness with the universal consciousness. He describes the

astral journeys in “The Vision and the Voice”, which was first published in his periodical “The Equinox” and then posthumously in 1949.

Never far from controversy in 1909 through to 1913, Crowley serialized the secret rituals of the Golden Dawn in his magazine 'the Equinox', which he also used as vehicle for his poetry. Mathers who had written most of the rituals and who was still his greatest antagonist, tried but failed to get a legal injunction to stop him. His action only served to gained Crowley more press publicity and notoriety.

By now Crowley was fast becoming infamous as a Black magician and Satanist, he openly identified himself with the number 666, the biblical number for the antichrist. He also kept with him a series of 'Scarlet Women'; the best known of these was Leah Hirsig, the so-called “Ape of Thoth”. Together they would indulge in drinking sessions, drugs and sexual magic. It is believed that Crowley made several attempts with several of these women to beget a 'Magical child', none of which worked and instead he fictionalized his attempts in a book called “Moonchild”, published in 1929.



Leah Hirsig - the “Ape of Thoth”

In 1912 Crowley became involved with the British section of the O.T.O. (the Ordo Temple Orientis or Order of the Temple of the East), a German occult order practicing magic. He then moved and lived in America from 1915 to 1919, moving again in 1920 to Sicily where he established the notorious Abbey of Thelema at Cefalu.

In Sicily he proceeded to involve himself in Italian occultism and in 1922 became the head of the 'Ordo Temple Orientis'. However (as he routinely did) he began to attract more bad publicity. The press denounced him as “The Wickedest Man in the World” because of the alleged satanic goings on in the Abbey. It has now come to light that many of the allegations were false and were no more than press sensationalism. However

their effect had serious repercussions for Crowley. In 1923 Mussolini the then ruler of Italy stepped in and expelled him from Sicily.

Crowley wandered around for a while visiting such places as Tunisia and Germany before settling for a time in France. While in France he engaged as his secretary the services of another aspiring magician 'Israel Regardie'. Regardie would later become famous himself and played a prominent role in exposing the complete rituals of the 'Golden Dawn' to the public (see Israel Regardie). Crowley continued to travel around Europe during which time he picked up a growing heroin addiction, a habit he would suffer from for the rest of his life. Back in England in 1929 he met and married his second wife 'Maria Ferrari de Miramar'. The marriage took place in Leipzig, Germany.



Maria Ferrari de Miramar and Crowley

In 1933 Crowley met with 'Sybil Leek' another famous witch and became a frequent visitor to her home. Sybil a hereditary witch was only 16 years old at the time and later wrote in her autobiography "Diary of a Witch" - (New York: Signet, 1969), that Crowley talked to her about witchcraft. He taught her the words of power and instructed her on the use of certain words for their vibratory qualities when working with magick (see Sybil Leek).

Already notorious and well known to the press, Crowley then became involved in a famous and sensational libel case. In 1934 before Mr. Justice Swift, he sued Nina Hamnett a prominent sculptress. Nina had published a book "Laughing Torso" (Constable and Co., London, 1932) in which Crowley alleged she had libeled him by saying he that the practiced black magic. As the case proceeded the other side produced such evidence of Crowley's bizarre life-style and scandalous writings (as they were considered at that time), that the justice was horrified. Crowley lost the case and was

forced into bankruptcy, much to the delight of the popular press who again had a field day.



Crowley in his room in Jermyn Street, Piccadilly circa 1943

In his penultimate year 1946, a mutual friend 'Arnold Crowther' introduced Crowley to 'Gerald B. Gardner'. His meetings with Gardner would later lead to controversy over the authenticity of Gardner's original 'Book of Shadows'. It was alleged that Gardner paid Crowley to write it for him? But this has now been discounted. While it did contain some of Crowley's writings, this was the result of Gardner and Crowley comparing notes on rituals used in 'Old George Pickingill's' covens in the New Forrest area. Doreen Valiente in her book "Witchcraft for Tomorrow" does much to shed light on this controversy.

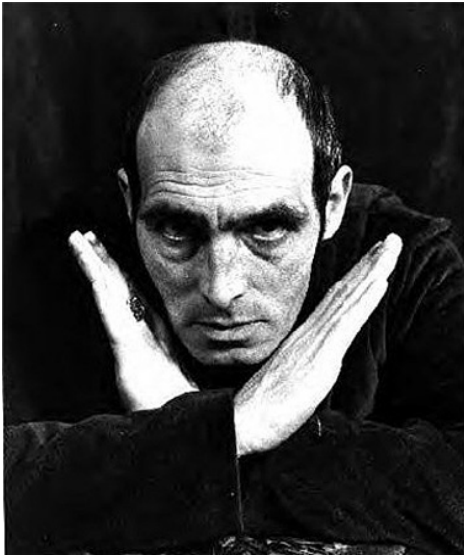


Crowley near the end of his life

At the time of his meetings with Gerald Gardner, Crowley was a feeble old man living in retirement at a private hotel in Hastings, barely kept alive by the use of drugs. It was here that he passed from this world into the next on the 1st December 1947. Unrepentant and unbowed he left this world with a final snub at the society that had so misunderstood him, he left instructions that he was to be cremated and instead of the usual religious service, his 'Hymn to Pan' and other extracts from his writings was to be proclaimed from the pulpit. Finally his ashes were to be sent to his disciples in America.

In many ways Aleister Crowley was not a well-liked man, but he influenced and had an effect on the build up to the new era of modern witchcraft. His knowledge of witchcraft and magick was profound and without question, and he has passed on that knowledge through his books. In today's more liberal society more and more of Crowley's books are being reprinted as we begin to appreciate his strange genius. Indeed some of his books have now gained classical status. These include: *Gnostic Mass* and *The Book of Law* (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1977) from which portions of the well known "Charge of the Goddess" were written by Doreen Valiente. Other books include: *Magick in Theory and Practice*, *777 And Other Qabalistic Writing* and *The Book of Thoth* to mention just a few.

Alex Sanders (1926-1988)



Written and compiled by George Knowles.

Alex Sanders (or the “King of the Witches” as he became known) was responsible for founding the Alexandrian Tradition of Wicca, one of the main traditions of the Wicca/Witchcraft movement, but his reign was fraught with criticism and controversy.

Alex Sanders was born Orrel Alexander Carter on the 06th June 1926 in a house on Moon St, Birkenhead. He was the eldest of six children to parents Hannah and Harold Carter. His father Harold Carter was a music hall entertainer who suffered from alcoholism, and soon after the birth of Alex, moved the family to Grape St in Manchester, there he unofficially changed the family name to Sanders. Alex was unaware of his official surname until he applied for a passport later in life, at which time he officially changed his name to Sanders by deed poll.

As a young boy Sanders suffered with tuberculosis and would regularly visit with his grandmother in Wales, where he could benefit from the Welsh fresh air. At the age of seven, he is believed to have happened upon his grandmother “Mary Biddy” performing some sort of pagan ritual. Taken by surprise she immediately swore young Sanders to secrecy, and initiated him on the spot claiming, “Now, you are one of us”. Thus he became her student and started on the path of the Old Religion.

Sanders was a natural psychic who learned all he could from his grandmother. He claimed that she gave him her “Book of Shadows” to copy and taught him all the rites and magic of the witches including clairvoyance by scrying in inky water and using his grandmother's crystal. Sanders also claimed that following the Blitz during WWII and just a few months before her death at age 74, his grandmother conferred upon him the second and third grade initiations involving ritual sex. After her death he tried to contact

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other witches, and though failing continued with his studies while working for a time as a healer in Spiritualist Churches under the pseudonym of Paul Dallas.



After the War had ended Sanders began working as an analytical chemist at a laboratory in Manchester, where in 1947 he met and then married a co-worker called "Doreen". He was 21 at the time, she 19, and together they had two children "Paul and Janice". Sanders had wanted more children but not Doreen, she also disapproved of his practicing Witchcraft. Five years later the marriage deteriorated and Doreen took the two children and left him. According to his later second wife Maxine, Sanders had been so grief-stricken that he cursed Doreen with a fertility spell; when she later re-married she had three sets of twins??

Depressed Sanders began drinking; he drifted from one low paid job to another and indulged in sex with both men and women. He started on the left-hand path, worshiped the devil and studied "Abra-Melin" magic, hoping to use it to gain wealth and fame. He regularly boasted about his feats of magic and made some amazing claims. One like "Aleister Crowley" before him, he claims to have created a "magical child". He created it during a rite of ritual masturbation with the aid of a male assistant. He says, "the baby disappeared shortly after its creation and grew up as a spirit called Michael".

"Michael" was the spirit he used during trance work, and it was Michael (he claims) who was responsible for forcing him to act badly at wild parties, to insult people, and generally act in an abominable way. "Eventually the spirit of Michael settled down and I was able to control it", he says. When channeling Sanders used a familiar entity called "Nick Demdike", who claimed to have been a persecuted witch from Lancaster during the trials of the 17th century.

In the early 60's, Sanders is reported to have sought entrance to some Gardnerian covens (see Gerald Gardner), including that run by "Patricia and Arnold Crowther", who refused to accept him. Not to be put off so easily, he somehow managed to obtain a copy of the Gardnerian Book of Shadows. This he copied (badly from all accounts) and embellished

it with a few of his own amendments. He then used this as the bases to found his own coven, claiming it to be a copy of his grandmother's Book of Shadows.

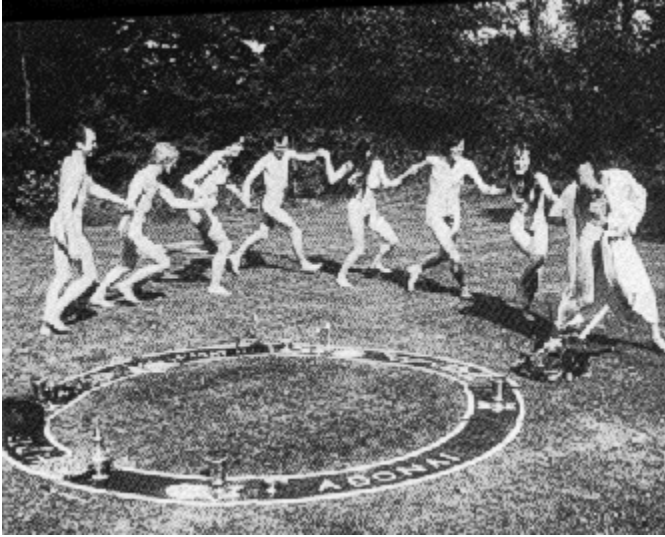
Sanders was a born showman who avidly courted publicity. In September of 1962 he even succeeded in convincing the Manchester Evening News to run a front-page article about Wicca. As a result he soon attracted a large following. During this period Sanders and his coven worked from his home at 24 Egerton Road North, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester. One of his initiates was "Maxine Morris", a Roman Catholic 20 years his junior. After her initiation, they handfasted and she became his High Priestess. They were married in a civil ceremony in 1968 and moved into a basement flat near Nottinghill Gate, London. Later that same year, Maxine bore him a daughter they called "Maya".



Sanders and Maxine

From their new home the Sanders' ran his London coven and taught training classes, he claimed to have initiated more than 1,623 witches working in 100 covens around the country, all-practicing what had become known as the Alexandrian Tradition. At one meeting, a gathering of sixteen of his covens, Sanders was bestowed with the title of "King of the Witches". Sanders frequently appeared in ritual photos as robed or wearing only a loincloth while Witches surrounding him were naked. His explanation for this was that the old "Witch laws" required that the Elder of a coven should be easily identifiable from the other coven members.

In 1968-69, Sanders with Maxine appeared in and gave technical advice on a film called "Legend of the Witches". During the press preview of the film, they met with and were introduced to "Stewart Farrar", then a reporter for the *Reveille*. Stewart would later be initiated by Maxine, and move on to become famous himself as a witch and author.



Alex Sanders leading a "skyclad" dance during a sabbat ritual.

In 1972 Maxine gave birth to another child, a son they named "Victor", then just a year later in 1973 they separated. Sanders moved to Sussex where he resided in relative obscurity until he died on the 30th April 1988 after a long battle with lung cancer. His funeral was a mass media event, Witches and Pagans from all over the country attended to pay their respects. During the course of the funeral a pre-recorded tape was played in which he declared that his son "Victor" should succeed him as "King of the Witches".

Victor Sanders had no desire to take up the title and left the country for the United States. Maxine stayed on in London and continued to run a coven and teach the craft, her half-brother "David Goddard" acting as High Priest. A short time after his funeral, a Witches Council of Elders was convened formed mainly from the Alexandrian tradition. They decided there would be no successor to the "King of Witches" and the title was discontinued.

Without doubt Alex Sanders was a controversial and flamboyant man, who without scruples plagiarized the work of others to embellish his own. Whether he did so with malice, remains a question? Personally I don't think so. More I assume through innocuous indifference, and mainly for the benefit of his students, even though it resulted in criticism from many in the craft. He was also without doubt a very skilled witch, and powerful magician, whose contribution to the newly evolving movement, brought witchcraft back into the public arena and changed the face of Wicca. He helped to influence many newcomers entering the craft and Alexandrian Wicca remains today one of the largest traditions of the craft.

Cecil Hugh Williamson (1909-1999)



Written and compiled by George Knowles

A lesser known figure whose work and knowledge of occult matters was instrumental in the formation and build up of the new and present day Wicca/Witchcraft movement, was the work and dedication of Cecil Hugh Williamson. He was the Founder of the Witchcraft Research Center during the war, and the Museum of Witchcraft in Castletown on the Isle of Man.

Williamson was born into a fairly well to do family on the 18th September 1909 in Paignton, South Devon. His father was an influential career officer in the Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Navy. Williamson's interest in witchcraft and the occult was aroused by an incident that occurred in 1916, which he describes as "a major public act of witchcraft". In December of that year he witnessed an old woman (reputed to be a witch) being stripped of her clothing and beaten. Young as he was (six years old) he ran to her defense and for his efforts was beaten himself. The old woman later befriended young Williamson and taught him all she knew about witches.

Some years later around 1921, Williamson confided to another old woman that he was being bullied at school. She allegedly showed him how to cast a spell against the bully. A short while later the bully had a skiing accident, leaving him crippled and unable to return to school. This had a dramatic effect on Williamson, and began a lifelong quest for knowledge and research into witchcraft and occultism.

Williamson was educated at Malvern College in Worcester, and spent the summer holidays in Dinard, France, visiting with his grandmother and her medium friend Mona Mackenzie. From Mona he learnt about clairvoyance and divination. After graduating from college, his father sent him to Rhodesia to learn about tobacco farming. While living in Rhodesia, he had a houseboy called "Zandonda", a retired voodoo witchdoctor who taught him about African magic.

Williamson returned to London in 1930 and started a career in the film industry working as a production assistant for several studios. In 1933 he met and married the niece of film director and producer, Herbert Wilcox. Gwen Wilcox was working as a makeup artist for Max Factor of Hollywood.

Williamson continued his interest and study of the occult and witchcraft. He began to accumulate vast amounts of knowledge and a substantial collection of artifacts on folklore, witches and their craft. From his interest grew an impressive network of contacts, among whom there was: E.A. Wallis Budge the Egyptologist, [Montague Summers](#) the historian, [Margaret Alice Murray](#) the anthropologist and [Aleister Crowley](#) the occultist.

Perhaps due to his father's high position within the Fleet Air Arm, Williamson came to the attention of MI6, the government's intelligence agency prior to the outbreak of World War II. In 1938 he was asked to head up a special section of MI6 attached to the Foreign Office. Its objective was to collect and assimilate information about Nazi occult interests, to facilitate this he formed the Witchcraft Research Center. Part of his strategy was to determine who in the Nazi high command was influenced by astrology, superstitions and predictions (particularly those of Nostradamus). This was done through the study of graphology and other such methods.

Williamson was instrumental in the capture of Rudolf Hess, Hitler's deputy. He planted phony Nostradamus predictions in an old book in France, which was then made to find its way into Hess's possession. The object was to lure Hess out of Germany. It succeeded and Hess was later arrested in Scotland.

Another scheme he was involved with was the now famous "Witches Ritual". This was aimed at Hitler and the Nazi high command to prevent the invasion of England. It now transpires that this was an elaborate hoax to fool and worry Hitler who believed in witchcraft and the powers of the occult. The ritual took place in Ashdown Forest, Crowborough in Sussex, and employed the services of Aleister Crowley and his son Amado. Gerald Gardner later made claims that he and his New Forrest coven were involved and that the ritual took place in the New Forrest, Hampshire? Perhaps his coven did perform a similar ritual, but not under the auspices of Williamson or with the governments backing.

After the war ended Williamson found himself at a loose end, he had saved a little money but had no work. He spent most of his time traveling up and down the country continuing his research and maintaining his contacts. In 1946 he happened to call in at the famous occult bookstore "Atlantis" in London, and there was introduced to [Gerald B Gardner](#) who was giving an informal talk on witchcraft. Gardner had been keen to meet Williamson because of his occult contacts. While friendly enough at the start their relationship was often strained and would later end on bad terms.

Williamson was a prodigious collector of artifacts on witchcraft, and had collected thousands of magical objects and items of occult interest. He decided that best use he

could make of them was to create his own business in the form of a “Witchcraft Museum”. But this was not so easy to do, for witchcraft in those times was still viewed with skepticism. In 1947 he set up his first site in Stratford-on-Avon, but was ran out of town due to difficulty with local antagonism. Eventually he had to move out of England and settle in Castletown on the Isle of Man. There his ideas were more favorably accepted, and he opened the Folklore Center of Superstition and Witchcraft in 1949. On the advice of his wife Gwen, the center also included a Witches Kitchen to be used as a restaurant and to boost business.



Williamson at the Castletown museum

After the repeal of the old witchcraft laws in 1951, Williamson decided to return to England and try again. In 1952 he sold the buildings of the Castletown museum to Gerald b Gardner and moved his collection of artifacts back to England. He started with a museum in Windsor, near to Windsor Castle. Initially it proved a success and was a splendid tourist attraction, but after the first season ended local residents again grew skeptical and antagonistic, and forced him to move on.

In 1954 he relocated to Bourton-on-the-Water in Gloucestershire. There he was treated to the same kind of harassment he had met in other locations, included: Sigils painted on his doors, dead cats left on his doorstep at night and even had a wing of the museum destroyed by arson. Williamson moved several more times due to this sort of antagonism and in the process started up museums such as: the Museum of Smuggling at Polperro in Cornwall, and the Museum of Shellcraft at Buckfast in Devon. He finally settled in Boscastle, Cornwall and there opened his final Museum of Witchcraft in 1960, the one still running today.

Williamson retired in 1996 and sold the Museum of Witchcraft together with many of its contents to “Graham King” and his partner “Elizabeth Crow”. After his retirement he moved to Witheridge near Tiverton in Devon, taking with him some of the artifacts from the museum he was reluctant to relinquish. He also took with him his extensive collection of occult articles and objects associated with the Witchcraft Research Center.

Following the advice of Aleister Crowley given in the 1940’s, Williamson over the years did not belonged to any particular group or society. He maintained that the services of a

witch was a valuable and necessary service to society, especially to the lower classes who cannot afford fancy medical treatments, but he disdained the modern Pagan religion of witches as being "nonproductive of results". According to his own records between the years 1930 – 1997, he took part as a spectator and sometimes as an operative in some 1,120 witchcraft rituals that produced beneficial results. He had known, met with and been taught by some 82 wise women.

Through his knowledge of witchcraft and the occult, and through his network of contacts with those involved, his Museums have done much to provide the means and a central focus point from which the new movement of Wicca and Witchcraft could evolve. Cecil Williamson died on the 09th December 1999. He was 90 years old.

Doreen Valiente



Written and compiled by George Knowles

Doreen Valiente was perhaps one of the most respected English witches to have influenced the modern day movement of Witchcraft. She was an early initiate and High Priestess of [Gerald B. Gardner](#) and did much to co-write with him the basic rituals and other materials that helped to changed and shaped contemporary Witchcraft as it is perceived today. As Gerald Gardner is now commonly thought of as the "Father" of contemporary Witchcraft, so Doreen is known affectionately as the "Mother".

Doreen was born Doreen Edith Dominy the daughter of Harry Dominy, an architect, and his wife Edith (nee Richardson) in Mitcham, South London, on the 4th January 1922. Little is known of her family except that they were Christian and very religious. During her early years the family lived near Horley in Surrey, and here Doreen had her first psychic experiences. When she was just seven years old, she became fascinated with the motion of the moon as she studied and gazed at it from the garden, and while doing so experienced her first spiritual contact:

"I saw what people would call the world of everyday reality as unreal, and saw behind it something that was real and very potent. I saw the world of force behind the world of form".

Far from a disturbing experience, it did more to boost her intrigue in the true nature of life's existence:

"Just for a moment I had experienced what was beyond the physical. It was beautiful, wonderful, it wasn't frightening. That, I think, shaped my live a lot".

At the age of thirteen, Doreen begun to experiment with simple magic. Once when learning that her mother, who worked as a housekeeper, was being constantly harassed

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and tormented by a co-worker. Doreen was able to obtain a few strands of the women's hair, and concocted a spell to stop her bullying. The spell apparently worked but her devoutly Christian family, perhaps out of fear, were far from happy and sent Doreen away to convent school. Doreen walked out of the convent when she was fifteen and refused ever to return.

As time went by, Doreen became more aware of her own psychic abilities and began to read and study all the occult material she could lay her hands on, including the works of: [Charles Godfrey Leland](#), [Aleister Crowley](#) and [Margaret Alice Murray](#) whom she particularly admired.

On the 31st January 1941 having just turned 19, Doreen was working as a secretary in Barry, South Wales. There she met and married her first husband 'Joanis Vlachopoulos'. Not a lot is known about Joanis, except that he was a 32 year old 'Able Seaman' serving with the Merchant Navy out of Cardiff. This was a dangerous occupation at that time as the course of World War II spread across Europe and our navy's struggled to re-supply troops and forces employed over there. On a daily bases, many ships and seamen were lost as they crossed the treacherous waters of the Atlantic. Just six months after their wedding, Joanis was reported missing at sea and presumed dead. Despite her loss, Doreen continued to work as a secretary in Wales, then later moved to London.

On the 29th of May 1944, just a week before the Normandy Landings, Doreen married her second husband Casimiro Valiente. Casimiro was a refugee from the Spanish Civil War, who while fighting with the Free French Forces against the German occupation, had been wounded and sent back to England as an invalid. He met Doreen while convalescing in London and they were married at St Pancras Registry Office. They would remained together for the next 28 years until Cosimiro died in April 1972.



Casimiro Valiente

Sometime after the war ended, Doreen and Cosimo moved from London and took up residence in Bournemouth, not to far away from the New Forrest area where Gerald Gardner had first been initiated into Witchcraft. After the bombed-out ruins of war-time

London, the peace and tranquility of the area appealed to Doreen and such was its history steeped in folklore, her interest in Witchcraft, the Occult and Psychic Phenomena was re-kindled. In 1952 shortly after the repeal of the old witchcraft laws, Doreen read an article about [Cecil Williamson](#) who was opening a Folklore Center of Superstition and Witchcraft based on the Isle of Man. The article mentioned a coven still operating in the New Forrest area, and this so intrigued Doreen that she wrote to Williamson seeking further information. Williamson in turn passed her letter on to Gerald Gardner.

After corresponding back and forth for a while, Doreen expressed her interest in joining a coven. Gardner invited Doreen to tea at a friend's house near the New Forrest. During the summer of 1952 in a little town called Christchurch, Hampshire, there still lived a lady called 'Dafo', the very same lady who had introduced Gardner to the New Forrest coven in the autumn of 1939. She wisely used 'Dafo' as a pseudonym, because it was only a year before that the old antiquated 'Witchcraft Act of 1735' was repealed, and 'technically', witchcraft was still considered by many a criminal offence, and to declare oneself a Witch could bring about all sorts of social complications.

At this first meeting in Dafo's home, Gardner didn't invite her to join his coven, but presented Doreen with a copy of his book 'High Magic's Aid'. This he did to all potential initiates in order to gauge their reactions to ritual nudity and scourging. After further correspondence, a year later in 1953, Doreen received her first degree initiation into the Craft. Tradition demanded that an opposite member of sex conduct the initiation, and so Gardner decided to conduct it himself. On Midsummer's Eve he was due to attend a 'Druid Solstice' gathering at Stonehenge, where he was to loan the 'Order' his ritual sword. Traveling in from his witchcraft museum on the Isle of Man, on his way he stopped off at the home of Dafo to initiate Doreen. That evening Doreen was reborn as "Ameth" the pseudonym or craft name as it is called, by which she was to be known.

During the initiation Gardner used his own Book of Shadows containing as he claimed, information and remnants of rites taken from an Old Religion passed down through the ages to the old New Forest Coven, but from it he also read a passage Doreen instantly recognized. It came not from an old religion, but from a more contemporary source, the 'Gnostic Mass' written by Aleister Crowley. Gardner then gave Doreen free access to his 'Book of Shadows' and other materials he had collected. He still claimed most had been passed down to him from the old coven, but much of it was fragmentary. Doreen immediately recognized some of Crowley's other work among his material, but accepted Gardner's assertion of how it came to be there. Working in collaboration with Gardner, she began to re-write his 'Book of Shadows' using her considerable poetic gifts. Due to his unsavory reputation, she removed much of Crowley's influence and instead inserted the influence of Charles G. Leland, this is evident in her most famous piece 'The Charge of the Goddess'. This revised version of the Book of Shadows served as the basis for what was to become known as "Gardnerian Wicca", which still today is one of the most dominant traditions of contemporary Witchcraft.



Doreen was reborn as "Ameth"

From these early beginnings we can see how Doreen Valiente's influence helped to shape and mould the future of modern witchcraft as it evolved into many other traditions. Doreen was also credited with increasing the emphasis on Goddess worship and thus transforming the craft into a fully-fledged Religion.

By 1957 however, a rift was starting to form between Gardner, Doreen (now his High Priestess) and the rest of his coven. It was caused mainly by his relentless pursuit of publicity and would lead to Doreen (and others) leaving his coven. In her autobiography 'The Rebirth of Witchcraft' she explains:

"that as the coven's High Priestess, she felt that by speaking to the press, Gardner was compromising the security of the group and the sincerity of his own teachings".

As was his way, Gardner persisted forcing a separation, so Doreen left to set up her own coven with a man called Ned Grove. Later, before Gardner died, they restored their friendship and mutual respect, but never to the same degree as before.

Life then changed dramatically for Doreen in 1964, when both her mother Edith, and Gerald Gardner died. It was also the year, perhaps due to the growing tensions of internal politics emerging within Gardnerianism, that Doreen decided to move on and take up with another tradition. She was initiated into the 'Clan of Tubal-Cain', a coven run by [Robert Cochrane](#). Cochrane claimed to be a hereditary witch and was the founder of the tradition now referred to as the '1734' tradition, a tradition allegedly handed down through his family. However, Doreen soon became disillusioned with Cochrane as she began to realize he was more fiction than fact. He was openly contemptuous of Gardnerian Witches, which irked her, and when she noticed his obsession with 'witches potions' (Drugs), she left him. Cochrane died in 1966 in what would appear to have been a ritual suicide, he had ingested belladonna leaves, more commonly known as 'Deadly Nightshade'.

Into the 1960's, a time that brought change to many people, in many ways, and a time that changed many public perceptions. Freedom was in the air, a sexual revolution started, rock and roll was here to stay, and peace movements proliferated as people took to the streets against war, racism and environmental issues. Social upheaval led to the old-fashioned ideas that Governmental-control and suppression, as well as public opinion could be changed. The public had finally found a voice.

From this social freedom emerged many alternative 'New Age' traditions as people cast off the restraints of orthodox religion. Some witches took advantage of this new found freedom and the likes of [Sybil Leek](#) and [Alex and Maxine Saunders](#) became media personalities actively courting publicity. Many Elders of the Craft still refused to come forward publicly, and stoically shunned all contact with anyone outside the Craft. Doreen was one of the few who managed to find a middle-ground, she never denied paganism nor feared to speak out in its defense.

After the death of her husband Casimiro in April 1972, Doreen began to devote much of her time to writing. Her first book was 'An ABC of Witchcraft' (1973), which soon became a sought after book. It was followed by 'Natural Magic' (in 1975) and 'Witchcraft for Tomorrow' (in 1978). These three books did much to establish Doreen as an authority on Witchcraft and magic. Many of today's leading authors, researchers and pagans then contacted Doreen, who helped them with her knowledge, anecdotes and personal reminiscences of leading craft figures. For those more discerning, she also made available her large and extensive private library, and by guiding their research, proof-read and edited many of their works. In this way Doreen helped and contributed to many of today's leading Wiccan titles.

It was also in the 70's that Doreen spoke out and challenged the British Government, who perhaps out of ignorance were attempting to pass new legislation against Witchcraft. However, they hadn't expected the persistence of someone like Doreen Valiente. She succeeded in lobbying the 'Member of Parliament' concerned, and in the end the new laws were never passed.

In 1980, Doreen began her quest and search for '[Old Dorothy Clutterbuck](#)', the High Priestess who had allegedly initiated Gardner into Witchcraft in 1939. So little was known about Old Dorothy, that many craft skeptics believed she never existed and was merely a figment of Gardner's imagination. Doreen set out to disprove these allegations and after a diligent and determined search, succeeded in proving through 'Birth and Death records', that Old Dorothy had indeed been a real person. Her account of the search which lasted over two years is published as "Appendix A" in [Janet and Stewart Farrar's](#) book - 'A Witches Bible'. She also wrote and had published her own autobiography, 'The Rebirth of Witchcraft' in 1989

Through-out the last three decades of her life, Doreen gave freely of her time and energy, and contributed much of her research, knowledge and experience, not only through her writing and poetry, but through her personal appearances and public speaking at events and conventions regularly organized by the 'The Pagan Federation' founded in 1971. In

her efforts to provide genuine information on Paganism, and to counter the many misconceptions about it's religion, in 1995 she agreed to become 'Patron' of the 'Center for Pagan Studies'. It was founded by [John Belham-Payne](#), her last High Priest and working partner, and it was to the 'Center for Pagan Studies' that Doreen made her last public speech.



Doreen Valiente - January 1999

In her later years Doreen lived in Brighton, Sussex, where after a long struggle with cancer, illness finally overcame her. In her last few days she was moved to a nursing home for extra care and attention, and there friends would visit and keep her company. Through-out her final mortal hours, John Belham-Payne and his wife Julie were at her bedside, and at 6.55 a.m. on the 1st September 1999, she cross the threshold into the Otherworld.

Doreen had been a strong person in life, strong in her belief's through-out her life, and while her illness sapped her physical strength, she retained her mental strength right up until the end. Just two weeks before she passed away, Doreen notarized her 'Last Will and Testament'. In it she bequeathed to John Belham-Payne her extensive collection of witchcraft artifacts, her personal library, and copyrights to all her writings, research material and poetry for prosperity. The artifacts included many items made for her by Gerald Gardner, together with some of his ritual items, his original Book of Shadows and her own Book of Shadows, thought by many to be contemporary witchcraft's most important documents. She also requested John to perform a simple pagan service for her funeral and invite all her friends to the same.



Doreen with John Belham-Payne - Doreen at rest

One of her last wishes John tells us, was that the poetry she had written over the years, be published. To achieve this last wish, John and his wife Julie moved to Spain in the following year 2000. This allowed them the time and freedom to restore and archive Doreen's now famous collection, and more importantly, to publish posthumously her final gift to the community, a new book of her poetry entitled "Charge of The Goddess" (published in 2000 by Hexagon Hoopix, the publishing arm of the Hexagon Archive). The book is available to order on-line from <http://www.shop.doreenvaliente.org/>

Doreen's contributions to modern day Witchcraft are immeasurable, and yet she was one of the few early pioneers who shunned publicity. She believed that a certain amount of secrecy on the part of covens should and ought to be maintained, and that the future of paganism in the age of Aquarius, lies in feminism and Green issues associated with the environment. In her last address to the National Conference of the Pagan Federation, held at Fairfield Hall in Croydon, London on the 22nd November 1997, she stated that:

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"The initiates of the ancient pagan Mysteries were taught to say 'I am the child of earth and Starry Heaven and there is no part of me that is not of the Gods'. If we in our own day believe this, then we will not only see it as true of ourselves, but of other people also. We will for instance cease to have silly bickering between covens, because they happen to do things differently from the way we do them. This incidentally is the reason why I eventually parted from Robert Cochrane, because he wanted to declare a sort of Holy War against the followers of Gerald Gardner, in the name of traditional witchcraft. This made no sense to me, because it seemed to me, and still does, that as witches, pagans or whatever we choose to call ourselves, the things which unite us are more important than the things which divide us".

"I was saying this back in the 1960s", she continues, "in the days of the old Witchcraft Research Association and I repeat it today. However since those days we have, I believe, made great progress. We have literally spread worldwide. We are a creative and fertile movement. We have inspired art, literature, television, music and historical research. We have lived down the calumny and abuse. We have survived treachery. So it seems to me that the 'Powers That Be' must have a purpose for us in the Aquarian Age that is coming into being - "So Mote It Be".

Time will tell whether her new book of verse will be recognized for its spiritual and literary values. Designed for practical use in Witchcraft, it may well in time be used for fresh inspiration and contemporary thought, and even become a template for a new generation of Wiccans, those who have finally arrived in the new age of Aquarius, a new era in a new millennium.

End



News up-date:

In 2011, John Belham-Payne of the Centre For Pagan Studies issued the following press release:

"The Doreen Valiente Foundation was officially formed on the 6th March 2011 and has now received ownership of all artefacts bequeathed to John Belham-Payne of the Centre For Pagan Studies by Doreen Valiente. The objects of the foundation are: "To protect artefacts which are important to the past, present and future of all pagan religions", and "to make such artefacts available for future education and research". The Foundations first Trustees each signed a "Declaration of Trust", they include: John Belham-Payne, Julia Belham-Payne, Brian Botham, Patricia Botham and Ashley Mortimer. The Foundation held its first meeting and resolved to: Seek charitable status from the Charities Commission, which has now been achieved, and to design and prepare all artefacts for their new purpose, that of exhibition.

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The Foundation has already received pledges of further artefacts to add to the Collection, and anticipates continued growth from future donations.”

A further up-date:



The Blue Plaque

On the 21st June 2013 (the Mid-Summer Solstice), sponsored by "The Centre for Pagan Studies" and the newly formed "Doreen Valiente Foundation", a Blue Plaque was unveiled in Brighton, UK honouring Doreen Valiente. Such commemorative Blue Plaques are only awarded to people of special interest those who during their life-time helped to shape our cultural heritage and history. This Doreen Valiente plaque is now prominently placed on the wall of the apartment block in Brighton where she lived and worked for the last 30 years of her life, and where she did most of her seminal writing. So far as is known, this is the first Blue Plaque of its kind to be placed on a council apartment block in this country, and one of the first to commemorate the life of a modern contemporary Witch.

Gerald Brosseau Gardner (1884-1964)



Written and compiled by George Knowles

Gerald B. Gardner is perhaps one of the best known and talked about figures in modern witchcraft to date. An English hereditary Witch (allegedly), he was the founder of the Gardnerian tradition of contemporary Witchcraft. Some consider him a man of great vision and creativity, one who had the courage to try outrageous things during difficult times. Others look on him as a con man, deceitful and manipulative. He authored the now famous books "Witchcraft Today" and "The Meaning of Witchcraft", both he wrote in the 1950's. These two classic books inspired the growth and development of many traditions of modern Witchcraft throughout the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States.

Gerald B. Gardner was born on the 13th June 1884 in a small northern town called Blundellsands, near Liverpool, England. Born of Scottish descent into a well-to-do family, his father was a merchant and Justice of the Peace. His grandfather is reputed to have married a witch, and he claims others of his distant family had psychic gifts. Gardner believed himself to be a descendant of Grissell Gairdner, who was burned as a witch at Newburgh in 1610. Of his ancestors, several became Mayor's of Liverpool, and one Alan Gardner, a naval Commander was later made a Peer of the Land having distinguished himself as Commander in Chief of the Channel Fleet and helped to deter the invasion of Napoleon in 1807.



Mother and Father

Gardner was the middle of three sons, but was kept distanced from his two brothers as he suffered severely with bouts of asthma. As a result of this, his parents employed a nanny called Josephine "Com" McCombie to care for him separately. To help alleviate his condition, Com persuaded his parents to allow her to take him travelling during the winter months. During their travels across Europe, Gardner was often left alone, but was content to read and study academic subjects, his main interests being Archaeology, Anthropology and Folklore. Later as a young man, Com married and went to live with her husband in Ceylon. Gardner went with her and started work first on a tea plantation and later managing a family rubber plantation his father had invested in. He then moved on to Borneo before finally settling in Malaysia.

While in Malaysia, given his interest in anthropology and folklore, Gardner became fascinated with the local culture and its religious and magical beliefs. He also had a keen interest in all things occult, and was particularly drawn to ritual knives and daggers, especially the Malay Kris (a dagger with a wavy blade). He made a name for himself in academic circles with his pioneering research into Malaya's early civilizations. He also wrote and had some of his writings published in the journal of the Malayan branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. Later he wrote the first authoritative book on the history and folklore of the Malay Kris entitled: "Kris and other Malay Weapons" (Singapore 1936). From 1923 until he retired in 1936, Gardner worked as a civil servant for the British Government, first as a rubber plantation inspector, then as a Customs official and inspector of opium establishments. In 1927 while on a trip back to England he met and married his future wife, an English woman called Dorothea Frances Rosedale (Donna). After a very short engagement they were married on the 16th August 1927 at St. Jude's Church in Kensington, before eventually returning to Malaysia to live-out their working lives together. Overtime Gardner was able to make a comfortable living from his dealings within the rubber and opium trades, which in turn allowed him to indulge in his favourite pastimes History and Archaeology. On one expedition during his travels, he claimed to have found the site of the ancient city of Singapura.



Gardner and his new wife aboard his Customs launch on the "Johore River" in Malaya. After his retirement in 1936, Gardner and his wife returned to England and initially resided in central London, before settling for a time in 1938 in a more permanent home in Highcliffe (a house called Southridge), located in the New Forest area of Hampshire. During this time he continued to indulge his main interests and spent much of his time travelling around Europe and Asia Minor. In Cyprus he found places he

claims to have dreamed about, and was convinced he had lived there in a previous lifetime. In 1939 he wrote and published his second book: "A Goddess Arrives". It was based in Cyprus and concerned the worship of a Goddess called Aphrodite in the year 1450 B.C.

By this time the Second World War was looming, and Gardner anxious to do his piece for King and Country turned his thoughts to Civil Defence. He wrote a letter published in the Daily Telegraph stating that: "As decreed in the Magna Carta, every free-born Englishman is entitled to bear arms in the defence of himself and his household". He further suggested that the civilian population should be armed and trained in the event of invasion. The German press picked up the article and front-page headlines appeared in the Frankfurter Zeitung, they were furious, and raged against the man who had made such a "medieval" suggestion. Shortly thereafter the famous Home Guard came into being, known first as the Local Defence Volunteers. We shall probably never know if the "Magna Carta letter" was the impetus that instigated it?

Having settled in the New Forest area of Hampshire, one of the oldest forests in England, Gardner began to explore its history. He soon found that local folklore was steeped in Witchcraft, and his curiosity ignited, began to seek out involvement. Through neighbours he became acquainted with a local group of occultist Co-Masons, a fraternity that called themselves "The Fellowship of Crotona". It was established by Mrs. Besant-Scott, daughter of Annie Besant, the famous Theosophist and founder of the women's Co-Masonry movement in England (Co-Masonry was affiliated to the Grand Orient of France and therefore not recognized by the Masonic Grand Lodge of England). They had built a small community theatre called "The First Rosicrucian Theatre in England", and it was here Gardner joined them and helped them produce amateur plays with occult and spiritual themes.

Within the Fellowship another but secret group operated, a member of which spoke to Gardner and claimed to have met him in a previous life, he then went on to describe the places Gardner had found in Cyprus. Soon after they took Gardner into their confidence claiming to be a group of hereditary Witches practicing a Craft passed down to them through the centuries. The group met in the New Forest where he was introduced to [Mrs. Dorothy Clutterbuck](#). Old Dorothy as she was affectionately known accepted Gardner for initiation and in September 1939 at her home "a big house in the neighbourhood", he was initiated into the Old Religion.



Old Dorothy Clutterbuck

Old Dorothy's coven was believed to have been the last remains of a coven directly descendant from one of the Nine Coven's founded by [Old George Pickingill](#) some forty years earlier. In the following year 1940, Gardner claimed to have helped with and took part in the now famous "Coven Rite" aimed at and against the Nazi High Command and the threatened invasion of Hitler's forces. This we now know was not true. That ritual had been orchestrated by [Cecil Williamson](#), founder of the Witchcraft Research Centre. It had taken place in Ashdown Forest, Crowborough in Sussex, and employed the services of the infamous [Aleister Crowley](#) and his son Amado. It's possible though and more probable that Gardner and his coven performed some sort of ritual of their own making?



Old George Pickingill - Cecil Hugh Williamson - Aleister Crowley

Just before the outbreak of war, Gardner met with [Arnold Crowther](#), a professional Stage Magician and Ventriloquist, and formed a friendship that would last for many years. It was after the war in 1946, that Gardner first met Cecil Williamson. They met at the famous Atlantis Bookshop in London, where Gardner was giving an informal talk. Gardner had been eager to meet Williamson in order to extend his network of occult contacts. While they met frequently thereafter, their relationship was strained and would later end on bad terms. Williamson described Gardner as a "Vain, self-centred man, tight with his money, and more interested in outlets for his nudist and voyeuristic activities, than in learning anything about authentic witchcraft".



Arnold Crowther

In 1947, his friend Arnold Crowther introduced Gardner to Aleister Crowley. Their brief association would later lead to controversy over the authenticity of Gardner's original "Book of Shadows". Crowley had allegedly been a member of one of Old George Pickingill's original Nine Covens in the New Forest, and Gardner was especially interested in the rituals they used. He asked Crowley to write down what he could

remember and later incorporated some his writings together other magical materials into his own Book of Shadows. Crowley by this time was in poor health and only months away from death. Perhaps seeing a kindred spirit, he made Gardner an honorary member of the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO), a Tantric sex magic organisation at one time under his leadership and granted him a charter to operate his own Lodge.

In the mean time, Gardner had moved from the New Forrest to Bricketts Wood outside St Albans. There he had bought a cottage on the grounds of a nudist club, from where he ran his own coven. Not having a car or able to drive, Gardner prevailed on Cecil Williamson to drive him down to Crowley's lodgings in Hastings for consultations. Williamson later claimed to have participated as an observer in some of Gardner's "Lodge" activities. The alter he said was made up of an old "Anderson" air raid table with a metal top and was used to perform the Great Rite (A rite involving sexual intercourse). The Lodge he say's, had far more men than women with about 80 to 20 percent splitting the difference, this because many of the women who joined his lodge didn't favour the sexual rites. At one point Gardner had to resort to hiring a London prostitute to play-act the role of High Priestess and engage in the sex act?

Over time Gardner accumulated a vast amount of knowledge on Folklore, Witchcraft, and Magic, and had collected many artefacts and materials associated with ritual procedures and ceremonial magic. Much as he wanted to write about and pass on this knowledge, he was prevented from being too public. Witchcraft was still against the law in England and he was cautioned by Old Dorothy to remain secretive. Later she allowed him to write in the form of fiction. The result was an occult novel called "High Magic's Aid". The book was published in 1949 by Michael Houghton (also known as Michael Juste) the proprietor of the famous Atlantis Bookshop in London and contained Gardner's basic ideas for what was later to become "Gardnerian Wicca".

In 1951 there was a resurgence of belief and new interest shown in the Old Religion brought on by the repeal of the last antiquated Witchcraft Laws still being enforced in England. Gardner was now free to go public and breaking away from the New Forest coven began to establish his own. This change in the law also made it possible for Cecil Williamson to open the famous "Museum of Magic and Witchcraft" (formerly called the Folklore Centre) in Castletown on the Isle of Man. Later that year after a dispute with his trust fund, Gardner turned up on Williamson's doorstep in financial trouble. Williamson took him on as the museum's director and soon he became known as the "Resident Witch".



Gardner in front of an exhibit showing in the "Museum of Magic and Witchcraft" Through his association with the museum, Gardner became acquainted with everyone there was to know in Occult circles at that time. His reputation as a leading authority on Witchcraft began to spread. A year later in 1952, with his financial problems resolved, Gardner bought the museum buildings together with its display cases from Williamson. However, Gardner's collection of artefacts and materials were not as extensive as Williamson's and he found he hadn't enough objects to fill all the cases, he therefore asked Williamson for the loan of his talismans and amulets. Weary, if not openly disliking Gardner, Williamson reluctantly agreed but took the precaution of making plaster casts and imprints of each item before allowing Gardner to re-opened the museum and show them.



The Witches Mill home of the museum in Castletown

In 1953 Gardner met [Doreen Valiente](#) and initiated her into his coven. Doreen proved to be his greatest asset, it was she who helped him rewrite and expand his existing "Book of Shadows". Together they rewrote and embellished the numerous texts and rituals he had collected, many of which he claimed had been passed down to him from the New Forrest Coven. Doreen also weeded out much of Aleister Crowley's material on account of his notoriety and put more emphasis onto Goddess worship. So it was between them, that Doreen and Gardner established a new working practice that evolved into what is today one of the leading traditions of the Wicca movement, Gardnerian Wicca.



Doreen Valiente

In 1954 Gardner wrote and published his first non-fiction book on witchcraft entitled "Witchcraft Today". In this he supported the theories of anthropologist [Margaret A. Murray](#) who purported that Witchcraft was a surviving remnant of an old organized Pagan Religion, one that had existed before the Witch-hunts. Murray also wrote the introduction to the book, which on its release was an immediate success. As a result and because of it, new covens sprang up all over England and the Gardnerian tradition of modern Witchcraft was born.



Margaret A. Murray

Soon after its release, Gardner became a media celebrity and began courting their attention. He loved to be in the spotlight and made numerous public appearances being dubbed by the popular press as "Britain's Chief Witch". However not all the publicity was beneficial, he was a keen naturist and his penchant for ritual nudity was incorporated into the new tradition. This caused conflict with other hereditary Witches who claimed that they had always worked robed. Many also believed he was wrong to make so much information public, information which to them had always been considered secret. They also believed that so much publicity would eventually harm the Craft.

Gardner became difficult to work with, his egotism and publicity seeking tried the patience of his coven members, even that of Doreen Valiente, by now his High Priestess, causing rifts to develop in his coven. He also insisted on using what he claimed were

“ancient” Craft laws that gave dominance to the God over the Goddess. A final revolt happened when he declared that the High Priestess should retire when he considered her to old. In 1957, Doreen Valiente and other members having had enough of the “gospel according to Gardner” left and went their separate ways. Undaunted, Gardner continued on and wrote his last book "The Meaning of Witchcraft" (1959).

In May 1960, Gardner was invited to a garden party at Buckingham Palace, this in recognition of his distinguished Civil Service work in the Far East. A few weeks later on the 6th June, he initiated [Patricia Dawson](#) into his coven, and she in turn initiated his old friend Arnold Crowther. On the 8th November, Patricia and Arnold were married in a private handfasting officiated by Gardner. Sadly that same year his devoted wife Donna died, and while she had never taken part in the Craft or his activities within it, she had remained his loyal companion for 33 years. Gardner was devastated and began to suffer once more his childhood affliction of asthma.



Patricia Dawson - Patricia and Arnold Crowther with Gardner

In 1962, Gardner started to correspond with an Englishman in America called [Raymond Buckland](#). Buckland would later be responsible for introducing the Gardnerian tradition into the United States. In 1963 Buckland and his wife Rosemary flew back to the UK to

be initiated and raised in Perth, Scotland, at the home of Gardner's then High Priestess, [Monique Wilson](#) (Lady Olwen). Gardner joined them for the initiation ceremony, during which Buckland was given the craft name "Robat" and Rosemary named "Lady Rowen". Shortly after their meeting Gardner left to vacation the winter months in the Lebanon, from which while returning on the 12th February 1964, he suffered a fatal heart attack and died at the breakfast table onboard ship. The following day he was buried ashore in Tunis, his funeral attended only by the Captain of the ship, "The Scottish Prince" on which he had been travelling.



Buckland and his wife Rosemary

In his will, Gardner bequeathed the Museum in Castletown to his High Priestess, Monique Wilson, together with all its artefacts; these included his personal ritual tools, notebooks and copyrights to his books. Monique and her husband continued to run the museum and hold weekly Coven meetings in his old cottage, but only for a short time. They later closed the museum and sold its contents to the "Ripley's, Believe It Or Not" organization in America. They in turn dispersed the many artefacts amongst their various museums, and some they sold on to private collections. Many of Gardner's supporters were dismayed, even angered by these events and Monique was forced from grace as High Priestess. Other beneficiaries of Gardner's estate were Patricia and Arnold Crowther (his old friends), and Jack L. Bracelin, author of his biography entitled: *Gerald Gardner: Witch* (1960).

Postscript:

In 1968 [Eleanor Ray Bone](#) one of Gardner's later High Priestesses went on a pilgrimage to Tunis where she visited the grave of Gerald B. Gardner. While there she learned from the Chaplain that the Tunisian Government would shortly be turning the cemetery into a public park. He explained that if she wished to disinter his remains and move them to another location, that this could be arranged. Through donations made by members of the Craft, Gardner's remains were later laid to rest in a more fitting place close to the ancient city of Carthage, once a prominent religious centre where they worshiped the Moon goddess Tanit and the Sun god Baal, the equivalent of the Phoenician goddess Astarte. Cults associated with the Greek goddesses Demeter and Persephone and the Roman goddess Juno were also worshiped there.



Eleanor Ray Bone

Sadly 40 years later after Gardner's grave had been left untended, while undisturbed and unmarked, through time it had gradually settled and subsided unevenly into the ground and become overgrown with weeds and strewn with rubble. However, in 2007 a meeting took place between Patricia Crowther and Larry Jones, a member of the Craft from Washington State, U.S.A. Larry at the time was working in North Africa, and Patricia took the opportunity to charge Larry with finding his grave. Taking a short break from his work to visit Tunis, he managed to track down the location of the grave and in the short time available to him, arranged for the ground to be cleared and the gravestone re-erected. A new plaque was then added on top of the gravestone.



In 2007, a new plaque was added on top of Gardner's grave that reads in the words of Patricia Crowther:

Gerald Brosseau Gardner
13th June 1884 - 12th February 1964

Author Archaeologist Artist
Father of Modern Wica
Beloved of the Great Goddess

Let those remembered never be forgotten, for we shall not see their like again.
End.

Monique Wilson



Written and compiled by George Knowles

Monique Marie Mauricette Wilson (nee Arnoux) was born in Haiphong, North Vietnam in 1928. Her parents were French, the father being a French naval officer stationed there in the seaport. She first met [Gerald B. Gardner](#) as a child in Haiphong and came to know him as “Uncle Gerald”. At the time Gardner was working as a customs official for the British government, a position that allowed him to travel widely in the area and occasionally brought him into contact with her father.

Shortly after the outbreak of war in 1939, Monique was witness to the unfortunate murder of her father by Communists in the streets of Hanoi, after which she and her mother joined many other refugees and fled to the relative safety of Hong Kong, there to wait out the war. Life was tough in Hong Kong during the war, more so after the British surrendered to the Japanese on the 25th December 1941. It remained tough until the end of the war and the British reoccupied the island following the surrender of Japan on the 14th August 1945.

After the war and while still living in Hong Kong, Monique met her future husband a Scotsman called Campbell Wilson, or “Scotty” to all who knew him. At the time he was serving as a Flight Lieutenant with the Bomber Command of the Royal Air Force and stationed in Hong Kong. Within months of their meeting they got engaged and soon after were married. After leaving the service in 1954, they returned to the UK and settled in Perth, Scotland, where Scotty went to work for the local gas board. Three years later they were blessed with a daughter called Yvette.

While living in Perth, Monique became interested in the Old Religion, inspired in part by a book called *Witchcraft Today* (1954) and news media articles about the book’s author “Gerald Gardner”, dubbed by the press as “Britain’s Chief Witch”. Gardner was gaining popularity in the daily tabloids, though sometimes controversially, as the owner of a “Museum of Witchcraft and Magic” based on the Isle of Man.

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Not knowing whom the author actually was, Monique wrote to him seeking further information about the craft, and was surprised to find that he was the same “Uncle Gerald” she had known as a child in Haiphong many years earlier. After renewing their friendship Gardner initiated Monique into the craft, and later in 1961 elevated her to High Priestess. She was given the craft name of Lady Olwen, and her husband Scotty who acted as her High Priest was named Loic. Their daughter Yvette although still a young a child, was also initiated and given the craft name of Morven.



Monique and Gerald Gardner

Gardner’s aim at the time was to proliferate and establish working covens across the UK and Scotland, so Monique under his guidance formed her own coven in Perth, and Gardner became a regular visitor. Gardner showed a lot of affection for Monique (perhaps due to their earlier relationship in Haiphong) and often referred to her as his niece, although there was no physical blood tie between them. She also became one of his main spokespersons on the craft, and attracted much media publicity. Through her association with Gardner, the popular press dubbed her the “Queen of the Witches”, a claim she never refuted and indeed sometimes embellished.



Monique 'skyclad' performing a ritual

In November 1963 at the bequest of Gardner, Monique and Scotty initiated [Raymond Buckland](#) and his wife Rosemary into the craft, a momentous event in the History of contemporary Witchcraft on two counts, one, it would prove to be the last initiation ceremony attended by Gardner himself, and two, it paved the way for the Buckland's to introduce the Gardnerian tradition of Witchcraft into the United States, the effect of which Gardner would never see. After attending the Buckland's initiation (their first and only physical meeting), Gardner left the UK to vacation the winter months in the Lebanon. On his return by ship aboard The Scottish Prince, Gardner suffered a fatal heart attack. He died on the 12th February 1964 and was buried the following day in Tunis.

In his will, Gardner left an estate with an estimated value of £21.688, the bulk of which he left to Monique Wilson. This included all the contents and artefacts of the 'Museum of Witchcraft' housed in the 'Witches Mill' located in Castletown on the Isle of Man. He also left her his cottage on Malew Street, which contained almost as many artefacts as in the museum, including his collection of swords and daggers, his other magical working tools and objects, plus numerous notebooks, papers and other important documents. Because Gardner and his wife Donna never had children, or any other living heirs, copyright to all his writings also went to Monique.



Gardner's Cottage on Malew Street in Castletown

Initially in his will, Gardner left the 'Witches Mill' and all its out buildings to William Worrall, the museums manager/caretaker, but added the stipulation that if he didn't wish to take it, it should then revert to Monique, and this is what happened. Another beneficiary of his will was Jack Bracelin his biographer, to whom he bequeathed the more commercial part of the museum "the Witches Kitchen", a small restaurant attached to the museum together with a grant of a £1000. Later when the Wilson's moved in and took over the museum, they purchased the Kitchen from Bracelin, making the museum a more viable financial venture.



The Witches Mill in Castletown

Other beneficiaries of his will, which is now preserved at Somerset House in London, were Mrs Lois Pearson of Carlyle Avenue in St Albans, to whom he left £1000 plus his shares and interests in Ancient Crafts Ltd, a company he had formed with Dafo in 1947 to buy a piece of land adjacent to the naturist club he frequented near St Albans. To Mrs Edith Woodford-Grimes (other wise known as Dafo) of Avenue Road, Highcliffe in Hants, he left £1500. He also bequeathed lesser amounts to two of his past High Priestesses, [Doreen Valiente](#) and [Patricia Crowther](#).

Following Gardner's death and the dispersion of his will, the Wilson's left their home in Perth, Scotland and moved to Castletown on the Isle of Man, taking up residence in Gardner's old stone cottage. There they took over the running of the Museum and set about trying to continue his work. To this end the Wilson's continued to generate a deal of media coverage, most of it positive, but sadly their relationship with other leaders of the Craft (perhaps out of jealousy, Gardner having left so much of his estate to one person???) become quite strained. [Eleanor Rae Bone](#) was particularly adamant in her objection to Monique's continued use of the press inspired title "Queen of the Witches", as she was equally apposed to [Alex Sanders](#) and his title "King of the Witches".

While Monique did her best to cultivate a positive image for the Craft in the media, the press at best is a fickle friend, and a few years later in 1969 the "News of the World" ran a sensationalised story about the Wilson's daughter Yvette. It appears that neighbours started a rumour she had been abused as a child and forced to take part in Witchcraft Rituals. As a result of these allegations, Yvette was placed on a special supervision order and under the protection of a probation officer for the next three years.

Under such pressure and circumstances, what with the press on a rampage looking for her blood, and when most other Elders in the craft were closing ranks against her, Monique's situation deteriorated. As a result she started drinking seeking solace from a bottle. Up until this time her husband Scotty had always played second fiddle to his wife, and

supported her in all her endeavours, but seeing the effect this combination of events had caused upon his family, decisively stepped in and urged Monique to sell the Museum. In 1973, Scotty himself took the lead role and began to negotiate the sale of the Witchcraft Museum to the “Ripley’s Believe It or Not” consortium in the United States.

After the sale of the Museum in 1973, Scotty used the proceeds to move and relocate his family to Torremolinos, Andalucia in Spain, at the time, still a quiet and sleepy little village. There withdrawn from any further involvement in Witchcraft, they bought a cafe and began to rebuild their lives. Both Monique and Scotty are believed to have passed into Summerland, sometime in the mid-1980’s, Scotty Wilson as a result of an auto accident???

The Wilson’s were widely condemned by the English witch community for selling off the Witchcraft Museum and all its artefacts outside the UK. Many had considered Gardner’s collection of artefacts, his notebooks and other important documents, as part of England’s National Heritage, and as the custodian of such treasures, Monique was viewed as having “sold out”, of abusing her position and responsibilities as one of Gardner’s last High Priestesses. As a result of her perceived treachery, the Wilson’s became outcasts with their name forever reviled.

Despite such treatment by witches in the UK, the Wilson’s name is much better regarded in the United States. There the Wilson’s legacy to furthering the aims of Gerald Gardner continues on through the efforts of their early initiates Raymond and Rosemary Buckland. After receiving intensive training from Monique and Scotty in 1963, the Buckland’s were initiated and raised to High Priest and Priestess. Before they returned home to Long Island, Gardner himself presented them with a copy of the Gardnerian “Book of Shadows”, with which they founded the first Gardnerian coven in the United States.



Raymond and Rosemary Buckland

This was in the early days of the 1960s, since when the spread of the Craft movement in the United States has been both rapid and successful. Buckland's introduction of Gardnerian witchcraft into the US was an inspired move, for it coincided with many other radically developing social and political movements and an increasing interest in alternative spiritualities. All of this helped to ensure the popularity, spread and survival of Gardnerian Witchcraft across the United States.

Today, there are many differing types and traditions of Witchcraft in the US, and nearly all of them have been influenced to some extent by the work of Gerald Gardner and other early pioneers from the 1950's and 60's, Alex Sanders and Robert Cochrane among others. It stands to reason therefore, that if not for the Wilson's efforts and training, the Gardnerian influence on the Craft in the United States may never have happened, and Craft history today could have been very different.

After the sale of the Witchcraft museum to "Ripley's Believe It or Not" consortium, Richard and Tamarra James, founders of the Wiccan Church of Canada based in Toronto, managed to buy back the bulk of Gardner's collection in 1987. Although the collection is still not back in the UK where many believe it should be, it is now back within the Craft and available for witches and pagans everywhere to view and visit.

Ninette Fraux Shumway met and became acquainted with Leah Hirsig while they were both crossing the Atlantic to London on the same ship. The recently widowed Ninette, whose American husband had died in a car crash, had previously been employed as a nursery governess and was looking for similar employment. When Leah joined AC in Paris after he returned, at the end of 1919, from the USA, she was quite pregnant with his child.

At the time, Ninette had one child, Howard, a son the same age as Leah's son Hansi. Since Leah was pregnant, it was arranged that Ninette would come to work and live with AC and Leah. A house was rented at 11-bis rue de Neuville, Fontainebleau. (France)

Ninette was given the magical name of Cyprus and her son was dubbed Hermes. It was late 1919 - by Jan 1920 they were all ensconced in the Fontainebleau house.

Leah delivered her child (fathered by AC) at a hospital in late Feb 1920. She and baby Anna Leah (also called Poupee), arrived home to Fontainebleau on March 8, 1920.

At some point during Jan/Feb 1920, Ninette and AC became lovers. Ninette is said to have fallen desperately in love with AC in short order. Difficulties ensued. And another pregnancy, announced by Ninette's domresy after the birth of Anna Leah, probably in April or May. Meanwhile, plans had proceeded apace for the move to the Abbey.

In early April, AC arrived in Cefalu along with Ninette and the two young boys (Hermes and Hansi), later joined by Leah w/ baby Poupee, who arrived from London April 14, 1920. Poupee was ill when she arrived. There were problems between the two women, and Poupee stayed quite sick.

By May, Leah was quite sick with dysentery, but recovered. In June, AC headed to Tunis for some R&R with "Mohammed Tsaida" among others. He also hoped to hook up with Jane Wolfe, but he didn't find her. He returned to the Abbey in late June. Jane Wolfe eventually arrived on July 23, 1920.

She journalled extensively and those diaries contain an interesting and dispassionate perspective on the appearance, personalities, and relationship between AC, Ninette and Leah. At that point, Ninette was quite visibly pregnant, and Leah was quite visibly worn down, according to Jane.

According to Symonds, in journals that I have not seen, AC recorded that Ninette went briefly away from the Abbey, no info about where. during the period of July 25/26, when Leah (Alostrael) and AC spent a long night of magick and talking, and he took "a vow of Holy Obedience to Alostrael proving her to be the Scarlet Woman...."

During that summer, around that time or soon thereafter, Leah became pregnant again.

In late Sept, Poupee was still very ill. She was taken by Leah to a hospital in Palermo. AC stayed at Cefalu. Poupee died on two days after AC's birthday, on Oct 14, 1920, and

Leah returned to Cefalu.

Six days later, Leah miscarried (what was described in diaries as "a man child in the third month of gestation" and then became ill.

Sadness abounded at Cefalu. Both parents were ill and unhappy and terribly sad.

Soon thereafter, it appears that Leah and AC decided that Ninette, now in her 8th month of pregnancy, had worked some sort of spell or witchcraft. Ninette was to be exorcized and cast away from the Abbey for the duration of her pregnancy.

The Exorcism

"NINETTE FRAUX. Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. Initiation purges. There is excreted a stench and a pestilence. In your case two have been killed outright, and the rest made ill. There are signs that the process may lead to purification and things made safe within a short time. But we cannot risk further damage; if the hate is still in course, it had better coil back on its source. Keep your diary going carefully. Go and live in Cefalu alone; go to the hospital alone; the day before you come out send up your diary, and I will reconsider things. I shall hope to see the ulcers healing. Do not answer this; simply do as I say. Love is the law, love under will."

From the Abbey's Record, Nov 5 1920

"Now then at last upon the fifth day of November, 1920 era vulgari, Sun being in the 13* of Scorpio and the Moon in the 11* of Virgo, did the Beast hearken to the Words of Alostrael His Concubine, perceiving clearly the Magical Need of making sure the circle against the Horror that had invaded it to such most cruel and deadly purpose; Wherefore with Wisdom of Tahuti did he conjure, exorcise and expel the aforesaid Ninette Fraux, casting her out from the Abbey for a season. And this Work not in hate nor in fear but in love and in pity did he do so, seeing that solitude purgeth the Soul by forcing it to feed on its own poisons."

Ninette left the Abbey and went to live with an old peasant woman nearby.

I remind my gentle readers that I'm just keeping score here.

And by damn, I still don't have a birthdate for Ninette's baby. Time to go into my diary files.

Ninette F. Shumway (aka Isabella Fraux). (born in Decazeville France June 9, 1894 - 1989 France) At 17, Ninette left the port in Le Havre France and arrived in New York on July 2, 1911 aboard the "La Trouaine", she was traveling under the name Augustine Fraux..

August 14, 1915, she married Howard Crosby Shumway in Cook co., Illinois. Ninette and Howard had one child, a son named Howard (b. 07/17/1916 Boston, MA.). Howard died that same year. On her passport application 02/28/1919 she stated that she was widowed, a governess and she that resided at 81 Sudbury Road MA. She was returning to France to make it her home.

Ninette was Crowley's second concubine at the Abbey of Thelema. Both Leah Hirsig and Ninette (her magical name was Sister Cypris after Aphrodite), were carrying Crowley's unborn children at the same time. Leah Hirsig had a two-year old son named Hansi and Ninette had a three-year old boy named Howard; they were not Crowley's but he nicknamed them Dionysus and Hermes respectively. After Leah's Poupée died, Leah had a miscarriage but Ninette gave birth to a daughter (11/12/20), Astarte Lulu Panthea.



Astarte Lulu Panthea (b. November 26th, 1920 - November 20, 2014
— daughter of Ninette Shumway (aka Isabella Fraux) and Aleister Crowley.

Astarte was raised in the USA from 1931 by Ninette's older sister Helene Fraux. Astarte has four children including jazz pianist Eric Muhler. Leah Hirsig suspected Ninette's Black Magic foul play and what Aleister found when reading Ninette's magical diary (everybody had to keep one while at the abbey for reasons explained in Liber E) appalled him. Ninette was banished from the abbey and the Beast lamented the death of his children. However, Ninette was soon back in the abbey again to take care of her offspring.

OBITUARY: Louise Shumway Muhler Nov 26, 1920 - Nov 20, 2014
Louise passed away peacefully of natural causes on November 20, 2014, at the Piedmont Gardens Skilled Nursing facility in Oakland, CA. She was born in Cefalu, Sicily, and her

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given name was Astarte Lulu Panthea. Her mother was Augustine Ninette Fraux Shumway and her father was Aleister Crowley. Louise came to the United States in 1930 and graduated from Santa Barbara High School in 1937. She attended Mills College for two years and graduated from the University of California in 1941. In 1940 Louise married Virgil A. Muhler, now deceased, and divorced in 1970. Louise served as a Vista Volunteer for a year in Laredo, Texas, and in 1970 she began working as an ESL teacher in the Oakland Adult Education School and taught for over 25 years. Lou was a member of Montclair Presbyterian Church for over fifty years and had a strong focus on social justice issues. She was also an active member of the Mills College Alumni Association. Lou loved nature and was an avid gardener and amateur expert in botany, zoology, and bird watching. She shared these passions with others for 15 years as a volunteer docent in the Natural History wing of the Oakland Museum. She travelled extensively in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America and was fluent in French and Spanish. She was preceded in death by her brother Howard Shumway. She is survived by her sister, Jeanette Fraux, and brother Richard Shumway; her children, Susan Joan Muhler, William Mead Muhler, John Eric Muhler, and Wendy Louise Nicholson; five grandchildren, Tamara Christine Muhler, Nathaniel Westbrook Muhler, Tymon Bennett Nicholson, Alexandra Cristina Aguirre Muhler, and Zoë Andrianne Mountain Muhler; and two great-grandchildren, Kira Louise Muhler Reyes, and William Generoso Muhler Reyes. A memorial service will be held at the Rheinhardt Alumnae House at Mills College on January 17, 2015, at 11:00 AM. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be sent to Mills College for the Louise Shumway Muhler Memorial Scholarship. Published in San Francisco Chronicle on Dec. 7, 2014

Old Dorothy Clutterbuck



Written and compiled by George Knowles

Dorothy Clutterbuck is perhaps the most elusive and secretive of the witches to have figured in the rise of the modern era of witchcraft. She is also perhaps the most intriguing. Old Dorothy as she was affectionately known, was the witch who initiated [Gerald B. Gardner](#) into the Old Religion during September 1939. She was then the head of an old time witches coven, the last remains of a coven directly descendant from one of the famed “Nine Covens” founded by [Old George Pickingill](#).

So little was known about Old Dorothy that for many years skeptics and historians had believed that Gardner, through a figment of his imagination had invented her solely to justify his belief that there was still in existence practicing witches of the Old Religion. In 1980 [Doreen Valiente](#) a great friend and colleague of Gardner’s, set out to disprove these allegations. After two years of research she succeeded, and was able to prove through birth and death records that Old Dorothy was indeed a real person.

Through ecclesiastical records held at India House, London. Doreen was able to establish Dorothy’s parents, and to find a record of Dorothy’s birth. It began in India where one Capt. Thomas St Quintin Clutterbuck, aged 38, was married to Ellen Anne Morgan, aged 20, at Lahore, India, in 1877. Three years later they had a child and Dorothy was born, in India, in Bengal on the 19th January 1880. She was later baptized in the church of St Paul’s, Umbala, on the 21st February 1880.

Her father must have been a man of means to hold a commission in the Colonial Forces, most officers of that time where. At the time of Dorothy’s birth he was still a Captain, and serving with the 14th Sikhs Regiment, Indian Local Forces. Later that same year he was promoted to Major and from Dorothy’s death certificate, we know he reached the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. From this we can surmise that Dorothy was brought up with all the privileges and prestige that go along with wealth and position.

Nothing further is known of Dorothy until 1933. Doreen through the aid of a Reference Librarian at the Bournemouth County Library was able to locate her as living at “Mill House”, Lymington Road, Highcliffe. Highcliffe being in the Borough of Christchurch. Curiously though, listed at the same address was a Rupert Fordham? Further research using the Register of Electors at the Christchurch Town Hall, revealed that Miss Clutterbuck became Mrs. Fordham in the 1937/38 list.

This prompt’s me to speculate about the intervening years between 1933 and 1937? Who was Rupert Fordham? Why was he listed at the same address some four years before they married? Was he a lodger, or were they living in sin? The later seems a little unlikely given the strict moral and social standards prevalent in those times. At the time Dorothy was a wealthy and respected member of the community. She would also have been 53 years old in 1933, and 57 when they married, but then? Perhaps we shall never know?

Through her researches, Doreen was able to corroborated most of Gardner’s claims of the events leading up to his initiation. She had collated records showing that Gardner and his wife Donna lived in the same area of Highcliffe, as did Dorothy. His official biography, (Gerald Gardner: Witch. – By Jack Bracelin, The Octagon Press, London. 1960.), states that the initiation took place in Old Dorothy’s home “a big house in the neighborhood”, Dorothy’s “Mill House”, was also a big house in the neighborhood!

Doreen also obtained press cuttings proving the existence of the “Rosicrucian Theatre”. This was situated in Somerford a village near to Christchurch, and had opened in June 1938. A Mrs. Mabel Besant-Scott also lived nearby and had been associated with it. In Gerald Gardner’s account, it was a Mrs. Mabel Besant-Scott who first introduced him to Dorothy.

In his biography Gardner also describes Dorothy as, “A lady of note in the district/county, and very well to do. She invariable wore a pearl necklace, worth some £5,000 at that time”. Doreen had been able to trace a copy of Dorothy’s will, the gross value of her estate after her death had been well over £60,000, a small fortune in 1951. It also stated that she owned some valuable pearls. She was certainly “well to do”!

Dorothy’s death certificate stated that: “Dorothy St Quintin Fordham died at Highcliffe in the registration district of Christchurch on the 12 January 1951, the primary cause of death being “cerebral thrombosis”, a stroke”. It also described her as “Spinster of independent means, daughter of Thomas St Quintin Clutterbuck, Lieutenant Colonel, Indian Army (deceased).

The existence of Old Dorothy having been proven, thanks to the diligence of Doreen Valiente. The skeptics and historians now changed their tune, claiming she had not been a practicing witch. After her death and upon an examination of her personal effects, no evidence could be found to indicate her involvement in witchcraft.

Once again Doreen Valiente steps in to refute these claims. During her research she had come across an old pamphlet entitled “The Museum of Magic and Witchcraft: “The story of Famous Witches” Mill at Castletown, Isle of Man. This was a guidebook of the famous museum, written and published by Gerald Gardner during his tenure as its director. Describing one of the exhibits, it states: “Case No. 1. – A large number of objects belonging to a witch, who had died in 1951, lent by her relatives who wish to remain anonymous”. Had these objects once belonged to Old Dorothy, who had also died in 1951? While its not proof positive, I find it hard to disbelieve.

We can surmise from the time era and from many of Gardner’s writings, that Old Dorothy was a witch of the old school, and to her secrecy was paramount. During her time witchcraft was still illegal and disclosure of its practice fraught with difficulty and danger. Indeed it was she who restricted Gardner from going public. Not until near her end, did she relent with misgivings, and allow him to write about the craft, but then only in fictional form (High Magic’s Aid – published in 1949.). In death it would seem her secrecy still prevailed, and she had all traces of her witchcraft past removed.

Old George Pickingill



This photograph purporting to be Old George Pickingill is in fact a photo of Alf Cavill, a station porter at Ellstree, taken in the early 1960s.

Written and compiled by George Knowles

George Pickingill was a legend in his own time, a feared “Cunning Man” by local residents, a sought after Witch and Magician by those in occult circles. Born to Charles and Susannah Pickingill (nee Cudner) on the 26th May 1816, George was the eldest of nine children. They lived in a small Essex village called Hockley in East Anglia, from where he later he moved to the nearby village of Canewdon, and there he remained until his death in 1909.

“Old George” as he became known, was a hereditary witch and claimed he could trace his ancestry back to the time of “Julia Pickingill – The Witch of Brandon”, who lived in a village north of Thetford in Norfolk. Julia as legend would have it was hired in 1071 to make magical chants for the troops of “Lord Harewood the Wake” inspiring them into battle against the Normans. During the battle, Julia was seen standing in a wooden tower overlooking the two opposing armies and where her chants could be heard across the battlefield. Her chants seemed to be working, but then the Normans set fire to the dry reeds around the tower and Julia died in the flames. Since that time each generation of the Pickingill family have served as Priests and Priestesses in the Old Religion.

Old George like his father was a humble farm worker, yet all who knew him held him in awe. Many of the local village folk were afraid of him and his mysterious abilities, it was said he could set magical imps to work bring in the harvest and that they could clear a field in half an hour while he sat under a tree and smoked a pipe. He was not well liked in the village and even feared, it was said that he terrorized the villagers for money and beer, and threatening to blight their crops if they refuse him. Despite this he would charm their warts and dispense cures, and was sometimes called in to settle their disputes.



Canewdon Church circa 1900

(Legend now has is that as long as the tower of Canewdon's St Nicholas Church stands; there will always be six witches living in the village).

In occult circles he was highly regarded, and was widely acknowledged as the country's foremost authority on Witchcraft, Satanism and Black Magick. Overtime, many of the days leading Witches, Satanists, Rosicrucian's, Freemasons, Magicians and other magically inclined people traveled from all over England, Europe and the United States to consult with him. As his reputation grew, Old George became just as infamous as Aleister Crowley was in his time. He was also known to have encouraged Satanism, which horrified other Craft Elders who considered him a renegade and a disgrace to the craft.

Over the course of his lifetime, Old George established a total of nine hereditary covens, situated in Norfolk, Essex, Hertfordshire, Sussex and Hampshire. In many ways he was a zealot, for when he started a new coven; he insisted its leaders produce evidence that they came from hereditary witch lineage. Each coven he formed worshiped the "Horned God" and used a basic set of rites, though he was constantly changing, embellishing and introducing new concepts as they developed. All rituals were conducted by women and involved ritual nudity and sexual inductions.

The Pickingill family, including Old George, were renowned for their allegiance to the Horned God and adopted many ancient Craft practices that were not observed in other parts of the country. The rites developed by the Pickingill tradition were a unique blend of French and Scandinavian craft practices. This was due in part by the influx of French and Flemish weavers into East Anglia, who introduced elements of the Cathar faith and the Old Religion as observed in France during the Middle Ages. Old George used a basic format for each of his covens, but he was always re-writing, revising and introducing new rituals, therefore each of his nine covens although similar, were not exactly the same.

Up until Old George's time, many existing covens were based on oral traditions, their knowledge and rituals having been passed down from generation to generation, and instilled upon their members by repetition, memory and practice. This in part due to the secrecy imposed on witches during the "Burning Times", which inevitably, and over time, led to fragments of their traditions being lost. However, some hereditary covens kept a "Coven Rulebook", now called a "Book of Shadows", which contained a list of all the coven members and outlined the covens basic rites. For safekeeping, the book was guarded by the coven's secret "male" deputy, often referred to as "the Man in Black", and only made available on special occasions at the Master's bidding to add/delete names or transfer authority. No members, particularly woman, were ever permitted to read it. This may have been due to the opinion that a woman would reveal the location of the book if her children were tortured in front of her, whereas a man may not.

As the fear of the "Witch-hunts" began to decline in the later half of the 18th century, Old George always willing to change, adapt and evolve took the idea of the "Coven Rulebook" and developed it, starting the tradition of keeping a "Book of Shadows" for the exclusive use of all coven members. The original Book of Shadows as compiled by Old George and modified over a period of his lifetime was then passed on to each of his nine covens, a legacy that lives on today. Many think Aleister Crowley passed on the details of one of Old George's Book of Shadows to Gerald Gardner who adopted the same into his own tradition. The concept of keeping an individual "Book of Shadows" in your own handwriting, evidently originated from Alex Sanders who founded the Alexandrian Tradition witchcraft.

Aleister Crowley is reported to have been a member of one of Old George's covens in or around 1899. He is thought to have obtained his Second Degree before being dismissed due to his contemptuous attitude toward women and deplorable behaviour. Other pupils of note were two Master Masons by the names of "Hargrave Jennings" and "W.J. Hughan". Both later become founder members of the "Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia"; from which the "Order of the Golden Dawn" would eventually emerge. Doreen Valiente in her book "Witchcraft for Tomorrow" alleges that Jennings consulted with Old George and conspired with him to concoct a cipher manuscript (Cipher MS), which led to the founding of the Golden Dawn. However such claims have since been discredited.

Aside from his famous "Nine Covens", there was a more sinister side to "Old George" for which he became notorious. Old George had an intense dislike for Christianity and local authority. He openly campaigned for the overthrow of the Christian Religion and the establishment in generally. Some claim he even collaborate with Satanists, because he believed that by promoting Satanism, he was helping to ensure the destruction of the Christian church. This brought him into conflict with other Craft Elders who strongly objected to his activities.

Contrary to popular belief, for many misinformed articles are commonly sensationalized in the Press, witches do not believe in "devil-worship", nor do they invoke Satan during ritual to carry out evil deeds. Satan and the Devil are by-products of Christianity and have nothing to do with the Old Religion. The Old Religion was being practiced well

before Christianity came along. This in mind, the other Craft Elders had good cause for objecting to what “Old George” was advocating, preferring secrecy and discretion to the unwanted attention he was arousing.

After Old George’s death in 1909, and some 30 years later, Gerald B. Gardner was initiated into one of his descendent covens and began openly writing about Wicca and Witchcraft. In 1946 when Gardner met with Aleister Crowley shortly before his death, it was alleged that Gardner paid him to write in his original “Book of Shadows”, but this has now been discounted. While his BOS did contain some of Crowley’s writings, this is now believed to have been the result of Gardner and Crowley comparing notes on rituals used in Old George’s New Forrest coven. Doreen Valiente in her book “Witchcraft for Tomorrow” does much to shed light on this controversy.

In 1951 when the old antiquated Witchcraft Act of 1735 was repealed causing a resurgence of interest in the Old Religion, many Craft Elders became concerned that exposure of Old George’s satanic activities would distort and damage the newly evolving image of Wicca and Witchcraft. To protect against this, the Elders of the Hereditary Tradition in East Anglia conspired to discredit any claims made by Gardner and others concerning the survival of Hereditary Witches. This in part involved the eradication of many traces of “Old George” and his “Nine Covens” as was possible. Today as a result, the real importance of Old George’s contributions to the revival of present day witchcraft may never be determined.

Patricia Crowther



Written and compiled by George Knowles

One of the last remaining High Priestesses initiated by "[Gerald B. Gardner](#)". Since her initiation by Gardner in 1960, Patricia Crowley has worked steadfastly to promote the Old Religion through her books, media interviews, and lecture appearances. She is considered by many to be Gardner's spiritual heir, and has formed many flourishing covens throughout the United Kingdom.

Patricia Crowther was born Patricia Dawson on the 14th October 1927, in Sheffield, England. The Dawson's lived next door to palmist "Madame Melba", who predicted that Patricia would later develop great clairvoyancy powers and follow in the foot steps of her great-grand mother, who had been a herbalist, clairvoyant, and fortuneteller. From an early age Patricia often identified herself with fairies and the craft, dressing up as a fairy for fancy-dress parties and playing the role in school activities. At an early birthday party she was presented with a gold snake bangle, symbolic of wisdom, life, and death.

Patricia was keenly interested in acting, singing and dancing, and as she progressed through school, she performed in pantomimes as Robin Hood, and was chosen to be the leading lady in a special revue, which featured a tableau entitled "The Legend of the Moon Goddess". After leaving school she took up a career in Cabaret and toured all over the United Kingdom, singing and dancing, and acting on stage.

While performing at one venue in her late twenties, Patricia went to see a hypnotist who regressed her back to previous lives, including one as a witch called "Polly". The year was approximately 1670 and Polly was an old crone of about 66 years old. She lived in a little hut with a cat, a frog, a goat and hen, and worked spells for the local people most of whom she held in contempt. During the regression, Polly recited a number of spells in rhyme with instructions on how to use them. Patricia at the time had no knowledge of any such spells, which experts later determined to be authentic. After her experience with the hypnotist, Patricia had a number of clairvoyant visions from another past life, one in which she served as a priestess of a Goddess who had great power. She identified much more strongly with this spiritual priestess than she did with the old crone.

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In 1954 while playing at a theater in Birmingham, Patricia went to see a fortuneteller who predicted that she would meet her future husband, two years later over water, and his name would be Arnold. Patricia thought no more of it, but two years later in 1956 she accepted a summer job to appear in a show on the Isle of White. While on a flight crossing the Solent (a channel between the coast of Hampshire, England and the Isle of White) she met a stage magician and ventriloquist called "[Arnold Crowther](#)". He was appearing in the same show as she and soon romance blossomed between them. Discovering her interest in witchcraft, Crowther offered to introduce her to "Gerald B. Gardner", a personal friend since 1939. Gardner incidentally had predicted some years earlier, that Crowther would eventually meet "a fair haired women who would initiate him into the craft".



Arnold Crowther

After several meetings with him, Gardner initiated Patricia into the craft on the 6th of June 1960. The ceremony took place in his private temple on the top floor of the barn at his home in Castletown on the Isle of Man. During the initiation rite, Patricia had a profound and powerful trance experience. She saw herself being reborn and initiated as a priestess of a Moon Goddess, whose initiation rite consisted of a line of howling naked women who passed her gauntlet-style through their spread legs. Gardner explained it, that she, while in trance, had reverted back to a past life and relived an ancient initiation. After the rite, Patricia in turn initiated Arnold Crowther, fulfilling the predication Gardner had made years earlier. Gardner then presented them with a gift of ritual tools and jewelry, including a coral necklace for Patricia.

Later that year on the 8th November 1960, Arnold Crowther and Patricia Dawson were married in a private handfasting ceremony officiated by Gerald Gardner. The ceremony was performed skyclad (nude) inside a circle strewn with flowers where they danced, sang and jumped the broom in accordance with tradition. The following day they were remarried in a civil ceremony, which was publicized in the national tabloids. After the wedding the Crowthers returned to Sheffield where they established their home. Both took their second-degree initiation on the 11th October 1961, and on the 27th her birthday, Patricia became high priestess.

The media ever looking for interviews often turned to the Crowthers for comments, as minor celebrities connected with the entertainment world, they quickly became known as authoritative spokespersons for the craft. By December 1961 they had started to build their own coven in Sheffield, while continuing their instruction in the craft with Gardner. Patricia had also started a correspondence with an old woman called Jean in Inverness, she had seen Patricia giving an interview on television and had written to her. She told Patricia that she thought her worthy of inheriting secret knowledge, and over the course of two years via correspondence, taught Patricia the secrets of an old inner tradition.

The Crowthers were a popular couple and media exposure generated more and more requests for interviews and speaking engagements. Together they authored two books, "The Witches Speak" (1965 and 1976) and "The Secrets of Ancient Witchcraft" (1974). In 1971, for BBC Radio Sheffield, they produced "A spell of Witchcraft", the first Radio series in Britain on Witchcraft. While performing numerous craft services for those who would ask for help, including spell casting and exorcising ghosts and spirits, they also wrote seasonal rituals and introduced new music and poetry into the craft.

After the death of her husband on the 1st May 1974, Patricia Crowther unstintingly continued to work for the betterment of the craft. She is a frequent guest on radio talk shows, appears regularly on television, and gives lectures up and down the country. She works hard at dispelling the many misconceptions surrounding the Craft and the Old Religion, and with her cool self-assurance and sense of humour, she is unhesitant when answering religious bigots and critics. In 1978 she represented the United Kingdom at an international conference on the occult, held in Barcelona.

After her 70th birthday while meditating in a circle, Patricia received clairaudient guidance that she should call herself a "Grand-Mother of the Craft of the Wise". She emphasizes that the craft concerns the evolution of the soul, and that it's inner teachings should be transmitted orally. "I am sure that the Craft/Paganism will have a big part to play in the centuries to come," she says. "We must not forget that in the new age, the ruler of Aquarius is none other than the Star Goddess, whose white hand even now beckons the Children of the Earth, to become Children of the Stars".



Grand-Mother of the Craft of the Wise

Patricia has written numerous books over the years (see bibliography), as well as writing for various mainline periodicals such as: Prediction, Gnostica, New Dimensions, Zodiac, and The Lamp of Thoth. She also designed three of the tarot cards (The Sun, Karma, and The World.) used for the Tarot of the Old Path (1990).



Cabot, Laurie

Laurie Cabot (1933-) Witch, author, artist, businesswoman, civil rights watchdog and founder of two traditions of contemporary Witchcraft. Known as “the Official Witch of Salem” in Salem, Massachusetts, Laurie Cabot has attracted attention for her dramatic dress of flowing black garments and pentacle pendants, which she always wears when in public.

Cabot (her maiden name) is descended from a line of Cabots from the Isle of Jersey off the coast of England, a place renowned for its witchcraft. An only child, she was born March 6, 1933, in Wewoka, Oklahoma, during a family move from Boston to Anaheim, California. Her father was a businessman. From an early age she felt an affinity with witches, although she did not know exactly what a witch was. According to Cabot, her heritage includes a long line of witches, including a mysterious woman who lived some 4,000-5,000 years ago whose genetic memory Cabot feels she possesses nearly intact. By age six, her psychic gifts became apparent, and she constantly was in trouble for discussing information she picked up through extrasensory perception. From her father, a science-oriented man who did not believe in the [Devil](#), Cabot developed a lifelong interest in science, which she dovetailed with her interest in witchcraft, the occult and the paranormal.

From Anaheim, Cabot returned to Boston at age 14 with her mother in order to finish high school. She embarked on a comparative study of religions and spent much time in the library. There she met a woman on the staff who encouraged her to look beyond Christianity for information on paranormal phenomena. The woman eventually revealed she was a Witch and introduced Cabot to two other female Witches, one of them elderly. The three women helped to school Cabot in the Craft. When she was 16, the Witches initiated her in a profoundly transformational experience. She was anointed with oil and

dubbed with a sword. She took the sword, impaled it in the earth, and said, “I return to earth my wisdom and I call myself Witch.”

Cabot made a life's projection for herself, in which she asked the Goddess and God to enable her to teach Witchcraft as a science.

After high school, Cabot did not follow through on plans to attend Smith College, but instead became a dancer in Boston's Latin Quarter. She was married twice, first to an Italian and then to a Greek, and had a daughter by each husband: Jody in 1963 and Penny in 1965. After her second divorce, in the late 1960s, Cabot and her daughters moved to the north end of Boston. She made a vow that she would live her life “totally as a Witch”: she would wear nothing but traditional Witch clothing (which she says is long black robes), wear her pentacle displayed, and would emulate the Goddess by outlining her eyes in black makeup, according, she says, to an ancient tradition.

She admits she was naive in not realizing how such attire would provoke people and in thinking that as soon as she explained herself, others would understand and accept her. Over the years, she has had to deal with jokes, aversion and accusations that her dress is for purposes of commercial exploitation.

At the urging of a friend, Cabot moved to Boston, where she and the friend rented a house that was the first house built on Salem's historic Chesnut Street, and had been home to [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) for a year. Three years earlier, Cabot had gone through a past-life regression to see the life of a Susan Sarah Prescott who supposedly had lived in Salem during the 1700s. Cabot believes she picked up on traces of a genetic memory. She discovered that Prescott had indeed existed and that her father had been the builder of their house. She stayed in the house one year.

Cabot also discovered that Salem had little idea what to think of modern Witches. Members of the public derided her for believing “in all that,” and other Witches criticized her for her appearance. Through a new friend, she began teaching “Witchcraft as a Science” classes for the public, forming the beginnings of her Science Tradition of Witchcraft. She also taught classes for seven years in the Salem State College continuing education program.

She opened The Witch Shop in Salem, which did not do well and closed; a second venture, Crow Haven Corner, was successful and has become a tourist attraction in Salem. Cabot turned the shop over to daughter Jody in the late 1970s.

In 1973, Cabot established the annual Witches' Ball, a costume party to celebrate [Samhain](#) (All Hallows' Eve) in Salem, which each year draws an international crowd of participants and media.

Since 1971, Cabot had sought to be named “the Official Witch of Salem,” but was turned down by local government; then-Mayor Samuel Zoll was quoted saying he thought it would be “improper” and that “the historical recognition of the city would be

internationally demeaned by allowing a commercial capitalization by one individual.” In 1977, Michael Dukakis, then governor of Massachusetts, signed a citation granting Cabot the title. The “Paul Revere” citation, as it is called, is recognition given to various citizens courtesy of members of the legislature. Cabot received hers for her work with dyslexic children.

Cabot has long urged Witches to take a stronger stand for their civil rights and public image. In 1986, she founded the Witches League of Public Awareness to serve as a media watchdog and civil rights advocate for Witchcraft.

She entered the Salem mayoral race in 1987 after incumbent Anthony V. Salvo made derogatory comments about Witchcraft and Witches in the press. One of Salvo's opponents, Robert E. Gauthier, a friend of Cabot's, was rumored to be a “warlock,” a term not favored by Witches of either sex. Gauthier denied this and blamed the Salvo camp for spreading the rumors. Salvo denied the accusation, saying he discounted witchcraft, and no one with “average intelligence” believed in it. Cabot jumped into the race “to prove that Witches have civil rights” and ran a spirited campaign that attracted local support and national media attention. But on August 11, the deadline for returning nominating papers, she dropped out of the race, citing business commitments, including work on a book. Cabot continued to serve Salem as a member of the executive board of the Chamber of Commerce, which she joined in 1980.

In 1988 she established the Temple of [Isis](#), a chapter of the National Alliance of Pantheists. Through the National Alliance of Pantheists, she was ordained Reverend Cabot and may perform legal marriages.

In 1955, Cabot founded the Cabot Tradition of the Science of Witchcraft (originally called Witchcraft as a Science), which she described as Celtic and “pre-Gardnerian” (see [Gerald B. Gardner](#)). It teaches practical magic and adheres to the Wiccan Rede (“Do what you will and harm none”) and the Threefold Law of Karma (everything one does returns threefold). Classes and workshops in the science tradition continue; one of Cabot's premier students is Christopher Penczak. Cabot also teaches classes in Witchcraft as religion and art.

Cabot's books include Practical Magic: A Salem Witch's Handbook (1986); The Power of the Witch, with Tom Cowan (1990); Love Magic, with Tom Cowan (1992); Celebrate the Earth: A Year of Holidays in the Pagan Tradition, with Jean candles 49 Mills and Karen Bagnard (1994); and The Witch in Every Woman: Reawakening the Magical Nature of the Feminine to Heal, Protect, Create and Empower, with Jean Mills (1997).

Cabot maintains a full schedule of teaching classes, giving readings and making public appearances. She is active in community work, including a tree-planting program for the Salem area. She continues to host the annual Witches' Ball at Samhain, and she is involved in Wiccan/Pagan civil rights issues. In 2007, she founded the Project Witches Protection, an educational organization “dedicated to correcting misinformation and Witches and Witchcraft.”

The Cabot Tradition

This tradition holds that Witchcraft is a science as well as a religion and an art. As a science, it may be applied to harness and expand psychic potential. The key to extrasensory perception is the harnessing of light energy and the sensitivity to alpha waves, which are part of the aura surrounding every living thing. Cabot says her method of controlling alpha waves is based on an ancient Pythagorean method of using colors and numbers.

Cabot teaches that each individual is responsible for all his or her thoughts and actions. The Wiccan Rede, "An' it harm no living thing, do what you will," is extended to defending oneself against evil energy or psychic attack. While other traditions hold that it is acceptable to boomerang psychic attack back to the sender, the Cabot Tradition considers this a violation of the Rede. Instead, practitioners are taught to erect a psychic neutralizing shield, which enables them to either transform the energy so that it can be used in a positive fashion or disintegrate it so that it harms no one, including the sender. The Cabot Tradition includes practitioners of all other traditions; therefore, rituals are eclectic. Practitioners wear black, which the tradition considers to be the traditional witch's color. Cabot notes that black absorbs light while white reflects it; this absorption of light facilitates psychic power. To further augment power, practitioners wear gold jewelry for psychic strength, usually in the form of a pentacle pendant. At least one piece of silver jewelry is worn for its psychic power properties.

In addition to Craft basics and history, instruction includes parapsychology; physiology; astrology; geometric structure; sociology; anthropology; meditation; aura reading, balancing and healing; the use of crystals; and the psychic arts. The Cabot Tradition traces the origins of the Craft to the Celts. The tradition teaches past-life regression and Cabot's theory of the Root Races of humankind, which holds that humans come from other planetary systems. According to Cabot, alpha waves store all knowledge of the universe, and a person who enters an alpha trance may pick up on vibrations from the past.

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Buckland, Raymond



Raymond Buckland (1934-September 27, 2017) English Witch called “the Father of American Witchcraft,” who introduced Witchcraft to America. After moving to the United States in 1962, Raymond Buckland became a leading authority on witchcraft and Wicca and enjoys a career as a prolific author, public speaker, media consultant and media personality. He has written more than 50 books translated into 17 languages.

Buckland was born in London on August 31, 1934, to Stanley Thomas Buckland and Eileen Lizzie Wells. His father was a Romani (Gypsy) who worked in the British Ministry of Health as Higher Executive Officer. A poshrat, or half Gypsy, Buckland was raised in the Church of England. Around age 12, a Spiritualist uncle interested him in Spiritualism and the occult, and the interest expanded over time to include witchcraft, Magic and the occult.

Buckland was educated at King's College School in London and served in the Royal Air Force from 1957 to 1959. He earned a doctorate in anthropology from Brandeis University in 1964.

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College in Sussex, England. He performed in theaters, taught himself to play the trombone and led his own Dixieland band.

He married his first wife, Rosemary Moss, in 1955. The couple had two sons. They immigrated to the United States in 1962 and settled in Brentwood, Long Island. Buckland went to work for British Airways (then BOAC), first in reservations service and then as a sales manual editor. His decision to embrace Witchcraft as his religion was influenced by two books, *The Witch-cult in Western Europe*, by Margaret Murray, and *Witchcraft Today*, by Gerald B. Gardner.

They helped him realize that Witchcraft was the religion for which he had been searching. Buckland wrote to Gardner, who was living on the Isle of Man, and struck up a mail and telephone relationship. He became Gardner's spokesperson in the United States; whenever Gardner received a query from an American, he forwarded the letter to Buckland.

Buckland went to England in 1963, where he met Gardner. Buckland was initiated into the Craft by one of Gardner's high priestesses, Monique Wilson, or Lady Olwen. The initiation took place in Perth, Scotland, where Wilson lived. Rosemary was initiated at a later time. It was the first and last time Buckland would ever see Gardner, who died in February 1964.

Interest in witchcraft caught on quickly in America, but the Bucklands built their own coven slowly and cautiously. They were later criticized for their caution; people who did not want to wait to be witches by traditional initiation simply started their own covens. Initially, Buckland kept his real name and address out of the media. The information eventually was published in the *New York Sunday News*, which focused more attention on him as a spokesperson for the Craft. Buckland was inspired by Gardner's *Museum of Witchcraft and Magic* on the Isle of Man and began collecting pieces for his own museum, the first *Museum of Witchcraft and Magic* in the United States.

The collection began in a bookcase, spilled out into the Bucklands' basement and eventually needed a separate building. In 1969, Buckland published his first book, *A Pocket Guide to the Supernatural*, followed in 1970 by *Witchcraft Ancient and Modern* and *Practical Candleburning Rituals*. Also in 1970, he published a novel *Mu Revealed*, written under the pseudonym Tony Earll, an anagram for not really. The novel was written tongue in cheek, inspired by the successful books on the lost continent of Mu by James Churchward.

Witchcraft from the Inside was published in 1971. The year 1973 was transitional. The museum collection was big enough to fill a rented building, and Buckland quit his job to run it full time. However, the Bucklands' marriage broke up, and they turned the leadership of their coven over to Theos and Phoenix of Long Island.

Buckland moved to Weirs Beach, New Hampshire, where in 1974 he married Joan Helen Taylor and reopened the museum. At about the same time, Buckland left the Gardnerian

tradition and founded Seax-Wica, a new open and democratic tradition based on Saxon heritage. He had two primary reasons for making this move: Gardnerian witchcraft no longer met his religious needs, and he had been dismayed at some of the ego and power trips exhibited within the Craft.

His book *The Tree: The Complete Book of Saxon Witchcraft* was published in 1974. Four years later, the couple moved to Virginia Beach, Virginia, where Buckland became educational director of the Poseidia Institute. He and Joan established the Seax- Wica Seminary, a correspondence school that grew to have more than 1,000 students worldwide.

Plans to establish a campus, however, did not materialize. After nearly 10 years of marriage, Buckland and Joan divorced in 1982. In 1983, he married Tara Cochran of Cleveland. They moved to Charlottesville, Virginia, where they operated the seminary school and Taray Publications.

In December 1984, they moved to San Diego, and the seminary correspondence course was phased out. Seax-Wica covens remain established around the world. In San Diego, Buckland withdrew from having a high profile in witchcraft, practicing with his wife with a small coven and as solitaires.

In 1986, his 11th book on witchcraft was published, *Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft*, which comprised everything Buckland felt he had to say on the subject. Some witches criticized him for revealing too much. While the book does not reveal Gardnerian secrets, it does reflect his view that the Craft should be more open.

In the late 1980s, Buckland turned to new creative avenues, writing books on other topics, plus screenplays and novels in comedy, mystery and Tolkien-style fantasy genres. In addition, he wrote numerous magazine and newspaper articles on witchcraft and appeared on talk shows and lectured at universities.

He also served as technical adviser for Orson Welles' movie *Necromancy* and for a stage production of *Macbeth*, working with William Friedkin, the director of *The Exorcist*. Buckland acted in small parts in several films, including the role of the crazy psychiatrist in *Mutants in Paradise*. In 1992, Buckland and his family moved to a small farm in north-central Ohio.

He retired from active involvement in the Craft, save for occasional public appearances.

He continues his solitary practice in Seax-Wica and PectiWita, a Scottish tradition inspired by Aidan Breac and developed by Buckland. In 1999, Buckland sold his *Museum of Witchcraft and Magic*, a collection of about 500 pieces, to Monte Plaisance and Tolia-Ann, a Gardnerian high priest and high priestess couple in Houma, New Orleans.

The metaphysical store “Crossroads” housed the museum and also serves as the location of the Church of Thessaly. Buckland continues to make public appearances, lecturing, teaching workshops and working as a medium at Lily Dale Assembly Spiritualist camp in New York.

His other nonfiction books are

- Witchcraft . . . the Religion (1966);
- Amazing Secrets of the Psychic World (1975);
- Here Is the Occult (1974);
- Anatomy of the Occult (1977);
- The Magic of Chant-O-Matics (1978);
- Practical Color Magick (1983);
- Secrets of Gypsy Fortunetelling (1988);
- Secrets of Gypsy Love Magic (1990);
- Secrets of Gypsy Dream Reading (1990);
- Scottish Witchcraft (1991);
- Witchcraft Yesterday and Today, a video (1990);
- The Book of African Divination (1992);
- Doors to Other Worlds (1993);
- Ray Buckland's Magic Cauldron (1995);
- Truth About Spirit Communication (1995);
- Advanced Candle Magic (1996);
- Buckland Gypsies Domino Divination Cards (1995);
- Gypsy Fortune Telling Tarot Kit (1998);
- Gypsy Witchcraft and Magic (1998);
- Gypsy Dream Dictionary (1999);
- Coin Divination (2000);
- Buckland Romani Tarot Deck and Book (2001);
- Wicca for Life (2001);
- The Witch Book (2001);
- The Fortune-Telling Book (2003);
- Signs, Symbols and Omens (2003);
- Cards of Alchemy (2003);
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- The Spirit Book (2006);
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- Face to Face With God? (2006);
- u Death, Where Is Thy Sting?” (2006);
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Cunningham, Scott

Scott Cunningham (1956-1993) was a prolific Wiccan author and expert on earth and natural Magic, best known for his books on magical herbalism, earth power, crystals, gems and metals and “the truth about Witchcraft.” Born June 27, 1956, in Royal Oak, Michigan, Cunningham lived in San Diego from 1961 until his death in 1993. He began practicing Wicca in 1971. A full-time writer, he authored more than 30 fiction and nonfiction books and wrote scripts for occult videocassettes.

Cunningham was introduced to the Craft in 1971 through a book purchased by his mother, *The Supernatural*, by Douglas Hill and Pat Williams. Early on in life, Cunningham had had a strong interest in plants, minerals and other natural earth products, and the book piqued his curiosity. He read it and was particularly fascinated by the book’s descriptions of Italian hand gestures used to ward off the Evil Eye.

In the next two days, two other incidents added impetus to his interest in the Craft: a movie about Witchcraft shown on television; and a female classmate in high school who was involved in an occult and magic study group. Meeting on the first day of drama class, the two began talking, and Cunningham unconsciously made the Evil Eye hand gestures. The classmate recognized them and asked, “Are you a Witch?” “No,” said Cunningham, “but I’d sure like to be one.” The classmate introduced him to Wicca. Learning magic intensified his interest in the power of nature. Cunningham was initiated into several covens of various traditions (see initiation) but eventually opted to practice as a solitary.

In 1974 he enrolled in San Diego State University and studied creative writing, intending to become a professional writer like his father, Chet, who has authored more than 170 nonfiction and fiction books. He wrote truck and automotive trade articles and advertising copy on a freelance basis. After two years in college, he realized he had more published credits than most of his professors, and decided to drop out and begin writing full-time.

The first book he wrote was *Magical Herbalism*, though it was not his first to be published. That book, *Shadow of Love*, an Egyptian romance novel, appeared in 1980. *Magical Herbalism* was published in 1982. Between 1980 and 1987, Cunningham published 21 novels in various genres, six nonfiction occult books and one nonfiction booklet. Besides *Magical Herbalism*, his credits include *Earth Power: Techniques of Natural Magic* (1983); Cunningham's *Encyclopedia of Magical Herbs* (1985); *The Magic of Incense, Oils and Brews* (1987); *The Magical Household* (1987; coauthored with David Harrington); and Cunningham's *Encyclopedia of Crystal, Gem and Metal Magic* (1987); *The Truth About Herb Magic* (1992); *Sacred Sleep* (1992); *The Art of Divination* (1993); *Spellcrafts* (1993); and *Hawaiian Magic* (1993).

Cunningham anonymously wrote a booklet, *The Truth About Witchcraft*, which explains folk magic as well as the Wiccan religion. An expanded, booklength version of *The Truth About Witchcraft*, as well as a second title, *Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner*, were published in 1988. He also wrote *The Magic of Food* (1991), a book about the magical properties within foods.

Cunningham lectured to groups around the United States and occasionally made media appearances on behalf of the Craft. He viewed Wicca as a modern religion, created in the 20th century, incorporating elements of pagan folk magic. He said Wicca should be stripped of its quasi-historical and mythological trappings and presented to the public as a modern religion sprung from primeval concepts. The purpose of Wicca is to facilitate human contact with the Goddess and God; the differences between traditions, he maintained, are petty and distracting.

Like others in the Craft, Cunningham believed in Reincarnation, but said many people place too much importance on exploring past lives. He said the present is what counts, and one's attention should be given to learning the lessons of the here and now.

Cunningham's intense devotion to his work and his prolific outpouring of writing perhaps was fueled in part by his intuition that his time might be limited. In 1983, at age 27, he was diagnosed with lymphoma. After surgery, radiation, chemotherapy and healing rituals and spells, the cancer was in remission.

In 1990, during a publicity tour in the midwestern and eastern United States, Cunningham began to suffer increasingly painful migraine headaches. In Salem, Massachusetts, he collapsed, semi-conscious, and was rushed to the hospital. He was diagnosed with cryptococcal meningitis complicated by AIDS infections. He spent several weeks in the hospital and then was transferred to the University of California San Diego Medical Center. He had no medical insurance, and friends and family set up a fund to help pay staggering medical bills.

Cunningham recovered enough to resume writing and traveling, although his health was impaired and his prognosis was not good. In 1992, his vision began to fail, and he spent increasing time in the hospital. In January 1993, he sold some of his personal belongings and books and moved back home with his parents. In February 1993, the spinal

meningitis returned, along with an infection in the brain. Cunningham went into a coma for several days and lost his remaining vision. He returned home, where he passed away on March 28.

Cunningham left an autobiography unfinished at the time of his death. It was completed and published as *Whispers of the Moon* by David Harrington and deTraci Regula in 1996.

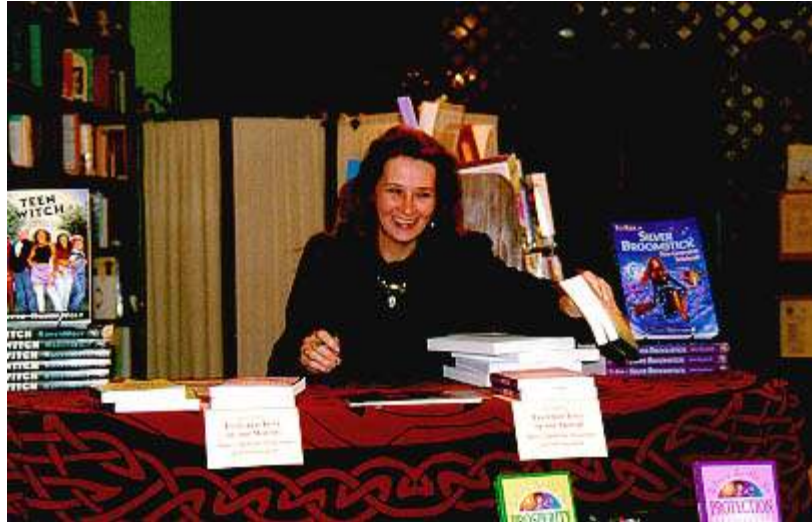
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Ravenwolf, Silver

SilverRavenwolf, (1956–) is an American Witch and author, known especially for her books on the Craft for teenagers.

Silver Ravenwolf—her Craft name—was born Jenine E. Trayer on September 11, 1956. Her father was a Lutheran, and her mother attended the First Christian Church Disciples of Christ, a Baptist offshoot. Ravenwolf was 14 when her 20-year-old cousin Tess gave her a deck of Tarot cards and also introduced her to the concept of Reincarnation and to the Craft via *Diary of a Witch*, the autobiography of Sybil Leek.

By age 17, Ravenwolf was involved in the Craft. She received her first degree Initiation in November 1991 from Bried Foxsong of Sacred Hart. She received second and third degree initiations in the Temple of Hecate Triskele of the Caledonii Tradition. On June 29, 1996, she was elderd by Lord Serphant at the Puff Gathering in North Carolina. She heads the Black Forest Circle and Seminary, a North American organization of 38 clans, each of which includes several Covens. Her hearthstone coven is Coven of the Omega Wolf.

Ravenwolf has written more than 28 nonfiction and fiction books. She also paints, makes jewelry and crafts, does professional photography and professional astrology. Her breakout book was *To Ride a Silver Broomstick: New Generation Witchcraft*, published in 1994. *Teen Witch: Wicca for a New Generation* was published in 1998 and tapped a growing interest in the Craft among young people.

Other nonfiction books written by Ravenwolf are *Hex Craft: Dutch Country Pow-wow Magick* (1995); *To Stir a Magic Cauldron: Witch's Guide to Casting and Conjuring* (1996); *The Rune Oracle* (1996); *Angels: Companions in Magick* (1996); *American Folk Magick*; *Charms, Spells and Herbals* (1999); *To Light a Sacred Flame: Practical Witchcraft for the Millennium* (1999); *The Rune Mysteries* (1999); *Silver's Spells for Prosperity* (1999); *Halloween: Customs, Recipes and Spells* (1999); *Witches Runes Kit* (1999); *Teen Witch Kit: Everything You Need to Know to Make Magic!* (2000); *Silver's Spells for Love: Getting It. Keeping It. Tossing It.* (2001); *Solitary Witch: The Ultimate*

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Fox, Selena

Selena Fox (1949-) is an American Wiccan high priestess, Pagan scholar, eco-spiritual minister and ritual artist. Selena Fox is renowned for her leadership role in the international Wiccan-Pagan community and for founding Circle Sanctuary, a legally recognized Wiccan church with a worldwide Pagan ministry.

Born October 20, 1949, in Arlington, Virginia, Fox was raised in a fundamentalist Southern Baptist family. As a child, she began having mystical experiences, out-of-body travel and psychic visions. Upon reaching her teens, she pursued her interest in dreams, the psychic and parapsychology and learned how to give psychic readings with Tarot cards. She left the Southern Baptist Church while in high school, citing a number of reasons, including the church's disapproval of dancing and its refusal to allow women to become pastors.

Fox attended the College of William and Mary in Virginia, graduating cum laude in 1971 with a bachelor of science degree in psychology. At the age of 21, she led her first Pagan ritual as president of Eta Sigma Phi, the classics honor society. She led the society in a reenactment of a Dionysian rite of spring, which took place outdoors in the center of campus.

After college, she worked on an archaeological dig in nearby Hampton, Virginia, where she met a woman who was a hereditary Witch. Realizing her own spiritual orientation had much in common with her friend's Craft, Fox embraced Witchcraft as a religion and later was initiated as a high priestess in several Wiccan traditions.

Following the archaeological work, Fox spent several years in various jobs, including work as a photographer and publications editor for a large corporation.

In October 1974, Fox conceived the name, logo and central spiritual focus for Circle, also known as Circle Sanctuary. Fox, along with her partner, Jim Alan, and a group of friends, formed the beginnings of Circle Sanctuary, with periodic meetings at the Fox-Alan home

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in Sun Prairie, near Madison, Wisconsin. In 1978, Fox decided to devote herself full time to the Wiccan ministry. The same year, Circle Sanctuary was incorporated as a Wiccan church.

In 1979, Fox and Alan were evicted from their Sun Prairie farmhouse by a prejudiced landlord. After several moves to other farmhouses in the Madison area, they settled on land near Barneveld and Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin, and created Circle Sanctuary, a nature preserve, organic herb farm and church headquarters.

Fox and Alan ended their common-law relationship in 1984, and Alan eventually left Circle Sanctuary to devote himself to a writing career. In 1986, Fox married Dennis Carpenter, a Wiccan priest and former school psychologist and now a renowned Pagan scholar. Fox and Carpenter live on Circle Sanctuary and work together to coordinate Circle Sanctuary's diverse activities and responsibilities: networking, publishing, research, counseling, education and nature preservation.

In 1995, Fox earned a master's degree in counseling at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and became certified as a clinical psychotherapist. Soon after graduation, she was invited into a public practice in a mental health facility in Madison, where she works as a staff psychotherapist with a mainstream clientele. She also has a private spiritual counseling practice at Circle.

Fox travels extensively throughout the world, participating in interfaith dialogue and networking, and working for various environmental, peace, social, civil rights and women's studies efforts. She also works to preserve sacred sites in North America and elsewhere. Her involvement with the interfaith and academic communities has increased dramatically since the late 1980s, in response to interest in and study of contemporary Pagan traditions. In 1995, she was the first to publish a study on Pagans as a distinct cultural population with special needs in terms of recovery therapy.

In addition, her public work includes lectures, workshops and seminars on Paganism, spiritual growth and psychology to all kinds of audiences in colleges and universities, learning centers, conferences, churches and Pagan gatherings. She does nature therapy, psychic healing, Tarot readings, dream work, guided creative visualizations and other types of spiritual healing services. For the media, she is a leading spokesperson on Wicca and Paganism and was a leading activist in the veterans' Pentacle Quest.

Fox has been a prominent religious freedom activist in the Pagan movement. She has worked successfully on cases involving the right of Wiccans and Pagans to worship, allowing Wiccan priestesses to minister as clergy in prisons, securing paid Pagan holidays for a Canadian employee (see Charles Arnold) and helping Native American Indians protect sacred burial grounds and other types of sites, including rock art, in North America. In 1985, Fox was a leader in the effort to defeat the Helms Amendment in Congress, which sought to strip Wiccan churches of their tax-exempt status.

Fox founded Wiccan shamanism, an interfaith blend of Wicca, cross-cultural shamanic practices and transpersonal psychology.

Through genealogical research, Fox has traced her Welsh and Scots family lines back several centuries and found a family tradition of “religious radicalism,” which she feels she is part of and continues in her life. Ancestral land in Scotland includes caves decorated with Bronze Age artwork. Fox is descended from St. Margaret (ca. 1045-93), wife of King Malcolm III of Scotland.

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Zell-Ravenheart, Oberon

Zell-Ravenheart, Oberon (1942–) American Pagan, visionary and author and the key founder of the Church of All Worlds. Oberon Zell-ravenheart (formerly Tim Zell, Otter G'Zell and Otter Zell) has played a leading role in Paganism. A self-described modern wizard, Zell has worn many hats in his career: transpersonal psychologist, naturalist, metaphysician, mystic, shaman, theologian, teacher, author, artist, lecturer and ordained Priest of the Earth-mother, Gaea.

He was born Timothy Zell on November 30, 1942, in St. Louis, Missouri. His father served in the armed forces in the South Pacific during World War II. A year before his birth, Zell's maternal grandfather died at home. Zell believes he reincarnated aspects of his grandfather's personality.

As a child, he experienced dreams of dying and going into a void. He exhibited many personality characteristics of the man he never knew, and at an early age he developed a love for spending time in the woods with nature—just as his grandfather had loved to do. After his father's return from the war, the Zell family moved to Clark Summit, a small town outside Scranton, Pennsylvania.

As a child, Oberon kept to himself and spent virtually all of his free time in the woods behind the family home. He would sit motionless and let the wildlife come around him. Perhaps because of this solitary time, he became telepathic at a young age and could hear the thoughts of those around him. As a consequence, he shunned large groups of people, because the telepathic commotion was too much to handle.

His early years were fraught with serious illnesses (including a nervous breakdown), which he says “erased and reprogrammed” his mind several times. During Oberon's teenage years, his father was promoted and the family moved to Crystal Lake, northwest of Chicago, Illinois. Oberon took naturally to the lake, as he had to the woods.

He learned instinctively to swim “like an otter,” folding his arms by his side and wiggling through the water. Otter became his nickname. He was introspective, read a wide range of literature, and delved into science fiction and fantasy. He enrolled at Westminster

Fulton College in St. Louis, where, in the early 1960s, he met Richard Lance Christie, an association that eventually led to the formation of the Church of All Worlds.

Zell shaped the church to his personal vision: religion should not be concerned merely with personal salvation, a goal overwhelmingly insignificant within the total context of the cosmos, but should be primarily focused on connecting with all time and space, the lifeflow of the universe and the oneness of all things. He coined the term “Neo-Pagan.” Under Oberon’s leadership, the church, which filed for incorporation in 1967 and was formally chartered in 1968, attracted a following of intellectuals.

It and Oberon played major roles in the coalescing and networking of the budding Pagan movement and the alliance of Paganism with the environmental movement. Oberon edited the church’s journal, the Green Egg, and made featured appearances at Pagan festivals and science fiction conventions. Sometimes he carried his pet boa constrictor, Histah, on his shoulders as he gave addresses.

In 1963, Zell married his first wife, martha, with whom he had a son, Bryan, his only child. That relationship ended in 1971. Between 1965 and 1968, Zell earned undergraduate degrees in sociology/anthropology and clinical psychology, a teaching certificate and a doctor of divinity from Life Science College. He entered, but did not complete, the doctoral program in clinical psychology at Washington University.

In 1970, Oberon formulated and published “the thealogy [sic] of deep ecology,” which later became known as The Gaea Hypothesis, the concept of mother Earth as a sentient being who, in order to survive, needs the harmonious balance of all things on the planet.

He preceded James Lovelock, whose similar “Gaia hypothesis” was published in 1974 and gained a popular acceptance. Oberon was invited to give a keynote address at the 1973 Gnosticon Pagan festival in minneapolis on “Theagenesis: The Birth of the Goddess,” his ideas about Oneness with Earth. In the audience was morning Glory Ferns (see mornIng glory rAVenheArt-zell).

In a dramatic moment, the two recognized each other as soulmates and experienced a profound, telepathic intimacy. Oberon took morning Glory back to his home in St Louis. Six months later, they were legally married in a spectacular Pagan handfasting ceremony at the 1974 Gnosticon festival at Easter. In 1976, Tim and morning Glory left St. Louis and the central nest of the Church of All Worlds.

They bought an old school bus and drove it to Illinois, where they converted it into a mobile home. They visited Coeden Brith in mendocino County, California, land belonging to Alison Harlow, a cofounder of the Pagan organization Nemeton (see Gwydion Pendderwen). They then went to Eugene, Oregon, where they taught classes on Witchcraft and shamanism and third world religions at a local community college.

In the fall of 1976, Zell underwent a profound mystical vision quest that proved to be a watershed in his life. For two weeks, he fasted alone in the wilderness near a hot spring

by the mackenzie river, with no clothes and only a knife and a sleeping bag. He learned to be completely in tune with nature, meditated, kept a journal and smoked marijuana.

He emerged from the experience completely transformed: his old identity as an urban social psychologist had been obliterated, and he was now a mountain man, ready to embark on new paths, live in the woods and become a priest of Gaea. With morning Glory, he performed a ritual baptism, and initiated himself into the Eighth Circle of the Church of All Worlds. For the next eight years, Zell did little public work.

In 1977, he and morning Glory returned to Coeden Brith and shared with Harlow their secret: that they had discovered how to create unicorns from baby goats. Harlow offered them a contract to live on the land as caretakers. They created a monastic homestead and a Pagan retreat, conducted seminars in the community, raised wild animals and ran the Church of All Worlds as an umbrella organization for several Pagan subsidiaries. Through one subsidiary, the Ecosophical research Association, they embarked on various projects, including the breeding of unicorns and a hunt for mermaids off Papua New Guinea.

In 1979, Zell decided to change his name from Tim. He had been dissatisfied with it since leaving St. Louis, for everywhere he went, he seemed to find a prominent person named Tim, and it made him feel awkward. He tried to forge new names without success. In march of that year, he and morning Glory sat by the banks of the river that flows through Coeden Brith and discussed Oberon's identity crisis. morning Glory suggested his nickname, Otter.

Zell rejected it, saying he wanted a name with more "flash" that would be taken seriously by urban folk, with whom they planned to do business with the unicorns. morning Glory then suggested asking the mother for a sign, which Zell did. At that moment, an otter popped up out of the water, climbed on a rock, looked at them, twirled around and dove back into the water. Zell had never before seen an otter in the wild and has not seen one since. "I hear and obey," he said.

He changed his last name to G'Zell, a contraction of "Glory" and "Zell," a style borrowed from science fiction. For a time, the couple were known as Otter G'Zell and morning G'Zell. From the beginning, the Zells had formed an open marriage. Indeed, it was morning Glory who later coined the term polyamory.

In 1984, they included a third primary partner, Diane Darling, in their relationship. In 1985, Harlow asked the couple to leave Coeden Brith to make way for other plans; they moved to Ukiah, where they lived for the next 11 years with their animals and extended family near a bend in the russian river.

Family members include Oberon's son, Bryan, and Darling and her son, Zack. Oberon emerged from retreat to resume public appearances, including lectures, workshops and classes. He and morning Glory began to reactivate the Church of All Worlds, which had

shrunk to a small, mostly California, base. morning Glory and Diane resurrected the Green Egg at Beltane in 1988.

Otter also worked as a freelance graphic artist and computer operator. He is a prolific writer and artist. Since the late 1960s, he has illustrated fantasy and science fiction magazines and books and has designed posters, record album covers and T-shirts.

He illustrated AnodeA Judlth's book *Wheels of Life*, and drew a *Darkovan Bestiary* for mArIon ZIMMER BrADley's science fiction series. In the '80s, Otter began sculpting museum-quality replicas of Goddess figurines, and in 1990, the Zell formed *mythic Images*, a business offering goddess and gods, jewelry, and other mythology products.

The business is now run as a ravenheart family enterprise, *Theagenesis, LLC*. Otter officially changed his first name to Oberon in the fall of 1994, following ritual and personal experiences in which he understood that he had to come to terms with his inner underworld, the shadow side. The new name was taken in a river baptism.

The triad marriage with Diane Darling ended in the summer of 1994, and three new persons joined the family: Wolf Stiles, Liza Gabriel, and Wynter rose. They adopted Ravenheart as the extended family name, and all moved in together in a succession of two large homes.

In 1997, the ravenhearts were featured in a television show, *Strange Universe*, and in a documentary in 2000, *The Love Chronicles: Love in the '60s*. In 1999, the ravenheart family moved to Sonoma County, California. There, Oberon began a new career as a book author. His first book, *Grimoire for the Apprentice Wizard*, was published in 2004.

As a contributing and advisory counsel for this remarkable work, Oberon gathers together many of the most respected and well-known leaders, founders, elders and teachers in the worldwide Pagan community into *The Grey Council*. The instant success of the *Grimoire* inspired Oberon to create his most ambitious project to date: the online *Grey School oF WlZArdry*, which opened its virtual doors in August of 2004.

With dozens of faculty members and hundreds of classes—in 16 departments, at seven “yearlevels”—the Grey School offers the most comprehensive apprenticeship in magickal practice and arcane lore that has ever been offered in one place. Graduates are certified *Journeyman Wizards*. Since 2005, Oberon has been supportive of morning Glory's recovery from cancer and has continued his work with CAW, the Grey School, and other projects.

Following the *Grimoire*, he has published *Companion for the Apprentice Wizard* (2006), *Creating Circles & Ceremonies* (with morning Glory; 2006), and *A Wizard's Bestiary* (with Ash Dekirk; 2007).

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Weinstein, Marion

Marion Weinstein is an American Witch, author, entertainer and media spokesperson. Marion Weinstein is especially known for her teachings on the positive applications and ethics of magic—she is called the “Ethics Witch.” As an entertainer, she offers Wicca-based standup comedy.

Weinstein grew up in the 1950s. She said she knew from early childhood—by age three—that she was a Witch. Born in New York City on a new moon in the sign of Taurus (with moon in Gemini), she has always felt an affinity with Diana, the aspect of Goddess who rules the new and waxing moon. As a young child, Weinstein called her dolls “witches.” She knew instinctively the basics of magic: that reality can be changed by specific, intense concentration. She felt a profound connection to Halloween (Samhain) that went beyond a child’s interest in trick-or-treating; to her, this most mysterious of Pagan holidays was filled with magic and beauty.

The oldest of three daughters in a Jewish family, Weinstein became interested in Jewish mysticism, but was disappointed to find the Kabbalah closed to women. At an early age, she realized she had a psychic link with her mother, the experience of which encouraged her to develop her intuition.

In school, she was fascinated by fairy tales, certain they were truth that had become fictionalized. Fairytales launched her on a lifelong pursuit of her Witchcraft heritage.

In early adulthood, Weinstein began to piece her intuitions and research together. At age 19, she visited Pompeii and felt a strong, instinctive connection to classical Paganism.

She graduated from Barnard College with a bachelor’s degree in English literature. Witchcraft played a prominent part in her creative life. She wrote a rogers-andHart-style musical comedy about Witchcraft, *The Girl from Salem*, which was produced on campus. After graduation, she took several courses in film at Columbia University, then went to Los Angeles to work as a commercial artist and animator. After two years, she returned to New York, studied acting, dance and voice and joined an improvisational theater troupe.

At the same time, she pursued her spiritual research and formed a group of people interested in Magic and Witchcraft. The group quickly recognized itself as a coven, with an eclectic tradition, meeting regularly on the Witchcraft holidays, and devoted to—

among other traditional goals—sending positive energy toward world peace and nourishment of the planet.

In 1969, Weinstein connected with WBAI-Fm radio, a liberal station in New York City. Her audition tape became the Halloween show that same year. That led to “marion’s Cauldron,” her own program. Weinstein decided to “come out” as a Witch live on air, figuring she would be supported by the station’s liberal staff. many reacted negatively, however, and Weinstein had a difficult time for several years before being accepted as a Witch.

Weinstein interviewed experts, taught occult techniques, conducted group Rituals and discussed topics such as psychic phenomena and dream research, as well as Witchcraft. Her show lasted 14 years. She concluded her work at WBAI-Fm as she had begun, on Halloween.

During 20 years of research, Weinstein compiled a treasury of material on Witchcraft and magic, which she integrated into her first book, *Positive Magic* (1978 and revised in 1981).

While she was working on *Positive Magic*, her own personal theology crystallized into a system of working with five aspects of the Deity: dIAAnA, selene and Hecate as the Triple Goddess, complimented by Cernunnos and PAn, which she correlates to the five points of the pentagram, the religious symbol of Witchcraft. Weinstein developed this system in her second book, *Earth Magic: A Dianic Book of Shadows* (1979). The book was published by her own company, Earth magic Productions, founded the same year, and initially was intended for a small audience of Witches. Its success led to several revised editions.

Weinstein has always advocated the practice of magic only for beneficial purposes, both with the public and inside the Wiccan/Pagan communities. Her stand on this led to the informal title of the “Ethics Witch.” Ideally, an ethics spokesperson shouldn’t be necessary, she believes, because magical practice should be understood as inherently ethical.

Weinstein began working professionally as a stand-up comic in nightclubs in 1978, using Witchcraft as the basis for her routines. Every Halloween, she appears in a New York City comedy club to deliver her annual routine about Witchcraft and to lead people in a ritual of positive magic. She appears on numerous radio and television shows and presents lectures and workshops about practical magic.

From 2001 to 2005, she had a radio show on Voice of America, “Marion Weinstein Live!”

Weinstein’s guiding belief about Witchcraft is that a Witch’s job is to help the community and to restore magic to daily life. Her personal definition of magic is transformation. She teaches personal self-transformation—always for the good of all and

according to free will—as an ongoing way to help the individual self and the global community. A self-avowed “city Witch” in a modern world, she believes the ancient traditions translate well to fulfill current needs. Earth Magic notes the integration of Witchcraft into mainstream religious, political, environmental and social concerns and the “discovery” of new physics that show that the universe is indeed a magical place.

Weinstein sees Witchcraft not only as a religion, but also as a philosophy and a way of life, springing from a personal inspiration that comes from within. Her guiding tenet is the Threefold Law of Return. She encourages people to develop their own groups and traditions in accordance with their inner guidance and their cultural and karmic roots, rather than to follow rules set by someone else. Her own system of Dianic Witchcraft evolved before the term became synonymous with feminist Witchcraft, and relates to her affinity with Diana. She believes it is helpful for women to identify with one particular aspect of the Goddess and embody the attributes associated with that deity, and for men to align similarly with God.

Her personal pantheon of deities has expanded from the original five to include Ceres, Goddess of the grain and rebirth; Neptune, God of the seas; Isis, Osiris and Horus, the holy trinity of the ancient Egyptians; and Cerridwen, Celtic Goddess of the Cauldron of Transformation.

Weinstein lives on Long Island with her pets and Familiars. Some of her pets and familiars have reincarnated, and she maintains an animal family of wild and “nonwild” animals. She is involved in animal rescue work of lost, abandoned and mistreated dogs and cats and is developing her interspecies communication with animals.

Through Earth magic Productions, Weinstein has created audio and video products from some of her radio interviews, instructional material and workshops. Her other book credits include Racewalking, with William Finley (1986), an exercise guide to the sport; Magic for Peace (1991); The Ancient/Modern Witch (1991, revised in 1993); Positive Magic: Ancient Metaphysical Techniques for Modern hints, revised edition (2002); and Earth Magic: A Book of Shadows for Positive Witches, revised edition (2003). She offers rituals on the Internet.

In Memoriam: Marion Weinstein (1939-2009)

Marion Weinstein was a priestess, author, radio host, comedian, teacher, and New York Witch.

Marion died on July 1, 2009 after a long illness. Her family held a private memorial at Marion's family home on August 1 on Long Island, New York. The following day, members of her coven and other close friends held a private memorial at a home in New York City's upper west side. A public ceremony for Marion was held on Saturday, September 26 at Battery Park in New York City as part of the Pagan Pride Day. Mama Donna Hennes and Margot Adler facilitated the ceremony.

Marion, a member and long time supporter of Circle Sanctuary, requested that after her death, there would be a place of remembrance for her at Circle Cemetery, the national Pagan cemetery at Circle Sanctuary land near Barneveld, Wisconsin.

On Saturday morning, October 31, 2009, Selena Fox & other Circle Sanctuary Ministers assisted by Ministers-in-Training and other community members performed a memorial service for Marion as part of the Samhain Festival at Circle Sanctuary Nature Preserve in Wisconsin.

Tokens of remembrance from friends, family, and fans were interred in the cemetery as part of the memorial. A custom designed granite pentacle marker was placed there and dedicated. Cost of the marker was funded by donations of family, friends, and fans from across the USA.

A video was made of the memorial service by community member Gabe Wollenburg, and can be seen here:

Further Reading :

Marion Weinstein Web site. Available online. URL: [https:// www.marionweinstein.com](https://www.marionweinstein.com). Downloaded September 12, 2007.

“The Wiccan/Pagan Times Talks with marion Weinstein.” Available online. URL: <https://www.twpt.com/weinstein.htm>. Downloaded September 12, 2007.

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Starhawk

Starhawk (1951–) American Witch, feminist, and peace activist whose popular books have influenced thousands of people to discover their inner power and spirituality and to join Witchcraft and Paganism. Starhawk is cofounder of reclaiming, an activist branch of Paganism.

Starhawk holds a master's degree in psychology from Antioch West University. She was taught Witchcraft while she was a student in college. Most of Starhawk's awakening and spiritual knowledge came in shamanic fashion from her own dream and trance experiences.

Starhawk had a Jewish upbringing (her grandparents were Orthodox Jews) that emphasized intellectual freedom. By the 1960s, she saw no future for women in Judaism—there were not yet any women rabbis. In the late 1960s, while attending college, she undertook an anthropology project on witchcraft. She met women who practiced Celtic Witchcraft and realized that Witchcraft reflected her own beliefs.

In 1975, she moved to San Francisco, where she met Victor Anderson, founder of the Faery tradition, at a Covenant of the Goddess meeting. She asked to study with him and later was initiated by him into the Faery tradition.

She practiced as a solitary for years before forming her first Coven, Compost, from a group of men and women who attended a class in Witchcraft that she taught at the Bay Area Center for Alternative Education in the San Francisco area. After organizing, the coven performed a formal initiation ceremony.

She formed another coven, Honeysuckle, comprised entirely of women. Rituals for both covens were based on the Faery tradition. Though feminist, her rituals included men and led to an increasing contact between feminist women and men in Witchcraft and Paganism.

Starhawk has taught at several Bay Area colleges. From 1993 to 1996 she was a lecturer at the Institute for Culture and Creation Spirituality at Holy Names College in Oakland, run by a Dominican priest Matthew Fox. In 1988, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger attempted to

have her ousted from the faculty as part of the silencing of Fox for his nonconformist views on creation spirituality.

Starhawk campaigns for a new political agenda for sacred values: peace, a community that honors diversity, family unity, self-determination, sound environmental practices, and social justice. She lives part-time in San Francisco and part-time in Sonoma County, where she practices permaculture (permanent agriculture). She travels internationally to lecture and give workshops. With Penny Livingston-Stark and Erik Ohlsen, she coteaches EAT, Earth Activist Training, a seminar on permaculture, political activism, and Earth-based spirituality. She sees environmentalism as vitally important to Paganism, which celebrates the sacred embodied in the Earth and the human community.

Her first book, *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* (1979), was based on the Faery tradition and was widely acclaimed throughout Paganism. Special editions were published for the book's 10th and 20th anniversaries, in which Starhawk discussed the evolution of the broader Pagan movement and compared it to similar traditions among Native Americans, African-Americans, and indigenous peoples.

Her other published nonfiction books are *Dreaming the Dark* (1982); *Truth or Dare: Encounters of Power, Authority and Mystery* (1987), which won the media Alliance meritorious Achievement Award for nonfiction in 1988; *Circle Round: Raising Children in the Goddess Tradition*, with Anne Hill and Diane Baker (1998); *The Twelve Swans: A Journey to the Realms of Magic, Healing and Action* (2000), coauthored with Hilary Valentine; and *The Earth Path: Grounding Your Spirit in the Rhythms of Nature* (2004). *Webs of Power: Notes from the Global Uprising* (2003) is a collection of her political essays that won the Nautilus Award from the trade association NAPrA in the year it was published. She is a contributor to the anthology *The Pagan Book of Living and Dying* (1997).

Film and documentary credits include her work as a consultant for *Goddess Remembered* and *The Burning Times*, and coauthorship with Donna read of the commentary for *Full Circle*, all produced by the National Film Board of Canada. Starhawk and read formed their own film company, Belili Productions. Their first film, *Signs Out of Time* (2004), featured the life of archaeologist Marija Gimbutas.

Her fiction credits include *The Fifth Sacred Thing* (1993), winner of the Lambda award for best Gay and Lesbian Science Fiction in 1994, and *Walking to Mercury* (1997). In addition Starhawk has recorded several CDs based on her teachings. She has written songs and chants used by others in Rituals.

Further Reading :

Hopman, Ellen Evert, and Lawrence Bond. *Being a Pagan: Druids, Wiccans and Witches Today*. Rochester, Vt.: Destiny Books, 2002.

Starhawk official Web site. Available online. URL: [https:// www.starhawk.org](https://www.starhawk.org).

Downloaded November 2, 2007.

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