



The Cauldron

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IMBOLC 1984

IMBOLC is the Celtic name for the Festival of Light celebrated at the beginning of February and dedicated to the goddess Brigid, patroness of sacred fires, holy wells and healing arts. On a spiritual level it is a time for purification, initiation and regeneration.

BEHIND THE CHURCH DOOR: Part 6 - Here Comes - Jack-in-the-Green! There have been several references in this series to the Green Man. Two of the church guides collected in my survey explain the term. That of St.James, Halsall in Somerset describes a piece of stonework above an arch as "a circular medallion in which is a carved head with branches and leaves coming out of the nose. Some say these foliate heads represent the old Jack-in-the-Green. Others believe they go back to earlier art forms even perhaps the classical Gorgon. The medieval carvers used them as symbols of growth and revival. The style of this leaf carving suggests a date around 1300. Firstly, the Green Man usually has foliage sprouting from his mouth not his nose. To say that medieval carvers used them as symbols of growth and revival is to omit to say they used them as pagan symbols! In the excellent guide book of St.Michael & All Angels at Linton-in-Craven, Yorkshire a Mr.C.E.Wright says of the resident two Green Men that they are 15th century and "good examples of the Jack-in-the-Green motif with stems of foliage issuing from the mouth and forming a foliate mask around the face" He also says "This figure was a common sight in medieval revels and was known as the Green Man, a term now more or less confined to inns. A person was dressed up in a light wicker frame decorated with foliage through which his face could barely be seen and along with the May Queen (he being known as the May King) he led the revels associated with some kind of fertility rites which may have come down from the Roman saturnalia. If so it is an interesting example of how the Church turned pagan rites to her own uses. One wonders where Rogationtide fits into the scheme of things" The wicker frame around the May King recalls the method by which the Goddess queen's consort was sacrificed at the end of his term of office by immolation in a blazing wicker prison. Jack-in-the Green is often rendered as Jack Straw, who had his 'castle' on Hampstead Heath in London and a famous public house named after him, or Green George.

He has been successfully equated with Robin Goodfellow, who like the Christian Devil has a beard, horns, pointed ears and goat legs, and Robin Hood. Bob Stewart in 'Where is St.George?' (p 68) describes the Green Man as St.George, a saint derived from St.Michael, Apollo and other solar divinities. As a fertility power, says Stewart, he returns to leaf and life after the triumph of winter. The Green Man is then a real pagan figure. How real and how important is hinted at the same church at Hasle. An exposé inside the church before referring to the Green Man discusses the mystery of the capitals and bases of an aisle. The bases are made of stone foreign to Somerset and the capitals originate from a Knight Templar chapel. One capital, says the exposé, represents tree and serpent worship, the next describes the Demiurge, the third has the serpent still visible, the fourth is the sign of Ain Soph (on the Cabalistic Tree of Life Ed) while the fourth again is the Demiurge. 'Webster's Dictionary describes the Demiurge as "an inferior, not absolute, intelligent deity, the Creator of the world identified by some with the god of the Old Testament and distinguished from the Supreme God". The exposé might have described it as the Templar's god, or Baphomet, but the figure on the two capitals is once again the Green Man and the serpent involved in the worship is a dragon. The Ain Soph is taken from the Hebrew Kabbalah and is the god of Kabbalism who has no sex and no other quality capable of human comprehension and comes before before and above the creator god (Jehovah) of the Old Testament. Sheila-na-gigs and Green Men are curious figures to find in any Christian church but may be small and insignificant ones compared with four monuments in the churchyard at St.Andrews Dacre near Pooley Bridge at the foot of

Ullswater. The original graveyard was an oval mount later extended in all directions to make a square. On the periphery of the oval, at what might be called the four 'corners', stand four heavy stone statues about 4' 6" high known locally as the Bear Stones or Dacre Bears. Each of them is animal like although almost human with arms that seem to end in huge hands with fingers. The statues appear to be in a sitting position with arms and legs embracing a another slighter, but still very heavy, form mostly like a pillar but in one of the statues it is topped by a semi-human face. The general attitude of the Bears is suggestive of copulation and there is an extraordinary impression of strength and great force in each of the figures. It is suggested the figures are medieval and represent the bear and ragged staff badge of the Earl of Warwick whose family lived at a nearby castle. The witch from East Anglia however recognized them immediately as elemental guardians representing earth, fire, air and water. The one representing fire she pointed out had a salamander on its back (Charles Leland in his 'Gypsy Sorcery' of 1891 reproduces a drawing of a salamander embracing a stone pillar similar to the Dacre bears) She touched the figures and said they'd lost nearly all their power because they'd been unused for centuries but in the earth guardian she could still feel something. "Probably they all became powerful at full moon and that is the time to come here" she said. If they had been put at Dacre as guardians then there must have been something to guard and this must have been an extremely holy place.

Guy Ragland Phillips

In our next issue Guy explores the pagan secrets concealed in Christian graveyards

GERALD GARDNER & THE HEREDITARY WITCH TRADITION The story so far for the benefit of new readers. In the late 19th century Old George Pickingill, a Hereditary witch master from the village of Canewdon in Essex, dissented from the established Craft to found his Nine Covens which practised Scandinavian, French, Romany and Saracen derived rites. In 1899 it is alleged Pickingill inducted Aleister Crowley into the Craft. Forty years later Gerald Gardner, the founder of modern Wicca, was also inducted into the Pickingill Craft. When Gardner later met Crowley the two men exchanged notes on their common Craft background. Using a magical recall technique Crowley passed on to Gardner details of the rites practised by the coven he had joined. The correspondence on this led occult writer Francis King to suggest in his book 'Ritual Magic in England' (1970) that Crowley had compiled the Book of Shadows used in Gardnerian Wicca. Now please read on The Hereditary persuasion has an ambivalent attitude to "Old Gerald" Gardner. He is accepted as a ~~newly~~ inducted brother but reviled as a meddler and Craft innovator. Gardner's interpretation of the English Craft is a travesty of the "true persuasion". Some idea of his perfidy may be gleaned from the following resume of his Craft background. He was inducted into three covens. His parent coven was the New Forest group. He was subsequently inducted into the Hertfordshire remnant of one of Pickingill's infamous Nine Covens. Only two of the original Nine Covens still convene today. One is in Hertfordshire and the other in Norfolk. The Hertfordshire coven must not be confused with the St. Albans group with which Gardner was also associated. Gardner was vexed to discover that the Hertfordshire coven repudiated many of the tenets espoused by his parent coven. He was astute enough to realise that the Fellowship of Crotona (a neo-Rosicrucian theosophical occult group associated with the New Forest coven Ed) had influenced its structure and concepts. Gardner received the Second Rite of the Hereditary Craft from the leader of the Hertfordshire coven. He was thus a full Crafter. It was this circumstance which led to the erroneous belief that Gardner was only a first grade Crafter. There is much controversy as to Gardner's actual standing in his parent coven. To counter any doubts Gardner foolishly admitted to several associates that he had received the first initiation of the Hereditary Craft. His detractors have seized on this fact and ignorantly assumed that he was only a first degree Crafter. The first actual initiation of the "true persuasion" is coincidental with the bestowing of the Second Rite. Gardner was disturbed to learn that the Third Rite could only be awarded by a magister (witch master Ed) However he submitted to the authority of a magister! He was accepted into another East Anglian coven and received the Third Rite at the hands of a magister whose name is known to me. Gardner's ignominy is almost beyond belief. He sought the help and assistance of the "true persuasion" and then abrogated their trust. He discarded the most cherished beliefs of the Hereditary Craft and promulgated his own concepts to its detriment. One is forced to concede that Gardner was only emulating Pickingill and indeed faithfully adhered to the format of those rites devised by Old George. One looks in vain for any admission by Gardner that he received the "authority" of the Brotherhood from a man. His peculiar sexuality naturally precluded such an admission as both he and Crowley physically enjoyed being dominated and chastised by women. Gardner's psychological quirks were his own business. We are all subject to our variety of sexual fantasies. Unfortunately both Gardner and Crowley projected their fantasies into the Revived Craft. Gardner

was less then truthful when writing about the Craft. He deliberately sought to popularize the tenets which he espoused by pretending that (Gardnerian) Wicca was representative of the Craft per se. He turned his back on the "true persuasion" and it is hardly surprising that the Hereditary Craft reciprocated in kind. Gardner attempted to curry favour with his Brethren by spelling out his Craft affiliation by means of an ingenious code. Unfortunately he contrived to be too clever by half. His "confession" on pages 52-53 of the paperback edition of 'Witchcraft Today' had a twofold purpose. He was appraising Crafters of his own background and attempting to anticipate charges of plagiarism. He states on p 52 that "the only man I can think of who could have invented the rites was the late Aleister Crowley". This extraordinary statement alienated all Crafters of the established traditions. The Hereditary Craft execrates both Pickingill and his most erratic disciple Crowley. It was Crowley who misused the sexual and magical techniques of the "old style" Craft. Gardner was simply warning other Crafters that he espoused the innovations instigated by Pickingill and perfected by Crowley and cloaking his own plagiarism of Crowley's poetry. The suggestion that Kipling might have written Craft rituals is another attempt to explain direct plagiarism. Gardner states on page 53 that there is much evidence that in their present form the rites were worked long before Kipling and Crowley were born. Pickingill had evolved the format of the rites of Wicca before either Kipling or Crowley were born. Indeed the Cambridge coven who appear to have initiated the concept of drawing inspiration from classical literature had formed in the first decade of the 19th century. It appears that Montague Summers (a defrocked R.C. priest who wrote books on medieval witchcraft and demonology Ed) also received a garbled report of these academics. He states that the author of 'The Magus' (Francis Barratt Ed) founded a coven at Cambridge University. The publication of 'The Magus' (in 1801 Ed) inspired certain Cambridge students to revive witchcraft and the Ancient Mysteries. Gardner's reference to the Order of the Golden Dawn is another coded illusion to Pickingill. Both Pickingill and Hargreaves Jennings adapted a "Rosicrucian" document purporting to have belonged to Ragon, the French occultist. Gardner next mentions Jennings by name. This author was acknowledged as one of Old George's star pupils. Indeed the views espoused by Dr. Margaret Murray are largely a rehash of Jennings' writings. It is then claimed that grandparents have told folk still living of meetings they attended 140 years ago when the (witch) cult was thought to have existed from all time. The key words are "140 years ago". The Cambridge coven was operative by 1810 and based their rites largely on the classical writings of Greece and Rome. They adapted the visitation of the goddess Isis from Lucius Apuleius 'The Golden Ass'. This was further modified by Pickingill and Crowley interpolated direct quotes from Charles Leland's 'Aradia' and thus created the Charge now used by the Gardnerian Craft. This coded reference enabled Hereditary Crafters to see that Gardner could claim some continuity of tradition. Pickingill was rightly reviled for adapting the Cambridge classical rituals. The Cambridge coven's premise was brilliant. These academics decided that the classical initiates who created the Greek and Roman dramas were in touch with the Ancient Gods. They reasoned it was possible to contact the old pagan gods and thought forms of the Ancient Mysteries by creating rituals using the exact wordings of the classical initiates. Borrowing the visitation of the goddess Isis seems to have been their principal stroke of genius. Pickingill appears to have thought so for he modelled his charge on it. Gardner leaves us in no doubt that he is alluding to the use of Greek and Roman literature as the basis of magical rites. His reference to Sir Francis Dashwood and the Hellfire Club is incomprehensible otherwise. Dashwood and his libertine cronies adored the goddess of love. Hereditary Crafters have long believed that Dashwood eulogised Venus by quoting extracts from classical tracts. Gardner's reference to the CABAL is an indirect allusion to the School of Night. Many Kabbalists were associated with that magical group. So too were many lodges of East Anglian Cunningmen. Pickingill made an abortive attempt to revive these lodges of Cunningmen. This reference by Gardner is without doubt another allusion to the East Anglian Hereditary Craft. Gardner's attempt to refer to Italy as a source of Craft rites must be seen for what it is. A naive attempt to anticipate charges of plagiarism. Gardner knew that Crowley had borrowed heavily from Leland's 'Aradia'.

Lugh

In our next issue Doreen Valiente queries Lugh's account of the origin of the Charge to the Goddess as used in the Gardnerian Craft today and he replies to her comments. Lugh will be returning to the subject of the Pickingill Craft in Issue 35 of TC when he examines the tantric and feminist elements in the rituals of Gardnerian Wicca. We are always interested in receiving informed comment on Lugh's articles especially from those Crafters who have inside information on the matters he discusses.

QABALAH & PAGANISM There has always been a degree of interaction between what might be termed 'High Magic' and the Old Craft practiced in the hamlets and villages. As Gerald Gardner illustrated by his novel 'High Magic's Aid' the two are by no means incompatible and indeed can be complimentary. Certainly Gardner himself drew heavily upon Golden Dawn and Crowleyan sources when he forged his re-constituted Wicca movement in the 1950's. Later Alex Sanders was to draw heavily upon the works of the German Qabalists Franz Bardons in addition to the, by now standard, debt owed to the Golden Dawn. Therefore most revived Wicca strains contain a considerable quantity of Qabalistically derived material. It is undoubtedly the case that some 'pure' streams of the Old Religion exist. The inner plane sources from which such springs stream are by no means exhausted yet. However those who drink from such deep waters are a tiny minority of those who practice the 'new' Old Religion. Most others owe a debt either to Greek, Roman, Egyptian or some similar mythology and in all likelihood bear some degree of indebtedness to the Western Qabalistic Tradition. As examples of the latter, if you use a 'pathworking' technique or invoke Angelic forces you follow not directly in the path of the Old Priesthood of this land but in the footsteps of the High Magicians of the Middle Ages. I would be interested to hear the views of other readers especially those who feel that High Magic or meditative Qabalah is somehow 'out of step' with paganism. My own view is that there is no conflict but I respect the right of others to differ and would be interested to hear their reasons for doing so. As a Qabalist, and also one who has been closely involved with the Old Religion, perhaps I had better explain my own position. To me the Qabalah is an inner framework, a plan of perfection (the Tree in harmony) which serves as a blueprint by which to regulate both my inner and outer life. It does not thrust upon me an alien theology nor does it close me to realisation of the multiplicity of Truth which is Creation. I take from the Tree no more than I am prepared to give it and the Tree in turn imposes nothing upon me other than that which I am prepared to freely accept. It is an age old arrangement. The Tree teaches, I learn and in turn I serve what I recognize as the Higher Principles, which govern it. It is likewise the same as with the Lord and Lady of the Old Religion. There are however important differences between the viewpoint of many pagans and that of many Qabalists. Firstly while I respect the forces of the natural world and hold them sacred I do not regard them as the totality of Divinity. Some, but not all, pagans seem to regard Nature as Divinity itself. In other words they express a pantheistic religious viewpoint. To me, and most Qabalists, Nature is an expression of Divinity but it is not Divinity itself. This is an important consideration. God (which to the Qabalists is neither male or female but encompasses the potential for both) is both transcendent and immanent at the same time - "As above so below" - which no doubt you have heard before once or twice! The purely pantheistic view seems to me to partake of one serious error - that Divinity is only as 'great' as Nature. Now Nature is very great but can we honestly claim it is Absolute? And if not how do we regard this Ultimate Absolute Divine Presence? Is it present in Nature? Is it completely separate from Nature? Or is it both at the same time? As an interesting example of Christian theology I was once informed that God/Goddess cannot be present in Nature as if this was the case every time we trod the ground beneath our feet we would be treading on God and 'he' would never allow such a dreadful blasphemy! Such sophism is ever the hallmark of the professional theologian.

Andy Highfield

Andy is the author of 'The Symbolic Weapons of Ritual Magic' (Aquarian Press 1983)

THE NATURAL WAY Last October 'The Guardian' published an article by a Dr. Michael O'Donnell attacking the modern trend towards health foods and natural products as a "cult of unreason". He claimed "Nature is not a benevolent matriarch" As a doctor he saw his professional colleagues protecting people from the ravages of an hostile environment and trying to "repair bodies and minds that have been visited by a malevolent Mother Nature". After attacking natural childbirth, breast feeding and organically grown vegetables O'Donnell said "Nature worship grows dangerous only when it is expanded to protect a vision of the world in which Nature is good and everything else is evil .. I see no harm in Nature being used as a generator of nostalgic packaging or of cute shop design .. but I see much harm when Nature worship becomes a celebration of unreason.. Our survival on this planet depends .. not on worship of a non-existent Mother Nature but an energetic use of the natural gift of reason. Perhaps unconsciously, Dr.O'Donnell's tirade is aimed at neo-paganism which can, on a simplistic level, be regarded as Nature worship. Few pagans that we know of .. are romantically inclined to always regard Nature as a Walt Disney Production. Those 'negative' aspects of Nature, which are characterised as "red in tooth and claw", were represented in the ancient pagan mythologies as the Dark Goddess. In pre-Christian religions She was Hecate, Lilith,

the Black Isis, the Morrigan etc. It is an aspect of the Goddess, and Nature, which demands our respect and which we ignore at our peril. The Dark Goddess is the symbol of the forces of death and decay which are an essential part of the natural cycle of being. With the decline of Christianity and the rejection of the Devil as humanity's scapegoat for misfortune it has become acceptable to project our subconscious fears onto Nature as the new bogey. Natural disasters are not the work of some evil, anti-human demonic force which was the medieval view or the result of our worship of a bitch goddess. Nature cannot be blamed if human error builds flimsy houses on an earthquake fault or erects towns at the base of volcanic hills. For everyone killed or injured by a natural disaster how many more die silently and without publicity as victims of the poisonous byproducts of our industrial society? Of course it is morally shortsighted to regard Nature as 'good' and all human created products as 'evil' but it is also unbalanced to regard Nature as anti-human and technology as a panacea for the problems facing humanity. Such simplistic views are rightly rejected by those who know the truth must lie between the two extremes. Pagans are not anti-technology per se. After all the stencils for TC are typed (albeit badly!) on an electric typewriter and the magazine is printed on a duplicator. There is a spiritual dimension to science and while the majority of scientific research is anti-life some of the new discoveries in biology and physics are helping to confirm the truth of the Ancient Wisdom teachings. In those fields of study there is the seed of hope that science can abandon its one-dimensional, materialistic outlook and find a truly spiritual understanding of the Universe. Today the trend towards natural and organic products has spawned an expanding consumer market which seeks to meet a genuine public demand. Like all consumerism it has its negative aspects but that it is not a legitimate reason to condemn the whole 'back to Nature' trend out of hand. Ultimately our survival on this planet depends on the ability of the human species to achieve mass realisation of its unique relationship with Nature and how to use the natural resources which are available wisely and with due consideration for the needs of future generations. We must promote non-exploitive avenues of technological growth which increase the quality of human life but not at the expense of the fragile ecosystem of the Earth. Such a response to the present planetary crisis must by necessity be based upon spiritual values if it is to have any meaning or success. The adoption of a religious or rather spiritual attitude to Nature should not be rejected by the ultra-materialists as a flight from reality, a cult of unreason or a regression into primitive superstition but accepted as a logical extension of humanity's relationship with the natural environment of this planet and our role in the sacred web of creation.

Myrddin

GOOD NEWS TIME The Welsh Arts Council - bless their little thermal socks! - has commissioned a new children's version of the Celtic myths of 'The Mabinogion' to be published this summer in both English and Welsh. Professor Gwyn Thomas of the University College, Bangor will prepare the Welsh version and co-edit the English translation with Kevin Crossley Holland who recently worked on a children's edition of the Anglo-Saxon epic 'Beowulf'. Artist Margaret Jones of Aberystwyth will be the illustrator of the new edition.

GAME FOR A LAUGH? Shortly before Yule there was national advertising for a new game called 'Taliesin'. According to the advert "you zoom through black holes protecting your life force with King Arthur, the White Goddess or the wizard Taliesin himself" Sounds exciting doesn't it? (yawn) In the same breathless style the makers go on "Taliesin is about Britain; a fascinating blend of cool clear logic with fantasy born out of our rich mythological heritage." Now your reaction to this new game will either be that it is a serious attempt to introduce ancient archetypal images from Celtic mythology to the mass mind or yet another example of the insidious way that sacred imagery and the pagan belief system is devalued by commercialisation today. No prizes for guessing which is our view!

SOAP OPERA JINK LEYED An exclusive story in a Sunday newspaper that the bad luck affecting Britain's most popular television soap opera is due to the influence of malefic ley lines crisscrossing the studio where the series is filmed seems to have been greeted with incredulity by both the general public and those with occult knowledge of these matters. The deadly leys were dowsed by a psychic consulted by a member of the cast who is a Druid. This story at least introduced leys, albeit in a sensational way, to a wider audience although the newspapers claim that witches harnessed ley power to perform Satanic rites and the Church recognised that leys could be used to fight evil was amusing. On the same day a rival newspaper reported that the producer of the series had turned down an offer by a witch to exorcise the alleged curse on the programme and repudiated tales of supernatural happenings on the set during filming. The dowsing of the ley lines does not seem to have helped as shortly afterwards one of the cast was arrested on a drugs charge and another has quit the show after twenty years!

WITCHES GARDEN ATTACKED A reader has sent us a cutting (no pun intended) from the 'Popular Gardening' magazine concerning an attack by Christian fanatics on plans for a witches garden display at the International Garden Festival in Liverpool this summer. The garden will feature a statue of the Greek goddess Hecate standing in the centre of a magical circle made of mosaic tiles. Each of her three faces will point towards a different garden representing the phases of the moon. The Christian Fellowship in Liverpool wrote to the festival organisers protesting about the presentation of witchcraft as "harmless fun". The organisers answered by stating that there was no intent to portray the witch as a wicked influence. The garden would show the witch's skill in the use of plants and herbs for beneficial purposes. Good for them!

KEEP CHRISTMAS PAGAN! In December a Sunday newspaper (you know which one!) commenting on the commercialisation and materialism of Xmas stated that originally it was not a spiritual or religious celebration but a pagan midwinter festival. Although pagans did celebrate the traditional twelve days after the Winter Solstice as a time for merrymaking and feasting there was also a spiritual perspective to their jollification. As part of its campaign to destroy the Green Ways the early Church took over the pagan festival of Yule (December 25th) and the Winter Solstice. In fact if all the pagan aspects of the festive season were removed (such as the virgin birth of the Sun God, holly, mistletoe, the Xmas tree, giving presents, carols, Santa Claus etc) most of what nowadays makes a "traditional Chritsmas" would vanish! The popular modern image of paganism as materialistic, unspiritual and atheistic is a classic example of Orwellian newspeak by a secular society which possesses all these negative aspects in abundance.

ANCMON QUANGO FIASCO On April 1st (an appropriate date we think) the Government's new super quango known as the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Commission lurches into action. This bureaucratic monstrosity was set up by Michael Heseltine before he left the Department of the Environment to concentrate his talents on the anti-greenham hate campaign. The quango's chairman will be Lord Montagu of Beaulieu whose stately home near Southampton boasts a famous vintage car museum. Montagu is believed to be in favour of a tough approach to the ongoing scandal of Stonehenge (TC passim). So far attempts to clean up the site have been thwarted by the local council and local residents but with the power of the super quango behind him Montagu is apparently determined to improve the long neglected site. Just how he goes about this within the framework of his brief to make our ancient monuments commercially attractive is something we will wait for with trepidation. Obviously this is one show that is destined to run and run and we will naturally keep you up to date with developments in future issues of TC. As we go to press we hear news that the Department of the Environment have turned down a request by a pagan to hold a Yule rite at Stonehenge. This does not surprise us when you consider what a circus the annual Druid rite held at the henge in midsummer has turned into. We would have thought that there were plenty of less public stone circles available for pagan worship across our land without adding to the problems surrounding Stonehenge! Attempts to raise a petition to demand that Stonehenge be the venue for pagan worship would seem to us a futile exercise.

COSMIC RELIGION From the sacred places of Earth we ask you to rest a while and fly to the starry regions of outer space. Whenever humanity makes mass contact with extraterrestrial life our accepted concepts of religion will be drastically altered along with many of our other social attitudes. A few far thinking Christian theologians are already worried that the culture shock of a close encounter with an extra terrestrial civilisation will be the final nail in the coffin of orthodox Christianity. After all it seems unlikely that any advanced extraterrestrial culture would find a spiritual belief system based on the concept of the incarnation of the Creator of the Universe on an obscure planet on the edge of a small galaxy theologically acceptable. Let us face it, do you? As Jesus was supposed to have incarnated here to release the bad karma of the Terran race it seems unlikely that alien visitors would find the religion founded in his name to be very relevant to their own spiritual outlook. It seems more likely that the ancient wisdom of the Old Faith, with its emphasis on the oneness of all life throughout the Universe, would be more understandable to the extraterrestrials and would no doubt approximate to their own spiritual beliefs. If we may borrow an allusion from Hollywood the correct greeting to ET when he/she finally arrives on this planet will definitely be "May the Force be with you"!

PREDICTION FESTIVAL 'PrePrediction' magazine are hosting the Aquarian Festival this year at Battersea Town Hall on Friday March 9th 6-10pm Saturday 10th 11 am - 9pm & Sunday 11th 11 am - 8pm. There will be several pagan groups present and your editor will be lurking in the background so see you there.

THE TAPESTRY OF WICCA compiled by Morgana & Merlin (Wiccan Rede P.O.Box 473 3700 AL Zeist Netherlands £2.50/\$4) This is an excellent anthology of articles in English on various aspects of the Old Ways by British, Dutch and American pagans illustrating the variety of spiritual experience available to the seeker within the pagan belief system. Subjects covered include Paganism & Politics, the Sacred Earth, Feminism and the Craft, the Gogmagog Coven, Hereditary Welsh Paganism and Christianity & Wicca.

THE NIGHT BATTLES by Carlo Ginsburg (Routledge & Kegan Paul £9.95) Fascinating account of a medieval Italian cult called the Good Walkers who fell into trances while their spirits, in the shape of animals, battled with witches to safeguard the harvest. The author draws upon official Inquisition records to show that the Christianised cult originated in the ancient fertility religion prevalent in medieval Europe which worshipped the pagan goddess who led the Wild Hunt. He describes how the Church reacted with incredulity at the tales of the Good Walkers and then attempted to relate them to their preconcieved image of witchcraft as a diabolical anti-Christian conspiracy. This important book provides a microcosmic view of medieval witchcraft illustrating how the Church transformed ancient fertility practices into Devil worship. Recommended

QUEST LIST OF ESOTERIC SOURCES (BCM SCL Quest London WC1N 3XX £2.50 INSIGHT OCCULT DIRECTORY 1983/84*) These are comprehensive guides to occult groups, publications, suppliers, conferences and publications compiled by the editors of two of Britain's leading esoteric magazines. Although obviously they cover similar ground they are complimentary and if you buy both you will get an overall view of the popular occult scene.*Insight OD also £2.50 from 25 Calmore Close Stourvale Meadows, Bournemouth, Dorset.

THE TAROT by Madeline Montalban & ASTROLOGY by Peter West & Jo Logan (Blandford Press Link House Poole Dorset £3.95/\$8.95 each) These are the first in a series of practical handbooks to be published under the auspices of 'Prediction' magazine. The first book contains the essence of Madeline Montalban's writings on the Tarot published over a period of 30 years. She approaches the Tarot from both a predictive and esoteric angle and the extent of her vast magical knowledge is evident. Congratulations must go to Jo Logan, editor of 'Prediction', for her skilful editing of the material. The second book is a basic primer for apprentice astrologers and is packed with practical information which will enable the beginner to become proficient in the art. Recommended.

THE HOLISTIC HERBAL by Dr. David Hoffman (Findhorn Press £6.95) Dr. Hoffman is a medical herbalist practising in Cardigan, West Wales who is also involved in holistic therapy New Age philosophy and ecology. He approaches herbalism as a self healing technique which is a gift from Mother Earth. Medical complaints are examined in relation to the total being of mind, body and spirit together with details of various herbs which can cure them. Highly recommended.

OWLS & FLOWERS Hilary Llewellyn Williams & Tony Padfield (F.O.I. Centre of Blodeuwedd Tynewydd New Inn Pencader Dyfed Wales 50p) This little booklet is about the Celtic myth of Blodeuwedd who was transformed into an owl by the druid Gwydion. It reveals the story as an allegory of the struggle between the ancient matrifocal religion and patriarchy with Blodeuwedd as an aspect of the Triple Goddess. The booklet concludes with an account of how the symbols of the myth have been relevant to the authors' search for a home in this magical region of the Blessed Isles.

THE MISTS OF AVALON Marian Bradley (Michael Joseph £9.95) We have not previously reviewed fiction in TC (mainly because most "occult" or pagan orientated fiction is sensational rubbish!) but this epic novel is worthy of a mention. Its subject matter is the Arthurian legends told through the eyes of the female characters in the myths such as Morgan Le Fay, Gwenhyver, Igraine and the mysterious Lady of the Lake. The central theme is the ideological conflict between the Old Religion and Christianity leading to the suppression of paganism. Arthur's own personal downfall is linked with his rejection of the Old Faith. Having been initiated as Stag King by druidic rite on the isle of Avalon and crowned as Lord of the Tribes and the Faery Folk the silly bugger abandons his pagan banner of the Pendragon at the battle of Mount Badon and rides under the flag of the new faith. Bradley acknowledges the assistance of several well known American pagans in her preface so the Old Religion elements in the novel are accurate. As Dion Fortune knew it 'often easier for people to accept the Mysteries if they are written in fictional form and the 876 pages of this novel are a good example of this in practice.'

BOOK NEWS UPDATE 'Earth Rites' by Janet & Colin Bord reviewed previously in TC has now been issued in paperback by Granada. Paladin have also republished Professor P.V. Glob's excellent study of Bronze Age Scandinavian Old Religion 'The Mound People' in paperback. Additionally on a recent trip to London we noted that Starhawk's excellent books 'The Spiral Dance' and 'Dreaming the Dark', both published in the U.S., are on sale in the Atlantis Bookshop 49a Museum Street London WC1. Please note due to space limitations this issue several book reviews have been held over.

EXCHANGE ADS THE ARROW OF ALBION Twice yearly pagan Celtic journal £3.80 p.a. -
c/o 29 Greenend Grove Edinburgh Scotland. THE BARD Hereditary Welsh journal of Celtic
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& WATER ecopagan feminist journal £2.70/\$3 p.a. 4 High Tor Close Bromeley Kent ***

A few pagan mags have fallen by the wayside during the last twelve moons but we are pleased to see new ones replacing them and that the established journals are keeping going despite the odds. Like TC the mags above are run on a microscopic budget and deserve your support. If we are going to promote the Ancient Wisdom and the Green Ways then we need as many outlets as we can get as no one publication can hope to reach the potential readership on its own. Apart from that it is healthy to have differences of opinion and approach so that the pagan movement expands its vision and does not stagnate.

CELTIC WORKSHOP Scottish readers may be interested to know that as part of the Edinburgh Folk Festival Dr. Deirdre Green B.A. Phd will be holding an afternoon workshop on Symbolism in Celtic Folksong Lyrics. It will be at the Somerville Room Societies Centre 60 The Pleasance Edinburgh from 2pm on Saturday April 7th 1984. The workshop will consist of discussions, slides, music and live singing on early Celtic beliefs as depicted in old folk ballads. Themes will include Otherworld journeys, ritual, magic, supernatural beings, death and rebirth. Deirdre will also be giving a talk on March 10th at the Prediction Festival on Mystical Symbolism

SAMHAIN PRINTS While on the Celtic theme, we still have copies of the fine art print entitled 'Samhain' by the artist Naomi Lewis. Measuring 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ " the print is a reproduction of an original pen drawing and is signed by the artist. Each print is also numbered and is one of a limited edition of 250. Ideal decoration for meditation room or pagan shrine. If you would like to own one of these beautiful prints just send £3 (blank postal orders or cash) or \$6 bills to Myrddin c/o Groesffordd Llwyn-drafn Llanfyrnach Dyfed Wales SA35 0AS United Kingdom.

BACK ISSUES A few copies of TC 26, 28 & 30 are available at 30p (blank postal orders) or \$1 bill. Also Issue 32 at 40p (blank postal order) or \$1 bill All others sold out

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