

INTERLUDE

Published by Roberta Gray, 14 Bennington Street, Cheltenham, Glos for the 43rd Mailing of the Off Trails Magazine Publishing Association. This is an interim publication between & Vagaries, whims and other fancies. Well, it is supposed to be near Spring, even if our climate hasn't got the message yet.

A SORT OF EDITORIAL

I am sorry, members, but I have only time to put in a few pages for this mailing, and as the next number of Vagary will be the twentyfirst issue I did not want to be a few sheets to save my membership, what this interim publication is. There wasn't time to go to town on a big issue of Vagary so near the deadline I only finished the exams ten days ago and I still feel whacked. Five papers, for which were allowed three hours each, plus two analyses, which must have taken a good twelve hours each, plus advice to those about to get married - really and truly (I could have given Punch's advice, but the examiners wanted more than one word). This took some more hours, plus a report on the whole thing. The odd thing is that although, I was burning the midnight oil for weeks before the exams, it wasn't until after they were all over I felt exhausted, dead tired, narky, and thoroughly irritable. Which is why I have left this until the last moment.

Anyway, I feel honour bound to put something in. I was so preoccupied with my studies that I clean forgot to renew my membership fee and Ron Bennett himself paid the balance from his own pocket, realising that it had slipped my mind. So I owe a big thank you to Ron for remembering to retain my membership for me.

With reference to the drawings on the cover on the last Vagary, I don't think I am going to have time to explain what they were. Ken did promise to put the explanation in his zine for me, but I never even had time to send them to him. Anyway, thanks for the offer, Ken. I will try to remember to get them in the next mailing if I haven't time to put them in this one. Incidentally, when Ken Cheslin dropped me a line, he suggested what they were and he wasn't far from the truth. No, Ken, not your second guess that they were something to do with astrology, but your first. H'M, says he, what did I say?

Now to answer a few of the comments on Vagary in the mailing before last.

BRUCE. Sorry, Bruce, but you are Sun-Virgo. I looked up the ephemeris for 1939 and on 23rd September the Sun was still in the sign Virgo. 29° to be exact. Now if you had only told me the time you were born, I could have told you what your Ascendant was.

ARCHIE. What a pity you did not get the book "Astrology" and "Common Sense". It is good, you know. More than a limited number of charts - as you state - have been studied. By now the charts that have been correlated must run into hundreds of thousands. For the past century research has been going on and charts compared by men and women who were genuinely interested in astrology and were tired of all the charlatry which had crept into it - and for which astrology is still suffering. There are still charlatans, but tell me any subject that has not got them. But I did point out in the article in Vagary that I had not believed in it, either, until I started studying it. And I would certainly not have studied until all hours of the night for two years unless I believed there was something in it. But Archie, I'm confirmed, honestly.

IAN. Well, at least you admit that you have not studied the subject of astrology. Jung, did you know. It was he who said "Whatever is born or done this moment of time, has the qualities of this moment of time." Astrology acts within the terms of a person's environment, which means that the son of a dustman and the son of a duke born at the same moment and in the same area will have a similar outlook on life, but whatever happens to them, although there will be similarities will act within the terms of their environments. The usual time considered for the moment of birth is when the child has drawn its first breath.

ETHEL. I though I'd said what I was studying. The modern "trend" is to call it Cosmic Correlation Theory, which to me is only another sign of the moderns being incapable of calling anything by its well known name. I prefer to call it what it has been called for the past four or five thousand years - astrology. And frankly, Ethel, I don't care whether the fans scoff or not. My private life is nothing to do with fandom and their opinions won't move me one inch from any course I intend to take. As for witches, I know at least half a dozen, have been accused of being one myself, and those I know sincerely believed in their craft. They were non-Gardnerians, by the way. However, a longer discussion will have to be left over until the next Vagary.

CHARLES WELLS. Yes, everyone, does have an individual astrological chart, even those born within seconds of each other. But the chart will act within the terms of the environment. See what I said in Ian Peters paragraph.

RON B. Yes, Ron, you are being unfair re the "astrology jazz". Give you the gen in reverse? Would you go to a doctor and say "Never mind what my symptoms are - you're the doctor, so cure me!" But I would not mind betting that you have the sign Gemini or Virgo prominent in your chart. If you don't know the exact time you were born, though, give me the year of a very important event in your life (accident, loss of near relative, etc) and I ~~can~~ be able to work out the approximate time of birth. Can I be fairer than that?

JOE. Why shouldn't girls have coloured boy friends and vicky vicky? Have you ever seen the colour of the children in orphanages who so seldom get adopted. The unwanted children is something the do-gooders consistently overlook. Did you read in the paper the other day of a woman who died while being aborted (a legal abortion)? The child would have been coloured if she'd had it. And it's no good both political parties trying to kid me that the Smethwick and Leyton election results had nothing to do with colour. I am damned sure they did. I don't go out of my way to read those damned books. The libraries here go out of their way to stock them. If Bill brings a book back I glance through it and a few pages is enough to tell me what sort of a book it is. Incidentally, one of the librarians informs us that the most enthusiastic readers of these books are lonely old ladies. Something for the psychologists to chew over.

JOHN ROLES. What did I mean by saying that users of Crowley's rituals will be worshipping Crowley. If you read his book of magic you will find instructions that all altars must be oriented towards Boleskin, in Scotland. Crowley bought a house there and dubbed himself the Laird of Boleskin. But anyone with even a little knowledge will realise on reading Crowley's rituals that many of them are ver much tongue-in-check. Crowley, with another man, decided to raise the "Pan" force in Paris in 1929. People in the hotel heard a fearful outcry from the locked room, but it was not until next morning that someone plucked up courage to break the door down. Crowley's assistant was dead and Crowley himself was taken off to an asylum where he stayed for some months. You've let OMPA in for something, haven't you? Very well, you will get the construction^{of} a chart, you will get examples, and you will also get a history of astrology, but I am afraid it will not be this time round.

TERRY. Let us clear up a few misconceptions, shall we? First, if you care to look back through the Vagaries, you will find that almost from the first issue I have been writing about what you were refer to as whacky. Bill only writes what I ask him to, usually because I have wanted to say something on the subject myself, but haven't the time, so he has obliged. If you say that my choice of material is up to me, what are you complaining about. I abominate jazz, but if it were a fan's hobby, he would have every write to discuss it, regardless of what I think. After all, it's his magazine, to do what he likes with. I'll tell you a little story. Many years ago, an eminent scientist was approached and asked to write an article decrying astrology. He agreed and wrote the paper. Then along came a friend, who was not an astrologer, by the way, and asked the eminent scientist if he had studied astrology. The reply was that the scientist had not. So the friend asked why was he going to read a paper on a subject about which he knew nothing yet was very ready to criticize it. "You're right," said the eminent scientist. "I am being very unfair." And Einstein tore up the lecture he had written. Astrologers, like navigators, use geocentric measurements, not heliocentric. When Eratosthenes discovered the circumference of the earth, longitude could be used. There was also an arbitrary division of latitude counting north and south from Rhodes in the old days. And haven't you heard of the Roman water clocks? There were also sundials. I hope you are not taking your pupils for astronomy. You mention Neptune and Pluto being discovered well into the twentieth century. Pluto was officially discovered in 1930, before a third of century was over and, in any case, astrologers had been nattering about the planet that moved about 1° a year for roughly a hundred years before the scientists admitted it was there. And Neptune was not discovered in the twentieth century, but the nineteenth. 1846, to be exact. Hitler chucked out his astrologers when they started telling him things he didn't want to here. He also order the books on astrology to be burnt throughout the part of Europe his army occupied. If astrology is a glaring nittyery how do you account for the following people not only believing in it, but going ahead and practising it. To wit: Hippocrates, Copernicus, Paracelsus, Nostrodamus, Naibod, Tycho Brahe, Bacon (Francis) Kepler, Galileo, Dryden, Culpeper, Flamsteed, Newton and Richard Garnett (A.G. Trent), who was Keeper of the Printed Books in the British Muscum. These people were right nits? And I have only quoted a few names.

DICK ENEY. Modern astrology is analysis, Dick. If one has studied it properly, one should be able to get the psychological make up of a person. And at least once you've paid an astrologer you've paid, and without having everything torn out of you.

Whereas if you go to an analyst, how many times are you on a couch for how many weeks and for how much money? To do an astrological analysis is hard work, hence the fees charged, but should a client want yearly directions after it won't cost as much as the analysis fee originally charged.

LEN BAILES. There is no truth in the newspaper fillers that the witches are organising themselves into unions. One or two that I know couldn't organise a rice pudding without making an issue of it. In fact, the way they carry on feuding at times, makes me suspect that they are either ex- or embryo s.f. fans. What we have got over here is a sort of Witchcraft research Association. I say sort of because many people think that it is a definite organisation, but so far it has no chairman, president, or any committee to argue over who should do what. All it is interested in is what it says - research. As a matter of fact, we were at the dinner given several months ago in a London hotel that is supposed to have a very snooty name. If that dinner was a sample of the food it is one hotel that will never see me booked in there. In fact, I did suggest to one of the witches present that he hex the cooks. The waiters and waitresses were mainly Italian and they looked petrified - can't think why. It was supposed to be private, but some nit told a daily paper, who came out with a lot of garbage about supposed witchcraft, including the old tired one that witches are always naked for their rituals. I know for a fact they are not (I am talking of non-Gardnerians). How do I know? I'll get round to that story in a later issue. But when I decide to do some research, I do it. Anyway, at this dinner were some genuine researchers, several genuine witches and occultists, and a large number of curiosity seekers, plus the oddball who turned up to plug their own theories. One informed me that he had to come along because his spirit guide told him he had to address the meeting and when we went in to dinner he made straight for the host's chair. When that failed he tried to sit in the guest speakers chair. Then he tried Bill's, then mine. Eventually someone managed to park him in the seat with his name on it. Guess whose spirit guide didn't address the company? Despite the fact that it was supposed a completely private dinner, all the reporters from the Sunday horror comics turned up, including a long drink of water from the News of the World. The host, John Math, (a non-de-plume) went and had a word with them and it must have been a good word. There wasn't a peep in the papers about it. Incidentally, the Gardnerian type of so-called witch was conspicuous by their absence. Maybe because it was kept absolutely private and therefore publicity seekers were non persona grata.

As I have mentioned Gardnerians several times and have obviously no time for them I suppose I should explain why. But first I should like to make it clear that Gerald Gardner, although He could be so wrong at times did at least have this in his favour. He was never unkind and those whom he counted as his friends he did try to help. What I have against him, and I know one should not speak ill of the dead, is the misconception of witchcraft that he has given. Poor old Gerald loved publicity, and when the Witchcraft Act was repealed in 1951 he couldn't rush into print fast enough claiming to be the leading male witch of this country. This rather narked another man, who, I suspect, was going to claim that honour himself, but Gerald beat him to it. So the other one wrote a book, after Gerald had didd, of course, revealing the rituals and putting in remarks that were not quite truths, yet not quite lies. I checked with an ex-Gardnerian who had broken from Gerald's several years ago, who admitted that the rituals were correct. Gerald kept on shoving in chunks of Crowley - she kept on shoving them out, but after she had left they started creeping back again. However, the whole thing boils down to this: bonding, beating, nudity and towards the end a feather duster (consecrated, too) was introduced into the rituals. Any psychiatrist can tell one what bonding, beating, nudity (and feather dusters) means, and the word they have for it is not witchcraft. The author of "The Battle for the Mind." did a lot of research on this and summed it up as "Why don't they just go in for kinky parties and have done with it?".

But that is just it - so a lot of them are kinks, but how many of that sort would admit to being kinks? Rather than be honest about and say "I know this is kinky, but I am doing it because I like doing it." No - they make excuses for it by edging in on somebody else's act and claiming that their kinkiness is no such thing, but it's the old religion. If they did not call it witchcraft they would call it by the name of another religion, even if they had to invent one. I am aware that some poor wretches can't seem to help being kinky and if they are they are, but what I object to is their damned dishonesty. If they are, they are kinky - why pretend it is a religion? In any case, the witches of the non-Gardnerian variety don't claim to be religion. They claim to be a Craft.

And that's all. I seem to have shoved a lot of commas in the wrong place, but perhaps next time I won't do such a rushed job. It is always awkward cutting straight on stencil.