



Tarot Association
of the British Isles

TABI NEWS

Welcome from the TABI Team

Welcome to the third edition of the TABI newsletter and we hope you have had a Happy Easter/Eostre! We are still following the pattern established with the second edition, which is to create a newsletter every three months of the year. This is therefore the Spring Equinox issue and apologies for its late appearance. It is nice that we can now enjoy lighter evenings in the UK and more of the beauty of Mother Nature as gardens and green areas fill with colourful blooms and blossoms! We hope you will also enjoy TABI News.

Forthcoming Issue

The Midsummer issue is being planned for launch around **21st June 2002**. For interested writers, suppliers and colleagues, please be in touch over the next month if you are hoping to see articles, reviews etc in the Summer Solstice issue as this is one that is going to be put together early due to your editor's upcoming wedding in early June!. In the meantime thanks go out to all of you and especially to TABI's volunteers for your strong support and dedication.

What is TABI?

TABI stands for the Tarot Association of the British Isles, which is a not-for-profit organisation, dedicated to supporting the positive use and development of Tarot in the United Kingdom. TABI is run by volunteers with a passion for tarot and the esoteric. Our main activity currently revolves around our web-site, where you will find options such as a free reading service and the opportunity to sign up to learn tarot with mentor support. Please also consider joining our email lists, which include UKTarotTalk on which we discuss tarot issues in general and TABI, which is especially for all of our volunteers. You can find out more about these and subscribe on our home page at <http://www.tabi.org.uk>. Membership and services all remain free at the current time. We do wish to raise some funding for TABI and are beginning to establish options that will allow us to accept donations and participate in opportunities for any mutually beneficial schemes that can help TABI to expand further. Do please let us know if you are interested in helping in any way and we will keep everyone posted on new developments!

How to get the most from the newsletter

Clicking on the page numbers in the contents table will take you directly to the page you want to view. If you want to make the text on a page look larger, please go to "View" and set the option to "Fit Visible", or the similar command that appears on your version.

Availability, Notification of Accuracy of TABI News

We do our best to keep the information in TABI News up to date and accurate. If anything needs updating or correcting for future reference, please let us know. TABI News currently appears as a PDF file on the TABI web-site and on the databases of TABI's e-mail discussion lists. We send out notification of new issues of TABI News to reach a wide and interested audience and for each issue we endeavour to ensure that all contributors are kept informed of the release date. If you should wish to be removed from our mailing list, however, please email us:

Editor: Diana McMahon; E-mail: newsletter@tabi.org.uk

Please send article submissions to: news.submissions@tabi.org.uk

Interested in working as a volunteer for TABI? Please send a blank email to:
volunteering@tabi.org.uk

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We wish to thank all of our writers and volunteers for their input and all of our members for their interest in TABI. Please note that article copyrights remain with the authors. All information given is as accurate as possible when going to press. The articles, reviews and information are offered for interest purposes and are not necessarily reflective of the views of or indicative of an endorsement by the Tarot Association of the British Isles.

What's new at TABI

Shelley keeps us up to date with events at TABI

New Volunteers & Roles

A big hello and thank you to the two newest members of our volunteer community, Norlei, Lorna and Gav, who all bring many years of tarot experience with them. We are also delighted to see Amanda taking on an additional role.

Norlei will be taking on a **publicity/PR** role, helping TABI become a focus point for people interested in studying, reading, teaching and sharing all aspects of tarot in the UK. One of our main aims is to promote ethical standards in tarot, and to try and make sure that the public's experience of tarot is a positive one. If you have any comments or suggestions on this, please contact Norlei c/o admin@tabi.org.uk.

Lorna will be helping out on the **training** side, which continues to be one of the most popular aspects of our work at TABI. If you are interested in taking a mentor-assisted study course, or have any suggestions about how we could enhance our training services, please contact Joanne or Lorna at training.admin@tabi.org.uk. Lorna is also assisting with the ongoing monitoring and development of ethical issues at TABI.

Gav is in the process of designing a reader support area for TABI, which he will update, maintain and add to as time goes on. Gav will be working closely with Diana and Amanda to collect and create information sources that will be useful to tarot readers. Please contact Gav c/o admin@tabi.org.uk.

Amanda has been a long standing volunteer for TABI and is extending her current involvement by taking on an additional role as **Psychic Fayre Co-ordinator**. Amanda intends to liaise with venues where TABI may take up tarot reading tables and will work closely with Gav on reader support issues. Although we all agree it may be wise to start small, we know that Amanda is developing a powerful vision for how this role could be developed! Contact Amanda co/ admin@tabi.org.uk.

Forums

Mark, our whiz kid technician, has (very modestly!) created a series of Forums at TABI. Please select the **Forums** option on the TABI web-site home page to find out more!: <http://www.tabi.org.uk>

Amazon Affiliation

We are in the process of setting up a bank account, which means we can start offering decks and books for sale through affiliation with online suppliers such as Amazon. What decks or books are on your wish list? Please let us know! We now have a **Suggestions Forum** on the web-site or you are welcome to contact Shelley direct on her admin e-mail address below.

Future events

TABI is a non-profit organisation, with funds raised being used to offset our administrative costs and hopefully in the future to arrange 'real life' events such as workshops or conferences. What would you like to see? Please send any ideas or suggestions to admin.shelley@tabi.org.uk

Situations Vacant

Are you able to spare some time to help with administrative or creative projects at TABI? New volunteers are always needed, particularly experienced readers who would be willing to act as **mentors** for our new students.

We are also looking for someone with **technical experience** to be an assistant to Mark, our Webmaster. Please contact admin.shelley@tabi.org.uk in the first instance for details of these roles.

Diana is looking for assistance for newsletter roles, including **Copy Reviewer, Archiving Assistant** and **Editorial Assistant**. If you are keen to be involved in creating or assisting with the newsletter in any of these capacities and would like more information, please write to Diana at newsletter@tabi.org.uk.

Popular Tarot Spreads

by Amanda Westall

My interest in divination began with the Runes several years ago and as these were exceptionally accurate using only 24 Runes, I wondered how much more detail I could get from a pack of 78 cards which even gave you pretty pictures to follow, not just obscure symbols. Must be easy, thought I, in my ignorance - I fully expected to know the basics of Tarot within a few days... after all, how hard could it be?

Now, I know that the majority of you, especially the experienced readers, are sniggering delightedly up your sleeves at that response - and I did learn better, very quickly infact. After a year I still regard myself as a very, very, very raw beginner, and during readings I have my pile of text books and notes at hand at all times – my poor mentor receives regular interrogations from me, and the folk on the Tarot Talk List willingly answer queries and questions, sometimes several times! My close family and friends are frequent guinea pigs, and not so close family and friends think I am a bit strange (aren't we all?).

Here are some details of the three more common spreads according to the most popular authors of the day. They can each be used for Tarot or Runes, although as this is a Tarot List I am using Tarot examples - Any deck can be used.

One Card Spread

Shuffle and cut the deck by the method you prefer (shuffling and preparation, is an article in itself which we will save for another day). Choose any card, look at it carefully and write down your response – Include anything you can remember about the traditional meaning of the card and your own gut-feelings, and any responses triggered by the details in the picture.

Look at what you have written and see if any details connect to your life at the moment, does anything jump out at you as an action or response to the day/week/situation you are in?

Now check your responses against the booklet that arrived with the deck, and against any notes you may have as to the traditional meaning of the card, check for both similarities and discrepancies – write them down!

Wait a few days then check back with what you have written, make a detailed note of the accuracies and see if you can merge the discrepancies into the situation in any way. Over time this gives you an idea of how your inner-self responds to the cards.

You can then use this spread whenever a quick response to a simple question is required, or use it as a guide to what you need to know in your everyday life.

The above technique for translating cards is generic throughout the spreads and is a very useful skill to learn.

The Three Card Spread

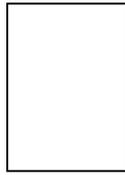
Lay 3 cards as shown:

Position 1



Issue

Position 2



Challenge

Position 3



Action

In a similar way as for a one card-reading look at the cards in detail, while keeping in mind their meaning by position. This will tell you something about the question being asked and your current situation regarding this issue.

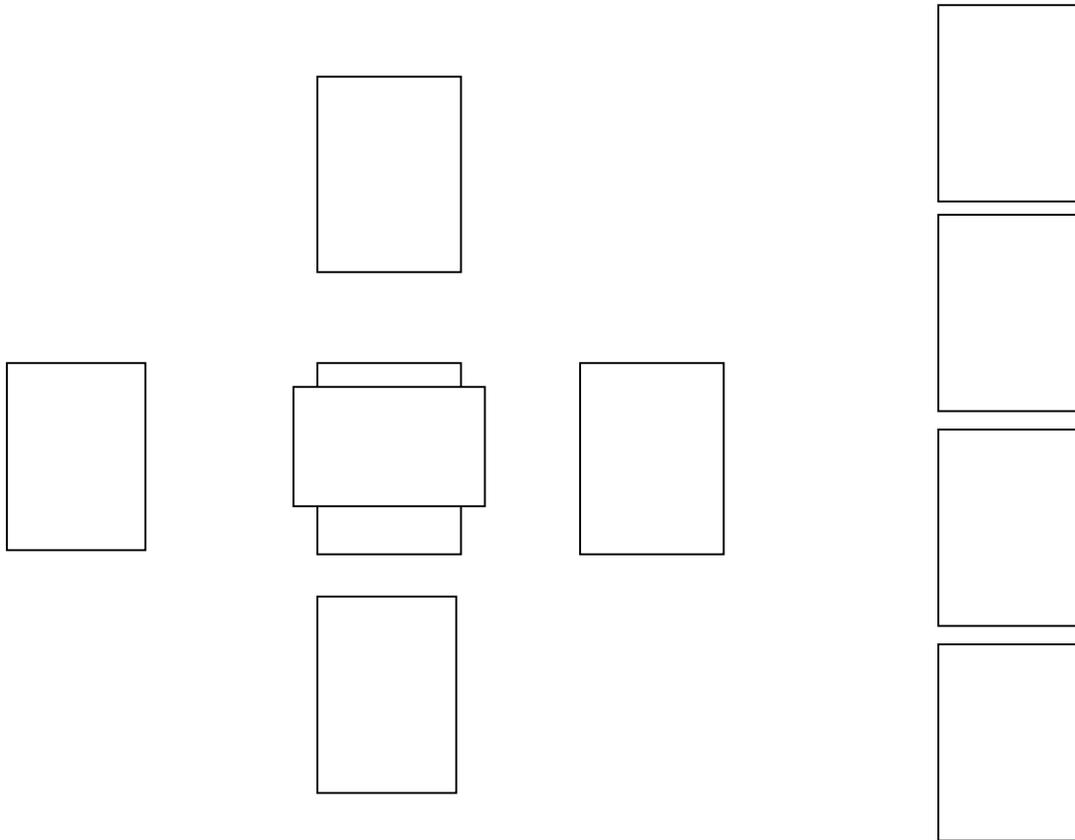
For example; if the question is one of finances and in position one you draw the Fool. This could indicate an oversight or financial opportunity of some sort with a catch, which needs viewing very carefully from all directions.

If in position 2 the magician appears, you might need to check with other reliable sources (possibly male, or an institution) about the benefits/pitfalls of any action? – This is your challenge!

In position 3 you might find the four of swords; meaning perhaps, better to wait and not make any hasty decisions? Use this time to look for other options.

The Celtic Cross Spread

This is divided into two stages the Circle or Cross, and the staff, the layout should look like this:



The two cards in the centre represent the issue – the *heart of the matter*

The four cards surrounding represent the time line moving from your past on the left to the future on your right, with the top and the bottom of the cross showing your unconscious mind or basis of the situation at the bottom, and your conscious mind or goal at the top.

- | | | |
|-------------|---|---|
| Position 1 | = | Heart of the matter – or current situation. |
| Position 2 | = | What effects this for the good or ill – or secondary factor. |
| Position 3 | = | Basis of the situation, how others see the situation. |
| Position 4 | = | Past, or in the process of leaving. |
| Position 5 | = | Your views of the situation - your goal. |
| Position 6 | = | Challenge, for you to do - future or unresolved factor. |
| Position 7 | = | You, where you are, how you see and present yourself – negative feelings. |
| Position 8 | = | The thoughts and feelings of those around you - the outside environment. |
| Position 9 | = | Your positive feelings, key factor, guidance. |
| Position 10 | = | Outcome. |

It is recommended (by Joan Bunning) that you look at the cards first individually, then in relation to the cards close to them, or on the same line, or with similar meanings:

For the Cross:

Look at cards 1 and 2 to find out the main issue.

Look at cards 3 and 5 to find out what is going on within you at different levels.

Look at cards 4 and 6 to see how people and events are flowing through your life.

From these 6 cards you see your immediate situation.

For the Staff:

Look at cards 7 and 8 to find out more about the relationship between you and your environment.

Look at card 10 – the projected outcome.

Compare card 10 to card 5 - your goal in relation to the outcome.

See how card 6 contributes to card 10 - your immediate future in relation to the outcome...

Tarot, I believe, is a touch more complicated than the Runes – but worth the effort!

One of the regions of complication involves the variety of spreads you can use. In many areas the Runes and Tarot run parallel, with each having the one, three, five, card/rune spread, the Celtic Cross, annual wheel/astrological forecast, etc, but there are stages where diversions occur too. With the Runes you can do a nine-fold spread, and of course there is the casting method, perhaps the most dramatic difference.

Thought of the moment:

I have been considering whether a Runic style casting of the cards would work? After all, with tipping Runes out of a bag willy-nilly chance is wholly responsible for the result, and those results are often very enlightening. Perhaps this could be done with cards too, a sort of 78-card-pickup– with the cards towards the centre which land face up, being the heart of the matter, the ones radiating toward the edge being the focus and challenges to be faced, and the outer cards being the Result or outcome... Hmmmm I may have to experiment (with an old deck – of course!) If anyone else tries this let me know how you get on?

I hope the above ramblings prove of interest, and wish you all happy reading! Remember, practice and keep a log... logs are always useful to look back on – if only for a giggle!

Bibliography and further reading:

Tarot the Complete Handbook for the Apprentice, Eileen Connolly: Thorsons 1995

Learning the Tarot, Joan Bunning: Weiser Books, Main 1998 (Pages 278 – 287)

The Tarot According to you, Nancy Garen: Simon and Schuster, New York 2001. (Pages 222 – 223)

Tarot Your Everyday Guide, Janina Renee: Llewellyn 2000.

Principles of the Runes, Freya Aswynn: Thorsons, London 2000 (Page 90)

The book of Runes, Ralph Blum: Oracle Books, Great Britain 1993 (Pages 49-51)

An Interview with Poppy Palin creator of Waking the Wild Spirit Tarot

Shelley King interviews the illustrator of *'The Hedge Witch's Way'* and author of *'Walking with Spirit'* for the low down on her upcoming **tarot deck and book set**

Tarot tends to draw artists from many different backgrounds - one of the more fascinating I've come across lately is writer and illustrator Poppy Palin, creator of 'Waking the Wild Spirit Tarot', a beautiful and very original deck and book set shortly to be published by Llewellyn.

Poppy has had a very varied creative career, which has seen her in creative roles as diverse as a professional leather jacket artist producing work for heavy metal heroes Black Sabbath, Head of Art at a London school and owner of a tattoo studio! She is also the illustrator of various pagan publications including the cover of new magazine 'Pentacle' and Rae Beth's last book 'The Hedge Witch's Way'. Poppy eventually settled in Glastonbury, where she created 'Waking the Wild Spirit Tarot' with its vibrant, otherworldly images. Some of the cards can be seen at Poppy's website, <http://www.herebedragons.co.uk/poppy/tarot.htm>

Poppy is the author of four books on natural psychism, *'Season of Sorcery'*, *'Wildwitch'*, *'Walking with Spirit'* and *'Soul Resurgence'*, and has applied this spiritual approach to her deck. Having confessed my instant love-at-first-sight, Poppy kindly agreed to answer some questions for TABI:

How did you get interested in tarot and what made you decide to design a deck?

I was always interested in tarot but felt very alienated from it as I cannot assimilate lists of dry facts... so learning all of the properties of each card seemed futile (I tried, believe me!) As a teacher, I understood that people who learned (as did I) better through a more lyrical approach than by 'rote' would benefit from a new deck/book which had those things in mind. I wanted to get totally away from images that looked arcane but did not explain what the card was about and move away from the secret sounding names/symbols involved. I wanted, in short, to make tarot childlike and accessible, not mysterious and exclusive. I wanted my own key to understanding this fascinating system, and judging by the response it has had so far I think I may have cracked it. I wanted it to be 'not just another rock in a hard place'.

Do you use tarot yourself or is it purely an artistic project?

I intend to use my own deck as a tool for counselling and divination, because I now have some understanding of how tarot works as a cohesive system for looking at life. The 78 stories I wrote to accompany each character really helped to bring the whole thing to life for me... as I hope it will for others in the future.

What media do you work in and how would you describe your art style?

I use Caran D'ache water-colour pencils and Derwent artists' pencils over an initial collage of images. My style changed radically from the beginning to the end of the Tarot deck, I now have a far softer style which relies more on colour and shade/tone than on hard lines to delineate form. I love the work of the Symbolists (Deville and Levy Dhurmer especially) and long to work with my new style to achieve some of the luminosity they have in their paintings and sketches. I also admire the Pre-Raphaelites' way with romantic 'English' imagery, of course. I have also been influenced by comic/graphic art and latterly (after the deck was completed) someone introduced me to Arthur Rackham, the Victorian fairy-tale illustrator, and I felt as if my work was in its infancy - there's always so much to learn! That's why I'd love to do another deck and expand my style further, tarot is such a wonderful gift for an artist!

Is your deck a 'traditional' one (78 cards, major arcana with usual names, suits of wands, cups, pentacles, swords) or have you created a system of your own?

It has 78 cards, major and minor arcana, for sure! But I haven't used the traditional names as I wanted evocative names that conjured up imagery and ideas, not strangely arcane terms like 'The Hierophant' or 'pentacles' that some people couldn't relate to...including me! I like to keep it simple yet highly emotive, eliciting a profound emotional response. Therefore my suits are Earth, Air, Fire and Water, and my cards have names like 'Wise Woman' and 'Wandering Minstrel'.

What was the inspiration behind your deck? Is it from your own spiritual path?

My own spiritual path is interwoven through the deck but only as a key to really potent imagery and words. Things I have gained insights into in meditation and trance vision come out in the deck but only if I see they are broadly relevant and may uplift and inspire others. Myself, as author/artist, I feel I should back off and not stamp my own 'beliefs' on the deck as they change so quickly and are replaced by new understandings all the time. I wouldn't want the deck to date or become limited just because of some spiritual idea I had at the time! My own path, if it needs to be categorised, is somewhere between the spiritualist and the Shamanic!

What kind of person do you think your deck will be suited to, and what do you hope they will get from it?

Anyone who has always wanted a way into a system they saw as too difficult before! Anyone who loves fairy-tales, fantasy, magical fiction...basically anyone who has a good imagination who likes to be stimulated and learn new things but who cannot assimilate knowledge as dry lumps of text. The deck will appeal to someone who had tried, as I had, to crack the Tarot by working laboriously through list upon list of card attributes ...only to forget it a day later! I hope it will have a wide appeal to anyone who loves the tarot but especially to those newcomers who have been looking for a helping hand into working with it in a sympathetic, poetic way.

The website mentions that the accompanying book is written as a work of fiction - what was the thinking behind such an unusual approach?

I hope I have covered why I wanted the book to be fiction. I always find that fiction, well written magical fiction, sticks in my head far longer than academic fact on its own. So I combined my teaching skills as a communicator with the skills I have as an artist and creative writer, and let the characters from the deck talk in the first person in the stories...they engage the reader by their unique voice...not me!

Do you recommend any particular techniques or spreads for working with your deck?

Anything basic, triads (past, present, future) and simple, circular readings representing the year past, present and future. That sort of thing...again I wanted to get away from anything that needed remembering to the ninth degree!

What other decks do you like, either to work with or for the artwork?

I haven't got to grips with any other deck. I tried the 'Greenwood tarot' as I liked Chesca's stunning bold style (but I couldn't learn all the cards' information so I gave up and gave it away!) I appreciate the 'Glastonbury Tarot' and 'The Sacred Circle Tarot' at present . I now have the 'Sacred Path' cards by Jamie Sams as I love her work and way of speaking and have discovered that she uses native teachings as stories to get her cards' message across too! It isn't a Tarot , as such, but it helps me in its grounded wisdom. She calls a spade a spade (only in poetic terms) and I like that! I'm afraid I am not a real 'tarot buff' but guess I will become more curious now I have a better insight into its workings!

What are your future plans - any more tarot projects?

Yes, I'm working with Rae Beth again on '*The Hedge Witch's Oracle*', which will focus on herbs and wild flowers native to Britain.

Books by Poppy Palin

'*Season of Sorcery*', Poppy Palin, Capall Bann
'*Wildwitch*', Poppy Palin, Capall Bann
'*Walking with Spirit*', Poppy Palin, Capall Bann
'*Soul Resurgence*', Poppy Palin, Capall Bann
'*The Greening*', Poppy Palin, Llewellyn - **due 2003**

Tarot by Poppy Palin

'*Waking the Wild Spirit Tarot*', Poppy Palin, Llewellyn - due April

Further details including ordering information can be found at

<http://www.herebedragons.co.uk/poppy/books.htm>

78 Little People

by Leah Whitehorse

Leah has kindly agreed for us to reproduce her excellent article, in which she writes on choosing your first tarot deck and becoming a tarot reader, along with other insights for tarot readers

When I was around 14, I went out on a day trip to Wales with my Grandmother. After hovering round a gift shop for a while I finally spotted a pack of “fortune telling cards” and my Grandmother bought them for me. My Gran was a medium but she was also a staunch Christian and rarely talked about this ability because it essentially against her faith. Sometimes I still wonder why she bought those cards for me that day but perhaps she just thought it was a passing phase.

From the first moment I opened those cards I was hooked. There was something deeply magical and mysterious about the whole process of laying them out and trying to divine the future. I was awful of course – I had no real idea of how to use them but now and again I knew when something I said was accurate and that “knowing” grew. These however were not true Tarot cards and after some time I knew I needed to have the real thing. So into my life came 78 “little people” who helped me look at the world with new eyes and opened my heart and mind to the nature of mysticism, personal development and understanding.

CHOOSING YOUR FIRST DECK

I was completely clueless when I went to buy my first pack of cards and so bought the only pack I knew anything about namely the Rider Waite Deck. This was a costly mistake because I ended up hating them. They felt wrong and “sticky” in my hands. The art work said nothing to me and the characters in the cards seemed unfriendly. This is not a criticism of the deck itself as I know many people find them wonderful to work with. I’m just not one of them.

This is a good example of needing to really involve yourself in the process of choosing a deck. Here are a few things I usually say to people about this process:

1) Do you have a particular passion for an era in history or mythology or subject? There are literally hundreds of decks to choose from nowadays and most are themed in some way. For example, I love the legends of Avalon and the Lady in the Lake so I work with two Arthurian Decks. I am also drawn to Shamanic practice so the Greenwood Tarot is another favourite (nowt to do wi’ the creator of this deck being the lovely Mark Ryan of “Robin of Sherwood” fame *grin*). The Mythic Deck might suit if you are fascinated by the Greek mythologies and this is a very clear deck to work with. There are Vampire and Wiccan decks, Medieval and Jungian. Perhaps Native American is your path or maybe even you are obsessed by baseball and the Baseball Tarot is for you (yes I am being serious there is a pack based on baseball – sometimes I despair...). What I am trying to say here is that there is likely to be a deck that will suit your personal interests.

2) Is it a true Tarot Deck with 78 cards – 56 Minor Arcana and 22 Major Arcana? That isn't to say that any deck of cards with more or less is bad, it just isn't a true Tarot deck. I have happily used other card systems and some are beautiful, they are just different to the Tarot.

3) Unless you really feel otherwise, please pick a pack that has illustrations on ALL 78 cards. There are some packs that are more like playing cards so the Five of Cups for example will just have 5 Cups painted on the card – not very inspiring. I also advise against cards that have descriptive words written on them as these can detract the reader from concentrating on the symbolism.

4) Do you love the artwork? I mean REALLY love it. There is some stunning artwork out there but again art is a very personal thing.

5) Make sure you actually look through the entire deck before you buy. Some retailers don't allow you to do this and I think this is bad. You really need to sit with the deck in your hands and take a long quiet look at all the cards. Another alternative now of course is to look at them on the net. See links at the bottom of this opinion.

6) Of course you can also buy packs second hand too so that is one way of getting a deck a bit cheaper. I would suggest that if you are going to work with them, cleanse them before you start so that the original owners vibes do not interfere with your own. You can do this in much the same way as cleansing a crystal (although obviously not put them under water!). Put them on a sunny windowsill for a day, leave them under the light of the full moon, smudge them with sage or other incense, visualise them being cleansed...whatever way suits you best.

Don't forget that if you have a pack that you don't want, give it away to someone else or sell it on Ebay. Many people collect Tarot cards so never throw them away.

BEGINNING TO WORK WITH YOUR CARDS

So – money spent and your new cards come home with you. What next?

Well the first thing is to begin to touch them, hold them and look at them. Most decks are accompanied by a book which may be very basic or highly complex. Whichever – have a flick through at first and see what catches your eye. A long term reader I used to know once said to me – read the accompanying book then put it away for six months so you really get to know your cards!

Initially there may be certain cards that you really love and some that you repel from. Others will seem like they say little to you. A good first exercise is to draw say 5 cards. Choose them by sight and then sit quietly and really look at them. What is happening in the pictures you have chosen? What numbers are they – which suit? Are they all Major Arcana cards or all Minor or mixed? Why did you choose these cards? Do any of the characters in the cards remind you or someone? Don't think about "fortune telling" just think about what these cards might be saying to you. Imagine you are watching a scene from a play – what would the play be about, the title, the theme?

Another important exercise is to find "your" card. The card that represents you. This is called the Significator card. The Significator card is used to portray the person who is having the reading. Some people don't use a Significator, others use a card that signifies a situation. There aren't

really any firm rules as you need to work with them in whatever way makes you feel the most comfortable.

There are several ways of finding your card. You might do it by astrological sign or by feeling or just the look of a certain card. Most people choose a court card (i.e. the Page, Knight, Queen or King) but this varies. Personally I am always the Empress card, no matter what pack I use – even when someone gives me a reading this card usually turns up.

Try laying out the cards in suits and see if each suit has it's own storyline. Try laying cards with corresponding numbers together and see if you can work out what meaning the numbers have. Try comparing the court cards and see what differences and similarities they have. There are a myriad of ways to learn the Tarot only limited by your imagination.

To get used to working with the cards you could try picking one card a day or doing one reading a week for yourself. There are hundreds of spreads (ways of laying out the cards) you can use – the most common being the Celtic Cross. Don't be afraid to design your own spreads and ways of working.

When you do a reading for yourself be clear about your intention. If you have one clear question great – but if a hundred thoughts are running through your head then just try imagining a door opening. Ask for whatever advice you most need.

READING THE CARDS

A tarot reading should flow like a story – in fact they are a great tool for writers to use when needing some practice exercises or inspiration. I am very much an intuitive reader so despite cards and positions in the spread having certain meanings I rarely conform to them. I allow my eyes to wander across the cards and they weave a tale together. Basically they are my tool for clairvoyant reading. Initially though you may need to go step by step and try and understand why those cards have appeared in that particular order. Try not to simply rely on the book meaning that is given for each card – you need to build up a relationship with these pictures and see what they mean to YOU. I usually advise that when you are reading for yourself that you speak out loud. Granted you may feel a little silly at first (although I constantly talk to myself anyway but that's another matter!) but it is very good practice for starting to read for other people. Also it is not so easy to dispel a particular thought if you have to put it into words.

Sometimes the cards can work very literally – an example I have was that I was once reading for someone who had lost their dog. The Moon card was central to the reading and it constantly caught my eye. For some reason I could not however incorporate it into the reading. Ironically it turned out that the dog was called Lunar!

Above all you need to be honest with yourself to read tarot or in fact undertake any form of spiritual development. The cards can help you reflect on your strengths and weaknesses and grow as person. They are NOT a crutch to be leaned on and not a way of making every single decision in your life. Certainly they can help you when you are struggling with a life situation because they offer a different way of looking at things. I see the cards as a pattern of my life right now – they show me how I came to be in my current situation and how my response to that situation will manifest in the future. NOTHING is carved in stone. We are all capable of change and therefore the future is not fixed. Certainly there are things in life that happen TO us – such as

the death of a loved one but much of life is about the decisions and actions we take, our feelings and understanding and the meaning we find in experience. Even when something happens to us – it is always our response to it that governs the future. It is possible to perceive things that are not immediately known to you through the normal five senses but you also need to be prepared for that too.

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT BEING A CLIENT

The name often used in Tarot speak instead of client is “Querant”.

Over the years I have done hundreds of readings for people and gained a good insight into how and why people decide to have a Tarot reading. Of course I have also received readings myself during that time.

Bear the following in mind when you decide you would like a reading

Always use a reader who has been recommended to you if you can.

Think clearly about why you are going and what it is you expect. The reader is not there to ‘prove’ anything to you and going with that mind set is not going to make for a productive reading. Equally important, do not be so gullible as to take everything your reader says as gospel – you are the person in charge of your life. Don’t be afraid to say if something doesn’t sound right or if the first words don’t make any sense to you. A professional reader will not take offence and may either start the reading again or inform you that they cannot read for you. If the latter happens then don’t be worried – it doesn’t mean something bad is going to happen to you, it simply means there isn’t a connection happening at that time. Far better for your reader to say this than try and read for you when it just isn’t happening.

THINK about the questions you wish to ask. You would not believe some of the things I have been asked about – from the classic “Is my husband having an affair?” to “When is *** going to die because I’m sick of them”. I hasten to add I refused to read after being asked the latter question but did talk to the client about their frustration. Some people use the Tarot as a confirmation of what they are feeling and some to avoid taking action or responsibility. This may sound harsh but it is true. It is also very understandable. Fear is a powerful trap that we can all become enmeshed in and sometimes we just need someone to tell us that it’s all okay. The tarot is not however like that – ideally it deals in gentle truth. The onus must always remain with you to change your life when things are not working. Life does not just happen to you – you are not a puppet.

The best way to approach a reading is with an open mind and a willingness to accept responsibility for your own life. That way your reader can help you take a look at your life from a different angle. It is like they are walking through the landscape of your mind – seeing things that maybe you don’t wish to see and pointing out things that you’ve been too busy to notice. A good reading should be accurate and should make you feel understood and hopefully facilitate your decision making process – much as a humanistic counsellor would.

ON BECOMING A TAROT READER

With the fast profiting industry of tarot lines springing up all over the place it is easier than ever to become a professional reader – even more so since it is relatively easy to set up as an online reader. I would like to add some cautionary notes here.

Before you do this, think about how much you can handle from people. What support do you have? What safety measures are in place (if you have people visiting your home)? Are you insured?

Most importantly remember the reading is about the person you read for. By this I mean you have to really understand how to work with people and there may be a lot more to deal with than you originally anticipated. In my years I have spoken to several people who were suicidal, listened to people who had suffered child abuse, spoken with those who had lost loved ones through accident and murder, dealt with victims of rape and torture and repeatedly talked to those utterly unimpressed by life. Not all people who come for readings are vulnerable or ill or needing answers but a few are and you need to be aware of how you might handle that. You also need to know when to say no and when you perhaps need to refer them on to another agency.

All this is rather sombre I know, but I have seen too many people blithely going into reading for other's simply because it seems like an easy job. It isn't.

It is however a profession that can be very rewarding and I believe it is important to offer people alternative ways of working through problems and difficulties that includes the spiritual dimensions. The Tarot is a wonderful tool that opens up a world of possibilities and potential within us all. I use them to trigger story lines, for meditation, for visualisation, for spell work, for healing and dream work with others and finally for their most known purpose – to read from.

Personally I stopped being a full time Tarot reader after four years as I wanted to concentrate on my writing and my dream work. I still regularly use my cards however and see them as an ongoing tool for my creative, spiritual and psychological development. I also plan on designing my own pack at some point in my life! The cards seem to have a life of their own sometimes. Rarely do they look the same each time I glance at them. Each card seems to have it's own personality and story and much, much more to teach me. 78 little people living in my house – no wonder I find it so hard to keep it tidy :-)

Favourite Decks

The Arthurian Tarot by Anna-Marie Ferguson
The Legend Arthurian Tarot by Caitlin and John Matthews
The Greenwood Tarot by Mark Ryan and Chesca Potter
The Inner Child Cards by Isha and Mark Lerner

Excellent Books

78 Degrees of Wisdom – Rachel Pollack
Learning the Tarot – Joan Bunning (her course is freely available on the internet – see TABI)

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Visit Leah's web site at <http://www.whitehoredreams.co.uk>

Preparing to Read for Others

by Diana McMahon

with special thanks to Moira Woods and “Witchcraft & Wicca”

This is the first of a number of articles that we plan to feature in TABI News, which will centre on themes connected to the experience of reading for other people. In my own practice as a tarot reader and astrologer I have had the experience of reading for people in all sorts of formats including over the telephone, face to face, postal readings and via email. I believe that the following subject matter will be applicable to anyone offering to help others through readings, in whatever format they may be given.

From time to time I receive a few strong and unavoidable reminders in my own personal life that I need to be careful how I deal with energy, especially the sort of energy that is employed in carrying out my work as a tarot reader and astrologer for others.

Working in the psychic and metaphysical fields brings its own set of problems quite apart from simply using skills and talents to try to help individual people with *their* problems and concerns. The energy exchange that takes place can sometimes mean things end up out of balance. Maybe I will have given a huge amount of energy in a reading, or may even have taken on some negative energy from the person I'm trying to read for. One way or another I may be reminded by this through experiencing a kind of emotional slump for a while, a depression period. And I will have to do quite a bit of personal and spiritual work in order to return to my usual energy levels. It is easy for me to forget about this need and the mood can take over. If I let it go too far then sometimes the reminders begin to appear in a very physical and concrete way. And that is just what happened very recently! Let me explain:

First of all, I was quietly sitting at my desk one day working in the study downstairs. Suddenly, a great big thud upstairs! I ran up the stairs to find a large chunk of plaster had loosened from the wall linked to the neighbouring cottage and had crashed onto the landing. It turned out that a builder was doing some work next door and somehow his attempts to remove some old battening had resulted in plaster falling out of our side of the wall! I reflected on this for a while and thought about boundaries being broken.

The next thing that happened was that someone exiting the car wash opposite our home did not check the road ahead and an oncoming car had to swerve to avoid hitting that car. Guess where the oncoming car ended up? Yep, it crashed straight into the front boundary wall of our cottage, destroying the two pillars that hold the gate (the High Priestess's pillars?!....). They were turned into a pile of rubble and the gate was tossed in the air and up the path to land on top. I thought there had been an earthquake and walked out to be met with this pile of rubble in my path. I reflected on boundaries being crashed into and piles of rubbish that needed to be cleared. Well to be fair I did that after I dealt with the shock of it all, exchanged insurance details, wrote down number plate information and offered the quarrelling parties a cup of tea! (I realised they must be in shock, too). The only blessing - miracle even - in the situation was that, thankfully, nobody was physically hurt in any way whatsoever.

I hoped that would be the end of the spate of domestic disasters. Apart from disliking the shock factors involved, it seems to take forever and a lot of fussing around to get these things repaired. "I'm busy enough as it is!", I thought to myself. But no, it has always been the case – and my mother taught me this many Moons ago – trouble of this nature comes in threes. So what was the third thing going to be. Well, we had a spate of very stormy weather with fearsome gusty winds. And those gales ripped the back garden fencing and gates apart so badly that some completely left their tethering and even some of the most recently replaced sections of fencing blew down or tore in half.

"Enough is enough!", I thought, as I spent half of my precious Saturday out in the harsh weather, tying rope around sections of fencing and gates, desperately trying to re-create the boundary that is supposed to exist at the back and sides of our property. The last time that boundary got messed with was when a neighbour suddenly, out of the blue without any warning whatsoever, decided to create a parking space at the back of her property. Great idea. Except that she did not let us know that she was going to simply remove some of our fencing in the process! We were left with a paltry (or should that be poultry?) bit of chicken wire. Well I am not too fussy about things being basic but I took exception when a prospecting burglar decided to leap over that wire and try to open our conservatory door. Fortunately the study, where I was sitting at the time, looks out onto the conservatory and garden and I was able to fully witness him doing it! So you can perhaps understand why I felt a need to stand out in the pouring rain and ridiculous wind with my fiancé, desperately trying to tie a battered fence together!

To return to the point of this article, as you know I had already started to wonder what on earth was going on for me personally, when chunks of plaster were appearing on the landing. I say "for me personally" because I believe that we are connected to our universe and to the events around us. That we are living concentrations of energy, if you like and that this energy is reflected in various ways in the events and people around us. That there is some law of attraction that brings into our lives whatever we deserve, whatever we have created be it consciously or not. What on earth was I doing or not doing, to attract this spate of physical domestic disasters?

As I reflected on the ruined landing wall (it has only recently been repainted), the shattered neat little wall-that-was, at the front of our property and the damaged fencing, I tried to retain a sense of humour. But deep down I was really worried about these events. I could not help feeling that my fiancé and I were the innocent victims of other people's errors and nature's harshness. Or was it that we had brought on the wrath of the gods, for some reason? I did not feel that I had been especially wicked lately! If anything I had been working harder than ever with my spiritual efforts for others.

Ah and maybe that was just it. I had been working very hard indeed. And I had been experiencing a lot of exchanges with other people through doing a great many readings on the trot. There seems to be a pattern to the way that readings and extra work arrive for me. It is irregular and more often than not I will get a sudden spate of readings one after another for quite a while and then it will go quiet again. The period during which these disasters happened was slap bang in the middle of one of those really busy times. I started to realise what had been happening. My energy was getting sapped and I was not doing a great deal to replenish it.

I *thought* I was doing ok because my readings seemed to go well. I did not feel especially tired after them. In fact I often felt quite energised just after a reading, which is the way it can go

sometimes when you read for other people. However, I was making the mistake of seeing this as extra energy that I could use for other projects. In reality I probably needed to do some clearing of whatever I had taken on energy wise and work at genuinely replenishing my own resources. And so I began to consider the ways in which I might do so.

For a few years now I have been working more closely with crystals. As my understanding of them has grown, so larger and more interesting specimens have appeared in my crystal collection. I use some of these quite often to recharge smaller stones, which I may take out with me when I venture into the outside world. What I sometimes forget is that these large stones are also wonderful for replenishing my own energy levels. All I need to do is to sit for a while quietly with a crystal resting in my hands and close my eyes. It is really the time that is the important factor. In reality it does not have to be very long – perhaps as little as ten minutes. But I have to remind myself to take those ten minutes for me!

Whilst looking for methods to help with energy replenishment I also came across a fascinating article in a magazine that I found in Watkins Books in London (visit www.watkinsbooks.com for information on their journals) and I wish to share a section from this article here with you. The editors of the magazine, *Witchcraft & Wicca* and the author of the article, *Moira Woods*, have very kindly agreed that I may do so. If you are interested in a back copy of the relevant issue (Samhain 2001 to Imbolc 2002) or would like a regular subscription to the magazine, please see the end of this article and **Places to Go** section for further details.

Moira's article is entitled *Magic, Power, Practice and Impeccability* and although it is written from the point of view of effective magical practice I believe the methods she describes can be equally useful for and applied to the needs of tarot readers. The crux of what she says, as I understand it, is that we each have only so much energy. Ad although we may have a genuine desire to help others through our efforts, we need to work at strengthening and increasing our own energy if we are to do that effectively and yet not harm ourselves.

Excerpt from “Magic, Power, Practice and Impeccability”

The way to empower ourselves is by meditation or prayer.... Once we feel we have enough power....we think we are ready to engage in magical work. But even if we have enough power, our energy must be balanced to enable us to direct our will with intent and with no harm to ourselves. One particularly effective method is the **Golden Cross of Equilibrium**. This visualisation, through focussing on a golden cross, consciously connects you to the universe and empowers your spirit. It is particularly apposite for magical work in that it uses the solar plexus, the locale for the direction of our energy.

You may want to find somewhere quiet whilst you are practising, though in reality if you need candles, incense and New Age music to get you in the right frame of mind for visualising, you are very far from the place where your power might have an effect on anyone. If you can form an image and hold it for two minutes whilst sitting on the Underground or on a bench by a main road, then you might just be ready to direct your will.

You need to imagine a point of golden light within your solar plexus (half way between your navel and where your ribs join). Then expand the point of light to become a cross of gold about one inch or 2 cms in size. The cross is solid gold and three-dimensional. You need to imagine the cross having six arms; one going towards your back, one towards your front, one going towards each of your sides, one going towards your head and one towards your feet. Practice holding the Cross still, so that it does not enlarge nor get smaller, move around nor flip over. You have to learn to hold the Golden Cross absolutely still for at least two minutes. When you have mastered this first stage, visualise each arm of the Golden Cross extending outwards through your body and into your aura to about two feet. Again, practice this until you have a clear, solid image of the Cross. Then you need to learn to vibrate the Golden Cross. Picture the arms of the Cross becoming alive, sending pulsating golden light along its arms and into your aura. Visualise this golden light filling your body and your aura until every molecule is filled with pure, golden light. Now draw the arms of the golden Cross back into your body until the Cross is an inch in size again. Now reduce the Cross to a point of golden light, and then let it disappear.

This simple visualisation allows us to centre ourselves. By that I mean the meditation enables that centre or chakra within us which is used for directing will to become balanced. It is only when this point is balanced can you direct energy effectively.

Once you are familiar with the practice it need only take a few seconds, but it is with spending time each day on getting it right. This visualisation should also be done before any magical work and before going into Circle. Though not strictly a Craft practice, but part of the Hermetic tradition, it is nevertheless an extremely useful tool to also use in Circle. Remember, if you wish to practise magic effectively you must endeavour to be impeccable, and that includes having a daily discipline of visualisation or prayer.

I am reminded by the mantra that most people involved with the occult use, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law, unless it harm none". I think a much more useful saying would be. "Don't dabble in the occult. If you are going to do it, do it properly".

Whether or not you view your tarot work as magical work, I think we can all learn something from appreciating Moira's wisdom and trying out the technique that she has recommended. I certainly personally believe very strongly that we need to have a powerful wall of protection when doing psychic work, in order to guard our own well being. This is an issue that I intend to explore further in future articles. On this occasion I hope you will try out the method above; I can honestly say that I have tried it and it works! I can also see that I will need to practice to make it truly effective over time. I am getting more reminders because lately I've taken on more work and have forgotten again about the need to replenish my energy! But I promise – Moira! – and myself that I will work at this.

Witchcraft & Wicca is the publication of the Children of Artemis: <http://www.witchcraft.org>

Interpreting Negative Cards by Vivianne Kacal

It happens – and it is a way of stretching ourselves as tarot readers, making us “think outside the box”. On a regular basis, we have a reading going swimmingly – until we reach the **Outcome or Conclusion** position and, Oh no – it’s a negative card!

We have three options:

- 1) lie to the client (!)
- 2) tell the client the bald truth
- 3) find the positive slant

Option 1 is not an option at all – not if we have any ethics worth the name. In addition it is hardly going to be helpful to the client – our main aim. Also, the client probably won’t return.

Option 2 is a possibility – “being cruel to be kind” etc. This is where our empathy with the client comes into play. How would we like to be told something we didn’t want to hear? Yes, we want the truth, but I doubt we want it starkly.

Option 3 is what we should be looking for – the positive side. There always is one – it may be well-hidden, but it is there. Our challenge as readers is to find it, and emphasise it.

For example, take a fairly usual question: will I get back with my ex? The concluding card is the *10 of Swords*.

Option 1: yes, and roses will grow happily round the cottage door

Option 2: no way, no how – forget it!

Option 3: hmm, well, it looks as if this relationship has come to its conclusion. It seems like you are feeling really depressed and down about the situation. But the card depicts a sunrise in the background; this is the lowest point, things look like they’re getting better from here – there is a new start for you, you will feel more hopeful and optimistic about your life.

Or, another example: What is coming up for me soon? And the card is *The Tower*.

Option 1: nothing special, things are ticking along nicely

Option 2: boy, I wouldn’t want to be in your shoes!

Option 3: well, it looks like a big change is coming for you – how exciting! It may cause you some pain while it is happening, but what you have to remember is that this is necessary; getting rid of the old, comfortable and familiar is not usually easy – but the benefits in the long run are usually worth it. I hope you come back and let me know what happens.

Now put yourself in the client's shoes – which type of answer would you rather receive?

Sometimes, finding the positive side isn't quick – if you can't see it, take some time. This is easier with readings by mail or email, obviously. For in-person readings, the chances are that your mind has been working on it since you pulled the card at the start of the reading. And hopefully you will have found the positive side by the time you reach it; if not, say to the client, I just need a moment to see where this meshes into the rest of the reading.

The main thing to remember is: to tell the truth in as positive a way as possible. After all, you could be the client!

Reviews

In this issue we focus on two tarot decks aimed at quite different ends of the market!

Beginner's Guide to Tarot - deck and book set

author Juliet Sharman-Burke with illustrations by Giovanni Caselli

2001 Connections Publishing <http://www.connections-publishing.com> ISBN 1859060528 RRP £14.99

reviewed by Diana McMahon

Juliet Sharman-Burke has seemed like something of a personal teacher to me, since I first read her book "*The Complete Book of Tarot*" in the mid eighties. Therefore I was delighted to be asked to review her new tarot deck and book set from *Connections Book Publishing* (for more information on the publisher please see the places to go area of the newsletter). Being someone that I have always thought tarot readers could learn from I was delighted to see that Juliet has included some sample readings in the book that accompanies this deck. These follow three different layouts, including a version of the perennial **Celtic Cross**. Juliet also provides two pages per card, including the card's image, with text covering the theme and divinatory meaning both with the major and minor arcana.

Moving into the deck itself, the colourful binder of this tarot deck and book set, which features the image on the **Two of Swords** card, describes the contents as a "new classic" deck and book. That seems an apt description. At first glance we appear to have what the tarot community sometimes refer to as a "*Rider Waite* clone". In other words, if you have seen the *Rider Waite* deck then you will almost certainly recognise factors of this deck, too. However what may well become known as the "**Sharman-Caselli**" has some characteristics that mark it out clearly as its own deck. For example much of the colouring is paler and more delicate than users of the *original Rider Waite* will be accustomed to. The colouring is perhaps a little more akin to the *Universal Waite* than the original RW deck but even in this regard it is in many instances comparatively muted, softer and more subtle.

On closer inspection of individual cards it becomes evident that the imagery on this new, **Sharman-Caselli** deck has been carefully thought through. A good example is the **Three of Cups**, which features the familiar scene of three women celebrating, holding three golden cups. The main difference between this scene and the *Waite* card is that this **Three of Cups** also has sets of two pillars and trees in the background and a small fountain in the foreground featuring a fish for its spout. In other words there are quite a few extra details and the author no doubt had specific intentions behind including the additional symbolism.

The deck comes in a rather unusual package, which you will probably love if you like to keep decks and books together. What appears at first to be a box about the size of two medium tarot decks automatically opens at the side to reveal the spine of the book, which is fixed to this folder, on the left hand side. On the right hand side is the tarot deck, split into two half packs which sit between dividers that create internal trays. If you are someone who prefers your cards in their own box, perhaps to carry them around among other decks you may own (as I personally do) you are probably going to be disappointed in this instance. I must admit that I had to be careful in how I picked up the package once it was opened, as there is nothing tethering it together. A

small section of adhesive Velcro or a ribbon-trim that could be tied around the deck might be an attractive and practical addition. But let us remember that this deck has been designed for the beginner and in terms of a package that provides a deck with book nearby for easy reference, all in one portable format, it does work.

In terms of the specific designs on the cards, illustrated by Giovanni Caselli, the styling can I think be best described as elegant and gentle. The detail is strong, the lines of the drawings are very fine and some of the cards such as the **Three of Cups** described above are decidedly beautiful. Focussing in finely on the three ethereal-looking maidens dancing by the small fountain, the lines on their robes are so finely drawn and painted that you can almost feel the movement that's going on!

Even cards such as the **Eight of Swords**, which typically represents difficult issues and intense mental/emotional pain, has a very beautiful look to it. In this case it may be the mix of colours, which are shades of blue, pink, lilac and purple with black. Despite the generally softer look to this deck, certain cards are particularly striking and dramatic and do stand out – the **Two, Three and Four of Swords** all have stronger colours including such shades as powerful reds, blacks and violet. This could be helpful to new readers trying to delineate clear differences and perhaps working on an instinctual response to the cards.

In some cases, then, the imagery is stark and this creates a strong sense of mood. In other instances the colouring is less dramatic, for example with the two, three and four of Wands and here I wonder if readers may struggle to draw out those differences. For me, in these three instances the imagery was not especially powerful and I found the similarity of one image to another somewhat unappealing. For instance the character depicted in them is the same individual. This is not to suggest that the original *Rider* deck is necessarily a great deal different in this way, however. And perhaps the intention in this instance was to create integrity of story throughout the minor part of the deck as a whole. I was reminded a little of the *Mythic Tarot*, for which Juliet Sharman-Burke is already well known and which, I gather, focuses strongly on the journeys of the individuals depicted in the deck as “stories”. There may be an element of this going on in the typical *Rider Waite* deck too, which it seems natural to compare this deck with, however I would say it is less noticeable.

Looking over a few technical factors, much to the cards' credit, it is impossible to tell from their backs whether they will appear upright or reversed when turned over – which can be a help for readers who like to interpret **reversed cards**. However **the backs** are quite plain in a deep cerise pink with a narrow silver border, which would not have been my first choice. Perhaps there was some respect given that this might appeal to the new generation approaching tarot today? The imagery and colouring has a fairly matte appearance on card stock that is on the flimsy side, which is of course a bonus for portability. However, the lightweight quality may also add to the impression of something more playful than serious. Therefore it is more likely to appeal as a learning deck for the beginner that it was intended for than to an established reader looking for a new deck for professional readings. We should indeed remember that this is a deck aimed at the beginner and therefore factors such as the plainness of the back may have been intended purely to simplify.

Returning to the book section of the set, I have to admit that I am the type of reader who looks at the book thinking it will be extremely useful later, only to hardly ever refer to it again. However, I think that a beginner would be delighted with the depth of information here. Would it be useful

for more advanced readers? Well one thing that I am sure such tarotists will be glad of is that the writer has gone to some pains to explain what the imagery on these cards means. There is also a keyword given for each theme, always helpful for readers building their sense of the cards. You may not find much new in the divinatory meaning sections but there is no doubt that the information given is solid and reflects Juliet Sharman-Burke's sound knowledge. One factor which is perhaps different from many other books is that the author does not herself strongly differentiate between **dignified/upright and reversed cards**. There is instead the emphasis that all of the cards can give both positive and negative messages.

All in all this looks to be an attractive deck with some helpful descriptions in the accompanying book; given that this is indeed a tarot set, the price is very reasonable. If a reader has learnt with the *Rider Waite* deck he or she will not have too many problems using this one. It could also be a useful alternative for beginners who like the imagery of the *original Rider Waite* but have been put off by the styling or colouring.

Author

Juliet Sharman-Burke writes on tarot for *Apollon*, the Journal of Psychological Astrology published by the *Centre for Psychological Astrology*, where she also lectures on a range of subjects. To find out more about the CPA, Apollon and seminars, visit <http://www.cpalondon.com>

Images

At the current time we are not aware of a range of images of this tarot deck available via the internet, however the cover can be viewed through visiting the www.amazon.co.uk web-site and searching for this title. If anyone hears of any please let us know! Images of the Original and Universal Rider decks are available at a variety of sources; please try the following for examples:

Aeclectic Tarot: <http://www.aeclectic.net/tarot/index.html>

US Games Systems: <http://usgamessystems.com>

Availability

The deck should be available from all leading booksellers but in case of difficulty please call 01280 814120 (24 hr. message service). Please also see the listing in the **Places to Go** section for mail order information.

Mantegna Tarot Deck (Tarocchi del Mantegna)

published by Lo Scarabeo <http://www.loscarabeo.com> and distributed in the UK by Deep Books Ltd ,
E-Mail: sales@deep-books.co.uk ISBN 8883951514 RRP £13.99
reviewed by Diana McMahon

This is a very unusual deck in that, quite aside from the cards' very ornate silver-leaf backgrounds, it is not the typical 78 card tarot deck, which consists of 22 Major Arcana cards and 56 in the Minor Arcana. Instead it contains 50 main cards with an additional 25 "instructional" cards, upon which there are words or phrases that you could probably use in a number of different ways.

These instructional cards could be utilised for example rather like an oracle, when you are looking for a key phrase to help you find a way forward. Indeed you might see this as an "instruction" on how to act in your situation and in this way it reminds me a little of the I-Ching system of divination. On the other hand you could simply use the instructional cards to read up on the intended meaning of the card and then see what this adds to whatever you have personally divined from the image.

The same word or phrase on the instructional cards also appears in the LWB (little white booklet) that comes with the deck. However sometimes the phrase in the booklet is quite different, so you probably need to look through and note the differences to deepen your idea of where this deck is coming from. In some cases you will have two meanings ascribed to one of the 50 cards, in other instances there will be just the one main meaning. Yet not always do the words seem to entirely agree!

As an example, let us take the card entitled **Misero**, which is translated into a number of European languages on the card itself. In the English it reads as "Wretch". The instructional card to go with it lists, however, the quality of "Humility" – which we could take to be the most important message from this card. When we look at the little white book, Misero is nevertheless translated not as "Wretch" but as "Pauper" and the word given here is "Dignity" rather than "Humility", along with a message to "Remain dignified even in adversity".

It may help to know that the deck on which this Lo Scarabeo version (no publishing date given) is based on a traditional Renaissance *Tarocchi* tarot deck. *Tarocchi* is an Italian card game played using the Minor Arcana cards. The LWB tells us: 'As whole, the "Mantegna" Tarot represents a summary of Medieval encyclopedism; in short, it is a microcosm containing via "classes" of figures corresponding to the social situation of the late Middle Ages, the intellectual dimensions, and the spiritual worlds. In accordance with the Pythagorean and Platonic philosophy which considered the number 10 perfect, containing the entire universal reality, each class consists of 10 figures distinguished by the letters A, B, C, D and E. Furthermore, the cards are numbered with Roman and Arabic numerals and arranged in each class according to a strictly hierarchical order.' The *five classes* featured are these:

Cards 1-10 the Human Conditions (the orders of society from beggar to pope)
Cards 11-20 Apollo and the nine Muses

Cards 21-30 the Arts and Sciences (or principal parts of knowledge)
Cards 21-40 the Geniuses and Virtues (a mixture of the three sciences of astronomy, chronology and cosmology, the four cardinal virtues of temperance, prudence, fortitude and justice and the three Christina virtues of faith, hope and charity)
Cards 41-50 the Planets and Celestial Spheres (classical astronomy)

Apparently it is possible to read “a complete and thorough study of the overall meaning of each class as well as the iconography and symbols of each card” in text published by Lo Scarabeo and written by Giordano Berti entitled *I Tarocchi del Mantegna e L'Arte* (Turin 2001). However I do not know if this text is available in an English translation (if anyone does know of one, please contact us at TABI!). The book also gives explanations of certain methods for using the deck and one of these, a three card spread, is included on a separate “Guide to Divining with the Mantegna Tarot” card that comes with this deck – again it is translated into several European languages. My Euro languages are sketchy but, at a glance, I would say the translations are in French, Spanish, Italian, German and Dutch.

In spite of the mix of words and phrases offered for this deck in the additional cards and the LWB given, the general message of the card does seem to come through, not least of all simply in the image itself. So let us get on to the basic appearance of the cards.

Overall, what is represented here is a group of figures or people. The figures vary from card to card, female and male, with different appearances. By and large this is a deck of cards showing one individual person per card engaged in some sort of activity, such as playing a musical instrument, counting, reading, holding something or contemplating something, or appearing with animals by their sides, at their feet and so on. There are a few exceptions of crowd scenes – on cards entitled **Saturno**, **Rhetorica**, **Jupiter** and **Venus**. Also some cards feature a couple, such as **Chevalier** (Knight), **Artixan** and **Zintilomo** (Gentleman). There are even cards where the one figure has the two faces of man and woman, such as **Prudencia** and **Theologia**.

One card from the final set, **Prima Causa** (Divine Light) is totally abstract but still offers a powerful message. You could see the image of a spreading circle with different banding as a symbol of the Sun, the planetary system, a mandala, or the divine light of creation which it appears to suggest in the translation. Without exception the Mantegna cards all have a beautiful quality thanks to the silver and coloured-pattern backgrounds. Admittedly, a few of the figures look less than happy but then you would not expect figures representing various different states of being etc to necessarily all look jolly! Apparently the artist who redesigned the cards for this edition, Atanas Atanassove from Bulgaria, painted the cards with soft colours. Indeed, there is a gentle, pastel to mid-strength shading to the deck, which, for those familiar with art history, is somewhat reminiscent of the range of colours employed in Louis XV, Rococo style décor.

Since we focussed on the **Misero**, Wretch or Pauper earlier I would like to go back to him to contemplate the imagery. Here we have a rather sad, thin looking figure, stooped over a stick, scantily dressed (presumably through lack of funds). He already makes me think of the Five of Pentacles/Disks/Coins/Deniers in the more typical tarot decks! He looks worried and may well be chilly due to the lack of clothing – certainly he is pulling the scant tunic that he is wearing closely around him to try to cover up. His expression, living up to his title, is miserable and there are a couple of small animals (pups?) yapping at his feet. Are the dogs looking for scraps? Or are they being friendly because they feel sorry for him? In any case the figure is enclosed by a broken brick wall. Is his world falling apart, or has he hit a brick wall so to speak, or just feels hemmed in, by his situation? Perhaps we cannot know the exact answer to all of these questions.

But there is no doubt that the image evokes some strong feelings and so I suspect that this deck will be useful for both divination and contemplation.

I thought it might be interesting to try out the three card spread given in the LWB, with a focus taken from a method shown by James Ricklef in his recent tarot deck review in the Spring 2002 Tarot Journal* (thanks James!). So I have asked how this deck may help me in life and in my tarot practice, with regard to the following categories:

1) **action** (that which the querent must do materially)

XXII C Loica (Logic) – a woman red-headed contemplating a creature which is a cross between a bird and a reptile/dragon (?), covered with a veil. What a strange looking creature! The woman in the image seems quite startled by it too.

2) **reason** (that which the querent must do intellectually)

XIII D Terpsicore (Terpsichore) – a woman with extraordinarily long hair down to her knees, situated on a fertile island in the sea and playing a small guitar-like instrument. There is a white sphere by her feet – representation of a planet? I am still none the wiser on what Terpsicore means, but the figure looks harmonious, safe and confident. Lost in her own little world and quite happy in it.

3) **perception** (that which the querent must do spiritually)

XXXXVI A Jupiter (Jove) – a crowned fellow seated within an oval frame, holding a small spear, an eagle above him and with various slain knights/soldiers around him and a still-alive child below him. The picture reminds me of a battlefield but seems to indicate that Jove is protecting the child – the innocent, perhaps?

It seems to me that this deck could help me to reach the inner logic for making decisions. This adds up for me as sometimes I see too many options to be able to distinguish which actually makes sense! Regarding the mixture of material and logic - sometimes I just need to spell out the facts to people. Again this makes sense as I can left too much unsaid and, as a sensitive, get overwhelmed by feelings and impressions.

From an intellectual point of view I feel that Terpsicore is telling me to enjoy what I talk about in my intellectual pursuits. It is easy for me to turn my work into a list of chores! The musical instrument reminds me of the value of “play”.

The theme of spiritual protection is one that has been predominant in my life for some time. It is especially in the melting pot again at the moment, not least because there has been a need to speak with other people who need protection. Within this there has been a focus on humour and lightness, central qualities of Jupiter!

It seems clear that the Mantegna Tarot cards can be used to find some interesting answers. In practice I found this deck more insightful than expected and will continue to be entranced by its reflective, gentle beauty.

Credits

Thanks to the following texts and authors for help with information about Tarocchi cards and additional details on the categories of the Mantegna Tarot cards:

Tarot by Jane Lyle; Mallard Press New York/Hamlyn 1990 p. 6

The Tarot by Brian Innes; Black Cat/Macdonald & Co, London 1987 p. 10

* For information on the **Tarot Journal** & subscriptions please visit <http://www.tarotjournal.org>

Images

Online images of the Mantegna Tarot can be viewed at:

<http://www.aeclectic.net/tarot/mantegna/index.html>

<http://www.tarotpassages.com/mantegnasilver.htm>

Availability

As well as usual tarot outlets, this book can be ordered direct from Deep Books .Tel: 020 8693 0234 or E-mail: sales@deep-books.co.uk for catalogue/order form and please see **Places to Go** section for further details on the distributor.

Places to Go

The latest offerings from the esoteric community, including **courses, shops and interesting purchases** not mentioned elsewhere in the newsletter

Courses, Centres & Events

Tarot

Intuitive Care Readings & Layouts workshop in Sussex on Saturday 20th April.
Berkana Academy of Universal Light, PO Box No 46, Westham, East Sussex BN23 5AZ Tel:
0870 747 1336

Crystals & Cards workshop with Barbara Almond-Dodd for Spirit works at the British Legion Rooms, Northview Drive, Westcliff on Sea, Essex, Thursday 25th April. Doors open 7.45pm.
£3.50. Enquiries: 01702 526297, E-Mail johnspirit@hotmail.com

Palmistry

A Comprehensive 10-week course in **Hand Analysis** is being offered by palmist and astrologer **Frank Clifford** from 8th May to 10th July in North London. Frank's work in astrology has been widely distributed; on June 6th his book on palmistry will be published by Random House. Explore easy, effective and fun ways of interpreting the language of the hands! Course cost: £160; venue: **London Voluntary Resource Centre**, 356 Holloway Road, N7. Contact: 07002 334455 or E-mail: admin@londonschoolofastrology.co.uk. *Stop press....* Frank is also holding a seminar at the **Company of Astrologers** in Hampstead on 24th April entitled "**The Planets and Celebrity**" – please contact the Company of Astrologers for further information: Tel: 01227 362427 or visit <http://coa.hubcom.net>.

Astrology

Astrology Workshop On-going, two-part workshops with Annabel Sweeney. Venue: Presence & Presents, 9 Brewers Lane, Richmond, Surrey. Part 1 for beginners with Part 2 a follow up and more advanced. £60 per part and can be booked separately. All classes take place on Saturdays with a choice of dates from April 27th, July 13th, September 21st, November 16th (part one); June 1st, August 10th, October 19th, December 14th (part two). Details: Tel: 020 8876 2833; E-mail: astrologyworkshops@obianna.com

Lilly Day in Walton 2002 marks the 400th anniversary of the "grandfather" of **traditional astrology**, William Lilly. Lilly day is celebrated once a year every year but this meeting will be extra special – a Lilly Feast, no less! Meeting at 3.15pm at the Anglers public house by the river, with Evensong at St Mary's Church to follow and an Astrologer's Feast and toast to **William Lilly** in the church hall in the early evening. Advance booking is vital as numbers are limited. £35 for the day ticket includes afternoon seminars, champagne toast and three course meal with wine. Seminars and feast can be booked separately – cost £12 for seminars only. Contact: the **Company of Astrologers**, Tel: 01227 362427. E-mail: admin@coa.org.uk This is a non-profit event; proceeds will go towards future Lilly ventures.

Sex, Drugs & Rock n Roll well this is one of the sets of themes to be covered, anyway (!) in an interesting seminar by John Etherington at the **Company of Astrologers** Wednesday 8th May centring on **Beach Boy Brian Wilson**. A fascinating life and no doubt a fascinating chart! (or set of charts). Contact details and venue are the same as for Frank Clifford's astrology seminar above (Planets and Celebrity): 4 Marty's Yard, 17 Hampstead High Street NW3, nearest tube Hampstead. Starting at 7.30pm entrance fee £5.

Crystals

Living with Crystals a one day experiential workshop with **Lettie Vantol** Sunday 2nd June, Reading, £45. Call 0118 926 4378 for further details.

Crystal Healing professional 2 year Diploma Course in **Crystal Therapy**

Accredited by the BCMA and the CHF (Crystal Healing Federation)

Vantol College of Crystal Therapy, 11 Heather Close, New Haw, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 3OF Tel/Fax: 01932 348815 E-Mail: crystalcollege@crystalcollege.com

Craft

Spellcraft workshop at Mountain Hall, Brighthouse & Denholme Road. Queensbury, West Yorks BD13 1LH on 21st April at 10-4pm; £40 incl. lunch. Details: Tel: 01274 816258

Fayres/Festivals/Shows

The Natural Health & Healing Show Maidenhead

Bank holiday Monday 6th May, 10am-5pm, admission £3 children free, held at The Magnet Leisure Centre, Holmanleaze Enquiries: 01628 783107

Health, Spirit & Fitness Exhibition Reading

Sunday 12th May, 10am-6pm, tickets £2, held at Rivermead Leisure Complex, Richfield Avenue Tel: 0118 901 5000

Mind, Body & Spirit Fayre Sunningdale

Sunday 9th June, 10am-5pm, admission £1, held at Village Hall, Church Road.

For information/stallholders form Tel: 01344 625566 <http://www.jade-events.co.uk/>

Groups & Development Workshops

Evening and daytime courses in Wokingham

A variety of courses on different subjects, such as **Tarot, Astrology; Psychic Development & Channelling**; prices vary but usually between £5-7 per weekly session

Further details: Fay Sims (clairvoyant medium) 0118 979 6833 E-Mail fays@genie.co.uk

Working with Universal Creative Energies Basingstoke

Meets fortnightly on a Thursday evening; open to everyone – Pagan, Wiccan, Druid, Buddhist, Christian etc. Attuning to the God/Goddess within. Ethical, loving people welcome.

Information: Darcy Jones 07801 141680 E-Mail darcy_jones@patient-access.com

Psychic Development Groups and One Day Workshops Reading

Areas such as: meditation, relaxation, symbolism, crystals, auras, colour, connecting with your Guardian Angel. Beginners welcome.

Contact: Sally 0118 942 7932 Mobile 0771 192 1127

Readings & Services

Aura Photography Caversham Clinic

in depth consultation with printed readout and intuitive interpretation £25

For an appointment, call Derek and Sheila Bedwell Tel: 0118 948 2999

House Cleansing & Healing and other options; Star-Light Healing & Meditation Centre
purpose built sanctuary qualified healers & spiritual advisors

Information & appointments: Virginnia Tel: 07788 756163 <http://www.psychic-art-meditation.co.uk/>

Stores, Outlets & Deck Publishers

Deep Books Ltd.

A sales and distribution company, specialising in mind, body and spirit publications and items; source of the *Mantegna Tarot*, our reviewed Tarocchi Tarot deck in this issue. They offer over 5,000 titles on subjects as diverse as alternative health, philosophy, the occult and of course tarot and include a range of oracle cards, a tarot CD (*Tarot Music for Reading*), a tarot journal and tapes on subjects such as meditation. Deep Books represent many publishers from a wide selection of countries, including Britain, America, Australia, South Africa and Israel and supply the UK, Ireland, mainland Europe and Scandinavia. 2002 is their tenth anniversary year (congratulations, Deep Books!) and to mark the occasion they are releasing the collection of 40 tarot decks from the Italian company *Lo Scarabeo* over the course of this Spring and Summer. Deep Books will also continue as distributors for any new decks that *Lo Scarabeo* may print in the future. New Spring titles include *Bosch Tarot*, *Tarot of the Gnomes* and **Tarot of Nefertari**. Their general catalogue also contains a wide range of decks featuring titles such as *Animal-Wise Tarot*, *Cosmic Tribe Tarot*, *Lakota Sweat Lodge*, *New Orleans Voodoo Cards* and *Rohrig Tarot*. Deep Books do deal with mail order customers and are happy to mail out a copy of their catalogue to anyone who requests one. Contact details: Deep Books Ltd, Unit 3, Goose Green Trading Estate, 47 East Dulwich Road, London SE22 9BN. Tel: 020 8693 0234 Fax: 020 8693 1400 E-mail: sales@deep-books.co.uk

Connections Publishing

A book publishers who, in addition to publishing tarot decks, includes a range of kits, oracles and sets, such as *Celtic Wisdom Sticks* from Caitlin Matthews, *The Celtic Tree Oracle* and *Lucid Dreaming Kit*. Suppliers of the deck and book set, *Beginners Guide to Tarot*, reviewed in this issue and available from all leading book sellers. Other tarot decks include Jane Lyle's *The Renaissance Tarot*, *White Eagle Medicine Wheel* and the enticing looking *Tarot de Paris*. Rune lovers may be drawn to *The Rune Cards*! Connections titles can usually be found at good booksellers but in case of difficulty please call their 24 hr message service on 01280 814120. Further contact details: www.connections-publishing.com Mail order: Melia Publishing Services, Tel: 01476 541080 Fax: 01476 541061.

Watkins Books

Not just books – lots of tarot decks, too! Watkins has expanded in recent years and they now also have a section that includes live readers. An excellent source for seasonal items such as calendars, yearbooks and diaries plus supplies of incense. For astrologers this is a useful source for Raphael's yearly Ephemeris and other Ephemerides (or books of planetary positions). Their mail order service has always been well run and you can now visit them online at www.watkinsbooks.com. Further contact details: physical store, fabulous for browsing (!) located at 19 Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London WC2N 4EZ by London's theatre land. Nearest tube Leicester Square. Tel: 0207 836 2182.

Mysteries

We understand that a web-site is currently under construction for this long established new age centre, stocking books and tarot decks as well as a range of metaphysical paraphernalia. You can also have a live reading there. A great retreat from the manic pace of London shopping and working life! 9-11 Monmouth Street, Covent Garden, London WC2H 9DA. Tel: 0207 240 3688.

Crescent Moon Direct

Mail order video, music, audio books
Free catalogue. Call 01494 880038

New Moon Occult Shop

Online New Age Shop stocking divination tools, aromathery supplies, crystals, incense, wands, scrying balls etc. <http://www.newmoonoccultshop.com/>

Nature's Gift

Crystals, minerals, music, Native American Indian jewellery etc
Reading branch at 12 Harris Arcade Tel: 0118 959 7089 (reflexology & Indian head massage available)
Bath branch at 18, The Corridor, Bath

Symbala

Astrology, Qabalah, Alchemy, Feng Shui – Posters, prints, charts, cards, models etc
www.symbala.com

Journals & Publications

Witchcraft & Wicca

From the **Children of Artemis**, a beautiful, glossy bi-annual publication with a wide variety of articles on Wicca, Witchcraft, Magick and Pagan subjects – an excerpt of one of which appears in the article "Preparing to Read for Others" in this issue of TABI News. As you might expect there is a strong awareness of the Pagan festivals for the context of this A5 sized magazine, which appears twice yearly at Beltain and Samhain. And if you are not too sure when the **Sabbats** are, you can always enquire about a back issue of the Samhain 2001 issue, which features an article on that very subject! Jam packed with valuable information, this is a treasure trove for the tarot reader, perhaps whether or not you happen to have conscious Wiccan or Pagan leanings! You should be able to find this title at stockists such as *Watkins and Mysteries* in

London as will some of the outlets in Glastonbury. If those places are not nearby you can always take out a direct subscription via the magazine; look out for special offers! Contact details: visit <http://witchcraft.org> or write to The Children of Artemis Magazine, BM Artemis, London WC1N 3XX

The Cygnus Review

A free monthly magazine featuring reviews of books available for sale plus articles on alternative ways of living, chat page and noticeboard of forthcoming events. Contact: Cygnus Books, FREEPOST (SS1193), Llandello, Carmarthenshire SA19 9ZZ. Tel: 01550 777 701 (office hours) 01550 777 744 (24 hrs). Fax: 01550 777 569 Email: info@cygnus-books.co.uk
<http://www.cygnus-books.co.uk/>

Things to Do

Our resources and links page: where can you find out more about tarot and esoterica online, usually where the links do not appear elsewhere in the issue. This time we have kept the same details as in the last issue, for easy reference. If anyone has material to add at any time please contact the editor, Diana McMahon: news.submissions@tabi.org.uk.

Resources

Astrology Database

The Astrological Association of Great Britain provides an online database for its members. Membership also includes a copy of their international, bi-monthly publication the *Astrological Journal*. For further details of the association and membership options, visit <http://www.astrologer.com/aanet/index.html> or email astrological.association@zetnet.co.uk

Aleister Crowley Links

Web-sites

<http://www.geocities.com/Paris/2110/> at this site visitors can post their interpretations of the Thoth cards, (Crowley's deck)

Books

Keywords to the Crowley Thoth Deck (available from US Games)

Tarot Mirror of your Soul by Gerd Ziegler

Tarot Mirror of your Relationships by Gerd Ziegler

Decks

There are two versions of the Crowley Thoth deck, this issue being made perhaps somewhat more confusing by the deck being available in different sizes. One of the strongest distinctions between the two version, though, is in the colour of the images. Some readers have not been so keen on the deck with the green tinged cards, which is published by **Samuel Weiser**. The favourite appears to be the one published by **AG Mueller**, which has highly vibrant colours on the images, with bright reds, blues and yellows. These have grey borders.

Online Tarot Newsletters and Sites

Dawn's Daily Tarot

A daily tarot newsletter by Dawn Williams of the Mystic Eye Tarot Publishing. Features include a reading of three cards and a link to a recommend site that relates to tarot. To subscribe, visit the site at <http://www.themysticeye.com>

AngelPaths.com Mailing List

A daily tarot newsletter. Features an in depth one card reading. To subscribe visit the site at <http://www.angelpaths.com>. The **web site's** database contains previous single card readings and did have useful **numerology** information but we are not sure where that has gone (perhaps being updated?). There are nonetheless some helpful tips for tarot readers, especially beginners and features such as a healing area with colour harmonics and offerings such as new age music reviews. If anyone knows what has happened to the numerology area of the site, or knows of other sites offering numerological correspondences for tarot cards please let TABI's newsletter editor know! <mailto:newsletter@tabi.org.uk>

Wicce's Tarot Newsletter

A monthly tarot publication featuring articles, links to tarot pages, updates to Wicce's web-site, news articles and information. See below to visit the site. To sign up for the newsletter send email to: WiccesTarotNewsletter-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Tarot Deck Images/Reviews

Aeclectic Tarot

Includes both published and unpublished tarot decks and the latest addition is a section on tarot media.

<http://www.aeclectic.net>

Tarot Passages

This used to be Michelle's Tarot Page/Art of Tarot and is now lovingly maintained by Diane Wilkes of the ATA. Includes images and reviews of many decks, tips for beginners in tarot and, at the other end of the scale, information on creating your own deck. Also contains a comprehensive links page to a whole range of tarot related sites.

<http://www.tarotpassages.com>

Wicce's Tarot Collection

Features tarot deck and divination software/CD-Rom reviews; deck exchange, showcase for unpublished tarot artists' work.

<http://www.wicce.com>

Learning the Tarot (Joan Bunning's site)

<http://www.LearnTarot.com>

TABI's Own Links

The Tarot Association of the British Isles Web Site

<http://www.tabi.org.uk>

UK Tarot Talk

Our General Discussion List on Tarot, for readers of all levels is at UKTarotTalk@yahoo.co.uk. Please visit www.yahoo.co.uk to sign up or go to the TABI home page for our direct link (see above).

Our lists for volunteers and students are available from the site and/or when you sign up for volunteering, reading or learning the tarot. See the TABI web-site for details.

We hope you have enjoyed reading TABI News. Please address all enquiries to the Editor
newsletter@tabi.org.uk

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