



Tarot Association  
of the British Isles

# TABI QUARTERLY

*Issue #13 31<sup>st</sup> December 2004*

Welcome to the Winter 2004 edition of TABI Quarterly.

In this issue we have some fascinating personal tarot experiences, TABI's own Free Reading Awards and an absolutely bumper end-of-year collection of book and deck reviews - titles by Rachel Pollack, James Riclef and Edain McCoy to name but a few.

This is my last issue as Editor - from 2005 on, TABI Quarterly will be in the very capable hands of Alison Cross. I've loved every minute of my two years at the helm, and would like to extend my thanks to Ali, and to everyone who's contributed over the last two years.

With best wishes,

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Editor

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*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. 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 at [newsletter@tabi.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@tabi.org.uk)

*Submissions:* We welcome submissions, but are unable to offer payment. Please send articles, ideas or suggestions to the Editor. 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. 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.

## Greetings from TABI

The Who, What and Where...

### *WHERE WE WILL BE*

TABI's Endorsed Readers will be giving readings at the following events.

#### *5 March 2005*

Medieval Witches Ball  
(Event organised by Children of Artemis)  
Fairfield Halls, Croydon

#### *14 May 2005*

WitchFest England  
(Event organised by Children of Artemis)  
Fairfield Halls, Croydon

#### *18 June 2005*

WitchFest Wales  
(Event organised by Children of Artemis)  
Cardiff Millennium Stadium, Cardiff

We are also planning a West Country Tarot Conference in June 2005, to be held in the Totnes/Brixham area - details to follow.

#### *2 July 2005*

WitchFest Scotland  
(Event organised by Children of Artemis)  
Langside Halls, Glasgow

#### *6 August 2005*

The Lammas Games  
(Event organised by The Druid Network)  
Oxfordshire

#### *August 2005*

Herstmonceux Medieval Festival  
(Event organised by The Malcolm Group)  
Herstmonceux Castle, Hailsham, Sussex

#### *September 2005*

North East Leeds Convention  
(Event organised by The Pagan Federation)  
Leeds, Yorkshire

**15<sup>th</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> October 2005**

2005 UK Tarot Conference.

The College of Psychic Studies, Kensington, London

**November 2005**

WitchFest International

(Event organised by Children of Artemis)

Fairfield Halls, Croydon

*All TABI's Endorsed readers are welcome to apply to read for TABI at any of these events. Details about how to become an Endorsed Reader are set out on the TABI website. <http://www.tabi.org.uk>*

### **WHO WE ARE**

The Tarot Association of the British Isles is a primarily online community run by volunteers with a passion for tarot and the esoteric. TABI was formed in January 2001, to provide support, information and resources for UK tarotists of all levels. Whether you are a beginner or an experienced reader, you are welcome at TABI.

Our aims are to provide a supportive and friendly environment for all those interested in tarot - whether you want to study, play, provide or receive readings, or just chat and network with others of a like mind - and to promote the use of tarot as an ethical tool for guidance and self-development.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Membership of TABI costs £15 per year, and entitles you to the following:

- Membership Certificate
- TABI Keyring and Pen
- A free in-depth reading
- Full version of the downloadable E-Zine TABI Quarterly
- Endorsed Reader programme
- Free online beginners' training, in a mentored study group.
- Participation in fayres and festivals
- Social events and regional meetings
- Monthly online chat and discussion forums
- Discounts on TABI merchandise
- Use of TABI logo for personal website/stationery
- The chance to practice your skills and meet other like-minded people, in a fun and friendly environment

If you would like to apply, please send a blank email to: [membership@tabi.org.uk](mailto:membership@tabi.org.uk)

## **TABI SERVICES**

**Readings:** Our Free 1-3 card reading service is still proving extremely popular. To request a reading, please visit our website: <http://www.tabi.org.uk> A longer, 7 card + reading is also available free of charge to new members. For membership queries, contact [membership@tabi.ork.uk](mailto:membership@tabi.ork.uk)

**Training:** Newcomers to Tarot can take our Beginners Training Course, based on Joan Bunning's book Learn the Tarot. The training is undertaken in an online mentored study group. This course is free and is open to everyone, whether or not they are members of TABI. Students doing the Beginners Training Course may join TABI at any time before, during or after completing the course.

If you are interested in participating in the Training course, email [trainingAdmin@tabi.org.uk](mailto:trainingAdmin@tabi.org.uk)

See the Endorsement section for information about becoming an endorsed reader.

**Endorsement:** As there is no central governing body for tarot, and no qualifications, it can be difficult to know how to find a reader. Recognising this, TABI has created a system of Endorsement, whereby our readers agree to adhere to our Code of Ethics and undergo an ongoing process of mentoring to ensure that TABI readings are of a consistently high standard.

For people who would like to become a Endorsed Reader, it is necessary to join TABI before starting the endorsement process. At the start of the endorsement process, we ask you to submit a reading for a scenario that we provide; so that we can get an idea of your reading style and experience, and match you with a suitable mentor.

If your application is successful; to become Endorsed, you will be required to submit a minimum of 25 readings to a Mentor for discussion and approval. The readings are done via email and the questions are from people using our free readings service via the TABI website. If you are interested, please contact [readers@tabi.org.uk](mailto:readers@tabi.org.uk) for further information and the application form.

### **Discussion Forum**

Recently moved to a new venue, check out our lively discussion boards:  
<http://p213.ezboard.com/btabi>

## **CONTACT US**

What would you like to see on our website or newsletter? Do you have suggestions, questions or thoughts on the subject of Tarot in general? Please feel free to get in touch with information you think may interest us, or with any questions – we'd love to hear from you!

Newsletter: - [newsletter@tabi.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@tabi.org.uk)

Membership: [membership@tabi.org.uk](mailto:membership@tabi.org.uk)

Training & Endorsement: [training.admin@tabi.org.uk](mailto:training.admin@tabi.org.uk)

## Free Reading Awards

*By Vivianne Kacal*

The TABI Panel are delighted to announce that **Ruth** (Endorsed Free Reader Amethyst) has been awarded ***Achiever of the Year*** in recognition of the hard work and effort she puts into her readings, particularly those completed during her Endorsement period .

As the Endorsement process relies strongly on teamwork between Mentor and Mentee, the Panel is therefore also delighted to announce that **Lyn** has been awarded ***Mentor of the Year*** in recognition of her commitment and effort.

Both ladies will receive a TABI T-shirt, a specially-commissioned embroidered TABI tarot bag, a £15 Amazon voucher and a certificate honoring their achievement .

### **Ruth's Side of the Pentacle :**

The Endorsement process : Where do I start? When I was asked to write about my experiences , I wondered where to begin - I guess at the start.

I did the trial sample question, only to have it sent back saying that the reviewing committee didn't feel I was of a suitable standard, my poor spelling and the lack of confidence they saw in my reading especially as I always put i and not a capital I. After tears, and thinking "That's it , it's all over, I'll never be a tarot reader", some friends convinced me to have another go. I reapplied, and to my shock, I was accepted. I was allocated a mentor called Lyn, and Ribbitcat slipped in "Oh by the way, she's in New Zealand." How would this work?

My first reading must have been returned to me 4 or maybe 5 times before I was told I could send it to the querent. I wondered at this point if I should I just pack it in; I felt my mentor Lyn must have wondered what she had let herself in for, too. The next few readings were much the same - always sent back 3 or 4 times - sometimes for spellings, sometimes for getting the card position wrong: for example finding myself giving advice from a 'what will hinder your situation' card, sometimes for not quite getting the meaning of a card.

Then I got to reading 5, a romance one . To start with, I got really confused doing a 3-card reading. Lyn said I only needed to use one card, so I tried that - I drew the two of Cups. What could be better for a romance reading? Well, I tried and tried to get this right, but it didn't seem to matter what I did, I couldn't do this reading. It never read right or I missed information out. The more Lyn tried to say it didn't matter, or that we could come back to it later, the more

annoyed and upset I got. The querent hadn't confirmed their email address so in the end she convinced me to put it on hold. I think I told her at this point that I wanted to give up.

With her help and the support of Internet friends, I kept plodding until I only had the readings sent back once for spellings. I even got the odd reading that didn't need correcting, and wow, what a buzz that was! I am really pleased I kept plodding. My spelling has improved - though I'm sure if Lyn reads any that I put up on the Free Readers group, she still says to her self "Ruth!" - maybe or maybe not .

I have learnt so much from TABI and owe a great deal of thanks to those who helped me: Lyn, Tef and Ribbitcat to name a few.

*Amethyst NOW ENDORSED BY TABI  
Aka Ruth*

### **Lyn's Side of the Pentacle :**

*Congratulations Ruth on your Achiever of the Year award. I know first hand how hard you have worked over the past few months and how deserving you are of this recognition. It was a pleasure to have been involved so directly in a part of your tarot journey.*

Mentoring Ruth through TABI's free reader endorsement programme proved to be an incredibly humbling experience for me. I had the pleasure of watching someone, who appeared in the beginning to lack self-confidence, develop into a most confident - and might I add, competent - tarot reader. What was even more admirable was the fact that she had to dig deep at times and work on things that didn't come easily to her.

Email readings can be difficult enough. This style of reading does not allow the luxury of facial expressions, gestures or voice tone to aid in delivering a message to a querent. Plus, finding the right words to ensure a reading is read the way it is intended can be quite challenging. On top of this Ruth had some of the 'basics' of written work to cope with as well. By her own admission, punctuation, spelling and grammar were not strong points for her – an interesting concept when TABI free readings are completely written work and presentation and clear delivery is so important!

I have no doubt whatsoever that there were a number of occasions when Ruth would have quite happily told me what I could do with the odd comma, full stop and capital letter that I continued, with regular monotony, to insist she insert in her posts! But, with good grace she engaged the help of a spell checker or two and continued on.

I recall fondly, an opportunity she found to ‘politely’ inform me of a typing error I had made in one of my replies. (I had typed god instead of good!)

For the first 7 or 8 weeks Ruth plugged away at her readings. At times I would suggest she might like to reword paragraphs with the aim to have them ‘flow’ a little better, or request that she expand a little on her thoughts and comments in order to offer more depth and clarity to her readings. On occasion she was clearly disillusioned by what must have felt at the time to be ‘picky’ detail. I admired her courage and the conviction she had to ‘stick’ at it. I am sure there would have been some who simply decided that it was all too hard. For that alone I respect her immensely.

I can honestly say there were occasions very early on that I did have some doubts as to whether we would reach the desired result in the 25 allocated readings. However, somewhere around reading 14 – Ruth’s own reading style really began to emerge. Almost overnight she had tapped into something that allowed her to trust herself and what she was reading in the cards. As a result her readings seemed to be coming directly ‘from the heart’. This breakthrough was incredibly refreshing. Although the odd spelling error would pop up – and a comma or two still needed inserting – her readings started to flourish.

By the time we had reached the downhill run and were up to reading number 20 something, Ruth had really found her stride. To place her first and final readings of the mentoring process side by side – one would never have believed they had come from the same person.

There is something extremely satisfying about seeing someone ‘achieve’ something. For Ruth I think it was actually a number of things. She can be extremely proud of herself and her achievements and deserves wholeheartedly the recognition she is being given. And, she should also know that she taught me a few things along the way too. For that I thank her. TABI has gained a wonderful asset.

*Lyn*

*TABI Mentor*

## Featured Spread: The Culmination Spread

by *Joan Akister*

### **Introduction**

This spread was designed as an exercise on the guinea pig run of TABI's Intermediate Course. The brief was to design a general spread using 7 to 10 cards and illustrate it with a reading. It didn't sound too difficult but several days later I was still unable to come up with any original ideas. I tried lots of different ways, start with a shape and work from there? Start with the card positions and work from there? Doodling shapes and numbers I wrote the number 10...hmmm a staff and a circle, a bit like a Celtic Cross so could make a good layout. Ten is the number of culmination so my spread had a shape and a name. Now I just needed to work out the position meanings. I had been reading an on line resource 'A complete Lexicon of Tarot by Arthur E. Rosengarten' He assigns aspects of the psychological spectrum to individual Tarot cards. I thought they could also work well as position meanings and so my spread was born! Here's the link to his site <http://www.artrosengarten.com/lexicon3.htm>

### **The Spread**

The spread is called the culmination spread and the cards are arranged in the shape of the figure 10 (numerological number of culmination.)

```
***4***      ***7***
***3***  ***6*** ***8***
***2***
***1***      ***5***
```

The stem cards 1-4 incorporate the situation and hopefully give insight to the querent. Cards 5-8 are the circle of learning culminating in a possible outcome.

Position meanings are as follows;

- Card 1 – the challenge or situation
- Card 2 – the support, what aids the querent
- Card 3 – the opposition, what hinders the querent
- Card 4 – the aspiration or hope of the querent
- Card 5 – pursuit, what should be pursued
- Card 6 – acceptance, what must be accepted
- Card 7 – learning, what should be learnt
- Card 8 – culmination or possible outcome

## Sample Reading

This sample reading was the one I used to illustrate the spread. It was done using a question taken from the problem page in a magazine.

*My son, who's 23 and has had lovely girlfriends in the past, has just told me he is gay. I became totally hysterical. It feels like a bereavement, I've always hated anything to do with homosexuals and find them disgusting. My son tried to tell me it wasn't so unnatural but I just screamed at him and asked him why, in that case, there were male and female humans. I was shaking and sobbing and I know I'll never come to terms with this. He was my beautiful, perfect son, manly, tall and solid. Now I look at him and see a pervert. Why has this happened to me? What have I done wrong? I feel as if my whole future and my happiness have been taken away.*

### **Card 1: the challenge or situation – The Hierophant**

Currently you feel as though all you believe in is under threat. Your idea of your place and standing in the world and its adherence to normality has gone. Your views on homosexuality may stem from your religious beliefs or from an upbringing where conformity and fitting in was all important, these views are probably long held but never really considered as you didn't feel they concerned you or yours. Now you have to face them and relate them to your own family. Perhaps you feel that you can no longer rely on your usual support systems, be they religious or community, because you are now outside that community.

### **Card 2: the support or what aids you – The Emperor**

This card tells you that despite your fears *you* are still in control of your life. You have always been there for your son, his rock and protector and this can continue. You have a strength of character that can be utilised in his support rather than against him. The structure of your family is still there, only your view of it has changed. You are the one with the wisdom and maturity, make sure you use that and don't allow your support to be eroded by the views and opinions of others. The Emperor also stands for masculinity and I feel it is important that you accept your son is still your son; he is still 'manly, tall and solid' that has not changed.

### **Card 3: opposition or what hinders you – Ace of swords**

Swords are the suit linked to the element of air, they are thought not deed, mind not heart. You are not looking at this with your heart; you are not seeing your beloved son but an 'aberration of nature.' The ace of swords can stand for harsh judgement and sharp and hurtful words. The hand holding this sword is gripping it very tightly, try to use your judgement more gently, remember this is your son, whom you love, temper your words with some emotion or you may be in danger of cutting off that which you hold most dear.

### **Card 4: your aspiration or hope – 4 of pentacles**

This card indicates your fear of loss, you want to hold on to your social standing, your position in the community, you fear being on the outside when you have always been on the inside. By holding it all in no one else will know, this is an inner shame which you want to keep under lock

and key. The King on this card clutches his pentacles to him, by blocking all feeling he hopes things will remain as they always have, but this is not making him happy. He has isolated himself, huddled and alone. By refusing to accept what your son has told you, trying to hide it from yourself and others, you are isolated, both from him, and from the community.

**Card 5: pursuit, what should be pursued – 5 of wands**

Wands are the suit linked to the element of fire and here we have action rather than thought. The 5 of wands can be a call to battle, sometimes this is an inner battle, where we must fight our own demons rather than fear them, and I feel that is relevant to you. Don't back away from this or hide from it, face it full on. Examine why you feel this way, ask your son how he feels, and find out more about homosexuality. Don't battle from a position of ignorance and superstition but from one of knowledge and awareness. The youths on this card are sparring but they are still in the process of building something. By putting an *informed* point of view and hearing the views of others you too can build something rather than tear it down.

**Card 6: acceptance, what must be accepted – 10 of cups**

This is the card of family harmony, love and support and here it carries a strong message that you are still a family. You still love your son deeply and he still loves you. That should be at the heart of all your choices and decisions. Family happiness is still there, right in front of you, as obvious as the rainbow on this card. Your hopes and dreams for your son may have to change slightly but at heart you still wish him happiness. If that happiness comes in a different form to what you expected it doesn't make it any less achievable. To confide in you as he did, probably knowing your views, took great courage, your son needs your love and support now as he has always done.

**Card 7: learning, what should be learnt – 3 of cups**

The 3 of cups can indicate support from female friends and relationships and in this position I feel suggests where you can find the support you need. You are not the only parent to go through this; others have been there and can share what they have learnt. Try joining a support group for parents in your situation, you can share your hurt and confusion with them and they can help you understand more about the life your son has chosen. This card is a joyful card of celebration and close friendships, perhaps your fears that you will no longer be accepted by your peer group are unfounded. If you have close female friends you may find them a source of love and support rather than censure.

**Card 8: culmination, possible outcome – 7 of wands**

Another wand card, action and passion, energy and fire, this time used to defend. If you take on board the advice in this reading you will be in strong position to defend your son and his path. Knowledge always holds its own against ignorance and fear. The man on this card is in a position of strength, he is exhilarated and assertive. It may seem unlikely to you now but I feel this card could indicate a much deeper involvement in the politics of discrimination. You have always supported your son and this card suggests this support will continue and grow. This is a challenge which you could even come to enjoy!

## An A-Z of Tarot

Our continuing journey...

*By Ian Stevens*

### *I is for... INTUITION AND INSTRUCTION (OR TRAINING)*

Intuition, according to the dictionary, is the 'immediate apprehension by the mind without reasoning', 'immediate apprehension by sense' or immediate insight'. This is what Tarot readers hope is going to happen when they lay out a spread and scan the cards, it is intuition that is the faculty that they try to nurture and develop in their practice of Tarot. The important word here though is immediate, intuition must be instantaneous, pause for thought and you are lost in a morass of keywords, observations about the querent and your own prejudices.

Now if you accept this it suggests that if you are going to use some method of triggering or sparking the intuitive moment, like the image on a tarot card, the less baggage this image holds for you the better. If it comes complete with all kinds of connotations, prescribed meanings and preconceptions 'immediate apprehension without reasoning' is going to be that much more difficult to achieve. Which is ironic because when we first become interested in and start to learn about Tarot the first step that most of us take is to find out what the cards mean, in the beginning often by learning a list of keywords by rote.

Look at the Tarot courses that are available, including the TABI ones, and you will quickly notice how much emphasis is placed on symbolism. As an exercise this is great, the beauty of the Tarot is that the cards, particularly the Majors, can be taken to represent unchanging and universal truths or archetypes which surround and effect every moment of our lives. When they appear in a reading the implication is that this particular archetype by its presence (or absence) is having a bearing on what the querent wants or needs to know. If the reader understands the symbolism they can apply their knowledge, relate it to the other cards in the spread and use it to divine the situation and advise the querent.

This is the way that most people either teach themselves or are taught to read, relying on the synchronicity and rapport between the querent, the reader and the universe to manifest itself in the chosen cards; and it works, but I humbly submit that this is an intellectual process that's got nothing to do with intuition. As soon you are aware that something has a specific purpose or meaning then intuition becomes clouded and more difficult.

Therefore in order to give the reader's intuition full reign she or he should know nothing about what they are looking at, which creates a practical problem because intuition tends to be like a light bulb, it either works or it doesn't. If nothing happens it would make for some long and embarrassing silences. In practice one way round this is to try and do both, describe the symbolism of the card to fill in the background while calling on intuition to make the connection to what is actually going on, although maybe this could be better described as seeking inspiration, 'stimulation of the mind to a special activity or creativity'.

So does this mean that anyone, merely by 'learning' tarot or taking a Tarot course, is actually inhibiting their intuitive potential, and if so is it a worthwhile exercise? Well probably both of those statements are true if you regard the formal learning process as a starting point or you don't regard Tarot as solely or primarily a tool for divination. One of the most valuable uses of Tarot is in reading for yourself which relies on making connections with and understanding the archetypes to achieve insight. It is also possible to give an enlightening and helpful reading to someone else without being able to tell them what they had for breakfast that morning.

But I suspect that divination is an important part of what most Tarot readers do at least some of the time and for this process developing intuitive ability is a definite advantage. Therefore once the basics have been covered and understood maybe it's a good idea to 'unlearn' all the symbols and keywords so that the student can react to the cards instinctively. Perhaps a ritual burning of the keywords should take place half way through every Tarot course. More than that, maybe this should be combined with a switch to another deck with entirely different symbolism. This approach would not only give the tutor some innocent if sadistic pleasure in the student's initial confusion it may also help to develop the student's intuitive capacity, as they would have little else to base their readings on. It would certainly liven things up a bit.

## Meeting the King of Swords

*A personal tarot experience*  
By *Diana McMahon-Collis*

I went with my husband to see a financial advisor recently to try to work out the best course of action with regard to some pension investments. I had lately relinquished a large work contract and was not feeling in such a great position to afford the premiums.

But as it happens the impetus for the visit came initially after completing a reading for my husband on financial issues - a reading that he requested because he too has recently made some major career changes. He is very happy with the decision made to leave the area of the finance industry he was working in and begin taking on freelance training work. However we both have had some concerns about the long term financial picture as we go through the current changes and it did not surprise me when Paul, a security-conscious Taurean by Sun sign, asked me for a reading!

At the current time I cannot find a note of the exact spread or the overall cards drawn, but I used the Morgan Greer deck and there were about five cards. I also recall specifically that most of the cards looked very positive. There was however one exception and that was the Five of Pentacles, effectively appearing as an "outcome" card regarding the financial result of Paul's career change, including the potentials of some freelance training options he'd been offered. We had also asked the card to answer to some ideas we had been milling over concerning the best investments for us, including investing in foreign property.

Neither of us felt buoyed up by seeing this notoriously downbeat card with the image of two people shut out of the neighbourhood church, huddled together in the cold and looking injured and forlorn. And yet the new training options were making Paul feel so much more positive that we didn't think this could be pointing to an issue about self-esteem connected with his new work interests. Although it may well relate to that issue in connection with our current low-income status (my husband has effectively been unemployed for some months now).

We decided that the card was more likely referring to money in general and investment issues specifically\*. I also explained that the card was indicating what would happen if no action were taken, ie this is the end result if we walk along this path without doing anything different in relation to our finances. I also felt that it was very clearly indicating that we needed to seek someone else for some help, otherwise we would be like the crippled couple in the deck, the blind leading the blind, struggling to hold one another up.

This actually made perfect sense in response to our query about investing in foreign property as we don't know enough about that area of investment. At the same time we felt there was a bigger message indicated. So I suggested pulling a further card to clarify the message of the Five in terms of finances generally. The King of Swords appeared. This made immediate sense in terms of needing to know about the legalities involved in foreign investments - we would at some point

need to consult a solicitor and other experts in the fields of property and law. But I also felt this area of the spread was pointing to our need for assistance with information and advice concerning investments in general.

As it happens we had been discussing perhaps consulting someone with regard to our pension investments as we both were not really sure what sums were involved in the disjointed schemes that we had contributed to over the years. Although we had a good idea of which company we would approach, we had had it in mind to consult a specific female advisor whom I had met when giving horoscope readings on a local radio programme. She had been giving out financial advice for the new tax year and all that she had mentioned made perfect sense - which was rather different to our experiences of working with financial advisors previously! Plus she had been kind enough to give my husband some personal advice at one stage on a career potential he had been investigating, working as a financial advisor himself.

However some intuition made me think that the King of Swords in this case really did indicate a man, not just a clear minded business person/woman who communicates well. Then it occurred to me that the lady concerned was probably still on maternity leave and that the company might offer us an alternative advisor - and the person might well be a man! So I said to my husband do go ahead if we are offered an appointment with a male.

We made our appointment and dutifully arrived to meet Richard on the appropriate date. He was just like the King of Swords in his clear cut way of explaining everything that we asked about. He didn't get lost in detail; he kept to the point and was fast thinking and concise, just as you might expect from a King of Swords.

At the end of the consultation I felt very comfortable with this person and felt the urge to tell him about the tarot reading. I explained that we'd seen a challenging card (the Five of Pentacles) in relation to our long term security, that suggested that we needed to consult someone to look at financial issues and planning and seek some clear advice. And that Richard had shown up as the King of Swords, associated in Tarot with the Air signs of the zodiac - those being Libra, Aquarius and Gemini. A slight smile crossed his face so I decided to press him about his birth sign. Lo and behold, our helpful advisor turned out to be a Libran! But this wasn't all. There was some icing on the cake to come! Richard also admitted that he is a collector of something rather special as a hobby. Can you guess what the special something might be? Yes, you've got it. He's a collector of swords!

\* Referring back to the idea that the Five of Pentacles was saying something about the fees Paul would be paid for the training work, at the time of the reading he had been offered a fairly tidy sum for two short spates of training. Subsequently as the first of lot of training approaches, he has been advised that the course intake has been lower than expected and so his fee has had to be trimmed to some extent. We remain optimistic that the second bout of training work will be at the higher level first indicated, because the course is being marketed in a different way from the first one.

Don't you just love the way that the tarot can be so graphic at times?

## Featured Free Reader: Karen Dawson

### ***Real Name/Reading Name:***

My real name is Karen Dawson. I read on TABI as Karen2032000 (yes I know - very imaginative!)

### ***Location:***

I live in Washington, Tyne and Wear which is in the north east of England roughly between Newcastle and Sunderland. I'm 39 - the big 40 looms next April. I'm married to John who is a merchant sailor and have two sons Dan 17 a music student and Matthew 4 1/2 who is currently learning to write his name. We also live with Tommy our elderly deaf and completely neurotic white cat and Bruce the psychotic cockatiel.

### ***Non-tarot occupation:***

I previously worked as a legal secretary for many years and then as marketing director of an IT company. After what psychosynthesis would no doubt call a "crises of transformation" two years ago, I changed my life completely and I now work as a full time tarot consultant and hypnotherapist. I've also completed courses in reiki level 1, psychotherapy, psychic counselling and am about to set off on both a course in psychosynthesis (the psychology with a spirit) and life coaching.

### ***Astrological signs and how you think this affects your tarot approach:***

I'm a sun sign Aries with moon in Scorpio and Cancer rising so on the one hand I like to go out and socialise and am quite typically forthright in the Arien sense but paradoxically am also a bit of a home bird. I've got a lot of Virgo elsewhere as well so as I said to one of the TABI astrologers I'm a bit of a manic perfectionist lol.

### ***How long have you been involved in tarot?***

My auntie read tarot to a small extent and she taught us to play 7 card brag with the minor arcana of the Marseilles deck when I was about eight or nine so I was always around tarot cards and never found anything "spooky" or unnatural about them. I started reading myself in 1987 and have been reading seriously for the last five years and professionally for the last two.

### ***What drew you to it?***

I don't know what really drew me to tarot - intuition I suppose and the fact that tarot had always been around me anyway.

### ***Do you read for yourself?***

I read for myself - rather badly as I either think the best or the worst and find it very hard to be objective. I prefer to use the cards for myself in meditation or guided visualisations. I also produce tarot based hypnotherapy CDs which I'm hoping to sell on the website eventually.

### ***First deck? Why did you choose it?***

My first deck was the Rider Waite - basically because in 1987 it was the only deck you get hold of and that wasn't easy

***How many decks do you have now?***

I have 10 main decks now although have sold or given away others over the years. These are Rider Waite, Mythic, Golden, Gilded, Songs for the Journey Home, Haindl, Victoria Regina, Quest, Thoth, Inner Child Tarot and the Tarot of Transformation, oh and also a deck I couldn't resist on E-bay which is one of the basic beginners packs which was advertised as "cursed"!!! - so far no broken mirrors etc!

***Fave deck(s)? Why?***

My Rider Waite is still a favourite and still the one I use for house parties and face to face readings. For therapeutic work I use the Tarot of Transformation (which is based on transpersonal psychology concepts), the Inner Child Tarot and the Rider Waite or clone as well

***Fave book and/or author?***

Books - I have got three favourites I suppose I'd take to a desert island. Rachel Pollack's "78 Degrees of Wisdom", Sallie Nichols "Jung and Tarot" and Christine Jette's "Tarot Shadow Work"

***Fave/most used spread?***

My favourite spread has got to be the "Whole Self Spread". It's an (w)holistic spread with no past, present, future or outcome - it looks at the whole person in the here and now, pretty consistent with the idea of the I-Self relationship in psychosynthesis. I occasionally use the old Celtic Cross but am uncomfortable sometimes with the idea of "outcome" as I believe psycho-spiritual growth is all about the journey and not the destination. In therapeutic work I also use Shadow spreads, some from Christine Jette and some I've designed myself but often will not use a spread at all as in a certain sense giving positional meanings is directive.

***Do you use reversals or other system ie Elemental Dignities?***

I use reversals sometimes. I used to use them all the time but have been coming to a realisation that giving a card an upright or reversed meaning is a bit of a misnomer as it brings in the idea of duality whereas I'm coming to the realisation that concepts like love/hate, like/dislike are points along the same scale rather than opposites and therefore the "reversed" meaning of a particular card is included within that of the upright.

***Do you use other disciplines in your readings ie quabalah/astrology?***

I began to experiment with the idea of applying psychology/psychotherapeutic methods whilst using tarot about a year ago when it began to emerge that the relationship between tarotist and client resembled very much that between therapist and client (ie empathy, compassion, unconditional positive regard, transference/counter transference are often present). I also found that, during the process of a reading, certain clients would pick up a card and begin to free associate about that card and what it meant to them personally. Whereas a tarot reading involves the practitioner doing most of the talking, therapeutic tarot is the exact opposite and involves the client doing most of the talking.

***Do you add psychic impressions to your readings?***

I'm wary of "psychic" impressions as these can be simply the tarotist projecting onto the client and will only mention something if the feeling comes across very very strongly and if I think it might be beneficial to the client.

***Do you rephrase? Why?***

Yes in e-mail readings in particular I often rephrase, usually sending the client a note explaining why first and asking them if they have any objection. I would generally rephrase where a yes/no answer has been requested or where the client is asking for a third party reading.

***Are there any questions/subjects you wouldn't take on?***

The usual things I won't look at - death of an individual, specific medical conditions, legal outcomes

***What is your favourite theory for 'how tarot works'?***

I don't really have a theory as to how tarot works although I know of many - sometimes the best thing you can say is "I don't know, it just does" - the mind cannot explain everything logically and scientifically.

***How would you describe your reading style?***

I always try to be open minded, empathic and compassionate towards people. If I'm annoyed at a question this is probably more to do with issues in my shadow rather than them and tend to "bracket" as the Gestaltists say, this type of feeling to explore later.

***Do you read professionally? How long for? What format?***

I've been reading professionally now for nearly two years. Sometimes I love it and sometimes I get pretty frustrated - yet another person phoning up and asking for the "fortune teller", or asking if I can get in contact with Great Aunt Betsy who passed away during the war (sigh). Overall though I wouldn't rather be doing anything else - my hobby has become my job which is pretty wonderful.

***How can querents contact you for a reading?***

I read face to face doing house parties in my local area and I'm also the resident tarotist/therapist at the Fifth Element which is in Concord Washington - there's a lovely cosy little therapy room there which I use for tarot (readings and therapeutic), hypnotherapy and reiki. I also have a website [www.tarotinternational.com](http://www.tarotinternational.com) where clients can purchase either straight readings or therapy sessions online via e-mail. I'm hoping soon to be using a messaging system such as msn or yahoo in the near future too. There's also a forum community where you can swap readings, get psychic photo readings from my colleague Joan or just join in general chit chat about a wide range of tarot and other esoteric and psycho-spiritual topics.

You can contact me by calling 0790 4521687, e-mail me [Karen@tarotinternational.com](mailto:Karen@tarotinternational.com) or visit the website at [www.tarotinternational.com](http://www.tarotinternational.com)

## The Many Lives Tarot Can Show

*By Edain McCoy*

Karmic lesson or karmic debt? Which one came first? Of more importance, what lessons and debts are now waiting behind your attempts to balance all the emotional, physical and mental issues in your life?

At one time I was able to regress myself with ease. I was — and still am — able to regress others to times and places that surprise both the seeker and myself. The better I became at talking others through the tangled jungle of their past, the more difficult it became to regress myself. This phenomenon is similar to that experienced by natural healers whose gift blesses everyone but themselves. I never thought of myself as a skilled healer, but I wasn't giving myself enough credit. I was just so focused on one type of healing that I missed seeing myself in the right healing role. I was not a healer of the physical; I was an empathetic emotional healer who could no longer count on using past life regression for my own needs. I could, however, uncover the past for others, often helping them to gain wisdom and erase negative karma in the process.

Those who are familiar with the personality of the tarot know the cards will sometimes override the question you think you're asking, and instead will comment on issues it thinks are more important to you. Whether this ethereal switch occurs because our own subconscious minds are trying to get through to us, or because some outside force with unseen hands is shuffling the deck, the result is the same. The unmistakable message from the cards is right there in front of us.

I record all my tarot readings just as I advise my students to do. Eventually the spread will make sense. They've never been wrong before.

My first clue that past life and karmic revelations were coming through tarot overrides came eighteen years ago. I was working with the cards on issues pertaining to both my financial situation and a man I was dating. The non-answers I received annoyed me — not a single card addressed the questions I asked. That same night I was in a twenty-four hour coffee shop in San Antonio having a discussion with some friends. At some point someone began talking about past life issues. It was a lively conversation, one in which we ruthlessly teased one another about the strange places and times in which we'd found ourselves. Most of our regressions took us to places we were not familiar with, and into occupations that were out of character with our present day selves. Then I heard someone compare the past life of another friend with one of the tarot's major archetypes.

The conversation faded from my hearing, and my head buzzed in recognition of a similar connection between the cards of my last unhelpful reading and my last regression experience.

As soon as I got home I went straight to my Book of Shadows where I recorded all my tarot readings. I went through the cards one at a time, cross-referencing them with several different

books of interpretation. There was no more doubt in my mind that the cards were speaking to me about my past life as a little girl on America's western frontier in the 1880s. I scrambled to write down all I could remember of that regression as the cards revealed more aspects of the child I had been, with each revelation from the cards opening more memories. From this I learned where I got my fear of tornados, why education is important to me, and why I possess a stubborn desperation to be independent and self-supporting.

Since my skills at self-regression had paled, formal regression sessions could no longer help. But could my tarot cards really help open those same doors to my soul's past? I'd been reading tarot cards with incredible accuracy for years, and knew their rich symbolism could help unveil many things — so why not my past lives and the karma I still carried from them?

With that knowledge in hand, I began to design my own spreads; creating, tweaking, rearranging and pondering each one until I trusted a spread to reveal what I wanted to know. The creation process took time, and I kept detailed notes until I knew which spreads worked best for specific query types.

Whether you want help interpreting the meaning of a past life, you want to trigger more past life memories from your previous regressions, or you just want to fine tune your knowledge about your karma, Past-Life and Karmic Tarot will show how the tarot cards will be an invaluable companion.

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### **Edain McCoy**

Edain became a self-initiated Witch in 1981 and has been an active part of the Pagan community since her formal initiation into a large San Antonio coven in 1983. She has researched alternative spiritualities since her teens, when she was first introduced to Kaballah. Since that time, she has studied a variety of magickal paths including Celtic, Appalachian folk magick, and Curanderismo, a Mexican-American folk tradition. Today, Edain is part of the Witan Irish Pagan tradition, where she is a priestess of Brighid and an elder.

She is also an alumnus of the University of Texas with a BA in history. In addition to being the author of 15 books, Edain works as a licensed stockbroker. Her most recent book is *Past Life & Karmic Tarot*.

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*Read on for reviews of Edain's book 'Past Life and Karmic Tarot'...*

## Book Review: Past Life & Karmic Tarot

*Written by Edain McCoy*

ISBN: 0-7387-0508-X

Publisher: Llewellyn

Paperback, 2004

175 pp

### ***Review by Brian Stephenson***

This is a welcome addition to Llewellyn's series 'Special Topics in Tarot'. The concept of using Tarot cards to shed light on past-lives and karma issues is not new. However, this book must contain more detail about this method of interpretation than can be found anywhere else.

In her Introduction to the book, Edain McCoy sets out the basics on past-lives, re-incarnation and the soul's journey. The next 17 Chapters contain detailed instructions on a total of 25 past-life spreads. The exact purpose and background for each spread is clearly outlined together with a diagram showing how to set out the cards. There is also a detailed example of a reading for each of the 25 spreads.

The complexity of the spreads varies considerably from the straightforward 6-card 'Invoking Pentacle' spread to the more complex 28-card 'Lifetime Convergence' spread. The 18th Chapter outlines a meditation procedure for entering the cards and the 19th Chapter gives the reader the tools to attempt self-regression.

Irrespective of your personal views on past-life and re-incarnation, this is certainly an interesting book which looks in great detail at an area of Tarot which deserves to be explored.

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### ***Review by Clare McHale***

*'This book will work best for you if you're an advanced card reader... Even so, if you want to use tarot to explore your past lives, then some insights should be available to you no matter what your level of expertise.'* p. 7

While I'm not sure I believe in past lives, it's an interesting subject to explore and would seem to lend itself to tarot well. As Mary K. Greer states in the Foreword, *'Even if you don't believe in past lives you can use this book to explore aspects of yourself, such as the effects of your actions in previous jobs, relationships, and in other locations or states of mind.'* p. xiii

And I don't consider myself *'an advanced card reader'*, but I'm not going to let that put me off investigating this intriguing idea further.

The book is mostly made up of spreads, one of them covers 28 cards, but McCoy has included sample readings to help you get an idea of how things work and how the cards relate to each other.

Don't worry; there are helpful layout illustrations too, so you won't get lost off when setting out the spread of your choice. Most of the spreads are medium to large and in-depth, so it would be best to have some experience reading spreads before you tackle this book, it's not one for the complete beginner.

The author's 13-page introduction is broken up into small sections and starts with an overview of, *'Tarot and Your Past Lives'* p. 1, and McCoy's views on the subject.

*'...this is where I take exception to the common linear view of past-life karma, which essentially teaches, "everything that's done to you is done because you did it first to someone else." If everyone's bad life experience was based on some wrong done in a past life, we would find ourselves in a circular argument that makes no sense.'* p. 1

And moves on through a few paragraphs on *'Past Lives and Your Soul's Journey'* p. 3; *'Coordinating Tarot Card Names'* p 4, which is a very brief overview of the ordering of the major Arcana [Strength 8, Justice 11] and the suit associations; Next are a few paragraphs on *'How to Use This Book'* p. 6, amongst other things, and pages 11 to 13 are the *'Further Study'* section.

The spreads start on page 15, each one has a few paragraphs as a short lead in explaining what the spread is for and how it works.

*'The Invoking Pentacle spread is one of the simplest in this book. It is designed to give you a broad overview of the facets of our past, the inherited inner traits that combined to make you who you are today.'* p. 15.

As already stated each of the 17 spreads has sample readings, or rather *'Example'* readings, 10 also have alternative spread information if you wish to explore further.

The one that most intrigues me at the moment is *'The Dark Moon Spread'* p. 21, and no, it's not because it's the shortest in the book at only 4 cards, 3 if you're lucky!

*'The Dark Moon spread uses only four cards, but they are enough to show you what is hidden from you in terms of karma from a past life and how that karma will manifest if you stay your same course in your current life.'* p. 21

In brief, card 1 is a major unresolved issue from a past life, card 2 is closely related to card 1 and is something that's hidden from you in relation to card 1, card 3 shows you the outcome if you take no action, and card 4 is only drawn if card 3 is *'undesirable for you... [and] can show you how to overcome your karmic debt in this lifetime'*, p. 22.

It's a little more involved than that, but you get the idea.

The example readings are interesting but especially the '*Other Indications*' information included at the end that helps to remind you to look more deeply at the meaning of the cards and the relationships between them.

*'Note that pentacles predominate this reading. Pentacles are feminine or introspective in nature ... In this reading the Judgement card is shown in reverse, indicating that the will to do the tasks needed to change the outcome is lacking... perhaps she is plagued by irrational fears...'* p. 25  
[from the Dark Moon Spread]

The spreads in this book are:

The Invoking Pentacle Spread, '*a broad overview of the facets of your past*' p. 15.

The Dark Moon Spread, '*to show what is hidden from you in terms of karma from a past life*' p. 21

The Irish Cross Spread [not the Celtic Cross], '*Past life arm... Past current life arm... Future life arm, Future current life arm*' p. 29

The Solomon's Seal Spread, '*looks simple, but is one of the hardest to learn... shows the elemental influences on your past-life issues.*' p. 37

The Karmic Choice Spread, '*how specific karma, formed over several past lives, manifests now as your major karmic issue in this present life.*' p. 45

The Rainbow Bridge Spread, '*will show your progress between a past life that closely parallels your current one, and how you came to the between-life decisions that are shaping your current life*' p. 54

The Tree of Life Spread, '*Each of the sephiroth... and each of the paths connecting them come under the influences of a planetary energy, or an aspect of divinity. This is the energy we will tap into to interpret a past life.*' p. 59

The Big Picture Spread, '*the big picture of someone you were in a past life.*' p. 67

The Feng Shui Spread, '*discover who you were in the past, compare it to your present... see if any areas [are] blocked or unsatisfactory*'. p. 77

The Lifetime Convergences Spread, '*the chain of events that brought you into your current life with someone you were close to in one or more of your past lives.*' p. 83

Omniscient Time Spread, '*brings together four of your other lives that are having the strongest impact on your current life*' p. 93

Growth Over Three Lifetimes Spread, ‘*this example [reading is] one of past, present and future, you can make them all past lives or all future lives... you can add as many past lives to the reading as you choose.*’ p. 106

The Next Challenge Spread, ‘*a chance to find out what our next major hurdle will be in our current lifetime.*’ p. 107

The Future-Life Spread, ‘*uses the circle to symbolize the wheel of time and the elemental rulers of each quarter as taught in Western magick traditions to allow us to peek into our next lifetime.*’ p. 113

The Constellation Past-Life Wheel, ‘*a look at a past life through the cycle of some of the heaven’s major constellations.*’ p. 121

Unmasking the Past, ‘*people in your current life... you feel you may have shared a past life connection with... take a closer look at one of these relationships and the influence it holds over your past, present and future.*’ p. 135

Past-Life Epiphany Spread, ‘*will show an important lesson learned – or one that should have been learned – in a past life*’ p. 141

Chapter eighteen is ‘*Entering the Tarot Cards*’ p. 147 and again for this you need a good knowledge of your chosen tarot deck for it to work effectively.

The basic idea is that you concentrate/meditate on a card and ‘*enter*’ it to gain a deeper understanding of it, and it’s meaning for you, by talking to the characters inside the card and exploring the landscape.

If you don’t believe in, or like, meditation and/or this kind of visualisation technique you can still give it a try, just use your imagination; it could prove a fun way to reinforce your knowledge of tarot.

‘*Uncovering Your Past Lives*’ p. 157, is chapter nineteen, the last chapter of the book before the reference section. It talks about regression with a partner, or alone, and has a 20 step self-regression method for you to try if you want to, or have to, go it alone.

Included in this is a short section on ‘*Assessing the Regression Experience*’ p. 166.

Overall an interesting book for the tarot adept, with lots of room for growth if you want to use tarot in conjunction with past life exploration, and as Edain McCoy states:

‘*Past life exploration is one way to know yourself; the tarot cards are another. Using these valuable tools for self-knowledge in tandem can enhance the experience for you.*’ p. 168.

## Book Review: THE BARDDAS OF IOLO MORGANWGW

*Edited by J. Williams ab Ithel*  
*Reviewed by Cilla Conway*

This will be fascinating reading for anyone with an interest in early or late Druidry. This reprint of Morganwg's work – as collected by J. Williams ab Ithel, a celebrated antiquarian and Welsh patriot who did much to foster an interest in the culture – is a beautifully produced book which gives the original text in Welsh, on the left of each page, and the English translation on the right, with copious notes by Williams relating to Iolo Morganwg's translation. Iolo is still a fascinating, if paradoxical, figure and John Matthew's Introduction gives tantalising glimpses into his life and motivation. Iolo has been slated for forging material when he could not find it, leaving modern-day scholars confused about what was genuine, and what was purely the product of Iolo's own mind. The suspicion is, of course, that because his 'forgeries' are so good – in some instances better than the original writing – we have no idea what is genuine and what is not. The alternative scenario is even worse – that all his material was invented, as Greywolf suggests in his historic review of Druidry on the Internet. This of course causes grave scholarly headaches, but you have to give him credit for his passion and attention to detail. Here is a man who obviously revered his source material (if of course there was any) and was working with dedication and inspiration. I would doubt that he invented all of it, because the number of repetitions of much of the material – which was purportedly from different sources – are so great that an enquiring, creative mind would be driven insane from boredom. And Iolo certainly had a creative, enquiring mind, even if he did belabour it with laudanum. He was also a fine scholar, immensely well-read, and he certainly did collect and transcribe manuscripts held in the private collections of wealthy, ancient Welsh families.

It is a fact, too, that inventing information and passing it off as genuine was by no means limited to Iolo. We have numerous instances of writers creating history – for instance Annius of Viterbo in 16<sup>th</sup> Century Italy who invented a number of facts about the druids in Gaul. Another example: Hector Boece, who moved Mona to Scotland in an attempt to claim Druidry for the Scots – when in fact the Welsh had a far better claim.

The Symbol section of the book is fascinating, although it is repetitious to a fault. It considers in great detail the bardic alphabet (the coelbren), its symbology, history, and how bards were to carry the documents written (though theirs was a verbal culture, not a written one. This is presumably why John Matthews, in his introduction, considers that it was almost certainly Morganwg's invention). However, taking the section at face value, I puzzled for a while about its length and detail, and decided that a reasonable explanation would be that when the earliest alphabets were devised, the symbols would have been seen as truly magical – in fact, a manifestation of the divine. Similar to cuneiform, they speak of a time when divinity lay just on the other side of thought, and the unknown was so all-encompassing that all you could do was to acknowledge your awe at its presence. Symbols – letters, sounds, and numerals – represented human ability to make visible the invisible. The Awen sign represents the Divine Energy itself – the three rays of light containing the manifestation of all that is. In the Barddas these three letters and rays of light are seen as the name of God (IOV). According to the text, this combination of

characters – and what it represents – was kept secret, one assumes within the bardic orders. Perhaps it was Iolo's invention; but still, the Symbol section transported me back to an ancient mentality, and I peered down a long tunnel into the mentality behind this intriguing alphabet. I realised how completely I take for granted the miracle of reading and writing, how their value has been debased in mass-media, pulp fiction, and the endless facility of digital information. It was refreshing to be given a glimpse (albeit possibly fictional) into a clearer, cleaner mentality.

The last section of the book, Privileges and Usage, offered a similar vista. Somehow the careful repetition of requirements of the different bardic levels (minstrels, home bards, etc) had an authentic tang of older times – perhaps not pre-Christian, but certainly it felt almost like a legal document of employment. Perhaps, indeed, those would be the kinds of documents to be stored over time. Oddly, the book ends mid-sentence, part-way through an exceptionally interesting section; with no explanation as to why. Perhaps that was where poor Iolo finally keeled over. But not before I got another glance through the gateway of time.

However my image of that early era vanished in the theology section. Here any link to early druidry vanishes under the weight of Christian values. Iolo's source material (whatever it was) must have drawn heavily on both Old and New Testaments, witness the bardic Ten Commandments, repeated innumerable times – although *why* is a moot point, because the original version is far more concise and easier to follow. By the time I waded through this section I was skipping large portions of text in the hope of reaching something that didn't belabour the Christian viewpoint *ad nauseum*. I could imagine the poor unfortunate neophytes bent over their parchments, having to learn all this stuff by heart, so they could recite it verbatim to their teachers. The passion and commitment I mentioned in the first chapter is still there, but begins to look more like zealotry – even fanaticism.

Still, often fanatics are the only ones to get things done. The Welsh Eisteddfod would not exist nowadays if Iolo hadn't taken it upon himself to restart it; and his enthusiasm certainly fuelled the Druidic revival of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. His work might even have reminded the English (who were busy trying to lay claim to the Druids after John Aubrey had decided that the megaliths and stone circles were Druidic) that Bardism and Druidry were Celtic in origin.

Nowadays, the Welsh and Scottish links to both Bardism and Druidry are acknowledged but often played down. Authorities on the subject talk at length about the Celts but when they mention him at all, they emphasize Morganwg's dubious reputation – presumably in order to negate his impact. No-one, however, denies that his was a powerful voice which gave impetus to the neo-druidic movement.

So in conclusion, the *Barddas* is a thought-provoking book. Its emphasis on a slightly confused but exceptionally repetitious Christian theology may be slightly irritating in parts for pagan readers, while aiding those attempting to shoehorn their druidic beliefs into a Christian framework. Whatever your persuasion, however, it is a fascinating if lengthy read.

## Book Review: Tarot Get the Whole Story

Use, Create & Interpret Tarot Spreads

*Written by James Ricklef  
Reviewed by Clare McHale*

ISBN: 0-7387-0345-1  
Publisher: Llewellyn  
Paperback, 2004  
240 pp

***‘The art of creating a Tarot spread is easy to learn... This book will describe and demonstrate that process in detail for you.’ p. 2***

A nicely sized paperback, just over 7 x 9 inches with a glossy cover using cards from the Gilded Tarot by Ciro Marchetti adorns James Ricklef’s latest tarot tome.

That in itself would make this book a good choice for your coffee table, if you have one, but the author’s easy writing style and interesting choice of topic means you’ll be using this book for more than just decoration if you’re at all interested in creating your own tarot spreads.

*‘What follows... is an introduction to some of the easier and more common techniques for creating Tarot spreads, along with some illustrative examples of them.’ p. 5*

For the sample readings Ricklef has used the same entertaining format as his previous book, ‘Tarot Tells the Tale’ [ISBN: 0-7387-0272-2], where celebrities or fairytale characters are asking the questions based on well known scenarios.

The author doesn’t mess about, by page 9 we’re well out of the introduction and into the first chapter, ‘How to Create Spreads’ Ricklef takes us through his creation of two spreads and is already challenging us to create our own based on the human body.

I came up with one based on this challenge, a work in progress naturally: ‘General Life Path and Potential’ Spread.

Imagine a little camp stick figure with arms on hips, and as an aside, if I can come up with something, anyone can!

1. HEAD: Here & Now
2. HEART: Future Hopes
3. GUTS: Hidden Aspirations
4. LEFT ARM: Possibilities
5. RIGHT ARM: Practicalities
6. LEFT LEG: Barriers

## 7. RIGHT LEG: Support

Positions 1, 5 and 6 are closely linked as they're the things that could prevent you from living up to your dreams. The position numbers add up to 12, the Hanged Man in the major Arcana and in this case could mean too much time spent thinking and not enough doing.

Positions 2, 4 and 7 are all about what could be if you have the support you need. The position numbers add up to 13, a match for Death, which is about a major transformation/change.

Position 3 is about the things you may not have dared to verbalise yet, or may not even know you want, so it's apt that it's number 3 a match for the High Priestess in the Major Arcana.

	1	
4	2	5
	3	
7		6

The Major Arcana associations are just for fun and weren't a conscious part of trying to make up the spread, I'm not that deep!

But all added together and reduced they equal 10-The Wheel of Fortune, which in a spread predominately about hope and possible life changes also fits well.

I tried the spread with my Gilded Tarot and it works for me as a general overview, but then it would, it's my spread! Though I am slightly concerned with The Devil in position 3, maybe I'm a budding evil genius?

Speaking of which, I better get on with the book review! Ooh, I'm so evil it hurts!

Ricklef also talks about modifying existing spreads and getting inspiration from various sources, such as the elemental associations of the suits. It's by no means an in-depth look at this subject, but it's enough to get you started.

Chapter Two, '*Spreads and Readings*', explains and '*illustrate[s] the use of a variety of Tarot spreads. These spreads are useful in a wide range of circumstances, some being geared toward specific types of readings such as romance or career, while others are more general in their application.*' p. 21

After an introduction into the chapter we start with '*The Decision Spread*' p. 25 with Clarke Gable asking for advice on taking the role of Rhett Butler in *Gone with the Wind*.

The sample readings take the format of a brief introduction, an image showing the layout, the spread information, '*A KnightHawk Reading with the...*' whatever spread, which includes the question and the reading itself, comments on the reading, alternative spreads and where appropriate specific notes about the spread positions and other notes.

We also have the Yin-Yang spread; The Magical Triangle spread; Sorrow's Alchemy; Alchemical Pentagram; Extended Temporal; Relationship Transformation; Lovers Card; Modified Celtic Cross Relationship spread; New Year's Resolution spread; Personal Transformation; Expanded Choice; Failure's Alchemy; Tree of Life and the Variable Timing spread and then onto the bibliography/recommended reading section.

The spreads are of varying sizes, from two to ten cards, although some of the alternatives are larger. The extra information is interesting and I like the casual unhurried style of the book overall.

And as with the author's previous book, it shows us what fun and good [safe?] practice it can be to read for well know fairytale characters and/or old movie stars, especially when you have the option of researching the characters more fully after you've done your reading to see how you got on.

Excerpts from the two-card Yin-Yang spread with question from Roderick Usher, p. 36:

'two-card spreads... can lead to surprisingly profound insights... Dear KnightHawk, My sister, the Lady Madeline, is no more... my initial grief, however, is now turning to horror...I have begun to hear strange sounds... Have we put her living in the tomb... I see that there is much more here than meets the eye...' p. 39

You'll have to get the book to read the full scenario and reading; the comments section contains a brief synopsis of the House of Usher story so you can see where the seekers question originated. There are also questions from Pocahontas, Marie Antoinette and Katherine Minola [The Taming of the Shrew], to name but a few.

There's more in this book to help with interpreting tarot spreads than creating them, but it's only a starting point for creation, it gives you a place to begin and ideas to implement to see if you want to explore further.

'*Tarot Get the Whole Story*' is probably of more interest to tarot beginners and those trying their own spreads for the first time, though I think some of the more experienced readers amongst us will enjoy the scenarios and seeing another's point of view on the cards.

And to finish, a final word from our author, '*experiment with using the cards in daring, new ways. Be inventive. Listen to your intuition, and create your own spreads.*' p. 223.

## Book Review: Tree of Sapphires - The Enlightened

### Qabalah

*Written by David Goddard*

*Reviewed by Ian Stevens*

David Goddard is a director of the Kabbalah Society and a teacher of the Qabalah, Theurgy and Alchemy. He has written several other books on these subjects and spends much of his time traveling and teaching, although he lives in England.

In this book he is seeking to provide the reader with an introduction to the Qabalah and from there, via a series of exercises, meditations and visualization, a path to help understand and experience the Qabalistic Tree of Life on a personal basis.

In the introduction he describes what the Qabalah is and isn't, outlining how it can encompass the great world religions and other esoteric traditions and it's roots and origins, presenting this as more of a spiritual journey than a history lesson. There then follow 14 chapters which form a program of work which leads the reader through an ever greater appreciation, understanding and experience of the Qabalistic mysteries. Each chapter begins with a dialogue explaining a new aspect and relating it to what has gone before, followed by a description of an exercise, meditation or both which is designed to enable the reader/practitioner to experience what has just been described. As the book progresses the exercises and meditations are often drawn together so that they form a coherent ritual. At the end of the book there is an epilogue which is essentially a closing ritual culminating in a visualization setting the seal on all the reader has learned and experienced. There follow notes and references as well as recommended further reading and CDs.

This is not a book for someone with an academic interest who wishes to learn about the Qabalah in the comfort of his or her armchair. Neither is of much use for general reference as although the rituals and visualizations are described in detail, as they have to be if they are going to be attempted, taken out of context they are not going to mean a great deal. The descriptions also make very dull reading unless you are about to put what is described into practice. The book also has few diagrams and illustrations to provide relief from the pages of text.

The audience the book is most suited to are those who are prepared to devote some time and effort to discovering the Qabalah from within by trying out the rituals and undertaking the visualizations. For this purpose it is excellent as David Goddard uses plain English as far as possible, minimizing his use of the kind of arcane prose and terminology so common in many occult texts produced by bodies such the Golden Dawn. It should not be difficult for anyone to be able to practice the exercises confident that they know why they are doing them and what they are hoping to achieve. The printed pages are double spaced which whether intentionally or not would make it easy to keep your place if you were looking away from time to time such as when practicing a ritual for the first time.

Goddard does make references to the links between the Qabalah and other disciplines including Tarot, but these are only in passing and anybody hoping to find much information about the relationship between Tarot and the Tree of Life will be disappointed. This book is for would be Qabalists and not for Tarotists or Astrologers who want to broaden their knowledge of their craft.

## **Book Review: Tarot and Psychology**

*Written by: Arthur Rosengarten Phd*

*Reviewed by: Karen Dawson*

Tarot and Psychology: Spectrums of Possibility is by Arthur Rosengarten Phd, clinical psychologist and tarot practitioner and teacher. This book seems to be aimed more at the therapist/counsellor rather than most books on tarot which tend to be directed towards the tarot practitioner alone. This is a scholarly and professional study not given to flights of fancy or delving purely into the esoteric.

Rosengarten states "tarot is no more fortune telling than psychotherapy is personality fixing". He looks at the relevance to and applicability of tarot in various systems of psychotherapy and then delves deeply into the psychology of tarot itself. including a tarot lexicon.

Reference is made to the archtypal nature of tarot cards. Rosengarten states "...because we engage in purely archetypal forces in the trump cards, we can further assume the interior dimension is primary, the exterior dimension secondary. By comparison, the cards of the lesser arcana should be taken as 'degrees of conscious activity' each associated with a particular corresponding major arcanum". For instance according to the tarot lexicon, the Ace of Swords, keys - thinking, discovery, intelligence (reversed confusion/illusion) corresponds to the Magician and the King of Cups to the Hierophant. Interestingly the Fool is assigned no minor correspondences.

In the chapter "The Fools Journey" he outlines a non linear map of the major arcana in the shape of a mandala (circular) with The Fool in the middle representing self (Self?) and the other trumps emanating out from that middle point. In other words the path of tarot is not one in which human beings progress in linear fashion from Magician to World and back again but rather, as is demonstrated daily in our readings, that not one card represents a "beginning" or an "end" but rather that the journey is endless throughout life and all or any of the trumps can be manifest in the present moment, the minor cards being the outer manifestations of their equivalent trump.

There follows a chapter on "Synchronicity", Jung's "meaningful coincidence". Rosengarten states that "I believe an empirical explanation for the Tarot method can indeed be demonstrated in Jung's theory of synchronicity" and goes on to say "many...today believe synchronicity carries the key not only to divinatory practices but to paranormal phenomena and certain anomalous psychical phenomena as well. Herein lies a region we may refer to as 'metascience', the study of invisible, acausal, non linear relationships between inner and out worlds"

He also makes reference to Mary Greer, the eminent tarot scholar's classification of different types of reading styles.

- 1) The analytic - "typically takes each card and symbol.....and analyses its multiple levels of meaning before an overriding synthesis is offered"
- 2) Therapeutic - "the reader's role is like a client centred therapist's - to listen and amplify, to reflect the querent's reponse back to them and to offer support, self disclosure and guidance when called for...."
- 3) Psychic - "uses cards as springboards for inner 'sight' and subtle sensory 'feelings'. Regarding this method he says "Interestingly enough, most of the leading scholarly and practicing tarotists today, to my knowledge, do not consider themselves to be psychics but "diviners" (conduits), whereas those who specialise in psychic readings using tarot cards tend to consider themselves not tarotists, but clairvoyants" In other words the stereotypical "tarot card reader" as portrayed in the media is not really a "tarotist" at all but a "clairvoyant", a somewhat different animal!!!
- 4) Magical - "In this context, "magic" is defined as 'the art of changing consciousness at will' and can be thought of as the application of creative will and conscious intent. " This approach I believe would be complementary to transpersonal methods and psychosynthesis.

Rosengarten also proposes a "global" method in which any or all of the above methods can be used depending on what the individual situation requires.

Within the book he also gives details of and case studies from an experimental "tarot research project" into domestic violence which, although too small to be conclusive in any way, is very suggestive of the positives of tarot in a therapeutic setting. Appendix Two contains the transcripts of the readings of two of the research subjects and earlier in the book there are some excellent case studies including one very moving study of a client dying of Aids and how tarot helped him to come to some acceptance of his life and imminent death.

In the final chapter, "When Psychology Meets Tarot", Dr Rosengarten refers to the tarot world and with some regret states that most tarotists are "regrettably unschooled" in psychopathology, a situation which appears to be undergoing some rectification at the present time. He calls for tarot to have "greater psychological sophistication, precision, empiricism, training and ethical codification as it seeks wider acceptance and utilisation"

Apart from the appendices which contain the book proper finishes with words from the great tarot theorist of the 19th century, Eliphas Levi

"It [the tarot] is perhaps the greatest masterpiece of the human mind, and certainly one of the most beautiful things handed down by antiquity"

I would highly recommend this book to any counsellor/therapist who is interested in the integration of tarot into their work and also to any tarot practitioner who is hoping to gain greater insight into the therapeutic world and how their art can be utilised within.

## Book Review: Tarot Outside the Box

*Written By Valerie Sim*

*Reviewed by Clare McHale*

ISBN: 0-7387-0277-3

Publisher: Llewellyn

Paperback, 2004

216 pp

***'This book is not a "cookbook". It does not contain the meanings or analysis of the seventy-eight cards in the Tarot deck, nor will it teach you beginning reading skills.'* [p. 5]**

What can I say about the beginning of this book, except that Mary K Greer always writes a stellar foreword worth reading, but it does make me wonder how she's ever going to fit in another book of her own around all these introductions! ;)

*'This book presents a multitude of surprising and exciting ways to break out of the box'* [Greer. p. xi]

I could tell I was going to like Valerie Sim's style when I read her first line in *'Acknowledgments'*, *'I am a confessed bookworm'* [p. xv].

Being that way inclined myself, I'm accustomed to her ways, but before I break into a spontaneous, and murderous medley of songs from *'My Fair Lady'*, I better get to the point of this article and review *'Tarot Outside the Box'*!

Valerie Sim is the owner of the Comparative Tarot e-mail list and is a champion for the comparative tarot method of reading the cards, which in essence is comparing the same card from a variety of decks to [possibly] gain a wider/deeper understanding of it's meaning in a particular spread.

You do your reading as per usual, but augment it with another deck or three, or however many you'd like to use, by finding the same cards in those decks and laying them out alongside.

*'How many times have we rejected or missed a message from one person only to take it to heart later when delivered by another person with a different approach or choice of words?'* [p. 7]

If nothing else, it will help you become familiar with, and utilise, several of your favourite decks rather than leaving them to languish on the shelf.

I like first chapter, *'The Comparative Tarot Method'* [p. 7] very much. I've always been interested in the story and inspiration behind tarot artwork, as well as the individuality people can bring to a project based on a similar basic concept, and this chapter gives you a small sample of that.

For me it's too short, I'd love to give Ms Sim my favourite tarot decks and have her write up the comparisons for me to ponder at my leisure. Maybe when I win the lottery? ;)

You may think this method of reading the cards unnecessarily complicated at first glance, especially after my garbled explanation, but it's not really, especially if you use small spreads, and it could provide ideas and insights you haven't previously considered.

If you have the time and the inclination, try this method of reading the cards. After all, if one card can inspire you, think what two or three could do to deepen your understanding of tarot.

This book also gives us a quick flash of the yet to be published [in full] Marie-El Tarot deck [<http://www.marie-eltarot.com>] which is shaping up to be a must have, for me at least. [p. 20]

If you're interested, but still not sure comparative tarot could be used for face to face readings, there's a section on the Lo Scarabeo Comparative Tarot Deck that might interest you where, *'each card contains a picture of cards from four very different decks: Marseilles, Universal tarot, Sphinx and Tarot of the Origins.'* [p. 39] and Ms Sims aptly wrote the little white book on it.

There's also a sample reading using the above deck and a *'Further "Out of the Box" with the Comparative Tarot Deck'* [p. 43] longer sample reading where the author decided to try using the deck to, *'answer more than one question'* [p. 43], four in fact, with a single card.

An interesting experiment considering they're all going to be the same card, but from different decks.

And all this in chapter one! I won't go into as much detail with the rest of the chapters or this review's going to be longer than the book! But I'll give you a brief overview as we go.

Chapter two is *'Combination Tarot'* [p. 47], *'If the voice of Comparative Tarot is a multipart harmony, then Combination Tarot is a series of poignant solos.'* [p. 47]

This method of reading involves different cards from different decks for comparison within a reading, like drawing an extra card for clarification.

This section starts us off with a sample one-card [daily] reading with three decks, and moves on to information about more complex readings, with a few examples of deck match ups that work well for the author. It's not a long chapter, running from p. 47 to 54.

Chapter three is *'Reading Practice without a Querent'* [p. 55], *'what do you do when you want to practice your reading skills but have on one for whom to read?'* [p. 55].

In chapter four the author talks about *'Interactive Readings'* [p. 63], *'I would read for her, but I would involve her in the process...this was the first time I had... tried a completely interactive style of reading, with both reader and querent actually drawing and interpreting cards'* [p. 64]

Included in this chapter is a spread created by Valerie Sim and her friend, who is also an experienced reader and the reading resulting from it.

An overview of the use of '*Elemental Dignities*' [p. 73] as per the Golden Dawn associations is the subject of chapter five and is something I find interesting but have yet to develop or utilise in readings.

*'Elemental Dignities (EDs), as part of a Tarot lexicon, deal with the interpretation of the meaning of a group of cards by means of elemental interaction and analysis.'* [p. 73]

Sounds scary, '*but it all boils down to the four elements: Fire, Water, Air, and Earth-their individual characteristics and their interaction.'* [p. 73]

Chapter six is '*Original Spreads*' [p. 85] '*The spreads that follow do not necessarily represent new methods, but rather present new spreads, many of which incorporate new means of interpretation such as numerology, stones, dignities, and so one*' [p. 85]

It includes a couple of '*Student Spreads*' [p. 86], Ms Sim's spread designed specifically for Sarah Ovenall's lovely Victoria Regina deck [<http://www.thefool.com>] with sample reading, and several more to try.

Chapter seven [p. 177] is another favourite of mine about '*Creative Writing with the Tarot*' and like chapter one is far too short.

I've always thought tarot is a great tool to stimulate creativity, be it writing or artwork, the idea bears further study and it's nice to see this side of tarot included here.

Oh, and it could help you learn and retain the meanings of the cards if you're interested in that kind of thing ;)

Chapter eight is the '*Conclusion*' [p. 127] and runs to only one side. It's a nice little sign off message from Valerie Sim, '*If you have gotten nothing else from this books, I hope you now understand how important it is never to stop looking at ways to get "out of the box" with your cards.'* [p.127]

But that's not all, in '*Appendix A*' [p. 129] we have a '*collaborative story penned by the Comparative Tarot e-list*' [p. 129], a fun way to use the cards for creative writing, and '*Appendix B*' [p. 159] is further reading resources.

Overall an interesting book and topic for anyone to read, though the methods are better suited to tarot enthusiasts who are already comfortable using spreads and doing readings, even if it's just for themselves.

Now, where the devil are my slippers?

## Book Review: The Kabbalah Tree: A Journey of Balance & Growth

*Written by Rachel Pollack*

### *Review by Krys Bottril*

I think it necessary to state from the start that this is not a book for a beginner who wishes to obtain some basic knowledge of the kabbalah, whether in its traditional Jewish interpretations or in those used by students of the Western Mysteries or by Christian esotericists. Rachel Pollack has attempted to include numerous, often conflicting, ideas about the Tree of Life. In many cases, a synthesis of these different viewpoints is not really possible. A person with some experience in this subject matter may well gain new realisations from meditating on an interpretation that is radically different from the one with which they are familiar. However, a beginner is more likely to experience confusion.

Before going into detailed impressions, out of fairness I also need to confess that I had major difficulties with the Haindl poster of the Tree, of which the book purports to be an exposition. To my eyes it is a jumble of dark, threatening images that belong more to a nightmare than to my perception of the Tree as a clear and luminous symbol of divine creation and our part in that creation. I also did not see many relationships between the choice of symbols and their location and the kabbalistic correspondences with which I am familiar.

The above is not intended as a criticism, but rather as an observation of my personal reactions to the artwork. Artistic expression and the aesthetic reactions of those who view it are highly subjective. This was my first exposure to the work of Hermann Haindl and I did not manage to “connect” with it; a matter that is no doubt due more to a deficiency in myself than in the artist. It would probably be useful for a prospective reader of this book first to assess his/her own reactions to the poster, as these will inevitably colour some of the subsequent experience of the text.

Rachel Pollack’s stated intention is to cover Jewish, Christian and Hermetic concepts of the kabbalistic Tree in a variety of interpretations, and also to include some input from tribal/shamanistic and scientific viewpoints. She recognises that this will give rise to a number of apparently contradictory statements. She also recognises that by speaking to a number of very different spiritual paths, she might also upset at least some readers some of the time. She therefore asks the reader to set aside previous beliefs, especially any negativities from previous religious upbringing, when approaching the book. She emphasises that a tree is a living being undergoing constant change, and that the symbolic Tree likewise must constantly adapt to new ideas.

The symbology of trees is discussed in great detail. Reflecting shamanistic concepts, a tree is presented as being a ladder/vehicle for a journey, with a discussion of the ladder of Jacob and the ladder of DNA. This in turn reflects the journey of the creative energy in the lightning flash down the Tree, and our return journey back up the Tree into Oneness. Other connections to trees

are explored, These including the sacrificial aspects of the Christian crucifixion, the coffin of Osiris embedded in a tree, Odin on the World Tree, and the Native American Sundance in which young men pierce their bodies and dance around a sapling while their blood flows.

From this, the discussion moves to tree symbology in the Genesis stories. At this point, Rachel Pollack introduces the kabbalistic concept of the four worlds, linking them to the four Hebrew letters that make up the word PRDS – paradise – which was used as an acrostic by the rabbis to provide a guideline to the interpretation of the Torah. P = Peshat = plain, simple = literal; R = Remez = hint, allusion = intellectual; D = Drash = exposition, homily = allegorical; S = Sod = secret = spiritual. Following the idea of a friend of the author, these are mapped in a rather unsatisfactory manner to the Tree at Malkuth, Geburah, Chesed and Kether.

The male/female polarities of the Tree are then introduced through a useful discussion of the Adam and Eve myths. One of the insights that arises from this discussion is the idea that God created humanity in God's own image as a perfect hermaphrodite. However, since perfection implies no further movement or development, and therefore no advance, humanity had to be split into male and female so that it might discover itself through dialogue. (Interestingly, Rachel Pollack gives two interpretations of this story, where the splitting of humanity into male and female is seen as being something good in one and as a consequence of the Fall in the other!). Likewise God created an image of God's Self in creation, and creation is reflected in the Tree with its essential male-female polarities. It is possible to link these two concepts together with the further idea, found in some other authors, that the task of humanity is to ascend back up the Tree to Oneness, bringing with itself the sum total of experience and knowledge that will bring creation, and thus God's knowledge of Self, to its ultimate completion.

The discussion of the Genesis myths continues with an analysis of serpent symbology, which is appropriate since one of the ways to ascend the Tree is called the "Way of the Serpent". Rachel Pollack contrasts the double serpent of the healing caduceus and of the ida and pingala energy flows with the single serpent of cunning operating in the Garden of Eden. The single serpent led Adam and Eve to knowledge (the invisible sephirah Daath, which is not shown on the poster), but without wisdom (Chokmah) and understanding (Binah). As a result, this knowledge led to shame about sexuality and a move away from the divine. There follows a very good interpretation of the story of the Fall and its relationship to the Tree, which touches on Gnostic concepts and includes a discussion on various aspects of knowledge without wisdom and understanding.

A more-detailed exposition of Daath follows. The word itself means knowledge, and thus is claimed to have sexual connotations, as in the phrase "Adam knew Eve". This leads to a concept of Daath as being hidden in the abyss that lies between the three higher and seven lower sephiroth, and attainable only through the Fall, i.e. through the consciousness and subsequent shame of sexuality. This restriction of Daath to a sexual content colours much of the subsequent discussion of this sephirah and, in my opinion, leads to some rather strained use of sexual imagery, especially in the theory of Judith Laura presented on page 44, in which Netzach and Hod form testicles on either side of the penis of Yod that impregnates Malkuth.

There is another interpretation that connects Daath with the Fall, which is not covered by Rachel Pollack. According to this, Daath is the empty space that was left when, as a result of the Fall, the abyss was opened and Malkuth fell from its original position to the bottom of the Tree. This arises from the realization that if Malkuth is superimposed over Daath, the shape of the Tree becomes perfectly symmetrical top to bottom.

Chapter 4 looks more fully at the concept of the four worlds initially presented in the exposition of the paradise myths. These worlds are explained as relating to emanation (Aziluth), creation (Briah), formation (Yetzirah) and action (manifestation) (Assiah), which are linked to the four letters of the divine name YHVH and to the four archetypal elements. The interaction between the four worlds is presented in the well-known “Jacob’s Ladder” diagram of four interlinked Trees, in which the Tiphareth of the Tree 1 becomes the Kether of Tree 2, Yesod (1) becomes Daath (2), Malkuth (1) becomes Tiphareth (2), and then Tiphareth (2) becomes Kether (3) and so on. It is at this point in the book that the first lengthier exposition of the Haindl poster appears. The images around the sephiroth are related to yet another way in which the four worlds can be viewed on the Tree: Aziluth contained in Kether, Briah in the triangle of Chesed + Geburah + Tiphareth, Yetzirah in the triangle of Netzach + Hod + Yesod and Assiah in Malkuth. The main point that is made is that there is no absolute distinction between these four levels in the images used and that Malkuth/Assiah is portrayed as being as mysterious as Kether/Aziluth.

The next chapter starts to look at some of the more defined correspondences placed on the sephiroth in the Haindl poster (Daath is not shown as such on the poster). The colours attributed to the sephiroth follow the Briatic scale, with the exception that Malkuth is for some reason shown as gold, instead of being divided into the usual four Briatic colours of black, citrine, russet and olive. The planetary correspondences follow a common modern Western scheme. The eight sephiroth in their sequence from Binah down to Malkuth are assigned Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon and Earth, respectively. This results in a more or less satisfactory correspondence between the qualities of the sephiroth and the astrological qualities of the planets. As is often the case, however, the outer (transpersonal) planets cause problems. In older times, when these planets were unknown and Daath was not considered a sephirah as such, Kether was associated with the “First Swirlings” (Rashith ha-Gilgalim) and Chokmah with the Zodiac Wheel. Modern kabbalists attempt to assign Uranus, Neptune and Pluto to these three sephiroth. Haindl attributes Pluto to Kether and Neptune to Chokmah, which would leave Uranus for Daath. Going purely by the astrological qualities of the planets, I feel more comfortable with Pluto, the planet of truth and transformation, assigned to Daath; Uranus, with its explosive and unexpected nature to Chokmah; and Neptune, the mystic, spiritual seeker of union with the All, to Kether. These are, however, purely subjective opinions.

Following a mapping of the human body onto the Tree, Rachel Pollack moves to discuss the overall structure of the Tree with its male-female polarities. This I find to be the most laboured part and unhelpful of the whole book. Much is made of the admittedly patriarchal origin of the Kabbalah and of the fact that Haindl attempts to achieve a more ambiguous presentation of sexuality, for example in placing owls (traditionally goddess symbols) into the “alpha male” sphere of Chokmah. A lot of space is also given to Judith Laura’s theory, in which the grammatical endings of the Hebrew names of the sephiroth are used to assign maleness or femaleness. This has the result of removing all the traditional horizontal male-female polarities,

with the exception of Chesed and Geburah, since, according to this system, Kether, Hod, Netzach and Yesod become male, and Binah, Chokmah, Tiphareth and Malkuth become female. However, by following the ancient adage of “as above, so below”, and working from our own experience of ourselves, it is obvious that maleness also contains female qualities and femaleness male qualities. Also, the simple exercise of picking a familiar pantheon and assigning the various deities to the sephiroth, according to their characteristics and qualities, will again show how easy it is to fit a female deity into a “male” sephirah and a male deity into a “female” sephirah. The concept of cross-polarity on the Tree is nowhere as new and revolutionary as it is made out to be here.

Chapters 6 and 7 contain a more-detailed look at the imagery and correspondences of the individual sephiroth. Again much is made of the deliberate reversal of polarities in the Haindl poster imagery. I must admit that even with Rachel Pollack’s rationalisations for the choice of images, I did not find them helpful. Some continue to be downright confusing. For example, the crucified Christ is shown rising above Chokmah in order to represent the principle of the white column of mercy. However, the crucifixion surely blends the polarities of mercy and sacrifice with those of severity and punishment, thus leading to the balance of Tiphareth, where the sacrificed gods are normally assigned. In order to justify the placement of owls in Chokmah, Chokmah and Binah are treated as one Divine Female, which to my mind muddies their opposing characteristics to a totally unhelpful degree. Likewise, the snake with its tail in its mouth that appears in Chesed is taken as symbolising the ouroboros and thus indicating eternal life, which is explained as showing the essential message of the sephirah of mercy, that life never ends. To my mind, the promise of life, linked as it is to the myths of sacrificial gods, fits more within Tiphareth.

The interesting point is made, first suggested by Alan Moore in his “Promethea” graphic novels that the number of Daath should be pi, which is the ratio of 22/7 (the number of paths over the number of the classical planetary sephiroth or number of double Hebrew letters). Daath is not shown, but a lizard, or perhaps salamander, as a symbol of advancement, is shown moving up from the snakes depicted in Chesed and Geburah to the human forms depicted in Chokmah and Binah. Daath is described as a dangerous place, because it is the point at which physical manifestation disappears, and so to enter it means one cannot come out in the same form as before. Daath is also described as an unfinished sephirah, which we are expected to complete once we learn to cross the abyss between the lower and the higher sephiroth. This is perhaps an allusion to the interpretation of Daath being the original location of Malkuth, with our task being to restore it there through our reascending of the Tree. Curiously, no mention is made of Daath being the hub between the Tree of Life and the qliphothic tree of evil. Instead, this function is attributed to Geburah, which seems to me very strange, given that Geburah is the purifying sephirah that causes the destruction of all that should not be.

The exposition of the Tree finishes in chapter 8 with a discussion of the paths linking the sephiroth. Each of these has a corresponding Hebrew letter and tarot trump card. The descriptions and discussions here are rushed and sketchy, as if the author felt she was running out of time or maybe had gone over the required length for the manuscript. Discussions to the tarot imagery is restricted to the Haindl tarot, with which I am not familiar. However, the concepts presented are the classical ones. The paths are only discussed in the direction from the

higher to the lower sephirah. This is a pity, since a wealth of further symbolism emerges when the paths are considered bidirectionally.

The use of the tarot with the Tree is covered in a very brief appendix, and in one spread presented in Chapter 4. The suggestions are as follows:

**Four Worlds Spread:** Lay out two cards for each of the worlds, in a sequence of pairs placed one under the other starting from the top, 1, 2 for Aziluth, 3, 4 for Briah, 5,6 for Yetzirah and 7, 8 for Assiah. The odd numbered cards answer the question: “Who am I in [the relevant world]?” while the even numbered card answer the question: What is my task in that world?

**Tree spreads:** lay out cards in the pattern of the sephiroth on the Tree, one card per sephirah. The possible interpretations for the meaning of each sephirah in our lives are given.

As a variant, a whole-pack reading can be done: one card is chosen as significator and placed above Kether. The rest are laid out, seven per sephirah including Daath, and the reading is based on the connections between the cards in each sephirah. Such a reading can take many hours to complete.

The imagery of the cards can also be used as an aid to understand the Tree, while at the same time the imagery of the Tree aids in understanding the cards. This is done by placing the trumps over the relevant paths on a symbolic representation of the Tree (for example the Haindl poster), or by using the cards of each suit in turn to represent the sephiroth in each of the worlds. Alternatively, all four suits can be used together, with all Aces placed on Kether, all Kings on Chokmah, all Queens on Binah, all Knights of Tiphareth and all Pages on Malkuth, with cards of the relevant numbers on the remaining spheres.

A reading list is given at the back. I was surprised not to find Gareth Knight’s “A Practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism”, Dion Fortune’s “The Mystical Qabala” and William Gray’s “Ladder of Lights” included here.

There are a couple of technical inadequacies that need to be addressed. The editing has been careless in places, resulting in at least two unpardonable errors:

page 9: “*Calgary*, the hill where Christ died” !!!

page 144: Path 20 is described as going from *Netzach* to Tiphareth, when in fact it links *Chesed* with Tiphareth.

In a book that covers a subject as complicated and as rich in correspondences as the Tree of Life, a well-structured index is a vital component. Unfortunately, the indexer of this book was restricted to a few pages with just a single level of index entries. This has resulted in unacceptably long strings of undifferentiated page references for many entries, thus decreasing the usability and usefulness of the index to a minimum.

In conclusion, I repeat that this is not a book for beginners. It is likely to be more attractive to readers who are in sympathy with the artistic imagination of Hermann Haindl than to those who are not. I personally found it to contain some interesting insights, but I would not class it among my list of essential reference works.

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### ***Review by TemplumKat***

*“I think you can delve deeply into the tradition and its images in their most powerful form and still discover it's all about life as people live it. The Tree of Life should be just that, and I think Hermann's painting reminds us of the life in the Tree.”*

Rachel Pollack.

Rachel Pollack, author of twelve books on Tarot, including the widely respected “Seventy-Eight Degrees of Wisdom” here turns her attention directly to the Kabbalah and its relationship to Tarot, through an extended analysis of Hermann Haindl’s Tree of Life painting, usefully included as a poster within the book. Pollack has already worked with Haindl to produce two essential titles as companions to his Tarot deck, and spent several weeks with him on that task, so was no stranger to his artwork.

This artwork, blending natural and animal motifs in earthy hues as a backdrop to the Tree of Life, is both complex and simplistic at the same time, interweaving diverse cultural myths and hinting at a common universality. His Tarot has the same approach, with both I-Ching hexagrams, Runes, and Native American imagery woven into the rich tapestry of the deck, setting numerous paths of interpretation and exploration for those seeking beyond the superficial symbolism of other decks.

Pollack’s book is presented as 8 chapters of 156 pages, a 4-page appendix, and a related reading list and index. The poster is included in a small pocket in the inner back sleeve of the book, which does unfortunately mean it is heavily folded – folds which are still evident even when the poster is framed under glass.

The aim of the book is given as an interpretation of the piece of artwork, but – like the Tree of Life itself – this artwork soon forms a structured focal point for Pollack to work against as she examines the shamanistic side of the tree, the use of Hebrew letters to convey a mystical understanding of the Universe, and the history of the Kabbalah itself.

She expands into the Four Worlds of the Kabbalah, then, after taking a break to ponder on the polarities of the Sephiroth, or components of the Tree diagram, she presents two chapters working through the Sephiroth in turn, and a final chapter on the twenty-two paths where she explores the relationship of the Hebrew letters to the Tarot symbolism.

The cover notes of the book quote that she “draws on many unusual sources” and to some extent this is evident, although her main sources include the usual authors such as Regardie, Ponce, Crowley and Scholem. Her most unusual source is Alan Moore, a graphic-novel writer, whose

work she refers to a number of times through the book, particularly his work, “Promethea” (pgs. 95, 129, 133). This is not something I have read, but will no doubt look for if it indeed is based on a Kabbalistic model!

There is much to be gained from reading this book, as either a novice to the Kabbalah or with some experience of the subject, although those looking for an instant key-guide to the correspondences between the two systems will be disappointed by the brevity of the final chapter where the attributions of the Tarot to the Paths – and hence, the Hebrew letters – are examined. There is little also in the way of using the Tree in performing Tarot reading, which is the subject of the brief four-page appendix, although this is compensated by the inclusion of a method of laying the cards out in a four-world reading (pg. 73) which simple method provides deep meaning.

In fact, for me, it was the highlighting of the Kabbalistic idea of the Four Worlds, mainly through the allied concept of PRDS – Paradise – that raises this book above other similar titles. The idea that all things can be interpreted on four levels, from their actual manifestation to their divine source, is fundamental to any reading of the Tarot, the teachings of the Tree, and the universal commonality in all mystical approaches. That this can be summarised in four key letters, and used to unlock a new way of experiencing the world is a gem of a secret within Kabbalah that deserves to be conveyed to a wider audience, and for doing this so clearly, Pollack can be applauded.

This book is not without minor faults, namely an avoidance of examining the complexities of difference between systems, for example, the concept of *gilgul*, or re-incarnation, is not in Kabbalah as it is in Buddhism, etc. There are also broad-brushed phrases such as “western Kabbalah” and “most Kabbalists” which skate over the complexities of difference within the traditions. I also found her reference to Regardie as a “great historian” slightly jarring – other than his publication of the Golden Dawn rituals, indeed a useful historical document – I was unaware of his standing as a historian.

None of these minor issues detract from the work, which is a Llewellyn publication after all, not a PhD thesis! It is refreshing to read a work that never loses sight of the application of the concepts to understanding the world around us, and as Pollack rightly says, “The lines on the Tree do not just construct a diagram, they signify ideas.” (pg. 56)

### Websites

Rachel Pollack’s site: <http://www.rachelpollack.com>

Pollack interview dealing with this title and her thoughts on Kabbalah at <http://www.angelfire.com/nm/spiritualwarrior/index.562.html>

Alan Moore information: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan\\_Moore](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Moore)

My website: <http://www.kabbalahcourse.com>

## Book Review: Mystical Origins of the Tarot

*Written by Paul Huson*  
*Reviewed by Diana McMahon-Collis*

Publisher: Destiny Books/Inner Traditions 2004 Rochester, Vermont. ISBN 0-89281-190-0

**Availability: All good book stores plus direct from the distributor - with the following special offer. \*\*\* Please mention to Deep Books that you are from TABI as TABI members can receive FREE POSTAGE when ordering items that have been reviewed in TABI News. \*\*\***

Distributor: Deep Books - [www.deep-books.co.uk](http://www.deep-books.co.uk) Tel: 020 8693 0234 RRP £14.99

This is a very attractive book, in several ways and one that is likely to be on the bookshelves of many tarotists in the future. It does not take too much reading to get the impression that this is one of those pieces that represents a "life's work" on the authors part. However the context of how the book has arisen soon becomes apparent in the author's preface where he explains that originally it was intended to be a revision of his previous famous tarot work "The Devil's Picturebook". Paul Huson explains that when he was in the process of re-reading that text, he realised that so much new light had been shed on the history of the tarot subsequently, plus his own views on the tarot had changed.

But whatever the background and *raison d'etre* for this book to arise, *Mystical Origins of the Tarot* is clearly a stand alone book. Or should I say manual because in a way it is like a catalogue of tarot history, card by card and suit by suit. There is also a powerfully adept handling of the general way in which spiritual meanings and divination became associated with the tarot.

For anyone interested in the astrological associations of the tarot, this area is handled with a welcome straightforward quality. The Golden Dawn Attributions are given and the Decan System of Rulership explained, with its roots in Chaldea (also the ancient home of Numerology). The Egyptian element often pinpointed as significant in the development of tarot history is given great clarity. Nothing is really forgotten here including the Book of Thoth, Etteilla's System and the Kabbala.

But what is most engaging about the book is the way that the author weaves a story in his narration. Finding out about the history of the tarot becomes an exciting adventure! It is easy to start imagining scenes from days gone by as he invites us to understand how and why the tarot has developed as it has done.

The book is also a delight in terms of including many black and white line drawings, helping us to see visually how tarot symbolism has emerged and travelled through the depths of time. As

you might expect there are crossovers with so-called ordinary playing cards. And it is fascinating to chart the developments and similarities.

All through the chapters covering the series of "Trump" cards, or Major Arcana and the "Suit" Cards or Minor Arcana, Huson offers the original cartomantic interpretations from a range of sources, including Mathers, De Meller, the Golden Dawn and Wait, together with his own suggested interpretations.. There is also a valuable chapter on the relationship of Cartomancy and Tarot, with a clear explanation as to how the very word Cartomancy arose and how it relates historically to "the practice of reading prophetic meaning into the random selection of signs or symbols".

Paul Huson also discusses how the medieval psyche was affected by popular culture, such as regular seasonal dramas and how the imagery of these has affected what has ended up on tarot card faces. There is an additional section on reading the tarot, working with spreads and understanding the importance of intuition as well as learned meanings for the cards.

Basically with this book the author suggests that if you are interested in tarot you will only be doing yourself a service to make yourself familiar with its history and supplies the means herein to do so. I recommend a straight read through from start to finish, to enjoy the teller's tales! And then keep in close at hand ready to dip into whenever you want to understand more about where a card's imagery has come from. This is a dense book that demands time and focus to really appreciate all that the author has to share. But it also happens to be like a good novel - hard to put down once you get into it! I have seen various attempts to document the history of the tarot. This seems to be the most thorough and most convincing to date.

## Book Review: Charm Spells

*Written by Ilena Abrev*

*Reviewed by Sezo*

The book is divided into 2 parts. Chapters 1 – 5 give an introduction to the world of magic to the teen that is new to the idea. Chapter 6 – 8 are spells.

Chapter 1 – Introduction to Magic sets the tone. Ms Abrev writes a short and concise chapter outlining what magic is and isn't. The tone is friendly and conversational. Although I understand she is the mother of a 'teen witch' herself, the tone isn't condescending, not the 'I'm older and so much more wiser than you'. She talks to you like an older friend, concerned and wanting to help you explore this new world you've stumble across. She then challenges the reader to try out a spell, understanding you're a teen wanting to experiment and do 'crazy' things, "that's why you guys make such great magicians. The words NO and YOU CAN'T are not yet fled in the teen memory format." It does get slightly teacher-like at the end with a pep talk on how saying no is cool, but it's a valid point.

Chapter 2 – What are positive and negative magic?. Ms Abrev is careful to not use 'black' magic, or to say 'witches do / do not'. Rather than witch, she uses the word 'practitioner', - safe from the media hype and helpful to the teen who doesn't want to associate themselves with witch. She refers to the Wiccan Rede 'An it harm none, do what thou wilt' without stating its origin. Abrev keeps the information clear, but maybe a little simplistic and ethically dubious. The bully example is fairly apt here, saying as a practitioner (though those who use harmful magic aren't 'true practitioners' for her) you can chose to wish harm on the bully, or you can be a smart kid and use positive magic to let them leave you alone. Personally, I think a spell to help that bully deal with his or her insecurities and causing issues is better as then you aren't simply pushing the bully on to someone else. Easy done with Wiccan seals of approval to boot!

Chapter 3 - Witches, well it had to come up at some point. "There are real-life witches out there, but there are also trendy witches. If you are serious, carry the craft in your heart and not in the way you dress or wear your hair". At last! Someone realises that there are teens out there that want to learn and explore more, not just looking for a spell to be like Sabrina the teenage witch. She later says to not just read her book, but other books, and borrow books from other people, 'the key to knowledge is to have an open mind'. Abrev sees that it's not the next generation of witches, but of young impressionable adults, who need to have the full facts now whilst in this crazy world of not accepting NO and YOU CAN'T.

Chapter 4 – The God and Goddess. Personal point is that so far I understood this book to be about the practice of witchcraft, but here we have the Wiccan elements of belief. Again, refreshingly a balanced view of the God and Goddess, not just the Goddess in all their archetypal forms though in a Wiccan dualistic format. No pointless lists of deity correspondences or days of the festivals, just a brief point in that with spellwork you are dealing with energies which are linked to the energies of the God and Goddess. Incentive for the teen to do their own research, use their own brain, but no help of book titles or mythologies to look into.

Chapter 5 – Getting Started. Brief descriptions and outline of the tools one might need for magical work. No extensive list of tools like Silver RavenWolf's *Teen Witch*, just some crystals, candles, censer, herbs oils, drawstring bags (with instructions on how to make your own!), mortar and pestle, parchment paper (with a cheap alternative of scrunched up paper). I feel there could have been some alternatives for candles for those who aren't allowed candles for fire reasons etc. Coloured stones would work but to the new teen practitioner that idea might not have come to mind to switch, and no mention of easy to keep, hide and effective dried herbs in tubs from supermarkets.

Chapter 6 – Mini colour spells. And yes we are talking mini! With a brief sentence about the qualities of each colour and a spell idea to light green candles for wealth, blue candles for healing etc. Nothing mind blowing but I did feel yes at last! We are at the spells! For most teens needing a quick spell I can't help but feel the last 5 chapters would have been ignored and headed straight for this chapter and the following one.

Chapter 7 – A spell to go please! More mini spells, though not that complicated, one herb or stone to carry for those teen moments of love, prosperity, jobs, parents, friends, driving lessons, new school, beauty (inner beauty and confidence). Simple spells to do for your friends who are feeling low or uncertain in these crazy teen years. Ethically, doing spells for others without their permission is wrong, but I feel Abrev comes from the school of thought that if its good energy then you don't need permission, but she has already cited Wiccan belief and practice. Now I'm getting confused if she's a practitioner, or a Wiccan.. I feel that although this book is an introduction, spells on others should have a paragraph or two about ethics and how to help people help themselves more than throw a spell at a problem.

Chapter 8 – Spells and Rituals – the more complex spells with more ingredients and incantations.. Metaphysically doing spells outside of a protective circle isn't safe with risk of psychic vampires and spirits, (or so I understand) there's no circle casting or energy raising, just the spell. Simple, quick spells, seems slightly lacking especially within a Wiccan framework.. Spells on exam success, getting the dreaded parents to understand you, create and celebrate friendship, dealing with bullies and harassers, keeping your bag safe from thieves in school etc, all good, but there are other spells I'm not all not agreeing with.

I realise no teen book is going to be perfect. The stars on every page and the naff drawings for the chapter pages seem silly, but it seems more of a publisher thing than what Ms Abrev had control over. The content is good till the actual spells come, the point of *Charm Spells*. Ms Abrev realises you will read more widely, but there is no further reading section, no advice from the older friend to help the teen find the good books from the bad. Also, there's no advice about keeping your practices secret, other than a quick note about a temporary altar. Ms Abrev came from a magical family and so might not have to come across that idea. There are some remarks on asking permission from plants and trees for their leaves, with little explanation for why or how to do that. Some of the language to be on a level with the kids, i.e. 'guys' and 'friends 4 ever', but that makes it 'teen friendly'. The 'Babe magnet' spells seems to directly attracting someone you like, rather than the qualities you would like in a partner, meaning 'black' magic. I do get the sense that Ms Abrev has written spells purely for the appeal to the teen market without

thinking how unethical they are. The 'guys in love' spell seems ridiculous for a boy to put apple and pear seeds in their shoes whilst walking. I see little significance for why its shoes, other than 'this will hurt, but if you want love you will do it'. Is Ms Abrev mad, giggling to herself at the thought of boys with seeds in their shoes, whilst the 'girls in love' spell has rose petals. Why the difference for the sexes? If it's not absurd its strange, with 'spells' to help parent/teen relations you buy flowers. Well, that's not technically a spell but buying your parents flowers. Since when was affection and gifts of love between family so strange it becomes a spell?. First rule of magic is that magic helps those who help themselves - from this book, a lot of teen seekers might get the impression that witches sit around doing spells and all of a sudden they have friends when they didn't step out of the house, or make any contact with the outside world, oh we are back to Sabrina world.

It's a good introduction and the first half was a refreshing and light-hearted interesting read for the teen thinking a little more about spells and alternative religions. I was slightly disappointed after the first chapters to see some silly and Wiccan-wise unethical spells for 'trendy witches'.

She defines Witchcraft as a pagan religion but never mentions Wicca. Wouldn't giving the name of the religion help the teen seeker to find more about it on the Internet and other books?. I first got the impression it was written for her teenage daughter in mind as well as other teens, and relying on her own early experiences from her magical family (without the 'I'm hereditary and you're not so listen to everything I have to say' tone) and experiences of teens asking for her advice at first, but after her chapter on negative magic and then spells to win over your crush and pointless seeds in shoe spells I can't work out of she's serious or laughing at every teen reading it. I'd throw away the spells half, the point of the book if I recall and find a better spell book, (Silver RavenWolf for all her faults has some great spells in 'Teen Witch') or create your own.

## Event Review: UK Tarot Conference

*By Mick Frankel*

A short bus ride to Islington and I arrived in good time for the first day of the UK Tarot Conference. The venue, the London Art House, was down an unremarkable side street and it looked nothing special from the outside - but the first room I walked into was really sumptuous. There were a few tables set up around the outside of a gorgeous Georgian reception room. Some people were browsing through books and tarot decks but the furniture looked so comfortable that I decided to relax for a minute with a cup of tea on the chaise-longue.

Everything was very well organised and I'd been lined up to attend the four more advanced sessions. Two before lunch and two after. As more and more people started to arrive, it was very obvious that there was a kind of lightness to the day. Everyone was smartly dressed and, in contrast to other events that I've been to with TABI, there were pastel colours and contemporary, elegant fashion. People looked professional.

I left some TABI handouts by the door as people came in. During the day, I mentioned the TABI course to a few people who were new to Tarot.

First up was a workshop on Elemental Dignities given by TABI member Paul Hughes-Barlow. I'd been in touch with Paul on the message board and I'd said that I'd say hello. I knew that Paul had recently written a book, "Tarot and the Magus" and the double-barrelled surname led me to expect someone very upper-class and frighteningly esoteric.

So as I introduced myself, I was delighted to meet a friendly, down-to-Earth bloke with a London accent similar to my own. The room that Paul's workshop was in had an Egyptian theme to it. The walls were painted with hieroglyphics and the curtains had Arabic writing on them. There were a couple of five-foot tall navy blue vases with tiny stars all over them. All in all, I thought that the style was early Parisian cabaret.

The seating was a little bit awkward. I wanted to take notes and most of the seats were low settees arranged in rows either side of the room. It looked like it might be tricky to sit there and write comfortably so I went for a sort of double-seat on its own at the back of the room.

Paul's talk was superb. He described the method he uses to look at the way the elements Fire, Earth, Air and Water interact with one another in a Tarot reading. Then Paul asked us to form groups of three and gave each group an envelope with three Thoth cards in it. Each group had to try to look at how the elements interacted in the three cards and what that might mean.

I really liked this approach. It was practical and useful. Plus it made me think that Paul had taken the trouble to prepare for his workshop in a thoughtful way.

Then one person from each group stood up in front of everyone to talk briefly about the three cards in their envelope. I was happy to do the talking for the group that I was in and I enjoyed it.

Unfortunately, there was one person who was disruptive and continually interrupted both Paul and the next speaker Adam Fronteras, whose workshop was titled 'Tarot and Astrology'.

I've seen Adam speak before. He's a bit of a Tom Conti look-alike and mumble-alike. He knows his stuff but he's not someone who dominates the room with his presence. And my Astrology is good enough to know that we were in for a rough ride when Adam apologised for being disorganised saying, "My Mercury is in Pisces..."

There was some fascinating material. I especially liked a Renaissance picture of the Zodiac with images to represent the Houses. The 8<sup>th</sup> House image looked very much like the Tarot de Marseille trump XIII.

When the disruptive participant started to talk about the size of his magic wand, there was a nice moment when he was challenged in fine style by a very elegant woman sat towards the front of the room. It was only much later, just before the cocktail party, when I plucked up the courage to say hello, that I discovered that she was TABI member Cilla Conway!

Lunchtime was actually one of the highlights of the day for me. I stayed in the building because I'd brought a packed lunch and so had another man who'd been in the two morning sessions with me. We discovered that we'd both come to Tarot from Astrology and I asked him whether he used Astrology in his Tarot readings. We quickly got involved in a nuts-and-bolts discussion about the Golden Dawn system of astrological correspondences for the pip cards which he wasn't familiar with.

He drew out the Zodiac and we went through each of the 36 decanates and their Tarot correspondences. He really liked this, and so did I. Tellingly, he said, "This is exactly what I thought the last workshop was going to be like!"

During the lunch break, the organiser Kim came up to us and asked what we thought about asking Disruptive Man to try to stop interrupting so much. I said that I thought that this would alienate him still further and make him interrupt all the more.

First up after lunch was a really wonderful workshop with Caitlin Matthews. This was a wonderful workshop. Well-prepared and professionally delivered. In fact, it was more like a guided meditation as we each did a five-card spread for ourselves. It was the Finding a Tarot-Teacher Spread devised by Caitlin Matthews, the central card representing "who holds the key to the otherworldly door?"

Caitlin had asked us to bring a deck with pictorial pip cards because she wanted us to use the powerful technique of entering into the card. This was a great workshop and there were no disruptions.

Unfortunately, the final session was a dismal let-down. As far as I was concerned it wasn't a workshop at all. It was someone trying to sell books. Apparently, Titania Hardie arrived a few minutes before her session was due to start. She then talked pretty much non-stop for about an hour ostensibly about "Tarot and The Mystery Tradition".

I had absolutely no idea what the session was supposed to be about.

So, that was it for the main part of the day. There was a break before the cocktail party in the evening and I met up with Paul Hughes-Barlow in the beautiful reception room. When I asked where he'd been, I was pleased to hear that he'd been down the pub to watch England play football.

We had a chat and then ended up at the local Sausage & Mash (S&M) Café. We were later joined by the owners of Atlantis Bookshop which is near the British Museum. It was another really nice moment in the day.

Back at the Arts Centre, I bought a lovely book, "Understanding the Planetary Myths" by Lisa Tenzin-Dolma.

Lisa kindly signed the book for me. She was there with her daughter who's 11 years old, the same age as my son. I had a chat with her daughter about how she felt about being in year six and moving to a new school. Looking back, I think that was the most normal conversation I had all day.

I was running out of the steam by the time we got around to the cocktail party. I found myself in conversation with someone who told me a long story about how a string of coincidences had enabled them to get their front wall rebuilt very cheaply.

By this point my head was starting to spin. There were three cheers for Kim for organising the event and people talked about looking forward to the next one.

Well, I think that the lesson for TABI is that if you're running an event like this, it's important to deal with potentially disruptive people as quickly as possible.

The venue was stylish and two out of the four workshops were very good so thanks very much to TABI for kindly paying half the price of my ticket.

## Deck Review: The Intuitive Tarot

*By Diana McMahon-Collis*

*Author: Cilla Conway*

Publisher: Connections – Online Ordering Facility at [www.connections-publishing.com](http://www.connections-publishing.com)  
RRP £19.99 but check out the website for special prices

Purple is such a popular colour choice for tarotists and so you may be instantly attracted by the purple box that these cards arrive in. On the other hand if you are a chocolate lover you may keep thinking they are a box of Milk Tray and develop designs on eating them! Seriously, once you open the box containing the Intuitive Tarot set it is quite obvious what is inside. This is a set that follows a similar but by no means identical format and design to some of the other sets reviewed from Connections, previously in TABI News, such as the Beginner's Tarot and Tarot de Paris sets.

With the Intuitive Tarot you receive a lidded box with, inside, a paperback bound book with pages that have very attractive printing and backgrounds - and of course the all important deck of cards itself. From the sets that I have seen from Connections so far, I would say that each one has a unique style even if it does in some ways bear similarities to other sets from the same publisher – which is pretty much what you would expect.

In this instance the containing box is of soft, almost matte card. The colouring of the book cover and the backs of the cards keeps up with the purple theme. The card backs seem somewhat similar to the aforementioned Beginner's Tarot as they have one main, strong colour with a contrasting design in silver which, here, is an oval in the centre of the card (which has a special significance, as you will see later). Importantly then, these cards are fine for working with reversals. That is, for choosing blindly and not knowing ahead if the card's face will be reversed.

Continuing with the purely cosmetic factors of the set, Cilla Conway's Intuitive Tarot is an altogether larger sized set than the Beginner's Tarot and also smaller than the Tarot de Paris. These cards measure approximately 3" x 4¼". The card stock itself is similar to other Connections cards in being not overly glossy and, compared with some of the other cards that I have handled, I think it is fair to say that they seem less resilient to the touch. This is a very subtle difference that gives them perhaps a slightly papery feel, which, if you are used to handling a lot of tarot cards you may be aware of.

Generally much more significant than these exterior factors though is the depth of the artwork and the special messages of the cards – plus of course what the book’s text has to offer. I do very much like the way that Connections produce their books. The inner pages are very attractive, with not only an image of each tarot card by the main text, but also a blown up version of the card’s core image in close up, as a background “wash” on the final page of each card section. This page (or half of the page for the minor cards) is given over to the reader for “intuitive notes”, which you may like to jot down as you carry out your readings. I think it is a very nice touch that you have the interior of the image right in front of you on the page.

This is what I mean about Connections focussing in on the unique qualities for each set of cards and books that they produce. I believe they work very closely with their authors and designers to produce products that have an inner coherence. So you do not generally get the sense that the deck was created by one person and the book was thrown in later – maybe by someone else. It is far more of a cohesive whole in this case. Maybe this is because the cards have been “an integral part of the author’s self-development for the last twenty years”.

With that in mind I should explain now that the oval symbol on the backs of the cards is there for a meaningful reason; it is not just a decoration. Cilla Conway has an oval theme running through all of the card images because she is interested in early Goddess cultures and the Divine Feminine. From what she says in the book, I get the impression that she sees the oval image as being one of the most mentally creative. The reference back to the egg and the way that growth takes place in this dark, nourishing place, might be intertwined in some way with her ideas about how intuition and the tarot work together.

Indeed, this set is not called The Intuitive Tarot without a very good reason! The author clearly wants this deck to be one that you can work with on a deep level, bringing your intuition into the fullest play as you look for meaning in the cards. I must say that I have found them very powerful to work with in terms of having graphic, “telling” dreams the night after using the cards. In fact I have found that although at the time of carrying out my reading I was a little unsure of what the cards were saying, I clearly had had some response to their images and reached some insights by morning, after “sleeping on it”.

So what is it exactly about these images that is so powerful? Well it is actually hard to put one’s finger on it. Maybe Cilla Conway really does have something with this oval frame that she’s using to encase the images. But I can certainly say that the colours employed in the artwork are quite striking. There is a wide range of colour here. We are not confined to primary blues, reds and yellows or anything of such a simplistic nature. I think in fact that this set might be one of the closest that I have seen in a while to the Crowley Thoth deck, in terms of complexity of colours. I don’t want to stretch that comparison too far but there are at times when I am sure I can see some similarities in design to that deck, even though the Intuitive Tarot obviously has a uniqueness in its own right.

What you will see here for certain is a mix of vibrant oranges and yellows, but also some olive shades, some muted teal green blues and some graduated pinks and crimson, together with lilac, aubergine and violet. More than your average rainbow! I have to say that I really like the variety of colours; it is quite refreshing. Maybe it has been made possible because some of the images are relatively abstract. For example the Three of Discs shows three cogs working together, with a background that looks somewhere between an industrial factory and a Moorish hotel in the middle east (to my eye, that is).

This is also a good point at which to mention that Suit-wise, the definitions here are Discs, Swords, Rods and Cups and the Courts are Pages, Knights, Queens and Kings. The Major Arcana have the conventional names you will be used to from decks like the RWS. However Justice is numbered VIII and Strength is XI and the Wheel of Fortune is simply called "The Wheel".

In terms of image design, many of the cards have an interesting fluidity, especially where the author is dealing with human figures. The eyes and other facial features are not clearly defined; there is more of a ghost-like or semi-alien quality here. The bodies are almost like some of those in the work of the artist Klimt in the way that they entwine or become quiet fluid with the designs around them, on clothing and artefacts. Temperance is the card used to give the book cover its design and this is quite stunning, with a person who seems something like a wizard or alchemist, pouring liquid from one jug to another. And his coat almost has feathers, so there is a suggestion of the peacock about him. Again, I have to say that this is very much what I personally see in the card, but I hope it gives you some idea of the richness of the imagery that you will find in this deck and how it somehow does play on the mind.

There are also cards where I have drawn a slight blank at first. But then you may find that the closer you look at them, the more they start to throw up images that you didn't realise were there! I can't pretend that these card images are all comfortable or inherently attractive to my eye. What seems more important is that they stir something up in me. There seem to be memories of films I have seen, people I have known or experiences I have had. A crystal ball suspended almost as though within an egg timer in the Four of Rods is filled with an idyllic image of a house in the mountains. There is a figure in the foreground. Is this childhood Heidi, or is the snow globe that reminds me of Orson Welles' reference to Rosebud, the sledge, in his film Citizen Kane? I am really not sure but the card imagery conjures up a lot at once.

To my way of viewing, cards some of the images are even a little scary at times. The Knight of Swords, looks particularly daunting. Maybe it is because he is faceless, behind the mask of his armour plating. Yet it is a card that I feel I want and need to work with in this deck! I suppose what I am getting at is that if you want something pretty-pretty and light-hearted to work with, this is probably not the deck for you. But if you are open to a challenge and want to explore hidden depths this is the sort of deck that I believe that will allow you to do it in a safe way.

Although Cilla Conway makes it clear that she is influenced by Goddess culture, this seems to me to be a deck that has a strong mix of both feminine and masculine qualities within it. So I think it will be perfectly accessible for both genders of reader. Although the set is recommended for readers of all levels, I personally feel it could have the most appeal for the advanced reader. I am not suggesting that a novice would be unable to find any meaning in the cards but that, personally, I think it would be better to start with a more traditional deck if you were just starting with the tarot. But then I am bound to say that because we work with the Rider Waite deck with beginning students at TABI! To be fair, this is the Intuitive Tarot set, so I suspect it is a deck that is bound to “speak” to your intuition, no matter at what level you are with your tarot reading.

Focussing in specifically on the value of the Intuitive Tarot set, what exactly does the book have to offer? Well first there is a description to the card alongside its image. This is followed by traditional meanings for the card and then an idea of how to work intuitively with the card, together with the space to write down your own responses. In the book’s introduction the author shares the technique of "dialoguing" with the card and also covers issues such as difficult cards, negative reactions, random falls and reversals. There are also explanations of how intuition and the tarot work. Plus, at the back of the book, some sample readings (very helpful, I found) together with a nice selection of spreads to experiment with.

I should clarify that the images on the interior pages of the book are not in full colour but neither are they purely black and white. I do not know enough about printing terms to describe the process, but the effect is rather like two tone when using just two colours, though it is more subtle than that in terms of gradation of shades. It is a very pleasing effect anyway and I think this approach lends something special to the book and set as a whole. It becomes not just another tarot text book but an item that is fun and fascinating to read, explore and work with. That is very much how I am approaching the Intuitive Tarot deck at the moment. I would like to thank Cilla, for being so courageous as to share something so personal with us! I look forward to working with the Intuitive Tarot some more.

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## Deck Review: Tarot of the Dead

Created/illustrated by: Monica Knighton

Reviewed by Clare McHale

ISBN: 0-7387-0427-X, Publisher: Llewellyn, Published: 2004

***“Cemeteries and homes are decorated with flowers, and offering tables are laid out with gifts of food, clothing, and anything the loved one enjoyed in life.” – p.1 LWB***

Tarot of the Dead [Tarot de los Muertos] - don't let the name put you off, is inspired by the Mexican Day of the Dead, [Dia de los Muertos] which takes place at varying times during November to *“honor family and friends who have died.”* p. 1 LWB

It's a fun, down to earth tarot deck and its only drawback the fact that the Minors are pips. The deck comes in a colourful side-opening box [no, I won't say it opens like a coffin, though I'm tempted], with a little white book in English and Spanish and a nice black organdy bag that seems to be the standard with Llewellyn decks lately.

*“This isn't about what happens after you die. It's not about religious belief, or lack thereof – as Tom Stoppard says, death is for everyone, even you. It's about letting go of the euphemisms and accepting where the parade is headed.”* – p. 3 LWB

It isn't a scary deck at all despite the skeletons; the backs are covered in coloured diamonds reminiscent of a Harlequin costume with chin-to-chin skulls and two roses so you can't tell which way is up.

In the LWB Strength is listed as 8 and Justice 11. But on the cards they are the other way around. XI [11] is Strength and VIII [8] Justice, but that doesn't matter as the meanings and names are swapped rather than mixed up.

*“17 The Star...*

*...Offers individual light. Union of the spiritual and physical. Reconciliation of the body with the soul. Harmony. Generosity. Platonic love. Peace.*

*Inverted Uneasiness. Malaise. Petty difficulties.”* p. 9

The suits are as follows:

Wands are Pens – Fire suit

Cups are Coffins – Water suit

Swords are Pistols – Air suits

Coins/Pentacles are Reels – Earth suits

*“The old saying that the pen is mightier than the sword may well be true. The wildfire of creative force often cannot be contained by reason or will”* Minor Arcana - Wands/Pens. p. 10 LWB

There are two spreads included in the LWB, the Pyramid and the Celtic Cross. The Pyramid layout is shown on cards in with the deck as a reminder in English and/or Spanish, and at the end of the section there's a very short list of recommended books.

It is such a shame the Minor Arcana are pips, I would've loved to see a full deck of scenes with these little skeletons. Strength for instance, is a fire-eater on the stage, his costume a small tan waistcoat to keep the chill off his.... Okay, I won't go there! Behind him a blue curtain with stars and diamonds provides the backdrop and leaning against it a half moon with a face. Roses around the top of the card frame the scene.

The Empress on the other hand is a fine figure of a pregnant woman, the only fleshed out character in the deck, forgive the pun. A blonde in a cool blue dress sitting on a plush padded chair.

The Wheel of Fortune is a peddling skeleton concentrating madly on keeping his balance on one of those half-penny three wheeled old fashioned contraptions, a snake coils in and out of the large main wheel, while sun flowers, dragon flies and butterflies provide the detail.

I love 15-The Devil, he's such a cutie, a real little gremlin bad to the... okay, okay, and no more puns... until the next one! And the little horned minions beneath their hoofed master manage to look scared despite having no fleshy features to convey the feeling.

The Court Cards are nice, the Queen of Pens [Reina de Plumas], has two skeletons, one upside down in a different outfit and pose to represent the reversed meaning as well as the upright, a nice touch, it almost makes me forgive Monica Knighton for the Minors!

*"Queen: An open, gregarious woman. Curiosity. Strong desire for sex. Pragmatist."* p. 11 LWB  
The upright figure holds aloft a pen, she wears a wreath of green leaves adorned with lighted candles dripping wax down her back. She has a necklace of flowers, a book in her hand, fitting her description very well.

*"Inverted: Ennui. Lack of stimulation. Misdirected energy. Shyness."* p. 11 LWB

The reversed/inverted figure is fully clothed in a soft pink dress; she has a matching fan hiding most of her face and a small crown, with what looks like a flame at the centre, again matching the description. A creature of some kind leaps between the two interpretations of the Queen, in the upright position from tail to head.

The Queen of Cups is underwater with seaweed for hair, bubbles and a green and purple paper chain between the two representations and I'll let you discover the rest for yourself.

It's a non-threatening, colourful deck, based on the Rider Waite and Marseilles decks so should not prove confusing, and I love the idea of a skeleton fire-eater for Strength, even if it is numbered 11!

I would say it's one for the collection.

## Deck Review: Tarot of the New Vision

*Reviewed by Diana McMahon-Collis*

*Creator: Pietro Alligo with Artwork by Raul and Gianluca Cestaro*

Publisher: Lo Scarabeo, Torino Italy 2003 ISBN: 888395299 5 (EX 60) RRP £10.99 incl. VAT  
Size: 2 ¼ " x 4 ¼ " - 78 full colour cards and leaflet

**Availability: All good book stores plus direct from the distributor - with the following special offer. \*\*\* Please mention to Deep Books that you are from TABI as TABI members can receive FREE POSTAGE when ordering items that have been reviewed in TABI News. \*\*\***

Distributor: Deep Books - [www.deep-books.co.uk](http://www.deep-books.co.uk) Tel: 020 8693 0234

*“For the first time, the most famous and best-selling deck in the world from a new perspective”.*

I have been curious about this deck sever since I first heard about it and am now delighted to be able to review it. If you are familiar with Lo Scarabeo decks then you will know to expect cards with a long, slightly thinner appearance than a lot of the other decks around. These are more in keeping with some of the original Tarocchi and indeed this is a company who specialises in producing a whole range of tarot related and oracle cards, including several of the historical Italian decks (e.g. Ancient Tarot of Bologna, Ancient Minchiate Etruria). Lo Scarabeo is in no way stuck in a time warp, though. With decks such as the Tarot of the New Vision, there is a distinct emphasis on progression and an openness to new ideas.

The fundamental idea of this deck is that it offers a new perspective specifically on a very well known tarot deck, which is the Rider Waite Tarot. Anyone who is well versed in tarot will know that there are many clones of that deck around, including updated versions in terms of colouring and style (Universal Waite and Universal Tarot, for example). So is the New Vision just another one of those? I think not, actually.

For one thing, there is a genuine attempt here to get inside the scenes on the cards and see them from a different viewpoint. Sometimes this means literally standing from the main character’s viewpoint. It’s all rather exciting!

When I first considered the idea of seeing the scenes in the cards effectively reversed, in many instances, I did wonder if it would make any real difference. After all, does it matter that we see the merchant’s back in the 6 of Pentacles, with the beggars in the background? Is it not just a mirror image, almost? Well, no, not really.

The way that these cards have been designed, they do make you start thinking about the scenes in the Waite deck in a new way when focussing on individual cards. Or to put it a little differently,

if you have worked with the RWS deck for a long time you may have found that you have got to a point of being a bit stale with it. After so many years it can get to the point where you don't even really "see" the card in any detail. The scene becomes itself a symbol or trigger for an established meaning. That is not all bad; in some ways it is just how tarot works. But sometimes it is nice to have your imagination pushed a little further and I think that is what this deck achieves.

Stylistically, New Vision also happens to be a deck of rather beautiful colours. Many people who come to the Original Rider Waite deck for the first time have reservations about it. They say they find the artwork too chunky, or the colours are too brash, for example. Personally, after trying to learn tarot with decks that were at best abstract and sometimes entirely image-free in the minor arcana, finding the Original Rider Waite deck was like opening Pandora's Box! However, it is a deck that I feel has done its time for me in terms of giving tarot readings – I now only use it as a teaching tool. However, I have to admit that I do get excited whenever I find a new version or development of that deck that is different to the original one!

So, to enlarge further on the Tarot of the New Vision – I do have to admit that this seems a somewhat unwieldy name. Why could it not just be the New Vision Tarot? But that is just a small quibble on my part. The colour scheme, as I say, is quite lovely. It is not a million miles away from the original RWS deck, mind you. But it does seem somehow more delicate and classy. There is a warmth and freshness to these cards that makes them a pleasure to work with. I am sure that some of the credit must go to the artists and creator, who appear to have put their heads together to tighten up the imagery so that it is more refined and delicate.

As for specific differences when you look at the reversed images on these cards. Well, did you know that there has always been a tortoise sitting behind the Emperor's throne? Or that he actually looks out onto a whole group of people? Or that his throne has a carving on the back of an open-winged eagle? These are the sorts of developments and symbol additions that you can expect as you look through this fresh interpretation of the cards.

Sometimes it seems slightly disconcerting not to see the face of the person in the image that you are used to. For example, on the 9 of Pentacles the woman has her back to us and we therefore cannot see her facial features. So can we judge her feelings as easily? Maybe not, though the way that the artist has kept to the rest of the original imagery (just reversed) means that the scene still looks peaceful and provides a feeling of contentment. I would say that in this deck the imagery of the pentacles and grapes in the 9 of Pentacles is much clearer, too. The character does not disappear so much into the scenery and thereby it seems a more realistic scene in some ways. Alright, you don't find pentacles growing on bushes (honest you don't!). But there is a greater three dimensionality in the cards, which makes them feel more accessible.

I have got to admit that there are some very appealing features on many of these cards. This has one of the most stunning depictions of the 3 of Swords that I have seen in a long time. The colouring itself is quite something, with a red heart against a stormy purple sky and golden and black storm clouds above, with the land almost blue and grey with the stormy reflection. The cold atmosphere and wet of the rain is almost tangible! Most of the time nobody wants to see that card pop up in their reading. But if you are feeling pained and this particular version

appeared I believe it might have the power to comfort you. Even if only in somehow conveying that “the rain falls on everybody “ (as that old song goes...).

The card stock, by the way, is the usual, high quality, quite glossy card that Lo Scarabeo seems to regularly use. I find they are easy to shuffle and fan out. And the backs of the cards have a dark blue and white patterning redolent of the Ace of Pentacles image with the hand coming out of the clouds. The image is reversed at the other end so you will not be able to tell if you were choosing cards upright or reversed, when they are face down.

You get some special treats in this deck, too. For instance, in the 8 of Cups, the character is walking away from a scene where fireworks are going off in the background. They somehow convey a finale (the 1812 overture to fireworks comes to mind, where it is performed in various venues in the UK in the summer!). This is a great image to convey success but one that is soon going to fizzle. What a fantastic idea for giving across the message of the 8 of Cups! And of course you get to see the poor old man’s face, hidden in the original Waite deck all these years.

Because Lo Scarabeo have a habit of producing decks with only little white booklets to accompany them, you are going to have to use your imagination to work with the new symbols that you will find on some of the cards. But was it ever thus with tarot. I say this whilst looking at the 7 of Pentacles, with the familiar scene of the chap who, having trawled the soil cultivating his plant, stands back to see what fruit it is bearing in the form of its Pentacles. Above him, in this card, is an angel or spectre in the sky. Is she a guardian angel? Or a symbol of his dreams fading? I don’t know, but it is fun to try to work it out! The LWB says: “Pentacles (metal is extracted from the earth) element: Earth..... 7 – Business, trade, worries. Maybe she is a symbol of worries hanging over this chap, then.

Not too much is changed in this deck from what you would expect in a Rider style set of tarots, in terms of labelling. Cups have become Chalices, Pages have become Knaves – I think that’s about it. You may be familiar with Lo Scarabeo’s Universal Tarot, which was reviewed in an earlier edition of TABI News. In case you are wondering if this is just another version of that I can with total confidence that it is not. The images are stylistically quite different and the colour spectrum is also markedly different. I do like the Universal Tarot but feel that with the New Vision we have something much richer in the colour palette.

I do not even think that the New Vision is close to the Universal Waite deck, which is another one to have deviated from the Original, in terms of colouring. It is fair to say that the Tarot of the New Vision is its own deck. Maybe as we are so used to calling the Waite deck the RW or RWS, we can call this one the NV, for ease of reference! Whatever we call it though I think it will be very appealing to anyone who has understood what the Waite deck has to offer and wants a little bit more. Or for if you have tired of the traditional Waite imagery but would be interested in taking a new look at an old deck. I cannot tell you yet if the change of perspective in the cards makes a huge difference in a reading. But I certainly love the colouring and vibrancy of these cards and enjoy using them already.

## Places to Go, Things to Do

### Regular Meetings

**Nottingham - Astrology Group** meets monthly every 2nd or 3rd Wednesday for talks and practical work. Further details from Gill on 0115 970 3051

**Manchester - Turn of the Cards** - a Tarot discussion group on the third Thursday of every month, hosted by Madame Estelle in New Aeon Books upstairs meeting room. Starts 7pm and the cost is £2.50 (£1.50 concessions). Phone 0161 232 0934

### Shopping

Songs for the Journey Home Mini Deck

*By Alison Cross*

Ten on-the-ball TABI-cats ordered this deck via myself earlier this summer, taking advantage of the considerably cheaper unit price when bulk-buying direct from the deck's creators, Catherine and Dwariko.

Since all buyers seemed delighted with their beautifully illustrated deck and the useful accompanying book, I was pleased to hear recently from co-creator Dwariko van Sommaruga who tells TABI: "We are pleased to announce that there is now a "New Songs for the Journey Home Companion Mini Set" which is very cute and beautiful.

"This set can be easily carried around as your companion deck. The colours are vibrant as I wanted these cards to be emitting a high frequency. The printers have captured the vitality and details of the originals. There is a lot of depth in the cards and one is able to move right into the images and spaces of each card. Although small they have a big impact."

For compulsive Tarot deck buyers such as myself there is an added reason to buy this deck – it isn't just a mini reproduction of the larger deck. "No," says Dwariko, "We have re-created the "1st Wind Song". This card now shows an image of Catherine, who originally captured the vision for this set."

The vision for the deck was key to its creation. Dwariko says "It was important to have a Tarot Deck that reflected the World that we live in now. So, these cards – just like the full-size version - are very easy to interpret as each image with their symbols expresses the essence and meaning of each card."

The cards are 75 mm and are individually packaged by Dwariko in a glorious box. The price for the set is £17 plus £5.00 postage.

Ordering can be through Catherine and Dwariko's website: [www.tarotjourney.co.nz](http://www.tarotjourney.co.nz).  
Email for any inquiries: [tarot@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:tarot@slingshot.co.nz)

### **TABI's Own Links**

#### ***The Tarot Association of the British Isles Web Site***

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

#### ***Past issues of the Newsletter:***

<http://www.tabi.org.uk/page.php?page=newsletter>

#### ***To request a Free Reading:***

<http://www.tabi.org.uk/freereading/freeread.php>

#### ***Discussion forums:***

<http://p213.ezboard.com/btabi>

#### ***UK Tarot Talk - our General Discussion List on Tarot, for readers of all levels, hosted on Yahoogroups.***

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/UKTarotTalk/>

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.

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