



Tarot Association
of the British Isles

TABI NEWS

Welcome from the TABI Team

Welcome to the second edition of the TABI newsletter and hello from your new Editor! We remain grateful to Sue Pyrke for her hard work on establishing the initial newsletter on TABI's official launch. Sue remains a member of the UKTarotTalk list and we wish her every success in the expansion of her business interests. There has been about a six month gap between the first and second newsletters, however our ongoing structure for issuing TABI News is now going to be **quarterly**, based on the seasonal solstices and equinoxes. You can expect to see issues through the year on the approximate dates below:

<i>Christmas/Yule Issue:</i>	<i>Winter Solstice</i>	<i>- 21st December</i>
<i>Spring/Eostre Issue:</i>	<i>Spring Equinox</i>	<i>- 21st March</i>
<i>Summer/Midsummer Issue:</i>	<i>Summer Solstice</i>	<i>- 21st June</i>
<i>Autumn/Year End Issue:</i>	<i>Autumn Equinox</i>	<i>- 21st September</i>

Thanks are due to all of the TABI volunteers who have contributed to this newsletter and special thanks go to Mark Webber for his excellent technical back up and patient support. For the non-technically minded, here is a brief note on navigation for TABI News. Clicking on the page numbers in the contents table will take you directly to the page you want to view. If you want to make the text on a When page look larger, go to "View" and set the option to "Fit Visible".

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

Read on to discover what we have to offer you this Yule!

Diana McMahon
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 all article copyrights remain with the authors. All information given is as accurate as possible when going to press. The articles, reviews and information are offered for interest purposes and are not necessarily reflective of the views of or indicative of an endorsement by the Tarot Association of the British Isles.

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What's new at TABI

Shelley keeps us up to date with events at TABI

Free Readings

Our 1-3 card free reading service is continuing to prove extremely popular - for beginning or intermediate readers, volunteering as a TABI Free Reader is a wonderful way of gaining experience and practice as you work with the cards. We are currently planning to enhance the facilities available to our Free Readers by the introduction of a mentor system, with advice and guidance being available on all aspects of the reading process. If you are interested in applying to become a TABI Free Reader, please send a blank email to reading@tabi.org.uk. If you are an experienced reader and would be interested in joining our mentoring programme, please contact our Mentor Administrator for further details: ribbitcat@yahoo.co.uk.

Training

Our free training programme, based on the Joan Bunning online course *Learning the Tarot*, has just been relaunched. We welcome students of all levels, and offer a mentor-backed system of self-directed study - you are free to set whatever level of pace and commitment suits you. We are also currently looking for experienced tarotists who would be able to provide mentor assistance to our students - for further details, please contact TrainingAdmin@tabi.org.uk.

Situations Vacant

Are you able to spare some time to help with administrative or creative projects at TABI? New volunteers are always needed, particularly writers and reviewers. Please contact admin.shelley@tabi.org.uk for details.

Discussion Forum

Like to discuss tarot? Our mailing list UKTarotTalk is the place for tarot chat, games, practice readings and more. If you're not a member, you can sign up at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UKTarotTalk>.

Coming Soon

We will shortly be offering a selection of tarot images as e-card greetings - watch the TABI web site <http://www.tabi.org.uk> for further details. If you are a UK deck designer and would like us to showcase some of your cards, please contact admin.mark@tabi.org.uk

Why Use Spreads?

Shelley King explores the value of tarot spreads and delineates some that you may not have tried out yet!

When we lay out our cards for a reading in any kind of pre-arranged design, we are using a spread. It isn't essential; a reader can simply flick through the deck or pull a series of cards at random and work from that, but most use a spread for the same reason they read tarot in the first place - for information.

A spread gives us more ideas to play with - in addition to the meaning of the card we've drawn, now we can also consider the meaning of the position the card is placed in. The spread gives context, turning a random series of concepts into a story - something that we, or our querents, can relate to ourselves and our lives.

The position that we assign to a card helps us to take its basic essence and give it *relevance*. We can draw the Wheel of Fortune and talk happily to our querents about destiny and karma and the cyclical nature of existence, but it may not mean a thing to them. However, if we draw it in a spread position called 'lesson to be learned' then we can talk about whether they're trying to be over-controlling in this particular situation, and whether an attitude of 'going with the flow' would make them happier.

Spreads also help us to find patterns and relationships between the cards; those dealing with the past, or with the subconscious - such as the Celtic Cross's 'basis' position - can help us see how a querent has arrived at the point they now find themselves in. If we draw Death, the Ten of Swords and the Tower in these sort of positions, we wouldn't be at all surprised to find ourselves with a querent whose life has been turned totally upside down.

If we study other disciplines, such as astrology or qabalah, we can use a spread which will allow us to incorporate these into our readings. The Tree of Life spread uses the entire deck, the layout reflects the 'lightning pattern' of the Tree, and the positions correspond to the Sephiroth. This provides a very full and detailed reading, with the qabalistic correspondences giving many more layers of meaning to the cards. Rachel Pollack describes using such a spread in *Seventy-Eight Degrees of Wisdom*ⁱ, and likens it in scope to a natal astrology chart; a method of giving a "wider picture of a person's place in the world."

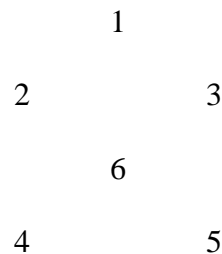
Astrologers may use a spread based on the astrological houses, or the signs of the zodiac. In the book accompanying the *Sacred Circle* deck by Paul Masonⁱⁱ, Anna Franklin details a Planetary Spread in the shape of a seven pointed star, corresponding to the seven planets known to the ancients: Moon - Home Matters; Mercury - Business Matters and Skills; Venus - Love and Relationships; Sun - Fame and Achievements; Mars - Adversity and Opposition; Jupiter - Gain and Expansion, and Saturn - Restrictions. Such wide-ranging categories mean that even a reader who has never studied astrology could easily use this spread for a good general overview.

Any area with which the reader is familiar could be used as the basis for a spread - the influence of the elements, or the seasons, or even of herbs or crystals. Themes could be inspired by the reader's or querent's personal views - a pagan might work well with a spread based upon the Sabbats, for example - or from the deck itself. Cynthia Giles, when writing for the *Russian Tarot of St Petersburg*, created a new layout called the 'Russian Icon'ⁱⁱⁱ, specifically for this deck and Terry Donaldson, creator of the *Lord of the Rings* deck, describes a seven-card Hobbit Spread^{iv} - present situation; querent's objective; forces supporting; forces opposing; significance

of last twelve months; forecast for next twelve months and general overview - laid out in the shape of the letter H.

It is important to remember that all spreads are flexible and can be adapted as necessary. No spread is carved in stone, not even what is probably the most famous and widespread of all - the Celtic Cross. In fact, almost every version given of this spread is slightly different; the basic shape may stay the same but the positions have subtle variations. Joan Bunning, in her book and online course *Learning the Tarot*^v gives four possible options for each position - card seven, at the bottom of the 'staff' section, could be a) you as you are, b) you as you could be, c) you as you present yourself or d) you as you see yourself. Which is right? All of them. As long as you decide *before* you lay out the cards, it can be whatever you want it to be.

The Celtic Cross is a good spread, and usually one of the first that new readers learn, however it can be too focussed on external factors. For a spread which really homes in on a specific issue, professional reader Diana McMahon (TABI's own "Selene")^{vi} recommends a personal favourite - the Star Spread. Laid out to look like a five pointed star, the positions are:



1. The facts
2. Sage advice
3. Dragons to slay
4. What to do
5. Possibilities
6. Crucial insight

Diana finds this spread especially useful for more sensitive querents who are looking for guidance - she finds that being focussed on what dragon they need to slay means they don't judge themselves too harshly for having the dragon in the first place.

Of course, if we can't find a spread that covers exactly what we want to know, there is no reason at all why we can't create our own. Customising a spread specifically for a certain querent or issue can be extremely effective and is very useful where the issue at hand is a little clouded - consider a question such as 'what do I want from X?' (where 'X' could be anything from a relationship to a job to a house move). This could be further broken down into:

1. What do I consciously want?
2. What do I subconsciously want?
3. What do I think I want?
4. What do I think I *should* want?
5. What do I really want?

A five card spread covering each of these questions is likely to give a much richer psychological picture of the situation than a Celtic Cross spread with double the cards.

It is also useful when a question or issue has a lot of component parts - a spread can then be designed which assigns a position to each component, and will give a very specific reading.

In *Choice Centred Tarot* Gail Fairfield gives a good description of this customisation process^{vii} - for a querent concerned about his relationship, she created the following spread based on his key questions:

1. What's at the root of the problem?
2. What needs of mine are not being met?
3. What needs of my partner's are not being met?
4. How do I feel towards my partner?
5. How does my partner feel toward me?
6. What can I do to improve things?
7. What will probably happen?

This technique can be used for many situations - positions can be assigned to different people for analysing group dynamics, or to different elements of a dream, for example.

This article is the first in a series looking at spreads - in future editions we will be covering spreads for different purposes, such as decision-making, relationships, business matters etc. If you have any ideas for spreads you'd like to see included please send an email to <mailto:newsletter@tabi.org.uk>

An Interview with Elen Hawke **author of 'In the Circle' and creator of a new Tarot deck**

Emma Donovan interviews the writer of *'In the Circle'* and discovers a **new book on magical practice** and a **Pagan tarot deck** in the making

In common with many other Tarot readers, I seem to be on an endless quest to find the Tarot deck that is the perfect 'fit' with my beliefs and taste in artwork. Sometimes the theme is right but the artwork is wrong. Or the artwork is lovely but it has an approach that doesn't work for me. This search for the right deck has led me onto Amazon, into too many shops to mention and occasionally into overdraft. So I was very excited to find images from **The Elen Hawke Tarot** – an as yet unpublished deck (still in progress). I was drawn to their vibrant and evocative feel, with powerful Pagan images portrayed in photo/collage. They also had a strongly British background, with some similarities to the Sacred Circle deck but perhaps more mysterious and abstract. Elen Hawke has kindly agreed here to answer some questions and say a bit more about this lovely Tarot deck.

Author of *'In the Circle – Crafting the Witches' Path'* and *'The Sacred Round, A Witch's Guide to Magical Practice'*, Elen Hawke has been a professional astrologer and tarot reader for many years and is a professional photographer and illustrator producing work with a strongly pagan theme. Elen has combined her talents to create her own tarot deck for publication, in between online interviews and public appearances. Selected images from this deck are available to view at: http://www.witchcraft.org/cgi-bin/iff/imageFolio.cgi?direct=Elen_Hawke_Tarot

Elen, can you tell us a bit about yourself and your work?

I'm a witch living in Oxford, England, where I belong to a coven as well as teaching tarot, astrology, meditation and chakra work, and the Craft. I've been an astrologer for about 28 years and a tarot reader for nearly twelve years. I'm also a professional photographer and illustrator, working mostly digitally to produce illustrations with a strongly pagan theme. My first book *In the Circle, Crafting the Witches Path*, was published by Llewellyn in January 2001. My second book, *The Sacred round, A Witch's Guide to Magical Practice*, comes out January 2002, and I have a third book with Llewellyn now. I have also done articles for other Llewellyn publications. including their famous calendar, and I provided the 144 magical sayings and folklore which will appear in the 2003 Llewellyn Witches Calendar. I have also written several articles for and had illustration work published in the Children of Artemis Witchcraft and Wicca magazine, which is widely available in newsagents and bookshops throughout Britain, and is now being distributed in America.

- **What first led you to working with the Tarot?**

When we moved back to England from Brittany in 1990, we had to live in rented accommodation while trying to sell our house in France. I had such a sense of needing a home which I could think of as mine. I saw the Norse Tarot in a shop window; the cover image is the Empress and I, not knowing at the time that she could be linked with the home, felt passionately drawn to her and bought the cards. I had only ever dabbled a bit with tarot before then. I was put

off in the 60's, when there were few decks on the market, and the definitions were very dire and doom laden - not a bit like now.

- **Can you describe the progression in how you have worked with the Tarot over the last ten years?**

Well, that first deck really whetted my appetite. I started off just doing three card spreads from the accompanying book. Then my partner got interested too. It wasn't long before we had begun to collect other decks. We had a huge pile of books which went everywhere with us. I'm sure we absorbed loads just from leaving the books by the bed at night. We would get up in the morning and start doing tarot spreads...neither of us was working at that time, and we would still be sitting there in our night things at lunch time, reading and experimenting, totally absorbed. I had some amazing experiences in those early days, like the time when the six of swords on the Morgan Greer deck really spoke to me, I could literally see the woman's robe fluttering, could smell slightly dank water and could hear the slap of waves against the bottom of the boat. I haven't had many experiences that vivid since. I soon realised that the cards were an aid to self realisation and growth. I did a lot of profound work with the Moon card...a card which seemed very weird and fearful when I first saw it, but which, as I have processed the negativity from my relationship with my mother, has become merely fascinating and calm. I've also moved away from text book card definitions to a very fluid way of interpreting, where even the fixed positions in the Celtic Cross can mean something other than the traditional definition, and the pictures speak very differently according to many current factors. I have also got into the habit of offering clients a choice of decks; this works very well, and often people will get their own insights during the course of a reading...though I usually have an intuitive feeling about which deck they will go for. I think this is all part of seeing a reading as being a two way thing, with the client taking their own power within it in the sense that they are finding their own solutions through the medium of the cards, and you, as the reader, are giving them the material they need to do this.

- **In your book, 'In the Circle', you say, "Tarot, astrology, meditation, healing and pathworking are all part of magical work". Could you say a bit more about this approach to Tarot?**

Magic is about spiritual growth and personal transformation, and to me this is also a primary use of tarot.

- **Can you describe the inspiration for developing your own Tarot deck?**

I spent three years at art college recently doing a course in photography and digital imaging. I put it to use pretty quickly producing pagan images, and it naturally progressed into doing tarot...an inevitable progression I feel, given my love of tarot and the lack of pagan decks around. The digital media lends itself really well to tarot imagery as it has a rather unworldly feel to it.

- **How did the work on each card evolve - was it a process of waiting for images to suggest themselves? How long did it take to complete?**

Well, the deck isn't actually completed...that was a misunderstanding on the part of the people who produced the web page. I've done thirty or so cards so far. But I would get up one day and feel that a specific card was ready to emerge, then I would find suitable existing photos or go out and take them, and would get on with the image. I use scanned objects as well as photos, by the way. Each card takes about one to three days on average to complete, but I've been working on the project on and off for about two years, fitting it in around my writing. If someone offered me a contract to finish the deck, I could do it happily within a couple of months.

- **And how was each card created (in terms of the artistic media used)?**

The cards are produced in Photoshop 6 using scanned original photos, paintings, objects, textures and so on. These are layered together and various effects are applied. Photoshop is a terrific illustration tool as it is so flexible and has so many tools and resources.

- **Images of sacred sites feature both in your book and also in your Tarot deck. Could you say more about the source of the images for each card?**

Except for Carnac in Brittany (very close to where we lived) the sacred sites are all British. The Rollrights, Wayland's Smithy and Avebury are the main ones I've used so far. The Hermit card, for example, features Wayland's Smithy. This is a very mystical site which feels close to the Otherworld, and so I felt it was very appropriate for the inner personal journey of the Hermit; I've had some profound inner growth experiences there myself. The Horned God (which corresponds to the Emperor) features the Rollrights, and gives the sense I feel of the Horned God being strongly tied to the land in a way which reflects the sense of responsibility inherent in the meaning of the Emperor. The Priestess is again Wayland's Smithy, but a different angle, which shows the huge supporting megaliths, which shore up the burial mound rather than the entrance to the mound itself as in the Hermit.

- **The deck is as yet unpublished. Is it likely to be available to buy in the future?**

I certainly hope so. I'm going to start looking for a publisher soon, but I want to be sure of making some wise choices, not least because the cost of reproducing the material and sending it to their requirements is astronomical.

- **You have a new book forthcoming. Can you tell us a little about it yet?**

My next book, *The Sacred Round, A Witch's Guide to Magical Practice*, will be published in January 2002, though it can be pre ordered on Amazon now. It takes the material of the first book further, giving more specific information on magic, meditation, visualisation, the chakras, divination and so on. I have a third book with Llewellyn right now, and that deals with the lunar cycle with rituals and myths etc., but that won't be out till later next year

- **Do you intend to write an accompanying book for the deck too?**

I already have some accompanying material for the deck...I would expect to write quite a detailed book to go with it.

Books by Elen Hawke

'In the Circle – Crafting the Witches' Path', Elen Hawke, Llewellyn, 2000.

'The Sacred Round, A Witch's Guide to Magical Practice', Elen Hawke - forthcoming from Llewellyn, January 2002

A further title is scheduled for 2002/2003 – watch this space!

Scheduled Appearances (and online interviews)

Elen expects to be appearing at The London Book Fair (Olympia) from 17th – 19th March, reading tarot at the Llewellyn stand. She will also be doing some workshops in Oxford early next year, possibly with Kala Trobe (author of *Invoke the Goddess, Invoke the Gods, Magic of Qaballah etc.*). For further details Elen can be contacted at: elenhawke@wythcraft.net

She has an interview on the big American pagan site, Cauldrons and Broomsticks at: <http://www.cauldrons-broomsticks.net/2001beltane3.htm#5>

Links

To see images from this beautiful Tarot deck and learn more about Elen, go to:

<http://www.witchcraft.org/elenhawke.htm>

How Vital is Feedback

Diana talks about the value of feedback for readings and what can help if you are not receiving any

When the people that you read tarot for give you positive feedback it does something special to boost your confidence. You know you did a good reading. You know you hit the mark and can therefore trust your talents again. Most of all you know you helped someone and that your efforts were valuable and worthwhile.

When I was first practising divination it was in the form of doing more astrology than tarot readings. That was not because I disliked tarot; I just was not that confident about using it professionally at that early stage. Perhaps more to the point, I had not got to the point of putting a lot of trust in my intuition, even though I was using it to some degree in my astrology readings. I had been “brought up” with the idea that astrology is somewhere between an art and a science – that its most important aspect may in fact be as a craft. If you get your craft right maybe you do not need to employ intuition too much.

Intuitive content or no, I nonetheless remained very nervous about whether others thought my readings were any good. Because I felt nervous I did not especially encourage any feedback; I was afraid of hearing something bad! I imagined that friends and family expected wonderful pronouncements and clever insights into their troubles and interests. If I couldn't come up with the goods then I was never surprised if nobody jumped up and down with pleasure at the quality of the reading they had received.

Of course if I did receive any feedback that seemed good I was absolutely delighted although, to be honest, the first time I received some positive feedback from a paying customer I was nothing less than stunned! You could have knocked me down with a feather because I did not expect a huge success. Perhaps it was beginner's luck, for I had not been giving paid readings for very long, but I felt able to make a prediction that the lady in question would, by a certain date be able to make a move of home that she thought was impossible. This lady, a colleague of my mother, arrived concerned that she was dealing with a mere fantasy ideal and left with the promise that her dreams could in fact be realised. When she came back to see me a second time I did not know what to expect but thought maybe it was going to be to tell me off for such a useless reading! In fact it was to explain that, unexpectedly, she had made some wonderful progress and therefore my predictions seemed to be “coming true”. She was returning because she needed some clarification over new issues that had arisen, concerning the purchaser of her current property.

Had my client asked me at that point how I had managed to obtain answers for her on that first reading, I am not sure that I would have been able to explain exactly what method I had used. I do remember that, when she asked me for a date for a move, if indeed it could be possible at all, I scanned quickly over the horoscope and lists of past, current and future planetary movements that I had in front of me. Probably too quickly for a beginner, actually. But I decided that those planets linking to the planet governing the third house of short trips and moves would tell me the

answer. In retrospect this is fairly sound astrology, although these days I might more readily judge on planetary contacts to the house of home. I suspect that an intuitive focus and spiritual guidance evoked by my own desperation for needing to pluck some answers out of the air were my real tools! Although I had undergone professional astrological training, I felt that I had not the expertise or experience to be able to give rapid, expert, accurate answers.

However, neither my client nor my mother questioned my exact methods and everyone seemed absolutely delighted with the results of the readings. Some time later my mother confirmed that this lady had indeed made the move she wanted around the time period that I had indicated and that she was extremely happy in her new abode. With all of this positive feedback it suddenly felt easy to trust that I could, if really needed, pull answers out of thin air for someone else. And whether or not I judged myself to be a good reader or used techniques that I could explain in a rational, step by step manner seemed by the by.

It probably was this first major success that made me feel confident enough to continue with astrology readings and to go on to develop my tarot reading ability to a similar level. I knew that, in the moment when I was put on the spot for answers, I could somehow manage to come up with them. This is in essence exactly what usually happens in reading for other people – we are put on the spot and asked to come up with answers. Whether the reading is face to face, over the telephone, via the post or through an email, we are faced with a question and we need to apply ourselves to come up with an answer. Of course sometimes we cannot provide exactly what is asked for, for various reasons which may be practical, ethical or otherwise. But when we can do and then learn that our attempts have been helpful, there is little to beat the positive feeling it engenders.

There are frequently situations where the reader does not, however, get much feedback. Not every client will take the time to report back about their (and your) successes and failures. Some clients may become “regulars” and will, with any luck, fill you in on your “hits” as a matter of course. You may however read for some people whom you will just never see again. And you may not know if your reading really helped them. This can be particularly frustrating if you have given a reading which, at the time, did not seem to mean a lot to your client. All of the action that you saw may well have become relevant at a later time but you may have heard nothing about such developments. Likewise, if you are involved in giving readings through online services, such as the TABI Free Readings service, you should not be surprised if clients do not always come back to you with feedback, either immediately or later.

With these sorts of services feedback may be the exception rather than the rule although, thanks to the law of averages, the more readings that you do, the more you will tend to notice feedback than miss it! You can of course experiment with ways to attract feedback from your clients and it can be a very good idea to do so. Perhaps we will explore that area more thoroughly in a future article. But how can you cope with the effect on your self esteem and confidence if you are giving out a lot of readings but not being given back any sort of measure from your clients to know how you are doing?

If you have ever had a fulfilling reading yourself, you may actually already know some of the answers. Has there ever been a time when you were so bowled over by a reading that you could not really express what you felt? Perhaps you even imagined that the reader probably guessed what you were feeling because all of his or her clients must feel that way? Or because he or she is, after all, “psychic”. Remember that a lot of people who are not aware of how psychic

processes work do not necessarily understand that you are not linked into their thoughts all the time. Then there can be the client who has meant to offer some feedback at a later date because he or she really wanted to thank you for your help. But time went on and this person just didn't get around to it. Or they didn't bother in the end because the time involved to give you the quality of feedback they felt you deserved was hard to find, even if they felt very strongly that you deserved that feedback.

These and probably a whole host of other situations are potentials for your clients and it is as well to keep them in mind when you are in the rather barren position of not receiving much feedback. Always remember that someone may be too busy to contact you and yet they may also be very grateful indeed for what you have done. A client may intend to get in touch with you and then get distracted and forget. Or he or she may assume you just don't need any feedback because you do this all the time and you seem so confident with your answers, you must realise that you are bang on. And perhaps this, even in spite of a message at the bottom of an online request form, for example, saying that the reader would appreciate some feedback!

Of course, we may all occasionally get customers, whether paying or non-paying, for whom our reading style is just not suitable or with whom the reading seems to go flat or just not quite hit the note. There will be the odd client for whom, for one reason or another, it doesn't gel. You may also encounter a situation where you have in fact hit upon the very issue that the client needs to confront, but they don't, won't or can't at that point in time. Again, that whole issue may deserve an article of its own! But remember that sometimes a reading is difficult for your client to take on board and that may be just one of the reasons why you sometimes don't hear back from them, especially straight away. Whatever the reason for a lack of communication back to you though, try not to assume that it is to do with the quality of your reading or your ability as a reader. The chances are that if you are genuinely trying to get to grips with reading tarot cards for other people, you are giving helpful and insightful readings.

In the meantime, one way that you can guarantee obtaining some feedback for at least your early readings is to join the growing group of TABI Free Readers and work with a reader-mentor to help hone your skills. Of course some of the readers coming into our service will already be quite experienced but even if you are an old hand at reading you may appreciate a new view of what you are doing. Or a bit of help with those questions that you always feel a bit uneasy with (all of us have some area that is a challenge!). If you feel you are at a fairly basic level with tarot reading you cannot do much better than receive some encouragement with your efforts as you develop your style and confidence, which is the sort of thing that the reader-mentors at TABI Free Readers hope to help you with. If you are a total novice with tarot then you may find it helpful to follow Joan Bunning's online tarot course, which is backed by TABI course-mentors and is ideal for the complete beginner, though of interest to all tarot readers.

Whether you are working with a course-mentor on the training course or a reader-mentor on the TABI volunteer free readers service, it is worth keeping in mind that each reader-mentor has his or her particular style of mentoring and that even mentors are in a process of learning! Your reader-mentor is of course not God and what they have to say should not be taken as gospel. However, it is likely that you will be offered some positive encouragement for your strengths and perhaps some tips and additional views for your reading style or approach.

One of the great things about working with a reader-mentor is that if you are nervous that you are not giving the best readings – which may be more to do with self doubts brought on by lack of

feedback, than anything else – you can run a few readings by your reader-mentor and get to work on the situation. As well as creating a new, more dynamic reader-mentoring service for our new volunteer readers over the next few months, we are also introducing a system whereby active volunteers on the reading service will post a reading each month to the Free Reading list for discussion and feedback. From this sort of sharing we can all grow and reader-mentors and readers alike can benefit.

It takes a certain amount of courage to put yourself out there as a tarot reader in the first place. It also requires courage to share your readings with others. But if you can rise to the challenge I am certain that you will gain a great deal.

To join TABI Free Readers and receive the support of a TABI reader-mentor, please send a blank email to reading@tabi.org.uk

If you are new to tarot and would like to learn, or need to brush up your skills, do sign up for the free online tarot course created by Joan Bunning and supported by TABI reader-mentors. Visit the TABI web site at <http://www.tabi.org.uk> and follow the “Course” link for further details.

Reviews

As *TABI News* develops we plan to include more and more reviews. For this issue we have invited **Bethan Arrowsmith** to review the new version of Sasha Fenton's classic book *Fortune Telling by Tarot cards*. Our deck of the issue is one of the editor's personal favourites, the *Cosmic Tarot*.

Books

Fortune-Telling By Tarot Cards - Sasha Fenton (ISBN - 1-903065-18-6) (Revised edition)

reviewed by Bethan Arrowsmith

Christmas arrived slightly earlier for me this year, or so it would appear as last Friday I received a review copy of the reprinted and expanded 'Fortune-Telling By Tarot Cards'. As you may remember, *TABI* very kindly published a review of the original book by Sasha Fenton in its last newsletter, so it was suggested that I may like to voice an opinion on the reprinted text for this edition of the newsletter. How could I refuse?

As I have already praised the author's interpretation of both Major and Minor Arcana in my previous review, I will not repeat myself here but will instead comment on additional chapters. It is obvious that extra efforts have been put into this revised version to make its scope more comprehensive. The author clearly recognises many of the problems that tarot novices face and has attempted to address the issues accordingly. In chapter 14, for example, she explains and skilfully illustrates the concept of linking card meanings. As ever, this information is presented in the down-to-earth, easy to understand manner that is so much Sasha Fenton's hallmark as a writer. The text is easy to understand and should remain accessible to all.

Another important issue addressed in this new version is that of 'failed readings', with the author devoting an entire chapter to the subject. The helpful and insightful information given here will no doubt serve to put many a beginner's mind at ease. Sasha deserves a huge pat on the back for broaching a subject that is often shied away from. It would be interesting to read responses to some of her theories. If I am to be honest I would have to admit, nevertheless, that I do not readily agree with all of the views espoused in the book. For instance, in Chapter 2, Sasha outlines her view of the history of tarot. And although she acknowledges the fact that tarot scholars have their own 'pet' theories as to the origin of the medium, I would personally have liked to have seen more emphasis on the now widely accepted theory that the tarot originated in 14th century Europe. On the other hand her awareness of the client's outlook and needs and how these may have shaped the development of the tarot provides some interesting food for thought.

In my previous review of the original book, I stood firm in my belief that this was one of the best texts a beginner could hope to acquire and, in many ways I still stand by that initial opinion. I must admit, however, to feeling slightly disappointed on a few superficial factors, such as the print quality and paper stock being quite different in this edition. For illustrative purposes we encounter here the black and white line drawings of Jonathan Dee's tarot deck. To be fair, this may work better for a book not featuring colour inside the covers, but fans of the Prediction tarot deck could be disappointed that the latter deck has not been used a second time.

It is wonderful to be able to re-buy a book that has become such a tarot classic over the years, though I will always treasure my copy of the original version. *Fortune Telling by Tarot Cards*. remains a fantastic resource for the novice reader to have in his or her collection and is excellent value for money. Thank you Zambezi Publishing!

Editor's Note: having also had the good fortune to preview the new version of this book, I was delighted to see extensive additions, including a list linking individual tarot cards to various people, situations and life experiences. I can see myself dipping into that in the future!

Copies of the revised and expanded *Fortune Telling by Tarot Cards* can be obtained direct from Zambezi Publishing, priced at £8.99 plus £1.50 p&p. Orders (with payment by cheque only, at the current time) can be sent to Zambezi Publishing, PO Box 221 Plymouth, Devon PL2 2YJ. Details of all Zambezi titles are held at the web-site at <http://www.zampub.com>. You can also visit Sasha's web-site at <http://www.sashafenton.com>.

Decks

Cosmic Tarot by Norbert Lösche, English Edition FX Schmid 1988. Art Nr. 15530 - 1

Reviewed by Diana McMahon

This is the main deck that attracted my attention when, perhaps for want of a better term, "psychic responses" to my *Rider Waite* cards suddenly began to dwindle. In terms of early reading development the *Rider Waite* deck had been a fantastic learning tool, taking my understanding of tarot from confused to much clearer. Thanks to the proliferation of imagery my ability to quickly put a meaning to a card and provide insightful readings had developed in leaps in bounds, so I shall always be grateful for the introduction to that deck. But when things went quiet in my psyche I realised I needed some sort of new stimulus and this is exactly what the **Cosmic Tarot** deck provided.

The deck is not to be confused with the *Cosmic Tribe* by American creator Steve Postman which, whilst also very strong in imagery, is a very different deck. Ditto the *Cosmic Egg* tarot, by Guido Gillabel and Carol Herzer, which features more abstract, brightly coloured images on square shaped cards. The **Cosmic Tarot** with its mix of intense and pastel shades of predominantly blue, green, yellow, pink, purple and brown was created by Norbert Lösche and originally published by the German company Schmid though it is also available via US Games. I bought my copy in one of the book shops in Glastonbury.

The cards are beautifully designed and the artist, who has a natural interest in the esoteric, has drawn on a combination of symbolism from various cultures and perspectives. Some cards feature symbolism related to *Arabic, North African and Asian* influences, for instance the **Four of Wands**, featuring Egyptian pyramids and the **Four of Swords** set in the desert with a camel in the background. Others, such as the **Ten of Pentacles**, with its robed and stockinged suitor have a more European, historic feel. And then there are cards that seem either timeless, e.g. the evocative **Ten of Cups** featuring a semi-naked woman sitting among an array of overflowing cups. Finally there are the more modern and contemporary images found in cards such as the **Four and Nine of Pentacles**, featuring *Twentieth Century* houses and clothing.

Many of the **Major Arcana** cards in this deck also have a timeless quality. In many cases the imagery is excellent at conveying facets such as movement and fluidity (in **Judgement** and **The World** for example), opulence (**The Empress**) and stasis and spiritual reflection (**The Hermit**). With the **Court cards**, even though these often feature characters in historic clothing, it soon becomes evident that the artist's consciousness also encapsulates film history and images. Some of the faces on the minor cards look distinctly familiar and you could be forgiven for thinking you were looking at an image of, for example, Elizabeth Taylor in the **Queen of Wands** or Sean Connery in the **King of Cups**. However this is not, in my opinion, the most predominant feature of the deck. What is more important is that the images are so varied and dense whilst maintaining an integrity of their own.

For those with an astrological awareness I would say that this deck would appeal especially to the sensitivity and romance of *Water* types. Although it also has a wide ranging appeal that will reach many kinds of tarot card readers, if you respond to soft, dreamy imagery, this could be the perfect deck for you. I use the **Cosmic Tarot** frequently for my own readings and find that clients often choose it, too. A further feature that appeals to me as a reader is the clear labelling of the title of each card. It doesn't interfere with my reaction to the card because there is no extraneous information but what *is* there is clear and easy to recognise. This is a deck where when the cards are turned face up you know without hesitation whether you are looking at an upright or reversed card. When the cards are face down you only have that information through noticing the colour of the Sun images on the backs of the cards. Unless you are focussing on that you may well miss it, which can be ideal for readers who still want to maintain a practice of selecting upright and reversed cards "blind".

Is this a useful tarot deck for the absolute beginner? Certainly the images are very striking but in all honesty I think it is better suited to someone who has a basic grasp of tarot and is looking to work with a new and interesting deck. The imagery will, in some instances, take you quite a way from what you may have learnt from tarot books and the *Rider Waite* styles of decks. That is not necessarily a bad thing if you wish to expand your tarot imagination and psychic "vocabulary" but it could be a bit confusing to switch mid stream to a deck such as this if you are still learning your basic language of the cards.

A final note is that whilst a lot of the images are gentle and peaceful, those that are "darker" are often quite intense. That is often no bad thing because powerful and distinctive imagery can be a great help for clear and effective reading responses. But if you are going to use these cards for face to face readings you may want to work up quite a relationship with and understanding of the more powerful cards. These include the **Nine of Swords**, featuring a man under attack from flying swords and the **Ten of Wands**, showing an individual burning up amidst a stack of flaming wands. All in all I am glad I found this deck and very much enjoy reading with it.

Publishers & Images:

F X Schmid GmbH & Co. KG Bachstr. 17, PO Box 1465, D-83209 Prien (English edition)
Also available from US Games Systems: <http://usgamessystems.com> (US edition?)
For images online, one source is: <http://www.aeclectic.net/tarot/cosmic/index.html>

For comparison with images from other decks with Cosmic in the title, visit <http://www.aesthetic.net> (search **Things to Do** section below for more details of the site) or, for the Cosmic Tribe deck specifically, visit author Steve Postmans's site at: <http://www.stevee.com>

Places to Go

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

Courses, Centres & Events

Psychic Studies

Angels or Tarot Three a choice of two workshops at the **College of Psychic Studies**, London SW7. - 8th December. £35/45 non-members. Tel: 0207 589 3292.

Astrology

The **Company of Astrologers** is offering their *Basic Certificate Foundation Course* starting with a **Locating Significance** course on Saturday 16 February in Guildford. This will be the first of three Saturday sessions, backed by private tuition, leading to the certificate exam. Further details, including accommodation in Guildford, are available at their web-site <http://coa.hubcom.net> The school's postal address is PO BOX 792, Canterbury, CT2 8WR.

Tarot Course

A new course which is apparently currying favour with the **Pagan community**, from **Inbaal**, who was an active TABI member when we first launched the site and began offering mentoring for the online training course. www.inbaal.com

Festival

Mind, Body & Spirit Festival in Norwich (April)

Friday, Saturday and Sunday 5th, 6th and 7th **April 2002**, 10am-5pm, admission £1 for over 16s, held at St Gregory's Arts Centre, Pottergate, Norwich. (Info from *Inanna's Festival* - see Stores section)

Readings

Watkins Esoteric Centre has opened in **London** offering professional **Palm, Tarot, Rune Readers** etc. 13 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4EZ 0207 379 4554

Stores

Inanna's Festival (Norwich's one and only New Age shop!)

5 The Royal Arcade, Norwich, Norfolk NR 2 1 NQ

Tel : 01603 626 133 Email: inannamagic@ntlworld.com

Zambezi Publishing

Publishers of the revised copy of our reviewed book, Fortune Telling by Tarot Cards and other Sasha Fenton & friends publications. Publications can be obtained via mail order. Address: Zambezi Publishing, PO Box 221 Plymouth, Devon PL2 2YJ. Tel: (0)1752 367 300 Fax: (0)1752 350 453. Details of all Zambezi titles are held at the web-site at <http://www.zampub.com>. You can also visit Sasha Fenton's web-site at <http://www.sashafenton.com>

New Decks & other Publications

The Beginners Guide to the Tarot (kit) by **Juliet Sharman-Burke**. A 192-page book and a specially created 78-card deck by Giovanni Caselli. Priced at £14.99. The deck is a Rider Waite clone, featuring closely detailed images and seems very well done. Prediction magazine featured a review with illustrations in their December 2001 issue. So far the only image we can find online, however, is the Two of Swords that features on the box front – which you can view if you visit www.amazon.co.uk and search this title.

Llewellyn's Tarot Calendar 2002 - each month depicting a Spread, a feature by a well-known Tarot writer and a Tarot Card illustration. Priced at £12.99, widely available in the UK or, of course, from the publisher's web-site is <http://www.llewellyn.com> *Don't miss this as your Xmas gift to yourself!*

Journals

Aries: Journal for the study of Western Esotericism

A new series published by E J Brill academic publishers as a continuation of the journal *Aries* that has been published at a smaller scale since 1985, *Aries* appears twice a year. From the editorial policy is it clear that the journal is centred on "*all aspects of the study of esoteric currents in modern and contemporary Western culture*". 'Western esotericism; is understood as including the revival of Hermeticism and the so-called 'occult philosophy' in the early modern period as well as its later developments; alchemy, Paracelsianism and Rosicrucianism; Christian kabbalah and its later developments; theosophical and illuminist currents; and various occultist and related developments during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A focus point for critical scholarship. For further details visit <http://www.theohistory.org/aries> or mail to Hermetica@hum.uva.nl

Wave Magazine

A colourful, quality publication with excellent articles on a variety of new age subjects, focussing on Brighton and surrounding areas. For further details and subscription information contact the editor, Emma Amyatt-Leir and staff at *Wave Magazine* Tel 01273 571148 Fax 01273 239747 or visit the *Wave* web-site at <http://www.waveonline.co.uk>

Things to Do

Our resources and links page: where can you find out more about tarot and esoterica online? In this issue – a British based astrological database, Crowley information and Tarot Deck images

Resources

Astrology Database

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

Aleister Crowley Links

Web-sites

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

Books

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

Tarot Mirror of your Soul by Gerd Ziegler

Tarot Mirror of your Relationships by Gerd Ziegler

Decks

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

Editor's Note

These Crowley links have been gleaned from the thoughtful sharing of members of our email lists. If you have any Crowley resources you would like to share please email them to news.submissions@tabi.org.uk and we will endeavour to include them in the next newsletter.

Online Tarot Newsletters and Sites

Dawn's Daily Tarot

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

AngelPaths.com Mailing List

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

Wicce's Tarot Newsletter

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

Tarot Deck Images/Reviews

You will find images and/or reviews at the following sites:

Aeclectic Tarot

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

<http://www.aeclectic.net>

Tarot Passages

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

<http://www.tarotpassages.com>

Wicce's Tarot Collection

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

<http://www.wicce.com>

Learning the Tarot (Joan Bunning's site)

<http://www.LearnTarot.com>

TABI's Own Links

Last but by no means least, links into the TABI community

The Tarot Association of the British Isles Web Site

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

UK Tarot Talk

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

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

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

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ⁱ Pollack, R. (1997) *Seventy Eight Degrees of Wisdom* (London: Thorsons, p.311).

ⁱⁱ Franklin, A., Mason, P. (1998) *The Sacred Circle Tarot* (St Paul, MN: Llewelleyrn p.18)

ⁱⁱⁱ Giles, C. (1996) *Russian Tarot of St Petersburg* (Stamford, CT: US Games p. 324)

^{iv} Donaldson, T. (1997) *The Lord of the Rings Tarot* (Stamford, CT: US Games p. 259)

^v Online course can be found at: <http://www.learntarot.com>

^{vi} Further details of TABI readers can be found at: http://www.tabi.org.uk/ukreader_listing.shtml

^{vii} Fairfield, G. (1997) *Choice Centered Tarot* (York Beach, ME: Weister p. 107)