

The Witch`s Tale

DOT HORSPOOL (MADAM MORGANA)

They used to burn them at the stake. Even in these enlightened times they still provoke a lot of controversy. But if fire couldn`t destroy their faith, what hope have words

Dot is the White Witch of Milton Keynes. She follows the Path of Wicker, an ancient pagan way of life based on peace and love. Her house is a covenstead – which means that she is prepared to welcome people who need her help twenty-four hours a day.

I arrived here long before Milton Keynes, twenty years ago, from Wembley, and I`ve been working continually for the good of the community. My daily life consists of helping people, poor people – helping increase their self-esteem, sorting out their problems. Sometimes I just sit and listen to them, the night is a lonely time for people on their own. Sometimes they can`t stand the stress of the new city, so they take to drink. So we show them that they are lovely people and don`t need to drink. We give them hope.

Mondays is Tarot

Mondays is tarot reading. I only do two people a night and take a lot of time to go into it in depth. Tuesday is a closed class. I teach my neophytes – which means novices. I teach them my witchcraft. On Wednesday we have an open meeting. We start with an invocation. That`s a simple prayer that says: “Let the plan of love and light and power and peace work out” We believe in the power of peace and love. Then we do healing, absent healing for the ones we love and care for, also people in other countries – Belfast, the Middle East – and the plants and animals. Then we have a subject. It could be anything, reflexology, astrology, scrine {crystal gazing} or tarot reading. There`s a big cross section of people who come to my house on Wednesday. Sometimes as many as thirty people come to the classes. We finish with another prayer and have coffee and biscuits and a general chit-chat. Thursdays and Fridays is again tarot reading and at the weekends we travel the country doing various psychic festivals doing readings etc. So you can see we`re busy at Witchypoo Mansion!

A lot of people hear of us through the radio, T.V, and lectures which we do quite a lot of – W.I`s, Mother`s Clubs, Young Wives, even Stantonbury Campus which caused a bit of a stir. People are worried because I was telling children about witchcraft. These were sixteen year old adults that knew their own minds. And let`s face it, I`m not going to give spells or incantations to a campus of sixth- formers so they can turn their mothers into frogs and toads.

I used to do the horoscopes on the local radio and one day the gentleman who was interviewing me before I started my programme said: "Help us with the weather, Dot, it's been so terrible." So I said: "Right, everyone who's out there listening, get up and open your windows and put out a positive thought to make the sun shine." And I believe three-quarters of the people who were listening automatically got up in their homes and did this. And believe you me, for the next forty-eight hours we had beautiful sunshine.

I've watched the new city being built brick by brick. I've seen the rape of the countryside and I've seen animals rebuild their burrows. The badgers have left their sets, and the common's gone in Bradwell. I can no longer walk in my beautiful Linford Wood because there is a road right through it.

There is a great unrest with the over-spills from London. We have a mixed community here, there's poverty and breakups of marriage like it's going out of fashion. So people have to learn to find themselves. They can't cope with this modern environment. There's a need for witchcraft or Wicker. Once they learn about themselves they can cope with living in this big, new city.

Twenty years ago I lived in these old railway cottages and I love them. We're losing our heritage, the bulldozers and the JCBs are moving everywhere. They ought to preserve the old buildings. My first husband was employed by British Rail at Wembley and lived there in a railway house. When they pulled my house down in Wembley, they said I'd have to go where they put me. Fate intervened and I ended up in Buckinghamshire. So with my six kids, the guards can plus a B.R. container with all my gear in, we arrived here twenty years ago. We had an outside toilet, cold water – I had to put an Ascot in – tin bath to scrub the kids. But we were happy and I liked the houses. What's been done now with the Rainbow Co-op could have been done then and all the houses would have been saved instead of having to live with the monstrosity across the road, (Permayne).

The Rainbow Co-op

When they knew the new city was going to be built, British Rail in all their wisdom decided to sell off all the railway cottages to M.K.D.C. So as people moved on or died the houses became empty, boarded up and then just started falling down. I was put on the new estate up the road (St. Peter's Way) and hated it. There was a bath but it was so new and impersonal I was always waiting for: "Hi-di-hi, it's time to go home now!" When all the railway cottages were going to be pulled down I got involved with the Rainbow Co-op and we managed to save this one street, Spencer Street, which is now one of the best running housing co-ops in the country.

All the children come and see me and I'll take their loose teeth out for them and produce 10p's from behind their ears. In summertime they bring me flowers and also the school is right next door, and the kids say: "The witch lives there." I knew a lot of their mums when they were children so I'm Nanny Dot to a lot of them. They knock on the door and boast to their little friends that they know the Witch, and of course I have to find a minute or two to spoil them.

A while ago we had some visitors staying in the Street. It was a summer night and they`d been to the New Inn and had a few bevvies. Afterwards they were standing outside talking when suddenly these bats started winging down the road. One of the visitors looked up and said: "Hallo, Dotties got her relatives staying."