



Written and compiled by George Knowles.

Robert Cochrane by all accounts was a very impressive, flamboyant and charismatic individual. He was a practicing English witch, who founded his own coven the “Clan of Tubal Cain”, which later became known as the “1734” tradition. This at about the same time as Gerald Gardner started his first coven in the early fifties.

Cochrane was born into a Methodist family on the 26th January 1931. They lived in London, England, but much of his early life is somewhat obscure based as it is on his own telling. He claimed to be a hereditary witch and at times spoke of a great-grandfather who supposedly practiced witchcraft in Warwickshire, he also referred to an aunt he called 'Mrs. Bromfield' who kept an impressive collection of 'Witchy' things in her home. Another claim was that he had ancestors who had been executed for witchcraft, and at other times a great uncle on his mother's side who had been his teacher. Then in contradiction to this he claimed his mother had taught him as her grandmother had taught her. Whatever the truth none of the above has yet been proved.

During his teens it is thought that he sought out and found a teacher, most probably from a Druidic or Celtic tradition. What is known for sure is that he studied books, did research and tried the best he could to recreate what he believed to be the Old Religion. By his early twenties he had formed his own coven called the Clan of Tubal Cain (a reference to his work as a blacksmith). This was around the time that the old witchcraft laws in England were being repealed, and about the same time Gerald Gardner started his first coven. Cochrane held Gardner in disdain and would frequently express his contempt for the Gardnerian Witches of his time.

Cochrane was a talented poet and philosopher who loved to write in a cryptic and mystical manner. His coven was based on a combination of Celtic mysticism and village Witchcraft philosophy. He delivered his teachings in the manner of the Druids using poetry, riddles and folksongs as apposed to actual facts. He and his wife Jean successfully combined traditional village Witchcraft (his ritual tools consisted of a cauldron, knife, cord, cup and a stone) and Druidic methods of training and practice with a guided meditation for creating an astral temple as a magical tower of sanctuary. He inspired research and evolution rather than a strict adherence to dogma, and once stated that: “A driving thirst for knowledge is the forerunner of wisdom”.

In the early sixties Cochrane began to correspond with an American witch called Joe Wilson, who started the tradition in America. The information he wrote in his letters to Wilson, plus articles he wrote for several periodicals of the time: *Psychic News* - (1963), *Pentagram* - (1964-66) and *New Dimensions* - (1965), form the bases of the tradition as it is practiced today.

As time went by Wilson and several of his American friends worked together to solve Cochrane's puzzles and filled in the gaps in his letters. Wilson gave copies of the letters to a number of other people who in turn did their own research and found their own answers. As a result different covens were created, no two exactly alike, and so began the renamed 1734 Tradition. Today each coven of the tradition is completely autonomous and there is no central authority. The tradition has no common Book of Shadows, but Cochrane's letters serve the same purpose and these are passed down from teacher to student in a similar fashion as the Book of Shadows in other traditions.

The figure 1734 was originally one of Cochrane's puzzles. Cochrane himself described it in a letter to Joe Wilson dated the 12th Night 1966, which reads:

'The order of 1734 is not a date of an event, but a grouping of numerals that mean something to a witch. One that becomes seven states of wisdom is the Goddess of the Cauldron. Three that are the Queens of the Elements, fire belonging to Man alone, and the Blacksmith God. Four are Queens of the Wind Gods. The Jewish orthodoxy believes that whomever knows the Holy and Unspeakable name of God has absolute power over the world of form. Very briefly, the name of God spoken as Tetragrammaton ... breaks down in Hebrew to the letters YHVH, or the Adam Kadmon (The Heavenly Man). Adam Kadmon is a composite of all Archangels - in other words a poetic statement of the names of the Elements. So what the Jew and the Witch believe alike, is that the man who discovers the secret of the Elements controls the physical world. 1734 is the witch way of saying YHVH.'" (Cochrane, 1966).

Cochrane believed that different types of vision contained the various approaches to and apprehensions of truth: ' Poetic Vision' inward access to dream images and symbols; ' Vision of Memory' - remembers past existences and past perfections; ' Magical Vision' undertakes part of a Triad of services and contacts certain levels; ' Religious Vision' admission to the True Godhead and part of true Initiation; ' Mystical Vision' divine union with the Godhead with no form only energy present.

In 1964 Doreen Valiente joined his group and was initiated into the Clan of Tubal-Cain. Doreen however soon became disillusioned with Cochrane as she realized he was more fiction than fact. Cochrane was becoming increasingly more controlling of his group and openly before his wife Jean; began an affair with one of the other women in his coven. His wife left him and the other members of his coven grow more and more disenchanted. His verbal attacks on Gardnerian Witches began to increase, which irked Doreen, and when she noticed his obsession with ' witches potions' (Cochrane by some accounts had become fascinated with psychedelic drugs derived from herbs) she left.

Cochrane died in 1966 on the eve of Summer Solstice in what would appear to be a ritual suicide. He had ingested belladonna leaves, more commonly known as Deadly Nightshade. Much speculation surrounds his death. Some believe it was an accident, others believe it was plain suicide. Still others, particularly his craft members believe that he appointed himself the “actual” male sacrifice, as is sometimes symbolically enacted at the height of the Summer Solstice.

While his early life is shrouded in mystery and his later life in controversy, Cochrane’s contribution to contemporary witchcraft lives on through his tradition. A tradition that today continues to grow stronger particularly in America. In a final letter to Joe Wilson, Cochrane wrote:

“We teach by poetic inference, by thinking along lines that belong to the world of dreams and images. There is no hard and fast teaching technique, no laid down scripture or law, for wisdom comes only to those who deserve it, and your teacher is yourself seen through a mirror darkly. The answer to all things are in the Air – Inspiration, and the winds will bring you news and knowledge if you ask them properly. There is no secret in the world that cannot be discovered if the recipient is ready to listen to it, since the very Air itself carries memories and knowledge”.

Robert Cochrane

Aside Note.

While Cochrane during his time may have dabbled with “psychedelic drugs derived from herbs”. There is no evidence that today’s members of the 1734 tradition, or any other tradition of that matter, use any type of drugs to aid ritual or vision.

Sources

Encyclopedia of Wicca & Witchcraft - By Raven Grimassi

Websites

www.themystica.com/themystica.html

www.spiraltree.demon.co.uk/index.htm

www.mystical-www.co.uk

Robert Cochrane: Tregetour or Magician?

This is an excerpt from Chapter 9 of *Sacred Mask, Sacred Dance* by Evan John Jones with Chas S. Clifton, published in 1997 by Llewellyn Publications. (Copyright 1996 by Evan John Jones. All rights reserved.)

The "Masked Rites of Tubal Cain" derive from the coven headed by Robert Cochrane, a leading figure in the British Craft revival of the 1960s. In her book *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, Doreen Valiente gives us a fair and accurate picture of Robert Cochrane the man, including his faults. Like the rest of us, he certainly had some. But Valiente does not delve deeply into Cochrane the magician even though she makes the valid point that many of his rituals were more "shamanistic" than, for want of a better word, "formal" magic.

Many of Cochrane's ideas were innovative yet seemingly based on historically proven fact. On the other hand, Cochrane did supply author Justine Glass with the totally spurious "1724" story, based on the numbers engraved on a copper plate that Doreen Valiente bought for him, which he then claimed had been handed down through his family for well over a hundred years. Glass's book, *Witchcraft the Sixth Sense--and Us*, gave this story credence. When it became public knowledge, no one knew what to make of this man--and of what he claimed to be the traditional Craft. Yet they were still intrigued by Cochrane's "old tradition," which was so different from the better-known Gardnerian Craft.

Ever since Cochrane's death in 1966, many people have asked, "What would have happened had he lived longer?" meaning, of course, how much influence would he have had in shaping the future of Witchcraft? No one really knows, but, strangely enough, Cochrane partially answered that question in a letter to the late William G. Gray, the famous occult author and founder of the Sangreal rites. In it, Cochrane writes, "I keep on getting the feeling that we are preparing the ground for a crop that we will not reap, waiting for a dawn that may never come, but wait we must. We are the force for something else that is to occur, the creators of opinion for a new concept that is arising in this world."

As this excerpt shows, Cochrane never really expected to become the leader of a vast network of covens-within-the-clan, nor did he expect that what he believed in and taught as the Craft would reach others beyond his immediate coven. More than once he told me that if his teaching would reach further, it would have to be because of others rather than himself. My collaboration with Doreen Valiente, which produced *Witchcraft: A Tradition Renewed*, made a start by presenting the basic coven structures, tools, and rites. This book now brings the process a stage further, for Cochrane himself never took the shamanistic rites this far but worked them on a more or less ad hoc basis. I have taken his basic ideas and extended them to their present form because that is what logic dictated.

Apart from what he taught me, the only hard evidence concerning his works are letters. Perhaps the most revealing of all are those written to William G. Gray, whom he very much admired. Just before he died, Bill Gray passed them over to me to work on, which means that I am able to take

ideas and concepts from them and enlarge on these while showing how they all interlock to give an overall picture of what Cochrane called his "traditional mysteries."

Before going on, let us consider the question posed by the title of this chapter. Was Cochrane a real magician of the old tradition, or was he just another magical trickster, a "tregetour" or mountebank who jumped on the occult bandwagon, as some people who never even met the man now claim that he did? Perhaps what is written here will go some way to help people to make up their own minds about him and not prejudge or blindly accept everything claimed for both him and his works. After all, even during his lifetime his harshest critics often were those of us who had worked with him! But even then we still had the feeling that what he did was very different from the usual run of occult workings. So what was so special about the way he worked all those years ago?

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The 1734 Witch ' Laws'

**Do not what you desire -
do what is necessary.
Take all you are given -
give all of yourself.
"What I have - - - I hold!"
When all else is lost, and not until then,
prepare to die with dignity.**

WHAT IS 1734

The 1734 Tradition is based on the teachings, writings (published and personal), and the inspiration of Robert Cochrane. 1734 is not an anagram, however, it IS a riddle. It does not give the true name of the Goddess as there are many names of the Goddess...all True. Within the 1734 tradition there are a number of riddles. When **all** are answered, and not until then, a diligent student will understand this tradition.

There are many paths to the Gods and Goddesses. 1734 is one distinct path and not for everyone. There are many things about 1734 that are different: The placement of the elements; The firm dedication that the Clan is one's spiritual family; the necessary shamanic essence; and Not believing in the Goddess, but **knowing** her as an every day part of your life .

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WHAT IS WICCA

Wicca, as most other religions, recognizes the existence of a ' First Cause' , GOD or that from which all comes. Wiccans feel that this First Cause is so large and all encompassing that it is difficult for mankind to communicate with it. We can communicate with that ' First Cause' through what is commonly known as the ' Gods and Goddesses.' These Goddesses and Gods manifest to us through their works, such as the cycle of the seasons, the miracle of birth, the joy of the first iris of Spring and the message of joy and hope from the rainbow, and through their Presence.

Priests and Priestesses of our religion can be seen dancing in Neolithic cave paintings and our sacred objects rest in every major museum of the world. Wicca is a Living religion, as it has been since the first primitive hunting tribes sought to establish and affirm their relationship with the cycles of their Mother the Earth, Her fertility, and that of the animals they depended on for life and sustenance. We are a religion of life and vitality, and we hold all life in respect and reverence. We do not own the Earth; we live on it by the love and grace of Our Mother. We do not own the plants, animals or stones; they are, as we are, the children of the Great Mother. They are our brothers and sisters on whom we are all dependent for life, shelter, and sustenance; and

they deserve our love and respect in return. Above all else, we choose to live in harmony and balance.

We do not claim an actual dogmatic descent as far back as Neolithic times. Wiccans retain the spirit of the ancient ways of reverence, in a way similar though not related to some Native American traditions and ideals. Although many Wiccans do not claim dogmatic descent of the original, native European traditions; many anthropologists, among them the noted Margaret Murray, consider us a survival of that same original European religion, albeit up-rooted and driven underground by the spread of an intolerant, monotheistic creed.

DEFINITIONS OF WICCAN TERM

Airts or Arts - The art of causing change through systematic use of the will and other natural forces. Some common goals in magic are healing, guidance, protection, and insight.

Cuveen or Coven - group of Wiccans with common religious goals and purposes, which meets regularly for the purpose of holding Esbats, Sabots, teaching, or for any other activity having a direct connection with Wicca.

Coven Council - a council selected by the High Priest and/or High Priestess of a Coven. It is convened due to a complaint made by them or a member of the Coven against them or a member of the Coven.

Cowan - A person that is not a Wiccan.

Esbat - Meetings held once or twice each Lunar month. Most Covens hold Esbat at the Full Moon (or the three days proceeding). Many hold Esbat at the New Moon or the Dark of the Moon (or the three days preceding or following).

Sabbat - Meetings held at the eight major seasonal holidays: the Equinoxes and the Solstice called the Quarter Days, and at the time of each season called Cross-Quarter Days; the Cross-Quarter Days fall at or about February 2, May 1, August 2, and October 31. There is also the festival known as

Twelfth Night - which occurs twelve (12) days after the Winter Solstice (Yule).

Tradition - A group of Covens having a common lineage and/or common form of practice.

Wicca, Witchcraft or The Craft - A religion including diverse Traditions related to many European and Mediterranean cultural sources. This religion worships feminine and masculine deities, and pays homage to The Mighty Dead. This corporation specifically excludes the Native American Religions, Native American Shaman and Native African religions from the definition of these words.

Wiccan - A person that has been properly Dedicated, Initiated or Ordained into the Religion of Wicca by a member of the Clergy who has the authority to perform that Dedication, Initiation or Ordination.

Witch - A person who worships and respects the Goddess(es) and God(s) of Witchcraft.

Letters of Robert Cochrane.

- THE CRAFT TODAY By Robert Cochrane [Pentagram (2) November 1964]
- THE FAITH OF THE WISE by Robert Cochrane [Pentagram (4) August 1965]
- ON CORDS By Robert Cochrane [Pentagram (3) March 1965]
- WITCHES' ESBA By Robert Cochrane [New Dimensions (Vol 2 No 10)]

Other 1734 Documents

Green Grow the Rashes, O [see below]

My Craft Ethics by James T. Crowley III - The High Priest of The Covenant of the Doves

1734 Wiccan Book List

The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles : Their Nature and Legacy

The Lost Language of Symbolism : An Inquiry into the Origin of Certain Letters, Words, Names, Fairy-Tales, Folklore, and Mythologies By: Bayley, Harold

The Practice of Witchcraft Today : An Introduction to Beliefs and Rituals By: Robin Skelton

The practice of witchcraft today : an introduction to beliefs and rituals of the old religion By: by Robin Skelton

The Golden Bough By: Frazer, James George

Witchcraft The Sixth Sense By: Glass, Justine

Robert Graves Reads White Goddess and Other Selected Poems By: Graves, Robert

The White Goddess; A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth By: Graves, Robert

Western Inner Workings By: Gray, William G.

Light from the Shadows: A Mythos of Modern Traditional Witchcraft By: Gwyn Light

Call Of The Horned Piper By: Jackson, Aldcroft

English Fairy Tales By: Jacobs, Joseph

Sacred Mask, Sacred Dance By: Jones, John with Chas Clifton

Covencraft- Witchcraft For Three Or More By: K Amber

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Aradia, Gospel of the Witches By: Leland, Charles Godfrey

Gypsy Sorcery and Fortune Telling By: Leland, Charles Godfrey

Women Of The Celts By: Markale, Jean

God of the Witches By: Murray, Margaret

Ractical Magic In The Northern Tradition By: Pennick, Nigel

The Triumph Of The Moon-A History Of Modern Pagan Witchcraft By: Ronald Hutton

Celtic Mysteries: The Ancient Religion By: Sharkey, John

The Magic Arts in Celtic Britain By: Spence, Lewis

Rebirth of Witchcraft, The By: Valiente, Doreen

Witchcraft : A Tradition Renewed By: Valiente, Doreen and Evan John Jones

Green Grow the Rashes, O

I'll sing you one, O,
Green grow the rashes, O.
What is your one, O?
One is One and all alone and ever more shall be so.

I'll sing you two, O,
Green grow the rashes, O.
What is your two, O?
Two, two, the lilly-white boys, clothed all in green, O,
One is One and all alone and ever more shall be so.

....Three, O,
.....
Three, three, the rivals, Etc.

.... Four, O,
.....
Four for the four wind makers, Etc.

.....Five, O
.....
Five for the symbol at your door, Etc.

.....Six, O
.....
Six for the six proud walkers, Etc.

.....Seven, O
.....
Seven for the seven stars in the sky, Etc.

.....Eight, O
.....
Eight for the April Rainers, Etc.

.....Nine, O
Nine for the Nine Bright Shiners, Etc.