



DAY I MET A WITCH...

THE witch lowered himself into a straight-backed chair with a chuckle.

"Wicca," he corrected. "Not witch—wicca."

I nodded. After all, it isn't every day I meet a witch. In fact, Dr. Gerald Gardner is the first wicca . . . wicca . . . I have ever met.

And he looks the part. No one could be ordinary with a head like this Elder Wicca's.

Whenever light catches it the shock of white hair shines like a halo, shadowing the fine-featured face, the remarkable eyes and long, narrow white beard.

Light kept filtering through the window of the 400-year-old barn he uses as a study in Castletown, Isle of Man.

SINISTER SWORD

It picked on the silver candlesticks, the magic knife, the old books on magic, and the heavy, sinister-looking black sword.

Then I got a shock! This self-confessed, severely-criticised witch told me he is a Scot.

It is 72 years since he left the

But nothing's eerie about this spellbinder

parental home in North Berwick. The skeleton in the family cupboard was his grandfather in North Berwick, who was a witch.

The confidence made the room feel almost cosy, and the wicca willingly corrected the superstitious nonsense I have heard about witches and their craft

WISE WICCAS

Witches — or wiccans — are "wise people" and are quite distinct from magicians. Magicians call up "non-human intelligence," but witches work under their own power.

And witches do NOT effect evil. They work in unison to cast spells to ensure a good harvest, to protect a friend in danger or to well-wish someone in trouble.

But the man himself interested me a lot more than the art 200 people in Scotland are practising NOW. Because he is a spellbinder.

Only his magic is the kind found in any eloquent traveller who has spent 77 years seeking the answers to a million questions, living in many



GERALD GARDNER at work in his 400-year-old study.

strange places and seeing many strange things.

STRANGE TALES

Many strange stories are told on the island—of this man, of the witches who gather and perform strange ceremonies, and of the punishment meted out to any witch who tries to use power to do harm.

But Gerald Gardner impresses me most as a scholar—probably because of his striking resemblance to the late George Bernard Shaw.

Only G.B.S. was never known to wear a magic ring or a heavy bronze bracelet which tells other witches that their colleague is an Elder Witch.

The proceedings of the National Association...
Friday afternoon in...
by an address from...
"Bloodship," Dr...
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