

Reviews of Leo Ruickbie's Work

Witchcraft Out of the Shadows has been favourably reviewed by Alan Richardson, expert on the Magical Tradition, by Amazon.co.uk and Amazon.de, Blogcritics, and Epinions.com, in addition to having received many personal recommendations and words of praise from readers.

If you want to review **Witchcraft Out of the Shadows**, then please contact the publishers **Robert Hale** in writing. Your request for a review copy should state clearly the book you want to review and the place in which the review will appear (e.g., magazine, newspaper, website).

From Alan Richardson, Author of over 10 Books on the Magical Tradition, its People and Practices

The title of Leo Ruickbie's book 'Witchcraft out of the Shadows' is both a clever play on words and also the key to the whole thing. Shadows can make people seem bigger than they are; they can fill us with terror, or at least provide our imaginings with some apparent substance. Take the shadows away and the hero-demons can look very small and laughable. What Ruickbie has done, however, is use real scholarship to illuminate the murky beginnings of Witchcraft yet still leave us with that most precious gift of all...a sense of respect, tinged with wonder.

Modern witchcraft is an easy target. Any serious researcher into modern belief-systems does not have to use the heavy tools of religious archaeology to uncover the very thin and precarious foundations on which this one is based. Any amateur psychologist can lay bare the motives of the early founders, such as Gerald Gardner, Alex Sanders, Robert Cochrane, Sybil Leek etc etc riding together on Uncle Tom Cobley's night-mare across the coven-haunted landscapes of modern British myth. But although Ruickbie sees right through the sham he still manages to lead us toward the sheer enchantment of what they did. All right, these post-War witches were making it up as they went along, claiming spurious origins in order to get acceptance, but what they did in respect to their Goddess is no more than St Paul did in respect to Jesus. And in so doing, they helped change the world. Green issues, sexual equality and freedom, belief in reincarnation, healing powers and the Return of the Goddess - were all championed by the modern witches long before their children and grandchildren accepted these as a matter of course.

'Witchcraft out of the Shadows' is an engaging book which deserves to be the benchmark for all future analyses of the Craft.

Alan Richardson, received 24th March, 2005.

From Epinions.com - Recommended

Readable, well-written, new information not found anywhere else and not a fluffy bunny in sight [...] Overall, the book is written in a serious and scholarly fashion. It's thoroughly referenced with a useful bibliography and a detailed index. Leo Ruickbie is an academic, but one who can talk to his readers whether they have an academic background or not. He's definitely a writer to watch.

Epinions.com, posted 5th January, 2005.
http://www.epinions.com/content_168369098372

From Hearth of Arianrhod

I just got a new book that I had to recommend to everyone--I really think you'll love it! [...] would surely made a fine addition to anyone's Pagan Studies library.

From Blogcritics.com - Rated 5 out of 5

Witchcraft: in the shadows no more

Mr Ruickbie has written a tight overview of the history and current trends (including some interesting statistical analysis) in Witchcraft. Unlike some books on the subject, there is no political or religious motivation to this book. It is factual and unjudgemental on the subject, neither being the craft's cheerleader nor taking the "its all evil" line. Because of this lack of an agenda, the book is much more complete than many books of its kind. His flowing style allows the reader to get to grips with the varied history of Witchcraft without being overwhelmed by minutiae. Not only is the book a fascinating read, it is a pleasant one as well. Needless to say, Ruickbie has included an extensive bibliography for those wishing to read further on the subject. I highly recomend this book to anyone with the slightest interest in the "Craft".

Rating: 5/5

Marty Dodge, Blogcritics.com, posted 3rd December, 2004.
<http://blogcritics.org/archives/2004/12/03/140311.php>

From The Wind's Song - Rated Five Stars

... this is the first book to bring witchcraft fully out of the shadows.

Score: ★★★★★

Rowena Windsong, the-winds-song.org, posted 27th Nov, 2004.
<http://www.the-winds-song.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=Reviews&file=index&req=showcontent&id=2>

From Amazon.de - Rated Five Stars

Endlich eine vollständige Geschichte der Hexerei!

Das Buch beschreibt die Geschichte der Hexerei (Witchcraft) von der Antike bis in die heutige Zeit - ohne wie so viele andere Bücher nur auf die Hexenverfolgungen einzugehen. Schon in der Antike gab es Hexen wie Medea oder die berühmte Circe, die bereits Odysseus betörte. Natürlich werden auch das Mittelalter und die frühneuzeitlichen Hexenverfolgungen in Europa und Amerika ausführlich behandelt. Anhand der historischen Quellen zeigt der Autor, wie und warum sich das Bild der Hexe gewandelt hat und warum die Hexen verfolgt wurden. Sehr spannend fand ich auch die Ausführungen zu den modernen Hexen - wer sind diese Frauen und auch Männer(!)? Der Autor hat zahlreiche moderne Hexen interviewt und zeigt, daß es auch heute noch viele Anhänger von Witchcraft oder Wicca gibt und wer sich dahinter verbirgt.

Das Buch ist sehr spannend geschrieben und gut zu lesen, auch wenn man über nicht so gute Englisch-Kenntnisse verfügt (das Buch ist in englischer Sprache erschienen).

Resultat: Unbedingt zu empfehlen!!!

A. Steeg, Amazon.de, posted 16th November 2004.
<http://www.amazon.de/exec/obidos/ASIN/0709075677/>

From Amazon.co.uk - Rated Five Stars

The first book to bring witchcraft out of the shadows

This is an incredible book: once I started reading it I couldn't put it down. Leo has a great, highly readable style with which he manages to convey a lot of information. The book is divided into three sections. The first deals with the beginnings of witchcraft in the ancient world and how it developed through the Dark and Middle Ages up to the Early Modern period. There's masses of information on Hecate, for example, that I just haven't found anywhere else. The second part deals with the origins of modern witchcraft, the influence of the Golden Dawn, the role of Aleister Crowley and the part played by Gerald Gardner. The chapter on Gardner is pure genius. There's a complete break down and analysis of the Book of Shadows. Gardner is totally dissected! The third part is all about witches today: who they are, what they do and why they do it. Most of this stuff is from Leo's unpublished PhD research. He ends with an analysis of the crisis facing Christianity in the West and discusses an exciting new development that he calls re-enchantment. My favourite chapter was the one on magic. It gives you such an amazing insight into how witches define and use magic, and the effect it has on them. Finally, the book lives up to its title. This book really does bring witchcraft out of the shadows. And did I mention there is also a website to go with it. It all adds up to quite a package. I'm impressed.

Witchcraft Out of the Shadows is on the reading list at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and it should be on your bookshelf too.

Witch Dr, Amazon.co.uk, posted 23rd June, 2004.
<http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/0709075677/>

From Bloomsbury (publish the Harry Potter books)

I found your material engaging.

Personal communication, 11th June, 2003.

Other Reviews

Witchcraft Out of the Shadows is based on Leo Ruickbie's highly successful course, which has been favourably reviewed by major newspapers, websites and others.

From L!VE Magazine

1, 2, 3 alles keine Hexerei. Früher wurde das Wissen über Zauberei und Hexerei aus den bekannten Gründen nur in engen Zirkeln weitergegeben, aber spätestens seit Harry Potter wissen wir alle, dass es entsprechende Zauberschulen gibt. Nicht ganz so elitär, dafür aber bequem übers Internet zu erreichen ist die einzige offizielle Zauberschule im Netz. Leider auf englisch, aber ein entsprechender Zauberspruch, der die Übersetzung herbeiführt, sollte sich finden lassen...

Neues im Internet, 'Zaubern lernen,' accessed 25th July, 2002.
<http://www.live-magazin.de/rubriken/hotspot/inet.htm>

From The Guardian newspaper

Presumably Buffy was born with her powers, but we are not all that lucky. Study for your diploma in witchcraft at <http://www.wica.org.uk>.

Ruth Rosselson, 'Halloween,' The Guardian, 25th October, 2001.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/online/story/0,3605,580163,00.html>

From Graduate Planet

However, it has to be www.wica.org.uk that has to be the most impressive; it is the world's only professional research and educational consultancy specialising in witchcraft. It offers a witchcraft information centre and archive, an online resource centre for the study and understanding of witchcraft, wicca, paganism and the occult and even online support through specialist tutors on online courses. All this is backed up with audio and offsite links.

Lucy Hay, 'Double, Double, Toil and Trouble,' Graduate Planet, 14th November, 2001.
<http://www.graduateplanet.co.uk>

From All About Eve, a BBC Magazine

Recommended as the "**useful link**" at the end of an article on women and prejudice featuring an interview with a Witch.

All About Eve, BBC Magazines
http://www.allabouteve.beeb.com/topics/prejudice/page_01/
[page has been moved]

From Worth Finding.com

Let me challenge you to see what Wicca and witchcraft are really all about... All you have to do is go to one of the official websites of witchcraft where those who call themselves "The Witchcraft Experts" have it all in plain view. You'll get quite an education.

John McWilliams, 'What the Harry is Going on Here?'
http://www.worthfinding.com/articles/what_the_harry.htm

Selected E-Mails

I would like to congratulate you on the amazing homepage. I've been looking long and hard for something like it and finally found it. It's great to be informed with the latest pagan news and events. Great job! Keep up the good work!

Sven, e-mail, 29th April, 2001.

I think you are doing an excellent job.

Ed, e-mail, 16th July, 2001.

I would like to say thank you to you for sharing your knowledge of that you have learned and providing the teachings of the Old Ways to me and others as well that seek the knowledge of The Old Religion. Blessed Be To You All

Briena, e-mail, 17th July, 2001.

I'm well impressed with the site keep up the good work!!! Blessed Be

Morven, e-mail, 27th August, 2001.

*I found your site to be very informative, unlike any other. Please add me to your **mailing list**. Blessed Be.*

Ravenclaw, e-mail, 3rd March, 2002.

*You've put together an impressive site. Please put me on your **list**.*

Tom, e-mail, 4th March, 2002.

I must congratulate you on a wonderful site. It is refreshing to see Wica "move with the times" so to speak.

Penny, e-mail, 12th March, 2002.

Keep up the good work.

Ginnylee, e-mail, 1st October, 2002.

... looks really good.

Ceri, e-mail, 10th December, 2002.

I love magic, this is good.

Max, e-mail, 6th February, 2003.

I'm enjoying the course thoroughly.

Denise, e-mail, 14th May, 2003.

The information you give is very interesting and you get to the point.

Helen, e-mail, 18th May, 2003.

I am enjoying the course very much. Thank you.

Cerridwen, e-mail, 27th May, 2003.

You have a great site...

Ed, e-mail, 11th June, 2003.

I am extremely impressed with the feedback and the presentation of your course.

Barbie, e-mail, 4th July, 2003.

I am a Wiccan that needs guided... thank you for your valuable time.

Heidi, e-mail, 13th July, 2003.

I just wanted to say keep up the good work. You are providing a service to everyone who is a little different from the norm and I would just like to thank you. You are really coming along with what you offer and I am proud of your progress. Keep up the good work especially when there are so many people out there that need you.

Amanda, e-mail, 5th March, 2004.

Many thanks for the wonderful newsletters and for the openmindedness you wear so well. May the spirits guide you.

Wendy, e-mail, 21st November, 2004.

While exploring the ways of Light and Spirit within the seas of cyberspace I was blessed to

find your Refreshing and Wonderful site. Its Depth and Character are to Savor and Enjoy. Well done. [...] Your pages are a Celebration of the Now, a Wellspring of Creativity for all to enjoy. I wish for you a Spirit which Soars on the Wings of an Eagle. May yours be a Divinely Inspired Dance that leads to the Sacred.

Michael Teal, e-mail, 26th December, 2004.

I've done A LOT of research on Wicca mainly through the internet but I also read quite a few books. I've never seen anything like [Witchcraft Out of the Shadows] out in the market.

Emilia, e-mail, 28th January, 2005.

I have received hundreds of e-mails from people who have enjoyed reading my work, but for reasons of space I cannot list them all here. However, if you would like to tell me what you think, then please **contact me**.

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