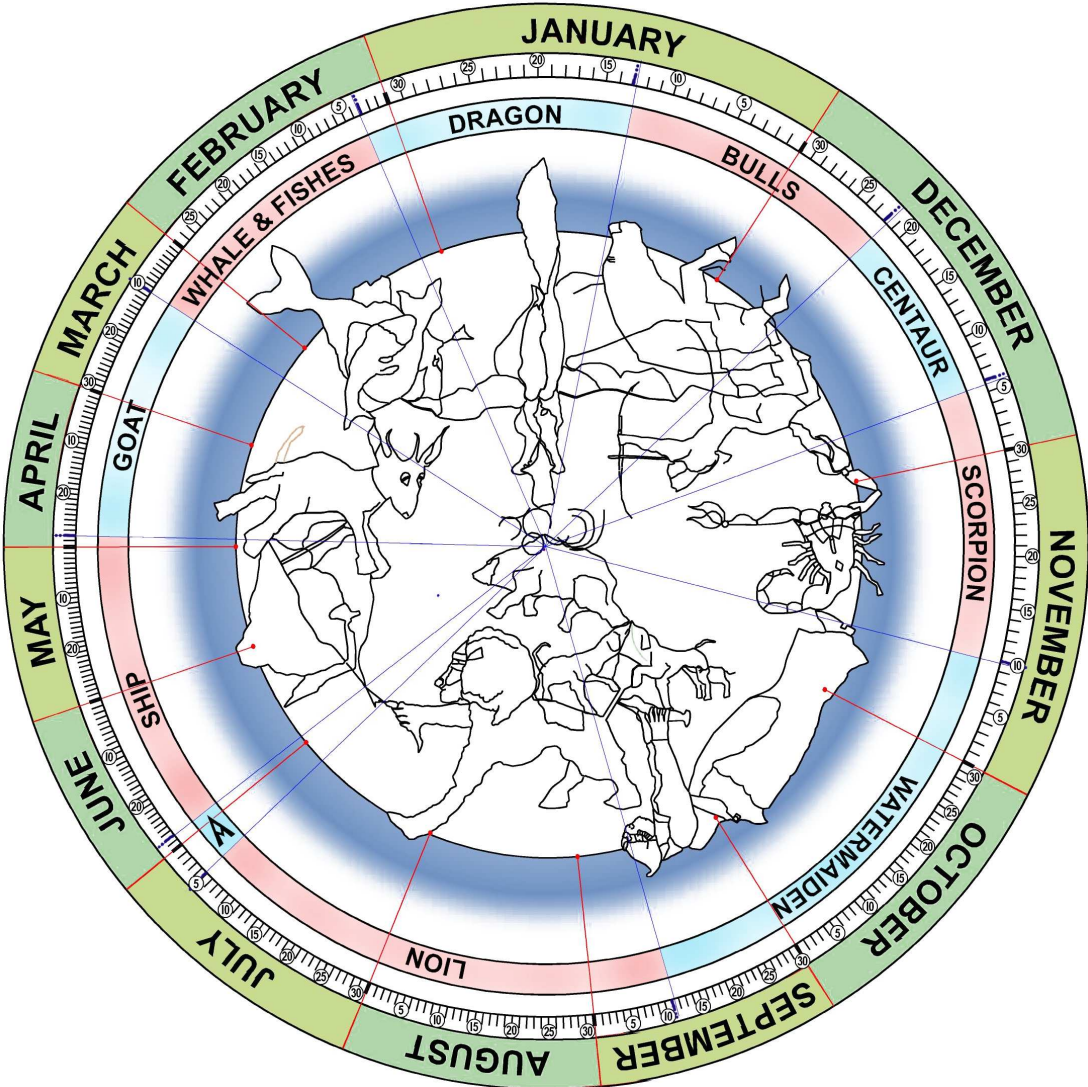


THE MALVERN ZODIAC

AN ALTERNATIVE ASTROLOGY

BY ALAN GRIPTON



ASTROLOGY, the belief that the cosmos has an effect on the actions and interactions of everyday events here on earth, has been a constant companion to mankind since the birth of civilisation, and probably from a time long before that. Maybe it's fact, maybe it's fiction – I'm just content not to be the man trying to prove or disprove the theory beyond any doubt.

As a species we appear to instinctively point a finger of blame or offer grateful thanks to the heavens above for our personal success or failure. In 2009, is it still necessary to envisage an ethereal management department where the buck stops once and for all? Surely by now we've learned that the cosmic intelligence behind the executive desk never offers a definitive solution to our problems – apart from informing us that we were born with the freedom of choice.

The importance of astrology throughout civilised history is well documented, from Sumerians, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans to the dollar-gathering 21st century electro-media. Even now, for millions around the world, the search for cosmic answers to tomorrow's problems generates a constant and continuous fascination with the principle that the disposition of any individual may be predetermined or merely swayed by the position of the stars and can therefore be called upon to assist every one of us through the human quagmire of our most powerful emotions, love and hate.

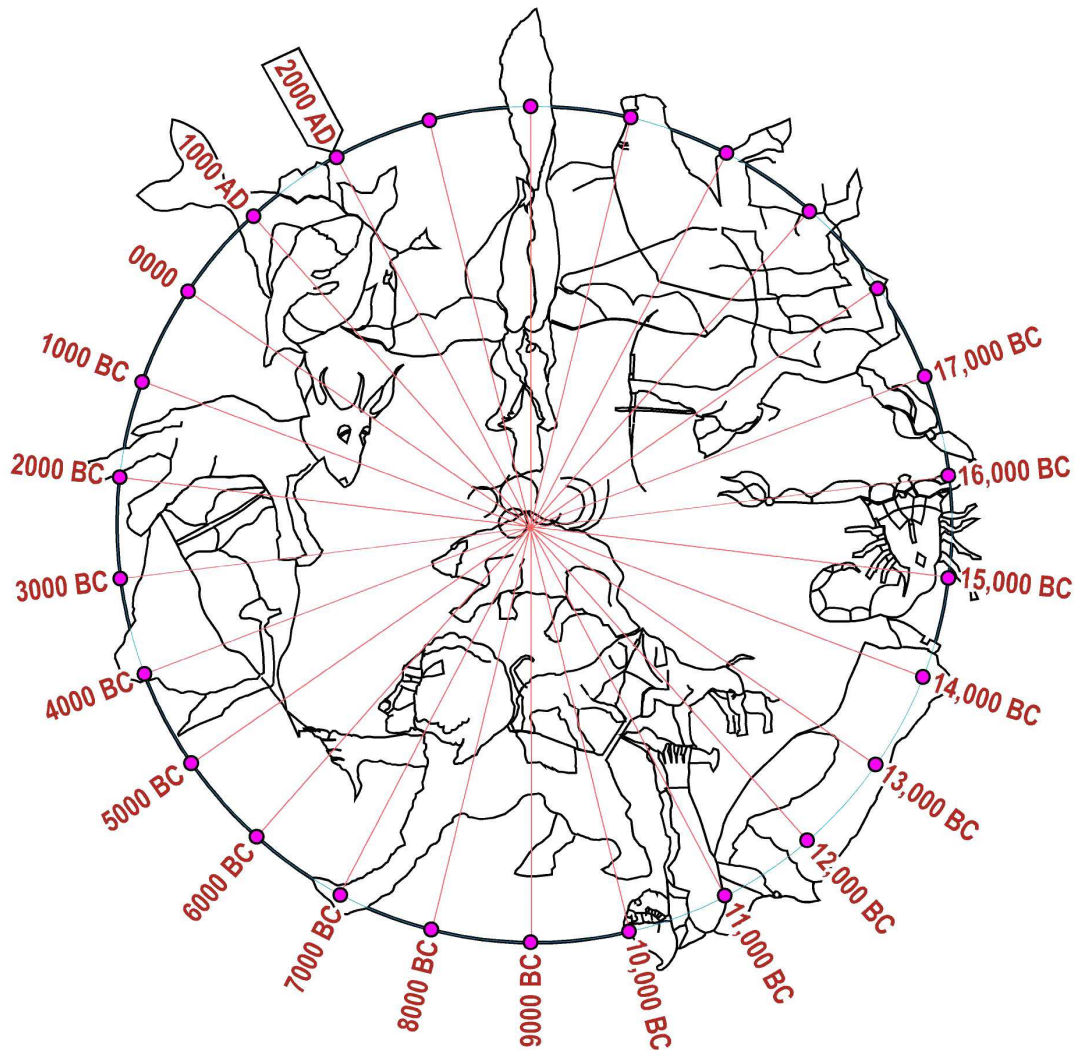
On a personal level, the youthful respect that I held for the “modern” twelve-sign zodiac was heavily dented when I discovered that my birthday, November 23rd, 1951, was only Sagittarian on paper, and that the actual position of the sun on that fortuitous day was straddling the border between Scorpio and Libra. Furthermore, my “Capricorn” wife was born while the sun was deep in Sagittarius, and that my “Sagittarian” son was born while the sun rose in Ophiuchus, the 13th sign of the zodiac, a subject that seems to be purposely avoided by astrologers.

Time has moved on – the precession of the earth has rendered most of the original celestial time slots obsolete, but it would require a step of immense financial bravery for a recognised astrologer to step out of the ranks and attempt to influence a change in the status quo, redressing the disparity.

From its original inception, without continual updates throughout the millennia, the zodiac was doomed to founder on the rocks of time, and maybe the lack of corrective action is one of the reasons behind its demotion to the level of a newspaper cartoon. Time-honoured characteristics attributed to particular signs are no longer applicable or even recognisable in the targeted individuals – even if they did exist.

My opinion of the ancients who initially decided to geometrically “mechanise” the layout of the prehistoric Malvern Zodiac into a regimented calendar of twelve houses each of 30 degrees is equalled only by that of Napoleon’s depressing foray into decimalisation – it shows a disregard of history and nature and a pretentious level of self-importance that we can all do without.

THE GREAT YEAR – A COSMIC CLOCK



At present, in the northern hemisphere, Polaris is the north star, but during the early Egyptian dynasties (4000-2500 BC) it was Thuban. In 12,000 BC the nearest bright star to true north was Vega – and in the future, approximately 14,000 AD, it will be Vega again. The Great Year is the time it takes for one complete cycle of the precession of the equinoxes, the cosmic clock, approximately 26,000 years.

Will we ever understand the reason for the contents of the original Malvern design? Why should one area of the sky be designated to hold the image of a ship, while

another holds a dragon? Why should the months of the watermaiden be three times greater than that of the whale? Was it purely down to visual recognition, a selection of random images plucked from the imagination to assist long-distance travel - or was there another, deeper purpose behind the graphical layout?

It's well known that according to the Great Year and the "new" zodiac we are entering the age of Aquarius, supposedly an age of love and peace, but by the ancient design of the Malvern Zodiac we are leaving the Whale and Fishes and entering the portion controlled by the Dragon - we can only speculate on the effect this will have



on humankind. The dragon image is the epitome of awesome power – wings, teeth, gaping jaw, flame and fireballs – it is not a sign of peace!

From the Malvern Zodiac's Great Year layout it's possible to trace back over the last 20,000 years to ages past.

The Piscean age falls over the Whale and Fishes, a watery sign commandeered by the Christians of the last 2000 years and still proudly exhibited by many of its followers today. It should come as no surprise that the mitre worn by the leader of the religion is based upon the head of a fish.

Previous to the Piscean age the heavens travelled through approximately 2500 years of the Goat, and explains why this animal has been the long-suffering graphic representative of devils, demons, fallen angels and all things dark and evil.

The passing age of the goat had to be summarily rejected and therefore the illiterate population were "thought-directed" in a more pictorial and religious manner. We can only wonder whether the Piscean age of today will be subject to the same level of defamation and vilification at a date yet to come – and if so, by whom.

From 5000 BC to 2500 BC, before the age of the goat, the star-gazing communities of the world came under the influence of the Ship. Was this a great age of maritime travel, exploration and expansion? Once again speculation is almost futile, our understanding is only governed by an academic guess from the evidence available – of which there is very little.

However, one aspect of prehistory cannot be denied, the people who ran their lives according to the Malvern Zodiac were far closer to nature than we could ever be. Their existence and survival depended upon their ability to understand and react to the underlying rhythms hidden amongst the unpredictable chaos of the natural world.

It is only recently, with the ever-increasing threat of global catastrophe, that we have started to seriously investigate their level of ancient wisdom in subjects such as animal husbandry, medicine and alternative earth-friendly lifestyles, with the hope that it will help us delay or survive the impending cataclysm.

The age of the Malvern Zodiac is difficult to determine, but it is located on land that has been ice-free since 16,000 BC and there are slight indications that other similar sites existed across the whole of the British Isles, such as Mount Temple in the Republic of Ireland and Galashiels in Scotland, but with my limited time and resources, further investigations have, through necessity, been put on hold.

A confusing aspect of the layout is its graphical content. The centaur may well be an ancient interpretation of a man on horseback and the dragon a misrepresentation of various bones or fossils, but to clearly include animals that have never ventured this far north, the lion and the scorpion, suggests that the design either originated in warmer latitudes or that the original tribes of the Celtic shelf, early Britain, were great travellers. I tend to favour the latter explanation due to the inclusion of the deep-keeled ship.

Nevertheless, the Malvern Zodiac is what it is, a beautifully simplistic design formed from the brightest stars within the ecliptic circle of the northern hemisphere. Of course, archaeologists and historians will disagree. According to academia terrestrial zodiacs do not exist and are merely figments of an over-imaginative mind, a dot-to-dot or ink-blot theory forming recognisable images from a totally random distribution of lines and strokes – I can live with that, this is a work in progress, and I guarantee that one day they will eventually change their minds.

As a slight diversion from my normal line of research, which is identifying the allegoric basis of archaic literature linked to the Malvern Zodiac, I have taken time out to redefine the astrological zodiac, complete with my own intuitive interpretations of birthday characteristics based upon the underlying nature, personality and temperament of the individual constellations. The results may surprise you, or maybe not ... can you recognise the traits? Is this where you discover your true self?

Alan Gripton



Unlike the standard 12-character zodiac, many of the constellations overlap and partially occupy the same area of the sky. A judgment has to be made where to place the radial that separates the individual areas of influence. With this in mind the panel below is a suggestion of the approximate dates of change.

THE MALVERN ZODIAC

DATES OF CHANGE

THE WHALE & FISHES -

February 4th to March 10th

THE GOAT -

March 11th to April 28th

THE SHIP -

April 29th to June 28th

THE ARROWHEAD -

June 29th to July 5th

THE LION -

July 6th to September 11th

THE WATERMAIDEN -

September 12th to November 10th

THE SCORPION -

November 11th to December 6th

THE CENTAUR -

December 7th to December 22nd

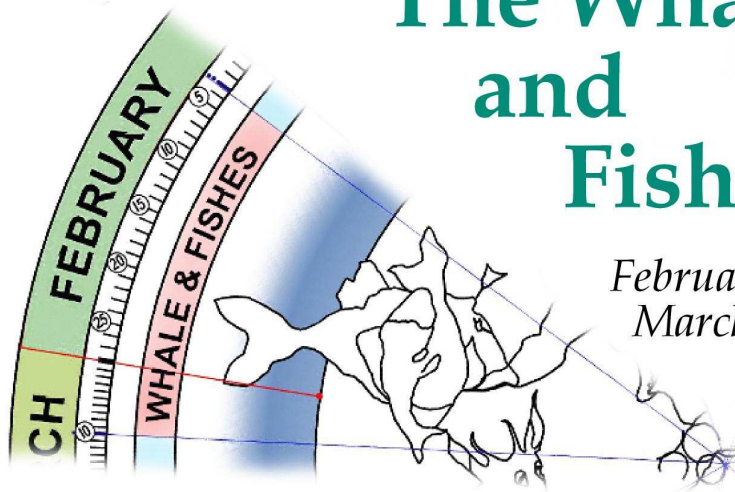
THE BULLS -

December 23rd to January 13th

THE DRAGON -

January 14th to February 3rd

The Whale and Fishes



*February 4th to
March 10th*

You are very calm and sensitive to the thoughts and feelings of those around you and are naturally generous to friends and relatives, however you will feel uncomfortable as a host.

Your thoughtfulness and hidden depths may occasionally send you off into a world of daydreams – but try to avoid whimsical ideas presenting themselves as actual reality, life is seldom as exciting as that found in the columns of magazines.

You are the kind of person that prefers to act and work steadfastly behind the scenes without drawing attention to yourself, purposefully avoiding the complications that arise in the spotlight of celebrity.

You enjoy traveling, but avoid seeking thrills, preferring to know the destination and the conditions you are likely to encounter before you arrive – for peace of mind avoid mystery tours, safaris and any other holiday situation that is likely to make unforeseen demands on your bank account and rigid timetable. A tranquil lifestyle, relative comfort and the safety of numbers is paramount for a short break away from the humdrum of everyday existence – a long-distance cruise or quiet hotel beside the beach is your perfect solution.

You are methodical in work and personal projects and will often benefit by having a pre-determined campaign of action, but if circumstances change and previous objectives are no longer available try to avoid dark mood swings – your feelings will not be hidden from those around you and could occasionally cause disagreements.

To avoid periods of loneliness you will seek the company of others in a situation similar to yourself, such as groups, clubs and societies – but deep down beneath the thick-skinned façade of communal enjoyment you would much prefer the companionship and one-to-one attention offered by a single partner rather than that generated by a supportive group – because of this you will always keep one eye on the door to see who is entering the room.

Most of the discord in your life will concern the balance between being inwardly unmaterialistic and your need to maintain an outward image that will act as a mask of normality, helping you to blend in with your chosen neighbours or buddies, this can be a difficult act to maintain emotionally and can often turn out to be financially damaging.

Your cool head and outward stability will attract others seeking advice concerning more serious matters and your ability to see more than one side of an argument will be welcomed, although not always followed. Try not to take offence, others have their own path to lead.

Avoid the pitfalls of a tranquil lifestyle – over-indulgence of food and drink will eventually take its toll – a little exercise and moderation will prove to be very beneficial in later life.

As a protective parent or carer you are unparalleled, and will ensure your dependents will not go without all they need to prosper, however, try not to dictate and impose upon them your own safety-conscious outlook, there are certain aspects of life that can only be learned the hard way – and your job is to be there to patch up the wounds and wipe away the tears.

By preferring to lead a calm and unruffled lifestyle, avoiding situations of inconsistency and unpredictability, you are naturally slow to anger – but if eventually all else fails and you find yourself compromised or cornered you have the capability to explode – and then beware all others!

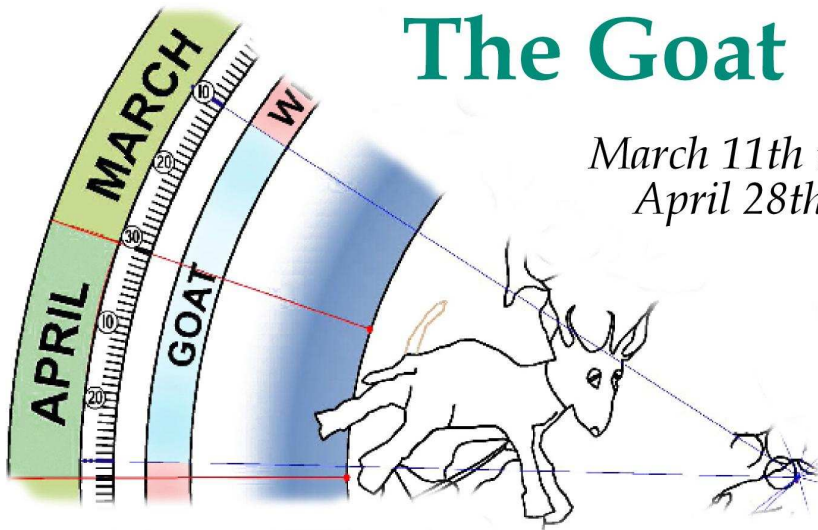
Favourite colours: Dark blue, Grey

Best Partners: Bulls and Watermaidens

Gemstones: Aquamarine, Blue Topaz, Blue Sapphire

The Goat

*March 11th to
April 28th*



A duality of nature exists for those with birthdays falling under the influence of the goat due to the large area of overlapping constellations. For those born in the month of March, you'll have problems controlling your natural exuberance and optimism while living in a state of permanent springtime.

New experiences and projects will be met with smiling enthusiasm, and there will be many opportunities for fun and frolics. Try not to lose concentration as you leap quickly from one brilliant idea to the next earth-shaking endeavour.

In romance, each of your partners will be regarded as the greatest love of your life - and only the passing of time and the wisdom of age will eventually shed light on the fact that there are many more windfall apples in the meadow - take your time, you can afford to be more selective.

For the goats of April life is not quite so hectic. There is still a wandering mind to deal with, but your path will be far more calculated and each step carefully planned. You will have greater awareness of the possible pitfalls and ramifications arising from your actions. This could eventually make you far more successful than your skittish March cousins, the downside being that you will not have quite so much fun.

All goats yearn for fresh green fields and freedom, if not physically then mentally and emotionally. For periods of relaxation or holidays you will be far happier rambling around meadows and mountains than wasting your life away on a sun-drenched beach.

You are very intuitive, and identifying short cuts to solve practical problems is an instinct that you can always call upon – although sometimes your impressive footwork would benefit from a little forethought.

All goats have the potential to be the life and soul of the party. Go out and enjoy yourself to the full, there will be no shortage of friends eager to share you company – but over-indulgence can occasionally open the door to others who may secretly envy your carefree demeanor, so try keep you senses alert for the smell of wolf.

You are not totally materialistic, but do enjoy possessing and wearing small beautiful objects such as flowers or fine jewellery, especially the expensive items that shine out like a beacon and sets you apart from others.

You are very confident, sometimes over-confident, you know where you want to be and the quickest way to get there, but life will become considerably easier once you learn to avoid jabbing people with your horns - consider the feelings of others before leaping into action.

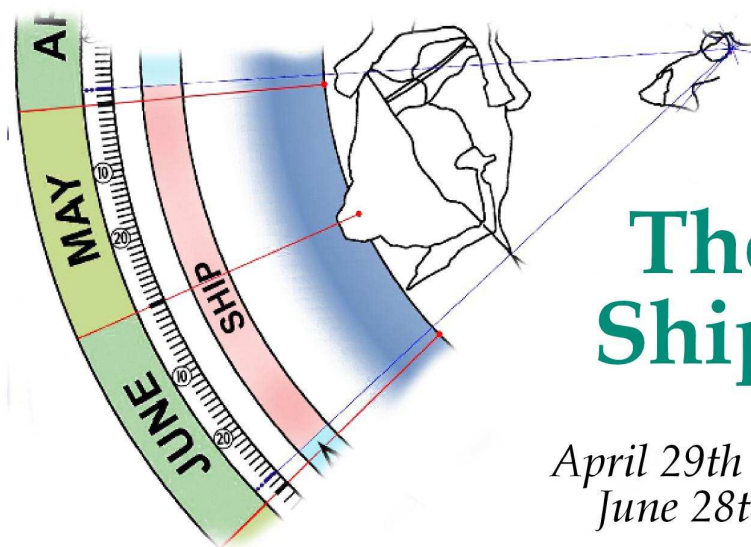
Avoid occupations that are over-repetitive and mentally stifling – you need to be regularly stimulated by the input of fresh new ideas, new concepts or having a continuous stream of new faces to meet and greet.

You learn to deal with problems quickly and forget very little – and when this is complemented by your gregarious personality there is no distant field or rocky summit beyond your reach.

Favourite colours: Green, Yellow, White

Best Partners: Lions and Centaurs

Gemstones: Jade, Peridot, Lemon Quartz, Tourmaline



The Ship

*April 29th to
June 28th*

For those born in the first week of this ancient maritime constellation, the phrase “are we there yet?” will continually haunt your life. With a head full of buzzing impatience, the milestones of success and achievements will never arrive quickly enough to satisfy your cutting-edge drive to get ahead of all others.

In ancient literature the Ship is the boat that carried Gilgamesh safely across the waters of death and also The Argo, the blessed vessel that carried Jason and his crew on their successful quest for the golden fleece - so expect to travel.

Struggling with a lifetime of itchy feet you will be occasionally frustrated by those who are less adventurous attempting to hold you back, but stay true to your nature and they will be left floundering in your wake.

If you are not a voyager then your mind will search for other interests and experiences to investigate so that your innate thirst for unusual facts and figures will stimulate and feed your growing intelligence – you need to know things that others would consider to be unnecessary trivia.

For the rest of those born under the Ship, the search for the unknown will continue, but at a slower, more controlled rate. It is a very inquisitive and intellectual sign, the internal library of information that you can offer will make you a very popular and interesting person to be with, therefore your ability to attract close friends and scholarly admirers will not be a problem.

You must be prepared for your direction in life to be regularly and dramatically altered by unforeseen outside influences, but such life-changing events will be easily absorbed and added to the catalogue of fascinating experiences – so don't fight it.

You are a natural born inventor and entrepreneur who is always looking for the next box to tick. Confidence generated by worldly knowledge gives you great verbal capacity, and you would be well placed as a media communicator or negotiator, a lawyer or even a comedian with a brain full of quick-witted humour.

You hold truth dear to your heart and are not prepared to suffer the companionship of others who lean towards minor subterfuge, misinformation or downright dishonesty.

Your speed of thought will enhance your leadership qualities but you will often find that a crowd following the dust from your heels will feel more like an anchor dragging across the sea bed.

While your attention is focused on the horizon and the constant race to achieve, do not forget to set aside a few hours each month to maintain the health of your body, you maybe built for speed but you are certainly not unbreakable.

Permanent companionships always need careful consideration and for you this will not be based upon looks alone. Such important decisions may prove to be problematic. For your choice of romantic partner only those who are prepared to sit patiently at home and wait for your eventual return from the library or the airport will be able to stabilise your inquisitive flirtatious nature – you are very competitive, and therefore do not need the added pressure and aggravation of competing against your nearest and dearest.

Keep a diary, and one day when you eventually tie up your hawsers for the last time you can sit in front of the warm fire, turn on the laptop and write the book.

Favourite colours: Aquamarine, Royal Blue
Best Partners: Watermaidens
Gemstones: Aquamarine, Lapis Lazuli, Blue Zircon

The Arrowhead

June 29th to July 5th

The Arrowhead is a tiny constellational segment that spans seven days of the ecliptic circle between the Lion and the Ship. In ancient Sumerian and Greek literature it is the constellation that generates the image of a "pine cone" or "mint leaf" being picked by Gilgamesh in the forest, and also the arrowhead being dipped into the poisoned blood of the monstrous Hydra by the hero Heracles - both of whom wore the skin of a lion.

Before precessional readjustment, the triangular Arrowhead fell directly over the week of midsummer, but this is no longer true, time and the cosmos has moved on.

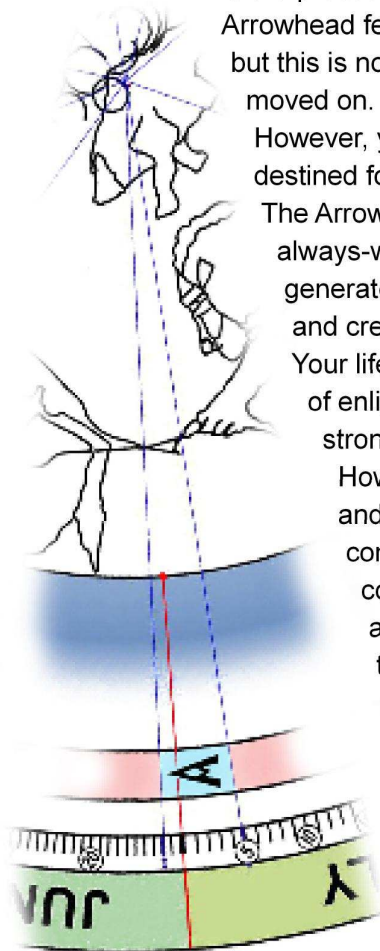
However, you can feel lucky that you are still destined for a lifetime of celebrations in the sun.

The Arrowhead give you the edge, you are the always-welcome bright spark in the dark, a generator of good deeds, an initiator of action and creator of movement.

Your life will be touched by thoughts and ideas of enlightened, glaring logicity, backed up by a strong heart and an unswerving nature.

However, being so single-minded, direct and slightly tactless, your mannerisms and communications with others may often be considered extremely curt, sometimes abrupt. Try not to alienate yourself from those who seek your advice or assistance - we will all need a friend at some time in our lives - even you.

You have the ability to clearly identify an uncomplicated solution to a difficult problem and will readily defend your simplistic rationale, although hitting a nut with a sledgehammer should be avoided.



On your best behaviour you will act as a brilliant catalyst for others by happily sharing your incisive and decisive thoughts, words and actions – your sunny disposition allowing you to say what others are merely thinking without any repercussions to yourself. When you have an opinion, everybody is going to hear it - and a wide, genuine smile makes it all so acceptable.

You are an excellent instructor, and can achieve much personal satisfaction in the field of teaching by encouraging friends or pupils to achieve their own goals. As long as you tread carefully you will become well respected for your clarity of vision, unsophisticated answers and enduring reliability.

When you want to relax and get away from it all, take a break from the warmth of summer sun. Chill out for a while on the snow-covered slopes of a winter holiday ski-ing resort, or consider scuba diving down under - a change is as good as a rest, but both together will certainly will help to recharge the batteries.

You will have many admirers hoping to emulate your character and receive an emotional boost, but few will be able to deal with the heat of the kitchen. Your long-term partner should be patient, articulate and content to remain in the shadows, although it may take you a long time to realise this.

Your downside is a reluctance to recognise that others may have a different point of view, so you can expect a few fiery arguments while talking through the night with friends and a good bottle of wine.

For Arrowheads life is direct and simple, and should be lived at speed. They start here and go there - and any social barriers will be completely ignored.

Favourite colours: Yellow, Gold, Silver

Best Partners: Scorpions

Gemstones: Tigers Eye, Hematite, Yellow Sapphire

The Lion

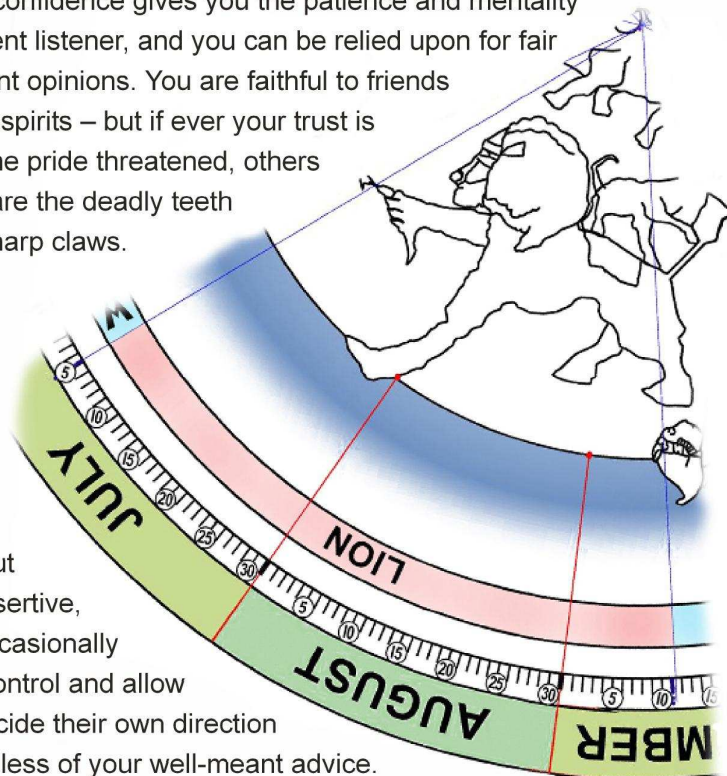
*July 6th to
September 11th*

The sun-kissed Lions of the zodiac will work steadfastly to build their castles, faithfully nurture and protect their families, proudly pace the impregnable battlements and loudly declare their independence from all others.

In ancient literature you are forever the hero. You represent the lion skins worn by Gilgamesh and Heracles and the brave standard bearer that walks unarmed at the front of the army.

The long lazy days of the summer months permeate your way of life, you have a big strong heart and it's dripping with the syrup of warm cosy family-based emotion. Anyone who dares to rattle your cage or criticise your methods will be met with a flick of the tail and a threatening glare of disdain – if they stubbornly continue to push harder they will hear your impressive roar.

Supreme confidence gives you the patience and mentality of an excellent listener, and you can be relied upon for fair and intelligent opinions. You are faithful to friends and kindred spirits – but if ever your trust is broken, or the pride threatened, others should beware the deadly teeth and razor-sharp claws.



You are fun-loving but often too assertive, you must occasionally relax your control and allow others to decide their own direction in life regardless of your well-meant advice.

Avoid taking any unnecessary financial risks – a large purchase, expensive project or travel should only be embarked upon after the outgoings have been carefully checked and the bank account can take the withdrawal without suffering.

You love the feeling of gold around your neck, and wear it as a sign of security for all to see and admire. However, in your search for a dependable partner you should remain very wary of the long queue of ever-eager candidates – some of which will be attracted to you for all the wrong reasons. Before you invite another to permanently share your castle solarium, allow plenty of time for their true nature to rise to the surface.

As a passionate, radiant individual you will be respected by others without question. You can afford to be very generous with your affections – but not without reciprocation, you will still expect or even insist upon the occasional word of appreciation, a birthday card, and a warm hug for your efforts. Try to avoid excessive demands from others and bear in mind that all people are equal, and each has their own path to tread.

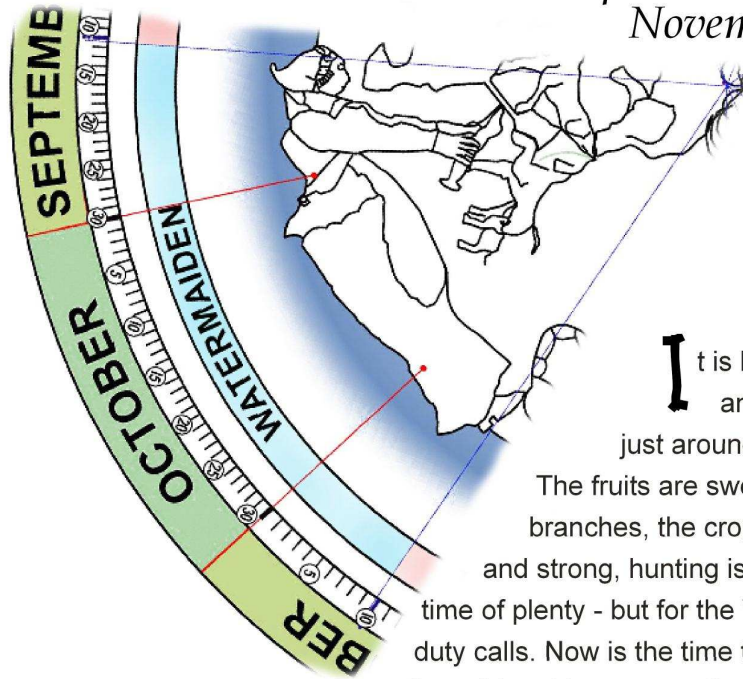
Travelling the world is not your idea of time well spent, preferring the safety and security of familiar ramparts. Deep down you are a home-loving creature and would prefer to take individual days out or maybe just a relaxing weekend break rather than an extended period away in unpredictable foreign lands.

You are naturally cheerful and the sincerity of your smile will attract a circle of close friends effortlessly – and all will be well in your glowing world while the Lion of summer retains its position as the centre of attention.

Favourite colours: Red, Orange, Yellow
Best Partners: Whales and Fishes
Gemstones: Amber, Carnelian, Ruby

The Watermaiden

*September 12th to
November 10th*



It is late summer and autumn is just around the corner.

The fruits are swelling on the branches, the crops are green and strong, hunting is good, it is a time of plenty - but for the Watermaiden duty calls. Now is the time to prepare for the cold and barren months of winter.

Whether male or female, you are the dependable anchor of the team, the unfailing motor that buzzes gently in the background preparing for that inevitable rainy day disaster. You are an uncomplaining supplier of a secure future for your often-unprepared colleagues and dependents.

Watermaidens are only content when homes and businesses run like clockwork, outstanding bills are paid, details meticulously checked, good delivered, engines serviced, rooms redecorated, hedges trimmed and harmonious music is playing softly in the background.

If disagreements occur others will expect you to immediately assume the role of unbiased referee – and your decision will be considered fair and final.

You are steadfast, trustworthy and well-grounded, and fully aware that nothing in this life is free - this can occasionally lead to others taking unfair advantage of your super-efficiency, practicality and uncomplaining nature.

Watermaidens are sometimes accused of being hoarders of junk, but in fact are collectors with a purpose – the extensive catalogue of items stored on shelves, in cupboards, in the dark recesses of the loft or beneath a sack in the garden shed may one day be worth a fortune, or could be just the tool you need for that unexpected household catastrophe.

You are never happy while in the company of others who do not share your outlook on life – loud, untidy, offensive or messy people will be diplomatically but gently directed to the exit door – which will then be securely locked, and dusted, twice.

You love those warm, friendly social gatherings that take place as the days of summer begin to shorten and an autumn chill hangs in the misty air – and better still when you can assume the role of the extremely capable host. Others will be regularly amazed at your capacity to rearrange a situation of potential chaos into a smooth-running, slick event.

Your life-long companion must be your life-style partner – a successful hunter or farmer, a supplier and frugal accomplice to your chosen way of life, somebody who can complement without seeking to challenge your authority. For the mate of a Watermaiden, opposites do not attract.

To relax on holiday, book into a hotel on a quiet beach well away from the hustle and bustle of shoulder-to-shoulder tourist traps. Visit the places that cannot be found in a holiday brochure, and take full advantage of the room service.

A chill is in the air and the shadows are getting longer. Birds gather preparing to leave - but the Watermaiden has been busy, so everything will be just fine.

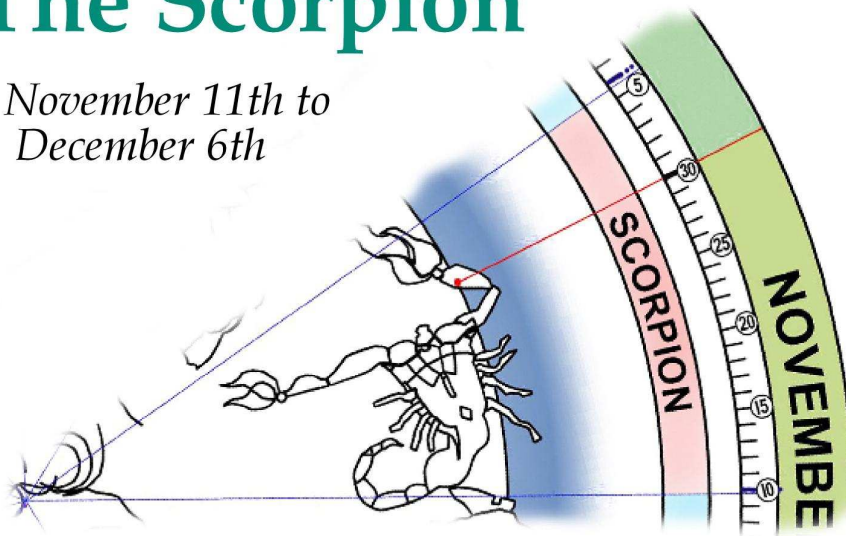
Favourite colours: Bottle Green, Brown, Plum

Best Partners: Centaurs and Dragons

Gemstones: Garnet, Amethyst, Emerald

The Scorpion

*November 11th to
December 6th*



Greetings to all scorpions (wherever you are) – and welcome to the dark side. You are secretive, sensitive creatures that have thoughts, words and a quick-witted intellect that can slay a fire-breathing dragon with a well-aimed verbal blow or bring a giant to its knees with a single glance.

You exist on the edge of social normality, only occasionally willing to join the noisy masses in their communal gatherings, but often preferring your own company and the security offered by shadowy solitude.

Your personal space is paramount and passionately guarded, and you find that unwanted interaction with others can prove to be very stressful. Your hobbies and pastimes will not include memberships of clubs, societies or collective activities that expect you to meet on a regular basis and aimlessly mingle.

You are not concerned with the mundane humdrum of everyday life – financial gains, valuable possessions and the trinkets of modern materialism will always be happily accumulated, but will serve merely as superficial camouflage and essentially mean very little to your enigmatic thought processes.

You are the loner of the zodiac, the cerebral hermit and the black sheep – however, your excellent memory, single-minded actions and instinctive distrust of all others will often project you skywards to the very top of the pile – because it's the only way to get your own office.

You are a born survivor and will have few pangs of conscience while you manipulate, use and confuse others by utilising the seductive air of mystery that surrounds you. You must try hard to resist misusing this talent, laws are there for a purpose.

Being a Scorpion, you have your own unstated personal goals in life and an internal agenda hard-wired into your brain cells. You know that with persistence and whatever else it takes, you can eventually achieve your target, and if you fail, the only one to blame is yourself.

Scorpions do not need to dress to impress, most of your inexpensive limited wardrobe will be distinctively low key, or just plain black, allowing you to blend perfectly into the shadows during a rare and unwanted social gathering. When confronted by a disagreeable situation beyond your control, you will revert to type and walk away without a backwards glance.

Your fortitude, resilience and bravery is beyond question, but you have no wish to demonstrate your prowess, knowing that the silence of modesty earns great respect and furthermore, it confuses many others.

For prospective partners try to find somebody who is not concerned about the number of pot-holes in the road – just the quality of the final destination.

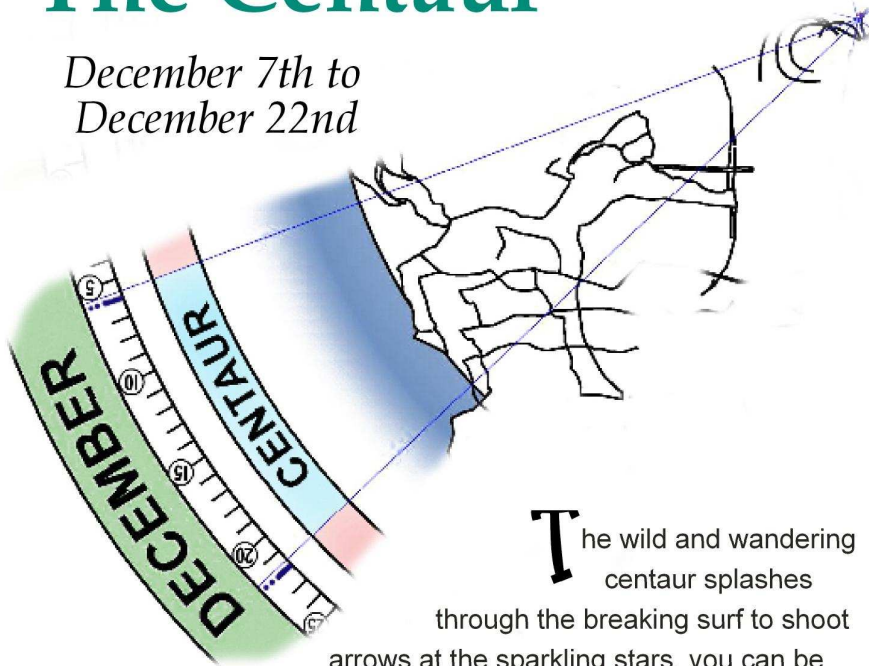
Favourite colours: Black, Blue, Grey

Best Partners: Lions and Whales

Gemstones: Black Onyx, Black Pearl, Sodalite

The Centaur

*December 7th to
December 22nd*



The wild and wandering centaur splashes through the breaking surf to shoot arrows at the sparkling stars, you can be such a dreamer.

The sign of the centaur has been used for thousands of years as two distinct personalities, each with opposite characteristics, but combining to form the complete individual.

You may be the overbearing hunter that lives for the nerve-jangling excitement and optimism of the chase, trampling all that goes before him – or you may be humility personified, willing to humbly serve and follow regardless of any dubious destinations set by others.

You are the original dual personality of the zodiac, and can change with the wind. On a good day the joy of life pumps powerfully through the veins of your body and any rewards are irrelevant as long as the heart-thumping journey is fast and furious. On a bad day – you might as well stay in bed.

Many of the ambitious targets that you aim for in life will be born from the positive side of your character, some of which will be completely out of range, but others achieved with incredible success – however, do not let dark depression take over when a few fall by the wayside, because there will always be more.

Try to pick close friends and long-term partners who are slightly more grounded and slow to anger - or eventually, the relationship and bank account will surely suffer.

Physically, mentally and emotionally your life will be one long adventurous trek over the mountains, sometimes standing on summits above the clouds, and at other times up to your ankles in the mud at the bottom of the valley. It's going to be an interesting journey and there's so much for you to do, so many boxes to tick, so many bull-eyes to hit.

As you gallop through life stay confident - at your brilliant best you are untouchable, irrepressible and genius - Vega, the brightest star in northern hemisphere sits proudly on the end of your arrow.

Others may see some of your fancy moves as audacity bordering on recklessness, but the deeply philosophical centaur instinctively knows that life is too short to worry and nothing is forever - such a situation would be far too boring.

Friends will come and friends will go, eager to be carried along by your free-spirited enthusiasm or purposely avoiding your apparent lethargy, and very few will have the energy to stay around long enough to try to understand you. Regardless of your uncontrollable duality, you will certainly be remembered by all.

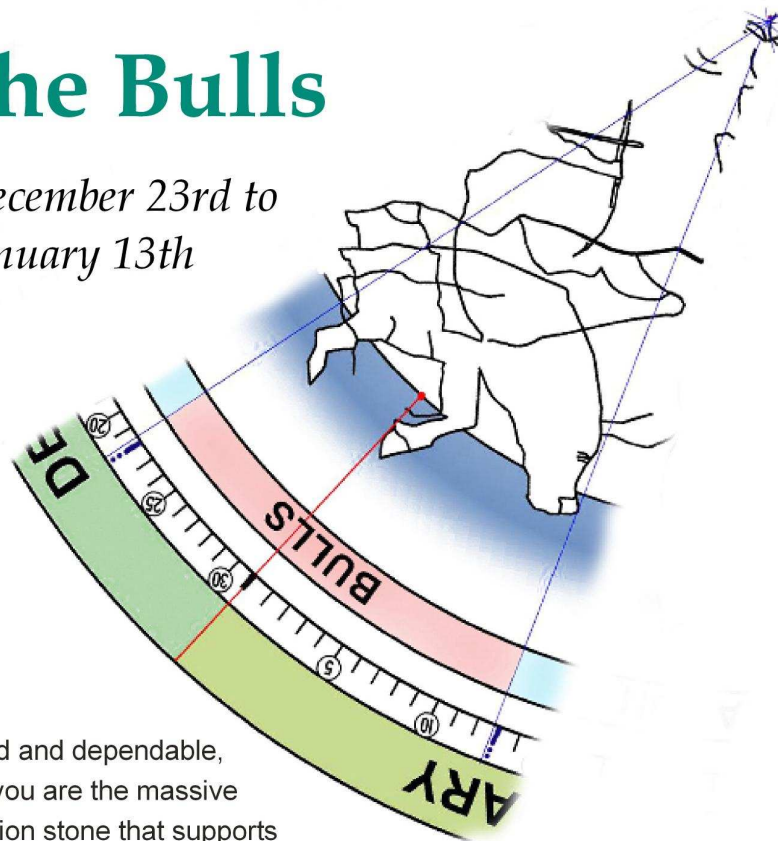
It is very important to know yourself – discover your strengths, suppress your weaknesses. Be very generous with your love and affections – your actions will be noticed and reciprocated.

The words “tact and diplomacy” do not rate highly in a centaur's dictionary – so occasionally be prepared to stifle your blunt opinions when dealing with those you care for – because a loose word can often rebound when you least expect it.

Favourite colours: Leaf Green, Chestnut
Best Partners: Whales and Watermaidens
Gemstones: Chrysoberyl, Star Sunstone, Tourmaline

The Bulls

*December 23rd to
January 13th*



Solid and dependable, you are the massive foundation stone that supports others during their flights of fancy, the reliable generator that hums in the background at the funfair and the winch that pulls friends and family through the quagmire of modern-day life.

Hard work is not a chore for you, it's an expression of your affections for others and demonstrates your rules for life - you plough, you sow and you will eventually reap the benefits – it's as simple as that.

You will be the first to arrive at work and the last to leave, you will make plans for the future during a well-earned break and maybe do some shopping on the way home. The Bulls consist of three overlapping images (or two and a-half) – which suggests that multi-tasking is not a modern concept and is certainly not gender specific.

This forceful segment of the ecliptic circle contains all the muscle, tools and weaponry necessary to get the difficult jobs done – but there is a danger that you may become so blinkered in your drive towards personal security that the feelings of others get trampled into the mud or scratched by the spiky horns – try to leave room for a little compassion.

You may well be the organiser of a group with a well-thumbed checklist in your pocket - an indication of the deep underlying concern that your personal ambitions may not be completely fulfilled unless you assume personal control and drive the situation forward.

You are ruled by your head and broad shoulders not your heart, you realise that plodding perseverance will get you to where you wish to be – knowing that when the job is finished everyone around you will fully appreciate your back-breaking efforts.

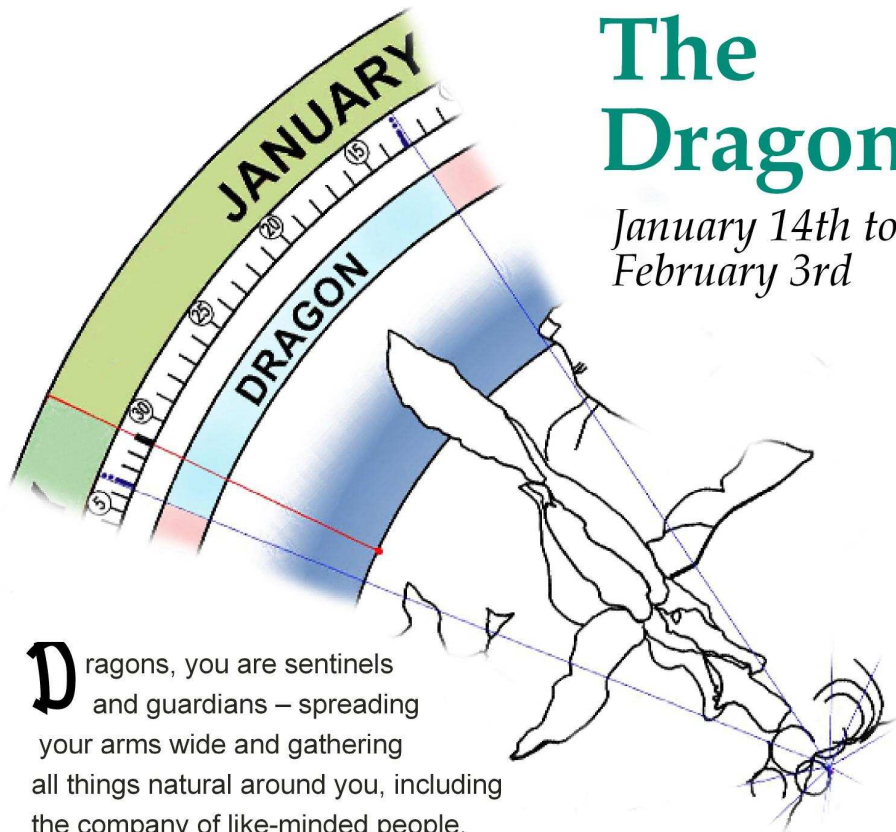
However, be careful of your health and wellbeing, pace yourself, remember that to keep the engine running smoothly it will need the occasional fuel stop and service maintenance – or it will surely suffer in the long term.

All work and no play makes Jack or Jill a dull person – do not let this happen. There are countless holiday brochures full of places that you have always wanted to see – none of which resemble a ploughed field. The many wonders of the world and the different cultures available will refresh your life and rekindle your drive to success (but don't forget your checklist).

For a lifelong partner you have quite a choice – so many would appreciate the reassuring comfort zone that you offer and the unstoppable four-wheel-drive motor pulling them through the mud of the 21st century. Be selective, choose somebody who is content to let you take the initiative while they busy themselves in the background – and the task will become considerably easier.

I guarantee that at the end of the day, while others toss and turn beneath the bedclothes, you will be the one who hits the pillow and sinks into the deepest slumber effortlessly.

Favourite colours: Brown, Deep Green, Yellow
Best Partners: Goats and Watermaidens
Gemstones: Emerald, Titanite, Citrine



The Dragon

*January 14th to
February 3rd*

Dragons, you are sentinels and guardians – spreading your arms wide and gathering all things natural around you, including the company of like-minded people.

In ancient literature the Dragon is the “splendid eagle-tree of Enki,” the chief Sumerian God, scattering its influence “like a cloak” from “the highest eminences of the mountains.”

You are the party-going environmentalists of the zodiac and will seldom miss an opportunity to fervently steer others towards emulating your fine example in the hope that all will eventually follow a sensible greener lifestyle – it’s going to be a long, difficult path, expect regular periods of frustration.

Your intellect and idealism may cause others to see you as an unrealistic dreamer – but they should be aware that linked with your burning flame of passion is a deep-seated irritation that can easily explode into verbal exasperation towards those who overtly disagree with your point of view. Blazing fireballs, smoke and thunder means you are definitely not the best person in the world to contradict.

You have a tendency to be outspoken, but also remain very sensitive to any adverse critical feedback from friends.

Your commitment to the benefits of recycling, wind power, water power and solar power should be applauded, you are there to protect the world and consequently those around you - logic determines that your efforts should be broadcast loudly and freely.

You may find that the office or home situation becomes occasionally frustrating and claustrophobic – when this occurs you will need to spread your wings, get out and about, and go for a walk to clear your head – however, your fundamental need for the company of others will guarantee an eventual return.

Being an airborne creature you will be subject to occasional and sudden mood swings as the gusty winds of life quickly change direction – this can be problematic for those closest to you, expect some personal difficulties.

Global distances and cultural differences are no barrier for the Dragon – holidays and business travel will be far and wide, allowing you to build an experience and knowledge base that will be the envy of other home-loving creatures – and the information accumulated will be usefully exploited to advance and extend your passion of commendable causes.

However, avoid slipping into the realms of conceited arrogance, worldly wisdom is not necessarily proportional to the number of air miles travelled and modesty can often be far more impressive than overt pomposity.

The Dragon is the benevolent superintendent of the Malvern Zodiac, its far-reaching tail splashes into the surf of the ecliptic sea while its head and scaly body rests high above upon the rocky hilltops – from here it guards and protects all. You must learn to appreciate and comprehend the bigger picture.

Favourite colours: Light Blue, Purple, Black

Best Partners: Ships and Goats

Gemstones: Apatite, Spinel, Onyx

THE MALVERN ZODIAC



The Fish has gone and the Bear walks on,
The Dragon wakes from sleep,
In a world of change, a world so strange,
Prepare yourselves, or weep.

By Alan Gripton