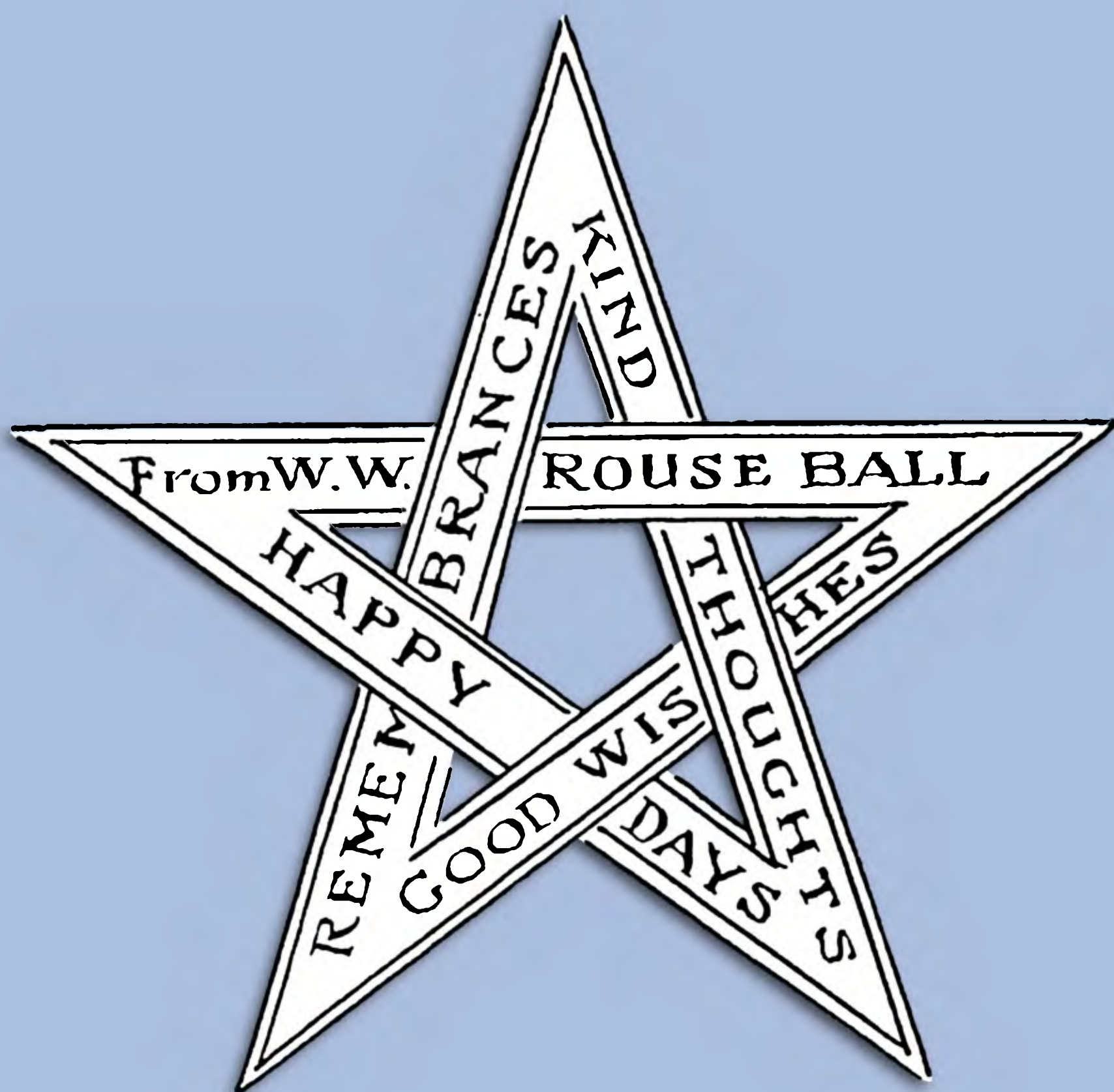


THE PENTACLE CLUB

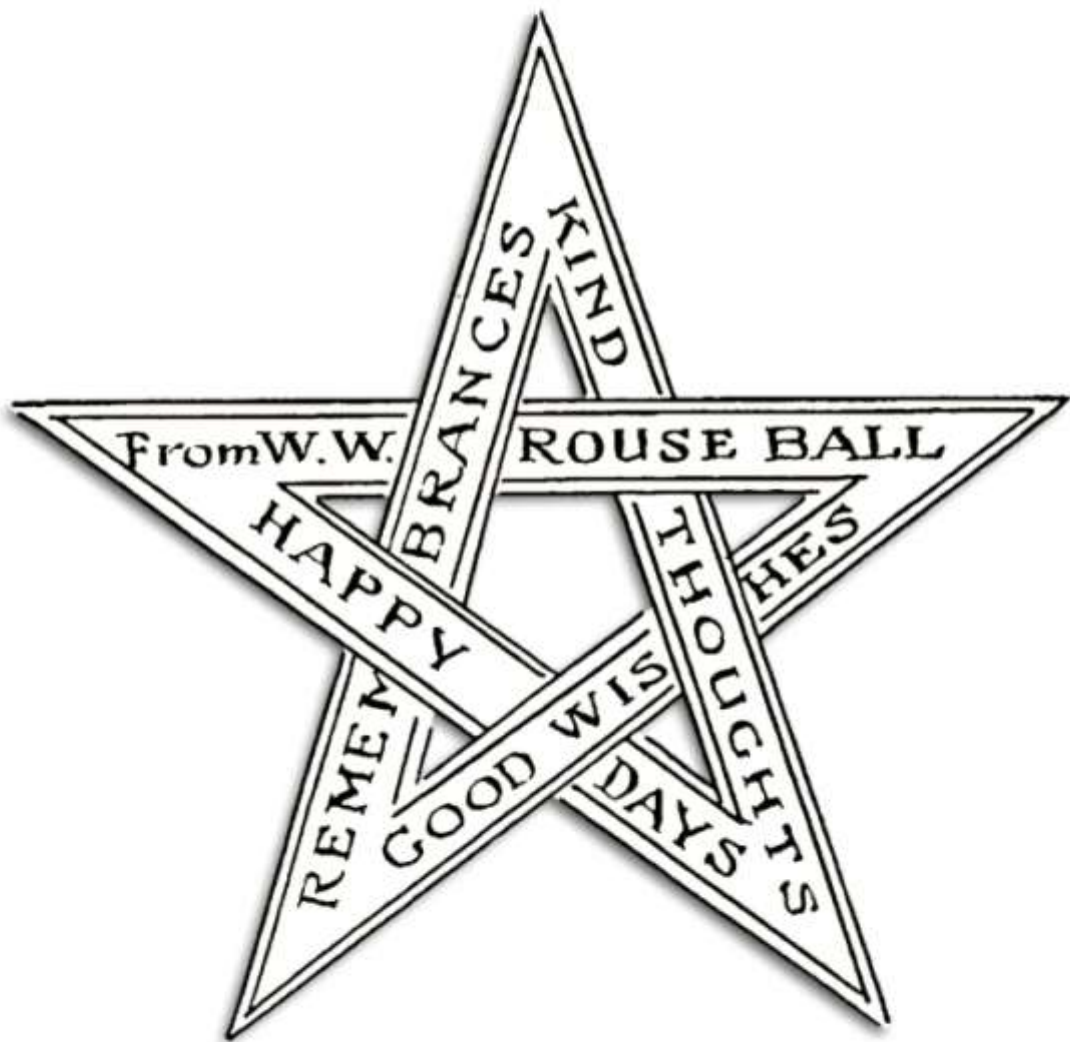
100 Years
of
Cambridge Magic



C. Michael Colley

THE PENTACLE CLUB

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ISBN

The cover shows a re-entrant pentacle star drawn by WW Rouse Ball,
the founder of the Pentacle Club.

Introduction

For some years the Pentacle Club has been deciding how best to celebrate its Centenary, which is on 14th May this year, 2019. Having written a history of The Magic Circle's Young Magician of the Year Competition, I was approached as being an appropriate person to compile a history of the Club as part of this celebration. I succumbed to the blandishments.

The basic research resource for the book is the Pentacle Club archive which dates back to the Club's foundation in 1919 and even before. There are photographs, newspaper cuttings, programmes, dinner menus, minute books and random items occupying a large number of lever arch files, which I scanned to form a digital archive and from which the work has been done. Sadly there are missing minute books, so for some periods there is no record of Committee and other meetings. Even the minute books which exist frequently have large temporal gaps.

I have spent interesting and exciting times in the Cambridge Collection, which is situated in the Cambridge Central Library. The microfilmed newspapers there have provided extra information as have the archivists and librarians at Christ's, Clare, Emmanuel, Gonville and Caius, King's, Magdalene, St. John's and Trinity Colleges and at Addenbrookes Hospital. I thank them for their help. Some newspaper cuttings in the archive are unidentified but wherever possible I have tried to give references. I have also conducted profitable searches in the Cambridge University Library. Will Houstoun, Editor of *The Magic Circular* is thanked for permission to use a number of substantial quotations from that magazine. I have also used two cartoons from *Abracadabra – The World's Only Magical Weekly*.

Where references are given they comply with the SAGE Vancouver Reference style. Thus a reference to a magazine is given as

Capon C. The Pentacle Club Visit. *The Magic Circular*, 1968;62;104
Author. Title. Journal, Year;Volume:Page

while that to a newspaper is recorded

Anon. Quips and Queries. *Cambridge Daily News*, 14 February 1927

Over the years the Pentacle performed in many private shows to raise funds for the Club. We have no details of the vast majority of these and they are not recorded. The larger shows, however, are reported in some detail, wherever possible.

My thanks are also due to John Davenport and Chris Kostecki for their help with the archives and to John for proof-reading the book. My wife Mary has been extremely tolerant of my almost continuous work on this project for the past many months and should be highly commended.

C. Michael Colley
May 2019

The Pentacle Club –100 Years of Cambridge Magic

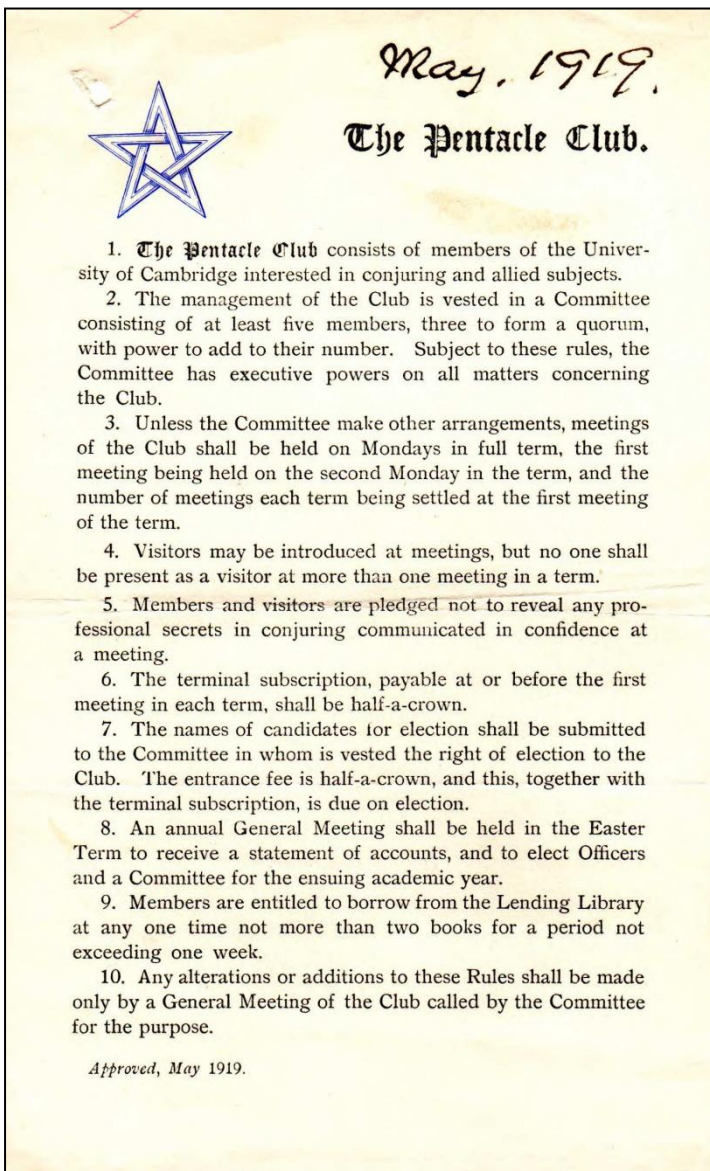
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Chapter 1

Beginnings - The Rouse Ball Years

1919

The Great War (1914-1918) was not long over. There was an upsurge in interest in magic. The Magic Circle had a membership of 242 in 1914, which dropped to 225 during the war years, but by 1918 this was back to 241 and rapidly increased to 299 by 1919 and 356 by the 1920 Membership list.¹ In April 1919 William Walter Rouse Ball (WWRB), a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge and a Member of The Magic Circle, issued a notice inviting members of the University "interested in conjuring and white magic" to get in touch with a view to forming a Club "or otherwise providing opportunities for meeting one another".



The Rules of the Club 1919

holding discussions and practical demonstrations. The Honorary Secretary was directed to draw up Rules for the Club to be submitted to the next meeting.

On Wednesday May 14th 1919 a Preliminary Meeting was held in Rouse Ball's rooms in Trinity College at which it was decided "to form a Club, to be known as 'The Pentacle Club' to consist of members of Cambridge University who are interested in magic".

Rouse Ball was elected President and he agreed for his rooms to be used as the Club Headquarters. William Ivor Grantham also of Trinity College was elected Honorary Secretary and Treasurer. These and the others present, James Herbert Johnson (Trinity), CR Cosens (Kings) and Francis J Worsley Roughton (Trin.) constituted themselves as a Committee.

Meetings would be held fortnightly in Full Term, starting on the second Monday of term, for the purpose of reading papers of general interest and of

Preliminary Meeting.

A meeting was held on Sunday, 14th May 1919, at 8.30 p.m. in Mr. W. Thomas Ball's Rooms at Trinity College, Cambridge, those being present Mr. W. Thomas Ball (Trin.) in the chair, Mr. F. H. H. H. H. (Fees), Mr. S. H. Coates (Hisp.), Mr. F. D. W. Boughton (Trin.) & Mr. W. S. Grantam (Trin.).

It was decided to form a Club to be known as "The Pentacle Club," to consist of members of Cambridge University who are interested in Magic.

Mr. W. Thomas Ball was unanimously elected President; Mr. W. S. Grantam was elected Hon. Sec. & Treas., to hold office until a General Meeting in the Michaelmas Term.

The members present constituted themselves the Committee with power to add to their number. There to form a quorum.

Mr. W. Thomas Ball kindly offered to allow the Club to make use of his Rooms as Hqs., which offer was gratefully accepted.

It was decided to hold meetings once a fortnight in full term (alternate Monday

evening); commencing on the second Monday in each term, for the purpose of reading papers of general interest & of holding discussions & practical demonstrations.

It was resolved to form a lending library under the supervision of an Hon. Librarian, towards which members were invited to loan books & periodicals.

A discussion took place with reference to the Rules in general, & the Club's relations with The Magic Circle, & it was decided that the Club should be independent of the latter.

The Hon. Sec. was directed to formulate Rules, to be submitted at the next Committee Meeting.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the chair, pro-tem.

W. Thomas Ball

18/5/19

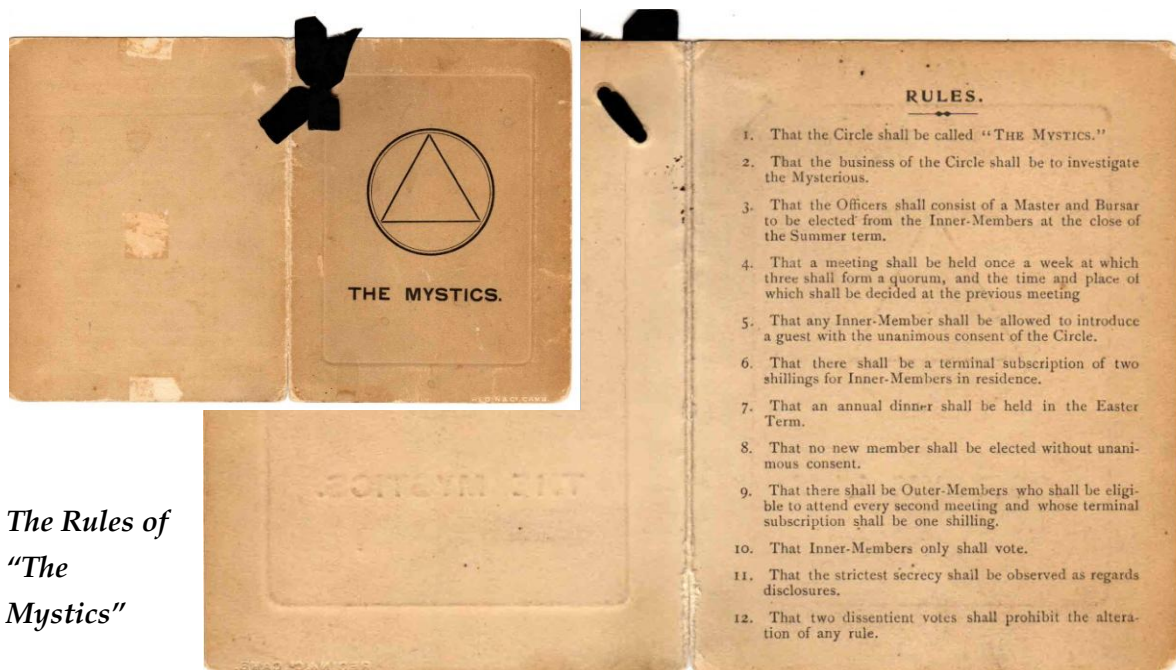
Rouse Ball had become a Member of The Magic Circle in February 1908. He was a mathematician who was also interested in puzzles and mechanical toys. He was the author of a number of books including *Mathematical Recreations and Essays* in 1892, *String Figures* in 1920, books on the History of Mathematics in 1888 and 1889 and the history of the First Trinity Boat Club in 1908. In the *Magic Circular* in 1915 he gives an account of the first written description of a magical performance by Dedi as recorded in the Westcar papyrus.² At the time of foundation of the Club he was 68 years old.

Johnson, Roughton and Grantham were also Members of The Magic Circle, Johnson having joined in April 1911 (as one has to be 18 to join, he must have been at least 26 in 1919), Roughton in March 1917 and Grantham in February 1918. The first meeting of the Pentacle Club was on Grantham's 21st birthday, his having been born on 14th May 1898. Apparently "he had nothing better to do".³ The first formal Committee Meeting was held on 18th May at which it was agreed that notices inviting people to join would be put up in the Cambridge Colleges at the start of the next term in October. A Lending Library would be formed and Members were invited to loan books and periodicals for this purpose; Grantham and Roughton offered to lend books. Rouse Ball states in his account of the foundation of the Club that he formulated the Rules, but the minutes state that it was the Secretary. Whichever is the case they were approved. The Club had by this time acquired two new members, TEH Beddington and BE Ogle both of Trinity College.

It was agreed that on Wednesday 21st May they should be "At Home" to all those interested in the movement in the Guest Room in Nevile's Court, Trinity and notices were put up in the Colleges advertising the event. Some 25 men turned up for the meeting, at which the formation of the Club was announced. Grantham and Roughton performed some rope tricks. There was general discussion and Johnson performed billiard ball, thimble and card tricks. Roughton closed with a fifteen minute spot after which Dr. Rouse Ball explained that they hoped to have one more short meeting that term and at least three in the following Michaelmas Term. As a result of this meeting a further five were added to the Membership, WRH Steer (Trinity), AG Pape (Magdalene), HWC Craigmile and C Latham (Kings) and PB Whillier (Jesus). The second "social" meeting was held in June. If, as was planned, this was on a Monday it would have been 2nd or 9th, but no date is given nor is the meeting referred to in the minutes of the next Committee Meeting. WWRB states that it was a success. At the meeting the Officers for the next year were elected.

The Pentacle Club was not the first Magical Society in Cambridge. In 1909 a society *The Mystics*, whose remit was "to investigate the mysterious", was founded by three members of Gonville and Caius College, GE Arrowsmith, WG Arrowsmith and WC Gingell, who all came up to Cambridge in 1908.⁴ The Arrowsmiths were not related. The records of Gonville and Caius College state that Walter Craven Gingell read Mathematics for Pt. 1 of the Tripos, then changed to Law, gaining his BA and LLB in 1911. He was killed in the First World War. Walter Gordon Arrowsmith was ordained in 1912 and became a Curate in Bristol. After a considerable Clerical career he became Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral and Chaplain to King George VI in 1946 and subsequently to Queen Elizabeth II. While in Cambridge he played Chess for the University.

George Ernest Arrowsmith also pursued a Clerical career, though at a less exalted level than WGA. After working as a Chaplain in Kowloon he became Vicar of Holy Trinity, Weston-Super-Mare in 1934, then St. Mary's Torquay in 1939. He remained a Member of The Magic Circle and died in Torquay on 11th February 1978. The first President of The Mystics was Aubrey Parker Bell, also of Caius. He was an academic year ahead of the other three.



*The Rules of
"The
Mystics"*

There were two classes of member, Inner Members who were magicians and Outer Members who were entertainers in other ways. Jack Hulbert, also of Caius, who later became a famous film star, director and writer, became an Outer Member by performing a tap-dance.

Rev. GE Arrowsmith is recorded as performing "clever conjuring tricks" at a Ridley Hall May Week concert in 1920.⁵

Another society, the *Cambridge University Society of Magicians* was founded in 1910, with most of the founder members having been at school at Malvern College. Like the *Mystics* it was open to any member of the University interested in any form of entertainment. An acknowledgement of its genesis was recorded in *The Magic Wand* of March 1911⁶ and *The Magic Circular* of June 1911.⁷ Owen Hughes of Clare College, a founder of this society who later became a professional magician, was made an Honorary Member of the Pentacle Club in October 1920. He was also a member of the *Versatile Dramatic Club* and with another member of this club, Alfred Capper, a mentalist, sailed to India in early 1911.⁸

1919-1920

October 1919 was the start of the next academic year and the first full year for the Pentacle Club, with three meetings arranged for each term. At the committee meeting on 13th October a letter of greeting to the new club was received from The Magic Circle; a note of the founding of the club had appeared in the *Magic Circular* of June 1919. Sentiments of sympathy were sent to AG Pape, who was unwell. It was agreed to put an announcement about the Club in the local press. Club membership was 20, including the committee.

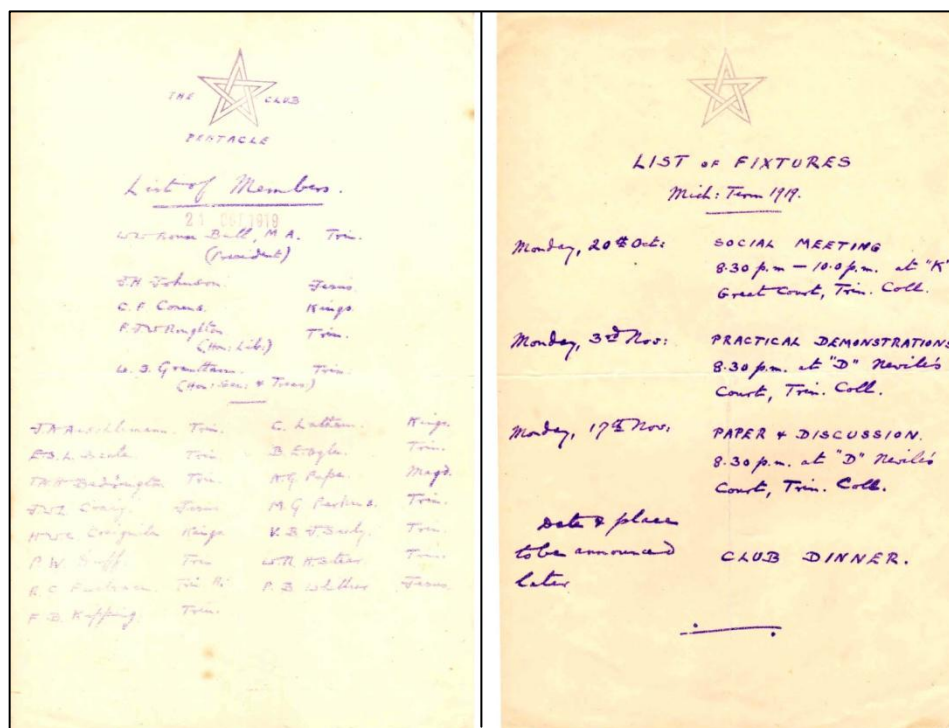
A report of the first full Term, by James Johnson, appears in the *Magic Circular* of February 1920:⁹

The first meeting took place on October 20th in the form of an open Social, at which pocket stunts with coins and cards were the order of the day, as far as practical magic was concerned. On November 3rd the Club had a "demonstration" evening—presentations of effects followed by the modus operandi. After the President had reminded those present of the Club rule concerning "secrets", Mr. WI Grantham, MMC (Member of The Magic Circle) opened the programme with various ways of doing "spirit slate writing", and simple, complicated, subtle and audacious, too, were his examples. The lucky appropriateness of the answer "No, but it might easily be", which appeared on a slate in reply to the question "Can a circle be squared?" by one of the audience, was appreciated even more when Mr. Grantham explained that he had written the answer several days beforehand!

Mr. JH Johnson, AIMC. (Associate of The Inner Magic Circle) followed with fire-eating and "manipulations" with thimbles and billiard balls. His explanations bewildered us a little more, but we had them repeated and thought it over.

Then came Mr. Kipping, who juggled with balls, tennis racquets, knives, Indian clubs and plates, causing "unnecessary consternation at times, for the safety of himself, his neighbours and furniture." The "explanations" were summed up in two words, "just practice."

After this there were card tricks and paper tearing, we believe, but "we" as official reporter, had crept away, loaded with the weight of many secrets.



Membership List and Fixtures October 1919

Names listed: WW Rouse Ball, JH Johnson, CR Cosens, FJW Roughton, WI Grantham, JA Aeschlimann, ESL Beale, TEH Beddington, JW L Craig, HWC Craigmile, PW Duff, RC Firebrace, FB Kipping, C Latham, BE Ogle, AG Pape, MGL Perkins, VBJ Seely, WRH Steer, PB Whillier

The programme for November 3rd shows Spirit Slate Writing, A Lesson in Magic, Billiard and Thimble Manipulation, Feats of Jugglery and Some Scientific Principles Applied to Magic. During this term WWRB presented a paper on *Some Methods of Raising the Devil*. In his notes he states that this was in October but the Fixtures List and report in the *Magic Circular* shows this being presented at the meeting of November 17th. In it he dealt with the ancient use of mirrors for reflecting images onto smoke etc. and other methods for producing spectral images, such as Pepper's Ghost. This prompted a pseudo-serious college debating society to discuss the motion that "*The Pentacle Club Should Not Be Allowed to Raise the Devil*".

The first Dinner took place on November 29th, with professional magician Douglas Dexter as the guest. He performed a card stab and another card effect which utilised a whist hand. If all at the dinner signed the paper, fifteen members were present.

Rouse Ball's wife, Alice, died in December 1919 and as a result he sent his apologies for absence from the Committee Meeting of 20th January 1920. The Club sent their condolences.

The meeting on February 9th was presented by Capt. PW Hubbard who had been at Trinity College. WWRB describes him as "a finished and experienced conjurer." There had been an informal meeting on 26th January and tricks were presented at the third meeting of the term, which would have been on 23rd February. In March FJW Roughton presented a paper on *Dreams*. In general the presentation of papers was less popular than meetings which included practical demonstrations of magic. By the end of the Lent Term the club had 48 members. The three meetings in the Easter Term were *Wizardries*, *Pentacular Prestidigitation* and the Annual General Meeting.

Additional functions included a joint meeting with the Magdalene Debating Society (the President of that Society was AG Pape), *That the investigation of Witchcraft should be encouraged* and a presentation by S.W. Clarke, a prominent Member of The Magic Circle, on *Oriental Magic*. At the end of the Easter Term WWRB provided a garden party at his home, Elmside, for friends of members of the Club. There was Punch and Judy and Club members performed five minute spots throughout the afternoon. Although this was a great success from the point of view of the guests the performers found it quite a burden, and the pressure of exams had made rehearsing difficult. The Committee Minutes of May 1920 record a note to ask that members should not use guns when performing.

In June 1920 The Magic Circle held a Country Members Night. The attendance was disappointing, the only two country members present being Ivor Grantham and John Gambling, a local Cambridgeshire magician.¹⁰

1920-1921

The only record of the Michaelmas Term 1920 is in WWRB's notes in which he records that the Annual Dinner took place on Saturday 20th November. The guest was Nevil Maskelyne. A paper on *Psychology and Spiritualism* was presented by Dr. Prideaux. WWRB was "At Home" to members of the Club the next day so that they could meet the guests. A few days later, on 25th November, the Club entertained some 60 boys from King's College Choir School in the Billiard Room at Elmside. Performers were Messrs. Johnson, Stone, Williamson, Grantham, Harrison, Smith and Low.

At the end of the Michaelmas Term Ivor Grantham resigned as Secretary and Treasurer. The two jobs were separated; RH Blundell became Secretary and HG Williamson took on the role of Treasurer, though he held this role only until the next Annual General Meeting.

As a result of the visit of Nevil Maskelyne the Club was invited to present the first half of a *Magic Circle* public show in London. WWRB states "To refuse was impossible, but to accept was embarrassing." Despite his misgivings the show on Friday 11th March, which was presented by Messrs. Johnson, Grantham, Smith, Stone (all Members of The Magic Circle) and Low, was a success.

A public show was given at the Alexandra Hall on 28th February in preparation for the visit to The Magic Circle. Seven members performed a range of magic and juggling. ALWS of the *New Cambridge* newspaper reported that "On the whole, the standard of the conjuring was surprisingly good, but one wished that the humour could have been a little fresher."¹¹ How little change there is over the years! After a sack escape by Messrs. Blundell and Johnson (entitled *The Seraglio Incident*) the sack was thrown into the audience resulting in the entanglement of the Vice-Chancellor. Ivor Grantham reported this in the *Magic Circular* in 1980, though he recalls that it was he rather than Blundell who performed this effect¹². A full report of the London performance appears in the *Magic Circular* of 1921, where it is commented that performers tended to become inaudible, probably because of lack of experience of performing in large venues¹³. Again, little changes. Those members who were in London were invited to Maskelyne's matinee performance the following day at the Theatre of Mystery, Langham Place.

The Alexandra Hall was part of the YMCA on Alexandra Street. This street ran south-east from Petty Cury to the intersection of St. Tibb's Row and Post Office Terrace. It was demolished in the process of building the Lion Yard development.

The other meetings in the Lent Term were a "miscellaneous show" and a lecture on *Savage Magic* by Dr. Haddon. Club Membership stood at 65.

Eleven members were present at the AGM on May 23rd. JGG Stone was elected Treasurer. Funds stood at £12/19/6d and it was resolved to send a donation of five guineas (five pounds five shillings) to the John Nevil Maskelyne Memorial Fund of The Magic Circle. Professional fees were usually charged in guineas; the guinea, valued at one shilling more than a pound, thus in today's terms £1.05p, acquired its name from the country of Guinea whence came much of the gold used to make the coins.

In June the Secretary, Robert Blundell, attended a meeting about *The Affiliation of Magical Societies with the Magic Circle*. The decision was later made that the Society would not be involved in this. This brought to end the second (academic) year of the Pentacle Club.

1921-1922

The Michaelmas Term of 1921 saw a lecture by a professional magician, Rupert Woodhouse Pitman MIMC on making, faking and arranging of playing cards, for which he received a fee of £3/3/0d. There was also a talk by FB Herring on an unspecified subject. At the Annual Dinner on 26th November the guests were two former Trinity men, both Members of The Magic Circle, Herbert J Paterson, by then a doctor in Wimpole Street and Capt. PW Hubbard.

AT Helme was coopted onto the Committee in December having agreed to take over as Secretary from the Lent Term. His reign was short for at the AGM in June GH Lunge (King's) was elected Secretary for the next academic year. JGG Stone (St. Catherine's) was replaced by FB Kipping (Trinity) as Treasurer at the AGM.

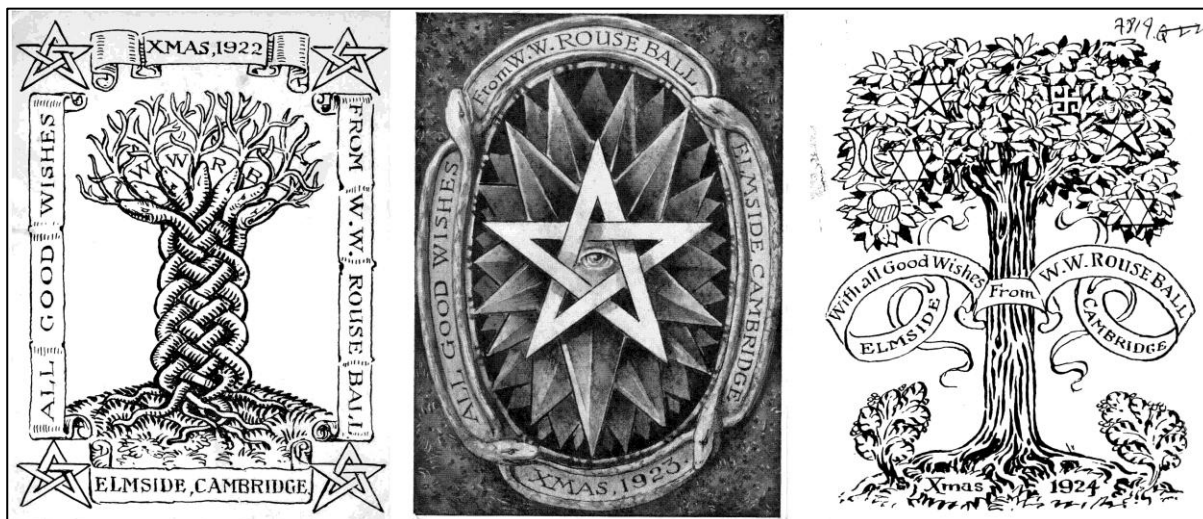
Mr. Gordon Selfridge had asked for the Club to give a performance for his employees at Selfridge's stores. Two dates in March were suggested but there is no record of whether this ever took place.

An Invitation Show was given at the Alexandra Hall on March 3rd, this time with eight members performing. The Hall was the largest available but invitations were limited to two per member as the Membership was 79. In the Easter Term there was a paper on *A Scene in the Solomon Islands* given by Dr. Rivers and a talk and demonstration was given by FB Herring in the Billiard Room at Elmside on 4th May.

1922-3

Michaelmas Term 1922 was the occasion of another show for the King's Choir School and later in the term there was a presentation by Bruce Hurling for which he charged 4 guineas (four pounds four shillings). Rouse Ball comments that they should have made a small charge to those attending in order to defray expenses. GH Lunge took over as Secretary and FB Kipping as Treasurer. Clive Maskelyne was the guest of honour at the dinner on 25th November but declined to perform, so an entertainment was presented by members of the Club. There are 26 signatures on the menu in the archives.

WWRB designed and sent his own Christmas Cards to friends. It is not known when he started this but there are examples from 1922, 1923 and 1924 in the archives. There is much occult symbolism, intertwined snakes, pentacle, all-seeing eye, swastika, yin-yang etc.



Rouse Ball Christmas Cards

Those of 1922 and 1923 were sent to JGG Stone, Treasurer of the Club 1921-1922

At the Committee Meeting on 12th February 1923 JGG Stone proposed that magical degrees should be awarded. A special meeting would be called to discuss this. However, at this meeting on 21st February the suggestion was withdrawn. The Secretary read a paper pointing out the need for some "honour" for good manipulators and hard workers. A Silver Pentacle Badge was suggested with a decision to be made at the next committee Meeting. This took place on 26th February and the proposal that the award should be made for "all round efficiency as a performer" was carried by five votes to three. On the 13th March RH Blundell, CK Brown, JGG Stone and GH Lunge were elected to wear the Silver Pentacle.

On 6th March the Club presented its *Annual Séance*, this time at St Andrew's Hall. Yet again the limited accommodation meant that invitations had to be restricted. In the event there were 403 in attendance including Major LH Branson and Sidney Pratt, a Cambridge magician. This time there were 8 performers. The pianist was Donald O. Soper of St. Catherine's College, who later became the first Methodist Minister to be made a member of the House of Lords. He had been made an Honorary Member of the Club in November 1922, presumably to encourage him to provide piano accompaniment. A note made after the show states that the show should not exceed two hours and that it had been planned for 1¾ hours. It actually ran for 2½ hours from 8:30 until 11:00 pm. There was also a query as to whether smoking should be allowed. Major Branson returned to do a presentation in May.¹⁴ Membership had increased to 99.

In May 1923, WW Rouse Ball was elected a Member of the Inner Magic Circle.¹⁵ He gave a short talk on *String Figures* at The Magic Circle on *Country Members Night* in June 1923 at which he was supported by Messrs. GH Lunge and JGG Stone. The first performed with cards and handkerchiefs then finished by producing six lighted lanterns from a Chinese bowl. Stone, the other Pentacle representative; included in his act the penetration of rings onto a rod and a coil of rope which transformed itself into the shape of a pentacle. John Gambling, professional magician and Cambridge resident (but as he was not a member of the University not a member of the Club) performed with handkerchiefs, gloves and clay pipes.¹⁶

Rouse Ball wrote an article about reports of the Indian Rope Trick in *The Magic Circular* of October 1923¹⁷. After queries from the Editor he also sent a letter, published in the same issue.¹⁸

1923-24

1923 saw another change of Officers, with JHT Griffiths as Secretary, PA Stenger as Treasurer and GH Lunge changing his role to be Production Manager. A number of members in arrears with subscriptions were struck off the books, reducing the numbers to under 50, but new members brought the total to some 70 or 80. Sidney Pratt took part in one meeting *Modern Magic* in the Michaelmas Term and John Gambling entertained at the Annual Dinner. It had been intended to have notable members of the Inner Magic Circle as guests at the dinner, but it had been inadvertently arranged for the same date as the Circle's Banquet, so this was not possible. Other meetings that term were *Moments of Mystery* and *Helpful Hints*.

Rouse Ball's Christmas Card had a frame of four snakes biting each others' tails with a large Pentacle in the centre and an "all seeing eye" in the central space of the pentacle (see page 8).

The *Annual Guest Séance* on February 7th 1924 moved to the ADC Theatre, Park Street and was presented on the following Friday and Saturday, including also a Saturday Matinee. AP Taylor (Trinity) opened with manipulations and a large production "from an inoffensive open hat". JHT Griffiths (Christ's) was Ali Caleph "The Arabian Funjurer" with "a garrulous tongue and an imperfect acquaintance with the English language" and included the Diminishing Cards in his act. Foo Li Quong (GH Lunge, King's) performed the Egg on Fan and the Smoke Vase and produced a mass of flowers from between two trays. The majority of the second half was taken up by a play *The Sorcerer* by PA Stenger and GH Lunge which included a talking head, a dancing skeleton and the conversion of the villain into the character Felix the Cat.¹⁹

Despite being a successful show it was not a financial success, with ticket sales producing an income of £56 against costs of £76/4/10d. WWRB contributed £5 towards offsetting this deficit. He commented that it was "a very expensive experiment".

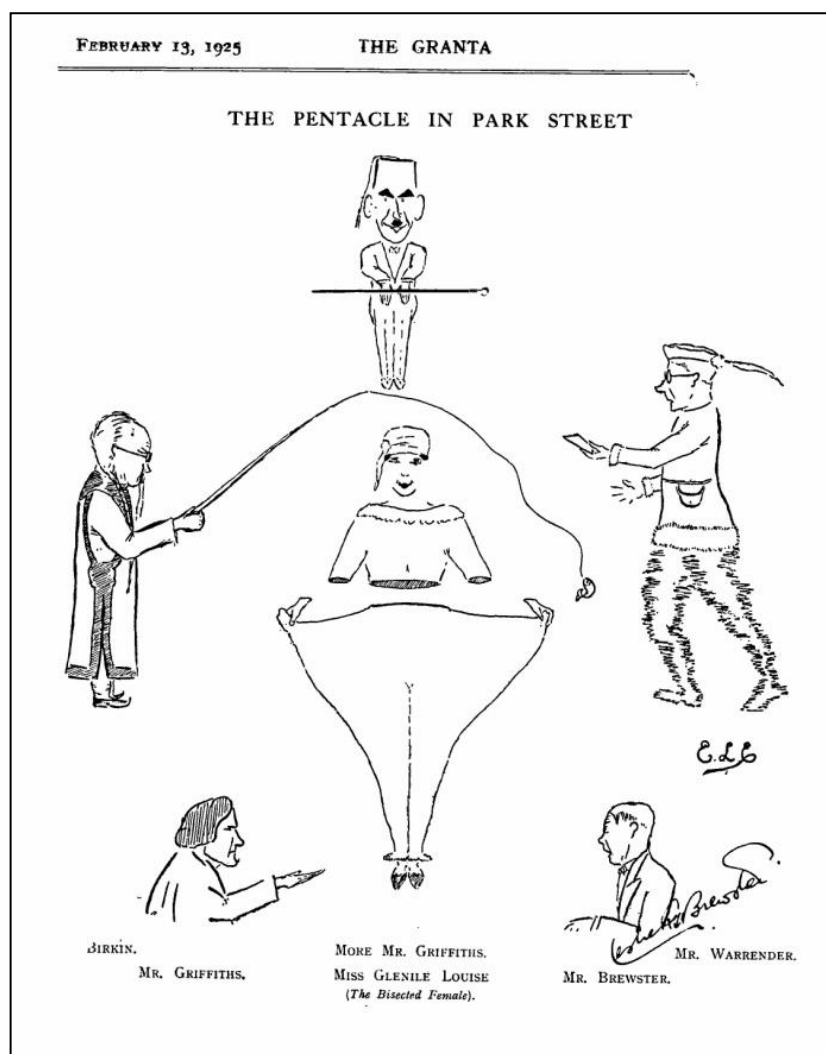
On Tuesday March 11th Dr. Herbert J Paterson MIMC gave a talk on *Education of the Magician* which he had previously presented at The Magic Circle.²⁰ Major Branson again presented an evening in the Easter Term and WWRB held a Garden Party in the name of the Club on the Monday after the May Bumps, at which Messrs. Lunge, Birkin and Griffiths presented an hour's magic.

1924-25

The WWRB Christmas Card for 1924 portrays even more occult symbolism (see page 8). It shows a tree with two pentacles, two Stars of David, a yin-yang and two interlinked crescent moons. What appears to be another WWRB design is the card which he sent to The Magic Circle saying "Thank You" for the receipt of his MIMC. This depicts a vase and flowers composed largely of cut up postage stamps (see Chapter 2 for illustration).

Sadly, at this point WWRB's narrative of the early days of the club ceases, presumably because of his failing health, so information henceforth is less detailed.

The Pentacle Club's 1925 show took place from 9th to 14th February closing the first half with *Sawing Through a Woman* by permission of the inventor PT Selbit. *Granta* commented "a case of the Pentacle being mightier than the sawed."²¹ The illusion was presented by Harold J Warrender who went on to become a stage and film star. He appeared in 19 films from 1934 to 1953 in which year he died aged only 49 years. *Sawing Through* was an illusion new to the public, having first been presented by Selbit in London in 1921. The second half of the show featured a Spiritualist Séance in which you could "see all the spiritualistic phenomena usually only obtained after long and wearisome waits in darkened rooms" though *Granta* commented that the fine wire attachments to the items of furniture that jumped about rather spoiled the illusion by loud twanging. *The New Cambridge* reporter went away concerned that he might find a silk handkerchief in his morning boiled egg.²²



Granta Illustration of 1925 Show at the A.D.C. Theatre

Reports of the show, by John Gambling, appeared in *The Magic Circular*²³ and *The Sphinx*²⁴ and there were numerous other newspaper reports.

Rouse Ball had been in poor health since the death of his wife, and died on April 4th 1925. After the funeral in Trinity College Chapel on 8th April he was buried in the Ascension Burial Ground on All Soul's Lane. The information on the location board there erroneously gives his dates as 1850 to 1926.

On Rouse Ball's death Dr. JR Campbell Canney, a Gynaecological Surgeon at Addenbrooke's Hospital, (who had been at Christ's College) became President and JT Spittle, MA (Pembroke) Vice-President. The Library was transferred to the rooms of Rev. Basil Dennis-Jones, Chaplain of Trinity College. The report of the year's AGM is undated and gives little information other than the Officers and Committee for the coming year, with EA Holt of Clare as Secretary and PD Allen of Pembroke as Treasurer. It would however appear that revised Rules were accepted at this meeting and that it was held on Monday 8th June. CAC Birkin (Jesus) and FJW Roughton (Trinity) were elected to the Committee and FB Kipping was re-elected. Both Kipping and Roughton were postgraduate students; Birkin had joined the Club in 1923.

On 26th June JHT (Humphrey) Griffiths and AP Taylor represented the Club at a *Magic Circle Country Members Night*.²⁵ JHTG performed some effects with eggs, giant cards (referred to as a “petit pocket patience pack”), billiard balls and milk and finished with a “Cheerio” message formed after wrapping silk handkerchiefs in a large cloth. APT performed a silent act with silks, a bottle of Bass and eggs, the whole being interspersed from time to time with the juggling of cannonballs.

The reporter, Harry B Denham, felt that

“judging from the prowess of these two performers and others who have performed on THE MAGIC CIRCLE stage at previous meetings, the Pentacle Club appears to form an excellent nursery for, and a good feeder to THE CIRCLE.”

JHT Griffiths had become a Member of The Magic Circle in March 1924 but AP Taylor does not appear ever to have joined.

¹ *Magic Circle Membership Lists*. 1914, 1918, 1919 and 1920

² Ball WWR The Earliest Conjuring Performance *The Magic Circular*, 1915;9:268-270

³ Grantham WI. The Pentacle Club, Cambridge. *The Magic Circular*, 1980;74:121

⁴ Davenport J, Drury A. Correspondence. *The Magic Circular*, 1969;63:173-174

⁵ Anon. Ridley Hall Concert. *Cambridge Daily News*, 9 June 1920

⁶ Munro GM. Our Monthly Chat. *The Magic Wand*, 1911;1:99

⁷ Clarke SW. Editorial Notes. *The Magic Circular*, 1911;5:170

⁸ Munro GM. Our Monthly Chat. *The Magic Wand*, 1911;2:216

⁹ Johnson JH. The Pentacle Club. *The Magic Circular*, 1920;14:75

¹⁰ Denham HB. Country Members' Night. *The Magic Circular*, 1920;14:171-173

Anon. The Magic Circle. *Cambridge Daily News*, 3 July 1920 p.4

¹¹ ALWS. The Pentacle Club. *The New Cambridge*, 5 March 1921

¹² Grantham WI. The Pentacle Club, Cambridge. *The Magic Circular*, 1980;74:121

¹³ Clark S. A Medley of Mysteries. *The Magic Circular*, 1921;15:105-108

¹⁴ Lunge GH. Major Branson at Cambridge. *The Magic Circular*, 1923;17:165-166

¹⁵ Anon. Promotions. *The Magic Circular*, 1923;17:149

¹⁶ Denham HB. Country Members' Night. *The Magic Circular*, 1923;17:169-170

¹⁷ Ball WWR. Tales of Magic. *The Magic Circular*, 1923;18:1-3

¹⁸ Ball WWR. Correspondence. *The Magic Circular*, 1923;18:12

¹⁹ Anon. Successful Entertainment of Magic at ADC. *Cambridge Daily News*, 11 February 1924

Anon. The Pentacle Club. *Granta*, 15 February 1924

Anon. Annual Entertainment of the Pentacle Club. *The New Cambridge*, 16 February 1924

²⁰ Denham HB. The Education of the Magician. *The Magic Circular*, 1922;16:310-311

²¹ FJP. The Pentacle Club. *Granta*, 13 February 1925

²² ECA. The Pentacle Club. *The New Cambridge*, 14 February 1925

²³ Gambling J. Pentacle Club (Cambridge University). *The Magic Circular*, 1925;19:86-88

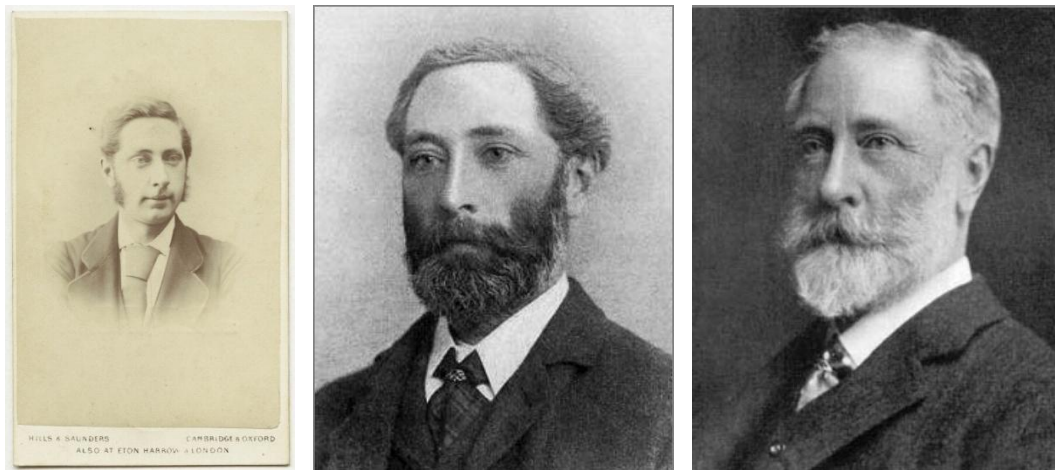
²⁴ Gamble J.(sic) Cambridge University, England. The Pentacle Club. *The Sphinx*, 1925;24:5

²⁵ Denham HB. Country Members' Night. *The Magic Circular*, 1925;19:170-172

Chapter 2

Interlude 1 – Walter William Rouse Ball

Walter William Rouse Ball was born on 14th August 1850 in London, the only son of Walter Frederick Ball and his wife Mary Anne Rouse. He began his academic career in 1867 at the age of seventeen, when he won an Entrance Exhibition to University College, London to study mathematics, logic, and moral philosophy. His performance in mathematics was outstanding, and he was awarded the Gold Medal in that subject. At this time it was not unusual for promising young mathematicians to take a degree at University College before going up to Cambridge. Thus after graduating from University College he matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1870. Four years later he graduated BA and was placed Second in the Mathematical Tripos; the following year he was elected a Fellow of Trinity.



Three portraits of Walter William Rouse Ball at different ages (dates unknown)

Rouse Ball's interest in philosophy does not seem to have lasted long. He decided initially to follow the Law as a profession and in 1876 he became a barrister in the Inner Temple, writing *The Student's Guide to the Bar*.²⁶ Academia soon took precedence over the law and in 1877 he returned to teaching mathematics when the Professor of Mathematics at University College, London became ill.

In 1878 Trinity College, Cambridge, invited Rouse Ball to return as a lecturer in mathematics, and there he stayed for the rest of his life, marrying Alice Mary Gaid on 1st September 1885.

He published *The Origin and History of the Mathematical Tripos* in 1880 and in 1888 there appeared *A short account of the history of mathematics*. The latter "contained a delightful account of what a young student of mathematics or most general readers interested in this science might wish to know". Other mathematical books by Rouse Ball are *The history of mathematics at Cambridge* (1889), *Elementary algebra* (1890), *An essay on Newton's "Principia"* (1893) and *A Primer of the History of Mathematics* (1895). His historical interests also extended to *Trinity College Cambridge* (1906) and *Cambridge papers* (1918). Extensive lists of his publications are available on-line.²⁷

His work in history, however, was not confined to mathematics. He wrote a history of the First Trinity Boat Club in 1908 and histories of other University and College societies. From this we may deduce that he had a keen interest in rowing, and he also contributed to this sport by acting as Treasurer of the University Boat Club. In addition Rouse Ball was a keen chess player and when young played for the Cambridge graduates team in the matches against Oxford graduates. He was also a governor of Westminster School and of the Perse School.

Rouse Ball made a collection of portraits of mathematicians which was exhibited at the Napier Tercentenary Celebration in Edinburgh in 1914. The catalogue runs to seven volumes. Shortly after this he instituted a medal commemorative of the discoveries of Napier, to be awarded annually in the University of Edinburgh to the most distinguished graduand in Mathematics.

He was very fond of tricks, puzzles, pranks, games and all works of arithmetical and geometrical pastimes. These he collected in what is the most widely read of his books, *Mathematical Recreations and Essays* (1892), reprinted many times and still available today. One chapter of this was devoted to String Figures (cat's cradle)²⁸ and he developed this interest into a complete book *An Introduction to String Figures*²⁹ published in 1920. This latter has been through several editions, the third including some new figures being published in 1928 by Heffers. Variations of this book under a variety of titles are also still available.

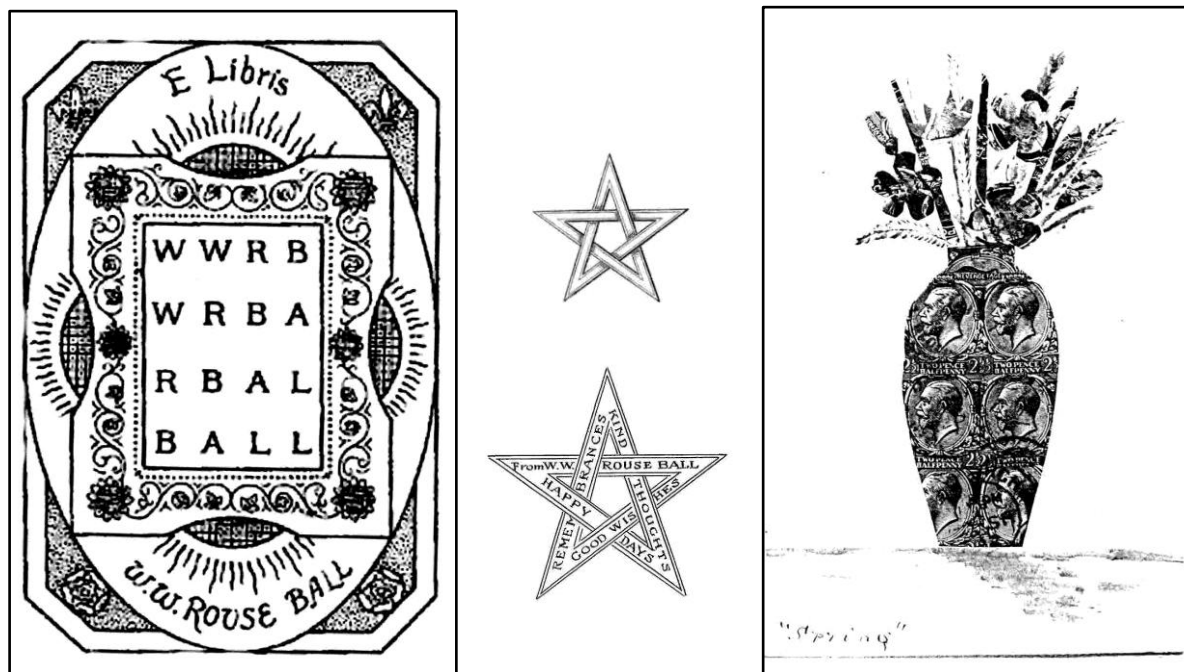
On 4th February 1908, at the age of 57, he was elected to Membership of The Magic Circle. His historical interest was still great and his article on *The Earliest Conjuring Performance*, that by Dedi recorded in the Westcar Papyrus, was published in the October 1915 issue of *The Magic Circular*.³⁰

Rouse Ball was popular with his students and he spared no effort to extend them hospitality, even building a billiard room and squash racket court at his house for their use. He kept in touch with many of them for the rest of his life. He was evidently fond of young people and was greatly distressed by the deaths of many of those who had come to Cambridge but had left without completing their degrees and gone away to die in the Great War. Perhaps this was part of the reason that in May of 1919 he set about the foundation of the Pentacle Club. Details of this have been given in Chapter 1. He described this in a letter to ET Whittaker written in 1924:

Some five years ago I founded a society of undergraduates interested in conjuring and such like shows: if members can conjure so much the better, but that is not essential. I took as our symbol the re-entrant pentacle, which, as you may perhaps know, was sometimes used as a sign by magicians in the middle ages and probably also in classical times. The Society prospers, and at the end of an academic year numbers something like 100 members. Nearly four years ago we received the unexpected 'compliment' of being asked to give a show in London before the leading professional conjurers. The invitation was embarrassing, but could not be declined: however, in fact, we gave a really good show. I was the more inclined to introduce a pentacle by the fact that, according to the historians, it was the symbol selected by Pythagoras as the

badge of his school. This seems to be true, and hence to mathematicians it should have interest.³¹

A further aspect of his personality was his ability at graphic design. In addition to the Christmas cards shown in Chapter 1, another postcard by him is known. He also drew the re-entrant pentacle for the Club's emblem and designed his own bookplate.



Bookplate, pentacles and "Spring" postcard by WW Rouse Ball

He took great pleasure in the reunions that came about through the celebrations in September 1924 for the 600th anniversary of the founding of Trinity College (originally known as Michaelhouse). However he was by this time suffering signs of heart problems and was less mobile, needing a stick to help him walk and he died on 4th April 1925.

In 1922 he had established the Rouse Ball lecture in Mathematics, with generous funding. After his death his generosity continued with bequests in his will to establish a Fellowship in English Law in Cambridge plus Fellowships in Mathematics in both Cambridge and Oxford. At Cambridge, this bequest was made with the "hope (but not making it in any way a condition) that it might be found practicable for such Professor or Reader to include in his or her lectures and treatment historical and philosophical aspects of the subject."

His generosity was also shown in 1924, when Jesus Green was being converted into a recreation ground for the town. Rouse Ball, who had just retired from the Chairmanship of the Borough Commons Committee, offered to pay the £500 cost of erecting a small sports pavilion there. Building was in progress when he died and shortly after it was discovered that the cost of the building would be about £300 more than anticipated. His executors agreed to pay the whole £800 on the understanding that the building should bear his name, and so the Rouse Ball Pavilion came into being and was formally handed over to the Mayor on 29th April 1926. Plans are currently afoot to refurbish it.³²



cc-by-sa/2.0 - Pavilion, Jesus Green by N Chadwick - geograph.org.uk

Rouse Ball Pavilion



Memorial Plaque. South Wall of the Antechapel, Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge

Memorial inscription

IN PIAM MEMORIAM GVALTERI GVLIELMI
 ROVSE BALL
 DE BINIS ACADEMIIS ANTIQVIS ET PRAESERTIM
 DE HOC SVO COLLEGIO BENE MERITI
 QVOD VIVVS SCIENTIA ET CONSILIO
 MORTVVS DIVITIIS AVXIT
 DISCIPVLVS SOCIVS LECTOR TVTOR
 DOMVS SALVTI AC DIGNITATI
 SEMPER PRO SVIS VIRIBVS CONSVLEBAT
 NATVS XIV DIE AVG. A.S.MDCCCL
 OBIIT IV DIE APR. A.S.MDCCCXXV

Translation

In pious memory of Walter William Rouse Ball.
 He deserved well of both ancient universities
 and particularly of this College, which he helped
 while alive with his knowledge and advice, and
 after his death with his wealth.
 As Scholar, Fellow, Lecturer and Tutor, he always
 tried to further the well-being and reputation of
 the College so far as he was able.
 He was born on 14th August 1850 and died on
 4th April 1925.

²⁶ Rouse Ball WW. *The Student's Guide to the Bar*, London: Macmillan, 1878

²⁷<http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/lookupname?key=Ball%2C%20W%2E%20W%2E%20Rouse%20%28Walter%20William%20Rouse%29%2C%201850-1925>

http://www.tpwilliams.co.uk/mathematical_tripos/Cambridge_Notes_Index.htm

²⁸ Rouse Ball WW. *Mathematical Recreations and Essays*. 1914. 6th ed. London: Macmillan

<https://archive.org/details/mathematicalrecre00ball/page/n7>

²⁹ *String Figures* 3rd Edn (1928) see

http://digital.slv.vic.gov.au/view/action/singleViewer.do?dvs=1547044566052~841&locale=en_GB&metadata_object_ratio=10&show_metadata=true&VIEWER_URL=/view/action/singleViewer.do?&preferred_usage_type=VIEW_MAIN&DELIVERY_RULE_ID=10&frameId=1&usePid1=true&usePid2=true

An Introduction to String Figures (1920) see

<https://archive.org/details/introductiontost00ballrich/page/n1>

³⁰ Rouse-Ball WW. The Earliest Conjuring Performance. *The Magic Circular*, 1915;9:268

³¹ Whittaker, E. (1925). Obituary W. W. Rouse Ball. *The Mathematical Gazette*, 12(178), 449-454.

Which can be found on-line at:

http://digital.slv.vic.gov.au/view/action/singleViewer.do?dvs=1547044566052~841&locale=en_GB&metadata_object_ratio=10&show_metadata=true&VIEWER_URL=/view/action/singleViewer.do?&preferred_usage_type=VIEW_MAIN&DELIVERY_RULE_ID=10&frameId=1&usePid1=true&usePid2=true

³² <https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/cambridge-news/jesus-green-lido-heated-lottery-14676130>

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"*The University Officers*", *Statutes and Ordinances of the University of Cambridge (PDF)*, University of Cambridge, p. 673 <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/pdfs/ordinance11.pdf>



EA Holt Balances a Gramophone 1926

Chapter 3

The Canney Years - 1925 to 1933

1925-26

There are no entries in the minutes book between the AGM of 1925 and November 1926. However activities evidently continued as there was a dinner on 28th November 1925 at which Herbert Milton presented an entertainment, and a show was staged in February 1926. AH Hill (Trinity) opened and by the time he had finished, *A Silken Symphony*, "one could hardly see the stage for silk".³³ LG Brewster (St.John's) followed with *Domestic Deceptions*, in which there were more jokes than tricks, then GL Alcock "a bobbed-hair Salome" gave an *Oriental Fantasy*.

The next item was the first performance of the playlet *The Marvels of Modern Medicine* (see Chapter 6) in which Sir Henry Seebohn amputates and replaces a golfer's leg and removes the head of another patient in order to retrieve a swallowed rugby jersey, a reiteration of the effect described in Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*. The reporter states that the audience were not surprised by the decapitation after the previous leg removal, but were surprised when the removed head, placed on the operating table, conversed and smoked a cigarette. These episodes were preceded by a ventriloquial section wherein Mrs. Binks (played by Mr. Humphries) took her small son (the vent doll) to the see the Doctor.



Bloodless Surgery 1926

G Wynne-Davis PD Allen H Rottenburg

EA Holt

The other illusion in the show was "The Flunkey's Dilemma", borrowed from Maskelynes, in which three parts of a dummy footman were placed in a cabinet from which later emerged a live person dressed in the same uniform. There are reports of Maskelynes presenting this effect at Portsmouth in August 1916 and Swansea October 1916.

EA Holt (Clare) was locked in a sack and he and his assistant, dressed in ghostly attire, found their positions transposed. He then performed some feats of equilibrium including balancing a gramophone on top of a pole placed on his chin.

AT THE PENTACLE



Granta Report of the 1926 Show³⁴

PD Allen performed manipulations then CAC Birkin (Jesus) presented CAC Birkin, (by kind permission of CAC Birkin) who started by vanishing a lamp, presented numerous effects with rings, ribbons, birds and boxes and finally disappeared in The Sedan Chair (by arrangement with CAC Birkin) in which he had arrived. Music was provided by the Cam Valhalla Dance Band.

When *Modern Medicine* was presented at the Magic Circle Grand Séance in March 1926 the removal of the head was purported to be used as treatment for a sore throat³⁵. It was reported that a proposed performance in Cambridge the year before had been banned by the Lord Chancellor as being too gruesome³⁶.

1926-27

At the Committee Meeting of November 8th 1926 it was decided that ladies would not be allowed to attend the annual dinner but that members attending the dinner could invite lady guests to the entertainment afterwards. It is to be presumed that, as in previous years, the dinner took place towards the end of November. Members wishing to attend the entertainment but not the dinner could do so for 3/6d (17½p). The cost of the dinner is not recorded.

The Production Manager, Mr. Brewster, produced an estimate for the show planned to take place the following February of £47/0/0, to include an opening turn, two main turns, a Club illusion (the major cost at £20), a short conjuring turn and a non-conjuring turn. If the event were a financial success five guineas should be given to the band, who presumably would otherwise be unpaid.

The Invitation Night for the show was on 12th February 1927 with public performances each night the following week and a matinee on Saturday 19th. Musical backing was by the Light Blue Blackbirds Band. It featured another magical playlet by Mr. Rottenburg, *Dope or the Plastic Art*. In this a drug-addicted sculptor, played by LG Brewster is given a special potion by a friend (SH Hamilton) in an attempt to cure him of his addiction. He falls asleep at which point a bust on top of a cupboard (JS Westcott) comes to life and floats round the room. The sculpture of a faun (H Rottenburg) also comes to life. It moulds a living face out of a lump of clay and the face (Alexander H Hill) then smokes a cigarette. Placing a glove on the sculptor's hand the faun sets the fingers alight, then cuts them off one by one. Restoring the fingers the arm is then crushed flat with a rolling pin. The sculptor's neck is then stretched, producing gasps from a few feminine members of the audience³⁷ but before it can be severed he wakes up and terrified by his experiences throws away his drugs and rejects the habit. LG Brewster, who played the dope addict, was to be ordained in June.³⁸



Dope or The Plastic Art

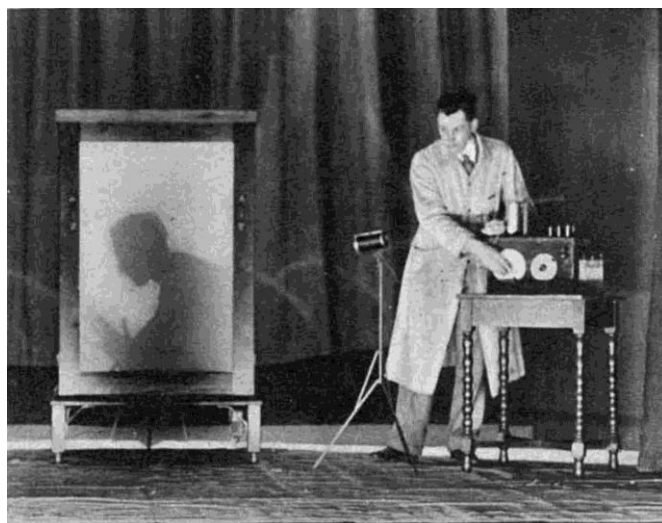
Messrs. Brewster, Rottenburg and Westcott

The other illusion was *The Ace of Trumps*, presented by Mr. Brewster, in which there was the production of a “too masculine and massive ‘woman’ from a still more enormous trunk”³⁹, wearing a costume selected but a moment before by the audience.



The Ace of Trumps

Professor Oscillatus (AH Hill) demonstrated “Omega Rays” which caused items to change colour or to change place. They eventually resulted in the materialisation of a man from a canvas-sided cabinet; a light was placed behind the cabinet, a shadow slowly appeared and when it was complete the individual was revealed. JM Cartwright produced watches and alarm clocks and RG Orr escaped from a cage, bonds and fetters



Professor Oscillatus

It is interesting to read the different reports of the show, each of which takes its own approach. These are from the *Cambridge Chronicle*, the *Cambridge Review*, the *Gownsmen and Undergraduette*, *Granta* and national papers, the *Daily Express*, the *Morning Post*, the *Daily Mail* and *The Sketch*⁴⁰. Whoever was responsible for publicity did a superb job!

The Pentacle Club contributed to the Magic Circle's 21st Annual Séance on April 11th 1927, with Leslie Brewster presenting *The Ace of Trumps* and Alexander Hill the *Omega Rays*. The evening was closed by a presentation of *Dope or the Plastic Art* involving the two members just mentioned plus Messrs. Hamilton, Westcott and Mr. Rottenburg playing "Man in a Fawn Suit"⁴¹.

1927-28

There are again no records until the following October, due to exams in the Easter Term followed by the Long Vacation. The Committee Meeting of 18th October 1927 proposed a General Opening Meeting, a Demonstration Meeting given by Mr. Pratt and an Annual Dinner to take place at the Lion Hotel. Edward Victor was invited to the dinner but was unable to attend; Wilfrid Jonson came in his stead. The dinner cost half a guinea (10/6d or 52½p) and two guests could be invited to the after-dinner entertainment at 3/6d (17½p) each.

The ADC had not reserved the customary week for the Annual Show and offered the first week in February. Although this was felt to be too early in Term it was accepted as no other date was available. The Guest Night was held on Wednesday 1st February and the public shows ran through to Wednesday the following week. Again reports appeared in local and national papers⁴², many of them highlighting the penetration of the Vice-Chancellor's Handkerchief by the magic wand of JM Cartwright. Identical reports appear in the *Cambridge Daily News* and the *Cambridge Independent Press*. The first half was closed by CP Storr (in a not very convincing Asiatic make-up according to the *Gownsmen*⁴³) who presented "Hindu magic". His final effect was the Hindu Sword Basket; the boy in the basket, having been subjected to many sword thrusts, reappeared at the back of the auditorium.

Harry Rottenburg penned another sketch *The Skeleton in the Cupboard*. A medical student (played by Roy L Glover) has a dream in which a skeleton comes to life, walks about, talks and (of course) smokes a cigarette. It reveals that it is the skeleton of his brother who has been murdered by a mutual friend. Other parts were played by AD Latham, CP Storr, SH Hamilton and JD Klugman.



The Skeleton in the Cupboard

In the other illusion *Magic Made Useful* Mr. Hamilton made his unwelcome sister (CP Storr) disappear. The Terpsichoreans were the musical accompaniment.

As on a number of previous occasions the show was not a financial success, resulting in a deficit of £13. Suggested approaches to resolving this included asking members for an additional subscription, requesting the ADC Theatre to accept a reduced fee and selling some of the Club's illusions. It was decided that for the next show the pricing structure would be changed, the guest night would be abolished and the number of complimentary tickets would be reduced.

A report of the show by JGG Stone in the *Magic Circular* of May 1928⁴⁴ expressed the hope that some of the acts might appear in the Magic Circle's Annual Séance. Unfortunately the Séance did not occur that year as a result of difficulties in finding a suitable hall.

At the AGM in April 1928 it was announced that the appeal to the members had raised £8/6/0d and the club's funds in hand amounted to £3/7/11d. However they still owed the ADC £7/15/0d. This balance needed to be paid off before the Theatre could be booked for the following year. The Committee was left to resolve the problem.

1928-29

At the start of the academic year 1928/29 it was resolved that Mr. Dennis-Jones, "the High Keeper of the Debit Account", would send a cheque for £4 to the ADC and that the remainder would be paid off the next week after subscriptions had been collected. As seen previously with Dr. Rouse Ball, being a senior member of the Society could be a costly business.

Investigations had shown that Eaden Lilley were storing an "Indian Basket. Contents Unknown" and the Club owed them 9/4d for storage at 7d per week (16 weeks).

Meetings were agreed for the Term. October 23rd would be an Open Meeting, November 12th a Social Meeting and December 3rd a Professional Demonstration. Mr Sydney Pratt was to be invited to present this.

It was suggested that a banner advertising the show in February 1929 could be stretched across Trinity Street. Mr. Spittle, a Fellow of Pembroke College who had been elected Vice-President of the Club in 1925, was to investigate the structural soundness of this in the light of possible damage to buildings and what the legal implications were. Mr Trinder was elected business manager for the show.

The Annual Dinner would take place on 24th November 1928, but it was felt that the Lion Hotel was unsatisfactory and it would be better to go elsewhere if possible. Louis Nikola was to be invited as guest and entertainer for a fee of 6 guineas. The venue finally arranged was the Dorothy Cafe (21/22 Sidney Street, now occupied by Waterstones). There is no record of whether or not Nikola attended.

The Club would give a performance at Westminster School on 8th February 1929, just before the Annual Show. Performers were to be SH Hamilton, OG Trinder, and JT Garrus plus the medical sketch by Harry Rottenburg.

The Annual Show took place from 12th to 16th February at the ADC Theatre and the minutes of 12th March 1929 record that a letter of thanks was sent to Ellis Stanyon (magical dealer of London) for sending reports of the séance to several magazines. Stanyon's report in the *Magic Circular*⁴⁵ records JT Garrus with manipulations, followed by *His Uncle's Ghost* presented by SH Hamilton assisted by R Law. In this, one performer dressed as a ghost by covering himself with a sheet and mask, while the other disguised himself as a monk. The ghost vanished from a trunk and the performer was found to be in the monk costume while the performer originally wearing the monk outfit appeared at the back of the theatre. OG Trinder presented a penetration of rings onto a rod in a wooden box and the confetti bowls.

After the interval SH Hamilton presented a range of card effects including a Four Ace Trick with giant cards, a transposition of cards from the pocket of the *Granta* reporter to that of someone else⁴⁶ and Find the Lady. CP Morgan-Jones and CF Wray presented a blindfold Nap Hand demonstration. The show closed with a presentation of Harry Rottenburg's *Medical Magic (Bloodless Surgery)*, misreported in the *Cambridge Independent Press* and the identical report in the *Cambridge Daily News*⁴⁷ as "Mediaeval" Magic, with RW Orme, JS Westcott and A Rothwell. The various offerings were interspersed with magical interludes from R Law, WA Burnett and AG Foster-Barham. Music was by the Light Blue Lyricals.

The show had again failed to be a financial success and even after the ADC had been persuaded to reduce its charges by £15 there was still a loss of £2/10/-. This deficit was again made up by a senior member of the club, this time, Mr. Spittle. It was decided to investigate using Central Hall in Market Passage for the next year's show. SH Hamilton and James Garrus were to pursue this.

At the Committee Meeting of 1st April 1929 it was revealed that there was a deficit on the previous year of £ 1/18/1d. SH Hamilton offered to subsidise this. It was suggested that the subscription should be increased, but further discussion on this was left to a future meeting.

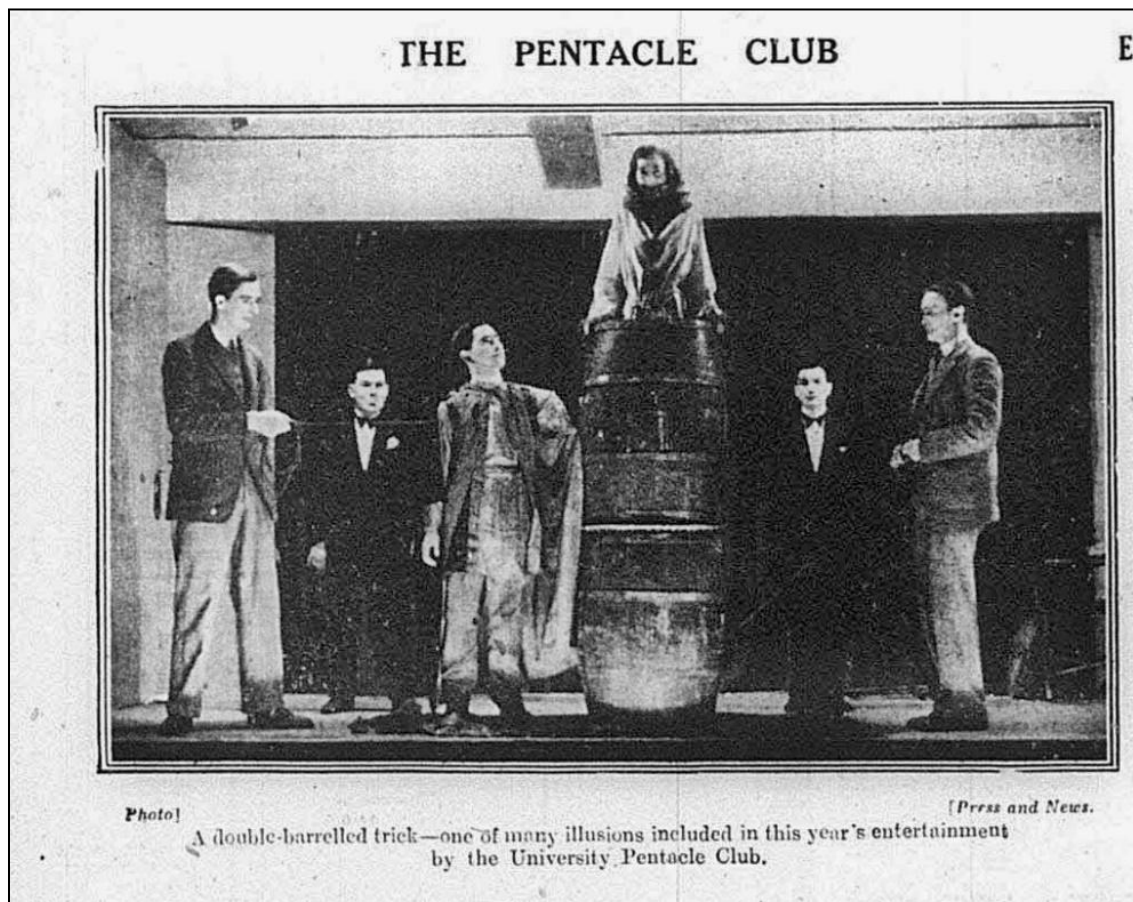
A book listing all tricks performed at meetings would be kept in the library and brought to meetings. Members could enter comments.

1929-30

There were to be three meetings in the Michaelmas Term of the next academic year. In addition a London professional was to be invited to perform at the dinner, which would be in the Old Combination Room in Trinity College.

The annual show took place at the end of February in Central Hall. There were two sketches by Harry Rottenburg, *The Odd Trick* and *The Elusive Burglar* with LT Waddams and JE Moss playing parts in both with the addition of RW Orme as the burglar in the latter. For notes on these see Chapter 6. The show also included Through the Eye of a Needle, by permission of PT Selbit, in which a girl passes from one barrel to another, through steel bars and a studded boiler plate with only a small hole in it.

As can be seen from the photograph, in the original version the two barrels were stacked vertically, whereas nowadays they are normally brought together horizontally. This illusion was premiered by Clive Maskelyne in 1924, so like the “sawing through” performed by the Club in 1925 it was a relatively new effect.⁴⁸



Through the Eye of a Needle 1930⁴⁹

WA Burnett as Ali Ben Empshi Washalick, the famous Disillusionist and F von Berghen as Ali Buckara, the Renowned Egyptian Pessi Mystic presented “Eastern” magic. Cecil F Wray gave a *Magical Medley*, and though he did suffer from protracted preparation, his effects were excellent.⁵⁰ Other acts were genuine (!) *Thought Reading* by John A Cope and manipulations by James T Garrus. There was also a “juggling” act. One reporter states

“Juggling is always interesting to watch but when the juggler has nothing in his hands it can also be very amusing. So it was with Mr. F. von Berghen of Trinity who managed to hold the attention of his audience for ten minutes or so without any apparatus at all. A very neat burlesque this.”⁵¹

Music was provided by the CUDC Virginians , who took advantage of the programme to offer their services for hire. The Treasurer was pleased as the show appears to have made a profit .

1930-31

With the first Committee Meeting of the new academic year in October 1930 it was noted that Mr. Spittle had resigned as Vice-President. Dr. Ellis of Trinity was to be asked to join the Club in his place. It is evident that he did not accept as at the Annual General Meeting on 21st October Dr. FB Kipping, also of Trinity and who had given a juggling demonstration at the second meeting of the Club in November 1919, was elected Vice-President. The balance in hand was £10/4/7d (£10.23), an immense improvement.

There were to be, as usual, three meetings in the Term plus a dinner. JGG Stone, former member and member of the Sussex Magic Circle was to be the guest and to give a post-dinner entertainment. He would receive a fee of 5 guineas and B Dennis-Jones would provide accommodation.

At the meeting on 26th November (later altered to 8th Dec) new members would perform as then it would be clear what material was available for the show in February at Central Hall. Some of these acts were obviously acceptable and in the final line-up LT Waddams, AWJC Wheeler and HJH Weekes presented *Magic of the East and West*, and *Relativity* was shown by John Meugens and FB Norrish, While JA Cope was the "Purveyor of terminological inexactitudes, in a conglomeration of antagonistic improbabilities".

WA Burnett, "The Knave of the Club" presented card magic and C Hippisley and GF Truscott communicated telepathically. *Magic of the East and West* was commended by the reporter. He notes that it

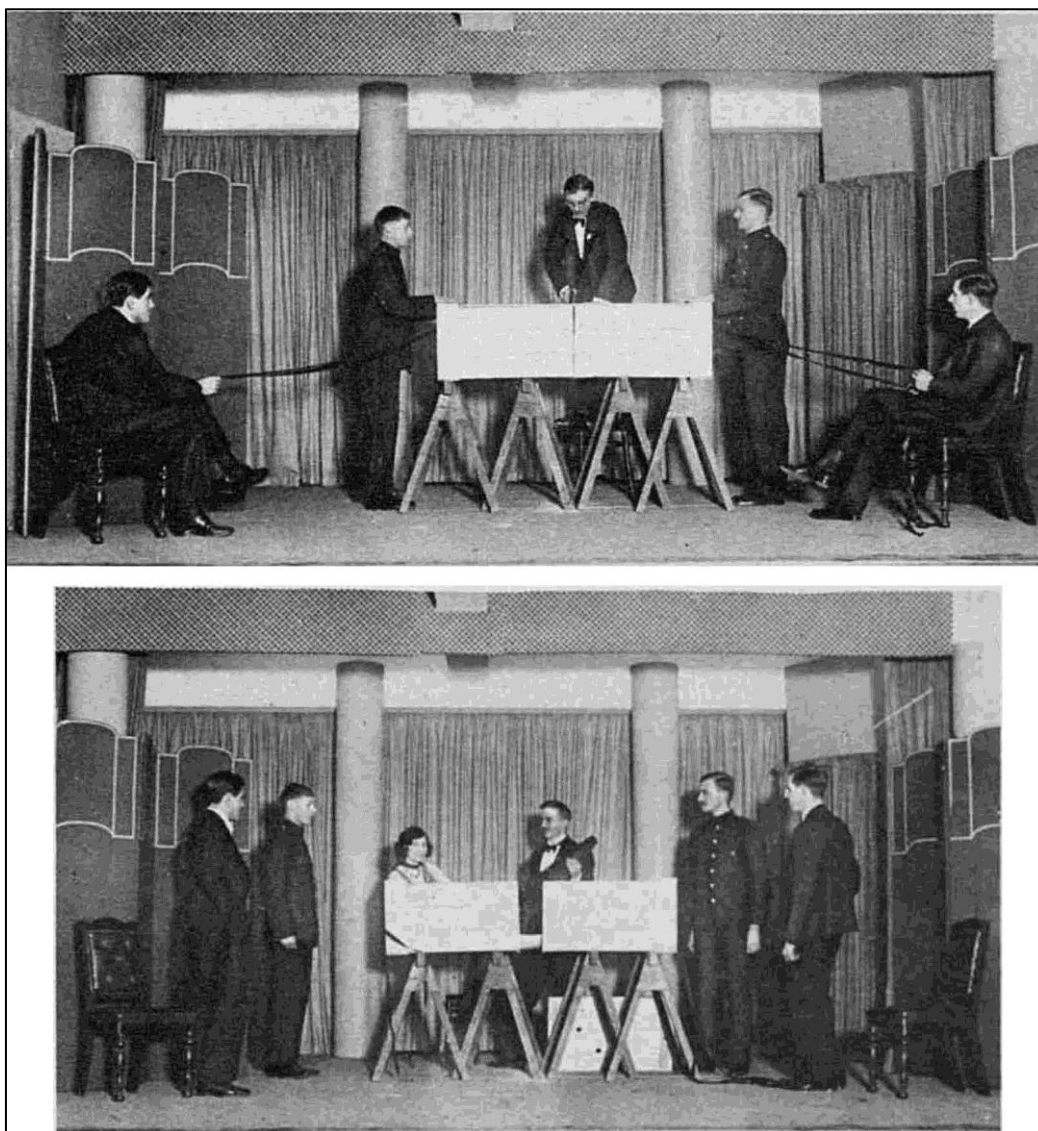
"...was an exceptionally good turn, in that it was accomplished entirely without the aid of 'patter.' What that means to the magician, only he knows, but to retain the interest of the audience for 30 minutes without uttering a word is no small feat in these days."⁵²

Percy Selbit was unable to lend an illusion on this occasion. However Sydney Pratt, who had presented "Sawing Through a Woman" on a number of occasions, was contacted for advice on building the equipment and this illusion was used to close the show.

Photographs of the performance show this to be the original version in which the girl is completely within the box, rather than the more advanced version where her head and feet are visible at all times. For the first time in several years the show did not contain any Rottenburg sketches.

At the May Committee Meeting it was reported that the Excise Officials were clamouring for money. A tax on Theatre Tickets had been introduced in 1916. By 1931 this was 6d (2½ p) on a 2/0d (10p) ticket, a considerable proportion of the price. It was agreed to pay what was due.

£30 had been received for a show at Pembroke College. When inflation is taken into account this would have the same purchasing power as approximately £2000 in 2019 ! It was decided to put the money into War Savings Certificates though when this proved not to be possible it was placed with Barclays Bank. Nevertheless the balance in hand at the AGM was £44/4/1d.



Sawing Through a Woman 1931

WA Burnett saws through Barbara Martin

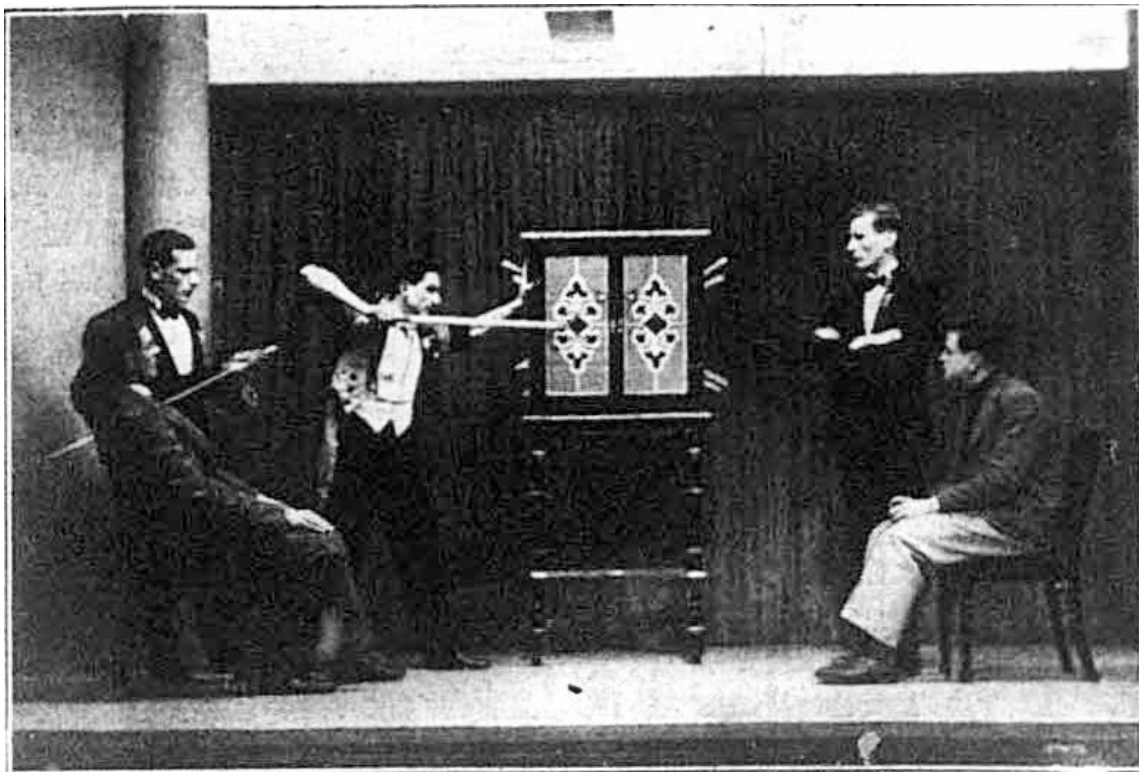
1931-32

No Annual Dinner was held in 1931, as an economy, though a show was put on in Trinity Old Combination Room in November. Members attended free of charge with unlimited guests at 3/6d each.

It was in Michaelmas term 1931 that E Brian MacCarthy (Jesus), already a Member of The Magic Circle and later author of *Slow Sleights* (1934) and *Modern Sleights* (1946) joined the Club. After being elected to the Committee in January 1932 he appeared to good reviews in the annual show *The Magic Pentacle* at the Central Hall in February 1932.

The show was introduced by "The Slave of the Pentacle" (J Eliot Moss) who appeared at various points throughout the performance, thus providing continuity. At the end he spirited away himself and his two undergraduate masters, HJH Weekes and GCS Goode. Another "demon" played by JS Bosanquet was earlier vanished, in full view of the audience.

J Finlay Truscott and FB Norrish performed dual feats with lighted cigarettes. J Anthony Cope, who was also the Production Manager of the show, manipulated thimbles and closed the show with an illusion in which Miss Barbara Martin was subjected to penetration by many swords.⁵³ Other performers were WA Burnett, who produced an astonishing number of eggs out of a hat,⁵⁴ JS Eacott and EW Brittain.



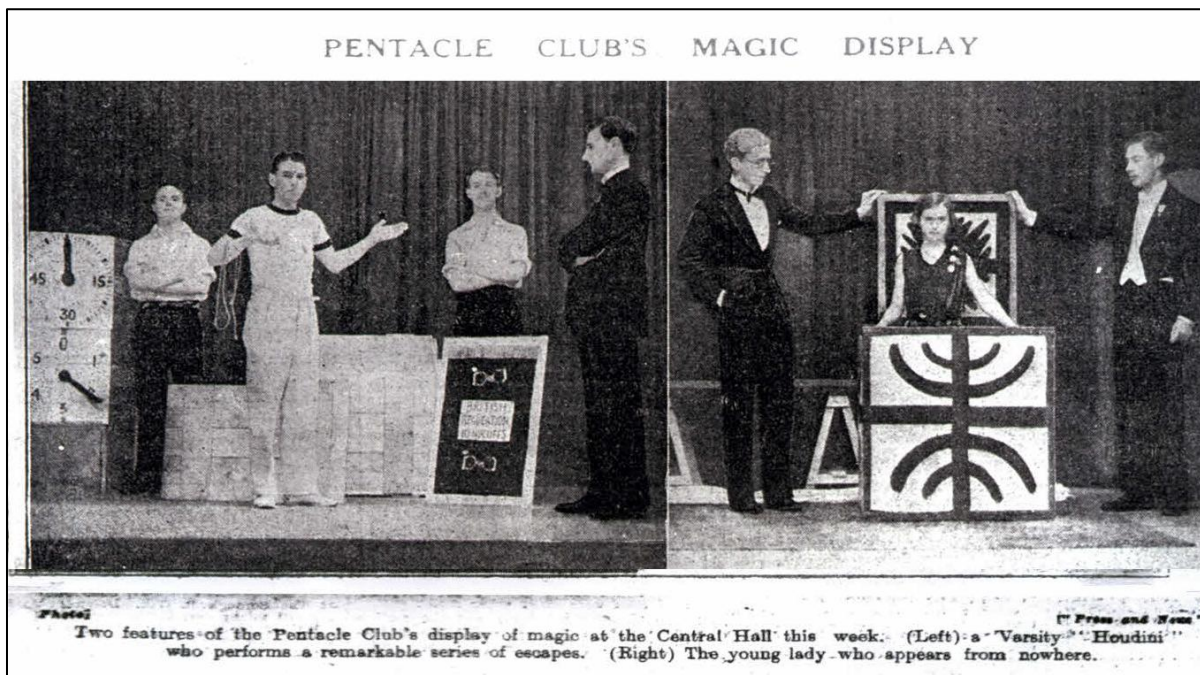
Barbara Martin is penetrated by Anthony Cope

The opinion of the reviewer in the *Magazine of Magic* was that if the patter of the entire show could have been as good as the magic, “what a show that would have been”,⁵⁵ while the *Varsity* headline was “Fine Conjuring Spoilt by Weak Jokes”.⁵⁶

At the AGM in May 1932 Dr. Canney stepped down as President, his place being taken by Dr. FB Kipping of Trinity College. Dr. Kipping was to remain President until his death in January 1965. He left Trinity to become a Fellow of St. John’s College in 1954. Dr. Canney became Vice-President, which he remained until at least 1961-62.

1932-33

The Show *Wizards at Work* was presented at the Central Hall in February 1933. The most popular part of the programme was the *Magic Menagerie* of Mr. E Beck. “pigeons and guinea-pigs seemed to come from every utensil he touched, in spite of the fact that we had only just previously seen them empty”.⁵⁷ S Eacott performed amazing escapology, W Hawthorne (later to become President) performed silk magic and SJA Bosanquet misled the audience into thinking his effects had gone wrong. He also performed some clever paper tearing. K Wheeler did some tricks with sheets followed by juggling. Brian MacCarthy demonstrated a high degree of skill in manipulating billiard balls.



*Wizards at Work 1933*⁵⁸

For the first time the Club ventured to take the show to London, appearing at the Fortune Theatre, Little Russell Street/Drury Lane in March. The Slave of the Pentacle (JL Roberts) again linked the items, which included EC Beck's *Magic Menagerie*, and JA Cope's *Magic Made Merry*. Barbara Martin appeared with Anthony Cope in the *Vivisection and Disintegration* item. Messrs. Eacott, Cornwall, Latimer, MacCarthy, Hawthorne, Clayton, Bowen-Roberts, and Wheeler completed the line-up.⁵⁹

The Minutes have by this time become remarkably sparse. The next minute is October 1933, at which it is reported that the Central Hall had been booked for February of the following year. The 1934 show was in fact staged at the Alexandra Hall.

Brian MacCarthy appeared in the June Social of The Magic Circle, performing cut and restored string, the transposition of a half-crown from a piece of paper into a ball of paper in a glass, two card effects and the multiplying billiard balls⁶⁰.

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- ³³ Anon. Magic and Mystery: Surgery Extraordinary. *Cambridge Daily News*, 17 February 1926
- ³⁴ PIP. At The Pentacle. *Granta*, 19th February 1926 p. 264
- ³⁵ Oldridge S. Correspondence. *The Magic Circular*, 1926;29:139-141
- ³⁶ Lea HL. Editorial Notes. *The Magic Circular*, 1926;29:95-96
- ³⁷ Anon. The Pentacle Club Annual Entertainment. *The New Cambridge*, 19 February 1927
- ³⁸ Anon. Cambridge Magic. *The Sketch*, 23 February 1927
- ³⁹ Anon. The Pentacle Club at the A.D.C. *Granta*, 19 February 1927 p. 255
- ⁴⁰ Anon. Quips and Queries. *Cambridge Daily News*, 14 February 1927
- Anon. Pentacle Club at the A.D.C. *Cambridge Chronicle*, 18 February 1927
- FP. Sold by the Pentacle! *The Gownsmen and Undergraduates*, 19 February 1927 p. 14
- RPWI. The Pentacle Club. *The Cambridge Review*, 18 February 1927
- Anon. Where Conjurers are Made. *Daily Express*, 21 February 1927
- Anon. University Magic. *Daily Mail*, 21 February 1927
- Anon. Amateur Magicians. *Morning Post*, 21 February 1927
- ⁴¹ Denham HB. The Twenty-First Grand Séance. *The Magic Circular*, 1927;21:118-123
- ⁴² Anon. Skeleton in the Cupboard. *Cambridge Chronicle*, 8 February 1928
- Anon. Vice Chancellor Puzzled. *Cambridge Daily News*, 2 February 1928
- Anon. Vice Chancellor Puzzled. *Cambridge Independent Press*, 3 February 1928
- Anon. 'Varsity Magicians. *Daily Mail*, 2 February 1928
- Anon. The Pentacle Club. *The Cambridge Review*, 10 February 1928
- ⁴³ DS. The Cult of Merlin. *The Gownsmen*, 4 February 1928 p.14
- ⁴⁴ Stone JGG. Magic at Cambridge University. *The Magic Circular*, 1928;22:120-121
- ⁴⁵ Stanyon E. The Pentacle Club. *The Magic Circular*, 1929;23:109-110
- ⁴⁶ AFRC. The Pentacle Club. *Granta*, 13 February 1929
- ⁴⁷ Anon. Pentacle Club. *Cambridge Independent Press*, 15 February 1929
- Anon. Pentacle Club. *Cambridge Daily News*, 13 February 1929
- ⁴⁸ Anon. The Pentacle Club. *The Times*, 25 February 1930
- ⁴⁹ Anon. The Pentacle Club. *Cambridge Independent Press* 28 February 1930
- ⁵⁰ Britannicus. The Pentacle Club. *The Gownsmen*, 1 March 1930
- ⁵¹ Anon. Magic and Mirth. *Cambridge Daily News*, 25 February 1930
- ⁵² Anon. More Magic and Mystery. *Cambridge Daily News*, 24 February 1931
- ⁵³ Anon. Illusionists "At Home". *Cambridge Daily News*, 23 February 1932 p.8
- ⁵⁴ James. The Magic Pentacle. *The Gownsmen*. 27 February, 1932
- ⁵⁵ Anon. The Magic Pentacle at Cambridge. *The Magic Magazine*, 1932;2:155-156
- ⁵⁶ DW. Fine Conjuring Spoilt by Weak Jokes. *Varsity*, 27 February 1932
- ⁵⁷ HC. The Pentacle Club. *Varsity*, 25 February 1933
- ⁵⁸ Anon. Pentacle Club's Magic Display. *Cambridge Independent Press*, 24 February 1933
- ⁵⁹ Anon. All Magic Show. *The Stage*, 23 March 1933
- ⁶⁰ Martin EB. The June Social. *The Magic Circular*, 1933;27:161

Chapter 4

Interlude 2 – James Robertson Campbell Canney



*JR Campbell Canney Matriculation photograph. Christ's College 1901
by permission of the Master and Fellows of Christ's College, Cambridge*

Robin Canney was born 4th August 1883 in Hampstead, London. He went to University College School and Aldenham School, Elstree. He was admitted to Christ's College, Cambridge on 3rd June 1901.

He took BA (Natural Science Tripos, 2nd Class) in 1905 and became a medical student at University College Hospital with an Entrance Exhibition in the same year. He won the Fellowes' Silver Medal in 1905, the Gold Medal for clinical medicine, the Erichsen Prize and the Medal for Ophthalmic Medicine in 1906. He qualified medically MRCS, LRCP in 1907 and MB, BChir in 1909. After his House Physician and House Surgeon jobs at University College Hospital he moved to Cambridge to practise as a General Practitioner and lived at 60 St. Andrews Street, now the location of the Santander Bank. He later moved to 25 Madingley Road.

His interest in surgery led to his being appointed as Clinical Assistant in Surgery at Addenbrookes Hospital and gynaecology became his main interest. He received his MA in 1911 and MD in 1912. During the First World War he served with the Royal Army Medical Corps in France and on his return to Cambridge he was appointed to take charge of the gynaecology patients and remained as honorary Consultant Gynaecologist until his retirement in 1949.

His eldest son, Wing-Commander Peter John Campbell Canney lost his life in February 1942 at the age of 26 as a result of air operations. A further son, Ronald Lindsay Canney became a Consultant Surgeon to Kent and Canterbury Hospitals.

Having taken over as President of the Pentacle Club on the death of WW Rouse Ball in 1925, he was formally elected to the post at the AGM of 1925, the date of which is not



recorded. He stood down from the position in 1932 at which point he was elected Vice-President and remained as such until at least 1961-62. I have so far been unable to find out anything further about his connection with and/or interest in magic. JRC Canney died on 13th April 1967.

JRC Canney c. 1925

*Photograph and Appointment
Card by permission of
Addenbrookes Archives, CUH
NHS Foundation Trust*

Addenbrooke's Hospital	
GYNAECOLOGICAL DISEASES	
(Keep this card clean and always bring it with you.)	
DR. CANNEY	
Patients must attend at the Hospital on a TUESDAY, at 10.45 a.m.	
No books will be given out after 11.30 a.m.	
(This card is not to be used for asking alms.)	
Name <i>Budget Jelliffe</i>	Reg. No. <i>13457</i>
Date <i>30 JUL 1928</i>	Book No. <i>53</i>
When discharged this card should be kept and presented on attendance at any future date.	
58 W. H. & S. LTD. G. 204	

Chapter 5

Both Sides of the Second World War – 1933 to 1950

1933-1934

Information in the Club Archives is scant for the next few years. The Club was evidently active as there was a show *Pentacle Parade* at the Alexandra Hall from 28th February to 3rd March 1934 in which there were ten performers with William R Hawthorne, later to become President of the Club, listed as a Committee Member, though he did not perform in this show. The *Granta* reporter was impressed:

“A good deal of the magic consisted of pure legerdemain without the help of any prepared apparatus whatsoever. AHC Branson produced innumerable thimbles, JS Eacott and JF Danby innumerable cigarettes and J Cornwall innumerable billiard balls from whatever place in the empty air they pleased.”⁶¹

The *Gownsmen* reported:

“This is not simply a bunch of amateur conjurers, but a quick, slick show without a dull moment.”⁶²

R Gaskell multiplied watches, KAC Wheeler performed with cards and handkerchiefs, WH Bowen-Roberts contributed paper tearing and juggling and Edward Beck threaded needles in his mouth. The thought-reading of AD Hayes “seemed a little strained”, though this could have been due to slow cooperation by the audience.⁶³



Although “one of the most beautiful and self-possessed young ladies that ever assisted a magician” was recorded by the *Gownsmen* reporter (who tended to indulge in superlatives), she does not appear in the photograph of the cast! *The Times* reporter doesn’t mention her either.⁶⁴

Cast photograph 1934 (omitting lady!)

1934-1939

A postcard dated 1st March 1935 was sent to Ellis Stanyon arranging to meet him at The Red Cow, a pub which was in Corn Exchange Street but which closed in 2014. This was the typical time of year for the annual show. However the report of the 1940 show states that there was no annual show after 1934 until 1940, so the reason for his visit is a puzzle. Perhaps he was lecturing at a Club meeting.

The Club participated in a one night concert with Trinity College Musical Society and the Trinity Madrigals at the Guildhall in March 1936. DJ Allen-Williams and "Prof. Epstein - The Mighty Master of Mystery" appeared in a variety show at the Comberton Village Institute on 2nd February 1939 helping to raise funds for the Recreation Ground.

1939-1940

A poster advertising a meeting open to "all members of the University interested in Conjuring and Juggling" on 29th October 1939 is in the archives. The only other documentation for this period is the programme of the Annual Show which took place at the ADC Theatre from 14th to 17th February 1940. Shortly after the declaration of war many of the colleges of London University had been evacuated to Cambridge and this is reflected by the appearance in this show of two London performers, L Bernstein and EW Rodnight, the latter appearing as "Professor Sniffleblister" giving *A Short Lecture on Recent Advances in Experimental Science* in which two of his subjects involved the production of alcohol and the use of thought waves. Mr. Bernstein presented *Catch a Ghost* in which a person dressed as a ghost was surrounded by screens then by a circle of audience members. When the screens were removed the ghost had vanished. The Club offered £1000 to anyone who could prove the use of trapdoors in the stage or screens used in this effect, but this was unclaimed.

The Marvels of Modern Medicine was the feature of the show and the audience was amused when the severed head wished to smoke a cigarette and the headless body produced the necessary matches.⁶⁵ This was the first "annual" show presented by the Club since 1934.

1940-1941

Again there is only the programme of the Annual Show which took place on 6th and 8th March. It was given in support of the local branch of the British Red Cross Society, and was again at the ADC Theatre. Although London University students would still have been in Cambridge, none appeared in this show.

1941-1945

There are no records for this period and it is believed that the Club fell into dormancy.

1946-47

After the understandable decline of the Club during the later years of the Second World War, it was not long after the war finished in September 1945 before it was revived. The first intimation of its revival to be found is a poster for an Open Meeting in Queens' College on Sunday 20th January 1946. All persons interested in Conjuring or Juggling were invited to attend.

The next reference to the Club is that Lord Ellenborough (Richard Edward Cecil Law, who was at Magdalene) and the Secretary Ralph Harris (Queens') had been present at The Magic Circle Social on 23rd February 1946.⁶⁶ Lord Ellenborough had joined The Magic Circle

shortly after his 19th birthday in April 1945 and was the father of the current Lord Ellenborough, who as Rupert Law was very active in The Magic Circle for many years.

Another recruiting Open Meeting was held in October 1946 in Trinity College. To attract attendance, Ernest Sewell, the “King of Conjurers and Conjuror of Kings” performed at this. Harold Warrender, by this time an up and coming film star, returned to the Club to appear at another recruiting meeting in January 1947. A presentation of *Bloodless Surgery* was given at this meeting.

The Club held its first non-austerity post-war dinner on 23rd February 1947 and guests were Francis White and Percy Press from The Magic Circle. After the dinner the group retired to Miller’s Studio where entertainment was provided by Lord Ellenborough, Ralph Harris, Ronnie Dee (Trinity) and the two Magic Circle invitees.⁶⁷



Bloodless Surgery 1947

RA Williams and CA Grimstone remove the leg of M Fowler and decapitate J Williams

The Revival show *Cavalcade of Magic* at St. Andrew's Hall in March 1947 was opened by Lord Ellenborough with *An Introduction to Magic*. Robert Macmillan and Nancy Timpany presented *Oriental Magic* and Ralph Harris, the Club Secretary, provided manipulations. Other acts were Peter Barnes, Ronald Dee, David Allen-Williams (who had returned to Cambridge after the War to do a PhD) and Derek Alsop with a Giant Memory Test.⁶⁸ The show closed with another revival, Harry Rottenburg's *The Marvels of Modern Medicine - Bloodless Surgery*.

The magic was interspersed with songs by two members of the Footlights Club and music was provided by Peter Tranchell, at that time at King's College and who later was for almost 30 years Precentor and Director of Music at Gonville and Caius College.

1947-48

The 1947 show led to a demand for performances by the Club for various local organisations. In the Michaelmas Term the club visited Girton College for the *Maid's Party* with a presentation based around the history of magic. In November of that year the Club made two trips to London. On 19th November they provided the second half of a Magic Circle Social, including the *Bloodless Surgery* sketch.⁶⁹ Part of this was repeated on the second London visit on 26th when the Club appeared on television in *Picture Post*. In addition to the performance the Secretary, Robert Macmillan, was interviewed by Joan Gilbert. He later commented that "make-up was hardly needed at all but blue was used to give a man a red nose and yellow powder to darken faces". Such were the tricks used on black and white television.⁷⁰

Around the same time, in an interview in *Varsity*, the Club offered £100,000 to anyone who could perform the Indian Rope Trick in the open air, such as the Market Place or Parker's Piece and without any mechanical contrivances. At the same time they offered £1000 to any undergraduate who could give evidence that mechanical devices were used in a substitution trunk effect to be presented in the *Cavalcade of Magic* in the coming Term.⁷¹

More Magic was staged in support of the Red Cross at St. Andrew's Hall in January 1948. Victor Skipp compered, Ronny Shephard performed paper magic, Geoffrey Phillips "had some letters that expressed an opinion concerning the audience" and David Allen-Williams manipulated thimbles. Tony Bullock's mind triumphed over matter, Robert MacMillan demonstrated amazing feats of memory and Ronny Dee made "cards do everything but talk". The Mayor and Mayoress were present and their children eagerly went on stage on more than one occasion.⁷² The show made a profit of £30 for the Red Cross.

Bloodless Surgery was repeated in the next show, *Cavalcade of Magic (Second Edition)* which took place in March 1948. On this occasion although it was a man (Martin Fowler) whose leg was amputated by Allen Chinnery and Arthur Hickson, it was a young lady (Brenda Bentley) who was decapitated. Earlier in the show Richard Lord Ellenborough had subjected her to amputation of the hand.



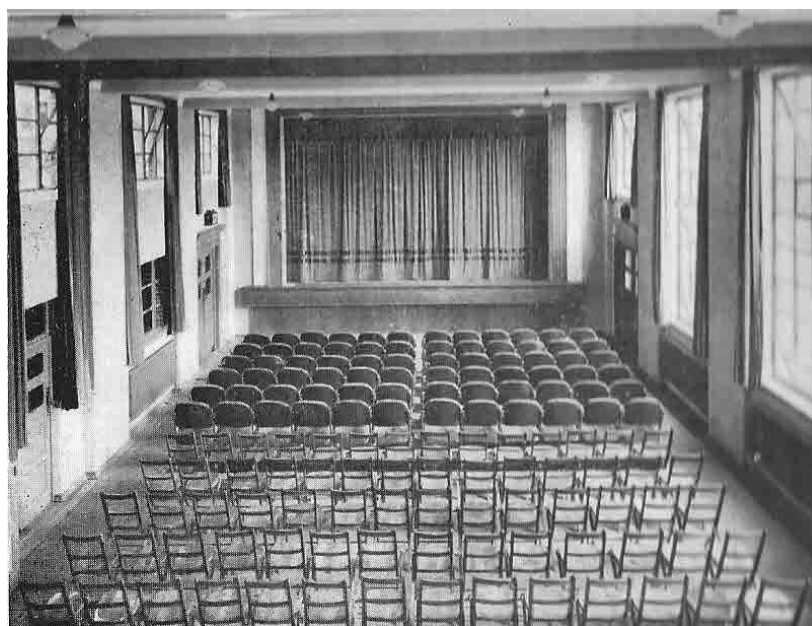
The Cast - Cavalcade of Magic (Second Edition) 1948

A headline prediction was sent to the *Cambridge Daily News* early in the week of the show by Tony Bullock and brought by a representative of the newspaper to the Wednesday Matinee. When opened the prediction was "Destroyers sent to the Gold Coast" which compared well with the actual headline which was "Warships sent to the Gold Coast". Getting the local newspaper involved has always been good for publicity, however the *Daily News* headline was "**HEADLINE PREDICTION ATTEMPT Almost. But Not Quite.**"⁷³

Other performers included David Allen-Williams, Ronald and Marian Dee, George Downer, Martin Fowler, Robert MacMillan, Richard Marshall, Ronald Shephard and Victor Skipp. Once more music was provided by Peter Tranchell.

1948-49

The Red Cross again benefited from a production by the Pentacle Club in January 1949. The show was staged at the Houghton Hall and was basically the show that was soon to be presented as the Annual Show at the Arts Theatre. Brenda Bentley was vanished by Victor Skipp while she was sitting on a bicycle, carrying a burned crumpet on a toasting fork.⁷⁴ Houghton Hall still exists as part of St. Alban's Primary School on Union Road.



Houghton Hall interior 1936

Photograph from the archives of Our Lady and the English Martyrs Church, Cambridge

Cavalcade of Magic (Third Edition) was presented in March 1949. Michael Newland opened the show with a miscellany of magic and was followed with juggling by Richard Marshall. Hilary Newton and Robert MacMillan were the next act and Laurence Rayner manipulated *Players Please!* with cigarettes by John Player and Son. The first act was closed by "Professor" Roger Poyser who locked Brenda Bentley into a small cabinet then transfixed it with eight large swords.⁷⁵

Edmund Akenhead opened the second half with Linking Rings then Victor Skipp magically exchanged one lady for another in a large box. Peter Barnes was the Dextrous Dilettante who swallowed razor blades and regurgitated them attached to a length of cotton, then Prof. Poyser continued to be nasty to ladies by performing *Simple Division* (Sawing Through) on Hilary Newton. Although *Bloodless Surgery* did not feature as a sketch on its own, part of it was performed when Allen Chinnery had his leg removed. The programme records that "The amputation is presented by kind permission of Dr. H. Rottenburg".

In June 1949 twelve members of the Club, including one lady, Hilary Newton, undertook a tour of Butlin's Holiday Camps. Performances were given at the Camps in Ayr, Pwllheli and Filey. Needless to say this show, which was based on the annual show, contained part of the *Bloodless Surgery* sketch.

THURSDAY

8.15 a.m. **GOOD MORNING CAMPERS.**
 8.45 a.m. Holy Communion. Camp Church.
 10.0 a.m. **Keep Fit with Sandy** in the Ballroom.
 10.0 a.m. **Morning Rambles to Rabble Burns Cottage, Museum and Monument at Alloway.** Don't miss this opportunity of visiting the shrine of Scotland's national bard. Assembly Ballroom entrance where your first coat will be waiting.
 10.20 a.m. **Dancing Instruction** in the Victor Silver "Magic Way".
 11.00 a.m. **Auditions** in the Theatre.
 11.30 a.m. **Fun and Games on the Beach.**
 11.30 a.m. **Miniature Bowls** for the over 40's in the Billiards Hall.
 2.15 p.m. **Children's Matinee** in the Brig o' Doon Theatre.
 2.15 p.m. **DRENE COMPETITION.** To find the Girl with the most beautiful head of hair, presided by demonstration. In the Quiet Lounge. Entry forms from the Hairdressing Salon, Ayrton, Bridge.
 3.30 p.m. **Tea Dance** in Col. Hans Millar and his Highlanders.
 4.15 p.m. **Whist Drive** in the Card Room.
 7.30 p.m. **All Star Professional Wrestling** in the Brig o' Doon Theatre.
 8.30 p.m. **To-night is Ladies' NIGHT.** Don't miss it!

FRIDAY

8.15 a.m. **GOOD MORNING CAMPERS.** Keep Fit with Sandy in the Montgomerie Ballroom.
 8.30 a.m. **Dancing Instruction** in the Victor Silver "Magic Way".
 11.00 a.m. **Hi-De-Hi** in the Montgomerie Ballroom.
 11.00 a.m. **Butlin Movie News** with supporting programme. See your self on the screen. Show taken around the Camp during the week.
 11.00 a.m. **Table Tennis Tournament** for Lads and Lassies.
 11.00 a.m. **Eleven's.** Eight Minute in the Window Lounge.
 2.00 p.m. **"GOOD-BYE BLUES"**. The Butlin Band's Quartet Party present their "All Stars" full production with the Theatre Orchestra under the personal direction of Col. HANS MILLAR.
 2.30 p.m. **Green Mander-Wright** presents her "Mammasin" in a Fashion Parade. In the Ballroom.
 3.30 p.m. **Tea Dance** with Col. Hans Millar and his Highlanders.
 4.15 p.m. **Whist Drive.** Card Room.
 4.30 p.m. **Prize Giving** for all campers in the Montgomerie Ballroom.
 5.00 p.m. **The Pentacle Club of Cambridge.** Presenting a special programme of Magic and Mystery. All Artistes are Undergraduates of Cambridge University. Quartet supplied by Col. Hans Millar. In the Theatre.
 7.30 p.m. **Grand Campers Concert** by the Campers for the Campers. Aids assisted by Col. Hans Millar and his Highlanders.
 8.30 p.m. **FAREWELL NIGHT DANCE.** In the Theatre.

Montgomery Ballroom.
 5.00 p.m. **The Pentacle Club of Cambridge.** Presenting a special programme of Magic and Mystery. All Artistes are Undergraduates of Cambridge University. Quartet supplied by Col. Hans Millar. In the Theatre.
 7.30 p.m. **Grand Campers Concert** by the

Butlin's Holiday Camp Ayr, Scotland
Your ENTERTAINMENT Programme
SATURDAY, 18th JUNE, to FRIDAY, 24th JUNE, 1949

INFORMATION
 Meals will be served in the Dining Hall at:
BREAKFAST - - - 9 a.m.
LUNCHEON - - - 1.0 p.m.
EVENING MEAL - 6.30 p.m.
Outdoor Activities: Daily (except on Sundays) - Lawn Tennis, Table Tennis, Football, Golf, Croquet, Badminton, Snooker, Billiards, Skating and Swimming.
Skating Sessions: 10 to 1, 2 to 3, 7 to 9. Closed on Saturdays.
Indoor Activities: Daily (except during Church Service on Sunday). Table Tennis, Darts, Billiards, Snooker and Whist.
Billiards Sessions: 10 to 1, 2 to 3, 7 to 9. Closed on Saturdays.
Horse Riding: Book at the Reception Counter. 9/- per hour. Daily rides.
Equipment. All equipment for the various activities may be obtained from the Games Store, except Darts and Table Tennis equipment, which is obtainable from the Billiard Hall.
Roman Catholics. Will all Roman Catholics please give their names to the House Captain before 9 p.m., so that transport can be arranged to take them to 8 a.m. Holy Mass on Sunday. All Competitions will be announced in the Dining Hall.
This programme is subject to alteration. Dependence upon the weather or other circumstances beyond our control.
BUTLIN SOCIAL CLUBS.
 Ask your Aids for FULL PARTICULARS.

Butlin's Programme Ayr, June 1949

1949-50

There appeared to be a degree of lack of imagination in producing titles for the annual shows at this time, or perhaps it was felt that familiarity would prove attractive, since the February 1950 show was *Cavalcade of Magic (Fourth Edition)*.

Alex Elmsley, “an odd looking young fellow with an unusual style of presentation”⁷⁶, opened the show, pretending to be incompetent but providing very skilful magic. He was followed by Hilary Newton’s *Lightning Sketches* and Laurence Rayner with a range of card effects including the Rising Cards. Richarde Allen made a paper tree and then performed Troublewit.

James Webber and Betty Schofield demonstrated their telepathic abilities after which Laurence Rayner reappeared with an escape act, about which the *Cambridge Daily News* reporter stated, “We could see how the trick was done but must compliment them on their speed”. After the interval Michael Downer and Rosalind Mellor demonstrated card fans and Robert MacMillan as “Mac Sho Yu” performed the Linking Rings and Silks from Newspaper. Richard Marshall was the last Pentacle performer, juggling with hat, cane and gloves and tennis racket and balls.

Richard Murdoch the radio comedian was invited to be a guest performer but had previous commitments. Instead, Peter Brough the radio ventriloquist with his doll Archie Andrews closed the show. After his ventriloquial spot he left Archie at the side of the stage and told some good jokes and, unfortunately, some “blue” ones.

There was another tour in the Summer of 1950, this time a ten day journey around Surrey and Sussex with *100 Minutes of Magic*. Michael Newland, Brian Cannon, Jimmy Webber, Richard Marshall, George Downer and Jessie Faber were supported by Stage Manager Geoffrey Shephard. Towns visited included East Grinstead, Lindfield, Lingfield, Oxted and Crowborough. Two vehicles were involved and the cast slept in an eight-person bell tent. This tour and that of the following year were reported in detail in *Pentacle Life in the Early 1950s* edited by John Davenport in 2016.⁷⁷

RE-BIRTH OF THE CLUB AFTER THE WAR



Pentacle Club 1947

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- ⁶¹ HNF. Pentacle Parade – An All Magic Show. *Granta*, 7 March 1934
- ⁶² Anon. Pentacle Parade. *The Gownsmen*, 3 March 1934 p.19
- ⁶³ Anon. Pentacle Parade. *Cambridge Daily News*, 1 March 1934
- ⁶⁴ Anon. Undergraduate Magic. *The Times*, 1 March 1934
- ⁶⁵ Anon. Magicians' £1000 Offer Still Holds. *The Cambridge University Journal-Varsity*, 17 February 1940
- ⁶⁶ Donister C. The February Social. *The Magic Circular*, 1946;40:71
- ⁶⁷ Naldrett P. The Pentacle Club. *The Magic Circular*, 1947;41:113-114
- ⁶⁸ Anon. Cambridge Pentacle Club's Successful Revival. *Cambridge Daily News*, 11 March 1947
- ⁶⁹ Newcombe P. The November Social. *The Magic Circular*, 1948;42:66-68
- ⁷⁰ Anon. Magic of Television Mystifies Pentacles. *Cambridge Daily News*, Unknown date November 1947
- ⁷¹ White N. Pentacles Offer £100,000 for Rope Trick Demonstration. *Varsity*, 18 October 1947
- ⁷² Anon. "Passing" Money from Public to Red Cross *Cambridge Daily News*, 23 January 1948
- ⁷³ Anon. Headline Prediction Attempt. *Cambridge Daily News*, 5 March 1948
- ⁷⁴ Anon. Magic Blood and Thunder *Varsity*, 29th January 1949
- ⁷⁵ SJA. Girl Stabbed; Second Sawn in Half. *Cambridge Daily News*, 14 March 1949
- ⁷⁶ PAB. Conjuring & Compering. *Cambridge Daily News*, 2 February 1950
- ⁷⁷ Davenport J. (Editor). *Pentacle Club Life in the Early 1950s*, Pentacle Club Private Publication. 2016

Chapter 6

Interlude 3 – Harry Rottenburg

Henry (Harry) Rottenburg was for many years a Fellow at King's College, Cambridge. Born in Glasgow on 6th October 1875 he entered the College as an undergraduate on 1st October 1895 reading mathematics. After obtaining his BA in 1898 he achieved a First Class degree in Mechanical Sciences the following year.

In addition to his academic studies he was an avid sportsman, being awarded a Blue for rugby in 1898 and was twice capped playing rugby for Scotland in 1899 and 1900. In the same years he also played for London Scottish. He founded the Cambridge Judo Club in 1906.

In 1900 electrical engineering took him to Pittsburgh, USA, with the Westinghouse Company but he moved back to the UK with the new British Westinghouse Company in 1902. In 1904 he returned to Cambridge as a lecturer in engineering but again left in 1908 to join the J.L. Submersible Motor Co. In 1911 he returned to his lectureship at Cambridge, where he remained until his death. He was a Member of the Institution of Electrical Engineers from 1912.

He married Bessie Mary Lawrence, daughter of Sir Trevor Lawrence, in 1911, remaining married to her until her death in 1944. They had a son and a daughter.

He had a great interest in matters dramatic, being President of the Footlights Dramatic Club in 1906 and 1907, writing, producing and acting in many sketches for them. He was a writer and singer of witty comic songs. He greatly enjoyed fantastical situations, and his exuberant imagination endeared him to a generation of undergraduates who knew him affectionately as 'The Rotter'.

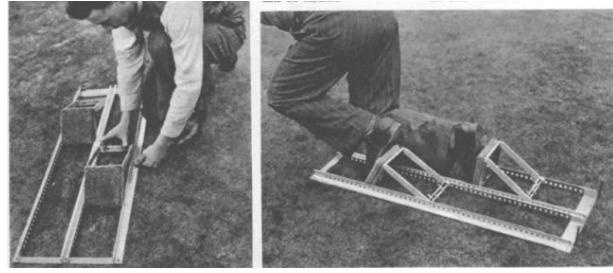
For some 30 years he ran the London Instrument Co. in Cambridge, which he started mainly to develop his own ingenious and very varied inventions, including a device for sharpening gramophone needles and a walking stick fitted with rollers to assist in carrying heavy parcels.

Harry Rottenburg turned his attentions to athletics. Some of his inventions were used in the Olympic Games in London in 1948 and in Helsinki in 1952. He devised a simple and effective piece of apparatus for measuring distances in athletic events such as the long jump, shot-put and in throwing the discus or javelin. He produced a starting gate for running races which was successful until a competitor pushed his head through it and became entangled. In 1930 he designed another gate for changeovers in relay races. Perhaps his best known athletic invention is the adjustable starting blocks, which were first used at the Wembley Olympics in 1948, and are still widely used today.

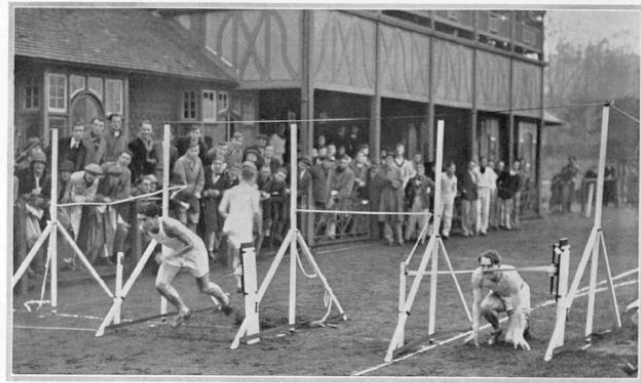


Rottenburg athletic inventions⁷⁸

Rottenburg demonstrating the starting blocks



Adjustable starting blocks



OPERATING THE CHANGE-OVER GATE AT IFFLEY ROAD: THE CAMBRIDGE RUNNER HAS BEEN RELEASED AND THE OXFORD ONE AWAITS RELEASE.

Relay change-over gate

Exactly when Harry Rottenburg joined the Pentacle Club is unknown but the first of his magical playlets performed by the Club appears to have been *The Marvels of Modern Medicine* in 1926. This was followed the next year by *Dope or the Plastic Art* and *The Skeleton in the Cupboard* in 1928.

Modern Medicine in some form appeared at least five times in Pentacle Club shows. There are two scripts in the Pentacle Archive. In the first, entitled *You Won't Feel Anything* (see Appendix 1) the doctor is Sir Edward Seebohn but there is only one patient. In the other version *The Marvels of Modern Medicine* the patient is an escaped lunatic and the operations are carried out by "Dickie Bill" who has broken into the doctor's house. In both cases the action is somewhat different from that described in reports of the 1926 performance in which the surgery was preceded by an interlude featuring a female patient waiting to see the doctor with her small boy, the latter being a ventriloquist's doll. No doubt numerous versions were used dependent on available performers. In all reported performances before 1947 Harry Rottenburg played the part of the Surgeon. It has not been possible to determine when the versions in our scripts were performed.

Rottenburg was a dedicated teacher in the lecture room and laboratory, on the stage and on the rugby football field. Some pupils, especially those with conventional minds, were apt to find him unsatisfactory as a teacher, while many others found him quite the reverse. He would periodically drop priceless gems of knowledge or ideas, which could be gathered eagerly from among a welter of rather random talk.

He died at home at 5, Adams Road, Cambridge on 25th March 1955.

The following accounts from *The Magic Circular* give good descriptions of Rottenburg playlets.

The Marvels of Modern Medicine

March 1926

If we may rely on a recent Press report, a one-act play entitled *The Marvels of Modern Medicine*, which was banned by the Lord Chamberlain as too gruesome, has been adapted by the author for the Pentacle Club. We are in hopes of being able to print some details of this performance shortly, as it is apparently of considerable interest to magicians and contains some striking illusions.

The author is a Cambridge Don, the Pentacle Club being, as members will remember, a society of undergraduates who are conjuring enthusiasts.⁷⁹

May 1926

The enterprising and virile young Magical Society formed in connexion with Cambridge University and known as the Pentacle Club was responsible for the *Grand Finale*. It consisted of a One Act Magical Mystery entitled *The Marvels of Modern Medicine*. The author, Mr. H Rottenburg (King's) played, with acumen and discretion, the principal role of Sir Ernest Seeborn, a physician, in whose consulting room, which was fitted up with a lot of weird implements, the scene was laid. The part of Mr. Paterson, his assistant, was played by Mr. PD Allen (Pembroke), whilst Mr. LG Brewster (St. John's) and Mr. Leonard De Lion (Christ's) respectively, acted as two patients named Mr. William Stansfield and Mr. John Goodebody, the first of whom came to be treated for leg trouble and the second for a serious throat affection.

The treatment proved to be of a very drastic nature, requiring in the one case the removal of the leg and in the other the severance of the head from the body. These remarkable operations were in turn satisfactorily and convincingly accomplished, and the patients went away thoroughly cured. This little playlet was both carefully thought out and carried out, and we offer the author and performers our warmest congratulations and venture to express the hope that more will be heard and seen of this clever magical sketch.

H. B. DENHAM.⁸⁰

June 1926

Dear Mr. Editor,

It is some time since I sent you a description of any show I have seen, as I know you are so well posted in all matters magical that I have felt that I had nothing fresh to say about the ordinary shows. I know you have received a very full account of the general programme of the Grand Séance, but the particular item I should like to describe to you is the illusory sketch, by far the best magical sketch of its kind I have seen.

Some might consider it a wasted effort to re-dress so ancient an illusion as the Decapitation feat, but I, having in mind our frequent chats in the past, know you are a believer in "The survival of the fittest," so here goes for a description of what I saw - The whole truth and nothing but the truth, kiss the book and - er - pay the half-crown, etc.

SCENE Surgeon's Operating Room.

TIME The present.

Surgeon, specialist (accent on the specialist), and assistant discovered. Doctor asking if certain instruments have arrived, referring specially to a new saw and some very wide bandages.

These are shown and their merits extolled. It is now time for the first patient's appointment. He arrives and is examined, when it is found that he has injured the muscles of his leg through a slight misunderstanding with his caddy and a golf club. The patient is wearing the orthodox "Plus Fours" of the golfer, which are very convenient as an aid to the first illusion.

He is asked to be seated, and, for greater convenience and comfort, his injured leg is rested on a chest containing the instruments previously discussed. The saw is brought into action and the leg is amputated just below the knee. The really funny business with the local anaesthetic and the clever patter precluded the gruesomeness often rather oppressive in such experiments.

All the points were well impressed, the switch of the real for the artificial leg, which was mechanical and moved the foot whilst under examination, was very clean and convincing. The amputated leg was examined and, greatly to the doctor's delight, was found to be wanting in vitamins, making it necessary to drill it some way down to the accompaniment of dry humorous patter, the humour and presentation redeeming it from mere buffoonery.

The patient was dismissed with a caution not to let anyone "pull his leg", and the next appointment became due. This time the patient was found to be suffering from loss of voice consequent upon an obstruction in the gullet. After some business the doctor extracted a large ball, and I am forced to say that this was the only inartistic part of the show, and, in my opinion, should have been omitted as unnecessary and rather nauseating. Sleight-of-hand might well, I think, have taken the place of the apparently terrifying introduction of the instrument.

In order to pave the way for the next illusion the patient's gullet is still found to be intractable so decapitation is resorted to. I have nothing but praise for the way this was carried out. The plotting was excellent and the action convincing. It was a modernised version of that described by Reginald Scot more than three hundred years ago and so no novelty, yet there were numbers of people in the audience who had never seen anything like it before. It was necessary to cover the head of the patient for removal from the shoulders. This was done with the specially wide bandage previously referred to and was very cleverly handled.

Before the decapitation took place the patient (unable to articulate on account of his throat trouble) wrote down a request for a drink. The assistant poured out a glass of stout from a jug. The doctor objected to stout telling him to give water instead. Thereupon it, the stout, is poured back into the jug and water poured into the glass. Under cover of this somewhat startling effect a clever switch takes place.

The patient's head having been removed and placed at a distance from the body some very amusing business accrues. The head is given a cigarette, but neither the surgeon nor his assistant have a match. The head, however, informs them that there are matches in its trousers' pocket, and the hand feels for and finds them, handing them to the doctor.

The head was enabled to talk by means of an arrangement of small fire bellows and a good deal of fun was made by the assistant forgetting to keep up a steady blast of air to the vocal chords, thereby causing the head to emit jerky utterances.

A mirthful ending was produced when the surgeon, in showing his assistant the correct way in which to sharpen a pencil, cuts his own finger, and, as is usual with those so brave when it's the other fellow who is going through it, makes an awful fuss, calling for bandages, iodine and sticking plaster, the assistant hurriedly binding up the doctor's hand. Immediately afterwards it is discovered that the sound and not the wounded hand has been dressed, which occasions a burst of fury from the doctor, in the midst of which there is a black-out and exit, quite a clever way of getting off.

I should like to add that the warmest thanks of THE MAGIC CIRCLE are due to those members of the Pentacle Club who were kind enough to take so much trouble to add a gem to the magic art and a very fine item to the Grand Séance programme.

Should you have an opportunity of seeing this sketch I strongly advise you to take it.

Yours faithfully,

SIDNEY OLDRIDGE.⁸¹

The script closest to this description, entitled *You Won't Feel a Thing* appears in Appendix 1. In this the characters are Sir Edward Seeborn (a Surgeon), Mr. Patterson (his Assistant) and Mr. John Goodebody (a Patient).



The Miracles of Modern Medicine - Bloodless Surgery

1926



1947

Dope or The Plastic Art 1927

May 1927

The last number on the programme was a refreshingly original Magical Sketch, *Dope on the Plastic Art*, (sic) by H. Rottenburg (King's, Cambs.), presented by him and assisted by members of the Pentacle Club.



Characters: -

A Sculptor ...

L. G. Brewster (Ridley Hall)

A Friend ...

S. H. Hamilton (Queens' Coll.)

A Man on the Bust ...

J. S. Westcott (St. Cath. Coll.)

A Man in a Fawn Suit ...

H. Rottenburg (King's Coll.)

The Head of the Hidden Hand ...

A. H. Hill (Trinity Coll.)

We are indebted to Mr. Sidney Oldridge, M.I.M.C., who had previously seen the Sketch at Cambridge, for the following full description.

"A sculptor is discovered in his studio asleep, a knock is heard, followed by the entrance of a friend, who, finding him sleeping, or as he correctly deduces, in a dope stupor, proceeds to exchange the sculptor's dope phial for a similar one, but containing a harmless powder. This effected he arouses the sculptor, who, on being taxed with the doping habit, evades the point in the usual shuffling manner of the drug taker and shows one or two marble figures rejected on various frivolous pretexts by his clients, as an excuse for his dejection - and folly. His friend leaves with an earnest exhortation to forbear the drug habit and he again relapses into a stupor, apparently being haunted by a weird dream.

The sculptured form of a faun comes to life, throws off its dust sheet and capers about. At its signal a small curtain, concealing a white marble bust on the shelf of a cabinet, rises, and the bust also appears to be alive, coming forth supported on an entirely black body, to join in mysterious antics.

The faun next manipulates a lump of modelling clay standing on a table, producing a model of a human head which it places on a stool, when it comes to life, smiling and grimacing and even smoking a cigarette supplied by the faun. A ball of clay is then placed on the clay head by the faun and the feat of William Tell is emulated unsuccessfully by the black-bodied head, with a cupid's bow and arrow. Then the faun, to the accompaniment of appropriate and subtle gestures, places the ball of clay upon the head of the sleeping sculptor and this time successfully transfixes the ball with the arrow.

The sculptor, now partially awakened, muttering imprecations on these mischievous revellers, as they proceed to burn off his fingers, suggests that they will be cutting off his head next. It proves, for him, an unfortunate allusion. No sooner have the words passed his lips than the two uncanny companions conspire to carry it into execution. The table and a bench are pressed into service. The one as an operating table, the other as a support for the unhappy sculptor's lower limbs. He is artfully cajoled into position, still in a sleepy state, and the faun, finding a fire shovel ready to his hand, improvises a hatchet by unscrewing the handle and screwing it into the shovel again in a lateral position. With this uncouth operating knife in hand the faun takes his stand near the head of the poor sculptor who has been forced backward by the assistant until, whilst sitting astride the bench, his neck is laid, throat upward, on the table. Taking hold of the hair, the faun draws the sculptor's head along the table until the neck is grotesquely elongated and prepares to strike the decapitating blow. Just as it is about to descend, however, some remaining spark of consciousness of the horrible situation causes the sculptor's muscles to contract and the fatal blow is stayed in mid-air. The stretching of the neck is repeated but the muscular contraction again ensues and the faun is once more foiled in his intention to strike. There is a sudden struggle, a "black-out," the lights go up and the studio has resumed its normal appearance, with the sheeted figures, etc.

The curtain falls as the sculptor recovers from his dream."

Altogether a fine presentation which, of course, loses much in the mere relating, but which held the audience spell-bound. Thus was the Twenty-first Annual Séance of the MAGIC CIRCLE brought to a triumphant conclusion. H. B. DENHAM⁸²

The Skeleton in the Cupboard 1928

May 1928

The evening was brought to triumphal conclusion with the most mystifying feature of all a magical mystery, entitled: *The Skeleton in the Cupboard*, written and planned by Mr. H. Rottenburg, whom we all remember so well at our Séances and the last Banquet. The stage showed a young student asleep over his studies of anatomy, when the cupboard at the back of the stage opened in a truly ghost-like manner, and the skeleton walked forward. The atmosphere was most eerie, and the skeleton's sepulchral voice and sinuous movements made at least some of us clutch our chairs for support.



*From "The Gownsmen",
4 February 1928 p.14*

But this was no ordinary skeleton, for not only did it walk and talk, but equally well did it sit down and smoke; and all this on a fairly well lighted stage.

Our best congratulations to Mr. Rottenburg for an excellent piece of mystery. It is greatly to be hoped that it will be possible for us to have Mr. Rottenburg's clever little sketch to add to the success of the next Séance.

J. G. G. STONE.⁸³

There are brief reports of three other playlets in local Cambridge newspapers.

From *The Gownsmen*, 4th February 1928

One had hoped to see something of the inimitable Mr. Rottenburg, but failing that there was a sketch by him, entitled *The Skeleton in the Cupboard*. Mr. Storr was delightfully bored in telling Mr. Roy Glover that his brother had been murdered by a mutual friend, and one hardly thought it had made sufficient impression for the latter to dream as vividly as he did about the bony framework of the deceased.⁸⁴

From *The Cambridge Daily News*, 25th February 1930

The first item of "magic" was a sketch by Mr. Rottenburg entitled *The Odd Trick* in which Messrs. L.T. Waddams and J.E.Moss (both of St. Catherine's) played the part of the husband and wife respectively. The main point of the very amusing scene was that the wife had just bought some new tricks, and was desirous of demonstrating them to her husband. She did so, with satisfactory results, until a trick with a £1 note went wrong, and then came – the curtain.⁸⁵

and

The Illusive Burglar, another sketch by Mr. Rottenburg, was rather disappointing, and it is uncertain whether it was meant to be a joke or taken seriously.⁸

⁷⁸ Day DJ. 'No fee' was to charged for their services. 2017

<https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/618858/1/Amateur%20Coaches%20Playing%20Pasts%202.pdf>

⁷⁹ Lea HL. Editorial Notes. *The Magic Circular*, 1926;29:95-96

⁸⁰ Denham HB. The Twentieth Grand Séance. *The Magic Circular*, 1926;20:113-117

⁸¹ Oldridge S. Correspondence. *The Magic Circular*, 1926;20:139-141

⁸² Denham HB. The Twenty-First Grand Séance. *The Magic Circular*, 1927;21:118-123

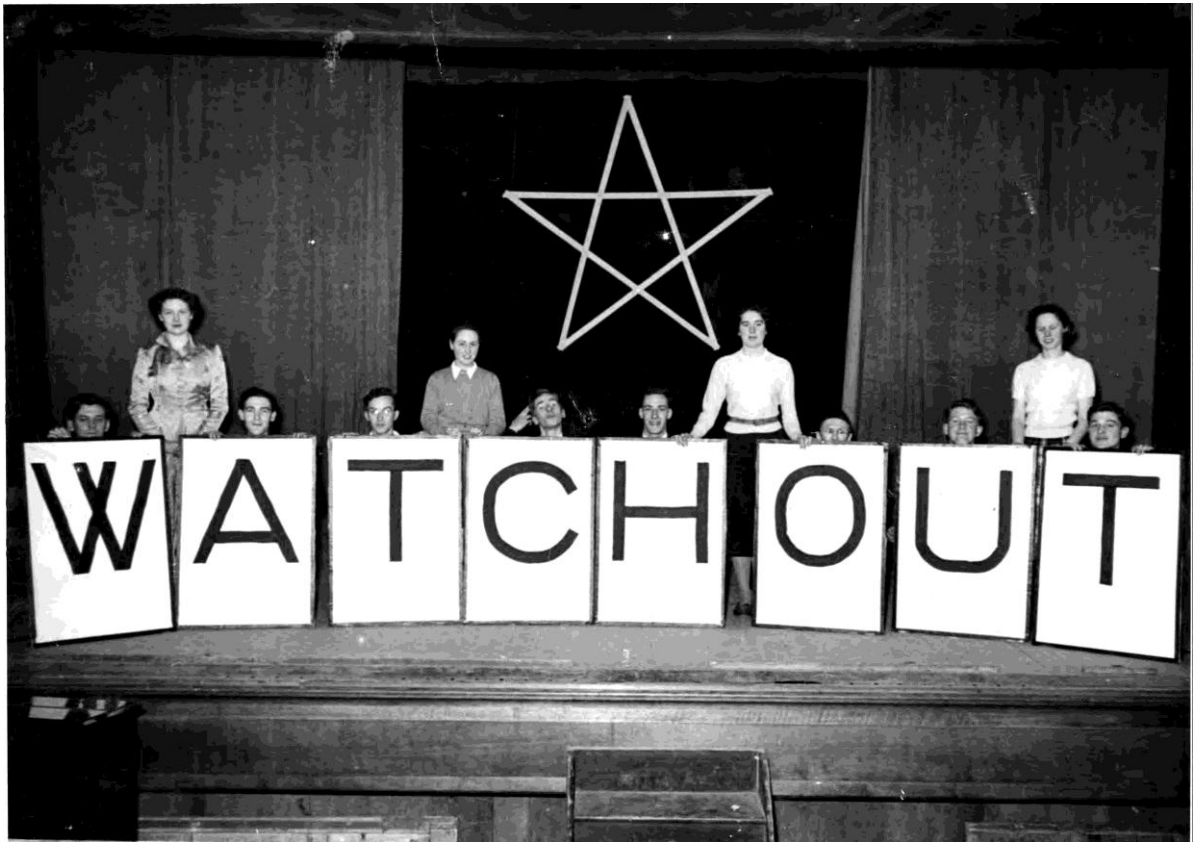
⁸³ Stone JGG. Magic at Cambridge University. *The Magic Circular*, 1928;22:120-121

⁸⁴ DS. The Cult of Merlin. *The Gownsmen*, 4 February 1928

⁸⁵ Anon. Magic and Mirth. *Cambridge Daily News*, 25 February 1930

Chapter 7

Festival of Britain and After – 1950 to 1958



Cast photograph "Watch Out" 1951

Margaret Thomasson Hilary Newton Dianne Rastcliffe Mary Smith
(W) Luke Mourden-Smedley (A) John Gardner (T) Geoff Shephard (C) Alex Elmsley (H) Ian Mortimer
(O) Tim Hobson (U) Brian Cannon (I) Ray Montford

1950-51

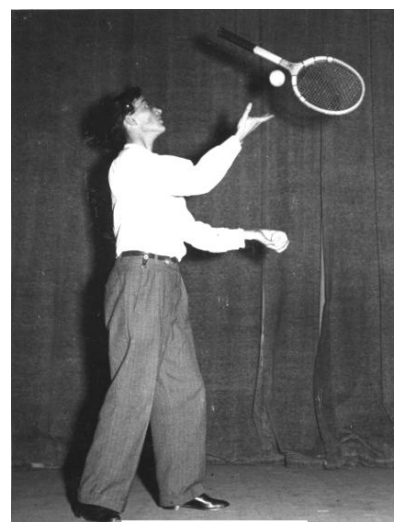
1951 brought the Festival of Britain and the Pentacle Club, in the spirit of the Festival, produced *Watch Out*, imaginatively subtitled *Cavalcade of Magic (Fifth Edition)*. This was presented at the Houghton Hall in Union Road, in February. It had in the cast Alex Elmsley with *Finger Tips* and John Gardner with *Just Magic*, which included the Chinese Linking Rings and thought transference. He also predicted the *Varsity* headline⁸⁶ but the outcome of the prediction was never reported. John Gardner later became a renowned novelist, with the Boysie Oakes novels and 14 James Bond titles to his name, along with many others. Hilary Newton, claiming to be the University's first woman illusionist, presented *The Return of Dr Strabismus* in which a figure (Alex) gradually materialised in a box, finally bursting out of it. Geoffrey Shephard juggled with tennis rackets, Ho Sen (Tim Hobson) ate fire and Brian Cannon provided a ventriloquial interlude. There was also an illusion entitled *The Wrapping of King Tut* presented by Ian Mortimer, with Dianne Rastcliffe and Luke Mourden-Smedley. Luke was wrapped up like a mummy. When the mummy was unwrapped it was found to contain Dianne instead. The newspaper reporter stated that it was "another deep intrigue".⁸⁷



As part of the advertising a “flying saucer”, levitating without apparent support, was displayed in the window of The Copper Kettle on King’s Parade for a week before the show. This attracted considerable attention. Tim Hobson informed the *Cambridge Daily News* reporter that it “uses a revolutionary method of power transmission based on electro-magnetic fields in a small air gap”.⁸⁸

Flying Saucer 1951

For years we have been taught that flying saucers are celestial, elusive and vaguely malevolent. But this one has been spinning harmlessly in the window of the Copper Kettle for the last week, and its origin was clearly on this earth.



Watch Out 1951

Tim Hobson (Ho Sen), Brian Cannon and Geoffrey Shephard

A somewhat different show, still entitled *Watch Out* was taken on tour round the West Country. This required a great deal of organisation, since it played at up to three locations in the same vicinity on the same night, at 7:00, 7:15 and 8:30 pm. A complex schedule still exists detailing who should arrive at which venue when. An account by Wally Smith of the first part of this tour, which was beset by problems, is in the Pentacle Club archives. Travelling in almost darkness in the back of an extremely old van, accompanied by a “transmogrification box” was one of the less enjoyable aspects of the tour. Another of the downsides was the “symphonic snoring” which kept the cast awake one night while they tried to sleep on the floor and other similarly hard surfaces. For further details see John Davenport’s book.⁸⁹

1951-52

In 1952 the annual show was presented as a play entitled *Anything Can Happen* (it was, of course, *Cavalcade of Magic, Sixth Edition*) with Acts 1 and 2 *In the Pentacle Club* and Act 3 *In Dracula's Graveyard*. George McCaw was the escapologist, Raymond Montford swallowed needles, Sleem Majidullah ate fire, The Demon Dentist was Harold Cannon, while Three Patients in Waiting were his brother Brian with his ventriloquist's dummies. Derek Page juggled and David Ashton levitated Mary Thompson, which rather impressed the newspaper reporter.⁹⁰ Other effects included a sword penetration box, a telepathic act and sleight of hand. The show was produced by Alex Elmsley.



Cast photograph "Anything Can Happen" 1952

From the left-Standing: H Oxe, M Barlow, Unknown, G McCaw, H Cannon, W Smith, A Elmsley, B Cannon, D Ashton, Unknown, S Majidullah, D Page, S Thwaites, C Lawrence

Front Row: Alison Shaw, Joan Mee, D Whittington, Mary Thompson, Mary Redman

Note: W.Smith said that the person named as S.Thwaites was in fact Paul James who partnered him in a double act the following year. However Paul James is not recorded as being in the 1952 cast.

On 6th April 1952 Alex Elmsley and Walter Smith were part of an entertainment *Spring Time Sorcery* at The Magic Circle. As a result of this they were both promoted to Associate of the Inner Magic Circle. The reporter, John Young, said of Alex: "It is always a pleasant change to find a performer wearing a smoking jacket in place of the ubiquitous dinner jacket or tails, and, with a little more experience in "selling" the act to the audience Mr. Elmsley bids fair to be an outstanding performer." Wally was commended for being "perhaps the first performer we have seen presenting effects in mental telepathy who has had the ability to make the audience enjoy them and also look as if he were enjoying them himself."⁹¹

The tour of 1951 had not been particularly successful, so a decision was made that there would not be a tour in 1952. In a newspaper article in May it was stated that the Club was planning to present a late night revue at Bolton's Theatre in London, but there is no further record of such a production.

In the event, at very short notice a tour during the long vacation was arranged. Mary Smith recalled:

"It all started with a postcard from Ian to Wally asking what time we were performing in Cricklade, a question which might, to the uninformed, sound somewhat irrelevant in view of the fact that all other members of the club knew perfectly well that it had been decided at the A.G.M. that there was not to be a tour this summer. However, this information had not penetrated to the wilds of Cornwall, the result being that the members of the club who were in Cambridge for the Long Vac term were rendered all sentimental about the joys of tours.

As would be expected from such an ad hoc arrangement, although the magic was good the tour was not a financial success. Hot weather resulted in very poor audience numbers though it did make travelling in the back of an open lorry and camping in bell-tents a most enjoyable experience."

An account of this tour can again be found in *Pentacle Club Life in the Early 1950s*.⁸⁹

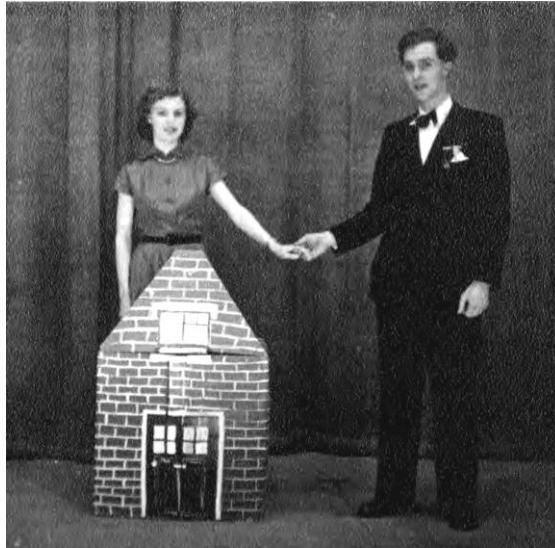
1952-53

From the list of meetings for Michaelmas Term 1952 it can be seen that presentations were given on Card Fanning by Derek Page, Ventriloquism by Harold Cannon, Mental Magic by Walter Smith and Mechanical Magic by David Ashton, all of whom were members of the Club. In addition there was a Beginners' Meeting and a Mystery Meeting.

After Christmas it was on to preparation for *ABRACANTABRA*, the 1953 Annual Show, at the Houghton Hall. This was reported in *Abracadabra* by Alex Elmsley, who by this time had left Cambridge.⁹²

Derek Page and Paul Jones (should this be James?) performed a Duet for Four Hands using ropes, candles, thimbles and silks in synchrony. Walter Smith performed a pools prediction, Premonition and a slate routine. "A mentalist that for once did not talk like a garden-fete fortune teller," said Alex. Tony Adams floated a ball and produced large Chinese lanterns from a giant square circle, his presentation obtaining considerable applause. Sleem Majidullah ate fire between these last two items.

David Ashton had Ibsen's Choice – a home-made cardboard Doll's House illusion, which Alex stated was smarter than many dealer items. The show also included manipulations, Chinese Rings using two children from the audience, juggling, and ventriloquism. The finale was the sawing-in-three of Jenefer Wiltshire, which apparently ended with the parts being carried off stage as the curtain came down. There was no restoration. Alex felt that the show had good material but was under-rehearsed. There was lack of pointing and some lack of clarity of effect. Nonetheless, he and the audience enjoyed it.



Ibsen's Choice – David Ashton and Gillian Bourne 1953

Abracadabra, the World's Only Magical Weekly, held a Coronation Jamboree on 24th April. The Pentacle Club were not part of this but Claude Perry, described as a "young man from Cambridge, who went through college on a bicycle" was part of the programme for the *BIG SHOW*.

1953-54

Paul James of Magdalene College took over the post of Secretary in Michaelmas Term 1953. He started a new Minutes Book and this provides additional information for the next few years. At the first Committee Meeting it was decided that handbills rather than posters should be used to advertise the Open Meeting later in October, as more could be obtained for the same outlay. Whether this approach was successful we do not know, as the next minute is that of the AGM in May 1954. At that meeting it was decided to have some new Silver Pentacles made and that they were to be sent to the 13 members who had been awarded them over the past few years but who had not actually received them. However, it was felt that they had been awarded rather too liberally in the past and that true merit should be required rather than automatic receipt.

The death was announced in January 1954 of JGG Stone, Treasurer of the Club 1921-1922. Although there are no details of his date of birth, the death was described in *The Magic Circular* as "unexpected".⁹³ He had joined the Pentacle Club in January 1920 so was presumably in his mid-fifties at the time of his death. His magical props were auctioned at The Magic Circle for the benefit of the Benevolent Fund.⁹⁴

In February 1954 there had been the annual show, this year *Be Deceived (8th Annual Cavalcade of Magic)*, again at the Houghton Hall. This included guest artists Gene Durham The Happy-Go-Lucky Comedian, Bert and Maurice Garner IBV, VAF and Reg Thurston, a Member of The Magic Circle resident in Cambridge. There were only four student members performing, John Pope, Paul James, Charles Rutter and Robert Elston, so it is necessary to conclude that there was a lack either of talent or of interest that year. Acts included the Linking Rings, Telepathy by Charles Rutter and a polished display by Reg Thurston of some amazing tricks.⁹⁵

According to *The Magic Circular*:

“Manipulation, comedy, apparatus, silks and illusions made up their offerings, which were brought to a climax by John Pope's "Neobiotron," a version of the cremation illusion coupled with the head chopper. Oh - and it involves the production of a beautiful 18-year-old girl from a handful of ash.

Pope is a young man to know. Now, I can provide the handful of ash any time he wants.”⁹⁶

1954-55

The first meeting of the year was an Open Meeting and fliers were distributed encouraging anyone interested in magic to attend the meeting in St. John's Music Room on 8th October.

A show, to be called *Mysteriously Yours* simply subtitled as *A Cavalcade of Magic* was planned for the Lent Term 1955. It was to contain more double acts than usual, in order to add variety. Elusive Rabbits impressed one reporter⁹⁷ while another mentioned a torn and restored newspaper and flaming juggling balls.⁹⁸



Mysteriously Yours 1955 Valerie Palmer and Chris Mallinson

Valerie Palmer played a young lady whose clothes were stolen while she was bathing in the sea. When the villain ripped away the towel which was covering her she was found to be wearing an evening dress.

For the first time the background music for the show was provided using gramophone records.

The show had again been advertised by use of the Flying Saucer in a shop window.



Flying Saucer 1955

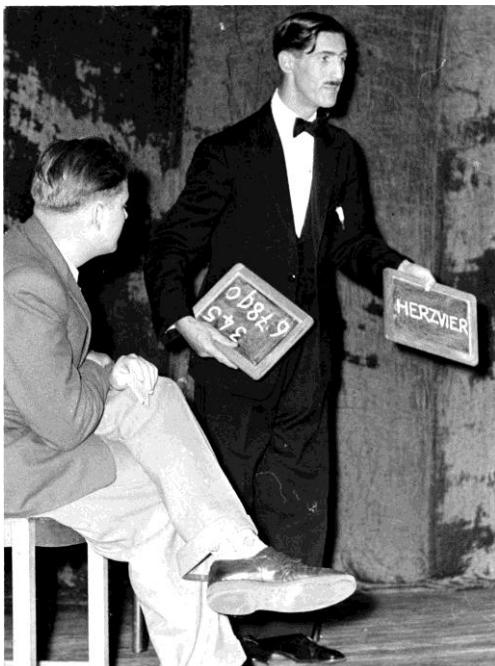
Peter Harland and Charles Rutter

Harry Rottenburg, who had designed the original Pentacle model of *Bloodless Surgery* died on 25th March 1955 at the age of 79.

The Silver Pentacles were finally distributed in May 1955, but club finances necessitated the payment of £1 by each recipient to cover manufacture, engraving and postage.

In September the Club ambitiously undertook a tour of Germany. There were six performers, Richard Burnett, John Pope, Robin Deane, Robert Elston, Charles Rutter and Peter Harland, plus the director David Spearing. For the most part they stayed with German

families. The show again included the Elusive Rabbits, Zombie, slates, manipulations and juggling. Photos of all these appeared in newspaper reports. The show was performed in German, with many of the performers learning the patter verbatim as they did not speak German. According to the minutes of the Committee Meeting in November the tour was a success. It was reported extensively in *The Magic Circular* of November 1955.⁹⁹



German Tour 1955

Robert Elston

A B R A C A N T A B R A		PROGRAMM	
1	Einführung		Dick Burnett Richard Burnett
2	Allerlei	John F. Pope. M.H.C. I.B.M.	John Pope
3	Juggling		Richard Burnett
4	Blauer Dunst	R.A. Deane	Robin Deane
5	Geisterreich und geistreich		Robert Elston
PAUSE - 15 Minuten			
6	Kunterbunt		John Pope
7	Ich weiß nicht, was soll es bedeuten, daß er so tüchtig ist	Charles Rutter	Charles Rutter M.H.C.
8	Zaubermischung	Peter "Always Twisting" Harland	Peter Harland
9	More Juggling		Richard Burnett
10	Kochschmerz	Robert Elston	Robert Elston & Peter Harland
11	Gleich und gleich gesellt sich gern		John Pope & Charles Rutter
Leitung: DAVID SPEARING Assistenz: JOHN POPE			
<p>Der Pentacle Club dankt sowohl dem Youth Travel Club Universal Ltd. als auch der Cultural Relations Group des Britischen Generalkonsulats für die Vorbereitung dieser Deutschland-Tournee. Ebenso möchte er den Familien seinen Dank aussprechen, die den Mitgliedern des Pentacle Clubs während Ihres Aufenthalts Gastfreundschaft gewähren und somit sehr dazu beitragen, die Reise überhaupt möglich zu machen.</p> <p>Der Cambridge Pentacle Club wurde im Jahre 1919 gegründet in der Absicht, das Interesse der Studenten für die Zauberei, das Jonglieren und verwandte Künste zu fördern. Er kann als der einzige Studentclub dieser Art in der Welt angesehen werden. Abgesehen von der Unterbrechung während der letzten Kriegsjahre hat der Club jedes Jahr seine Gala-Vorstellung in Cambridge gegeben. Seit Kriegsende ist er mehrmals innerhalb Englands auf Tournee gewesen und ist sowohl vor dem magischen Zirkel in London als auch im Fernsehen aufgetreten. Die Deutschland-Tournee ist die erste Auslandsreise des Clubs.</p> <p>Das Zeichen des Pentacles ist seit Jahrhunderten symbolisch für Hexerei und Dämonologie. Jede Spitze des Pentacle Zeichens stellt einen der fünf Sinne dar.</p>			

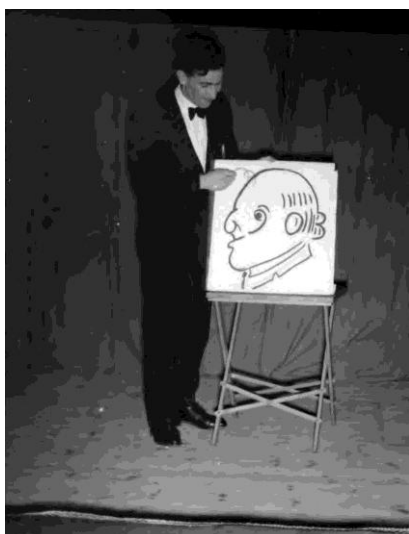
Signed programme of German Tour 1955

1955-56

In the Michaelmas Term there were lectures and instruction on Silk Magic, Card Stab, Manipulations and Card Magic. Dr. Franklin Taylor, an American magician who was spending a year in Cambridge gave a talk on Close-up Magic.

Unfortunately, except for a meeting in January, there are no records of the meetings for the next two terms, the next recorded meeting being the AGM in October 1956.

In January 1956 the Club presented *Magic in the Air* at the YMCA Hall. This was subtitled *An Annual Revue. Cavalcade of Magic* had disappeared. Peter Harland successfully predicted the headline of the *Cambridge Daily News*.



John Pope made a selected card "leave the pack of its own accord"¹⁰⁰ (presumably Rising Cards) and also did lightning cartoons. Sheila Sawter and Michael Glead performed a Substitution Trunk. There was Telepathy between Robert Elston and Peter Harland (who also produced the show), Peter Richards and Robin Deane manipulated billiard balls and other items and Dick Burnett juggled. Steve Capey and Roger Maltby completed the cast.

John Pope – Lightning Cartoons 1956

Dick Burnett, John Pope, Peter Harland, Robert Elston and Charles Rutter appeared at Harry Stanley's Unique Day of Magic in April, the juggling interlude being especially popular.¹⁰¹ However they did not feel it went as well as it could have done, as they were given much less time on stage than they had anticipated. Plans were made for another tour of Germany in the Summer but this had to be cancelled.

1956-57

In autumn 1956 there were a number of meetings, though that in November at which "New Members are Asked to Perform" was attended only by the Committee, the new members having declined the invitation. There is no record of the meetings for the rest of that academic year. The annual show *Magically Yours* took place in January 1957 with eight members performing, several of them doing two spots. The *Cambridge Daily News* was pleased that "their show throughout depended more on skill than on apparatus".¹⁰² The best performers were felt to be Bryan Christopher and John Pope. John's illusions with a gramophone and his creation of a girl from nothing were "original"¹⁰³ while Paul Sims appeared to be extremely worried about the possible failure of his "passing the car through the air" illusion. A deadpan Dick Burnett juggled and Bob Cleveland's brief appearance in "Black Mischief" (a title also used the previous year by Charles Rutter) was pleasing in its originality. Peter Harland's sleight of hand was perfect though he was "not in the first rank as comedian."

The Secretary's Report to the AGM in May 1957 expressed the feeling that it had not been a very successful year for the Club, with a great deal of apathy from members of all abilities. He felt that there had been too much emphasis on presentation and not enough teaching of basic principles to new members. Life would be simpler if meetings were always on the same weekday.

1957-58

Twenty-eight new members were enrolled at the Open Meeting in October. The meetings that term were all on Mondays and included talks on Mechanical Magic, Sleight of Hand, Silk Magic and Close-up. There was also a successful "New Members Perform" meeting.

The possibility of making a tour of Russia in the summer had been explored, but information from the Russian Embassy suggested that this would not be a practical proposition. A tour of Germany was suggested as an alternative. Meetings in the Lent Term included "Giving Your First Show" and card magic.

The weather at the time of the annual show, *A Touch of Magic* in January was extremely cold and the reporter at the first performance felt that the audience was rather icy as well.¹⁰⁴ The magic however was good, including Ted Farrington performing mind-reading and giant memory and Paul Sims, who also produced the show, introducing "cleverness and tomfoolery". Andrew Warner's straitjacket escape almost went wrong when a strap, suspending him by the feet from the ceiling, broke. Fortunately he was unharmed and this feat gained him a good round of applause. Other performers were John Simmons, who opened the show, Brian Archer, Bryan Christopher, Mary Poole, David Charlesworth, Chris Petrie, Mike Wardle and Sheila Sowter, who had her head in a guillotine every night.

The standard of magic was inconsistent and “oscillated between the amazing and the mediocre”.¹⁰⁵ As normal the show made a loss, this time attributed to poor takings, icy weather and insufficient publicity.

The German tour went ahead playing in eight places including Berlin. The first shows in Essen had very poor audiences as a result of a clash with the Germany versus Sweden football match. Most of the shows had been financially guaranteed, but nonetheless a loss was made. This had to be covered by the members of the cast. An account of the tour and the details of the show appear in the Secretary’s Report for 1958-1959 and are included in Chapter 8.

For the past several years Club members had presented shows for various organisations around Cambridge to support Club finances. It was agreed in January that the minimum fee for these shows, except when they were for charities, should be one shilling per minute, that is £1.50 for a 30 minute show. For an hour, the fee would be 2 guineas (£2.10). The Secretary reported to the AGM in 1959 that £12/11/0d (£12.55) had been earned in the past year, over four times the income of the year before.

Bäbel Dinkes

A B R A C A N T A B R A

<p>1. Midnight Mystery</p> <p>2. Mental Maestro</p> <p>3. Ladies Only</p> <p>4. Magic in the Air</p> <p>5. Escape</p> <p style="text-align: center;">INTERVAL</p> <p>6. Silent Sorcery</p> <p>7. A Handful of Magic</p> <p>8. Unbroken</p> <p>9. Mammoth Memory</p> <p>10. Abracantabra</p>	<p>The Cast Gesamtes Ensemble</p> <p>Ted Farrington</p> <p>Sheila Sowter</p> <p>John Simmons</p> <p>Andrew Warner</p> <p>John Simmons</p> <p>Clive Sampson</p> <p>Paul Sims</p> <p>Mary Poole Ted Farrington</p> <p>The Cast Gesamtes Ensemble</p>	<p>Magische Mitternachtstunde</p> <p>Maestro</p> <p>Nur Damen</p> <p>Es liegt was in der Luft</p> <p>Flucht</p> <p>PAUSE</p> <p>Stiller Zauber</p> <p>Eine Handvoll Zauberei</p> <p>Gesund und Munter</p> <p>Wunderhirn</p> <p>Abracantabra</p>
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MANAGER | JOHN SIMMONS
 REGISSEUR | *John Simmons*

PRODUCER | PAUL SIMS
 LEITER | *Paul Sims*

The Club wishes to thank the following for their invaluable help and co-operation, without which the tour would not have been possible:
 All Commanding Officers, Station Staff Officers, Heads of Die Bruecke, Those providing accommodation, R. Thurston Esq., Herr K. Laengner, Herr Van Hechten and Van der Giessen.

Der Verein dankt den Folgenden für ihre unersetzliche Hilfe und Mitwirkung, die diese Tournee ermöglichten:
 Allen Commanding Officers und Station Staff Officers, Vorsteherren der Bruecke, denen, die uns Unterkunft gaben, R. Thurston Esq., Herrn K. Laengner, Herren Van Hechten und Van der Giessen.

to My Dinkes
H. Schwenk
Mutter
to My Dinkes
to My Dinkes

Signed programme of German Tour 1958



The only formal photograph of the Club 1951

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- ⁸⁶ Anon. Journalism Without Tears. *Varsity*, 17 February 1951
- ⁸⁷ Anon. Nice Goings On – and Off. *Cambridge Daily News*, 23 February 1951
- ⁸⁸ Anon. “Flying Saucer” at Cambridge. *Cambridge Daily News*, 25 February 1951
- ⁸⁹ Davenport J.(Editor). *Pentacle Club Life in the Early 1950s*, Pentacle Club Private Publication. 2016
- ⁹⁰ Anon. Anything Can Happen. *Cambridge Daily News*, 5 March 1952
- ⁹¹ Young J. The April Concert. *The Magic Circular*, 1952;46:273-274
- ⁹² Elmsley A. Abracantabra. *Abracadabra*, 1953;15:141
- ⁹³ Ivey A. Correspondence. *The Magic Circular*, 1954;48:221
- ⁹⁴ Harrison WC. The Summer Sale. *The Magic Circular*, 1954;48:361
- ⁹⁵ Anon. The Audience was left Spellbound. *Cambridge Daily News*, 27 February 1954
- ⁹⁶ Dexter W. Monthly Notes. *The Magic Circular*, 1954;48:297
- ⁹⁷ TH. Pentacle Club’s Clever Show. *Cambridge Daily News*, 19 January 1955
- ⁹⁸ Cahm E. Mysteriously Yours. *Varsity*, 22 January 1955
- ⁹⁹ Anon. Abracantabra. *The Magic Circular*, 1955;50:31-33
- ¹⁰⁰ Knapp-Fisher P. Magic in the Air. *Varsity*, 26th January 1956
- ¹⁰¹ Stanley S. Review. *The Gen*, 1956;12;4
- ¹⁰² Anon. Magically Yours at Y.M.C.A. Hall. *Cambridge Daily News*, 22 January 1957
- ¹⁰³ Waite J. Night of Magic. *Varsity*, 26 January 1957
- ¹⁰⁴ RGT. A Touch of Magic. *Cambridge Daily News*, 21 January 1958
- ¹⁰⁵ Thomas M. Magic. *Varsity*, 25 January 1958

Chapter 8

Interlude 4 – The German Tour 1958

This document is included to show the complexity of arranging and running a tour and the lessons that were and were not learned. Had anything been learned from the previous tours in the 1950s?

Summary Report on German Tour 1958

Preliminary Preparation: Addresses of British Units were obtained from the 'A' Branches of HQ 2 TAF & BAOR. Die Bruecke addresses were provided by the Foreign Office. Negotiations were commenced some 6 months before the date of departure. An approximate fee was initially quoted, & when a definite number of engagements had been received, a precise fee was calculated on the data available four months before the departure. A proforma was also completed by the accepting units, giving details of the stage & performance.

One month before: All seat, berth & ticket reservations had by this time been made. A Volkswagen minibus had been booked in Holland for transport. (A Posters had been dispatched. The acts were those which had been presented at the annual show, with a few exceptions. Rehearsals were theoretically held between June 6 and June 18, when the dress rehearsal was held at Trinity College Mission. It was surprisingly successful, as it was the first complete run-thru; but the German rehearsal next day was chaotic (R). On Sunday 21st, John Simmons travelled by day boat to Rotterdam, where he collected the Volks., and next day drove to Ostend, where the other members of the cast landed. The intention was to reach Dusseldorf, but this proved to be impossible, on account of an unexpected speed limit on the Volks. The night was spent on the outskirts of Munchen-Gladbach. Essen was reached in good time, and 2 performances given in German. First, chaotic--second, reasonable. The shows commenced at 1500hrs & 1900hrs and 1700hrs to 1900hrs were spent filming a television sequence. Both audiences were very poor, mainly because the Germany v Sweden football match was played that very day. This was quite unforeseeable. That night was spent with German families.

Paderborn was reached in good time next day, and an English performance was well received by a fair audience. We were entertained afterwards by the 17/21 Lancers, or did we entertain them? In spite of the doubts of the organiser, we reached Dortmund on schedule! and a very good ^{SECURE} audience enjoyed one of our best shows. (R) The car was serviced in 30 minutes, and next evening found us in Brunswick...after a long wait for visas, we found ourselves on the autobahn to Berlin, where we had a late lunch, and then proceeded to the NAAFI Club where we did a great show for a great audience. For the next 36 hours we did Berlin and ended with a frantic rush to the British Centre. ~~The reasonable show was followed by a chicken and schaumwein reception, with an interesting selection of F.O. and consular people. An early start to Dusseldorf was delayed by some clever! official at a check point; and by dint of some hard driving, we arrived at the Die Brucke to give a show to a minute audience (R). After sampling the night-life we went to bed.~~

Then Butzweilerhof, via Cologne, where we had a 99% officer audience. They took a great amount of warming up. Photos of the show, a bar reception, and bed (R) There was an ~~show~~ drive to Ahlhorn next day. A tremendous performance pleased everyone, including the stage-hands whom we had thrown out (R). We were invited to return, and we were toasted in beer. The Astra manager promised to recommend us to the Canadians. Then up to Jever, via Oldenburg, where we had carburettor trouble - fortunately, we were near a Volkswagen Dienst, and we were soon able to continue on our way. Another good show, another invitation to return. A ~~9 hour~~ drive, and a meal with the Dortmund Magic Circle preceded the ~~show~~, which was well supported. The following ^{SUNDAY} morning performance was poorly attended, and both we and the Germans lost money. We spent the ^{SATURDAY} night with the Germans, and we were presented with some Union Pills. After farewells, there followed a long drive along packed roads, to Ostend where John left the others at 2330 hrs. He ~~had~~ ^{drove back} to Holland and caught the day boat, after returning the Volks.

The show: Generally speaking, we performed against dark background curtains or the wood covering for the screens in Forces' cinemas. No stage properties were taken- tables, chairs and blackboards were obtained in situ. Music was all taperecorded: this was really essential, apart from emanating the performance. (R) The revue consisted of:

Midnight Mystery- man & girl sitting side by side, she bored, he engrossed in newspaper. Enter another couple, he approaches sitting girl, shakes hand, leaves bouquet. She tries to attract her escort's attention, who pays no attention. Standing girl taps her boy on the shoulder, he apologetically removes her doubts by Gloves to Bouquet. Sitting girl now insists, and her escort shows paper, folds it up, produces bouquet. Standing girl now does stick to silks with escort's cane, gives him loose silk, which he drapes over his shoulder, and produces cigarette from lapel. He presents this to sitting girl, whose escort brightens up, but looks dejected when she does thumb-tip vanish. She throws it away, but he catches it, mimes smoking it & from smoke produces the cane, which he presents to standing girl. Claps hands and paperseller in background sells him a paper. All read it except the standing boy who goes into a three minute + thimble routine with the paperseller watching. At end the standing boy takes bow.. sitting boy turns page, & dashes over to show the standing boy, everyone looks and all are duly surprised. They all buy papers whilst sitting boy shows the audience a red mass of lines in the middle of his paper. The others show blank papers. Sitting boy now snugs shoulders and tears paper, others emulate him, moving forward. Curtain closes and they line up and restore the papers which now read ABR) (ACA) (MTA) (BRA). bow, exit centre and Ted enters centre for 'Mental Maestro'. Curtains open when others have arranged the stage for him. He does: Just Chance or Prediction of any thought of card in a jumbo fan: Prediction of any two cards arrived at by doubling any thought of number under ten and then helper calls stop. They tally with the prediction cards placed in envelopes. Then ' '. Finally the revelation of a 'phone number found by a mathematical force, and then words applied to the directory, brought the applause. *A good act*

Ladies only, with Sheila performing and Mary assisting. Willow pattern plate, chink cans, and flower darts from ghost tube. Always fair applause.

John with cards (jumbos) to pocket, The Lady vanishes with sucker angle and Ted as stooge, coins through glass, communist and conservative, and vanishing fruit. *A good routine. laughs and applause.*

Andrew closes the first half with escapes: thumb tie, padlocked wrists behind the back with spectators holding the ends of the chains. Shirt off under a black sheet whilst tied, and finally the punch, hanging upside down strait-jacket escape. *Interval Andrew was superb.*

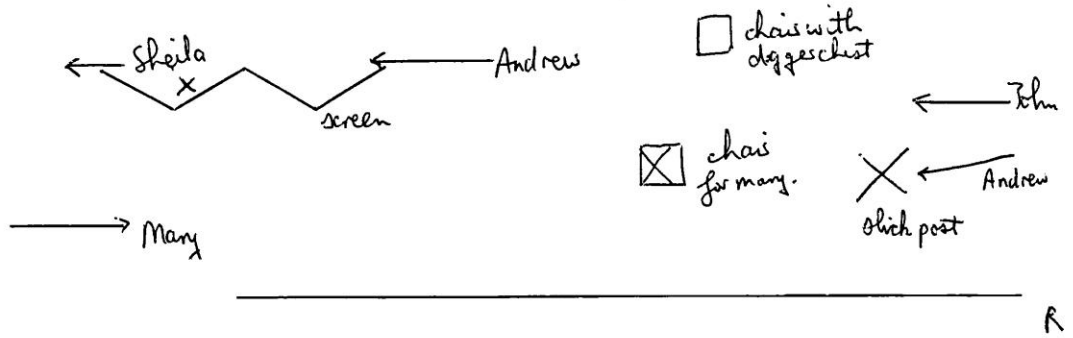
Silent Sorcery with John on the run, and Andrew waiting on him. An experimental, attention-getting routine: Stanley's wonder tube, and vanishing bowl of water, with a 22 repeater blank pistol.

Clive, with effective razor blades, Exhaust tube (crystal cylinder), ropan silk, last part talking, first silent. Ending with C&R and circle.

John and Paul in the Invisible Deck leads into Paul's offering. Good, laughs and applause. Ribbons, sunshade, with continual attempted restoration, and attempted cards up arm-ending with success, only to drop the pack to show it's a feke! Zebra crossing, and a variation on Trayers table hand.

Ted and Mary in Mammoth memory..when it's good it's very, very good.....

Abra cantabra, the finale was perhaps too quick, but the set up was as drawn.



Mary enters left, smiling at the audience, and does not see Andrew peering from the slick-post. He forces her into the chair, hypnotises her and performs the dagger chest on her. He hands the daggers and chest back to John who returns right. He dehypnotises Mary, who screams, & exits right. Andrew then stands by the post, and pulls the hood of his ghost robe over his head. Sheila is behind the screen similiarly dressed, and Ted & Clive enter left looking for Mary. They see the screen & turn it around to reveal "Girl loses head", & show the screen empty by the 4-5 move(R). They then see Andrew & chase him behind the screen, & capture him (Sheila) the other side. SHE is tied to the post and John enters with 3 daggers. As they are going to stab SHIM he escapes and reveals true identity. Ted looks puzzled & walks to the screen, which he pulls aside to reveal Mary with the 'the end' banner.
 Continuity items- pop-eye pips, 2 diamonds forced & eventually found on back, clippo, 6 card repeat....
 Additional items performed...

Details of performances: (24 June) Die Brucke, Essen :two German perf. the changing rooms were on another floor of the building ,otherwise a good place. Stage & lighting good.
 Paderborn for 17th/21st Lancers..AKC cinema. Lighting not so good, amplifiers. Dortmund for Garrison ... AKC cinema....very good,must book amplifiers in advance. Fortunately, acoustics good.
 Summit haus Naffi Club for the Brigade.... Curtains by hand, stage narrow in depth. Lock everything up.
 British Centre... very long & narrow hall, Terrificallly not in summer. Fair dressing accomodation, no toilets backstage.
 Dusseldorf...Die Brucke...fair stage, eccentric curtains,poor dressing rooms, no helpful people in direct contrast to all other places.
 Butzweilernhof, Ahlhorn and Jever,all RAF. No faults at all.
 Dortmund,a joint performance with the admin. side by the D.M.C. In ultra-modern Fritz-Hensler-Haus. Only disadvantage was the lack of side space & narrow stairs up to stage from dressing rooms.

Finance: all the shows were guaranteed, with the exception of Essen and Dusseldorf. The former was poorly attended on account of the international match. That money was lost was no one's fault. However the latter showed a catastrophic loss; and this was solely due to the Dusseldorf staff's idleness and irresponsibility. They even had the effrontery to tell us that we might just as well not have troubled, and that they were not prepared to help us! Hence the stiff letter in the tour file, because the promoters promised ~~xxx~~ that it would be worth making the performance. The moral is never to go to Dusseldorf again. Afterwards it was learnt that the HQ of the German Magic Circle is in Dusseldorf. As a result of these losses, each of the cast was obliged to pay £5-11-0 to cover the loss of £38-17-0.(R) Apart from this the tour was a most enjoyable success.

Programmes	9- 2-8	Programmes	16 - 11-4
shows	184-10-0	Food	22 - 17-6
Items sold	6-17-0	Oddds	9 - 5-10
Berlin tour	4- 1-1	Cross-continent	52-13-3
		show expenses	10-14-11
		Dress rehearsal	5-5-7
		Petrol etc	15-7-4
		Bus hire	60-0-0
		Hotels	33-14-0
		Posters	12-12-2
		Postage	4-5-7.
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	204-10-9		243-7-6
	38-16-9		
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	243.7.6		243-7-6.

- (R) Recommendations: A considerable amount of experience is gained on such a tour, if only in packing & unpacking. There is little time to analyse and practise, which was possibly a good thing.
- 1...the fee for all shows must be guaranteed, if 'take the proceeds' shows are envisaged then the guaranteed shows must cover all the costs & the other shows treated as luxuries.
 - 2...If possible it is best to have a journey not exceeding 200kms in the day, this allows sightseeing in a leisurely fashion; and also it allows for calm preparation for the show (very important indeed) The ideal day would be:
 1000hrs leave last night's theatre, having packed as much as possible the night before. 1300hrs lunch in a town 100kms away. "Wo kan Mann gut und billig Essen?" 1630hrs arrive at next place, have tea, prepare, perform and have a meal after the show.
 On long journeys buy food and have lunch while driving, buy liquid refreshment in multi-stores in towns.
 - 3...Do not let drivers drink alcohol.
 - 4...A break in the tour is a very good idea, as laundry can be done, & everyone can have a good rest.
 - 5...The problem of illusions was not really solved on this tour, as the necessary coordination was not achieved. The 4-5 move particularly requires 3 people thinking and moving as one. The finale should contain as many people as possible, but the action at any given instant should probably be restricted to two people. This is by far the most thorny problem of the tour.
 - 6...Canadian units should be approached next time, as apparently they would welcome our type of show.
 - 7...German audiences do not buy programmes. In fact 750 would have been enough.
 - 8...Someone must be able to speak German fluently.
 - 9...This may not be the most suitable time of year for a tour, as schools are (or have) breaking up in late June. September might be better. In addition the exercise season has normally ended by then.
 - 10..The language problem needs to be squarely faced early on in the preparations. Better than no German is the technique which uses key words in German. A fluent compere would be a great asset.
 - 11..Each member of the cast should put up £5 or £10 to assist the finance and to cover any loss. (at one time £120 had been spent and no money had been received.)
 - 12..Garrison shows were generally better supported, than unit shows.
 - 13..Sunday traffic on the continent is always very heavy indeed until 10pm.
 - 14..Tape recorded music is essential, and English recorders cannot be connected to the German fittings in the cinemas over there. Thus in a large hall an amplifier is required.
 - 15..Late night parties and heavy drinking are to be discouraged, as the next performance will suffer, and the cast will be wrecked. The best policy is to have a meal after the show, some refreshment, and then bed.
 - 16..Get as many meals, and accomodation, provided as ~~possible~~ is possible. The expenses will be greatly reduced. Food & accomodation cost the earth in Germany.

Chapter 9

The Kipping Years – 1958 to 1965

1958-59

General Magic, Cards, Mentalism, Presentation, Sleight of Hand and Children's Magic were the topics of meetings in the Michaelmas Term 1958.

The 1959 Annual Show *Abracantabra* in January made its usual loss, though this time only £4 on an expenditure of £64 as opposed to a loss of £16 on an expenditure of £56 the year before. The *Cambridge News* headed its report "Show has Professional Polish" and gave it an excellent write-up¹⁰⁶ while the editor of *Varsity* was involved in a prediction by Ted Farrington. Ted predicted the *Varsity* headline and the prediction was sealed in a tin and baked in a cake at Fitzbillies.¹⁰⁷ This latter stunt provided considerable publicity. However, just as for 1951, I have been unable to find a report of the outcome in *Varsity*. Ted also presented other mental magic during the show. Bryan Christopher manipulated golf balls and demonstrated the diminishing cards. In total there were 15 performers in the show, the largest number since 1941 (when there were 16), plus a number of backstage staff. This presumably reflects a flourishing period of the Club.

There had been discussion for some time about replacing the Club Tie and the proposed new design was presented and approved at the AGM.

1959 was the 40th Anniversary of the Club and the meeting expressed the desire that the 50th Anniversary in 1969 should be marked by some appropriate and fitting celebration.

1959-60

At the first Committee Meeting of the new Academic Year in October it was noted that one old-style Club Tie had not been sold. It was decided to cut a piece from this and mount it in the scrap book for reference in future years.



Club Ties

The Old Tie is on the left. It is black with upper Gold stripe and lower Cambridge Blue. That in the centre was lent by Mike Ridgeon who was a member of the Club in 1959-1960 so presumably is the one which replaced it.

It is Royal Blue with Gold Pentacles. The tie on the right was around from the mid-60s and is black with Cambridge Blue Pentacles and upper stripe and Gold lower stripe. Both John Davenport and I have one of these.

Arrangements had been made for a tour of the West Midlands in December and the window of the Copper Kettle had been booked for advertising the show in January. In that Michaelmas Term there were talks by members on Children's and Close-up magic, and Harry Stanley and Lewis Ganson showed some of their "Unique" films and gave a dealer demonstration.

The West Midlands tour was a success theatrically, organisationally and financially. Four groups, with four or five performers in each gave a total of thirty-three shows over the space of 15 days. As a result 2783 miles were driven. Over £130 was raised for the World Refugee Fund and the Club made a profit of £32.

For the Annual Show in January 1960 at St. Andrew's Hall reduced price tickets were offered to organisations concerned with the over-60s. These resulted in good, appreciative audiences for the first two nights. The show, *Top Hat and Tails* ran for a full week, with a matinee on the Wednesday. In the first half of one performance Andrew Warner, the escapologist, unfortunately collapsed from his efforts and so failed to escape after being tied and placed in a box. He recovered and reappeared in the second half and very efficiently escaped from a straitjacket, this time without a strap breaking.



Cartoon from Abracadabra Vol. 21 No. 541 9th June 1956

By permission of L Davenport & Co.

The newspaper reporter was impressed by the Three Sword Suspension, with Mary Poole being suspended by John Simmons, but felt that the show's performers lacked the polish that one had come to associate with the Pentacle Club.¹⁰⁸ Remarkably the show made a profit of £14. A modified form of the show was performed in Newmarket at the end of February in support of the fundraising by the local Business and Professional Women's Club for the World Refugee Year Fund.¹⁰⁹

At the AGM on Leap Year Day 1960 it was decided to introduce a new award for service to the Club as it was felt that the work required to attain the Silver Pentacle would only ever be achieved by the Secretary. This award was to be a Gilt Circle, to be attached to the ribbon of the Club Badge. Four were awarded at the Committee Meeting in May. The subscription was increased from 7/6d (37½p) to 10/- (50p) per year and from 21/- (£1.05) to 25/- (£1.25) for three years.

The Annual Dinner in March was held at the West House Hotel, on which site now stands the Stephen Hawking Building of Gonville and Caius College. Claude Perry was the guest of honour and gave both a lecture and a performance of his commercial act.

Top Hat and Tails was also taken to Whittlesford in April, again in support of the World Refugee Fund.

1960-61

The new academic year in October brought new members, many of them recruited as a result of the Club's attendance at the Societies' Fair. A full programme was organised, including a Beginners' Meeting at which very simple tricks were taught to neophytes, talks on Conjuring to Children, Productions, Close-up Magic and Mentalism plus a dealer demonstration by "Witchcraft Magic" local magic dealers. There was also a celebrity lecture *Watch Those Hands* by Geoffrey Buckingham, a renowned manipulator. Three members of the Club performed at a Hallowe'en Evening in Stetchworth.

In 1961 the date of the Annual Show was moved to the beginning of February. *Magic in the Air* took place at St. Andrew's Church Hall. It included *Horrors of the H-Bomb* presented by Garth Davies and Denise Belgrove and *Sawing is Bereaving* in which Susan Francis was sawn through. Garth also presented a manipulative act. As had occurred in several previous shows a young lady vocalist, Ann Taylor, provided musical interludes in the magic. David Hobbs successfully predicted the *Cambridge Daily News* headline; the prediction was brought to the show by the reporter still sealed in a glass bottle.¹¹⁰



Horrors of the H-Bomb. Denise Belgrove and Garth Davies 1961

Also in the cast were David Trimble with *Zombie Ball*, Geoff Buckley and *Linking Rings*, Peter Marshall with *Linking Ropes* plus a prediction and David Wallwork with *cut and restored rope*, *torn and restored newspaper* and the *razor blades*.

A short television recording was made at Anglia Television in Norwich by Geoff Buckley and David Trimble. This included the interviewer being sawn through and was broadcast on the Wednesday evening of the show. On this occasion the show made a profit of £3 thanks to a fee for the television performance. The show was performed in an abbreviated form at The Magic Circle's meeting on 20th February where it was well received, and they were rebooked for February 1962.¹¹¹

The dinner was again at the West House Hotel. Claude Perry proposed the toast to the Club and this was responded to by the President Dr. Kipping.

It was time to reprint the Club notepaper and it was decided to include the motto "Audaces fortuna iuvat", *Fortune helps the bold*, underneath the Pentacle symbol.

1961-62

So to the next academic year, 1961-62. As usual there was an Open Meeting at the beginning of term followed by talks on Mentalism, Manipulation and Miscellaneous Magic by members of the Club. In addition that term there were two outside speakers, Tom Harris, The Magical Schoolmaster and Claude Chandler, Vice-President of the Magic Circle. A *Sorcerer's Soirée* was the last meeting before Christmas and guests were welcomed at this, though in limited numbers because of the size of the Clubroom.

A talk on Silk 'n' Ropes was given at the start of the next term, then it was all hands to the pumps for the 1962 Annual Show, *A Touch of Magic* again at St. Andrew's Hall, as it had not been possible to book the ADC Theatre for the dates required. David Hobbs and David Trimble opened the show with general magic then John Gilliland provided a ventriloquial spell. Sue Valentine was levitated on an unsuspected board by David Trimble. David also did a Magical Salesman act, including washing dirty handkerchiefs in a Lux carton (Soft Soap).



A Touch of Magic 1962

Sue Valentine is levitated by David Trimble

There was escapology by Nick Mandeville, mentalism and telepathy by Jane Bottomley and Ralph Matthews, and an illusion in which a man wrapped in a sheet metamorphosed into a lady. Sadly, this year there was a loss of £7/12/7d.

The show was taken to The Magic Circle on 19th February as arranged after the show there the year before. During this presentation at least two individuals appear to have asked the audience if anyone had a lawnmower and a dustbin to use backstage; fortunately these items were forthcoming!

Forty years since it had first been suggested, the question of affiliation of the Club with The Magic Circle was again raised. After discussion it was decided that, as the Club was open to members of all Colleges and this would include ladies, this might be in conflict with the rules of The Magic Circle. The application was therefore withdrawn.

At the Annual Dinner in March, which was held at the University Arms Hotel, there was an abundance of guests. Goodliffe replied to the toast to the guests and Louis Valentine, a lightning cartoon performer and illustrator, proposed the toast to the Club; it was his daughter Sue who had been levitated in the Annual Show. Guest performers in the cabaret were Claude Perry and Tom Harris, both good friends of the Club. Jane Bottomley performed a fire-eating act, the first time she had done this.

Planning for the next academic year (1962-1963) went on in Committee during the Easter Term and it was proposed to have a tour in the area around Buxton during the Christmas Vacation.

In September six members, Jane Bottomley, John Gilliland, John Kolbert, Nick Mandeville, Ralph Matthews and Sue Valentine, went on a Club Outing to the IBM British Ring Convention in Brighton.

1962-63

As in the previous several years the Club took a stand at the Societies' Fair and put on displays in the arena. Jane Bottomley did fire-eating, John Gilliland, Linking Rings and Rope Stretch and David Trimble, Cut and Restored Rope and 6-Card Repeat. As a result of the stand and displays 45-50 people turned up at the Open Meeting on 15th October.

Meetings during the Michaelmas Term included lectures by Robert Harbin which included an apparently impromptu levitation of a volunteer, The Magical Claudine on Presentation, Ron Macmillan on Manipulation, Claude Manley on Close-up and Roger Crosthwaite on Card Magic. There was also a Social Evening with members performing, and at another, David Trimble spoke about the problems facing the amateur conjurer. At the Beginners' Meeting there was tuition of simple effects then Peter Quinsee and Les Beacroft of Premier Magic (renamed from Witchcraft Magic) demonstrated and sold new and second-hand magic.

At the end of November nine members of the Club put on a two hour show in the Large Examination Hall in support of the Cambridge Association for Mentally Handicapped Children. There was a cast of eleven and an attendance of 300. The performance, which included Roger Crosthwaite burning and restoring a 10/- note, John Gilliland doing ventriloquism and Peter Fox with Corinda's Fantasy in Flame, was very well received.



Peter Fox "Fantasy in Flame"
Association for Mentally Handicapped Children Show
29th November 1962
John Gilliland and Al (Photo by "Cambridge Daily News"¹¹²)

The planned Christmas Tour had to be called off as several of the venues which had requested the Club to perform cancelled their bookings, leaving only two, which was thus non-viable as a tour.

The start of the Lent Term 1963 was, as usual, taken up with preparations for the Annual Show, *Panorama of Magic*, which took place at the beginning of February at the ADC Theatre. John Gilliland and his vent doll Al boarded a Time Machine which took the audience on a tour through history, from Ancient Egypt, via the Court of King Arthur and the middle ages to Victorian Music Hall and finally Night Clubs. There was the production by magic of a wide range of objects by an "Ancient Egyptian" (David Trimble) and a Guillotine which somehow managed to avoid severing the neck of the victim, Fire Eating by Jane Bottomley, in the character of a Roman Slave Girl, Merlin (Roger Crosthwaite) levitated the Lady of the Lake (Sue Valentine). Roger also performed card effects and think of a number tricks in the

Night Club. There was the largest cast for any recorded Pentacle Club show, totalling 22 persons. Unfortunately the first night, which was of course when the Press were present, was a disaster. The *Cambridge Daily News* said, "the idea of magic through the ages is good. The execution here is shambling, uncertain and corny"¹¹³ John Gilliland's comment (see left) was:



"Although all went well on later nights, we still have the C.N. criticism".

First Night Fiasco 1963



John Gilliland and Al - Time Machine



Strolling Conjurers -Tim Wood Nick Mandeville Mike Kelly



18th Century Fair

*Mike Kelly John Campbell Jane Bottomley
John Chapman-Andrews George Adams David Vaughan*



Music Hall

Sue Valentine

Panorama of Magic 1963

Just over a week after the show, the Club paid their annual visit to The Magic Circle. Of the scenes in *Panorama* only the 18th Century Fair and the levitation were included, the other acts being presented in a more standard fashion.¹¹⁴ The show was compered by John Gilliland and Al. John (without dummy) also performed Vernon's Symphony of the Rings to close the show. The Clubroom was packed, a tribute to the success of the previous visits.

The first meeting of the Term was a Potpourri meeting where members spoke on Fire Eating, Escapology and Ventriloquism. Two celebrity lectures took place during the Term. These were by Louis Histed with *Magic My Way* and Peter Warlock speaking on *Means to an End*. The Ipswich Society were guests at the Warlock Lecture. Francis Haxton's lecture in February had to be postponed as he was unable to reach Cambridge because of fog. Ralph Matthews presented a talk on Mental Magic at the end of Term.

At the Committee Meeting in February changes to the Constitution were discussed, including the admission of non-University Members. Additionally the requirements for awarding the Pentacle Star were to be increased and the award of the Gilt Circle was to be cancelled. Membership fees were to be 12/6d per year or 25/0d for three years and the Entrance Fee was to be abolished. An extraordinary General Meeting was arranged in

March to pass these changes. However, as insufficient notice could be given to the Members this was later postponed to 21st April, on which date the new Constitution was passed allowing non-University members.

The Guest of Honour at the Annual Dinner was Francis White, Secretary of The Magic Circle. He participated in the cabaret after the meal; his act included Clippo, the 30 Card Trick, Nudist Deck and Card in Orange.



Dinner 9th March 1963

John Gilliland Mike Ridgeon John Kolbert Francis White Nick Mandeville David Wallwork Peter Quinsee

In May the Club paid a visit to the Ipswich Magical Society where they entertained at a Buffet Evening. In early June "Mordini", Major John Dixon, a life member of the club, performed a straitjacket escape hanging from Silver Street Bridge.

A Christmas Tour was agreed to take place 9th to 23rd December. As several Members were coming up to Cambridge during the Long Vacation it was decided to investigate the possibility of performing shows during that period. Accordingly there were several Committee Meetings during the Long Vac at which it was decided to ask the Cambridge University Light Entertainment Society (CULES) to produce a joint show with the Pentacle Club in the coming year.

1963-64

Mike Kelly appeared on the BBC *East at Six Ten* programme in November talking about and demonstrating manipulative magic. A fee of six guineas was paid. Also in November a joint show with CULES in support of the Red Cross was arranged at the Arts Theatre and the Chairman of CULES was invited to become a member of its Production Committee. In *A Pack of Jokers* the Pentacle contribution was Telepathy by Ralph Matthews, Torn and Restored Paper by John Gilliland, Escapology by Mordini and card and cigarette manipulations by Mike Kelly. In addition, Mike performed a fire-eating act together with Jane Bottomley. The reporter also mentions John Cameron; this is presumably John Campbell.¹¹⁵

The name *A Pack of Jokers* was used again for the tour of Sussex which took place in December and in which a number of CULES members also took part, with a total of 24 participants. A large number of shows were presented including an appearance on Southern Television on Christmas Day.¹¹⁶ Unfortunately, despite this, the tour made a loss of over £70, the organisers realising very soon that the fees they had requested were too low.

At the first Committee Meeting of the Lent Term 1964 producers were appointed for forthcoming shows of which there were six for local organisations, including the football club, and four for the regular weekly cabaret at the University Arms Hotel. These cabarets continued weekly into the late 60s.

A Competition between the Pentacle Club and the Oxford University Magic Club was planned to take place at The Magic Circle in February. Oxford withdrew from the contest so the Pentacle presented a show alone, this being the fourth successive year that the Club had entertained at The Magic Circle. The performers were Michael Kelly, John Gilliland, Ralph Matthews, Erica Harding, Stefan Petszaft, Mark Nelson-Richardson, John Campbell and Clive Sampson, plus Julian Vincent on the banjo. The show was described in *The Magic Circular* as “marvellous” and “a very enjoyable evening indeed”.¹¹⁷ Ivor Grantham, founder member of the Pentacle Club and Secretary 1920-1921 attended the show to see how the modern generation was doing.¹¹⁸

During the term there were talks by Roger Crosthwaite, Harold Taylor and friends and Ralph Matthews who showed tricks, mainly of mentalism, which would be unfamiliar to new members. The Inzani-Henley Magic Company presented a dealer demonstration.

The Annual Dinner was held in Peterhouse with Peter Warlock as guest of honour. He proposed the toast to the Club, to which Claude Perry responded.

At the last Committee meeting of the term the Publicity Manager for the forthcoming show *Crunch* was found lacking in the carrying out of his duties and was relieved of his post, being replaced by Mike Quinion. *Crunch* at the beginning of the Easter Term was presented in association with CULES (described in the Programme as a PENTACULES production) so that the magic was interspersed with comedy sketches and songs. It was again at the ADC Theatre in Park Street. Goodliffe reported how much he enjoyed the acts, particularly the bubble act of Mike Kelly, though he said that “a good 50% of the appeal of this act was in the lady assistant, Erica Harding, a fine flashing-eyed beauty who blew the soap bubbles and really looked interested in what was going on”.¹¹⁹ Mike and Erica also ate fire, Clive Sampson swallowed razor blades and Mordini escaped from his bonds in 27 seconds.¹²⁰ Ralph Matthews offered mentalism, Roger Crosthwaite pickpocketing and Mark Nelson-Richardson a substitution-trunk type effect using a mailbag, with the assistance of Erica Harding.

For some time the Club had been investigating the possibility of having a permanent Clubroom. It was suggested that a room at the ADC Theatre might be leased but at a minimum a seven year lease would be required. It was felt that the ADC would not accede to this.

A sub-committee was established to arrange a tour of Surrey and Sussex during the Christmas vacation. 600 circulars were sent out to potential organisations. However the tour was cancelled, for lack of bookings, around October. It was unclear why the publicity campaign, which had replicated that of 1963, had been unsuccessful.

A group of eight represented the Pentacle Club at the British Ring Convention in Eastbourne in September 1964. The highlight of this was the Gala Show, with Ritani of Germany and The Keeners from the USA.

1964-65

As usual the Club had a stand at the Societies' Fair in early October. Erica Harding and Mike Kelly did a fire-eating performance in the arena. This was followed by an Open Meeting a few days later in Peterhouse.

There were lectures in the Michaelmas Term from Alfred Gabriel, The Magic Claudine (Chandler) and Chris Gosselin. The last of these is the first to be recorded as taking place in the Kashmir Restaurant, a venue used for some years thereafter. It was owned by Devi Agarwala, a member of both the Pentacle Club and The Magic Circle.

Perhaps the highlight of the term was the Competition against the Oxford University Magical Society, which took place at The Magic Circle on 23rd November. It was narrowly won by the Pentacle Club. The Pentacle team were Stefan Petszaft, John Campbell, Clive Sampson, Mark Nelson-Richardson, Mike Kelly and Erica Harding. The last two presented an act including the bubble sequence, and which the reporter stated was "a feast of ideas".¹²¹

There is much discussion in the Committee Minutes about the "Lifeline Charity Show" which took place on 25th November though there are no details of the show.

At the Committee Meeting on 15th January 1965 it was announced that Dr. Kipping had died suddenly a few days before. It was suggested that a bouquet of flowers be sent to his home before the funeral, but on the advice of the Rev. Dennis-Jones this plan was abandoned and a donation was sent to the Cancer Research Fund.

In the Lent Term there were lectures from Piet Tovenaar and Billy McComb as well as talks by Committee Members on various subjects. A lecture by Tony Corinda did not take place as Corinda did not arrive.

The Annual Show, *Crunch '65* was highly successful. It was produced by Robert Crick, son of the then President of the IBM British Ring, Paul Graham, with magical advice from Billy McComb. It was again staged in association with CULES, who provided songs and comedy sketches between the magic acts. As on previous occasions Erica Harding provided a fire-eating act. Goodliffe records a six-ring routine by Stefan Petszaft, the sawing through of an audience volunteer by Mark Nelson(-Richardson), a substitution trunk by Mike Kelly (the lady involved was not named) and a magic square by John Campbell. Mike also presented the Multiplying Bottles and did some pickpocketing. There was escapology by Mordini, a bar act by Roger Spencer and smaller magic by Peter Killworth, John Wardle and Gus Guest.¹²² Maureen Bavester, Debbie Pope and Penny Shaw acted as assistants. The *Cambridge Daily News* noted "It is a happy evening and it will be even better when the company settle their nerves."¹²³

Crunch 1965

Erica Harding - Fire Eater

*(Photo Cambridge Daily News
21 April 1965)*



As a result of the Competition at The Magic Circle, the Club were booked to provide the second half of the London Society of Magicians Show on 4th May. Gus Guest, Mike Kelly, Stefan Petszaft, John Campbell and Erica Harding were the performers for this.

At the Annual General Meeting Sir Gordon Sutherland, Master of Emmanuel College, was elected as President of the Club.

The Club also featured in the *New Faces* show at the IBM British Ring Convention in Llandudno in September. Baird Oldrey demonstrated James Bond's new secret weapon, which resembled closely a Dancing Cane, Gus Guest did Squirle and a Twentieth Century Silks in which an invisible silk transported to between two other silks, but remained invisible. Stefan Petszaft did a Dictionary Test (with an **OXFORD** dictionary) and Mark Nelson and Vivienne sawed through an intrepid audience volunteer.¹²⁴

Thus came to a close the Academic Year 1964-1965.

¹⁰⁶ Anon. Show Has Professional Polish. *Cambridge Daily News* 27 January 1959

¹⁰⁷ Editor. Crumbs. *Varsity* 24 January 1959

¹⁰⁸ Anon. First Defeat for Escapologist. *Cambridge Daily News* 27 January 1960

¹⁰⁹ Anon. Magic Show aids local fund for Refugee Year. *Newmarket Journal* 3 March 1960

¹¹⁰ EJD. Magic Among the Headlines. *Cambridge Daily News* 7 February 1961

¹¹¹ Moore D. The Pentacle Club Entertains. *The Magic Circular* 1961;55:134-135

¹¹² Anon. Untitled. *Cambridge Daily News* 30 November 1962

¹¹³ Anon. Shambling Uncertain Corny. *Cambridge Daily News* 6 February 1963

¹¹⁴ Wallwork D. The Pentacle Club. *The Magic Circular* 1963;57:114

¹¹⁵ Anon. Revue of Music, Satire, Magic. *Cambridge Daily News* 18 November 1963

¹¹⁶ Quinion MB. The Pentacle on Tour. *Abracadabra* 1964;37:98-100

¹¹⁷ Gupta S. The Pentacle Club. *The Magic Circular* 1964;58:127-128

¹¹⁸ Gittings J. News of the Month. *The Magic Circular* 1964;58:130

¹¹⁹ Goodliffe. Crunch, A Dinner and Other Matters. *Abracadabra* 1964;37:257-258

¹²⁰ Harvey D. Volatile New Revue at ADC Theatre Unsophisticated. *Cambridge Daily News* 2 April 1964

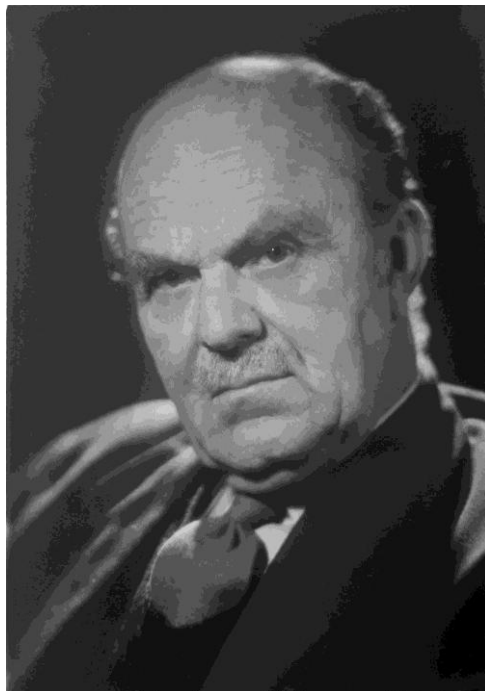
¹²¹ Capon C. University Magic. *The Magic Circular* 1965;59:73-74

¹²² Goodliffe. Crunch '65. *Abracadabra* 1965;39:297-298

¹²³ Harvey D. Crunch Goes Along With a Crackle. *Cambridge Daily News* 21 April 1965

¹²⁴ Dawes E. New Faces. *The Budget* 1965 I.B.M. British Ring p.333

Chapter 10
Interlude 5 – Kipping and Sutherland
Frederic Barry Kipping - President 1932 to 1965



Photograph by permission of the Master and Fellows of St. John's College, Cambridge

Frederic Barry Kipping joined the Pentacle Club on 20th October 1919, just after he came up to Trinity College from Nottingham High School, and appears on the first Membership List of the Club. He was elected to the Committee of the Club on 24th April 1922. He appeared performing feats of juggling in the shows given on 3rd March 1922 and 6th March 1923. He became President of the Club at the AGM in May 1932 and remained in that position until his sudden death in 1965.

Dr. Kipping was born on 14th April 1901, the second son of Frederic Stanley Kipping, a Professor of Chemistry at Nottingham University and his wife Lilian Florence, known as Lily (née Holland), who was his cousin.

Kipping read Natural Sciences and gained a First Class Degree in the Tripos Examinations. After his degree he started research in Organic Chemistry and was awarded his PhD in 1925. This led to a University Demonstratorship in 1930 and a Lectureship in 1937; he lectured for many years to students in Organic Chemistry. He supervised students for St. John's College and was appointed a Fellow of St. John's in 1954, becoming Director of Studies in Chemistry in 1961.

During the Second World War he was posted to the Middle East as an adviser on chemical warfare. He then returned to England with the rank of Wing Commander in an advisory position to Fighter Command and Army Co-operation Command. In February 1942 he was made an assistant director of scientific research.

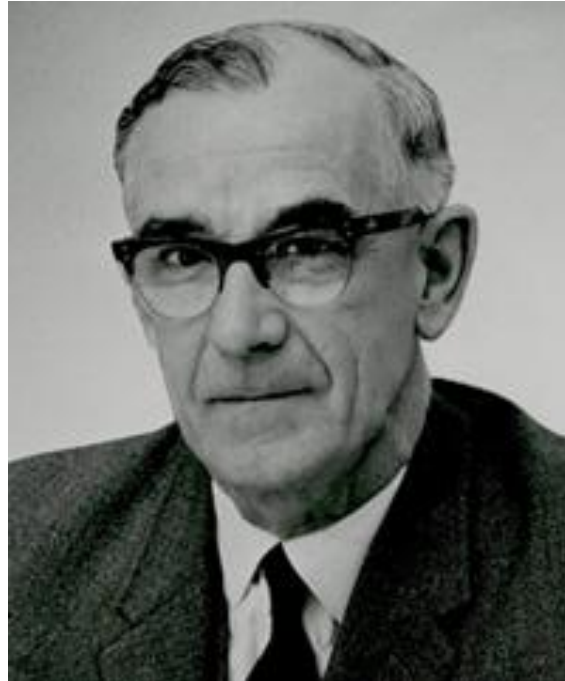
After the War he became involved in University administration, and was Secretary of the Faculty Board of Physics and Chemistry, being reappointed to this post numerous times.

Dr. Kipping's interest in magic lasted throughout his life but he also had a number of other interests. As a young man he played the saxophone and he collected shells and stamps. He was a keen sportsman with a particular interest in tennis. Not only was he a good player, playing for Nottinghamshire and then for Cambridgeshire, but he also contributed to its organisation. He served on the Committees of the Cambridgeshire Lawn Tennis Association and the English Lawn Tennis Association and was Vice-Chairman of the LTA Council in 1964. He was Chairman-Elect of the LTA Council at the time of his death. He was also a keen golfer, winning the College High Table golf tournament in the September before he died.

He married Margaret Williams in 1926 and they had two sons and a daughter. Margaret died in 1955 and he lived alone until 1964 when he married Mrs. Ursula Ward-Smith. He died on 12th January 1965.

Much of this biography is based on the obituary of Dr. Kipping in *The Eagle*, magazine of St. John's College.¹²⁵ This gives his name as Frederick, but in the books written by him on Organic Chemistry and the biographical record card at St. John's College, the given name is Frederic.

Sir Gordon Sutherland - President 1965 to 1970



Gordon Brims Black McIvor Sutherland was born in Caithness, Scotland on the 8th April 1907 and educated at Morgan Academy, Dundee. He graduated from St. Andrews University with an MA in Mathematics and a BSc in Physics in 1929, then spent 2 years at Cambridge University doing experimental work on infrared spectra, followed by 2 years at the University of Michigan.

On his return to Cambridge and the award of his PhD in 1934 he worked on infra-red and Raman spectroscopy. Over this period he was a Fellow of Pembroke College. During the 1939-1945 war he worked for the Ministry of Supply on bomb disposal.

He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1949. From 1956-1964 he was Director of the United Kingdom National Physical Laboratory which he left to become Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He was knighted in 1960.

Sir Gordon became President of the Pentacle Club on the death of Dr. Kipping in 1965 and held the post until 1970. I have been unable to find any reason why he took on the Presidency of the Pentacle Club or any other link to magic.

He died on the 27th June 1980.

¹²⁵ Prince RH. Frederick Barry Kipping. *The Eagle*, 1966;265:253-255

Chapter 11

More Crunch and After – 1965 to 1978

1965-66

When I applied for entry to Cambridge University one of the main reasons was that it had a magic society. Therefore when I arrived in October 1965 one of my first visits was to the Societies' Fair at the Corn Exchange, where the Pentacle Club had a stall. They didn't have to convince me to join as I was already hooked. One of the people I met on the stand was Peter Killworth and we remained friends from that day until his death in 2008.

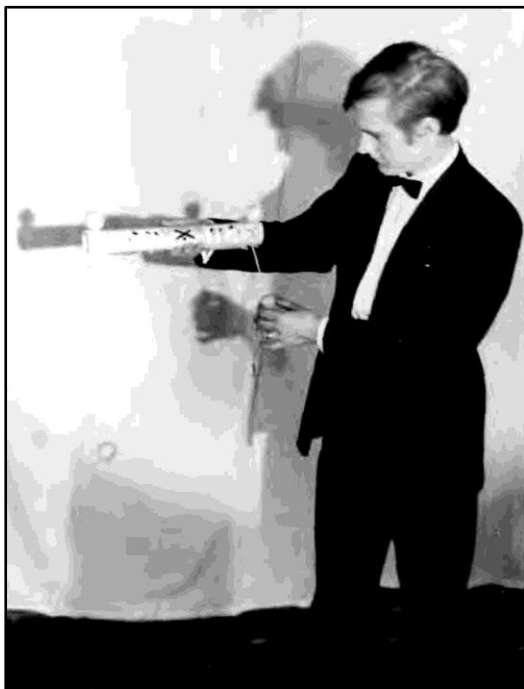
As had happened for the period 1936 to 1953, the Minute Book for 1965 to 1974 had been mysteriously lost and was never found, so information for this period will be less detailed. Despite the fact that I was present my memories are vague and even inaccurate so reliance on documentation is necessary.

In October the Pentacle Club made a journey to Oxford to hear a lecture by Harold Taylor, who spoke on a wide range of magic including the Snake Basket, Wand from Purse, Russian Dolls and Stick to Silks, all of which had been given the Taylor Touch.

In November there was the second Oxford v. Cambridge Competition at The Magic Circle. Despite a full list of Oxford performers there is no mention of any Cambridge person by name in the *Abacadabra* report¹²⁶ and the report in *The Magic Circular* only names Erica Harding and Peter Killworth.¹²⁷ The Club performed a *Murder in a Country Seat* sketch, with the detective Stately Holmes. For the second time Cambridge won by a narrow margin.

February saw a lecture by Tony Griffith and a performance at the Annual Dinner of the Cambridge Local Exams Syndicate. The Club's Annual Dinner was held at Churchill College in March with John and Monique Henley as the guests.

The Annual Revue *Crunch 66* took place in April, yet again with the participation of CULES. Deryck Harvey, the *Cambridge News* reporter who had included a photograph of Erica Harding in his report the year before, this time described her and her fire-eating as



“the star of the piece”.¹²⁸

Peter Killworth performed a headline prediction on cassette tape, which fooled Goodliffe even though it was based on a method in a recent *Abra*.¹²⁹ Michael Colley performed Histed's Papyrus (as modified by Sid Lorraine) also from *Abra*.¹³⁰

Crunch 66

Michael Colley with Papyrus

MOORS JURY TO HEAR SCREAMS ON TAPE

The Attorney-General, Sir Elwyn Jones, Q.C.



Crunch 66 – One of the headlines predicted on cassette tape by Peter Killworth

There was a two-person dancing cane from Baird Oldrey and Penny Shaw, Multiplying

Bottles from Gus Guest, Paper Balls over Head from Mark Nelson and manipulations by Malcolm Nunn. John Campbell performed with silks, David Hopkins transferred dots from a can onto a silk (Jack Hughes' Can-Can Polka) and Malco stuck swords through a lady's head in a Dagger Chest. Two matinee performances were arranged for more than 370 members of over-60s clubs.

1966-67

As usual the first meeting of term was an instructional meeting for the benefit of new members, teaching some manipulations, close-up magic and after-dinner magic. Later in October there was a visit from the Inzani-Henley Magic Company. There were lectures from Tom Harris and Claude Chandler plus a number of "home-grown" sessions.

The New Year brought lectures by Jack Yates of Norfolk (after booking him it was discovered that he was not the author of *Minds in Close-Up*), Jack Mayes on Children's Magic and Paul Graham, who brought along with him a number of props made by Louis Histed, including Sand and Sugar.

Guests at the Annual Dinner in March were Sir Gordon Sutherland, Master of Emmanuel College and President of the Pentacle Club and Billy and June McComb. Billy provided the cabaret and was made a Vice-President of the Club and awarded the Silver Pentacle.

The Silver Pentacle was the highest award that the Club could bestow. In the early days of the Club, the Gilt Pentacle on a blue ribbon was originally the Club badge, which all Members were entitled to wear. By the time of the mid-1960s the Gilt Pentacle was only awarded in recognition of services to the Club. It is not known when this change was made. There was also a stock of Gilt Circles, known to the current Committee as "washers", but their purpose was not clear. Had anyone looked back to a Minute from 1960 (see page 66), their purpose would have been explained. The award of a Gilt Circle was in recognition of services to the Club, but not to the extent that warranted the award of a Silver Pentacle. The idea was that the circle would be attached to the ribbon of the Club badge, the Gilt Pentacle.

Crunch 68? – The Revue Ahead of its Time generated speculation from Deryck Harvey about what the next year's show would be called.¹³¹ It was a co-production with CULES. Gus Guest performed Sand and Sugar, loaned by Paul Graham and the McComb "Striptease" illusion, wherein Anjie Finch lost her clothes one garment at a time but rather than appearing naked at the end she totally vanished. Mike Colley did the McComb Head Chopper routine, titled *Chopin* in the programme (Goodliffe said "See Donald! *Chopin* – that's funny if you think about it."¹³²), Chris Whiteley magically baked a cake, Adrian Dixon (in later life to become Professor of Radiology at Cambridge and Master of Peterhouse) juggled and Nunnini (Malcolm Nunn) manipulated. Peter Jones provided mental magic, David Hopkins picked pockets and Peter Killworth prestidigitated with soap bubbles and Snowstorm in China. Prad Kansara presented some Indian Relish.



Crunch '68?

Michael Colley guillotines Peter Killworth

As part of the publicity, fliers saying

“Are you Going to Crunch? – ADC April 18-22”

were stuck to the inside of all the toilet doors in the Cambridge Colleges.

1967-68

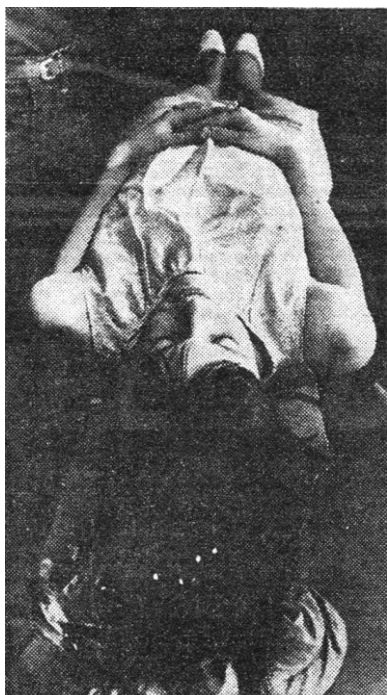
The Michaelmas (Autumn) term brought lectures by Claude Perry on developing an act, John Gilliland (ex-member) on body loads, servantes and harnesses in close-up magic and Ali Bongo with *Pongolian Rubbish*. There were also a number of instruction and social evenings.

Lent (Spring) Term had lectures by Dennis Collins on Children’s Magic and Graham Clarke of Ipswich on Impromptu Magic. Malcolm Nunn presented an evening where all present drew lots for packages of props with which they had to perform. Ipswich Magic Society visited and presented a show in February.

The highlight of the term was a visit to The Magic Circle in February. The first half was “normal” magic acts by Dave Cridland, John Davenport, Laurence Griffiths, Mike Colley and Peter Killworth, while the second half was *The Social Secretary’s Family Tree* or *2000 Years of Bad Jokes* ranging from Adam & Eve with Multiplying Fig Leaves to *Nixon of Nock Green*, a spoof of David Nixon’s TV sketches in which he conversed with his image on a large TV screen. Cyril Capon said “It was a hilarious evening and must have come as a bit of a shock to the Philistines; but it was very enjoyable and some good ideas came out of it all.”¹³³ I think it was on this occasion that Bobby Bernard muttered “Humph! Undergraduate Humour”, but what did he expect from undergraduates?

The difficulty in naming the Annual Show, anticipated the year before by Deryck Harvey, was readily overcome by calling it simply *Crunch*. It took place in April at the ADC and involved only the Pentacle Club. The first half was of mixed magic by Peter Killworth, Ron Lockett, Dave Cridland, Martin Mitchell, Michael Colley, Laurence Griffiths, Malcolm Nunn, Sarah Graves, Peter Jones and John Davenport. The second half was a repeat of *2000 Years of Bad Jokes*. The newspaper report particularly selected the manipulative act of Nunnini and the illusions of John Davenport to commend.¹³⁴

A small group travelled to Norwich for a short spot on Anglia Television, which included Peter Killworth and Sarah Graves performing the Three Sword Suspension, much to Sarah's anguish and pain. "Get me off this thing", she said. "Never again!"



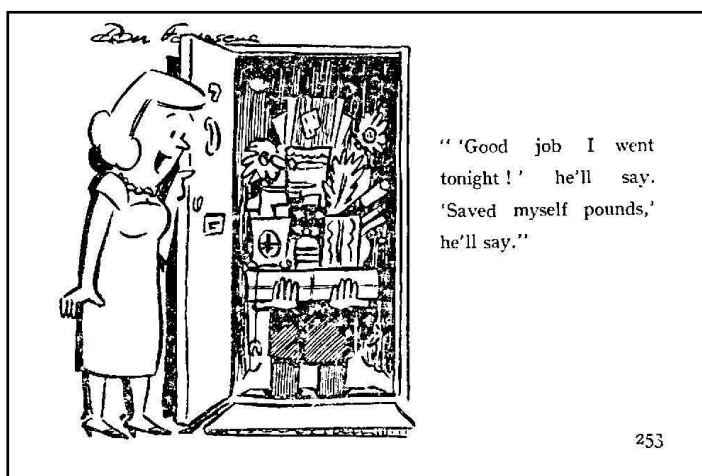
Crunch 1968

*Sarah Graves and the Three Sword Suspension*¹³⁵

Mary, my wife (then fiancée) remembers sewing up rips in the curtains at the ADC Theatre before the dress rehearsal. Of such things is student life.

1968-69

There appear to be no records of what went on in the Michaelmas Term 1968 except for an Open Evening at the beginning of Term and a show for the Red Cross Ball in October. Lent Term brought lectures by Geoffrey Buckingham on *Preparation for Manipulation*, Pat Page on the commercial approach to magic, with a superb demonstration of the Topit vanisher and Roy Johnson with a general lecture, showing many effects some of which were being marketed by Ken Brooke. Harry Baron, again a general lecture, and Les Nottle on rope magic helped to provide a term full of "celebrity lectures" which was closed by Wilfred Tyler speaking on Children's Magic at the last meeting of the Term. There was also an auction, believed to be the first in the Club's history.



Cartoon from *Abracadabra* Vol. 28 No. 718 31st October 1959

By permission of L Davenport & Co

The Annual Dinner in February had Ali Bongo as Guest of Honour. He gave a most entertaining "Instant Speech" and provided a cabaret which was completely different from his *Shriek of Araby* act.

Despite the aspirations of the Club in 1959 for a grand celebration to mark the 50th Anniversary, this did not happen, nor was there an Annual Show. A Notice celebrating the occasion was placed in *Abra* on 17th May¹³⁶; the Wednesday before was the precise 50th Anniversary of the first meeting on Wednesday 14th May 1919. In May 1969 Ivor Grantham wrote to *The Magic Circular* highlighting the 50th Anniversary of the Pentacle Club, of which he had been a founder member.¹³⁷

In September Malcolm Nunn won the Dittia Shield for Manipulation at the British Ring Convention in Scarborough.

1969-70

An Open Meeting and Free Show was held in Emmanuel College in October but there are no other records of the Michaelmas Term in the Archives.

There was another visit to The Magic Circle in February 1970, this time with *Five Points to Watch*. Michael Colley compered and performed Newspaper Magic, including the formation of a Pentacle Star using one cut (from *Abra* of course¹³⁸) and the first performer Robert Rae showed silk magic plus the transposition of a dove from a paper bag to a box. Ivan Nathan had a live hen on stage; its antics led to much hilarity. Peter Killworth and Sarah manipulated bubbles, John Davenport presented spoof magic and Doug Howe was the "inebriated magician" surprised by the magical events happening around him.¹³⁹

The show was attended by Ivor Grantham who had been a founder member of the Club on his birthday in 1919 and by Leslie G Brewster who had joined the Club in 1923 and was Production Manager in 1925-26. Ivor Grantham had written to *The Magic Circular* in 1921 complaining about the duplication of effects in shows and recommending that all the performers should submit a complete list of their effects to the organisers of the show so that this could be avoided.¹⁴⁰ Sadly, in many cases, the passage of almost a hundred years does not seem to have improved the situation. There was a Dinner in March, but apart from the menu, which included Halibut and Duckling, there is no further information.

In 1970 Sir Gordon Sutherland, who had not been very active as President, retired from that position and his place was taken by Sir William Hawthorne, Master of Churchill College. Sir William had been on the Committee of the Club in 1934.

1970-71

The downstairs room at the Kashmir Restaurant was needed for expansion of the business. The Open Meeting in October was therefore held at the Maypole Pub in Portugal Place, and this became the new venue for Club meetings. In addition to the auction and other meetings arranged within the Club there was a dealer demonstration by Inzani-Henley, a lecture by Stanley Hammond (Magini) from Ipswich on close-up and general magic, a talk by Peter Quinsee on doves in magic, including the care of the birds and Les Beacroft (formerly of Premier Magic) gave tips on *Making your own Tricks*.

The University Graduate Centre was the venue for the 1971 Annual Dinner, the guests at which were Sir William Hawthorne (the Club President), Keno (Ken Thomas of Colchester and the Ipswich Magical Society) and John Salisse, Secretary of The Magic Circle. After replying to the toast to the guests, John took to the floor with his “remarkable animal” Francis the Duck providing a hilarious cabaret to end the evening.



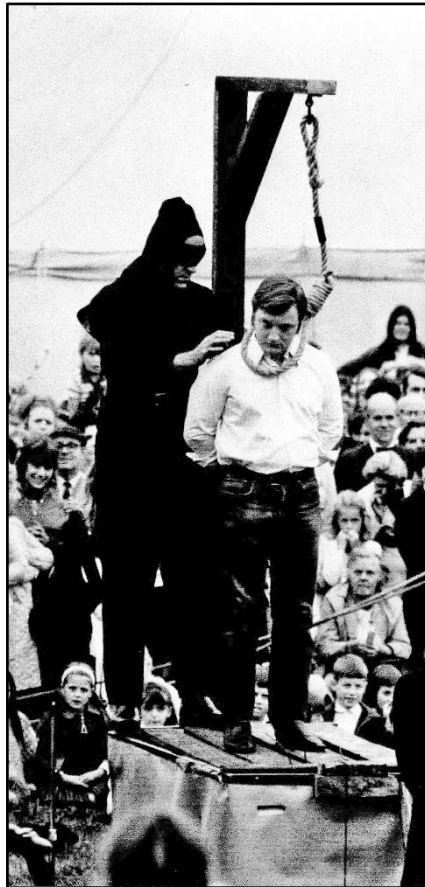
*Annual Dinner 1971
John Salisse and Francis*

Other meetings in the Spring Term included an evening of films from The Magic Circle Film Library, Terry Herbert on children’s magic, with many mechanical toys, Reg Lord on mentalism, Matheson Taylor on manipulation, Peter Warlock with *Warlock’s Way* and Stanley Thomas looking at the history of some classics of magic. The annual competition included sections for new members and for those who had been around somewhat longer.

Peter Killworth was soon to leave Cambridge to go to the USA, so he gave the club the benefit of his experience at the beginning of the Easter Term. The effects demonstrated ranged from mentalism and comedy children’s magic to close-up.¹⁴¹

In July 1971 an Evening of Magic was presented for the WRVS Hilltop Club, a group of pensioners, at The Friends’ Meeting House. Robert Rae gave a talk on the History of Magic and Peter Quinsee and Mike Colley performed a range of magical effects.¹⁴²

August Bank Holiday Monday brought a Leisure Fair on Midsummer Common and the Pentacle presented Fogel’s *Cheating the Gallows* with Tony Middleton as the “hangee” and Robert Rae as the hooded executioner. This drew a great crowd of spectators, one of whom selected the rope to be used. Fortunately this proved to be the one which was set to separate into two pieces, while the ones which were not used were all solid.¹⁴³



*Leisure Fair 1971 –
Tony Middleton (right) and Robert Rae (left)*

1971-72

The October term started with an Open Meeting and Show to attract new members followed at the next meeting by simple instruction for those new to magic. Terry Seabrooke presented his commercial approach to magic, Larry Spencer presented a little bit of everything and Terry & Norma did a dealer demonstration. Mike Colley, who was leaving at Christmas, presented *Mike's Magic* and there was also a Competition and an At Home to which the members could bring guests.

The Club entertained in Waterbeach on 2nd November in an event which also included a fashion show by "Annet". Peter Killworth compered and introduced Les Beacroft with Children's Magic. John Davenport presented "straight" magic and Roy Heath performed some feats of Mental Magic. After the interval Robert Rae presented a History of Magic then John Davenport returned with Beverley Gray and Great Illusion. Liz Middleton modelled Balloons for All (especially for the children) and Devi Agarwalla closed with Mysteries from the East. Exactly when the fashion show took place is not clear.

Malcolm Nunn, who had decided not to defend his title at the British Ring Convention in 1970, entered in 1971 and won not only the Dittia Shield but also the British Ring Challenge Shield for Outstanding Magical Excellence, the top prize at the Convention.¹⁴⁴ As a result of this he was invited to perform as part of the International Gala at the British Ring Convention in September 1972.

Spring 1972 brought an evening of Films, including one of John Scarne, Club evenings with John Davenport and Roy Heath, a "surprise evening" with Claude Perry and Malcolm Nunn plus the Auction. There were lectures by Maurice Garner on ventriloquism, Dennis Patten on children's magic and Francis Haxton on close-up. In February the Pentacle again entertained at The Magic Circle with *Making Themselves at Home – A Takeover Bid for the Magic Circle HQ*, the entire show being described in military terms. This started with *Close-combat* which was in fact half an hour of close-up magic by half a dozen members, then *Switch Assault to Theatre* which started with John Whitmore's presentation of a short illustrated history of the Pentacle Club and led into a revue *Full Frontal Attack* including Robert Rae and Clive Holt in a spoof ventriloquist sketch.

There was spoof mentalism from Jeff Shaw and Mark Taylor, with more by Ted Farrington and Paul Townsend, a spoof Dealer Dem and Fogel's Cheating the Gallows, a grim warning to would be deserters. Other participants were Reg Lord, David Beamish, Roy Heath, Colin Dennis, Margaret Layton and Richard Webber with assistance from J Blanco White.¹⁴⁵

There will be numerous delays to allow performers and audiences to exchange wounded.

Believe it or not, this show was produced
---Blame Robert Rae.
Assisting in the disaster were J. Blanco White,
Margaret Leyton and others.

(In case of fire tear along this line.)

A Begging Letter.

Due to the heavy drinking habits of our treasurer the Pentacle Club are constantly short of funds. If you would like to help please sign below.


"I bequeath all my worldly goods to the Pentacle Club".

Signed _____ Date _____

(Copy of psychiatrists report to be attached.)

C.U.

PENTACLE CLUB



MAKING THEMSELVES AT HOME.

(A take over bid for the Magic Circle H.Q.)

Programme Frec. Price 5p.

PLAN OF BATTLE.

1900 Hrs. C.M.T. Invasion Of Club Room.

Close combat led by Major Ted Farrington.
His Men.
Fte. Roy Heath.
Fte David Beamish.
Fte. Paul Townsend.
Fte. Clive Holt.
Fte. Richard Webber.

1930 Hrs. 7.M.T. Switch assault into Theatre.

"Caught in the Searchlights Beam"
Col. John Whitmore.
(Muttering about the Glorious Past.)

1945 Hrs G.M.T. Press home full frontal attack.

1. Captain Eric Meadows.
2. Talking to themselves. (shell shock.)
Clive Holt and Robert Rae.
3. Two mental cases.
Jeff Shaw and Mark Taylor.
4. Flopping off Ex-V.D equipment (dealer dem.)
Clive holt David Beamish and Robert Rae
5. Entertaining the Troops
Brig. Reg. Lord.
- (All ranks stand to attention during his performance
6. A Punch Up.
Jeff Shaw and Mark Taylor.
7. A Futher Case of Mental Breakdown.
Paul Townsend and Ted Farrington.
8. A Public Execution. (A grim warning to would be deserters) Jeff Shaw Colin Dennis and Roy Heath.

2100 Hrs. G.M.T. Peace Treaty signed -- All ranks may then visit N.A.F.F.I.

Programme for show at The Magic Circle 1972

The Annual Dinner was held in March with William G Stickland, Past President of the International Brotherhood of Magicians as Guest of Honour. The venue was Churchill College. Bill also provided the cabaret including an effect where a snake rose from a basket holding a chosen card in its mouth.



*Annual Dinner 1972
Bill Stickland and friend*

In May the Pentacle Club travelled to Bury St. Edmunds for a Test Match with the Ipswich Magic Society. The magic ranged from close-up coin effects to livestock productions. The Cambridge contingent were the winners.

Bank Holiday Monday, 28th August, was again the Leisure Fair on Midsummer Common. On this occasion the Pentacle staged a Blindfold Drive, with Beverley Gray driving a Triumph Spitfire through an obstacle course, ending up with the car bumper against the legs of John Davenport, the Club Chairman, who was gagged and tied to wooden posts.



*Blindfold Drive 1972
Beverley Gray driving at John Davenport*

1972-73

There were lectures by Alfred Gabriel and John Wade and a Dealer Dem by Roy Baker in the Michaelmas Term 1972. These were in addition to home-grown meetings involving teaching and social evenings and the Competition. In the Spring Term Ali Bongo, Dennis Collins and Michael Bailey conveyed gems of wisdom to the Club members. Club evenings with Roy Heath, Malcolm Nunn and Eric Widger and the regular Auction completed the Term's programme.

Alfred Gabriel, with Cecilia, returned for the Annual Dinner in March at Churchill College. Though Goodliffe had been scheduled to attend it would appear that his visit was cancelled.

After the Gallows of 1971 and the Blindfold Drive of 1972 the Pentacle Stunt at the Midsummer Leisure Fair in 1973 was a Straitjacket Escape, suspended upside down from a crane, performed by John Davenport.



Leisure Fair 1973

John Davenport – Straitjacket Escape

1973-74

The Autumn Term of 1973 brought lectures by Alfred Gabriel on Presentation and by Magini. There were the usual in-house meetings including the Competition Night. The Spring Term brought visits from George Kovari and John Palfreyman, the latter with some old and rare magical apparatus.

John Davenport repeated the suspended straitjacket escape at Soham Carnival on May Bank Holiday 1974, taking 4 minutes 45 seconds beating his previous best time by a minute and five seconds. Roy Heath and Chris Bastow performed a blindfold drive at Tillotson's sports day at Burwell in June.

In August 1974 the Secretary, Donald Graft, writing to Doug Howe about organising for him to speak to the Club stated that "the club is going through a very dry period and death cannot be ruled out".

1974-75

In October 1974 the Club had to find a new venue as the Clubroom at the Maypole had become a disco. The new location, kindly offered by Sir William Hawthorne, was the Cockcroft Room at Churchill College. An Open Meeting was held in October and in November Tony Faro brought his collection of magical films, including footage of Fred Kaps, Ron Macmillan and Slydini. In December Ali Bongo delivered his new lecture which he had first given at the British Ring Convention in September.

A "crisis meeting" was held in October but only 11 people turned up apart from the Committee. A letter was sent to the membership asking them what they wanted from the Club as it was felt that many people only turned up when there was an outside speaker. The accounts which had been passed on to Peter Killworth (who had returned from the USA and was, since June, the Treasurer) were sketchy in the extreme. There was enough in the bank to cover immediate needs but subscriptions and shows were required to boost income.

Two Club outings were arranged to London, the first to the International Day of Magic in December and the second to The Magic Circle Show at the beginning of January.

Alex Elmsley, member of the Club in the early 1950s was the first speaker in the Lent Term. As would be expected he spoke on close-up and card magic. Other guest speakers were George Jenness on the history of magic, illustrated with his collection of posters and playbills, Les Nottle on ropes and Ron Bishop on Modern Magic for Adults and Children. The average cost to have a visiting speaker was about £15, including travel, overnight hotel and dinner for the speaker and a couple of Committee Members.

The Club attended the 1975 Leisure Fair, but little response was obtained from the public, apart from the sale of Svengali Decks, which brought an income of £29 for an expenditure of £21.60, a 34% profit, with some packs left over (there was a further income of £1.65 in the following year).

1975-76

At the end of October 1975 Peter Killworth sent out a letter explaining why there had been no presence at the Societies' Fair and no meetings of the club in the new term and requesting members to attend an Emergency Meeting. The Secretary had left Cambridge and the few Cambridge residents who constituted the Committee were becoming frustrated at the lack of interest in any other members to take an active part in the Club.

A Committee was formed, though only two of these were undergraduate members of the University. Meetings were arranged for the Spring Term, starting with the postponed Open Meeting, traditionally held at the beginning of the Michaelmas Term. Visiting lecturers were Bob Read on close-up and impromptu magic and Raymond Cross on *Entertaining Children* and there were a number of meetings presented by members. Additionally there was a Club show for Senior Citizens.

Eric Widger, local magician, held two “sleightly different” parties at his home on 13th and 14th February. Members were asked to “let us know by telepathy, spirit rapping or any other recognised medium on which day we may expect you”. A small prize was offered for the most original reply to this invitation. He had held such parties from time to time before and was to do so in the subsequent years.

The club again attended the Leisure Fair in August on Midsummer Common though this did not produce any new members.

1976-77

The Michaelmas Term 1976 started as usual with the Open Meeting, hosted by Claude Perry and Eric Widger. There were visiting lecturers, Bob Hamilton *Close-up at its Best* and Sam Gupta *Indian Magic*. John Davenport and Eric Widger again provided in-house meetings. There was a Teach-in for new members, a bring-and-buy sale and a Christmas Social.

Meetings for the Lent Term were planned from Rovi and Fred Castle, together with the usual home-grown meetings.

Unfortunately little remains in the records of this period, save for a newspaper cutting which informs that magicians were out in force in June for Silver Jubilee Parties; Dara Kaka was in Ely and Alf Looker was at several villages around Cambridge.¹⁴⁶ In June the Club participated in a *Magical Music Hall* with the Brooklands Players. It opened with Tony Wilkinson and *Magic Moments*, followed by Chris Kostecki and *It's Magic!*, then Martin Taylor with *Mind over Matter*. A *Lesson in Magic* was given by Peter Killworth and the show finished with *Magic of the East*, including an electric sawing-through, performed by Dara Kaka. The compere was Roy Gilbert. As unusual, the performers did not take any fee and the Club profited to the tune of almost £30.



Magical Music Hall

Darius (Dara Kaka)

In the year 1976-77 the Club did five private shows, St. Raphael, Post Office Children's Party, Churchill Rag, St. Mark's Club and Chivers. The total income from these was £48 of which the performers took half, leaving a Club profit of £24.

In the Treasurer's report for the year he states

- "1) The Average cost/speaker is £14.50 + mail + a drink at the Club.
- 2) The losses on drinks (36% of our total losses) will not be repeated due to cancelation of the current beer scheme, and a sigh of relief from your treasurer..."

1977-78

October brought a new academic year and an Open Meeting, then the next week Reg Lord spoke on Mentalism. Reg predicted the day's headline of the *Cambridge Evening News* on an audio cassette, which caught the interest of that newspaper.¹⁴⁷ Michael Colley returned to the Club, lecturing on Children's Magic and the next week was the turn of Alan Shaxon with his brand of highly professional magic. The Bring and Buy sale, Dara Kaka on *Eastern Magic*, Roy Gilbert on *Paper Magic*, a Dealer Demonstration by Geoff Maltby of Repro '71 and a social evening completed the programme, except for a visit to the Northampton Magic Club in December, after the end of the official Term.

Claude Perry was featured by the *Cambridge Evening News* in December 1977 as "The Magic Accountant".¹⁴⁸

Peter Quinsee of Camtryx Magic opened the Spring Term with a Dealer Demonstration and the first Guest Lecturer of the year was Terry Seabrooke at the end of January talking on *Comedy with a Magical Twist*. Tony Griffith presented *An Invitation to Mystery* in February and Joe Riding visited in March. The Northampton Magic Club made a return visit to Cambridge at the end of February.

The Guest of Honour at the Annual Dinner at the University Centre in March was Robert Rae, former Secretary of the Club, who had moved to Lincolnshire a few years before. There was no set menu, the guests choosing from the Table d'Hôte or A La Carte menus. Robert Rae and The Hamlyns provided the after-dinner cabaret.

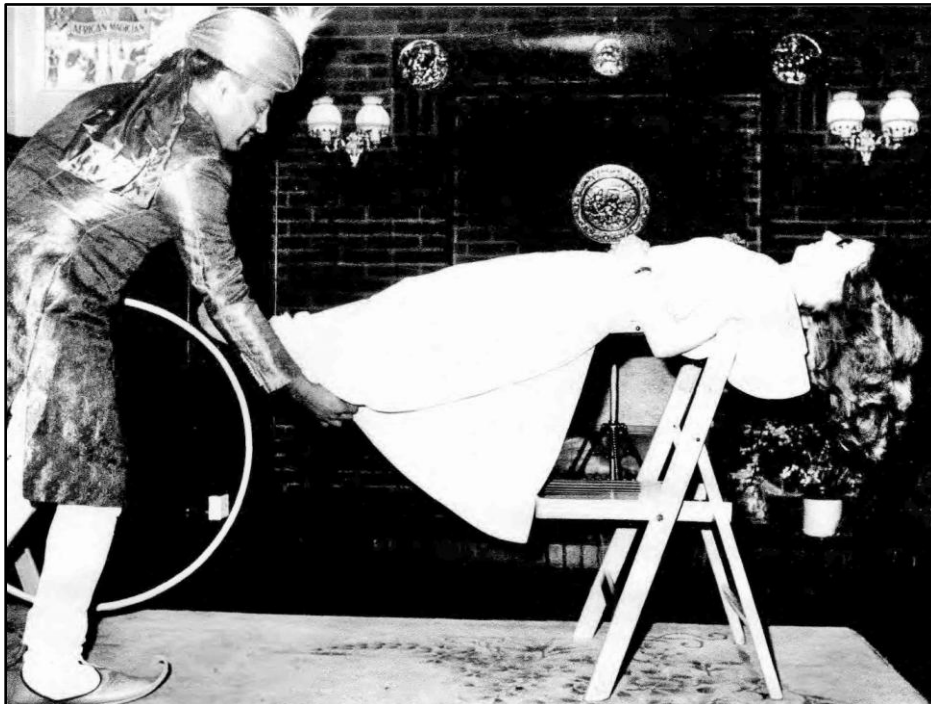
The Club was becoming more Town oriented. In the 1978 Membership list there are only three members out of thirty-eight, including the President, whose addresses are given as Cambridge Colleges. This is reflected in the more extensive programme for the Summer Term, as previously this had been examination time and the programme more restricted. Visitors were Terry and Norma (Burgess) with a Dealer Demonstration, Magini (Stanley Hammond) with a *A Potpourri of Magic*, Richard Stupple with insights on children's magic and Bruce Vickers with *Something Different*. There was also a visit to the Ipswich Magical Society.

In August the Club put on an hour-long show at the Old Crown Pub in Girton. Tony Middleton had recently taken over as manager and had introduced a magical theme to a number of evenings.

Old Crown Pub, Girton August 1978



Tony Middleton and Barmaid Chris



Dara Kaka levitates Rosemary Middleton

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- ¹²⁶ Capon C. Society Notes. *Abracadabra* 1965;40:354
- ¹²⁷ Capon C. University Magical Match-Oxford v. Cambridge. *The Magic Circular* 1965;59:80
- ¹²⁸ Harvey D. Crunch is Bright Brash and Lively. *Cambridge Daily News* 20 April 1965
- ¹²⁹ Bourne JH. The Perfect Prediction. *Abracadabra* 1965;39:212-216
- Killworth P. Postscripted perfect Prediction. *Abracadabra* 1966;42:262-263
- ¹³⁰ Histed LS. Papyrus Climax. *Abracadabra* 1949;8:325-326
- Lorraine S. It Never Fails. *Abracadabra* 1964;38:52-54
- ¹³¹ Harvey D. Theatre. *Cambridge Daily News* 19 April 1967
- ¹³² Goodliffe. *Abracadabra* 1967;43:266
- ¹³³ Capon C. The Pentacle Club Visit. *The Magic Circular* 1968;62;104
- ¹³⁴ Harvey D. Ripe Jokes Mixed With Magic. *Cambridge Daily News* 19 April 1968
- ¹³⁵ Czartoryski R. Sarah Graves Hangs in the Balance. *Varsity* 20 April 1968
- ¹³⁶ Drury A. Pentacle Club Fifty Years. *Abracadabra* 1969;47:321
- ¹³⁷ Grantham WI. The Pentacle Club. *The Magic Circular* 1969;63:130
- ¹³⁸ Sewell LJ. Solomon's Seal. *Abracadabra*, 1947;Christmas Special;13-14
- ¹³⁹ Capon C. The Pentacle Club. *The Magic Circular* 1970;64:151
- ¹⁴⁰ Grantham WI. Duplication of Effects. *The Magic Circular* 1921;16:231
- ¹⁴¹ Rae R. Society Reports. *Abracadabra* 1971;51:346
- ¹⁴² Harvey D. An Evening of Magic. *Cambridge Daily News* 17 July 1971
- ¹⁴³ Goodliffe. Editorial. *Abracadabra* 1971 52;165-166
- ¹⁴⁴ Anon. Amateur Magician Regains his Title. *Cambridge Daily News* 25 September 1971
- ¹⁴⁵ Kemp T. The Pentacle and Circle in Takeover Battle. *The Magic Circular* 1972;66:130
- ¹⁴⁶ Nestor. Jubilee Magic. *Cambridge Evening News* 3 June 1977
- ¹⁴⁷ Anon. Well Ahead. *Cambridge Evening News* 26 October 1977
- ¹⁴⁸ Anon. The Magic Accountant. *Cambridge Evening News* 28 December 1977

Chapter 12
Interlude 6 – Two Clergy
Roger Crosthwaite



Roger Crosthwaite in 2005

Another Pentacle member who has achieved fame within the magical community is Rev. Dr. Roger Crosthwaite, who has combined a successful career in the Anglican Church with performing and writing, mainly about card magic.

George Roger Crosthwaite was born on 13th November 1938 in Solihull, West Midlands. At his seventh birthday party there was a conjurer, Ray Griffiths, who as Fabian was Literary Editor of *Abracadabra*. Roger was fascinated by the “miracles” and later Ray introduced him to Davenports. The first trick he bought through the post was the Bean Barrel.

At the age of twelve he met Cyril Golding who became his mentor instructing him in sleight of hand and taking him through Erdnase’s *The Expert at the Card Table*. At Malvern School he continued to practise, resulting in his pack of cards being confiscated by the Latin master. At the Magician’s Mecca (Alliance Rubber Company) in Birmingham he met Edward Victor and spent time with him.

From Malvern he went to Durham University where he remained for over four years. During that time he played many of the Northern Night Spots, including a six-months booking for Cabaret and Table Magic at Newcastle’s first Night Club. He was also on TV not only with magic, with a regular five minute spot on Tyne Tees Television, but also interviewing and introducing fashion, beauty and hairdressing shows.

After Durham Roger moved to Ridley Hall, Cambridge to study for Ordination in the Church of England. In Cambridge he met up with Alex Elmsley when Alex returned to his Alma Mater. Vacations provided a chance to perform and he worked as a professional magician in London doing cabaret and close-up at venues in the West End. He continued with this for some time after completing his studies. In 1964 he worked with the Rev. David Sheppard in the East End of London.

1965 saw Roger ordained as a priest and he joined the staff of Bradford Cathedral. Clerical duties took over and he dropped out of active magic, though continuing to practise with his cards. In 1978 he went on a clergy exchange to Los Angeles, which opened the door to The Magic Castle where meetings with Dai Vernon, Charlie Miller and others reawakened his magical interest. On his return to England he won The Magic Circle Close-up Magician of the Year Competition in 1980.

Roger has written for many magazines including *Abracadabra*, *The Gen*, *Apocalypse*, *Pabular*, *Genii* and many others. He has written a number of books including *Roger's Thesaurus*, *The Commercial Card Magic of Roger Crosthwaite* and *Arcardia*. In the early 1980s, in association with Michael Vincent, Justin Higham and others he produced the *Inner Sanctum* series of videotapes.

He has appeared at numerous Conventions and meetings, including the Pentacle One-Day Convention in 1981 and several IBM British Ring Conventions. Roger was scheduled to feature on the *Abracadabra* Cruise in 1986, but this was cancelled when the vessel's sister ship sank. Though more usually speaking on close-up and card magic, at The Magic Circle Collectors' Day in 1990 he presented a lecture *From Witchcraft to Warlock - The Evolution of Think-a-Card*, tracing the history and development of this effect from as far back as Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*.

Roger has always had an interest in the methods of card cheats and during his time in London and in America came to know many gamblers, legal and illegal. He is also interested in paranormal research and spent some time in 1990 investigating Psychic Surgery in the Philippines.

Being an Anglican clergyman Roger has moved around the country serving a range of parishes but finally returned to Worthing where he is still active in Church affairs.

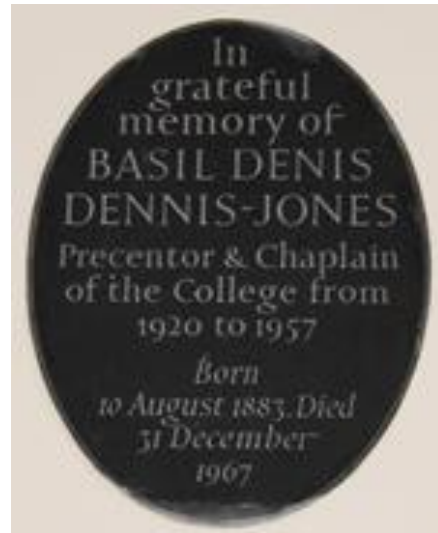
Basil Dennis-Jones

Treasurer and Senior Treasurer 1926 to mid-1960s

Basil Dennis-Jones was born 10th August 1883 in Walton, Cheshire. His father was Rector of Winlaton, Newcastle-on-Tyne. He studied at Keble College, Oxford and was ordained at York around 1st October 1907. After a period as Curate at Hexham Abbey, he was Precentor and Minor Canon at Manchester Cathedral from 1910 to 1920. He was appointed as a Chaplain for Italy by the Colonial and Continental Church Society for the month of September 1912.

During the First World War he served as an Army Chaplain and received the OBE in February 1919. In October 1920 he returned to Manchester Cathedral where the last record of him is in October 1920, after which he arrived at Trinity College, Cambridge as Chaplain and Precentor. In 1926 he became engaged to Hilda Merle Shiers, a 20 year old alumna of Harrogate Ladies College, and they were married in Cheadle in June 1928.

Basil Dennis-Jones joined the Pentacle Club on 18th January 1923 and became Librarian in 1925. In 1926 he became Treasurer, a role which he held until 1963, at which point an undergraduate Treasurer was appointed and he became Senior Treasurer. Even though he had retired from his Chaplaincy at Trinity in 1957 he was still eligible, as a Cambridge MA, to be Senior Treasurer. Many meetings of the Committee were held in his rooms in Trinity.



Memorial - Trinity College Chapel

Sadly, the records are missing for the next few years, so it is unclear how long he remained in this post, but he was still in it for the year 1964-1965 despite being over 80 years old. When the newly formed Oxford Magical Society and the Pentacle Club competed against each other in 1964, he gave a Trophy. This was won by the Pentacle Club on the two occasions on which the competition was held. He was invited, on the first occasion, to attend The Magic Circle to present the Trophy, but the report of the meeting in *Abracadabra* does not mention his presence there,¹⁴⁹ while that in *The Magic Circular* merely records that he had given the Trophy.¹⁵⁰ His age may have precluded his travelling.

I do not recall having any dealings with him while on the Committee though, at this remove, memories are untrustworthy. Like many of the senior members of the Pentacle Club his connection with magic is unclear. One may speculate that, like many of his generation, he was introduced to it while on active service in WW1. The first record of his contact with the Club is when he offered his services as pianist for the Guest Night in February 1921.

He wrote a number of books including *A Varsity Career* (1926), *Conduct of Public Worship* (1931), and *Passion Music* (1931).

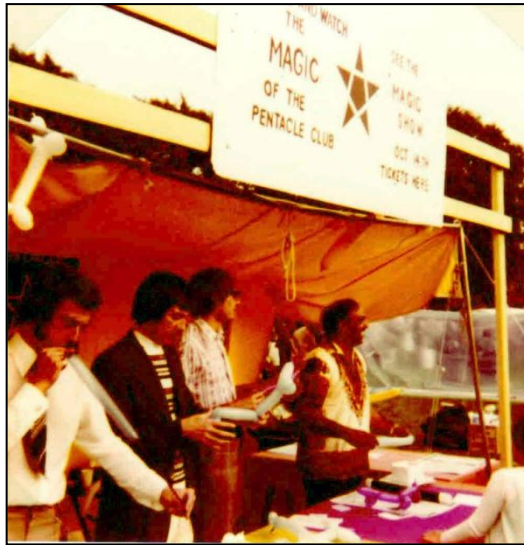
Basil Dennis-Jones died at Grange House, Selwyn Gardens, 31st December 1967 at the age of 84. His wife died in 1990.

¹⁴⁹ Capon C. Magic Circle - Dennis-Jones Cup. *Abracadabra*, 1964;38:350

¹⁵⁰ Capon C. University Magic. *The Magic Circular*, 1965;59:73

Chapter 13

The Return of the Full Show – 1978 to 1991



Summer Fair 1978

Chris Kostecki, Roy Heath, John Davenport, Dara Kaka

1978-79

The 1978 Summer Fair on Parker's Piece provided an opportunity to promote the Club and to advertise its first full-length show for ten years at the Mumford Theatre on East Road in October. This was *It's a Magic World* and the performers included Claude Perry, Malcolm Nunn, Eric Widger, Dara Kaka, Roy Heath, Peter Killworth and John Whitmore. John Davenport featured Oswald Williams' Noah's Ark illusion. There were just two performances, both on 14th October, and a profit of approximately £150 was made, providing a good boost to Club funds. Fogel's Cheating the Gallows was the feature illusion.¹⁵¹



It's A Magic World

Claude Perry performing "Troublewit"

Roy Heath

A mysterious flashing lightbulb was installed in the window of the Anglia Building Society as part of the advertising of this show.

Just before the show, on 10th October, the Club held an Open meeting at which John Whitmore gave a talk on the History of Magic and the Pentacle Club, John Davenport and Dave Cridland performed stand-up magic and Roy Heath, Peter Killworth, Roy Gilbert and Dick Marchant provided the close-up. As a result of this meeting there were several new members.

Arthur Adolph (Smartie Artie) came to the Club the following Tuesday to present *Children's Magic as a Business*. The next week was a visit from the Ipswich Magical Society and Harry Reeve spoke on *A Craftsman's Approach to Magic* the following week. The Dealer Demonstration for the Autumn was by Ron Gilbert, and Henrique (Alan Goodall) was the last visiting lecturer before Christmas talking about both children's and adult magic. The term closed with a Social Evening.

To fill a weekly programme is a tall order but the Pentacle Club continued to succeed in this. The Lent Term started with a film evening, including a recording of *It's a Magic World* and the interview given by John Davenport on Anglia Television before that show. There was extreme weather the week after and the planned meeting was cancelled, but the programme restarted the next week with a visit by Jack Delvin, followed over subsequent weeks by a team Competition and a Dealer Dem by Peter Quinsee. Yet more guest lectures were provided by Mark Leveridge on *The Art of Close-up*, and Richard Stuppel who made a return visit with *Bookworm's Bonanza* based on his experience as Reference Librarian at The Magic Circle.

Five members took part in a charity show in March for the St. Raphael Club, an organisation providing social facilities for people with physical disabilities. The last lecture of the Term was *Be Professional* by Peter Stedman, and the last event the Annual Dinner, again at the University Centre, this time with a set menu. The Guests of Honour were Ali Bongo and his mother. Ali also responded to the toast to the guests and participated in the after-dinner cabaret with his "other act".



The Easter Term again provided a packed programme with guest lectures from Michael Austin, Tony Shelley and Rex Cooper, a Dealer-demonstration from Paul Scott Magic, visits to the Ipswich Magical Society and to the South Lincolnshire Magical Society in Peterborough and the Annual General Meeting.

There was a bonus event in May, when there was a "talk-in" with Paul Daniels, covering his approach to magic and entertaining the public. Paul was presented with a Chung Ling Soo poster.

Paul Daniels Talk-In 23rd May 1979

Roy Gilbert, John Davenport, Chung Ling Soo Poster, Paul Daniels

At the end of this Term, Roy Gilbert stood down from the post of Secretary, which he had held for the two years previous. Alan J Clarke took over the role. The Club again participated in the Leisure Fair in the summer but there is no further information in the archives.

1979-80

October brought the start of the new Academic Year and the Open Meeting, with stage and close-up magic being presented. The first Guest Lecture of the year was by Ken de Courcy, with *Presentation Points* on close-up magic. Donald Bevan, Associate Editor of *Abacadabra* visited in November and Peter Scarlett lectured on a wide range of magic the next week. There was a dealer-dem from R.A.R. Magic and the Close-up Competition, jointly won by Roy Heath and David Curtis.

Also in October was another full-length show, *Hey Presto* at the Mumford Theatre, this time involving John Whitmore, David Cridland, Devi Agarwala, Malcolm Nunn and Roy Gilbert, with performances by visiting guests Reg Allen, Len Blease, Ed Ward and Johnny Wai and She (Johnny Wainwright and Sheila). Although this was not really a Pentacle show, being organised by Dara Kaka, as a result of it Anglia Television visited the Pentacle Clubroom at Churchill College, producing good publicity for the Club when it was screened on *Look East*.



Hey Presto! October 1979
Devi (David) Agarwala

In November the Club participated in a Charity Show at the Guildhall in support of the British Heart Foundation and the Cancer Scanner Appeal. Also in November Roy Heath gave a talk *Here's Heath* to the Club, with the second part of the meeting being the Annual Auction. For the last meeting of the Term there was a Christmas Social, including a visit from the Ipswich Magical Society.

Eric Widger hosted two "convivial evenings of wine, cheese and magic" at his home in January, to raise funds for the Club. There were in-house meetings plus visiting lecturers, David Barnes known as Barney the Magic Clown and Francis Haxton. Len Blease came along to do a Dealer Dem. There was an Auction, the second of the year and the Competition for the Widger Trophy, won by Dara Kaka. Evenings in both this and the next Term were dedicated to video recordings.

The Annual Dinner took place at Churchill College with the cabaret provided by Terry Burgess, Sam and Joy Mallinson and Roy Gilbert. A stern letter was received from the College as a result of damage caused by people sitting on chairs placed on dining tables.

The Club continued its programme of visiting lecturers in the Easter Term with Harold Taylor on general magic, Walt Lees on comedy and presentation in close-up magic and Jack Mayes on entertaining children. There was a visit to the Ipswich society and a talk by John Davenport on *Magic of the Past*.

The main event of the year was the first ever Pentacle One-Day Convention, *Midsummer Convention*, on Sunday 29th June. There were star lectures by David Berglas on *Professional Presentation*, Jean Merlin on *Rope Magic* and Trevor Lewis on *Entertaining Children Magically*. Alex Elmsley led the Close-up Seminar, which also included Dave Walker from the USA, Jean Merlin and Trevor Lewis. The Gala Show in the evening featured The Carandoes, a very young brother and sister act with doves, Paul Scott performed Card in Chewing Gum, John Whitmore performed the Noah's Ark Illusion and Derek Lever closed the first half with his dynamite illusion. The Valdoses had a comedy act based on a short-sighted magician, Tai-Wei-Sue presented Chinese magic, Claude Perry did Claude Perry's act and Chris North and Jill closed the show. Jack Delvin was the compere. The Convention was very successful magically though the finances were less so, with a large loss being made.

Shortly before the Convention Alan Clarke stepped down from the post of Secretary being replaced by Peter Osborne. Alan was ordained the same day as the Convention.

1980-81

An Extraordinary General Meeting took place on 7th October to discuss the outcome of the Convention. Churchill College were still owed almost £300 and a request to see if there was any way to reduce the bill was unsuccessful. Although not on the agenda of the meeting a decision was made to cancel the forthcoming lecture by Pavel, which was to cost £125. The Chairman, John Whitmore, who had been unable to be at the EGM, overruled this and the lecture took place as planned in November. Other visiting lecturers of the term were Ted Lumby (Tovenaar) and Harry Baron. As a result of the controversy over the Pavel meeting Peter Osborne resigned as Secretary and Roy Gilbert temporarily stepped into the breach.

The New Year brought Lez Jones, a policeman, with Road Safety & Children's Magic, a visit from the Ipswich society and a dealer dem by Paul Stone of Ace Magic. "Supertramp" Don Simpson and Paul Diamond from the USA gave two very entertaining evenings. There was also the Competition for the Eric Widger Trophy, won by Dave Cridland, and a talk on card magic by Ted Farrington.

After the meeting by Lez Jones there was a discussion about the feasibility of another one-day Convention. How was the financial viability to be guaranteed? Despite the losses of the previous event it was decided to proceed.

Edwin and Ian of Supreme Magic visited in April with a dealer dem, Marvello (Terry Wright) lectured on *Do you want to be a magician or an entertainer?*, there was the Close-up competition which drew a very small audience and a visit to Ipswich. The only public performance by the Club was by John Whitmore, Chris Kosteki, Dara Kaka and Roy Gilbert at a dinner in the Engineering Department of the University.

28th June was the day of the Convention, held this time at Impington Village College. It was opened by Tony Shelley, President of the IBM British Ring. After a Dealer Demonstration came the first Star Lecture, by Klingsor from Belgium with *Easy and Effective Magic*. There followed a three-course lunch, included in the £12.50 registration fee, and after lunch the Close-up session with Vic Allen, Mark Leveridge and which finished with Roger Crosthwaite, in whose act oranges and boots were hurled at the audience and salt was poured over everyone and everything. An account of this, and Billy McComb's performance in the Gala Show appears in *Pabular*.¹⁵² The second Star Lecture was by Richard Stuppel on Children's Magic.

The day closed with a Gala Show with a panoply of talent, Colinsky and Flame (Colin Wade and Wendy), Julie Llusion (Proudlove), Terry Burgess and Klingsor provided the first half. Allen Merrell, Jean and Dennis Collins, Billy McComb and San Yen (Colin Hughes) were after the interval.

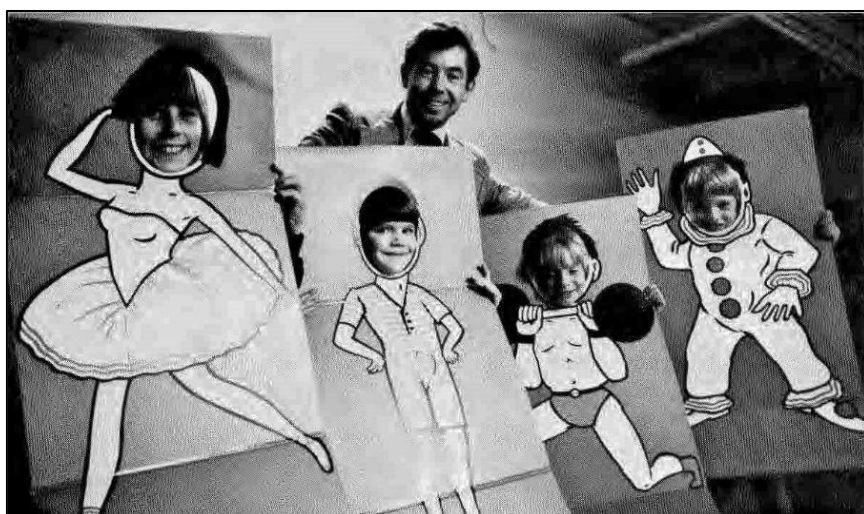
Happily the Convention was also a financial success, with a positive balance of £200, which was used to clear the outstanding debt to Churchill College from the year before.

A number of Club members went to Ipswich in July for a talk by Jack Delvin. The first half was on the methods used by Uri Geller; Jack had gained entrance to the TV studio by posing as a studio hand. The second half was Jack's own magic. The talk contained convincing demonstrations of key-bending and mental effects.

1981-82

At the beginning of October nine members of the Club performed at The Mill Theatre, Sharnbrook near Bedford in a show to raise funds for the full implementation of the Mill as a 250 seat theatre. This was organised by Eric Widger.

The first Club meeting of the Term was a second visit by Ted Lumby and the next a farewell party for Roy Gilbert who was moving from Cambridge. The post of Secretary was taken by Chris Kosteki. There was a further lecture by John Cooper, a visit by the Ace Magic Club of Hitchin and a Dealer Demonstration by International Magic. The usual Auction and internal meetings took place.



Roy Gilbert
Secretary of the Club
who left Cambridge in 1981

The Spring Term was equally diverse, with a lecture *A Lifetime in Magic* by Edward Pearce, a dealer demonstration by Kovari, a return visit to the Hitchin Club and a lecture on *The Davenport Story* by John Davenport. There were also the Close-up competition, talks by members, including Ken de Courcy and a visit from Roy Gilbert. Eric Widger held another *At Home* which raised £40 for the Club. In February it was announced that the Third Pentacle One-Day Convention would take place in June, again at Impington College. Roy Gilbert acted as Convention Registration Officer although he was no longer in Cambridge.

Lectures in the Easter Term were from John Palfreyman on Children's Magic and Jim Adams on Close-up and Stand-up Magic. There was a video evening, a Bring and Buy Sale and a return visit to the Ipswich Society.

The Third One-Day Convention was on 27th June with star lectures by Ted Lesley and Johnny Geddes and a Close-up session with Pat Page, Mike Gancia and Ken Hawes. The Gala Show was even more star-studded with Mike Gancia, Faye (Kay Swadling), Leeroy (Roy Roth), Johnny Geddes in his "John Reid" character, Alan Shaxon and Anne, John Whitmore, Jack Mayes and Geoffrey Durham as "The Great Soprendo".

1982-83

The only meetings of the Michaelmas Term 1982 which required active participation from members were *Trick Time* in October and *Impromptu Magic* in November. Otherwise there was a Question and Answer session by Billy McComb, *Close-up Tricks I Don't Do* from Ken de Courcy and Children's Magic from Les Nottle. The other weeks were occupied by the Auction and visits from the Northampton and Ipswich societies.

There were two meetings involving videos in the Lent Term. *Videos of Christmas* was first and later in term there was a *Learn from Your Mistakes* video evening. David Hemingway presented a lecture/dealer demonstration, Chris Pratt spoke on Close-up magic and Terry Seabrooke lectured in his own inimitable style, including items shortly to be used in his forthcoming lecture at the Magic Castle. There was an auction of the props of a deceased member, Ron Edwards, and Claude Perry closed the Term's programme.

Video featured again at the start of the Easter Term, with recordings of the shows at the Pentacle Conventions. Richard Stupple gave insights into Punch and Judy and Geoffrey Buckingham into Manipulations. At the AGM, held in Churchill College on 3rd May, Claude Perry was elected Chairman, a position which he continued to hold for many years.

The 7th May saw the Annual Dinner at the University Arms Hotel given in honour of the retirement of Sir William Hawthorne as Master of Churchill College. Past members travelled from afar and local members turned out in force resulting in about 60 people present. Sir William was presented with a plaque bearing a silver tipped magic wand and achieved his ambition by sawing a lady (his daughter) in half as part of the cabaret. Other performers were Eric Widger, Sue and Ken de Courcy and Claude Perry. Billy McComb joined in the informal close-up session after dinner.



Annual Dinner 1983

Sir William Hawthorne and Mounted Wand



Sir William sees through his daughter

Mid-June was the date of the Fourth Pentacle One-Day Convention, again at Impington. There were lectures by Roy Baker and by Brian Lee on Children's Magic. The Gala show included the Cambridge Jugglers, the Great Camperini (Walt Lees), Peter Greenwood, Ken de Courcy and Sue, Roy Johnson, fire magic by Krakatoa and Tina, Wayne Dobson, and Kordan and Patricia (Geoff Ray and Pat). During the afternoon a close-up session had been presented twice, in order to maximise the visibility for the spectators. This involved Roberto Giobbi, Roy Johnson and Rovi (Ivor Parry). While one group was watching this, the other group were at liberty to visit the dealers, Terry and Norma, Practical Magic, Camtryx, Mark Leveridge, Peter Crush, Magictrix and Ken Ward with Fantasio products.

Roberto Giobbi, who was in Cambridge for three months studying English, lectured to the Club at an additional meeting arranged at the University Arms hotel in August.

1983-84

A small Club Magazine was started in October 1983 with articles by Roy Heath, Eric Widger and Ken de Courcy. It also contained the programme for the coming Term: Open Evening, Teaching evening, Close-up lecture by Mark Leveridge, the Auction, *This, that and the Other* by Ted Lumby, a Workshop evening, an *evening of surprise and mystery* and a Christmas Social.

In October Eric Widger arranged two shows at the school in Holywell with Eric, Claude Perry, John Whitmore, Chris Kosteki, Dara Kaka, Ken de Courcy and Sue, Roy Heath and Tim Curtiss participating. The afternoon show to 160 spectators was aimed mainly at children and did not include the Cheating the Gallows effect which was presented to the 80 people present at the evening show. The funds raised were shared between the Church Fabric Fund and the Club.

As Sir William Hawthorne had retired from the Mastership of Churchill the Clubroom in the College was no longer available and an alternative venue had to be found. The final choice was the Station Hotel. The first meeting held there was *First Night of the Props*, orchestrated by Claude Perry and Malcolm Nunn. For the next meeting Lez Jones returned with *A Policeman's Lot...* and there were lectures by Smartie Artie and Roy Johnson later in the Term. Peter Killworth and Eric Maskell ran *From Our Own Stable* and the other meetings of Term were a Pentacle Test Match, the Competition for the Eric Widger Trophy and a Patter and Presentation evening.

The Club was booked to entertain The Magic Circle in May, so the first meeting of the session was taken up with a preview of the acts to perform there. The next week was a visit from the Northampton Society and the following Monday was the trip to the Circle.



The Magician's Guide to the Galaxy. Magic Circle 14th May 1984

Eric Maskell

Colin Daines

Eric Widger

Stuart Jacobs

Dara Kaka

Roy Heath

Chris Kosteki

David Cridland

Claude Perry

The Circle show was entitled *The Magician's Guide to the Galaxy*, with Pilot Eric Maskell and crew of David Cridland, Chris Kostecki, Eric Widger, Stuart Jacobs, Claude Perry, Roy Heath and Colin Daines, with Dara Kaka as "lurker", turning up from time to time with anti-gravity glasses. Many of the effects were twists on standard effects, supposedly due to reduced gravity, such as the ribbon fountain which actually wound itself backwards into the pot. This show took place on 14th May, 65 years to the day from the first meeting of the Pentacle Club in 1919.¹⁵³

Other events of the term included lectures by Maurice Day on Children's Entertainment and by Harry Reeve. Members were invited to use an evening to present effects which had not been bought from dealers, that is they were either their own invention or made up from books or magazines. Mary Widger presented *I Married a Magician* and John Davenport made a trawl through the Club archives.

The Club was in good health. There were 40 names on the Membership list and the accounts presented at the AGM showed a balance in hand of almost £430. The Annual Dinner was held at Owen Webb House with a cabaret provided by Lez Jones and John Whitmore.

1984-85

Guest Lecturers for the Michaelmas Term were Peter Lane and Terry Herbert, the latter speaking on *Magic for the Under-5s*. *Three of a Kind* were Lez Jones, Sean Taylor and ... (the ... does not appear to have been identified in any subsequent document) while Claude Perry presented a *bot night* wherein members had to perform with equipment other members had brought. Mike Gilchrist and Ted Farrington presented evenings and there was an Auction and the Christmas Party.

Eric Widger arranged and compered a return visit to the Mill Theatre at Sharnbrook in October which starred Sue & Ken de Courcy, David Cridland, Dara Kaka, Chris Kostecki, Claude Perry and John Whitmore. In November the same performers appeared in a show at St. Ivo School, St. Ives for the local Conservative Association. The show was attended by the MP for Huntingdon, John Major, who later became Prime Minister.

1985 started with two informal meetings, the first being close-up magic performed in the Bar of the Station Hotel and the second a video evening. However there also came the sad news that Devi Agarwala had died of a heart attack while in India to organise a Magic Convention.

Tony Faro came to the Club to lecture on Close-up Magic, Roy Gilbert returned to lecture and there was a visit from Wally Boyce. There was the Widger Trophy Competition, won by Lez Jones, an evening of presentations from younger members and Part 3 of *bot night* with Claude Perry.

As Peter Killworth had left Cambridge, it was necessary, under University regulations, to elect a new Senior Treasurer, who had to be an MA of Cambridge University. John Davenport was elected at the AGM in June.

The Easter Term was impressively started with a lecture by Vice-President Billy McComb. Terry Burgess lectured and did a Dealer Demonstration and George and Joy Rissen spoke about their forty years in magic. The other guest lecturer was Jimmy Haviland the Street Conjuror. The only home-grown lecturer for the term was Lez Jones on close-up. There was a Puzzles and Pocket Tricks night plus a barbecue at the home of John Whitmore. The Annual Dinner was again held at Owen Webb House, with Ron Betteridge as guest entertainer.

In July Dara Kaka was featured in the *Cambridge Weekly News*, with the Club being mentioned.¹⁵⁴ There had been worries that the Station Hotel might be demolished with the resulting loss of meeting venue but this did not occur as the planning application for change of use of the site was rejected.

1985-86

The first Tuesday of October brought rehearsals for a visit to the Leicester Magic Circle. The visit itself was the following Monday with the Club presenting a version of the *Guide to the Galaxy*; this was greatly enjoyed.

Ray King on *Children* and Ian Keable-Elliott on *Commercial Close-up* were the guest lecturers for the term while Claude Perry and Eric Widger provided local contributions. Ken & Sue de Courcy gave out various “dealer” items which participants had to open, study the instructions and then perform; considerable hilarity ensued and the effects were then auctioned for Club Funds. With the Annual Auction, *A Display of Pentacle Magic*, an informal Test Match with the Ipswich Society in Bury St. Edmunds, and a Christmas Social, a full programme was achieved.

The *Cambridge Weekly News* for Christmas Eve featured the magical career of Eric Widger which had started as The Dorset Boy Magician at the age of 12 in 1924 giving over 60 years of performing.¹⁵⁵ His talk referred to above had been *Sixty Years in Magic has Taught Me...* He was also featured in a large spread in the *Huntingdon Post* the following April.¹⁵⁶

The three meetings in January 1986 were all internal events, a video evening, *Entertaining Ourselves* where everyone had to bring one trick, and another *Tricks and Puzzles* evening hosted by John Davenport. The first meeting of February was Rex Cooper with some novel close-up magic. The other guest lecturer of the Term was former member Roger Crosthwaite whose card magic skills astounded the entire audience.

Sean Taylor won the Eric Widger Trophy, there was a dealer demonstration by Brian Nye of Practical Magic and a visit to the Club from four members of the Medway Magical Society. The other meetings of the session were organised locally, including a “surprise meeting”, which meant that at the time the programme was issued it hadn’t been organised.

The newsletter at the end of March promised a “magic packed three months” and indeed it was, with a lecture and dealer demonstration by Ron Gilbert, an evening with George Johnstone from Chicago and a lecture from Graham Reed, magical adviser to the Paul Daniels shows.

In addition there was an internal meeting *Have You Seen This One?*, a visit to the Medway Magical Society with performances by Ken and Sue de Courcy, Eric Maskell, Sean Taylor, Chris Kosteck, John Whitmore and Claude Perry, *The A - Z of Magic* coordinated by Eric Maskell, and *Collectable Magic*. The Annual Dinner at Owen Webb House and a Summer Test Match against the Northampton Club at Kempston, Bedford helped to pack those three months. At the AGM Geoff Armstrong resigned as Secretary, the post being taken over by Sean Taylor. Also at that meeting it was decided to formalise the programme as three sessions of ten weeks, thus extending beyond University Terms and decreasing the intervals between sessions. The financial year was also altered so that rather than finishing just before the AGM it ran to 31st March.

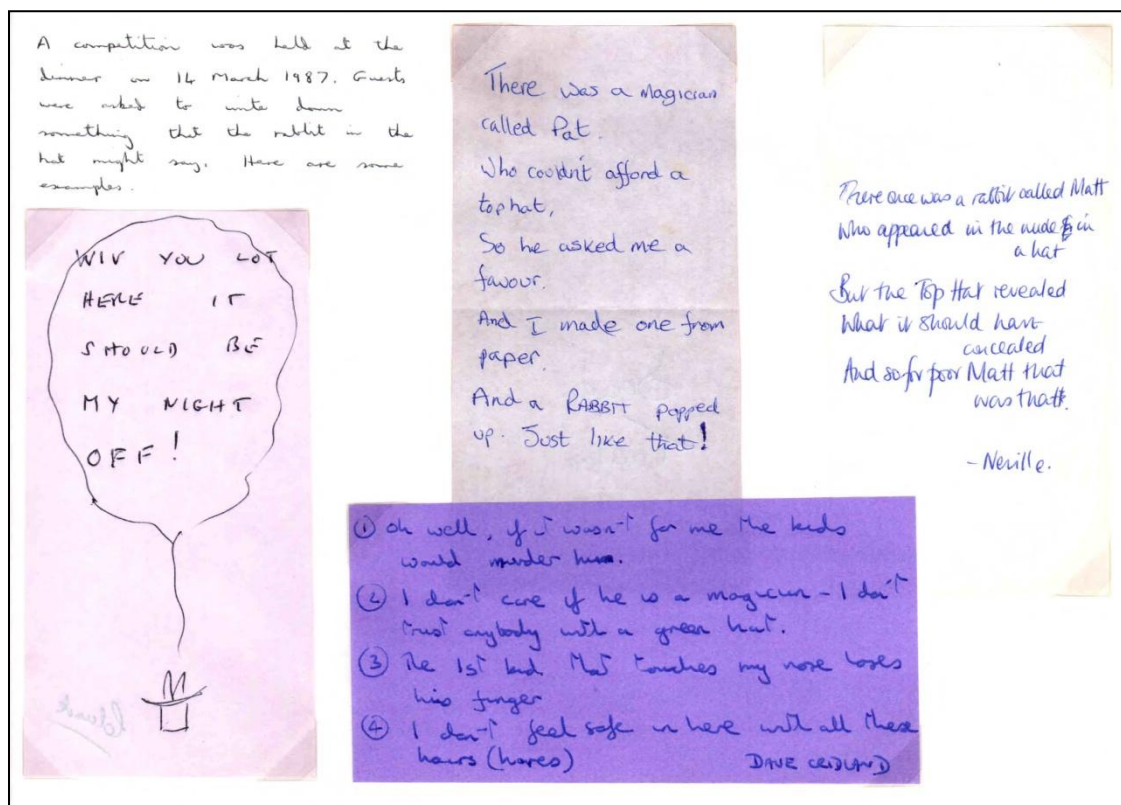
1986-87

In accordance with the AGM decision, the next session started on 16th September with the Committee providing an entertainment. This was followed at the beginning of October by an evening with Ken de Courcy, a visit from the Leicester Magical Society and Eric Armstrong with *The Return of the Wandering Wizard*. Wally Boyce paid a second *Magic Funatic* visit and the Ipswich Society provided an evening of lecturettes. The third visiting lecturer was Stephen Tucker and the session was completed by the auction, an evening with Claude Perry and the Christmas Party.

In October it was announced that the meeting room at the Station Hotel was to be converted into a Steak Bar so from November the meetings took place at the Golden Hind in Milton Road. The Club was featured on Radio Cambridgeshire in November, with Eric Armstrong performing the electric sawing-through and additional participation by Sean Taylor and Eric Widger.

The first session of 1987 brought Guest Lectures from Pat Page which included his thoughts on the Topit vanisher, and from Len Blease. There was an evening of Lecturettes from John Whitmore, Colin Daines and Mike Gilchrist. Deryk Lees presented a *Pot-Pourri*, and John Whitmore and Colin Daines showed *Tricks for Everyone*. An Evening with John Saville, the Widger Trophy Competition, won by Philip Bond, a Chris Kosteck evening and a teach-in by Geoff Armstrong and friends completed the Club evenings of the session.

The Annual Dinner, held this year in March, was again at Owen Webb House. Place labels were in the form of origami rabbits in top hats made by John Davenport, a considerable effort as thirty were required. There was a competition for "what the rabbit might have said", and although examples of entries exist in the archive there is no record of the winner. There was no Guest Performer, the entertainment being provided by members.



Dinner 1987 Rabbit Thoughts

There seemed to be an epidemic of pubs being in the throes of alteration. In April the meeting venue had to be changed yet again as the Golden Hind was closing for renovation with the meeting room to be changed into a restaurant. It was therefore necessary to decamp, this time to the Jolly Waterman on Chesterton Road.

Eric Maskell, Brian Downham, Sean Taylor and Neville Selby provided Club Evenings and there were Guest Lectures by Leslie Melville on Children's Magic and by Ali Cardabra who gave *A full evening's magic without a single card trick*, again with the emphasis on children's magic. A visit from the West Norfolk Magical Society, led by George and Joy Rissen, a Barbeque and the AGM completed the year's programme.

1987-88

At the beginning of the Michaelmas Term the Club had a stand at the Societies' Fair at the Kelsey Kerridge Sports Hall. This was followed up by an Open Meeting in November, with free magic show, as a recruiting event. Three new members joined as a result of these efforts.

The Jolly Waterman proved to be too expensive so there was a move to the Duke of Argyll, off Mill Road. The first Club meeting was a visit from the Northampton Magic Society, with Roy Gilbert, ex-secretary of the Pentacle Club and Anthony Owen as part of their team. Evenings with Claude Perry and David Cridland, Eric Widger, Ken de Courcy and with Chris Kosteki filled a number of the meetings. There was also the Auction, a chance to get your favourite effect on video, a Dealer Dem from Stacey Lee's Magic Palace and a lecture from Dennis Patten. As usual, this Term finished with the Christmas Party.

At the end of October the Club presented a Half-Term Magical Afternoon for children and their parents at Sawston Youth Centre.

The Duke of Argyll was rapidly found to be unsatisfactory and the venue was changed to Arbury Community Centre. The programme planned for the next Term was considerably modified; though most of the events took place, few of them were on the date originally intended. Bob Moore and Shaun Yee were visiting lecturers, but a Magic Circle Film Archive evening had to be cancelled. There was a Library Night, an evening with John Davenport and Malcolm Jaggard, a close-up evening and meetings presented by Roy Heath, Dennis Collins, who had recently returned to the Cambridge area, John Whitmore and Claude Perry. Dennis Collins won the Widger Trophy competition in March.

Owen Webb House was again used for the Annual Dinner in March, at which the cabaret was provided by Len Blease, Eric Widger and Sir William Hawthorne.

There was only one visiting lecturer in the Summer term; Mark Leveridge lectured on Table-Hopping. However after the AGM in April Philip Bond, a relatively new member, gave a demonstration on Pyrotechnics and Stage Magic. Other meetings were occupied by a Dealer Demonstration by Hugo the Magician, an evening with Eric Widger entitled *Magic, Mary and Me*. There was also a *Cards, Coins and Cabaret* evening and the Test Match.

John Davenport lectured at the first Ipswich Convention in May, talking about Maskelyne's, Davenports and the development of the Dove Pan.

1988-89

The Club continued to meet at Arbury Community Centre after the Summer break despite concerns about the small size of the meeting room, which made it difficult to invite other clubs to attend Star Lectures. The Term started with a video night. Most of the meetings for the Term were organised in-house, but there was a visit from Roy Johnson and an evening with Ray King. Lez Jones presented tricks from his library, Tony Middleton showed *Magic at the Bar* and there was an Auction, followed a few weeks later by *A Trick from an Auction*. A teach-in as a follow-up to the stand at the University Societies' Fair and the Christmas Social completed the Term's programme of meetings. A children's show at Melbourne Village College took place at school half-term.

John and Anne Davenport and Geoff and Rosie Armstrong left the Club during the year as a result of job changes, a surprise party being given for them at the end of November.

1989-90

Unfortunately at this point there is a lacuna in the archive, the next information being for the Autumn of 1989, when Claude Perry and friends opened the Term's programme. There were two visiting lecturers, George Peake on children's magic and "the hilarious Terry Machin", an evening of currency magic, a "three way workshop" and an evening for which members were invited to bring along antique props. A visit to Stacey Lee's Magic Palace was also organised. The Auction and the Christmas Party were the other sessions of the Term.

Spring 1990 brought visiting lecturers Gus Wilson, Bozo the Clown and Andy Leach, home grown evenings with Dennis Collins and Colin Daines, the Widger Trophy Competition and an evening of mentalism, an April Fool's Night and a visit from Pandora's Magic Box.

At the AGM in June the opinion was expressed that the Club was stuck in a rut, with the same meetings being repeated year after year. The standard of visiting lectures had been poor, but the in-house meetings were going from strength to strength. Sir William Hawthorne had expressed the wish to step down as President due to the illness of his wife and the fact that he was living in America, her homeland. Dennis Collins proposed that this was the time to change the constitution and break the connection with the University. It was agreed that the Committee would discuss the proposal. The treasurer reported a second year in which the Club had made a loss and it was agreed that subs be increased to £20 per year.

1990-91

Though no record exists of the decision to change, by autumn 1990 the frequency of meetings had dropped from weekly to fortnightly. The autumn term started in September, before the start of University Term, with a lecture on *Children's Magic* by David Tomkins from Luton. Other feature lectures were *My Kind of Magic* with Raymond Roberts and *Magical Mysteries of Reg Scot*. Dennis Collins ran two successive meetings. The first was a quiz to start the meeting with Sean Taylor filling the second half with Paper Magic, and the second was *What's in a Name?* There was an evening with Lez Jones and, of course, the auction and the Christmas Party.

In January the planned programme for the whole of 1991 was issued thus widening the gap between the Club, the University and the Academic Year. The first event was a visit from former Secretary Roy Heath who had some magic suitable for children and some for adults, plus origami, with which he made give-aways for parties. Billy Benbow spoke on *Children's Magic* in March, closely followed by Tony Brooks on Table Hopping, Len Blease with a varied mixture of magic and Simon Lovell on Stand-up Magic.

The final break with University Terms was at the AGM in April, when the subscription year was changed to coincide with the calendar year.

In July the Club presented a magical entertainment for the Histon Feast at Histon Church Hall, which raised £105 for the Club. The Secretary of the Feast expressed the hope that a Pentacle Show would become a regular feature of the Feast programme. The other public show was on 31st October, a Hallowe'en Show at Arbury Community Centre.

There were 31 names on the Membership List in October.

Other visiting lecturers during the year were Rex Freeman, Jack Lowen and Freddie Firth with the other meetings being filled with home-grown events, including a Test Match against the Ace Magical Society of Stevenage and the Widger Trophy Competition.

¹⁵¹ Anon. Show Gives Audience Magic Moments. *Cambridge Evening News*, 16 October 1978

¹⁵² Editor. Cambridge Close-up. *Pabular*, 1980;6:941

¹⁵³ Buttress F. The Pentacle Club. *The Magic Circular*, 1984;78:133

¹⁵⁴ Danks P. Being a Magician can be Quite a Tricky Business. *Cambridge Weekly News*, 11 July 1985

¹⁵⁵ Nicholls C. Entertainer Eric's magic world is Just the Trick. *Cambridge Weekly News*, 24 December 1985

¹⁵⁶ Hadder L. A World master in the art of magic. *Huntingdonshire Post*, 10 April 1986

Chapter 14

Interlude 7 – Sir William Hawthorne - President 1970 to 1990



William Rede Hawthorne was born on 22nd May 1913 in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He was educated at Westminster School and graduated from Trinity College, Cambridge in 1934 with a double first in Mathematics and Engineering.

After a year's practical work in Scotland with Babcock and Wilcox Ltd, he went to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as a Commonwealth Fund Fellow and received his ScD in fuel technology. He returned to the UK as a development engineer at Babcock and Wilcox.

In 1939 he married Barbara Runkle, granddaughter of the second President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, John Daniel Runkle. She died in 1992.

During the Second World War William Hawthorne was instrumental in the development of the jet engine by Frank Whittle, producing an improved method of mixing the fuel and air.

In 1951 he became Professor of Applied Thermodynamics and a Fellow of Trinity College. He became a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1955 and a Foreign Associate of the US National Academy of Sciences in 1965. In 1968 he was elected Master of Churchill College and from 1966 to 1973 was head of the Department of Engineering. While in this position he frequently asked the Pentacle Club to entertain at various Departmental functions. He was Knighted in 1970.

In 1956, under the stimulation of the Suez crisis, came his invention of the DRACONE flexible barge. This was a long tube made of rubberised cotton fabric which could be filled with oil or fresh water and towed behind a ship. On reaching its destination the contents could be removed and the tube rolled up and easily returned for further use. These eventually had capacities of up to 1100 tons. Later work was related to the development of wind turbines.

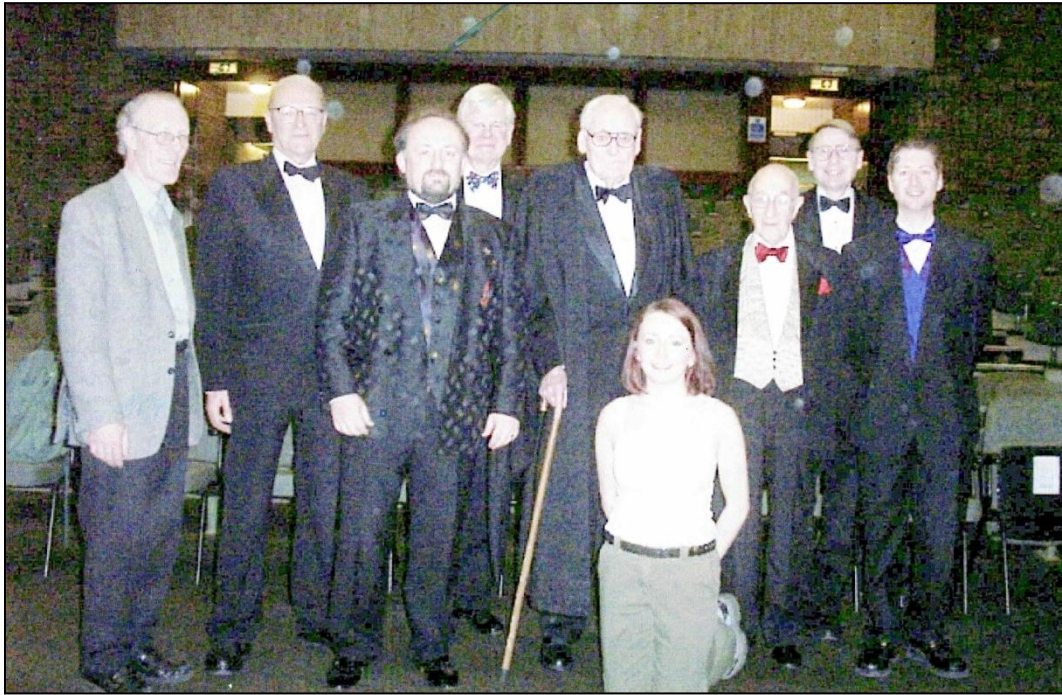
Under his Mastership, Churchill College developed strong relations with industry and was the first in Cambridge to admit women, in 1972, to what had previously been an all-male College.

He had always had an interest in magic and joined the Pentacle Club when he came up to Cambridge in 1931 and was elected to the Committee in May 1932. He appeared in the Annual Show in 1933 performing silk magic and also performed in the show at the Fortune Theatre, London in March 1933. He is in the list of Committee Members on the programme for the Show in February 1934, but is not listed as a performer.

As mentioned above, Sir William became Master of Churchill in 1968. When he was elected President of the Pentacle Club in 1970 he invited the Club to meet in the College, so that he could readily attend Club meetings and save the Club money on room hire.

At the Annual Dinner in 1983 he took part in the after-dinner cabaret with coin effects plus Torn and Restored Tissue. His act finished with Sawing Through a Lady (his daughter). A photograph of this is in the previous Chapter. Colleagues at Churchill were often taken aback when he produced bread rolls from behind his ears.

The Club accepted an invitation to provide a Magic Show for Sir William's 90th birthday Dinner in 2003.



Sir William's 90th birthday

*Philip Bond, David Girling, Alan Maskell, John Whitmore, Sir William, Claude Perry, John Davenport
Chris Wardle*

Samantha Buckmaster

Sir William died on 16th September 2011 at the age of 98 years. The Pentacle Club provided its last *Show for Sir William* at the dinner following his Memorial Service on 24th February 2012.

Chapter 15

Claude Perry at the Helm – 1992 to 2006

1992

The new year started with a talk on money magic by John Whitmore then Paul Garofalo of Cottenham lectured on *Just Puppets*. John Davenport travelled from Leicester to present an evening and Alan Clarke, previous secretary, also returned to talk. There were visits to and from the Norwich, Ipswich and Northampton Societies. Paul Spencer of PSP Props ran a Sale and Exchange evening and there was a dealer demonstration by Cliff Lount. The other meetings were in-house, with all the regular events as in previous years.

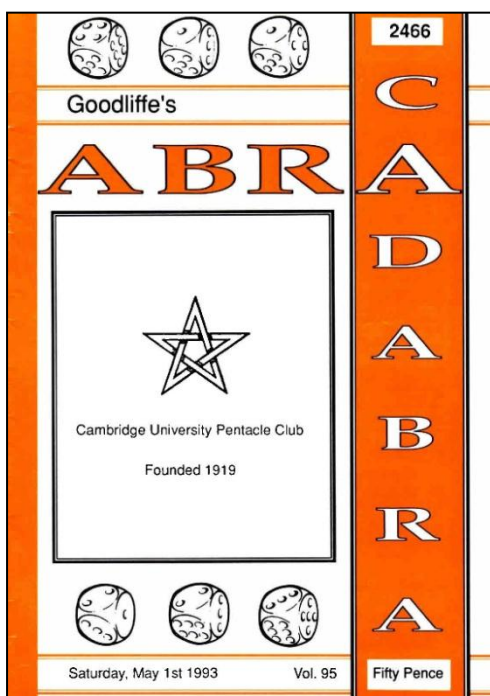
In March Eric Widger wrote to the Committee tendering the resignations of himself and his wife Mary on the grounds that recent illnesses had meant that he had been unable to attend meetings and could not “do his bit” for the Club. These resignations were not accepted; instead Eric was made an Honorary Life Member.

As had been intimated the year before, members of the Pentacle again performed an evening of magic at the Histon Feast in July, on this occasion raising £155 for Club funds.

1993

There was a plethora of visiting lecturers in 1993. Wally Boyce started the year and was followed by George Rissen, Freddie Firth, Keith Downs, Jack Lowen, and Richard Stupple who spoke on the Magic of Eric Lewis. There was a visit to the Ace Magic Club and one from the Norwich Magic Circle. John Whitmore organised a trip to the Mechanical Music Museum, at that time situated in Landbeach, and there were other meetings arranged within the Club.

Another performance at the Histon Feast raised £150 and there was a further show in June at Burwell College giving additional funds for the Club; as a result a proposal at the AGM to increase the subscription was turned down.



The Pentacle Club was featured on the cover of *Abracadabra – The World's Only Magical Weekly* on 1st May 1993, just under 74 years after the Club's foundation. There was a brief account of the history of the Club in the same issue.¹⁵⁷

Abracadabra Vol. 95 Issue 2466 1st May 1993
Pentacle as part of series of Magic Society Emblems

1994

1994 was again a full year with all the visiting lecturers being in the first half of the year, if one excludes John Davenport's visit in October. They were David Jones on close-up, Paul Temple, Pat Page and Mark Leveridge. There were visits to and from the Mid-Essex Magical Society and the Peterborough Magic Circle. Income over expenditure to March 1994 had been £220 but it was felt necessary to increase the subscription to £25 for the following year.

July was a busy month for the Club, starting with a show at Impington College on the 1st. On 7th to 9th Philip Bond, "Dr. Bondini", presented a full evening's magic show at the Mumford Theatre. He had been part of the Impington show but, as a result of his Mumford Theatre show, he could not be part of the, by now regular, performance at the Histon Feast on 8th July. This time it generated £200 for the Club Funds.

There were two deaths of Club members during the year. Malcolm Jaggard died in February at the age of 54, Eric Widger in August at the age of 82. A new Trophy was to be bought in Eric's memory, to be used for the Stand-up Competition, while the Sylvia Lawrence Shield would be awarded for Close-up Magic. In October a budget of £450 was set for the Secretary, Eric Armstrong, to try to arrange five visiting lecturers. As can be seen from the 1995 programme, these lectures were arranged (with a total cost of £415).

1995

Guest lecturers for the year were Ronaldo, Michael Austin, Maurice Day, Peter Westlake and Jon Gordon and there was a visit by dealer Brian Nye. July brought a visit from the Ipswich Society, but no return trip was made. In-house evenings were by Eric Maskell and Lez Jones (his fourth lecture in as many years). There was an evening at the house of Reg Lord plus competition nights, the auction and various teaching evenings.

The show for the Histon Feast took place at Impington College on 30th June. On this occasion Dr. Bondini was part of the entertainment. Though the takings were down on previous years, this still achieved an income of £150 for the Club.

There is no other information in the Archives for this year.

1996

Alan Maskell, son of Eric, had attended his first Pentacle AGM in April 1995 and took over as Secretary on 1st January 1996. He had been an active member of The Magic Circle for many years while living in London and Oxfordshire so he was not a newcomer to magic.

There were more visiting lecturers than usual in 1996, starting with a talk on children's magic by Wallis's Wonders (including a dealer demonstration). This was followed the following week by Ray da Silva, a puppeteer, then by Len Blease. Chris Pratt, Secretary of The Magic Circle followed in April and Ted Lumby made a return visit in June. Terry Barry and Walt Lees lectured in July and Jay Scott Berry and Anthony Owen in October, making a total of nine visitors out of 23 meetings.

A sixth appearance for the Histon Feast again took place at Impington College in June and there was a "Hallowe'en" show at St. Bede's School, in association with the Blue Cross, at the end of October.

The Annual Dinner 1996 took place at the Gonville Hotel on 1st October, with Mike O'Brien providing the cabaret.

1997

There was a flurry of visiting lecturers at the start of 1997, Mike O'Brien returned at the end of January to talk on close-up. The next meeting was another visitor, Scott Penrose on manipulation and stage magic and three meetings later it was the turn of John Palfreyman, who spoke on general magic. The other visitor was David Tomkins on children's magic in June. Rosie Gibb had been scheduled to lecture in October, but sadly she died in July.

The AGM in April saw the revision of the Constitution of the Club and the re-election of the Committee en bloc, with the exception of Dennis Collins who wished to stand down. Club Membership was steady at around forty. It is interesting that in the new Constitution the club's name is given as The Cambridge Pentacle Club. Early versions of the Constitution bore the name The Pentacle Club on the outside of the document and merely stated that "Membership of the Pentacle Club is open to Members of the University of Cambridge interested in Conjuring and allied arts." The first known use of "Cambridge University Pentacle Club" is on a poster of October 1946 during the revival of the Club.



*First known poster using
"Cambridge University Pentacle Club"
1946*

There was to be no attendance at the Histon Feast in 1997, though a show was put on in October at the Ely Sugar Beet Social Club, with Claude Perry, Dennis and Jean Collins, Andy Santry, Chris Kosteki, John Whitmore and Brian Downham performing. This was poorly attended by the public, possibly due to inadequate publicity, but fortunately it did not make a loss, just a minimal profit of £3.13p.

The dinner the previous year had obviously been a success since a return visit was made to the Gonville Hotel on 30th September with a menu identical to that of the year before.

1998

As a result of an earlier suggestion, Alan Maskell had put together some Standards and Rules for the Club's competitions. These were welcomed at the AGM in April as was the leaflet for new Club members, which included a brief history of the Club, prepared by John Whitmore. Alan had also put together the programme for 1998 with visits from Mark Leveridge, Roy Johnson, Harry Reeve, Ron London from America, Leslie Day and Myles Sinclair, the first and last of these combining a lecture and a dealer demonstration.

There were the regular Competitions (Stage won by Chris Kostecki, Close-up by Chris Wardle) and Auction plus a considerable number of evenings presented by members.

At the dinner, again at the Gonville Hotel at the end of September, the presentation of a statue of Isaac Fawkes was made to Jean and Dennis Collins to celebrate their 50 years in magic and their retirement from professional performing.

The Hallowe'en show in 1998 was at St. Laurence's School, Arbury on 27th October with Philip Bond, Dennis Collins, Wayne Goodman, Alan Maskell, Claude Perry, Chris Wardle and John Whitmore.

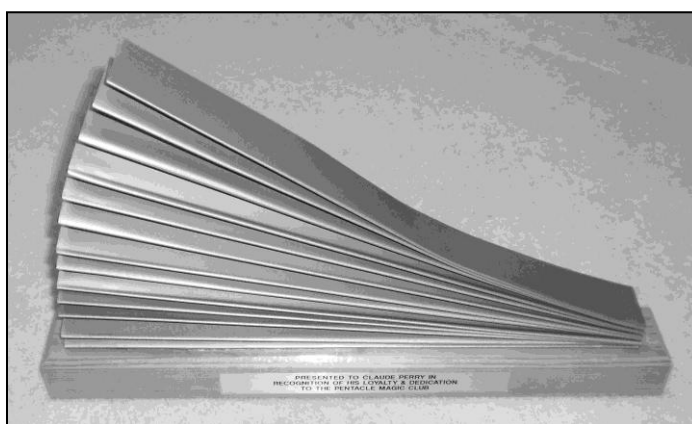
The possibility of changing meeting venue was looked at in September, and the decision was made to change to St. Laurence's School, where Chris Wardle was teaching at the time. The move would take place at the start of the New Year.

The Pied Pipers Musical Theatre Group had requested assistance with their show *Barnum* at the Arts Theatre in December. A number of members were able to provide "strolling" close-up magic before each show, and their contribution was greatly appreciated.

1999

It was the 80th Anniversary of the Club in 1999 and celebrations were planned. The possibilities of putting on a show at the Arts Theatre were investigated but the costs were found to be prohibitive and it was decided just to have an Anniversary Dinner.

The Gonville Hotel was unable to accommodate the Club for the dinner on the Saturday requested and a new venue was found at Selwyn College on 15th May, one day after the anniversary of the first preliminary meeting in 1919. Once arrangements had been finalised invitations to the dinner were sent out to all former members who could be contacted. On the evening 101 persons assembled including a number of past members, particularly from the early 1960s. Richard Stupple, President of the IBM British Ring, with his wife Mary, was the main guest. The cabaret was provided by Roy Johnson and Claude Perry; a special presentation of a "gold" Troublewit was made to Claude "in recognition of his loyalty and dedication to the Pentacle Magic Club". A leather commemorative bookmark, financed from Club funds, was given to all the guests.



Troublewit presented to Claude Perry 1999

Presidential Regalia in the form of a Cambridge Blue collar with attached silver Pentacle symbol was commissioned and bars were added with the names of previous Presidents.



Presidential Collar

Guest lecturers during the year were Alan Astra on children's magic, Rob Cox with "a cynical approach" to the same subject, Paul Gordon on card magic, David Jones, publisher of *The Conjuror* with a variety of mentalism and close-up magic and John Shearer on close-up and coins. A dealer demonstration from Marmon Magic Co. and a trip to the Kaymar Magic Company, together with competition nights, the auction and assorted Club nights completed the year's programme of meetings. The Widger Trophy was won by Philip Bond and the Close-up by Wayne Goodman. Additionally a further show was staged at St. Laurence's School in October.

2000

Preparations were in hand for a visit to The Magic Circle in March, but regular meetings continued. As it was "the new millennium" the first meeting of the year was a video evening entitled *Magic of the Last Century* presented by Alan Maskell.

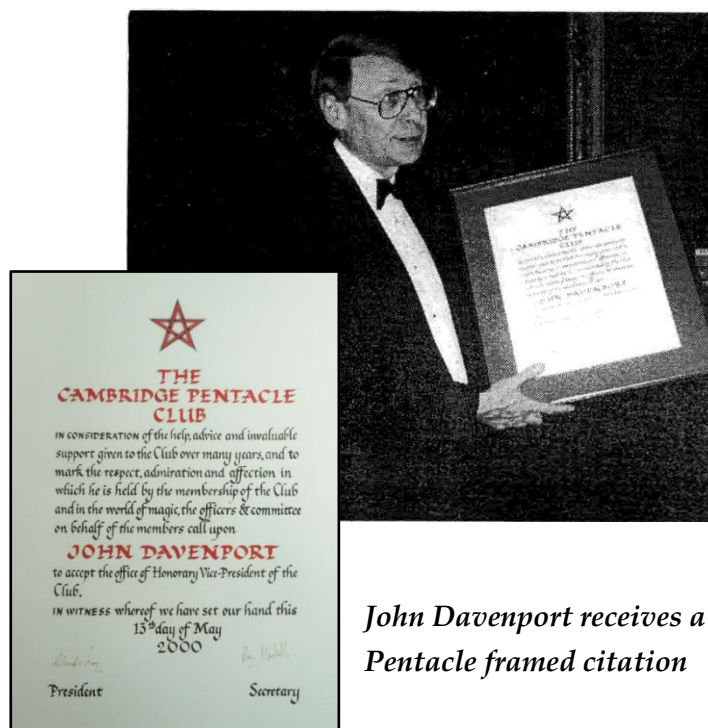
The first guest of the year was Ali Bongo with what he described as "an evolving lecture on useable magic". Other visitors through the year were Nic Einhorn with close-up magic, followed the next meeting by Shirley Ray with balloon modelling and magic. Patti Sinclair spoke on *The Business of Magic* and just before Hallowe'en there was a visit from Alain the Storyteller with bizarre and spooky magical tales. Ipswich Magical Society visited in July.

The first meeting in March was the Close-Up Competition, won by Wayne Goodman, which was filmed by Philip Bond's daughter as part of her school project.

The next Monday, 13th, the Club took its show to The Magic Circle. The reporter in *The Magic Circular* commented on how frequently the number three features in magic. David Girling did (three) cups and balls and (not three) linking rings, Wayne Goodman did a Find-the-Ace routine with three cards and Chris Wardle had a prediction involving three glasses each containing different coloured silks. Other performers were Philip Bond and Claude Perry, whose “three” was the production at the end of his Troublewit routine of a “vayse, varse or vorse”. The compere for the evening was Alan Maskell, in “a succession of stylish jackets and ties”.¹⁵⁸

In order to provide a non-magical audience the Eric Widger Trophy Competition was held at a residential care home in Impington. It was won by Ted Lumby.

An interesting innovation at the Dinner in May, again at Selwyn College, was the appearance on the menu of ostrich steak. During the dinner, John Davenport was made an Honorary Vice-President of the Club and was presented with a framed citation, both awards being in recognition of his many years of service to the Club while he was resident in Cambridge and since he moved away.¹⁵⁹ He presented the “cod” inventions of Oswald Williams as part of the cabaret.



John Davenport receives a Pentacle framed citation

There were two public shows during the year. The first was staged on 12th February at Barton School in support of their Parent Teacher Association. In addition to raising £350 for their group it also raised £100 for the Club. Shelford School was the venue for a May half-term show with Chris Kosteki, Eric Maskell, Claude Perry and Philip Bond performing and John Whitmore as compere. This was held in the afternoon in order to be more accessible to the children and raised £193 for Club funds in addition to generating funds for the Rainbow playcentre at the school. Alan Maskell and John Whitmore provided walk-around magic at the Arts Theatre Open Days in July, raising the profile of the Club.

2001

In January the first visiting lecture of the year was a double act, Dan & Ko (Dan and Hiroko Dobson) who covered two subjects, mentalism and children's magic. After a number of in-house meetings, including the auction and both the close-up and stage competitions, the next visitor was renowned professional Alan Shaxon who presented *My Kind of Magic*. Keith Bennett lectured in July and brought some magic along to sell and Roy Gilbert returned in November with *The Big Magic Show*. The Allied Arts were represented by a juggling workshop led by Richard Green of Patchwork Circus. There were no visits to or from other magical societies during 2001, though a trip was made to Kettering to Studio 9 Magic.

The Michaelhouse Project was supported in February when the Club performed at St. Michael's Church in Trinity Street. The magic was continuous but the public were invited to come and go when they pleased. As this was primarily a fund-raising effort for the Project only £50 went to the Club's funds.

Shows were given at St. Laurence's School at the end of March with Chris Wardle, Chris Kostecki, Ted Lumby, Colin Daines, Philip Bond and Claude Perry performing. The two Chris's and Claude also took part in the show for the Histon Feast at the end of June together with Alan Maskell and John Whitmore. Alan's son David and Chris Kostecki's daughter Lisa also accompanied their fathers on the stage. A further show planned for St. Laurence's School in the autumn half-term had to be postponed due to building work at the school. The annual Stage Competition for the Widger trophy was again held at the residential home in Impington with Mary Widger in attendance. As in 2000, it was won by Ted Lumby. A letter was circulated to schools in the area advertising the Club's availability for fund-raising shows.

For the Annual Dinner the Club returned to Selwyn College. Attendance was down but an enjoyable evening was passed with Roy Heath and Ted Lumby providing the cabaret.

John and Anne Davenport were featured in Peter Blanchard's column in *The World's Fair* in July, their association with the Pentacle Club being noted.¹⁶⁰ Two weeks later Philip Bond received coverage in the same column in *The World's Fair*.¹⁶¹ One sad event in the year was the death of Jean Collins.

Jake Jacobs, having taken over the Library at the AGM embarked on a review of both its content and its operation. Books which were felt to be no longer needed were sold via the Club Auction or by direct sale to members. It was suggested that new members should pay an additional £10 to use the library and that a ticketing system should be introduced.

2002

Opportunities to increase one's stock of magical equipment abounded in 2002. In addition to the annual auction there were visits from three dealers, each providing a lecture plus a dealer demonstration. Mark Leveridge was the first, in March, with his wide range of magic, Paul Stone sold the Ken Brooke range in May and David Charles from Hocus Pocus Magic came along in November. The other visiting lecturers of the year were Ali Cardabra (Paul Buonocore) and John Davenport who presented a history of the Davenport family and business.

Claude Perry's 80th birthday was celebrated in January with a *Classics* night and a poem especially written by Chris Wardle.

A POEM FOR CLAUDE

He's the President, that's our Claude,
And at The Pentacle Club, you'll never get bored.
He's a very dapper gentleman, who always looks great,
And for our meetings, he's never a second late!
At every show, Claude's an absolute hit,
With his Vanishing Cane and, of course, Troublewit!
He can make you a fireplace or a pork pie hat,
A church window, a pressure cooker or a bath mat.
A roundabout, a park bench, a glass for the Vicar,
A dumb-bell, a candlestick, he gets quicker and quicker!
A vase, 'vayse' or 'vorse', he's got the power
And not forgetting that big bunch of flowers!
With a ready-wit he enjoys a good laugh,
And Paul Daniels has asked for HIS autograph!
As for magical history, he knows everything,
He's no Joker, he is the King!
So now, on his birthday, we salute and applaud,
The Master of Magic - our President, Claude!

By Chris Wardle on the occasion of
Mr. Claude Perry's 80th Birthday
with warmest wishes.

A Poem for Claude by Chris Wardle

The Eric Widger stage competition was held at Windmill Grange, a sheltered housing community in Histon which again provided a non-magical audience. This was won by Chris Wardle, who also won the close-up title in April.

A return to Selwyn for the Annual Dinner in May attracted 28 diners with the cabaret provided by Chris Wardle and Robert Rae, the former Secretary of the Club. For the first time there were four choices of main course, venison, beef, sole or vegetarian stroganoff.

The Library was discussed at the AGM in April and Jake Jacobs suggested that, as books were infrequently borrowed, in future there should be more concentration on video tapes, which were a good income generator. He had bought a number of second-hand tapes and books and the library had thus been strengthened at limited cost. Additionally Ted Farrington had donated a number of books. As new books were expensive a charge of £1 to borrow a new book was introduced, to match that for a video tape. An initial charge of £10 was payable to use the library, which would be refunded when a member left, provided all books had been returned.

The Club was again engaged to perform at the Histon Feast in June. Alan Maskell, Chris Kosteki, Eric Maskell, Dennis Collins and Claude Perry performed, with John Whitmore compering. The Club benefited by £115.

2003

A good programme was arranged as usual. Visitors were John Derris and Piet Forton, both in February, and Charles Gauci from Australia for the following meeting held at the beginning of March. Franklin presented Mental Magic in June. There was a visit to Aquarius Magic in Thetford and an evening devoted to the late lamented Supreme Magic Company. After the reorganisation of the library, Jake Jacobs had compiled a new Library List which was issued in January. £112 was spent on a number of video tapes which were on special offer, and it was expected that rental fees for these would rapidly cover the costs.

In an attempt to get a higher attendance at the AGM in April (there had been only eight people the year before) it was decided to have the Auction after the General Meeting. Sadly this was not a success as attendance, number of auction lots and interest in them were all low.

Lez Jones presented an evening in the Autumn. This was the twelfth meeting which he had given to the Club and he had decided that this would be the last. He first came as a visiting lecturer in 1981 and shortly after became a member.

There were no entries for the Widger Trophy competition, which had been planned to take place at Gretton Court Residential Community in Girton; instead several members of the Club put on a show at the venue. The close-up competition went ahead and was won by Andy Bracey.

Andy opened the cabaret at the Annual Dinner at Selwyn College in May and was followed by Michael Colley who presented a paper-themed act, including the production of a Pentacle with a single cut of a sheet of newspaper (*Abracadabra Christmas Special 1947*).¹⁶²

Sir William Hawthorne was 90 in May and the Club was approached to provide some entertainment before his birthday dinner at Churchill College. This approach was made by Sir William's daughter, whose sister he had "sawn through" at his retirement dinner in 1983.

The show started with a brief account by John Whitmore of Sir William's involvement with the Club, from his being a Committee Member in 1933/34 to being the President from 1970-1990. It continued with magic by Chris Wardle, Alan Maskell, David Girling, John Davenport, Claude Perry (act as known) and Philip Bond and Samantha. This was well received and formed a topic of much conversation during the reception and dinner which followed. A photograph is included on page 112.

Preparations were being made for the Club to have its own website. John Whitmore was organising this and by July it was progressing well and awaiting the addition of some photographs. Subscriptions were to be increased for the first time in six years, to £35 per year. For the coming year it was planned to have both Stage and Close-up Competitions in the Clubroom on the same night. Guests would be welcome at this event. The Christmas Social was poorly attended and there was doubt as to whether this was worth running in the future.

2004

At the first Committee Meeting of 2004 it was reported that there had been no further progress on the website. The Club finally achieved a web presence in the middle of the year thanks to the Ipswich Society who allowed some dedicated Pentacle pages on their website, to which there was a direct link from MagicWeek. Some of these pages were based on the new Members' Booklet which had been prepared by Alan Maskell.

The programme for the year was up and running. Unfortunately there is no list of meetings in the archives, but from various documents it is possible to determine that there was a lecture from Peter Gardner, then Richard Stupple with a further lecture on The Magic of Eric Lewis after his previous talk ten years before. Paul Hallas also lectured and there was a visit by a team from The Magic Circle. Tim Reed spoke on being a Magical Collectaholic in November. A group from the Ipswich Magic Society visited Cambridge for a magical quiz and there was a Club visit to see Geoffrey Durham's show at the Theatre Royal, Bury St. Edmunds in April.



Claude Perry presents a framed First Day Cover to Chris KostECKi

It was the Club's 85th Anniversary and the Dinner was again held at Selwyn College on 15th May. Twenty-eight members and guests attended and Chris KostECKi was presented with a framed First Day Cover of Punch and Judy stamps to recognise his great service to the Club.

The after-dinner cabaret *Magic from the Generations* was opened by Josh Miller, at 13 years of age not yet old enough to join the Club but already a member of the Young Magicians' Club run by The Magic Circle. He was followed by Chris Wardle and the final act was the most senior member, Claude Perry. Unfortunately there were some problems with the meal service and efforts were to be made to find an alternative venue for the next year.

It was decided to proceed with the Christmas Social and this went well, so it was agreed that it should be repeated the following year.

2005

There were two dealer demonstrations in 2005. Alec Powell of *Albion Magic* visited in January and Morley Budden of *Kaymar Magic*, on his retirement tour, in May. Another opportunity to buy was at the Table Top Sale which took place after the Annual General Meeting in April.

Magical knowledge, with no need to buy, was conveyed by Dominic Mansi who covered both stand-up and children's magic. There was also Duane and Mary Laflin from the USA on silk magic, Jon Allen with a range of magical effects, Ali Cardabra with children's magic and Keith Bennett on cards. The Pentacle Club Lecture in May was *An Evening with Geoffrey Durham* who kindly gave his presentation free of charge. Home grown meetings included cards, work in progress, a video night and the Competitions.

Two shows were planned for March, a two hour show on 12th at Swavesey Village College with John Whitmore, Chris Wardle, Josh Miller, Claude Perry and Chris KostECKi performing and Alan Maskell compering, and a one hour show at Gretton Court on 15th with the same team except Josh Miller. The 16th April was the opportunity for the Club to entertain at the *Saturday Night@The Circle* concert in London, believed to be the first time any Society had provided the entire evening. Close-up in the Devant Room was preceded by a brief talk about the Club by John Whitmore. Then five members, including Josh Miller, who had appeared on the same stage four days before with the Young Magicians' Club, provided the stage show in the theatre. Many good comments were received from the audience though no formal acknowledgement is recorded from The Magic Circle. The report in *The Magic Circular* states that this was to celebrate the 85th Anniversary of the Club.¹⁶³ If it was, it was only a year late.

After the disappointment with the Annual Dinner at Selwyn College the year before, the venue was changed and the event was held at Girton College in May. The after-dinner entertainment was provided by a number of members each performing one or two effects. On the Monday after the Dinner there was a trip to Ipswich for a return of the Inter-Society Magical Quiz of the previous year. Again, the Pentacle Club was triumphant.

The end of the year brought an *All Stacked Up* meeting covering stacked cards, dice and others with the Christmas Social to close the year's programme.

2006

The start of the New Year brought the sad news of the death of a former member Alex Elmsley, Secretary 1951-1952 and inventor of the card count which bears his name. The Club decided to make a donation to The Magic Circle Endowment Fund in his memory.

Happier news in January was the completion by Claude Perry of 38 consecutive Christmas shows at a local primary school and his decision at the age of only 84 to hang up his magic wand. This was covered by the *Cambridge Evening News*¹⁶⁴ and in March by two other local newspapers¹⁶⁵. It also resulted in an appearance on local television.



Claude Perry on his retirement aged 84 with rabbit Peter (aged 15)

An even greater number of visiting lecturers were at the Club in 2006. Former member and winner of the British Ring Close-up Competition Tim Shoesmith offered *Fountains and Acorns*, an evening of ideas in March. Wayne Dobson gave his *Unclamped* lecture in April and Sean Carpenter spoke on close-up in May. Mark Leveridge presented his anniversary lecture in June combining it with a dealer dem. The Pentacle Club Lecturer was David Wood with his children's magic and music lecture *Child's Play It Ain't* at the beginning of May. The Dinner was held at Girton, also in May, again with entertainment by those dining. Jake had compiled a new library list which contained 117 books and 61 video tapes.

The only visiting lecturer after the summer break was Steve Short who presented his research into the David Nixon Story in October. The magical quiz against Ipswich took place in Cambridge and was again won by the Pentacle Club.

Philip Bond and son Jeremy presented a magical show *Merlin's Secret*, with Philip in the title role and Jeremy as Arthur. This toured around the country and played its last performance at the Merlin Festival in Carmarthen in June.

¹⁵⁷ Anon. Our Cover. *Abracadabra*, 1993;95:546

¹⁵⁸ Sibley B. Pentacle Club Entertains. *The Magic Circular*, 2000;94:296-297

¹⁵⁹ Maskell A. Pentacle Club Honour John Davenport. *Abracadabra*, 2000;110:384

¹⁶⁰ Blanchard PD. Blanchard's World of Magic. *World's Fair*, 27 July 2001

¹⁶¹ Blanchard PD. Blanchard's World of Magic. *World's Fair*, 10 August 2001

¹⁶² Sewell LJ. Solomon's Seal. *Abracadabra*, 1947;Christmas Special;13-14

¹⁶³ Wardle C. Saturday Night at the Magic Circle with the Pentacle Club. *The Magic Circular*, 2005;99:399

¹⁶⁴ Downing J. Santa Claude Brings Curtain Down at Last. *Cambridge Evening News*, 31 January 2006

¹⁶⁵ Bish D. Age catches up with a magician and his rabbit. *Haverhill Echo*, 16 March 2006

LNT. Quiet Man with a Secret. *The Linton News*, March 2006

Chapter 16

Interlude 8 – Alex Elmsley

Alex Elmsley is the Pentacle Club member whose name has worldwide renown through the Elmsley Count, the method of showing a packet of four cards, actually concealing one of the cards though still counting four. Originally named “The Ghost Count” by Alex it has been used in many effects and guises. A brief account of it can be found on Magicpedia.¹⁶⁶

Alexander Edward Darby Elmsley was born, the son of a naval officer, on 2nd March 1929 in Edinburgh. During a period of convalescence after an operation for appendicitis he developed an interest in juggling and the search for juggling equipment led him into magic. This rapidly displaced the juggling and turned his mind to inventing his own tricks. His father died in 1935 and this, with the war, meant that money was limited, so he turned to magic which did not need much equipment such as manipulation and cards.

Academically bright he went to Eton School and after that and his two years of National Service he arrived at King’s College, Cambridge in Autumn 1950. He was obviously already magically adept because he took part in the Pentacle Show *Watch Out* in February 1951, both performing a manipulative act in his own right and also being “materialised” within a translucent paper box by Hilary Newton. He’s the one behind the “C” in the photograph at the start of Chapter 7.

According to Harry Stanley, “when his cards became too dirty to use and to do tricks with, he worked sufficiently hard to get his BA degree”¹⁶⁷ which was in mathematics and physics. After Cambridge he worked for some years as a Patent Agent.



Alex Elmsley 1955

Between 1949 and 1959 over seventy magical effects and sleights by Alex appeared in print, the earliest being the Tower Bridge Cut in *Abracadabra*.¹⁶⁸ At a meeting of the Unique Magic Club he entered a competition for performing a trick published in *The Gen*. Although his was judged to be the best effect it turned out that it had never been published, so he could not be the winner. He was however awarded a special prize and he promised to write up the effect for the magazine.¹⁶⁹ At the Unique Eisteddfod in February 1954 Alex represented the Pentacle Club (this is determined by correspondence between him and the Club, but not recorded in the report) with a topical presentation of Kentare.¹⁷⁰

In the 1960s he largely disappeared from the magic scene, though he did contribute to Dai Vernon’s *Ultimate Secrets of Card Magic*, published in 1967.¹⁷¹ Computer technology became his interest and he toured the world as a lecturer on computer languages.

There was a brief resurgence of interest in magic in 1972 but in 1975 he again largely withdrew, citing his work, science fiction and looking after his mother as the reasons. He did however give a close-up seminar at the Pentacle Convention in 1980.



Alex Elmsley 2002

His interest was again stimulated when he assisted with the production and publication of *The Collected Works of Alex Elmsley* by Stephen Minch in 1991 and Volume 2 of the *Collected Works* in 1994. He remained in contact with the magical world after that and in 2004 was presented with the David Berglas Award for services to British Magic by the British Magical Society.

His last performance was at the close-up session entitled *Come a Little Closer* at The Magic Circle Centenary in 2005.¹⁷²

Alex Elmsley died on 8th January 2006. An Obituary by John Derris appeared in *Abracadabra* 3131.¹⁷³ An earlier biography by John Derris can be found in *Abracadabra* 2952.¹⁷⁴ A further biography, by John Davenport, is soon to appear in *The Linking Ring*, the magazine of the International Brotherhood of Magicians.¹⁷⁵ A full bibliography up to 1992 can be found in *The Collected Works of Alex Elmsley Vol. II*.¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁶ https://geniimagazine.com/wiki/index.php?title=Elmsley_Count

¹⁶⁷ Stanley H. Alex Elmsley. *The Gen* 1955;10:275

¹⁶⁸ Elmsley A. The Tower Bridge Cut. *Abracadabra* 1949;7:182-183

¹⁶⁹ Stanley H. Review. *The Gen* 1953;9:35

¹⁷⁰ Tyler W. The Unique Eisteddfod. *The Gen* 1954;12:340-341

Elmsley A. Kentare. *The Gen* 1954;12:362

¹⁷¹ Vernon D. *Ultimate Secrets of Card Magic*. London: Unique Magic Company 1967.

¹⁷² Derris J. Come a Little Closer. *The Magic Circular* 2005;93:335-336

¹⁷³ Derris J. Alex Elmsley. *Abracadabra* 2008;121:249-251

¹⁷⁴ Derris J. The Man You Can Count On. *Abracadabra* 2002;114:220-222

¹⁷⁵ Davenport J. Alex Elmsley. 2019. Personal Communication

¹⁷⁶ Minch S. *The Collected Works of Alex Elmsley Vol. II*. L&L Publishing, Tahoma, Ca. 1994 pp.485-494

See <https://www.scribd.com/doc/306000429/Alex-Elmsley-Collected-Works-Vol-2>

Chapter 17

Largely After Claude – 2007 to the Present

2007

At the end of January 2007 the Membership stood at 32. The number had decreased by one as a result of the death of John Whitmore in mid-January at the age of 70. A later list for the year gives only 27 members.

There was a very wide selection of visiting lecturers. Keith Bennett returned presenting a coin magic lecture and having items available to buy. Martin Cox talked about children's magic and Barry Miller spoke on his experience of magic; cards, canes, microphones, tables and ribbons were among the topics discussed. David Lang presented his *Magic Without Bunnies* lecture, a mix of close-up, cabaret and mentalism. Roy Davenport spoke about the history of the Davenport company and brought along items for sale.

The meeting on 27th February was billed as a *Surprise Evening*. The first part was a quiz against Ipswich and after a buffet there was a performance by the Ipswich members. As it was held on the 50th birthday of the Club Secretary, Alan Maskell, the whole was designed to celebrate this occasion, with three generations of the Maskell family present. During the final presentation Alan was "sawn through".

The Pentacle Club Lecturer for the year was Anthony Owen who spoke about his experience in television magic, including some video footage which although prepared for television shows had never been broadcast and therefore was unseen.

The return match of the Challenge Quiz took place in Ipswich, this time with the addition of a team from the Southend Sorcerers. For the first time in the four year history Ipswich won, with the Pentacle Club coming second. The close-up competition for 2007 was again won by Wayne Goodman.

In November the Club was sad to be informed of another death, that of Richard Stuppel of Bedford. Richard, who was a past Chairman of The Magic Circle, had appeared for many years on the Club Membership List as a Friend of the Club.

2008

In April 2008 the Club lost its President through the death of Claude Perry at the age of 86. John Davenport was elected President in his stead and the decision was made to give the Presidency a fixed term of 5 years. Another sad loss in 2008 was that of Ken de Courcy who died in July. Well known in association with the Supreme Magic Company and a Past President of the IBM British Ring, he and his wife Sue had been active members of the Club while living in the Cambridge area, though they had since moved to the Driffield area. Additionally Peter Killworth, former member, died in February. He had been very active in the Club in the mid-1960s and also in the late 1970s to early 1980s and was living in Southampton at the time of his death.

The Pentacle Club Lecture in June was given by Neil Roberts whose evening was entitled *From Page to Stage*, a discussion of the development of an act from initial idea to final presentation. Other visiting lecturers were Walt Lees, editor of *Abacadabra* with a range of ideas, Mark Shortland with Comedy Magic and Mark Paul who presented the magic of Jack Hughes. Sean Taylor, a past Secretary of the Club who had emigrated to Australia, returned in September lecturing on Comedy, Magic and Mentalism.

Competition Night was held at the Clubroom in March. The Widger Trophy for stage magic was won by Jeremy Bond and the Sylvia Lawrence Close-up Shield by Peter de Horsey.

In April there was a visit by Steve Short and Paul Cooke from Magic Books by Post, who claimed to be "The World's Largest Magic Book Supplier". They brought along an enormous range of books and demonstrated effects from many of them. Fake £5 note vouchers were handed out to be used towards the purchase of books.

In-house meetings included Wayne Goodman and friends and an evening of reminiscences and videos by Dennis Collins, now an elder statesman of the Club. The first meeting after the summer break was devoted to a trip through the Club archives by Chris Kosteki. He had been researching these in preparation for a display at the Club's 90th birthday celebrations the following year. There was a "mini-convention" in September for those not at the British Ring Convention with lectures by Chris Wardle giving new twists on older ideas, Jeremy Bond showing some children's routines he had been working on and Ian Thomson on the life and magic of Theo Anneman. There was also a "dealers' table" of items to swap and sell.

Another visit was made to Girton College in May for the 89th Annual Dinner. A new award for Member of the Year, given in memory of John Whitmore and voted for by the Club Members for "the person who had given the most to the Club in the past year" was presented to Chris Kosteki. The Competition prizes were also presented at the dinner.



John Whitmore in Pentacle Club Tie and The John Whitmore Award presented to Chris Kosteki 2008

2009

And so we come to the Pentacle's 90th Anniversary Year. 10th January saw a special Pentacle issue of *Abracadabra – The World's ONLY Magical Weekly*, compiled by Chris Wardle.¹⁷⁷ This contained a brief history of the Club, reminiscences, thoughts for the future and of course tricks, with articles by John Davenport, Chris Wardle, Ian Thomson, David Girling, John Derris on Alex Elmsley, Alan Maskell, Michael Colley, Tim Shoesmith and the Pentacle Committee. Sadly, only two months later, on 28th March, *Abracadabra* published its last issue, 3298, which contained a report of the Pentacle Competition on 10th March, won by close-up magician Rob Gough.¹⁷⁸

As there was to be a full Day of Magic in May, with lectures by well known speakers, the programme for the rest of the year was relatively modest, with no visiting speakers in the first part of the year. The Pentacle Club lecture was given by Ian Keable on *The Professional's Guide to Comedy Magic*. The only other visitor, in November, was Dr. Todd Landman with *Metaphysical Magic*, covering performance, theory, methods and effects in magic and mentalism. He was preceded at the meeting before by Chip Colquhoun, a Club member, whose background was in story-telling but who had recently added magic to his stories.

The Keio Magical Society, a Japanese University club had been in contact with the Club and in February one of the meetings was devoted to exploring ways in which the Pentacle Club could become twinned with it. Unfortunately this effort did not come to fruition. Other evenings were presented by Dennis Collins, Chris Kostecki, Philip Bond, Colin Daines, David Girling, Alistair Brown and Neville Selby.

In March the Club was featured in a two page spread in the *Cambridge News*, with items about Alan Maskell, Chris Kostecki, Chris Rowlands, Dinesh Jacob, Jeremy Bond and Philip Bond.¹⁷⁹

The major event, as mentioned above, was the Day of Magic on 9th May at Girton College. Around 50 people came to hear four lectures by magicians outstanding in their fields - Will Houstoun, who presented the inaugural Claude Perry Memorial Lecture, Alan Shaxon, Geoffrey Durham, and Paul Kieve describing his involvement in the devising of magical effects for stage and cinema productions. Magic Books by Post and The Card Collection were the dealer representatives. There was a display from the Club Archives. Additional guests arrived for the evening when there was an excellent dinner with speeches kept to a minimum. The toast to the Pentacle Club was proposed by Geoffrey Durham and responded to by Club President John Davenport. Club awards were presented to Jeremy Bond for stage magic, Rob Gough for close-up and to Alan Maskell, the member of the year. Alan was also presented with a caricature of himself to celebrate his 13 years as Secretary. Close-up magic was provided by members and the cabaret featured Keith Cooper & Carol and Graham P Jolley.



*90th Anniversary Cake and John Davenport, President, cutting it with a sword
The cake was made by Annette and Chris Kostecki*

The Quiz in 2009 was a three-way event, held in Ipswich in July with the local society plus the Southend Sorcerers. The other interaction with local societies was a visit from the Northampton Magicians Club who visited Cambridge to entertain in November.

In celebration of the 90th year, and of the Pentacle Club's founder WW Rouse Ball, Professor of Mathematics at Trinity College, the Club put on a show on 10th October in the Winstanley Lecture Theatre at Trinity. A full house of Fellows, students, staff and families saw pre-show close-up from Chris Wardle, Alan Maskell and Trinity student Chris McGeever. There followed a stand-up show featuring Chris Kostecki with his full audience participation Cards Across routine, Chris Wardle presenting mentalism with an art theme, and Dr. Bondini with classic magic including Linking Rings, Rice Bowls and the Willow Pattern Plate. This was compered by Alan Maskell.

2010

After the excitement of 2009 there was a sad moment in early February 2010 with the death of Dennis Collins at the age of 85. He had been a long-standing member of the Club, and had in the minds of generations of children been "Uncle Dennis" with "Auntie Jean" in the children's shows they performed over the years. The meeting at the end of February was a tribute to him.

There were of course visiting lecturers. In March Adrian Sullivan gave his ideas on both close-up and stage magic and also demonstrated a number of items which he had for sale. In May Will Gray presented *Magic with a Capital E* (for entertainment), in July James Ward covered *Mind, Magic and Mirth* and Keith Cooper came along in October. The Pentacle Club Lecture on 1st June was Andrew Normansell who spoke about commercial magic in the real world.

The “real world” was also the venue for the close-up competition, which took place at the White Horse in Barton and which was won by Rob Gough. The stage competition however was held in the Clubroom after the AGM in April. This was won by Jeremy Bond for the second year running.

The in-house meetings for the year began with the traditional Secretary’s Evening, which included video clips of the 90 years celebration. There was a further look into the back of Chris KostECKI’s cupboard, a close-up pick and mix organised by Peter de Horsey, David Girling on those little things that make magic work, Neville Selby with ideas, effects and routines and Jake Jacobs with an evening mixing magic and science. Rob Gough hosted *Work in Progress* for members to develop ideas and effects on which they were working, Jeremy Bond hosted a workshop on children’s magic, Bruce Wright led an evening of mental magic and there was an evening devoted to effects from the Tarbell Course in Magic.

The 2010 dinner, again at Girton College, was a much smaller event than the previous year. Although only 19 people attended, those who were there had a very good evening. Just before the summer break there was the Annual Inter-club Quiz against Ipswich and Northampton, on this occasion both hosted by and won by the Pentacle Club.

In the September issue of *The Magic Circular* there appeared an article devoted to a collection of material given to the Circle Museum by David Cridland and relating largely to John Gambling and to Claude Perry.¹⁸⁰

2011

After the Secretary’s evening at the beginning of January the next event was ABC Night, with impromptu effects which began with randomly selected letters of the alphabet. These two meetings had become traditional starters to the year over the past few years, as had the delve into Chris KostECKI’s cupboard which this year focussed on the magic of Jack Hughes. The 1st February brought a visit to Northampton to entertain at their Club.

Peter Greenwood on children’s magic, John Kimmons on comedy magic and Paul Gordon on cards were visiting lecturers. The meetings in June were two mini-lectures/shows, the first from Devil-Stick Peat on Juggling and Street Magic and the second from Jack Barton (Jack Goodall) on mentalism, in the lead up to his appearance at the Edinburgh Fringe. In July Trevor Liley came along with reminiscences of and effects suitable for corporate events.

The Pentacle Club Lecture for the year was by Jay Scott Berry from America. His manipulative skills and use of very clever gimmicks were most impressive. There was no Stage Competition in 2011 but the close-up, won for the third time by Rob Gough, was again held at the White Horse at Barton in April. The Annual Dinner was taken by 25 diners at Girton College, with Chris KostECKI providing the entertainment.

Philip Bond, in collaboration with dance artist Paula Templeman, toured a full show in the Autumn. After a show in Broadstairs the tour finished with performances in Nottingham and Comberton.

2012

The first external event of the year was a show on 24th February at Churchill College in celebration of Sir William Hawthorne, who had died the previous September at the age of 98. This immediately followed the memorial service for him that afternoon at Great St. Mary's Church. The acts all represented aspects of Sir William's life. Chris Kostecki performed Cards Across, representing Sir William's love of magic and his long association with the Pentacle Club. Chris Wardle presented the magic square, representing Sir William's science & mathematics. John Davenport brought the Oswald Williams cod inventions representing the Pentacle Club's links with the University and Sir William as an inventor and innovator. Brent Swann-Auger performed sawing in half, Sir William's favourite illusion, and Alan Maskell compered. The Club Meeting the Tuesday before was used as a memorial to Sir William and as a rehearsal for the show.

The Pentacle Club Lecture came early in the year, Steve Evans being the year's first visiting lecturer at the beginning of March, with his approach to magic and to life. He was followed by Mario Morris from the School of Busking and Al Smith, with magic, opinions and ideas. Steve Short, holiday camp magician, delivered the first Dennis and Jean Collins Lecture, on children's magic, naturally. He covered providing the full party, games, magic and extras! Steve cited our late members Dennis & Jean as a major influence on his magic. Duane Laflin from the USA was the last visitor of the year with silk magic.

Membership in May was 22 and the Membership List also records 20 "Friends". About twenty of these attended the dinner in May, again at Girton College, plus a few who were on neither list. At the dinner Chris Wardle, who was about to leave Cambridge after over 16 years, received three awards, the Close-Up Trophy, the Member of the Year Award and Honorary Life Membership of the Club. After-dinner magic was provided by nine of the members and guests.

There were, of course, other meetings, including mentalism, pocket tricks, tricks from magazines and children's magic. There was a quiz, an evening devoted to dealer effects and a visit from the Northampton Society. With a change from the practice of recent years the Stage Competition was, like the close-up, held at the White Horse at Barton.

JezO (Jeremy Bond) appeared in the pantomime Jack and the Beanstalk at the Harlow Playhouse for four weeks in December and January 2013.

2013

Another Steve was the first visiting lecturer of the year; Steve Price, Secretary of The Magic Circle who brought along his brand of comedy magic at the beginning of March. Michael Carr spoke on both close-up and stand-up magic. A meeting was planned at the end of February between Town and Gown, with the Pentacle, now the Town club, meeting with the recently formed Cambridge (University) Magic Society. However this did not take place.

Many successful meetings from previous years were repeated including the *ABC of Magic* - how many tricks could be found starting with each letter of the alphabet. There was also the Secretary's Evening introducing the year, and tricks from the Tarbell Course in Magic. Chris Wardle came back to Cambridge in July to demonstrate some of his new twists on tricks and there was a further delve into the recesses of Chris Kostecki's magic cupboard.

The Dennis and Jean Collins lecture was delivered by member JezO, Jeremy Bond. In June Alan Maskell interviewed his father Eric about his personal magic history and in September the opening meeting after the Summer break was by past member Rob Gough on close-up and card magic.

In February the Club acquired its own website, prepared and maintained by member Stacy Smith. This meant that the Club was no longer dependent on the Ipswich Society to have a web presence.

Two public events occurred on consecutive days in March. On 15th the Club provided close-up magic at Cineworld on the occasion of the opening of the film *The Incredible Burt Wonderstone*. On 16th there was a Family Magic Show at St. Laurence's School, with Alan Maskell, Chris Kosteki, Philp Bond and JezO performing. The father and son duo had been in action together at a show in Comberton just two weeks before.

Alan Maskell addressed the Blake Society of Downing College, the College's society for the humanities, in March. He spoke on the history and practice of magic.

Claude Perry was remembered in March when William Houstoun, Editor of *The Magic Circular*, acknowledged Claude in his editorial as the person who had introduced him to magic eighteen years before.¹⁸¹ It was his help and encouragement over the years that had contributed to Will's promotion to Member of the Inner Magic Circle. Claude was later remembered by both Scott Penrose and Will in the March and June 2015 issues of *The Magic Circular*.¹⁸² At the AGM in April John Davenport stood down as President, handing over the Presidential Collar to Chris Kosteki.



John Davenport hands over the Presidential Collar to Chris Kosteki 20th April 2013

The Close-up Competition was again held at the White Horse in Barton in March. It was won by Bruce Wright. There was no Stage Competition in 2013. Jeremy Bond received the John Whitmore Award as Member of the Year. Sadly there was not enough interest to hold an Annual Dinner in 2013. When Peter Quinsee, former Member, died in September at the age of 80 it was evident that the Pentacle had meant more than a little to him as he left a bequest to the Club in his will.

2014

Alan Maskell, the Secretary, was greatly in evidence at the start of the year. He presented his usual Secretary's Evening at the second meeting of the session then returned four weeks later for another go. At this meeting, in February, there was also a presentation of Membership Certificates to a number of people, most of whom had been Members for many years. More Membership Certificates were presented at subsequent meetings. The certificates were an initiative of the Committee, which believed that the formal award of a certificate would give the opportunity for new members to be welcomed and introduced to the Club.

Between the two Secretary's evenings there was a lecture by Wayne Goodman, past member of the Society, covering both close-up and cabaret magic. Steve Gore came along a few weeks later with his own brand of magic, George Kovari Jr. presented the Pentacle Club Lecture in May and Trevor Liley came back with a second helping of magic and performance tips in June. Chris Wardle returned with yet more of his original ideas in July and Oliver Meech gave his ideas partly based on his show *When Magic & Science Collide*. Scott Penrose and Steve Short spoke about the life and work of Alan Shaxon based on the book they had recently co-authored.

The Dennis and Jean Collins Lecture was again given by a Club Member. On this occasion the President, Chris Kostecki once more delved into the back of his cupboard and produced many effects, some of which were new to most of the members.



The annual Dinner, which celebrated the 95th Anniversary of the Club, was held at Girton College in May. Rather than having several of the diners presenting one effect, the evening's entertainment was presented by Philip Bond, with his traditional magic, and Jeremy Bond with his usual whirlwind approach to entertainment. Chris Wardle was presented with his Membership Certificate and Alan Maskell received the John Whitmore Award for Member of the Year.

Jeremy Bond (JezO) at the Annual Dinner 2014

Chris Wardle was the recipient of the Cecil Lyle Award of The Magic Circle for the best trick published in *The Magic Circular* in the past year. This was presented at The Magic Circle Awards Night in October. On the same evening Michael Colley was awarded the Circle's Silver Wand for outstanding services to the Society.¹⁸³

2015

The year started gently with a number of home grown meetings and the first external event was a trip to Northampton to entertain at their Society Meeting in February. An evening of mentalism followed this then it was the first visiting lecturer in mid-March, Julie Carpenter who spoke about entertaining the under-5s. This was followed by Wayne Fox presenting his ideas in May and Trevor Liley making a third visit in June. Was Chris Wardle a visiting speaker or not? He lived in Surrey but remained a Member of the Club. Whichever it was, he returned in July with another selection of his *Crafty Conjuring*. The final visiting lecturer in September was Chris Wood and *Magic With Charm*.

Rather than having the Competition Night at The White Horse Inn in Barton, the pub was the venue for the Club's first show of the year at the end of March. The Competition night took place a month later in the Clubroom.

The Dinner in May, the tenth held at Girton College, was attended by a number of members from the 60s, including Baird Oldrey, Mike Kelly and Stefan Petszaft and their partners plus Penny Campbell. Roy Heath and his wife also returned for the meal. This resulted in there being 28 people at dinner, despite the Club membership being only fourteen. Entertainment was provided by William Bearcroft, Hugh Newsam, John & Anne Davenport, David Girling and Chris Wardle, all introduced by Alan Maskell. Sad to record, Baird Oldrey died in September 2016.

The Town and Country Show on Parker's Piece in June was an opportunity for the Club to publicise its activities and also to advertise another show, staged in October at the Boathouse Pub on Chesterton Road. The Boathouse had been used for the social meeting after the Summer break.



*Town and Country Show 2015
Chris Kostecki at the Club's stand*

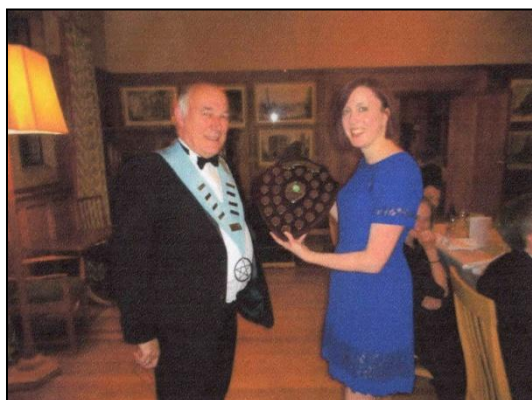
Seven members of the Club plus compere performed in the show and there was a showing of a stop motion animation film *The Great Mobilini*, made by Elizabeth Maskell and using Lego figures of a magician and his assistant. Philip Bond, in his "Dr. Bondini" persona presented a Victorian Dove Act.

Philip and JezO also presented a show in November at Comberton for the Centenary of the Women's Institute.

2016

Steve Short gave his lecture *Packs Flat. Plays Big!* about the Supreme Magic Company in April and Wayne Goodman made a return visit to the Club in May. After the Summer break the visiting lecturers were Tom Crosbie and "Time Travelling Victorian Magicians" Morgan & West, who delivered the Pentacle Club Lecture about their unique style of presentation.

The Annual Dinner made a twelfth visit to Girton College in May with 23 people attending and the cabaret was provided by seven of the members. John Davenport was presented with the John Whitmore Award for the person who had done the most for the Club in the past year. Jeremy Bond was the winner of the Close-Up Competition Trophy but as he was unable to attend the dinner (he did send along a life-size cut-out) it was presented to his wife Sara.



Sara Bond accepts the Close-Up Trophy on behalf of cardboard cut-out Jeremy

The Club put on two public shows during the year. The first was *The Magic Show* at the Portland Arms on 12th July, which achieved a full house and good feedback. Close-up magic was offered during the interval and there was a lucky ticket draw for a prize. Effective advertising was achieved via the pub's website and by posters on railings around Cambridge. The *Cabaret Magic and Music Show* at Fulbourn Sports and Social Club in November was greatly appreciated by the audience but over-ran for a variety of reasons, meaning that some of the audience who had children had to leave before the end. It was resolved that future shows should stick to schedule, just as had been decided in 1923 (see p.9). Additionally the Club provided close-up magic at the Light Cinema before the showing of *Now You See Me 2* in early July. This provided another opportunity to advertise the Club's Magic Show a few days later.

The other public appearance of the year was at the Town and Country Show on Parker's Piece in June. A number of members performed close-up magic over the two days and leaflets were distributed advertising the Portland Arms magic show.



Town and Country Show 2016 - David Girling with Cups and Balls

The question of how to celebrate the Centenary in 2019 was raised at the Committee Meeting in July. It was agreed to set up a "Team 100" to consider this. One of the outcomes of this team was an approach to the office of the Mayor of Cambridge to suggest putting on a show in support of one of his official charities. A letter was to be sent to the Mayor proposing this. Michael Colley was to be asked if he would write a history of the Club; as you can see, I acceded to this challenge.

2017

The year's programme was started by Alex Joseph and at the next meeting Hugh Newsam presented an evening of DVDs. The first visitor of the year was Ozzy D who made the long trip from Exeter to speak on games and stunts for children's parties as well as close-up and stage magic. Matthew Wright followed in mid-February lecturing on stage and close up, magic theory and comedy.

The second February meeting was an in-house event with Alex and Stacy Smith presenting an evening of ropes, rings, cards and coins with contributions from the audience. In early March JezO (Jeremy Bond) was interviewed by Chris Kostecki about his life as an entertainer and owner of an events company and mid-March brought the first public show of the year. This was at the Headquarters of the 12th Cambridge Scout Troop and was in support of their efforts to raise funds for a trip to Canada. Performers were JezO, Stacy Smith, Alex Joseph, David Girling, Hugh Newsam, Chris Kostecki and Alan Maskell.

There were two dealer demonstrations during the year, in March by Saturn Magic and in May by Razamatazz magic.

In mid-April Chris Kostecki pulled some more items out of the back of his cupboard. In May there was a double bill with Dominic Halford speaking first on *The Magic of Invisibility*, followed by *Moving My Magic On* by Chris Kostecki and friends.

There had been insufficient entries for the Stage Competition for the past six years so it was decided to combine the two competitions. If a stage act won, the Widger Trophy would be presented, if a close-up act, the Sylvia Lawrence Shield. This year, the latter trophy was presented to Lulu Kyriacou at the Dinner, which was for the thirteenth time in the Fellows' Rooms at Girton College in May. Twenty-nine people attended and there was entertainment by Philip Bond, Chris Kostecki and Dara Kaka who were introduced by Jeremy Bond. The John Whitmore Award had been presented to Hugh Newsam at a meeting earlier in May.

A lecture by Terry Herbert, *The Magic of Comedy* was in June, as also was the Town and Country Show on 10th and 11th. The stand at the latter was manned by Chris Kostecki, Alex Joseph, David Girling and James Merlin (Steven Goodwin). The opportunity was taken to advertise a forthcoming show at The Junction.

There were two home-grown meetings in June, an evening of effects from the Tarbell Course in Magic and a *Moving My Magic On* (abbreviated to M3O) evening looking mainly at card magic; members presented an effect which was critiqued by the team. The final event before the Summer break was another evening from the inventive mind of Chris Wardle.

The programme resumed in September with a talk by John Davenport on *Pentacle Life in the 1950s*, based around his book on this subject, for which he received a Local History Personal Award from Cambridgeshire. As has been previously mentioned, the book covered the Annual shows 1950 to 1953 and the tours of 1950, 1951 and 1952. Using accounts of the 1951 and 1952 tours recorded shortly after the event by Mary Smith, this provides fascinating details of the period described less fully in the current narrative.



*Town and Country Show 2017 –
The Mayor and Alex Joseph*

October brought a lecture by Oliver Graham on *Family Entertainment* and later in the month the Club staged a sell-out show at The Junction J2, which was well received although it over-ran. Performers were JezO, Philip Bond, Hugh Newsam, Steven Goodwin, Alex Joseph, Stacy Smith, David Girling and Chris Kostecki. The acts covered the whole range of magic from cups and balls, via balloons to full-stage illusions. In addition, Tony Middleton ran a “Bunco Booth” in the foyer and Dominic Halford presented some effects using “Green Screen” technology.



The Junction 2017

Tony Middleton in the Bunco Booth

The final meeting in October was *An Engineer's View of Making Magic* in which Tony Middleton showed various magic props which he had made, including items for Davenport and others. November brought *M3O #2* when David Girling walked through his cups and balls, sponge balls and rope routines, and an evening with Karim Homsey.

The last formal evening of the year was presented by Hugh Newsam, demonstrating some items which “he had bought at Conventions” and to close 2017 there was a trip to Margate to see JezO as the Scarecrow in *The Wizard of Oz*.

2018

The first meeting of the year started with a review of the show at The Junction, including a video recording of the first half, then the second half of the meeting was dedicated to the first of the four *M3O* sessions which occurred throughout the year.

Philip Bond hosted the second meeting of the year, then Mark Chandaue was the first outside speaker, talking mainly about mentalism. Mark Leveridge returned in March with more of his thoughts and some effects for sale. Between these lectures there was a visit from the Northampton Society.

The Club returned to the Portland Arms on 27th March with Chris Kostecki, Dara Kaka, Lulu Kyriacou, Alex Joseph, Steven Goodwin, Will Bearcroft, Chris Thomas and Stacy Smith in the cast. Attendance was not as good as had been hoped for and discussions were held after about better ways to publicise shows.

At the Annual General Meeting in April Alan Maskell stepped down as Secretary of the Club. He had been in post for 22 years, the longest ever holder of that office. Hugh Newsam became the new Secretary.

May started with a lecture on close-up magic by Tim Shoesmith, former member of the Club. Later in the month thirty-one members and guests attended the Annual Dinner at Girton College in May. The after-dinner entertainment was offered by Chris Kostecki, Michael Colley, Philip Bond, James Merlin and JezO.

There was another appearance at the Town and Country Show in June and the Competition was also held the same month, being won by Alex Joseph. The remaining two meetings before the summer break were a dealer demonstration by the Ace Magic Company and more ingenious offerings from Chris Wardle.

The second public show of the year was at The Junction J3 on 14th September. JezO, Alex Joseph, Will Bearcroft and Hugh Newsam provided the stage magic with Ray Christofides, Michael Adams, Denis Moreno and Chris Kostecki offering close-up magic during the interval. Just a few weeks after this, on 23rd October, a show called *Halloween Magic* was the order of the day at the Fulbourn Social Club. The cast was similar, with the addition of Lulu Kyriacou to the stage performers and Chris Massey and Joe Corrigan to the close-up. Chris Kostecki also did balloon modelling during the interval.

On 9th October there was a visit from Ferran and Nataly Rizo, repeating the lecture given at The Magic Circle the night before, covering cards, coins, chop cup and a switch box of their own design. The final visiting lecturer of the year was at the beginning of November. Mr. Biscuit, Martin Cox, delivered his thoughts on comedy and magic, leaving the last two meetings to be home-grown, the first of these being the sixth M3O and the last before Christmas a "bring a trick" evening.

2019 - 2119

As I started to write this section on New Year's Day 2019 Centenary Year lay ahead. The Club's aim for the year was declared to be:

"To celebrate the 100th anniversary, between January and December 2019, by a mix of performance and events that will stimulate new and existing members as well as promoting local awareness, so helping the Club to have another 100 years."

Participation in the Mayor's Charity was confirmed and despite the untimely sudden death of the Mayor, Nigel Gawthrop, in January a day of magic was staged at the Guildhall in support of the Red Hen Project on 24th February. In the morning families and supporters invited by Red Hen were entertained with Punch & Judy, close-up magic and balloon modelling. In the afternoon some 250 people enjoyed a stage show which was opened by

JezO with illusions followed by some children's effects and the Hydrostatic Glass. Philip Bond was next with Pom Pom Stick, Faulty Follower, Cards Across and Head Chopper.

After the Mayor's widow, Jenny Wood, had made a short speech Will Bearcroft closed the first half with Sucker Silk, spoof mind-reading and a watch smashing trick. For the last of these his audience helper was, unknown to him, Adrian Dixon, member of the Club in the 1960s and who was Master of Peterhouse from 2008 to 2016. Philip returned with his Chinese act to open the second half, then Adrian Dixon was formally called to the stage and presented with a poster and programme of the 1967 Pentacle Club show *Crunch '68* in which he had performed. Chris Kostecki provided more entertainment for the children with magic (including Joey the Clown) and balloons. Finally Philip and Jeremy closed the proceedings with a series of grand illusions, including *Through the Eye of a Needle*, with Lucy Bell. Close-up performers for the two sessions were Michael Adams, Ray Christofides, Freddie Gathercole, Steve Goodwin, Dara Kaka, Chris Massey and Hugh Newsam.



Red Hen Magic Extravaganza
Lucy Bell and Jeremy Bond – The Assistant's Revenge

As part of the Cambridge Science Festival, *The Magic of Discovery* was staged at The Junction J2 on 17th March. Hugh Newsam was the narrator, linking the magical effects by means of scientific discoveries with a Cambridge connection. In honour of Isaac Newton and gravity Alex Joseph changed an apple into an iPhone and performed the Park Chair Suspension using a child from the audience. Steve Goodwin divined a word chosen from a copy of *Principia Mathematica*. The Enlightenment and Francis Bacon were represented by JezO (Jeremy Bond) performing the Dynamite Illusion in which one of a number of sticks of dynamite is held by the performer. While the performer holds this stick, a member of the audience selects a numbered button to explode the sticks, one at a time. The performer is left holding the last stick, which is placed in a bucket. When the spectator presses the final button, that stick also explodes, but with JezO now safely out of the way.

Chris Massey performed mental magic themed around Charles Darwin and evolution, after which Philip Bond produced doves and levitated Lucy. Hugh Newsam opened the second half by creating an impossible balancing structure with two bottles, a card box, a crayon box, one crayon, a toothbrush, a pencil and a bottle opener.

Illusions returned, presented by JezO and assisted by Hugh, with a young lady being produced from a box, then subjected to numerous spears being pushed through her. In a supposed explanation of atomic structure (!) Patrick Nielsen linked steel rings and Alex returned to produce a large number of bottles from two tubes. Patrick also demonstrated thought transmission from the audience to volunteers on stage (100th Monkey), then Steve Goodwin had the audience participating in matching halves of torn cards. The show was closed with more illusions from Jezo and Dr. Bondini. Lucy Bell and Suzie Davies were their assistants.

There were two performances, in the afternoon and the evening, to sell-out houses each time. The audience loved it and it was also a financial success.

Adding to the enjoyment of the audience in the foyer was close-up magic by Freddie Gathercole, Michael Adams and Lulu Kyriacou, as well as Dominic Halford with the miracle of "Green Screen" technology. Dominic had created a set-up where people could apparently have their head on top of a table, with no sign of their body below. It was a Green Screen version of The Sphinx Illusion.

What remains for the rest of Centenary Year? A *Pentacle Club Parade* has been submitted to the *Linking Ring*, the magazine of the International Brotherhood of Magicians and this History of the Club has been produced. There will be a Centenary Dinner and Cabaret on 22nd June; unfortunately it was not possible to arrange this closer to 14th May, when the Club was founded. Other ideas include a Centenary Brochure aimed at both current and past members and friends, and the feasibility of touring schools is being investigated.

A Centenary Lecture Series is planned and lecturers already booked include Kieron Johnson on close-up, Paul Megram (Colonel Custard) on family magic and Brian Lead on Chung Ling Soo. For the first time in many years a visit to entertain at The Magic Circle is planned for 11th November.

Performers at The Junction 17th March 2019



*From top left
to bottom right:*
STAGE
*Hugh Newsam,
JezO, Dr Bondini,
Lucy Bell,
Patrick Nielsen,
Alex Joseph, Chris Massey,
Steve Goodwin.*



GREEN SCREEN & CLOSE-UP
*Dominic Halford, Lulu Kyriacou,
Michael Adams,
Freddie Gathercole.*



The Club has come a long way since 1919. It has gone through lean periods and periods of plenty, both in terms of membership and finance, but it has survived. Numerous well-known magical personalities have been part of its history and no doubt many more will be part of its future. Would Walter William Rouse Ball have thought that his magic society would still have been around a hundred years after its foundation?

Where will the Bicentenary be celebrated? What innovations in magic will there be by then? Or will magicians still be performing sponge balls and linking rings? There'll almost certainly still be someone willing to show you a card trick.

Good luck for the next hundred years.

¹⁷⁷ Bevan D. Cambridge Pentacle Club Special Issue. *Abracadabra* 2009;127:236-253

¹⁷⁸ Maskell A. The Pentacle Club (Cambridge). *Abracadabra* 2009;127:572

¹⁷⁹ Ryan A. Masters of Mystery hit Magical 90. *Cambridge News* 20 March 2009

¹⁸⁰ Hibberd D. Ten Days in the Archive. *The Magic Circular* 2010;104:266-267

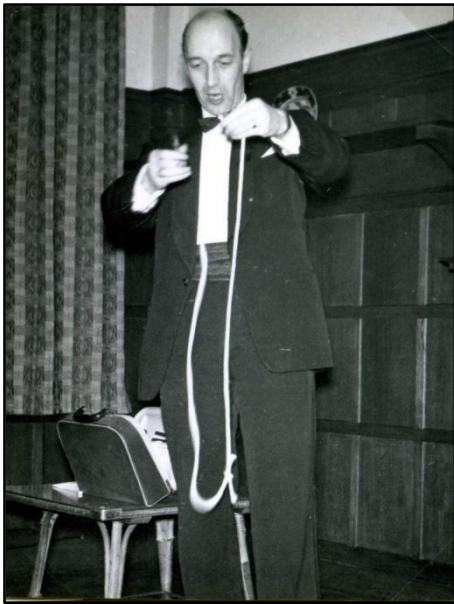
¹⁸¹ Houstoun W. There is a Way. *The Magic Circular* 2013;107:65

¹⁸² Penrose S. President's View. *The Magic Circular* 2015;109:66

Sibley B. Dr Will Houstoun. *The Magic Circular* 2015;109:171-173

¹⁸³ Houstoun W. The Magic Circle Awards Night 2014. *The Magic Circular* 2014;108:368-369

Chapter 18
Postlude – The Recent Presidents
Claude Perry - President 1990 to 2008



Claude Perry in the 1960s

Claude Perry's interest in magic started around the age of ten, as does that of many people, with a magic set. Born on 25th January 1922 he was 17 when World War 2 started and he gained a great deal of performing experience during and immediately after the war, not least with *Stars in Battledress* in Germany. Claude was by profession an accountant and continued to do that job until his retirement, but magic was always there as an important part of his life. Over the years he gave lectures to numerous Magical Societies and performed at their Dinners and shows, but his main interest and enjoyment was entertaining the public including being an excellent children's entertainer.

Claude became a Member of The Magic Circle in March 1943¹⁸⁴, and his first appearance at a Magical Society event was on 18th April 1952 when, with John Gambling, he was part of the cabaret for the Watford Association of Magicians Dinner.¹⁸⁵ Although a Cambridge resident, he could not at that time be a member of the Pentacle Club, as he was not a member of Cambridge University.

Despite a "slow start" he rapidly became noticed by the magical fraternity appearing at the *Abracadabra* Coronation Jamboree.¹⁸⁶ He also appeared at the Sheffield Circle of Magicians Day of Magic in 1953, for which the reporter states "Claude Perry did the slickest Troublewit we have witnessed"¹⁸⁷ and The Magic Circle Golden Jubilee¹⁸⁸, among numerous other engagements at magical society dinners and as a lecturer.

In January 1955 he became an Associate of the Inner Magic Circle¹⁸⁹ and was called to Membership of the Inner Magic Circle in June 1956.¹⁹⁰ At the British Ring Convention in 1955 he came second in the Shield Competition, being awarded the Speaker Cup.

In January 1956 Claude appeared in the *Focus on Hocus* show on commercial television and in May 1959 was a performer in an evening demonstration of colour television organised jointly by EMI and the British Ring together with Michael and Valerie Bailey, Joe Stuthard, Alan Alan, Fred Lovelle, Elizabeth Warlock and David Jacobs as compere.

Practically every report on Claude's act mentions his superb Troublewit routine (he did it in the colour television session as well). This was not his only effect, but his whole act fitted into a small attaché case which he could rest on a chair while he performed. In 1958 he won the "travel-light" competition run by *Abracadabra*, by sending in an account of his regular act. Goodliffe wrote:

Claude Perry, maybe for a joke, sent in the list of effects that he does in his standard act, Vanishing Cane in Newspaper; 20th Century Silks; Anti-gravity Glasses; C. & R. Rope; Stretching the same; Mandroop's Pasteboard Policy; Sucker Silk; the Thumbtie; Troublewit.

"The total weight of all the props," he says, "is less than two and a half pounds, and that is using Chinese Rings for the Thumbtie hoops. Small wooden ones would knock a few ounces off. I know the act is varied and effective—I've done it more times than I care to remember."

So he has. It must have earned him a lot of money. And now it has earned him a twelve months' subscription to *The World's Only Magical Weekly*.¹⁹¹



Claude Perry and Troublewit

In 1959 his Troublewit routine formed part of Harry Stanley's Magic Moments Film (No.9). He was in eminent company as it also featured John Ramsay, Claude Chandler, Gogia Pasha, Zina Bennett, Tom Harris and Dr. Sir Alexander Cannon.

Claude was always noted for the cleanness and efficiency of his routining, as commented on by Roy Johnson.¹⁹²

He became an Associate Member of the Pentacle Club when this became possible in 1963 and was soon an important part of the Club. He performed in many of the Club's shows, his last being in April 2005 when the Club provided the *SaturdayNight@TheMagicCircle*.¹⁹³

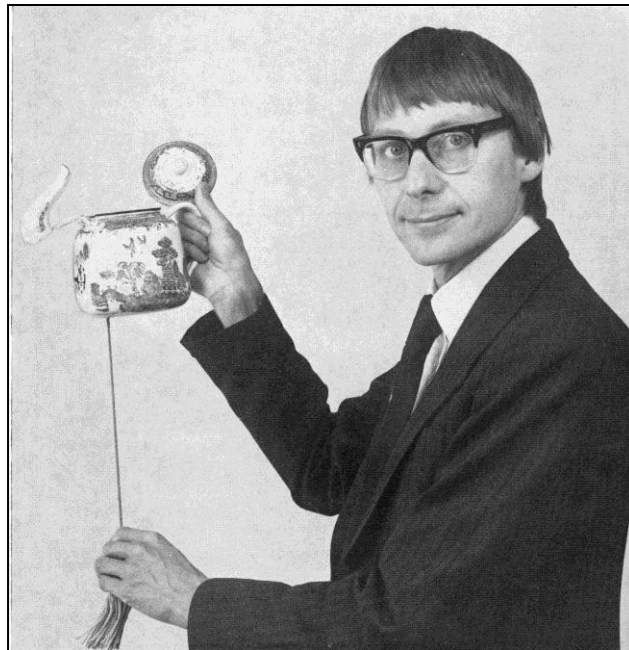
Claude was featured in the local press when he finally retired from performing at the age of 84, even later than his mentor John Gambling.¹⁹⁴

He was made an Honorary Vice-President of the Pentacle Club in 1964 at the same time as Francis White, Secretary of the Magic Circle. He became President after Sir William Hawthorne stepped down in 1990 and remained in the post until his death in April 2008.

Claude was always very generous, with advice and in other ways. I remember his giving me a blue brocade dinner jacket which had become too small for him. I suspect it wouldn't fit me now either. He was very supportive of younger magicians, as evinced by the experience of Des King¹⁹⁵ and Will Houstoun.¹⁹⁶

Claude died on 23rd April 2008 aged 86.¹⁹⁷ I shall never be able to see a Troublewit without thinking of him. I wish I could do it as well as he did!

John Davenport - President 2008 to 2013



John Davenport 1981

John is the grandson of Lewis Davenport, founder of the Magical Company of the same name, so it was little surprise that when he arrived at Peterhouse in Cambridge in 1967 he rapidly became a stalwart member of the Pentacle Club. He appeared in the last Crunch show in 1968, presenting the Dizzy Limit illusion and Oswald Williams' Noah's Ark, the latter of which had not seen the light of day for over 30 years.

Rather than following in the family business, John was interested in material science and after his PhD he found employment in an industrial engineering and research laboratory. He and Anne moved to Leicester in 1988 for a new job but whenever possible they returned to Cambridge for the annual Pentacle Club dinner. It was at such a dinner, on 13th May 2000, that John was asked to accept the office of Honorary Vice-President of the Club.

The largest prop he ever used was not for a stage show, but for an outdoor arena show in Cambridge in 1973. The club needed a showy stunt for the Midsummer Fair, something sufficiently spectacular to follow the blindfold drive stunt which the club provided the year before. John suggested an upside-down escape from a straitjacket, suspended above the arena from a 60 foot high mobile crane. The idea was popular with the club, but nobody could do it, so John borrowed a straitjacket from Davenports magic shop, learned how to do the stunt, and added escapology to his list of achievements.

In 2001 John's work brought him back to Cambridge and the chance of renewing closer links with the Pentacle Club.

John is renowned for his presentation of the "cod" inventions of Oswald Williams such as that seen in the photograph above, where the teapot has a retractable spout to avoid its being knocked off, the spaghetti fork with a winding handle and the amazingly over-complicated Mousetrap.

He became a Member of the Magic Circle as a result of his performance in the Pentacle visit to the Circle in 1968¹⁹⁸ and a Member of the Inner Magic Circle in 2000¹⁹⁹ in recognition of his work in magical history.

He is the only person ever to have been both Undergraduate Chairman of the Pentacle Club, serving in that office in the Academic Year 1969 to 1970 and President, from 2008 to 2013. As the club now has a five-year rule for presidents, Chris Kostecki took over in 2013. Meanwhile, in 2012, John retired from his job, giving him more time on his hobbies of mechanical puzzles and the history of magic. His latest venture has been starting the Davenport Collection website

www.davenportcollection.co.uk

aimed at making the contents of the Davenport Collection more available for those with a general interest or more serious research needs. John is still very active in Pentacle Club matters and, like the rest of the Committee, is busy helping to organise the centenary year.



*John Davenport presents the
John Whitmore Award to Chris Wardle
12th May 2012*

Chris Kostecki - President 2013 to 2018



Chris discovered the Pentacle Club in the early 1970s, when the club had a marquee at a fair on Midsummer Common and the first record of him in the archives is when he performed in the *Magical Music Hall* in June 1976. He became Treasurer in 1979, then Secretary from 1981-1983 and Treasurer again from 1991 to the present. In 1984 Chris successfully auditioned to become a Member of The Magic Circle, on the occasion when the Pentacle Club put on a show at The Magic Circle headquarters in London. He took over the Presidency from John Davenport in 2013.

His interest in magic had started much earlier. "When I was eight, I got a magic set for Christmas," says Chris. "It had all the bits: a set of plastic cups and some cards. And that was it - I was hooked. Now I'm in my 60s and I'm still hooked."

After the magic set, Chris soon realised that he could borrow books on magic from his local library. He pored over these and luckily was able to keep renewing his borrowings, as nobody else was on the waiting list for the books. With his ever-growing knowledge and purchases from the magic dealers, he was out doing his first paid birthday party by the time he was seventeen.

As he built up his performing, he discovered that there was plenty of work available. His day job as a partner in K&P Heating and Plumbing in the city kept him busy during the week. However, through the year Chris was doing four parties every weekend, mainly private birthday parties. Come the Christmas season, this grew to eight shows a weekend. The Christmas season was a long one, from November to February, because in those days it was common for large companies, colleges and nearby villages to have a party with a magician. Since around 2010, this work has been less common. In addition to children's shows, he has always been happy to perform for adults, as and when such opportunities arise.

Chris added Punch and Judy to his magic in 1979, following the retirement of a local P&J man who wanted to pass his equipment on to a younger performer. Mr Punch brought in many new bookings for events such as craft fairs and village fetes. Another skill he has is balloon modelling. Anyone who has tried this will know that blowing up a modelling balloon is not easy. Chris can still blow up fifty balloons for children at an event, as he proved at one of the club's centenary shows in 2019.

Chris has always found time to help with the Pentacle Club and his invaluable support was recognised in the Club's 85th year with the presentation of a framed First Day cover of the Royal Mail's Punch and Judy stamps (see Chapter 15). His dedication to the Club continues in many ways, as a Committee Member, Club Treasurer, archivist, performer and as the provider of an annual *Tricks from Out of the Cupboard* evening. Over the years Chris has been forced to invest in new material because many of his shows have been repeat bookings. He therefore has a seemingly endless supply of tricks to demonstrate and explain during his evenings.

Chris has been a semi-professional magician and entertainer all his life. In a newspaper report he said "I love entertaining and I love the excitement of doing tricks. It just gives you a kick."²⁰⁰ He performs at all manner of events, from birthday parties to fairs and carnivals. Wherever he goes his signature trick, Joey the Clown, whose head gets knocked off only to reappear magically, is always a real hit.



Jeremy Bond - President 2018 to the present



Jeremy Bond (JezO) and Through the Eye of a Needle

Jeremy was born into a theatrical family and began entertaining at the age of three for his sisters and their friends. At ten years old he took his first party booking as a magician and DJ.

Over several years he appeared in television and film roles ranging from a scruffy urchin in *Little Labourers* to an evacuee on a liner in *Enigma*, the best part of which was the “fantastic food”. As a teenager he appeared in *East Enders* where he had to spray graffiti on a brick wall and make a quick get-away on a bicycle. Such claim to fame!

Back in the real world, Jeremy’s interest in magic was growing, copying and making models of the illusions his father was using in his act. It was in January 2000, at the tender age of 14, that it was agreed he would be admitted to the Pentacle Club, after much discussion and deliberation by the hierarchy of the Club in view of his young age. His first performance for the Club was in March of that year when he appeared in the show which the Club took to The Magic Circle, being “sliced every which way” in a sword cabinet by his father.²⁰¹ He was co-opted to the Committee in 2007 when he reached the age of 21.

At the age of 15 he visited Uganda with *Signpost International* spending a month there with street children. In order to raise the money for his ticket Jeremy hosted a number of discos with his inimitable style of entertainment to the fore. The ticket money was raised very quickly. Determination and talent go hand in hand.

As an entertaining head boy at secondary school he followed this with his first role as president at Sixth Form College. Was it his prowess in entertaining the students that caught the eye of his future wife? During these years he appeared in many dramatic productions with the role of Gratiano in Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice* proving he was a serious thespian, notwithstanding his line, “Let me play the fool: With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come”.

After studying Performing Arts he set up his own business as an entertainer, compere and DJ and has enjoyed success ever since with both children and adult audiences at all types of events.

He is a high energy performer with a natural flair for comedy and magic. He also works as an actor for film and television as well as for medical training sessions. Jeremy has recently filmed *Jezo in the Jungle* for Cheeky Chimps online television channel. As a charity auctioneer he is a master, raising thousands of pounds at events. Raffles raise even more money when he auctions off the remaining biscuits on the plate and bingo numbers become magical and hilarious at his call.

For more than 15 years Jeremy has entertained at clubs and events for adults with learning difficulties. He has great empathy with his audiences who love him. Bookings for children's parties come thick and fast and he is often booked again for the same child's 18th birthday party; such is his appeal across the ages.

He has toured his own children's show, *Jezo's Magic and Laughter Show*, to theatres around the UK and has also entertained on board ship. In recent years he's toured the UK in partnership with his father, Philip Bond, also known as Doctor Bondini in their illusion show.

Over the last six years Jeremy has appeared in pantomime and in 2018 took the lead role as Jack in *Jack and the Beanstalk* at Margate's Theatre Royal. Spring 'pantomimes' have become more popular in the last few years and Jeremy has been spotted on *Treasure Island* quite a few times.

Jeremy is kept busy with numerous private and corporate bookings and regularly entertains at holiday parks on the east coast. He is also a managing director of *Jezo's Events Ltd*, a full service production company for private and corporate events and entertainment.

Jeremy is the youngest President of the Pentacle Club in its 100 year history. It's an honour of which he is rightly proud.

¹⁸⁴ Anon. Promotions. *The Magic Circular*, 1955;49:126

¹⁸⁵ Goodliffe. Watford Dinner. *Abracadabra*, 1952;13:77

¹⁸⁶ Goodliffe. The Coronation Jubilee. *Abracadabra*, 1953;15:225-228

¹⁸⁷ Stuart G. The Sheffield Circle of Magicians. *Abracadabra*, 1953;16:237

¹⁸⁸ Young J. Abracadaborough. *The Magic Circular*, 1955;49:206-208

¹⁸⁹ Anon. Promotions. *The Magic Circular*, 1955;49:126

¹⁹⁰ Anon. New Associates, Promotions, Etc. *The Magic Circular*, 1956;50:217

¹⁹¹ Goodliffe. Editorial. *Abracadabra*, 1958;25:289-290

Goodliffe. Travel-light Contest Result. *Abracadabra*, 1958;26:19

¹⁹² Johnson R. *The Roy Johnson Experience*, 1st ed. Goodliffe Publications 1970 p.2

¹⁹³ Wardle C. Saturday Night at the Magic Circle with the Pentacle Club. *The Magic Circular*, 2005;99:399

¹⁹⁴ Bish D. Age catches up with a magician and his rabbit. *Haverhill Echo*, 16 January 2006

Downing J. Santa Claude brings curtain down at last. *Cambridge News*, 31 January 2006 p.18-19

¹⁹⁵ King D. Claude Perry – An Appreciation. *Abracadabra*, 2008;125:719

¹⁹⁶ Houstoun W. There is a Way. *The Magic Circular*, 2013;107:65

¹⁹⁷ Davenport J. Claude Perry. *Abracadabra*, 2008;125:718-719

Morris LJ. A little bit of magic disappears for ever. *Cambridge News*, 1 May 2008

¹⁹⁸ Anon. New Members etc. *The Magic Circular*, 1968;62:143

¹⁹⁹ Anon. Promotions. *The Magic Circular*, 1980;94:342

²⁰⁰ Ryan A. Masters of Mystery hit Magical Ninety. *Cambridge News*, 20 March 2009

²⁰¹ Sibley B. Pentacle Club Entertains. *The Magic Circular*, 2000;94:296-297

Appendix 1 – Miracles of Modern Medicine

"YOU WON'T FEEL ANYTHING"

Invented and written

- by -

H. Rottenburg.

CHARACTERS: MR JOHN GOODEBODY, (a patient).

MR PATERSON, (Sir Edward's Assistant).

SIR EDWARD SEEBOHN (a Surgeon).

SCENE SIR EDWARD'S waiting room.

Shallow scene with backcloth. Chair left with small table.

ENTER P and G.

P. You wish to see Sir Edward ?

G. Yes. Is he disengaged ?

P. He's engaged at the moment. What can I say you wish to see him about ?

G. Oh Well - I don't know exactly - I'm really all of a doo-dah.

P. Quite so. Sir Edward has treated several such cases lately. I'll tell him.

G. Are you sure Sir Edward can't see me at once. I simply must see him.

P. I see. Well I'll get him to give you something to soothe your nerves. (Fetches glass). This will make you feel better. You may even feel inclined to doze.

G. Thanks. (Drinks. P. EXITS. G. settles down with left elbow on table. Nods. Falls asleep. Lights die down. Back cloth rises showing consulting room. Back centre high couch. Left back, box. R. down table with sprayer, P.M. knife, saw, glass, tonsil brush, bottle, fluff extractor, and probe. Chair R. Left, table with tray earthenware jug and glasses.)

(Lights change to green and slowly rise to normal. Sir E. is standing R.D. holding saw. P. centre back).

E. Paterson this saw wants sharpening. I think I mentioned it before. Only this morning I took 10 strokes to get through a man's arm. That is three over bogie. It won't do. Have it seen to. (G. blinks and listens during this. E. puts saw on table R.)

P. Yes, Sir.

E. And so this is the new patient. (Goes forward and looks at G). A fine specimen. Judging by his plus fours, a golfer. Good. He should be accustomed to slicing and pulling. Paterson, better see if we have everything we want. (P. goes to box). Large size bandages ?

P. Yes Sir (Produces one and puts it on couch).

E. Towels.

P. Yes Sir.

E. A new bottle of the anaesthetic.

P. Yes Sir.

E. Good. (Goes up to G.) And what may I ask is your trouble ?

G. A cup tie.

E. A cup tie ? Perhaps too much of the cup without the tie, yes ?

G. Oh no, no. I came up to London to see a cup tie. The Puddleby Rovers were playing the Muddborough Wanderers.

E. And you lost, I suppose.

G. How did you know ? Yes. I lost my watch.

E. And did you see the other side win ?

G. Win ? See them win ? It was a foul. A ruddy foul.

E. That's very serious. Pink mice are common but a ruddy foul that's serious. Have you any pains.

G. Pains ? Not as far as I can feel.

E. Does that hurt ? (Kicks G's leg).

Al

- G. Oh, I say. Yes that does hurt.
- E. Ah. I'd better have a look at the leg. Just take a seat. (G. sits chair R). We'd better have something to put the leg on. (Looks round). Ah Yes. The chest. Paterson just bring it forward. (P brings forward chest sliding it along ground. E. is facing G and P brings chest down just behind G's legs). Thanks. I think we'd better turn it up. (Turns chest over on side and lifts legs on to it). That's better. Now let us see what's wrong. I'd better listen to the circulation in the outer bifurcation of the femoral artery. (Stoops down thereby giving G. opportunity to switch over to false leg). No I can hear nothing. Paterson, my stethoscope. (P. hands stethoscope from table R. E. puts it on his head). Just say ninety nine. (E. applies steth. to knee).
- G. Ninety-nine.
- E. That's rather too high up. Let me have something lower down. Try twenty seven.
- G. Twenty seven.
- E. Yes. That's better.
- G. What can you hear.
- E. Nothing. We'll now try your ankle joint. (Hands Stethoscope to Paterson and moves G's foot, turning it to right and left). Does that hurt.
- G. No.
- E. Kindly move the foot so that the toes point upwards (G. moves foot). Good. Now down again. Yes. Up and down again. Thanks. No pain?
- G. None whatever.
- E. Tell me now if I hurt you. (Presses leg with his hand, going slowly up the leg).
- G. Oh.
- E. Does that hurt.

- G. That's where you kicked me.
- E. Impossible. I only resorted to pedel percussion. That's quite a different thing. In any case it indicates trouble in the bone. We'd better have the leg off and look at it.
- G. Cut it off ?
- E. ~ It's quite simple and as I use a local anaesthetic you won't feel anything. Paterson the local anaesthetic spray (P. brings it from table) Thanks. Now in case you don't know, a local anaesthetic entirely prevents any feeling in the part of the body to which it is applied. For instance supposing you were to feel the pangs of hunger you would merely spray the stomach with a local anaesthetic and you would cease to feel any hunger.
- G. What about thirst ?
- E. Other more popular ways of dealing with thirst have been invented ? This local anaesthetic is the latest from America. It is quite harmless. (Looks at bottle). The trade mark is three stars. You may have heard of it. (Looks again). My mistake. I should have said three stars and stripes. To reassure you I'll just give you a little demonstration of its efficacy. (To P). My post mortem knife. (To G.) Just hold out your hand. (G. holds out left hand palm down. E sprays it and puts down sprayer on box. With his left hand E. holds G's hand and with his right takes knife from P.) I assure you, you won't feel anything. (E. thrusts knife down into back of G's hand. Point appears protruding from palm). You feel nothing do you ?
- G. (Nervously) No nothing.
- E. You see, I can move the knife about and you feel nothing. (E. moves knife to and fro). When I take it out (withdraws knife) the wound heals instantaneously. Wonderful isn't it. I will just spray the leg - so (sprays leg) and - Paterson my saw.
- P. The one that is blunt.
- E. The patient is not very old. He won't be very tough. (P. brings saw from table R). It would be a pity to cut the stocking wouldn't it. (Pushes stocking down.) Thanks. (As P. hands him saw). You need not be afraid. You won't feel anything.

- G. I'm rather ticklish (E. saws).
- E. (When half through). Leg feeling quite comfortable ?
- G. Yes.
- E. (After sawing). Now one moment (pulls leg off).
Good. (Looks at several parts of leg). Ah Yes.
Quite so, quite so. I'm afraid you've not been taking
sufficient vitamins lately Mr Goodebody.
- G. Oh Yes, Sir Ernest. I've been taking more this year
than ever.
- E. Oh. I surely can't be deceived.
- G. By the way beer does contain vitamins doesn't
it ?
- E. No, no. Beer contains hops not vitamins.
- G. Hops is it. I knew they'd discovered something new
in beer.
- E. (Still examining section of leg). I see there is a
little decay in the bone too. I'd better just remove
that. Paterson my drill. (P. brings breast drill).
Just hold Mr Goodebody's leg. (P. holds it). Thanks.
(To G.) You may feel this a little but it won't take
long. (Drills at leg bone while G. squirms). Thanks
that is all I intend to do. Now a little more of the
preparation to promote healing (Sprays two sections of
the leg and takes leg from P. giving him the sprayer).
Just get me one of my patent fasteners. (P. brings
peg of wood from table). Thanks. You see Mr
Goodebody how simple this is. I place this wooden
peg into the centre of the bone and so ensure it
jointing on to the other part. Simple isn't it.
- G. Wonderful. (E. pushes leg on to stump.

E. The fact of the matter is, the higher we go in science the simpler things become. In the highest medical science in fact there's absolutely nothing in it. Paterson hand me a swab.

(Paterson hands E. swab with which E. wipes join in leg.)

With a little care the join will become quite invisible.

(E. places swab on edge of chest so that it falls off in front of chest and then pulls up stocking to cover leg). There. In a moment you will be able to use it. (Sees swab on floor). Excuse me. (Rests right hand on G's knee and stoops to pick up swab).

G. (Yells). Oh. (During this, false leg is switched back into chest and real one reappears).

E. What is it.

G. You were leaning your whole weight on my knee.

E. Did it hurt ?

G. Did it hurt ? Well of course it did.

- E. Excellent. That shows the feeling has returned. It means in fact the leg has healed. We must be careful still. Gently now (lifts leg and tilts chest back out of the way and puts leg on ground). See if you can bear your weight on it (G. rises on to it). Feels all right does it. (P. replaces chest at back of scene).
- G. (Nervously and stammering) Rather a feeling of pins and needles.
- E. I assure you nothing of the sort was used. Only one patent fastener.
- (G. rolls down stocking and shows scar).
- E. That you will find will disappear in a day or so. Just apply a little vaseline or cold cream and rub it with a soft towel. Well, how do you feel? Quite all right?
- G. We - well. A - a little sh - shaken up and (swallows between words).
- E. I see, a slight lump in the throat perhaps
- G. (Swallows) Yes.
- E. Just take a seat again (G. sits in chair left) and let me look. Kindly open the mouth. Oh, yes, I see. Slightly relaxed. The vocal chords - especially the C major one - are rather relaxed. Paterson, a tonsil brush and a little three star mixture in a glass. (P. brings them).
- G. But my throat is quite all right. I assure you.
- E. Exactly. There you must allow me to judge though. (Takes brush and dips it in glass) open. (G. opens mouth). Excellent (Paints G's throat. G. suddenly makes a noise and shuts mouth). Please open the mouth (G. opens and E. finds brush part gone). What on earth has happened (looks at end of brush). D'you realize Mr Goodebody you've bitten the end off my brush. Well? (looks at G. who only mouths). The least you can do is to apologize. In any case I presume you will return it. (G. points to mouth and tries to speak). Can't you speak. (G. shakes head). Oh. Let me have a look again (Presses G. back into chair, and looks into throat). Paterson get me the

chest to stand on. I can't really look down properly. (P. brings chest forward). Thanks. (Gets up and looks down). I see. Yes. Entangled in the vocal chords. Paterson my No. 3 size fluff extractor (P. hands it; G. looks horrified). Don't be alarmed. Your mouth is quite large enough to take a number six size. Now open wide. (G. squirms). Better hold his head Paterson. A little nervous (E. inserts extractor). Now quite steady. Yes. Excellent. No don't move. Ah. I can feel it. Splendid. Now just one moment. Gently. I can feel it quite distinctly. Careful now or we'll spoil it all. There! (Brings out extractor with red ball on end). Yes. Hts quite time you had your tonsils out. (Examines tonsil). Wonderful. Here it is. The cause of all the trouble. A little bit of fluff. It's wonderful what a lot of trouble a little bit of fluff can cause. (Picks off imaginary bit of fluff). I'm afraid we've missed the brush though. Better order a new one Paterson. Let me see. (G. opens mouth) Yes. I'm afraid the brush has side slipped further down. I shall have to resort to Kephalotomy. (G. starts) You needn't be afraid. You wan't feel anything. Paterson just bring forward the couch and hand me the sprayer. (To G.) This operation I am going to do is quite a minor affair and well - it only fails once in every ten times. And as it has failed the last three times I did it you see it's bound to succeed in the next twenty seven cases. So you needn't be in the least afraid. (P. hands sprayer). Now kindly close the eyes. (E. sprays head and face). P. now hands bandage and E. and P. wind it round head beginning at forehead, going back over head and then round $2\frac{1}{2}$ times finishing in front, where E. puts a safety pin over right temple and then over left. Next he puts one in centre. G. shouts.)

E. Hulloa. What has gone wrong. (Lifts bandage off) What is it? (G. indicates pin has gone into his eye) Into your eye. I see. That doesn't matter at all. You see it's a safety pin. (Puts bandage on again and pins back part if necessary). Now Paterson. We'll get him on to the couch. (P. takes left arm and E. right and they lift him out of chair and then backwards to couch where they lift him up in a sitting position on to the couch) Quite comfortable? (G. makes signs he wants to write) I see. Certainly. (Hands G. a pencil and a piece of paper out of his pocket. G. writes.) A drink! Most certainly. Paterson. Get Mr Goodebody something

to drink. (E. goes behind couch and lifts bandage off G's head while P. fills a glass from jug with stout. As E. momentarily holds bandage behind couch man under couch exchanges it for trick bandage which E. places on couch. Then he comes round and finds G. just going to drink).

E. Paterson. What on earth have you done ? Stout to a patient just going to be operated on. Impossible. A stout before an operation always means a bier after it.

(P. takes back glass pours it into jug. Takes a clean glass and pours out milk).

E. That's better (G. drinks. E. goes behind couch and puts on bandage over head and lays G. down, coming himself round to the end and slightly in front where he holds bandage steady and releases trap). Now make yourself quite comfortable Mr Goodebody (this to cover up any shuffling to get head right for trap). Paterson. Give me a towel. (P. takes one of those placed on couch and brings it round) Just slip it under his head while I lift it. We mustn't get any stains on the new couch. Thanks. Get me another for his neck. (P. brings another and as he passes along behind couch changes it with the man under couch for the "neckpiece" with towel attached. This E. places in position, standing behind the couch level with the neck) Another one Paterson. Thanks. (This one can be added openly and helps to cover the neck piece). That's excellent. Now my saw Paterson. (P. crosses behind him to table and hands saw) Thanks. (G. heaves) That's quite all right. You needn't be afraid. You won't feel anything. (P. holds head while E. saws and with his foot signals strokes of saw to man below who uses saw on piece of wood) That's gone quite well. Now Paterson we must be careful. Just clear the end of the couch while I look after the head. (P. moves G's legs and 2 remaining towels back and E. lifts head carefully standing behind couch. Then he moves along and places it over trap where P. receives it). Just steady it Paterson while I get some towels packed round it. (E. goes round head of couch and puts two towels round bandages while man inserts his head. There. That's fine. Perhaps he'd like a little fresh air. (Lifts bandage and hands it to P. who places it on the table at R. back) How's that ? Quite comfortable ? (Head moves as if to speak). Dear me, I thought the obstruction was lower down. Why can't he speak. I - how stupid.

Of course his lungs are missing. Get the artificial respiratory organs Paterson. They are on the shelf under the couch. (P. lifts curtain at head end and produces bellows and tube. He crosses in front of E. who takes end of tube):

E. Just hold the head while I fix the tube to his wind pipe. (E. pushes tube in between the collar and neck of the "Head"). Now Paterson a gentle supply of air. (P. starts to blow.

HEAD I had no idea --- (P. has stopped blowing).

E. Paterson you must not let the supply of air fail. Keep it up. (To head) Now try again.

H. I had no idea you were going to do this.

E. I'm sorry. I hoped to get it all finished before you noticed anything.

H. Will it take very long ?

E. Only a few minutes. Would you care to smoke while you're waiting ?

H. Thanks. (E. produces cigarette and inserts it into mouth. Then he looks in his pocket for matches; walks over to table R and looks; turns to P.) Have you any matches Paterson ?

P. No, sir.

E. Have you any ? (P. blows).

H. Yes. (Hand takes box out of coat pocket).

E. Thanks. (Takes out a match and holds it to cigarette. Head blows it out). Paterson you really ought to know that suction not blowing is required to light a cigarette. Again please. (E. lights cigarette and head sucks and expels in time to P's working of bellows). Excellent. Now we'd better have a look for the brush. (Goes to table and takes a long probe and goes to head of couch.) By the way would you care to see this part of the operation ?

H. Thanks.

P. Shall I carry it round for it to see ?

E. No. Introspection is liable to make a patient morbid. Just turn the head gently. (P. gently lifts and turns the head). That's excellent. (E. probes. Head coughs).

H. You're tickling my throat and making me cough.

E. I'm so sorry but I won't be a second now. (Continues). Yes, I've got something this time. (Pulls out a rag with brush attached) Dear me. What on earth is this ?

H. It's a piece of the referee's muffler.

E. Had you been chewing the rag with him ?

H. I had an argument with him.

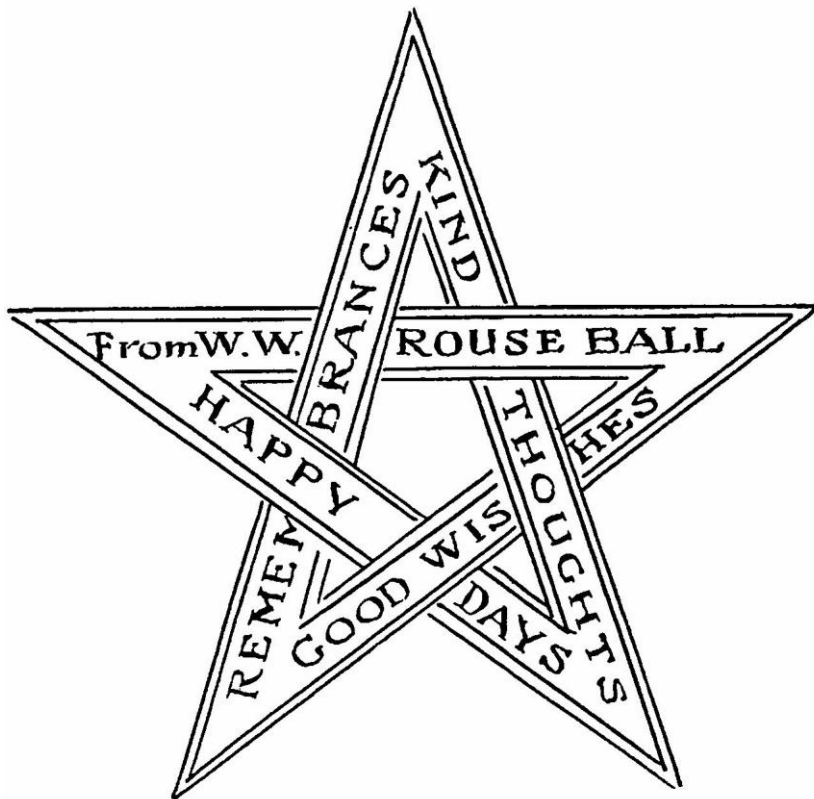
E. And look, the brush has got entangled in it. Splendid. (puts rag etc. on table R.). Now we'll get you back on to your body. (Goes to table and fetches sprayer). Kindly close the eyes and let me have your cigarette. (Takes cigarette while P. removes tube. Hands cigarette to P. who puts cigarette and bellows on table L. P. fetches bandage and stands with it.)

E. Kindly close the eyes. (Sprays face) Puts sprayer on table L as he goes round and takes bandage). We'd better have this on again as the anaesthetic is so liable to give you a cold in the head. (Puts on bandage). Just spray the body as well Paterson while I attend to the head. (P. takes sprayer and sprays neck) Ready. (Picks up head). We must be careful not to spoil it now. (Puts head back and pretends to see if it has joined while P. stands at head of couch holding head steady. E. removes neck piece and leaves one towel to cover join of bandage and body.

E. That seems to have joined up splendidly. Just take away this towel from under his head. It may have got stained. I will hold his head up. (P. pulls out towel while E. holds bandage). Just get me another clean towel.

P. I am sorry sir, there are no more.

- E. You'll find plenty on the shelf under the couch.
(P. pulls back curtain and takes out towel). Thanks.
(During this E. helps G. to raise his head by pulling
up trap in pillow. When E. gets clean towel he wipes
neck, going round to front while P. falls back behind
couch. Then E. goes to head and P. stands behind head
of couch.)
- E. Just steady his head while I slip off the bandage.
(E. removes bandage and hands it to P. who gets it ex-
changed by "head" for original one, which he places on
table L. E. raises G. up on couch. G. seems dazed.)
Well, how do we: feel ?
- G. Rather dazed.
- E. Naturally. People are when they've just recovered
their head.
- G. Got rather a stitch in my neck.
- E. Pure imagination. None were necessary. Step down
gently. (E. helps G. to chair L down. Turning back to
P.) Just put away the artificial lungs Paterson. (P.
does so showing shelf under couch all along). There
now (as he lets G. sit down in chair. E. then drops
back. Lights die down to black, then green. Act drop is
lowered and lights go up. Enter E. in front R. Goes
up to G. who is stirring in his sleep and lays his hand
on his shoulder).
- E. I'm quite ready to see you now.
- G. (looks up in terror). Not to-day. (Rushes off. Black
out.)



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The author Dr. Michael Colley was a member of the Pentacle Club from 1965-1971.



At the age of almost six Michael won an Ernest Sewell Cabinet of Conjuring in a competition in a children's comic, and the pattern of his life was set. An elderly magician across the road bought him a magic wand and an "x-ray vision" box. A few years later he acquired a "Gay Deceiver" magic set and then a Monkey Bar from Davenports.

Part of the reason for his choosing to attend university in Cambridge was that it had a magical society. On arriving in Cambridge in 1965, his first important visit was to the Societies' Fair in the Corn Exchange, where he immediately enrolled in the Pentacle Club.

Michael was involved in the Club's annual Crunch shows in 1966 to 1968 and was Secretary of the Club in the academic year 1966-67 and Chairman in 1967-68, after which he remained on the Committee for the rest of his time in Cambridge. He is a holder of the Silver Pentacle award.

After his Ph.D. study ended at the end of 1971 he left Cambridge for the Netherlands, where he managed to find a magic club, De Zwarte Muze which, together with regular shipments of Abracadabra from the UK, meant that he was not deprived of magic and even did a show for the Laboratory in which he was working (though not in Dutch).

In 1973 Michael returned to the UK, to London where he became deeply involved in The Magic Circle, joining the Council, running and cataloguing the Lending Library and in 1979 becoming the organiser of The Young Magician of the Year Competition, a role he still fulfils 40 years later. He became a Member of The Magic Circle in 1970 and was called to Membership of the Inner Magic Circle in 1986. He wrote *The Young Magicians - The History of a Competition* published in 2011, which covers the first 50 years of The Magic Circle Young Magician of the Year Competition. As a result of doing this he was cajoled into writing this history of the Pentacle Club.

Though a messy worker he enjoys putting books and documents in order and has published Indices to *Abracadabra*, the *Gen* and the *Magigram*. For over 20 years he produced the annual index to *The Magic Circular*, and has produced a digital copy of the magazine which is on The Magic Circle Website.

Michael has lived at the edge of Gloucestershire for over 30 years but is in Cambridge from time to time and he and his wife Mary (who was involved in the background with the Pentacle Club in the 1960s) enjoy meeting up with members of the Club when possible.

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