



# THE MEMEL

## MAGAZINE OF THE MODERN MYSTIC LEAGUE



Volume 78 Number 1 January 2015



**OF  
THE MODERN MYSTIC LEAGUE**

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## EDITORIAL

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This is the last issue of this magazine in this paper format. A sad day for many members I have spoken to. You will no longer be able to pick it up at intervals and read it. Whatever may be said it isn't the same reading a screen as looking at a printed page. This is definitely a collector's issue.

One important point I have is that it is important for future issues to be run off and collected as an ongoing historical record. Also, I do hope there is no delay in forwarding copies to non-internet members, and to this end issues may have to be produced a day or two earlier to ensure such members receive them before the meetings.

I have been proud to be your Centenary President and I hope this year will be regarded as a special year for the events we undertook. In advance of the year I considered what we might do to publicise this great anniversary. I put forward proposals for a month of magic which met with a lukewarm response. Undaunted I endeavoured to sell the idea to a small sub-committee and gradually with more flesh on the project, people warmed to it. I had, in advance, initiated talks with the two theatres, the shopping mall, the museum, the library, the local history societies and the local press. Nearly all were unaware of our existence but applauded the suggestion of their possible involvement.

And so we had, throughout March, the Thwaites Theatre and King Georges Hall shows, the Children's School Poster Competition, magic in the Shopping Mall, lectures to two history societies, a Poster display in the Museum, and quite a lot of newspaper publicity.

I reached the conclusion that one thing that must emerge from the year was that we should gain public awareness of the Society and endeavour to put it on the map, not merely as a local Society but to emphasise that our members come from all over the county and beyond, and that we are THE Lancashire Society. I hope this

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point may be taken up at the AGM. We should no longer have to explain to people that we are not just a Blackburn society.

It is appropriate to profoundly thank all those members who assisted in the organisation or supported the various events during the year.

Perhaps the highlight was the Banquet, a full house of 125 against our normal attendance of around 75. Due primarily to my being able to persuade Paul Daniels and Debbie McGee to be with us for the weekend with Paul performing at the Banquet and Debbie giving us a delightful talk on the Sunday.

We did have some fun on occasions. The Lancashire and North-West Magazine Photographer and sub-editor, came to take photos and newsworthy items, resulting in a hilarious three quarters of an hour, and subsequently did us proud in the next issue.

Blackburn has never had an internationally famous illusionist. Or, so I thought, until by accident I read a 1945 magazine article which inspired my research. Somehow, it seemed appropriate that in this special year I should find that Blackburn did have one, a man born in Mill Hill, namely Edwin Hargreaves, who was invariably top of the bill in major theatres as Signor Arvi from 1909 to 1932. He was a great success for a short period in America and Canada, and retired well off even though his act was still topping the bill.

Twenty years is long enough for anyone to act as Editor of this magazine which has been a very enjoyable ride. In tandem nearly ten years as Treasurer is quite enough and I wish my successor a smooth journey. Financially the Society, as far as I can recall, has never been in better shape.

One sad matter to report. Amy Dawes, the wife of Eddie Dawes, passed away just before the New Year. Eddie, a good friend of several of us, has long been a supporter of this Society and seeing him fairly frequently, he often comments that he avidly reads this magazine. Amy was a most charming lady, supporting Eddie with his research, but in her own right an authority on English fashion through the centuries and on the magic scene had an unusual but appreciated rag picture act. Our sympathies are extended to Eddie and his family.

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In conclusion I would like to thank all the loyal contributors over the years who have helped to make this one of the best magic society magazines.

Best wishes to everyone for a healthy and prosperous 2015.

Keep shuffling

**Trevor**

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## **JUST A SEC ...**

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Our December meeting brought the annual magic party to the MML. Oh no it didn't! Oh yes it did!

Donald the Average again disproved his name by linking the show together with a variety of sight gags, a sing-song and a dancing hat, concluding with his splendid box illusion featuring Harry Moulding as one of Santa's elves.

Harry had his own spot (as Harini Mouldini) earlier in the show, presenting a silk routine to delight his young audience, with the silks taking on a life of their own as they jumped back and forth between bags and boxes, changing colour as they went. Paul Joyce was equally colourful, with magic painting, balloons, attractive props and the usual paraphernalia of Christmas magic. Your scribe got Marmalade the Monkey to blow up a balloon to celebrate 100 years of the MML with various bits of business, while an audience volunteer assisted with a ghostly tube effect and the tale was told of three coloured ropes attempting to buy sweets.

Joe Gilmour, sporting a real beard, brought Santa along this year, and proved to be a resounding success. There were goody-bags galore, along with the festive fare of mince pies and cakes courtesy of Chairman Roger and President Trevor, assisted by Joan. Once again, the event was deemed to be a great success.

Oh yes it was!!!

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I do hope you will be able to make it to the AGM on Sunday, as a lot of changes of personnel are in prospect for the coming year and you can make your opinions felt. This is the time when we look backwards and forwards and honour those who need to be honoured.

I have two or three points I would like you to consider in advance. Years ago the committee meetings were held every month, for 45 minutes before the main Sunday meeting. This was an impractical arrangement, as some people inevitably arrived late and others were under pressure to sort out the afternoon - especially if a guest speaker had just arrived. When the workshops started we addressed this issue by introducing quarterly meetings, an hour before a workshop. Obviously, evolution is a slow process but we have realised on a couple of occasions recently that a three-month gap is often too long when relatively urgent issues need to be dealt with. My modest proposal would give us bi-monthly meetings by magically just adding one more! How? Well, the AGM in January will obviously serve as one of those meetings. We could then have the rest in March, May, July, September and November. This will allow a two-month gap between each while just having five evening meetings.

You will find an up-dated calendar elsewhere in this issue, and I will add the committee meeting dates next time, after we have made our decision. You will also see that we have had to shunt the March, April and May meetings *en bloc* onto the third Sunday of the month. We always strive to avoid this, but on this occasion it has been necessary to accommodate the international lecturers and because of Easter weekend and the Northern Magic Circle Convention, which many of us will be attending. Such shifts have occasionally caused confusion in the past, so **do please put these dates in your diary now so that you are not caught out later.**

Also in connection with the calendar, can I please urge you to volunteer to deal with the refreshments one month? It worked so much better last year when we got it all sorted out at the AGM – so if you can't attend please let me know so that you can be slotted in. I'll kick off with the coming meeting, and because the President's and Chairman's days are already accounted for, along with the party, we now just need

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volunteers for February, March, April, May, July, August, September and October.

Some people have been asking about memorabilia to celebrate and commemorate our centenary, so I have made enquiries and Alan Astra, who produced the excellent packs of centenary cards, is offering a number of personalised products, from button badges (£1.50 each or £1 if 50+ are ordered) to coasters (£2.50 each or £2 for 50+), bookmarks (£2 each or £1.50 for 50+) and key fobs (75p or £1 depending upon size – or 50p and 75p respectively for 50+). There are also special deals for coaster sets. All the products are of good quality, and samples were admired by those who attended our last workshop; so again be having a think about your own requirements.

See you on Sunday for what I hope will be a very constructive and positive meeting.

**Brian Lead**

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## **SECRETARIAL – JANUARY 2015**

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Firstly I'd like to wish all members, friends and acquaintances, a happy new year to you all. I hope you had a good festive period and for the professionals a busy time.

Well 2015 is here already and our first meeting, the AGM, this coming Sunday. I would encourage you to attend this meeting to have your input into how the society is run and this year there are a number of significant positions which have become vacant.

I'm sure it will be mentioned elsewhere but I would like to offer thanks to Trevor Dawson for his contribution to the roles of Treasurer and Memel

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Editor who, at the AGM, will resign from these posts. Thanks also to Allan Clarke who reluctantly resigned from the position of Secretary earlier in the year. AGM's are never the most magical of meetings although I believe we also have an initiation show to look forward to.

Copies of the minutes from the previous AGM were circulated earlier in the year so I would encourage you to read these again if necessary beforehand to help proceedings.

I haven't seen much magic on the television this festive period. The only one which comes to Mind is Darcy Oake which has been showed a couple of times now in the last few weeks. You may remember the name as he was a contestant on Britain's Got Talent but didn't win although made it to the final. The show on television was filmed at the Opera House in Blackpool and the eagle eyed amongst us will spot some familiar faces in the audience! It was a fast paced illusion show inter spaced with a couple of close up effects in which he came into the stalls. The only down side for me was the compare, Christine Bleakley who personally I thought needed a bib as she was drooling over Darcy so much. He certainly used his looks and charm on her as misdirection.

The final illusion was where he walked though a brick stoned wall which had apparently been constructed by some local builders. Darcy stood the wall onto a steel plate to negate the option of going under the wall, cubicles where placed, one each side of the wall. He entered one on one side and emerged seconds later from the other one at the other side. Now that's magic! Or is it? It will be interesting to have a discussion with one of our members who I saw in the audience to see what actually was seen live rather than in the TV edit, as the illusion was too impossible with members of the audience surrounding the illusion.

On the whole a great show bringing magic up to date and once again into the public forum. It just shows how popular magic is at the moment as on the lottery programme on Saturday the couple playing for prizes wanted to win a tip to see Dynamo.

Hope to see you on Sunday.

**Dave Moss**

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# CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

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2014 the Centenary Year of the Modern Mystic League is now over and it was a memorable year during which many events happened that put forward the good name of the Society. Many thanks to the Centenary Sub-Committee and all those who took part in making the Centenary Year such a great success.

Our last meeting of 2014 was, of course, the Christmas Party. I thought it was as good as ever this year, not too long and not too short. Joe Gilmour brought along Father Christmas as only he can (!) and all the performers Donald, Brian, Harry and Paul (J) did very well.

The next meeting of the Society is the AGM. There are quite a number of changes to be made in the officers and Council so it will be an important meeting. So, do come along and take part if you can.

Joe has decided to step down as Web Master. We must thank Joe for constructing and maintaining the Society's current web site which is a vital part of any organisation in today's technological world.

Trevor is retiring as *Memel* Editor and Treasurer. He has given long service in both these positions for which we thank him most sincerely.

A number of members have put themselves forward for the vacancies for which we are grateful. The Council needs members who are regular attenders at our meetings and who can make a contribution so consider putting yourself forward if you can help. The Society is for every member of course so it is good that we will be able to continue into the New Year with a strong team.

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Brian has been busy arranging the programme for 2015 and it looks like it will be an interesting and varied one. Our Concert Secretary knows that you need to plan ahead to secure lecturers and performers and he does an excellent job in this regard.

I am hoping that the new book *The Centenary History of The Modern Mystic League* will be available at the beginning of the New Year sometime after the AGM.

As President Elect I am looking forward to leading the MML into its second century!

Best wishes for 2015 and regards to you all,

**ROGER**

PS Reminder - No Workshop meeting in December but the next one will be held on **Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> January 2015** and the suggested theme is **Wallets**.

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**The Monk  
Sez**



As you know **The Modern Mystic League Close-up & Cabaret Team** (sounds good dunt it?) go round to various places doing their

stuff to raise funds for our club. The money raised helps to pay for visiting lecturers and the hire of the rooms. We never fail to get glowing reports from the various punters as our repeat bookings testify and we always leave with the satisfactory glow of a job well done. We even have had some of our juniors perform with the team, and quite successfully too.

One particular compliment from a customer however made me realise just how lucky we had been. It went something like this, **“I was amazed how, having seen lots of different magicians over the times we’ve had you entertain us, never once have I seen any two magicians do the same trick!”**

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Now you and I know that it was more luck than management, but nevertheless this is how our gigs have played out.

What prompted me to mention this was by seeing some of our juniors doing their stuff and making the following observation . . . Two particular effects seemed to be popular with our apprentices **'The Ambitious Card'** (finishing with card in mouth) and **'The Omni Deck'**. I've got to say that all the young magicians that I saw performing these effects did a marvellous job in fooling the pants off their respective audiences. They were all performing to different people and, as good as the effects are, if you were to repeat them (albeit with another performer) all you would achieve would be to give the spectators an insight as to how it was done.

I recently demmed a great effect at our senior workshop ('Spoonaround' by Axel Hecklau) which was immediately taken up independently by Trevor G. and Norman, unbeknown to myself or each other. At our first C.U. gig Trevor asked if I was doing 'Spoonaround' and, as I was, he kindly refrained from using his. The next gig we did saw Norman asking me the same question and again choosing not to perform it 'cause I was. This was very generous of them as I'm sure they were chomping at the bit to show off their new effect (it's a good 'un), but they left it in their case so that only one of us would show it to the customers.

This brings me back to my observations about duplications. It's never happened yet with our magicians, but I would feel easier knowing that whatever I perform at a table is a first for that group. Maybe we should show each other what we would like to do and then we each would know what to do, or not to do with our effects. This is easier said than done I know . . . a topic for discussion no doubt. **'How to avoid duplication?!'**

**Maybe the juniors could have a chat amongst themselves this Sunday when they're doing their own thing** and hey,- not only the juniors, but us oldsters could benefit from this too. Let's have a senior workshop

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session where we show each other what we like to show the punters,- not just what we like to show each other.

Another thought for the day: Never catch a snowflake on your tongue before you make sure that all the birds have flown south for the winter.

All the best for the New Year

**D the A**

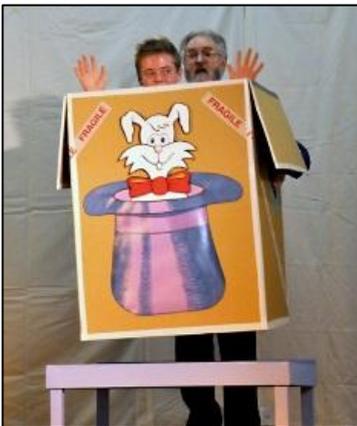
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The traditional Children’s Christmas show in December was a busy time as usual. James, Harry and Adam helped to drag out the sound and light gear from the ‘basement’ under the stage, actually it was me under the stage and

others dragging it into the hall, not sure what went wrong there.

With the added complication of hailstone invading the pitch as it were, some quick re-locations were in order.



Harry did a great job as ‘Santa’s little helper’ performing a short set of silk effects, but then went on to reprise his box illusion (with a little help from Donald of course) to close the show. I have to say this effect is really

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strong but the choreography is quite challenging but I'm glad to say it all went perfectly. The added production of Santa's gifts was a real treat too.

Adam was chief in charge of the curtain although a little distracted by James who was busting out some card moves backstage. Even Reiss appeared although only in time to watch the show and take advantage of Santa's gifts at the end!

Speaking of Christmas gifts, I handed out some of the new Blue Crown decks which have a great feel and handling, hope you enjoy using them. If you need more try [www.ajtplayingcards.co.uk](http://www.ajtplayingcards.co.uk), mention that you are an MML Junior and you may get a discount. For those of you who didn't get a pack, I'll bring them along next time, although I would appreciate it if you didn't test how good they are for card throwing while in the club room. (PS. they are really good! If a little dangerous at times!)

It's been a good year with a lot of magical thoughts and effects covered, I hope you enjoyed them and I look forward to picking up on some new ideas during the year. Sadly, we will be saying goodbye to Harrison who hopefully will slow down enough to pass the audition to become a full member. Good luck from all of us and hopefully you'll drop in and talk to us some more yet. We now have a blank sheet in front of us and I want to get your thoughts as to what avenues we should explore in 2015.

The January Meeting is the AGM on the 12th January. It's not going to be much fun, but you are welcome to witness the democratic processes at work. You will of course get to find out which of you will win the coveted 'Maurice Howarth Tyro Trophy' for the most improved Junior. You have all done really well and it was hard to make a final selection but I hope you would all agree on the choice we made.

All the very best for the New Year.

**Allan & Donald**

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# THE GAMBLER

*(Inspired by 'The Raven' by Edgar Alan Poe).*

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The heavy night was so incessant; do I see a distant peasant?  
From my window down below, snow has fallen snow, on snow.  
Up here I languish in my lodgings, reading tawdry tales of gambling.  
Lost in the lost inner secrets of yore,  
More of this I must explore.

My bleary eyes begin to water, over text which makes me falter.  
With my tired mind out of focus, over rhymes and hocus pocus.  
Then something quite emphatic makes my heart beat so erratic.  
Where it comes from I'm unsure,  
Is it a sound I have heard before?

I think I hear a silent riffing? Or of someone false shuffling?  
Throwing cards up to the ceiling, or practising second dealing?  
What could be more alarming, than the sound of bottom palming?  
Or cutting cards into piles of four,  
But let me see it may be more.

Can I hear a card locator, or some such other indicator?  
It's a breather, I'm sure of that, placed upon a close-up mat.  
The cards must be in a stack, but am I on the right track?  
It is this uncertainty I abhor,  
When cards are falling on the floor,

It seems to me too fantastic, a conjurer locked inside the attic?  
I can only think if someone's there, they could be playing solitaire.  
Before I give myself a scare, I must decide to leave it there.  
Who knows what is beyond that door,  
It is just a guess and nothing more.

Tony Hodgson

# Modern Mystic League Calendar 2015

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All meetings begin at 2 p.m., with a Junior Workshop at 1 p.m.

**Jan 11<sup>th</sup>:** A.G.M. [Brian Lead]

**Feb 8<sup>th</sup>:** Centenary retrospective, with [Roger Woods](#)

**February 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>:** Blackpool Convention

**March 15<sup>th</sup>:** [Cody Fisher](#) (USA)

**March 20<sup>th</sup>:** Fund raising show at Padiham

**April 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>:** [Northern Magic Circle](#) Convention, Harrogate

**April 19<sup>th</sup>:** [The Magic of Alan Shaxon](#), with Steve Shaw

**May 13<sup>th</sup>:** Visit to the '[Barrow Boys](#)'

**May 17<sup>th</sup>:** [Peter Eggink](#) (Netherlands)

**June 14<sup>th</sup>:** Chairman's Day

**July 12<sup>th</sup>:** Juniors v Seniors

**Aug 9<sup>th</sup>:** David Hemingway v the Audience

**Sept 13<sup>th</sup>:** Dealer's Day with [Mission Magic](#)

**Oct 10<sup>th</sup>:** Annual Dinner

**Oct 11<sup>th</sup>:** [Oliver Tabor](#)

**Nov 8<sup>th</sup>:** President's Day with Roger Woods

**Dec 6<sup>th</sup>:** Christmas Party

Tuesday workshops, beginning at 8 p.m.

Jan 27<sup>th</sup>, Feb 24<sup>th</sup>, March 24<sup>th</sup>, April 28<sup>th</sup>, May 26<sup>th</sup>, June 23<sup>rd</sup>,

July 28<sup>th</sup>, Aug 25<sup>th</sup>, Sept 22<sup>nd</sup>, Oct 27<sup>th</sup>, Nov 24<sup>th</sup>

\* Open meeting

[refreshments]

Unusual date



# CHUNG LING SOO



AND HIS  
**MARVELLOUS RING TRICK.**