

Welcome to the



Wessex Magical Association

Founded in 1932

www.wmagic.co.uk

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Early members ("Echo" photo, 1938)



Jon Brett



Annual Dinner and Cabaret



Tribute Show i.m. Ron Gilbert and John Williams (Jon Brett)

Who we are

The Wessex Magical Association is based in the Poole and Bournemouth area. It is a club for magicians—those with a professional, semi-professional or amateur involvement in magic and the allied arts.

The WMA's main aim is to further and advance the magic arts (see also **WMA events**) and to protect their secrets.

The WMA meets at 8pm on the second Tuesday of each month at the Bourne Valley Centre, 56 Herbert Avenue, Poole, Dorset BH12 4EE.

A brief history

The WMA was formed in October 1932 at Gatti's Restaurant, Bournemouth, a venue that remained its headquarters for some years. Rex Gatti, the restaurant's proprietor, was the WMA's first treasurer. The Great Nixon, who owned Nixon's Magical Depot, Bournemouth's first shop to deal exclusively in magical equipment, was the first secretary.

The WMA's aims were "to bring together people with an interest in magic and afford them opportunities for discussion and demonstration of their skills", aims encouraged by having Jasper Maskelyne—master illusionist and, later, WW2 'War Magician'—as the first president.

The Association later met in Bournemouth's Grand and Devonshire hotels. During the war, it met at the home of members Vin and Louie Hampton. Many magic shows were staged to boost Bournemouth's morale. Several members also entertained overseas with ENSA.

Louie Hampton, the first lady to perform her own act on the Magic Circle stage, was one of the original ten members. During its history the WMA has had several lady secretaries and presidents. In recent years Joan Wright held the posts of both secretary and president.

Past and present membership lists are a Who's Who of magic. They include such names as:

- Douglas Craggs—Royal ventriloquist and a past secretary of The Magic Circle
- Percy Bee—who wrote controversial articles on magic presentation for Goodliffe's *Abracadabra* magazine
- Jack Blake—who performed before the Royal Family and was the inventor of the Six Silk Repeat and other tricks

- John Liautard—also one of the longest serving members of The Magic Circle, from 1920 until his death at 90 in 1986
- James Breedon—author of *Rub The Lamp* (1986)
- Bart Harding—creator of the Bart Harding Stack (1962)
- Geoffrey Scalbert—author of *Scalbert's Selected Secrets* (1981) who joined in 1932 and died in 2007 aged 101
- Fred Castle—author of *Magic with Giant Cards* (1981), whose picture hangs in Hollywood's Magic Castle
- Jon Brett & Michelle—the first to present magic on TV's *New Faces*
- Ron Gilbert—magic dealer and puppet-master
- Chris Woodward—author of *Maurice Fogel: In Search of the Sensational* (with Richard Mark, 2007) and other books
- Marc Paul—star of LIVE TV's *Mind Games*; voted World's Greatest Mind-Reader at the World Magic Awards, Los Angeles (1999)

The present membership of fifty-plus consists of full-time and part-time professionals as well as amateurs for whom magic is a hobby.

Becoming a member

Because magic is dependent upon secrets and is vulnerable to exposure, we insist upon a real interest and commitment to the art as opposed to mere curiosity about methods.

- If you are or were a member of another magical association, you are advised to submit a letter of reference from that society addressed to the WMA president and, with his/her agreement, to attend meetings initially as a guest.
- If you have never been associated with a magic club, or are newly interested in magic, you are advised to contact one or more members of the WMA who, if satisfied that your interest is genuine, will ask the president if you may attend WMA meetings and be introduced to the membership as a guest.

If you wish to join, you must ask two full members to propose and second you. It is their duty (a) to judge whether your interest is genuine and (b) to vouch for you as a potentially responsible member.

Your application form must be signed by your proposer and seconder before you submit it. Once the Council accepts your application—and upon payment of the requisite entrance and membership fees—you will become an associate member of the WMA.

Associate Members

Associate members may attend all meetings of the WMA, but do not have voting rights. They may not use the WMA Library or enter the WMA Annual Competition, except at the Council's discretion, until they become full members .

Audition: After no less than six months and no more than a year of joining (or at the Council's discretion), Associate Members should apply for full membership and undergo an audition. Auditions are normally held at closed meetings. Performances, of close-up or stand-up magic, must be no less than six minutes and no more than twelve minutes long. At the Council's discretion (in the case, for example, of someone with a serious academic interest in magic) an interview with Council members or a talk to a meeting of the Association may take the place of a performance. Candidates will be informed of the result of their audition within a few days.

Induction to full membership: Following a successful audition, associate members are inducted to full membership at a simple ceremony during a regular club meeting, at which the new member promises to honour the Association and its rules, and to preserve the secrets of magic. Members are given a membership pin, a certificate of membership and a copy of the WMA's rules. They are welcomed into the Association with applause.

Members

Full members may use the WMA's Library and compete in the WMA's Annual Competition. After a period of full membership, as stipulated in the rules, they may stand for election to the Council and for office in the Association.

Master Members

Members may be advanced to the degree of Master Member, at the discretion of the Council, in recognition of their having reached a high standard of magical performance and a considerable knowledge of the magic arts. Master Members undertake to perform for the Association once a year if requested.

Life Members

Members may be advanced to the degree of Life Member, the WMA's highest degree, at the discretion of the Council, in recognition of exceptional services to the Association. The membership subscription is waived for Life Members, who enjoy all the usual rights and privileges of membership.

Honorary Members

Persons who are not current members of the WMA may be granted the degree of Honorary Member, at the discretion of the Council, in recognition of special services to the Association. The membership subscription is waived for Honorary Members. Honorary membership carries no voting rights.

WMA events

- Closed meetings—consisting of lectures, workshops, informal competitions, dealer demonstrations, and times to socialise and perform—which are open only to members and to paying guests who are bona-fide magicians and members of other magical societies.
- Open meetings and social events, including the Christmas Party and the Annual Competition, to which lay friends and members of the public are welcome.
- An Annual Dinner and Cabaret for members and their guests.
- A One-day Magic Convention, held every two years, which is open to all magicians.

WMA resources

The WMA has a library of books, videotapes and DVDs on magic and the allied arts. News, views and magic articles are published in the WMA's monthly magazine, *The Flame*, produced on paper for those that need it and online for the majority. Members can access *The Flame* on our website, www.wmagic.co.uk, which also holds a current list of WMA Council Members and Officers, the up-to-date WMA Membership List, WMA Rules, WMA Library Stock List and other resources and links of interest to members.

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