



MAGIC AT HARROGATE 1961

S.P.18



Jubilee demanded something extra special. When Alagar invited Elizabeth Warlock to "Take Your Pick" from a number of giant keys, she hit the jackpot by choosing the only one that opened a door to the President and the Committee. Later that day we saw the first competition, "Cigarette Sorcery," sponsored by Messrs. W. D. & H. O. Wills Ltd., Leslie Lester won it, and Oscar Paulson and Murray Smith were runners-up.

The Civic Reception, which Ernest Wethered described as "perfectly grandiose," completed a busy opening day, and enabled George Smallwood's Tombola to collect the magnificent total of £685.0 for the Benevolent Fund.

Thursday morning brought the popular Dealers' Demonstration, and the Ladies, at their exclusive "Afternoon," were shown the secrets of making pottery. Meanwhile, some of the members and their assistants entertained at the Yorkshire Home and Harrogate General Hospital. For the majority, Jerry Andrus gave the first of his fabulous lectures. The Royal Hall filled quickly in the evening for the Shield Competition which was of a particularly high standard. Nobody envied the judges their job, but everyone agreed with the decision that Robert Sinclair and Jill should hold the Shield until next year. But Thursday didn't finish until well into Friday morning. Mystic Craig's films kept conventioners late from their beds.

When Friday eventually came, Walter E. Cummings' lecture caused a tremendous amount of talk, and "More Classics in the Modern Manner" (by request from last year) demonstrated old effects brought up-to-date by experts. To close the day, a rather over-heated banquet gave way to a delightful after Banquet Gala Show seen under perfect conditions.

Saturday evening is a traditionally set aside for Children's Playtime where children of all ages are entertained by magic and the I.B.M. clowns. And the evening always brings the Gala Show. This was Jubilee Year and Bill Stickland arranged a jubilee show. Every act was superb. As Harold Taylor said when Mila Trnka was finally allowed to retire: "Follow that!" And Trnka was the opening magic act!

Saturday, too, featured another lecture by Jerry Andrus for those who missed him the first time.

Sunday morning found most people in one of two places; the subterranean den of the New Era Company, or the lounge where Will Norman projected magical films brought over by George Boston.

Later in the morning, the Revd. Michael Seacombe conducted an Undenominational Service in the Royal Hall and, soon after, Jerry Andrus gave an informal talk entitled, "Why Magicians are crazier than people!"

And then came the last moments, the Farewell Cocktail Party and installation of Peter Warlock as President.

So much has been missed out; the Dealers superb displays, the Mechanical Man, the wonderful stage-managing, the orchestra, Fred Lowes' Close-Up Casino, the Micro Magic Contest, the friendliness. As Francis Haxton said at the official opening, "I sincerely believe that ours is the most friendly organisation of all."

This year there was a postscript, a thirty-minute telecast, compered by David Jacobs, of some of the artists who appeared at the Convention. An excellent show in every way, it was the culmination of many years ground-work by Jack Potter and Bob Johnson.

Yes, as far as we're concerned, Harrogate was "the best ever"!

KEN DE COURCY



FRANCIS HAXTON, President 1960-61



PETER WARLOCK, President.



DONALD CROMBIE, President-Elect.



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