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THE GUARD

ORGAN OF THE SRI LANKA MAGIC CIRCLE

The Official Guardian of Magic

May 2018

Our Star Performer last month Kumi



The Guest Speaker at the April get together the Managing Director of N'Able Ltd, Mr. Peter d Almeida delivered a very thought provoking speech and had a lively Q&A session with our members

**Please note the next meeting
is on Sunday May 27th**

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Welcoming the Pakistani Magicians

Aqeel Nomi, Ali Raza, Abbas Nanha and M. Bilal from Pakistan.

The four Magicians from Pakistan finally made it to Sri Lanka after facing many obstacles on the way. We should thank President Rohan who worked hard to make the visit a reality. Pictures show the visiting Magicians and our members on the 13th of May.



Dinesh showing his Juggling skills

You got talent?



Several of our members including Kasun, Bhanuka, Priyantha, Vihan etc are taking part in the highly popular Sirasa Got Talent show. Participants please keep the Wand informed of your activities and send pics for publication. Above is a screen grab of Sumangala in one of the Preliminary rounds

Happy Birthday to all members celebrating their birthdays in May



- | | |
|----|---------------------|
| 2 | Joy De Silva |
| 3 | Gayen Wickramage |
| 6 | Iranga Gunawardane |
| 13 | Chandrasena Gamage |
| 14 | Dinesh Thangavel |
| 17 | G. S. Rodrigo |
| 17 | Anuradha Perera |
| 20 | Merril Weckasinghe |
| 21 | M. B. Ranjith Silva |
| 28 | Chenul Perera |
| 31 | Prajani Padmasiri |

Magic in the media

With the increased interest in Magic the SLMC received some valuable media coverage during the last few weeks.

As shown below the Ceylon Today Sunday edition carried a full page feature article on the Circle and it's activities in their issue of 6th May.

The very popular online magazine Roar Media also uploaded a very extensive article on the SLMC last week. Part of it is displayed here.

You can view this by visiting Roar Media.

The URL is <https://roar.media/english/life/culture-identities/the-sri-lanka-magic-circle-more-than-just-pulling-rabbits-out-of-hats/>



The Sri Lanka Magic Circle; More Than Just Pulling Rabbits Out Of Hats

By Rohini Ramess

I bet what you think? Cue it a bit!

Regent Street, February 10, 1932. A riveting public show, a flamboyant Ceylonese illusionist, the seed of an idea from a seller of magical books and five other dabblers in magic.

These were the elements which converged to form the Association for Ceylon Magicians nearly a hundred years ago in colonial Ceylon. The society first saw the light of day as a small circle of enthusiasts who shared a common passion they wanted to take forward for the whole country. The founder and first president, Modilkar A. C. G. S. Anandakumar, was a well-known performer who went by the stage name 'The Gay Deceiver'; but it was Harold Bolder, manager of the toy store H. W. Cave and Co. (which also sold books on magic), who first hit upon the idea of a 'club' that would cater to people interested in the art.

Designed and illustrated by the author



Modilkar A. C. G. S. Anandakumar, 'The Gay Deceiver' in a performance. Sri Lanka's history with the art of magic goes as far back as the early 19th century. In 1833, Anandakumar performed several shows in the Public Hall on Chalmers Street. Image courtesy Sri Lanka Magic Circle

Today, the Sri Lanka Magic Circle (the name was changed in the 1990s) is still going quite strong. 'In 2022, we will be a hundred years old,' said Rohini Ramess, who has just celebrated an upcoming birthday by turning some ordinary pieces of paper into hundred year notes right before our eyes. 'We are the oldest association of performing arts in Sri Lanka, and the oldest circle of magicians in Asia.'

Dyanekere, who is the current president of the association, has been performing magic for more than three decades. According to him, the Sri Lanka Magic Circle (SLMC) was formed just 12 days after the institution of the world renowned International Brotherhood of Magicians (IBM). 'I learned everything about magic from the Circle,' he tells us. The association currently has over a hundred performing and non-performing members, with the youngest being a nine-year old girl and their oldest being an 88-year old veteran called Chandrasekara Ganage. The individual with the longest membership in the dozen of Sri Lanka's magic scene, Ronald de Alwis, whose father Loden de Alwis was one of the original seven founding members. De Alwis, who used to accompany his father on performances around the island, joined the circle at the age of fourteen, and has been an indispensable and prominent member to this day.



Ronald de Alwis is a well known face when it comes to magic in Sri Lanka, and has joined the circle way back in 1932. Image courtesy Yana Sri

How Do You Pull A Rabbit Out Of A Top Hat?

We have not got the foggiest idea, but in this digital age, any ten-year old with an internet connection could find out.

Just Google 'how to pull a rabbit out of a top-hat' or 'how to save a woman in half' and you will find dozens of videos, articles and probably even a Wikipedia page. The tricks of the magician's trade are no longer as shrouded with secrecy as they used to be centuries ago.

That said, knowing the logistics of a trick is not going to help you become a good performer. 'The key to magic is to infuse the tricks with entertainment and audience participation,' says Ramess, who as deftly pulls a multi-colored handkerchief out this air. The secret to the perfect performance, he stresses, is not just mastering the trick, but





Down the memory lane by HDN



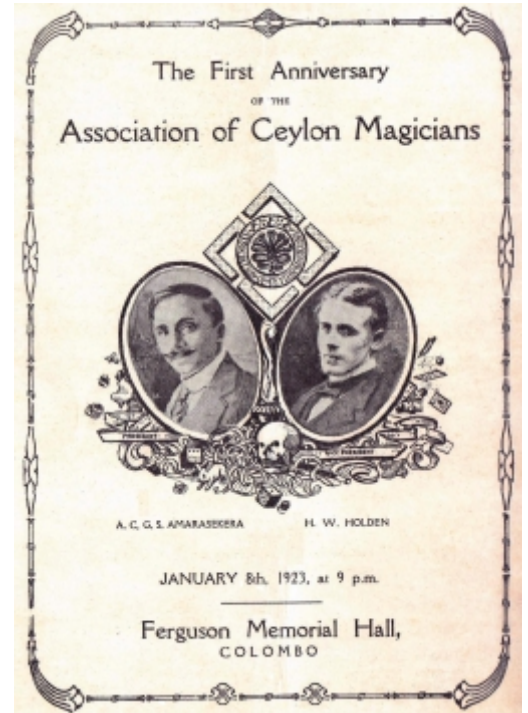
Landmarks of a 100 year journey II

(Ferguson Memorial Hall)

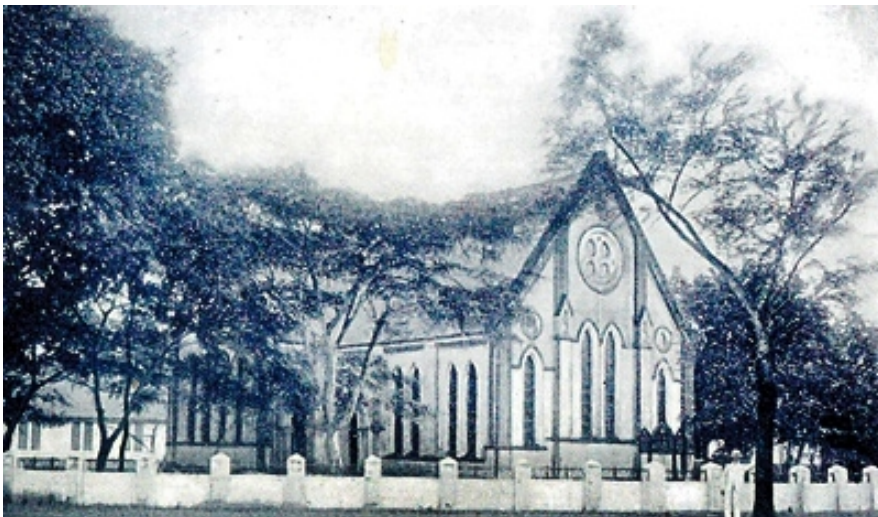
First Anniversary celebrations of the Association of Ceylon Magicians (ACM) were held on 8th January 1923, at the Ferguson Memorial Hall, Colombo.

What was this venue?

The clue came from a good old book 'Twentieth Centenary Impressions of Ceylon' edited by Arnold Wright. Page 81 of the book gives the official activities for the Governor; Sir West Ridgeway's in the year 1900, which includes the opening of the 'Bacteriological Institute' the forerunner to today's 'Medical Research Institute'; where I spent half of my working life. 'Ferguson Memorial Hall' too was opened same year by the Governor, but the exact location or date not mentioned. Then I tracked after the name 'Ferguson' and found that Alastair Mackenzie Ferguson (A.M. Ferguson) arrived in Ceylon in 1837 with the Governor J.A. Stewart (1837-1841) as a member of his staff. In 1846 he joined 'Ceylon Observer' as the editor, and in 1859 became the proprietor of the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited (ANCL). Mr. Ferguson made a significant impact on colonial Ceylon. He was the originator of the well known 'Ferguson Directory'. He had been a religious figure, and served as the deacon of the Cinnamon Garden Baptist Church for 32 years and passed away in 1892. (I wonder whether this information on recent history of Ceylon makes any sense to you. Being my current pastime I do enjoy them)



'The Ferguson Memorial Hall' built in memory of A.M. Ferguson and his wife Annie Ferguson is still there in the premises of the Cinnamon Garden Baptist Church at the Lipton Circus. Comparatively smaller in size, but it was a prime venue of early 20th century. While surfing the web, I came across a review by Pablo Neruda on an exhibition of George Keyt, held at the Ferguson Memorial Hall in 1930. You know that George Keyt (1901- 1993) was the internationally acclaimed Ceylonese painter of the era and Pablo Neruda (1904-1973) was the celebrated Chilean poet and Nobel laureate for literature in 1971. In 1930, Neruda was in Ceylon as the Chilean Consul in Colombo.



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Besides the Star Performer Kumi, many members such as Chenul, Rohan performed at the get together including Sumangala who gave a superlative display with his deft finger manipulations. Picture below shows Guest Speaker getting mystified by Gayan Garusinghe.....



.....and Gayan Wickramage



Vihan Malith
in action



A token of appreciation was handed over to Peter by EVP Rohith



The parcel of books that were received from Fred Rasmussen of the USA, was officially handed over to Librarian Premalal by President Rohan

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