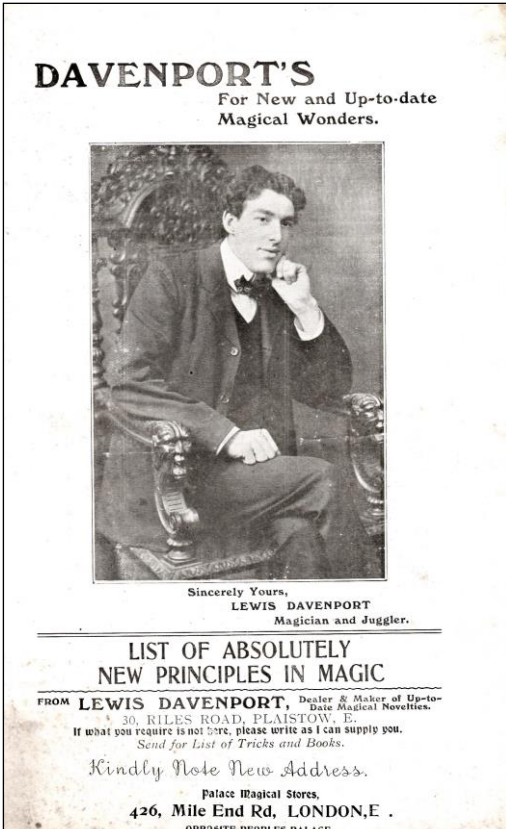


How did the magic business start?

Lewis Davenport was born George William John Ryan in 1881. His immediate family were poor, and he became an apprentice in the coopering (barrel making) business owned by a wealthy branch of the family. One story is that his interest in magic was started when he went up to help a magician during a show. Whatever the reason, the young George became interested in magic.

There is a family anecdote that his interest in becoming a dealer in magic stemmed from buying a second-hand book on Farringdon market in London, only to sell it at a profit that same day. A version of this story was told by Edward Graves in *The World's Fair* of 28 August 1948:

Fifty years ago a young man, already deeply interested in conjuring, saw on a book stall a second-hand book on magic. In return for the three or four shillings at which it was priced, the book became his and, as he made his way homeward, he just couldn't keep his nose out of it. Before home was reached however the young man met a conjurer who spotted the book and requested a peep. Liking it, the conjurer asked the young man if he would sell it. At first the idea did not appeal but, on the conjurer offering no less than fifteen shillings the young man changed his mind and the book changed hands again. Back home the young man pondered over all this. The more he thought the more he was convinced that to sell magic and books possessed distinct possibilities. The more so if one was prepared to put into the business a knowledge of magic – to be more than a mere salesman. And so it came about that in August 1898, Lewis Davenport opened a small shop devoted to magic.



DAVENPORT'S
For New and Up-to-date
Magical Wonders.

Sincerely Yours,
LEWIS DAVENPORT
Magician and Juggler.

**LIST OF ABSOLUTELY
NEW PRINCIPLES IN MAGIC**

FROM **LEWIS DAVENPORT**, Dealer & Maker of Up-to-
Date Magical Novelties.
30, RILES ROAD, PLAISTOW, E.
If what you require is not sure, please write as I can supply you.
Send for List of Tricks and Books.

Kindly Note New Address.
Palace Magical Stores,
426, Mile End Rd, LONDON, E .
OPPOSITE PEOPLES PALACE.

In fact Lewis, who was only sixteen in 1898, started trading from his home address. He had been trading for ten years before he opened his first shop at 426 Mile End Road in the East End of London. From the early days Lewis sold not only magic, but also novelties, jokes and puzzles. This mix of products, which he also sold wholesale, held him in good stead over the coming years.

Lewis Davenport over-printed this catalogue with the address of his first shop when he moved his business there in 1908.