

# 'Hooded figures performed rituals in wood'

## LIBEL ACTION IS DISMISSED

A "SINISTER" ceremony in which hooded figures sang and chanted in a moonlit Surrey wood and carried out ritualistic acts before a stone altar was described to a High Court judge and jury on Wednesday.

Journalist Mr William Hall, 31, told Mr Justice Melford Stevenson that the leader of the hooded figures was Mr Charles Cardell, 74-years-old psychologist and writer on the occult, of Dumbledene, on the Charlwood-Newdigate road, and one of the participants was Miss Mary Cardell, 54.

Mr and Miss Cardell are not related, but say that they have lived together on a brother and sister basis for 30 years.

Mr Hall was giving evidence in the action in which Miss Cardell alleges she was libelled in stories in different editions of the London Evening News on March 7, 1961, headed "Witchcraft in Wood" and "Devil Worshipers by Night in Surrey Wood".

And yesterday (Thursday) after a retirement of only 20 minutes, the jury decided that the story was true.

Mr Justice Melford Stevenson dismissed action with costs estimated at £5,000.

Miss Cardell alleged that the stories identified her as "Beth, the witch maiden" one of a coven of witches taking part in a ceremony led by Rex Nemoensis, "King of the Woods".

The Evening News pleaded that the stories were true.

Both Mr and Miss Cardell alleged that they ever took part in witchcraft and devil worship ceremonies in the woods near their home.

### Clairvoyants

Miss Cardell denied in evidence that she or her "brother" had any serious belief in witchcraft. Mr Cardell's only interest was to help people who had been misled by bogus clairvoyants, she said.

While she was being cross-examined by Sir Peter Rawlinson, Q.C., Miss Cardell exclaimed: "All I can say is I am not a witch."

She denied that she was "trying to fool people" or that after the publication of the article the wood had been "dressed up" to give the impression that what had taken place there was a joke.

When Mr Cardell was being cross-examined he said: "There are no such things as witches, there never have been and there never will be."

He had offered £5,000 to anyone who could perform an act of witchcraft or black magic. "I have been making that challenge for years," he said.

### Hooded figures

He denied being one of the 12 hooded figures described in Mr Hall's story.

"Anyway, you would never get witches in hoods," he said. "They take their clothes off and do it all in the nude."

Mr Hall told the court that he went to the wood with another newspaper employee and Mr Ray Howard, a former employee of the Cardells. In a clearing in the wood was a large flat stone "dressed like an altar".

"I can remember seeing a bowl and a small glass sphere on the stone and what looked like a shrivelled animal's head," he continued. "There was a very large silver sphere at the base of a tree and stars and symbols had been fixed to the trees around the clearing."

### Large sword

At about 10 p.m. a group of people began walking down the path in single file.

"They were wearing cloaks and hoods and the last one had a lantern on a long pole," he said. "We ran to our vantage point in the bushes. We were very excited and somewhat apprehensive."

The hooded group filed into the clearing and lit a fire and the leader drew a circle around the fire with a large sword.

"He was wearing a hood with a pentagram on the back which had a silvery glow in the moonlight," Mr Ball said. "From time to time the glow of the fire lit up his face and I saw that it was Charles Cardell."

The others continued singing and chanting and Mr Cardell took up a hunting horn and blew four blasts in different directions.

### Very solemn

"It was all very solemn," went on Mr Hall. "He picked up the long bow and aimed it in our direction. Howard was very frightened and said he was getting out. We restrained him and he stayed reluctantly."

A goblet was then passed around for each member of the group to drink from and then they slowly filed out of the clearing.

The whole ceremony took about two hours.

"It was anything but a joke," Mr Hall continued. "It was extremely sinister and very vivid. I can still visualise some of the scenes. It was like a service and I got the impression that Howard was in stark terror."

After he had written his story, he was invited to a Press conference by Mr Cardell.

### Protection

He said that he took a companion with him for protection.

"Mr Cardell took my hand and stared at me for a very long time and I felt very uneasy," he said. "I had heard he was a hypnotist."

Mr Cardell denied that anything had taken place in the wood.

Mr Hall said he later received through the post a wooden fish with the tail broken off. It was addressed to "Mr William Hall, almost a reporter," and on it was stamped the name "Rex Nemoensis" and a small poem.