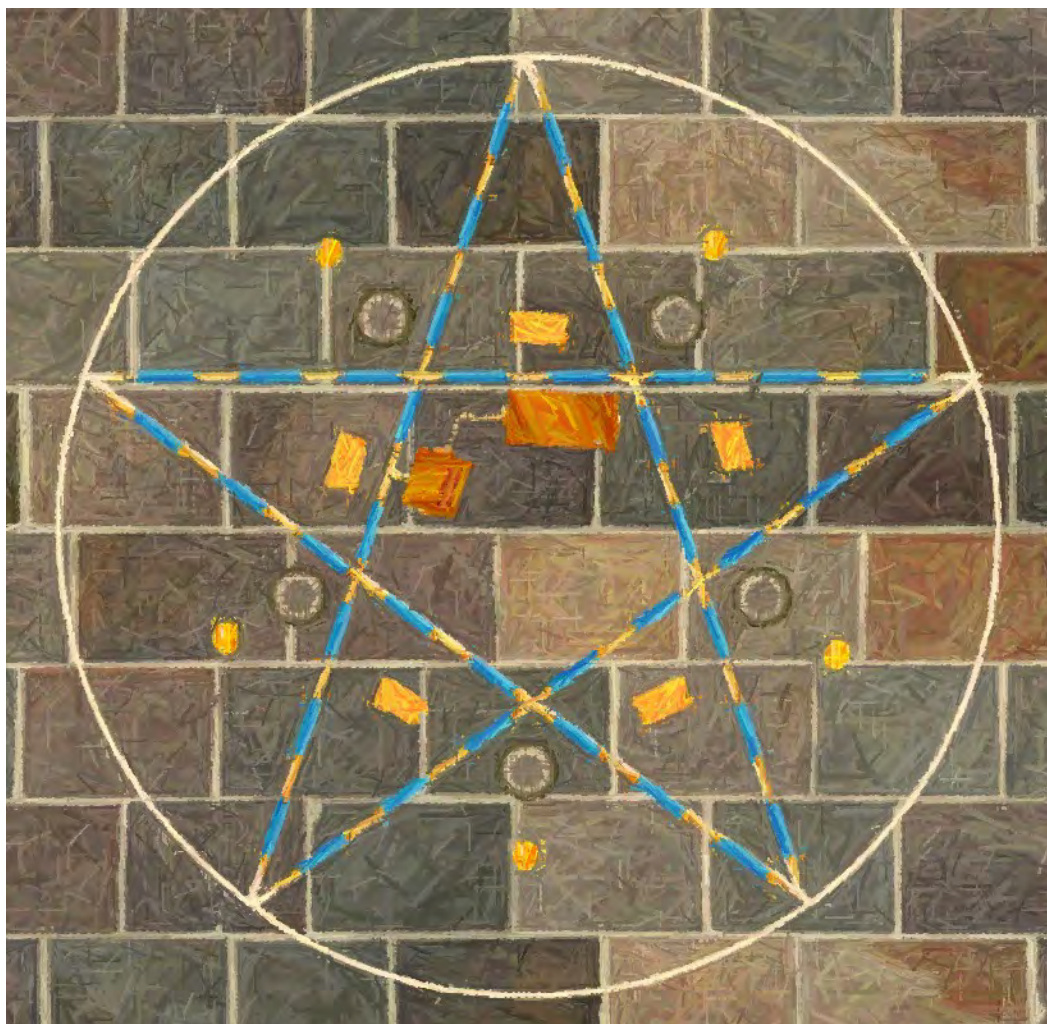


# Forgotten Futures IV

## The Electric Pentacle Handbook



Resources and Floor Plans etc. for  
*Forgotten Futures IV: The Carnacki Cylinders*  
A role-playing setting based on  
William Hope Hodgson's  
*Carnacki The Ghost-Finder*  
Marcus L. Rowland

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## Introduction

This is a compilation of material related to possibly the most iconic element of William Hope Hodgson's *Carnacki The Ghost-Finder* stories – the electric pentacle, a sovereign defence against Ab-Natural and Supernatural entities. It's a lovely image, but given the period there are a few practical problems which any real device would have to overcome, chief among them power supply. Real electrical valves need a fair amount of power at high voltage. A circuit designed to cover a pentacle drawn inside a 21ft diameter would have to be big, adding even more problems.

The answer I finally came up with was a power supply based on a big rechargeable lead-acid battery, an induction coil to boost the voltage, and mercury discharge tubes, which were already around at the time the stories were written. You'd probably need a steamer trunk and a couple of porters to move it all around, but it would almost certainly work.

The version I described in the 1996 edition of *The Carnacki Cylinders* was fairly crude, and when I came to write the 2022 update I decided that it was the Mk 1 version, used to get a patent but never produced in quantity. It would still be much bulkier than the version described in the stories, so I'm assuming that that there was also a Mk 0 prototype that Carnacki used for a while but eventually abandoned for safety reasons.

This file quotes the first two appearances of the pentacle in the Carnacki stories, followed by an account of the history of the Electric Pentacle, an instruction manual for the Mk 2, and some scenario ideas and floor plans. I've taken the opportunity to correct some errors where I'd mis-remembered the stories as I was writing the first version, in this file and in the main *Carnacki Cylinders* worldbook.

**Warning – this material includes “spoilers” for the Carnacki stories,  
and some “history” invented for the RPG!**

## From *The Gateway of the Monster*

...I returned then to the centre of the room, and measured out a space twenty-one feet in diameter, which I swept with a 'broom of hyssop.' About this I drew a circle of chalk, taking care never to step over the circle. Beyond this I smudged, with a bunch of garlic, a broad belt right around the chalked circle, and when this was complete, I took from among my stores in the centre a small jar of a certain water. I broke away the parchment and withdrew the stopper. Then, dipping my left forefinger in the little jar, I went round the circle again, making upon the floor, just within the line of chalk, the Second Sign of the Saaamaaa Ritual, and joining each Sign most carefully with the left-handed crescent. I can tell you, I felt easier when this was done and the 'water-circle' complete. Then, I unpacked some more of the stuff that I had brought, and placed a lighted candle in the "valley" of each Crescent. After that, I drew a Pentacle, so that each of the five points of the defensive star touched the chalk circle. In the five points of the star I placed five portions of bread, each wrapped in linen, and in the five "vales," five opened jars of the water I had used to make the "water circle." And now I had my first protective barrier complete.

"Now, anyone, except you who know something of my methods of investigation, might consider all this a piece of useless and foolish superstition; but you all remember the Black Veil case, in which I believe my life was saved by a very similar form of protection, whilst Aster, who sneered at it, and would not come inside, died. I got the idea from the Sigsand MS., written, so far as I can make out, in the 14th century. At first, naturally, I imagined it was just an expression of the superstition of his time; and it was not until a year later that it occurred to me to test his 'Defense,' which I did, as I've just said, in that horrible Black Veil business. You know how that turned out. Later, I used it several times, and always I came through safe, until that Moving Fur case. It was only a partial "Defense" there and I nearly died in the pentacle. After that I came across Professor Garder's 'Experiments with a Medium.' When they surrounded the Medium with a current, in vacuum, he lost his power - almost as if it cut him off from the Immaterial. That made me think a lot; and that is how I came to make the Electric Pentacle, which is a most marvellous 'Defense' against certain manifestations. I used the shape of the defensive star for this protection, because I have, personally, no doubt at all but that there is some extraordinary virtue in the old magic figure. Curious thing for a Twentieth Century man to admit, is it not? But then, as you all know, I never did, and never will, allow myself to be blinded by a little cheap laughter. I ask questions, and keep my eyes open!

"In this last case I had little doubt that I had run up against a supernatural monster, and I meant to take every possible care; for the danger is abominable.

"I turned-to now to fit the Electric Pentacle, setting it so that each of its 'points' and 'vales' coincided exactly with the 'points' and 'vales' of the drawn pentagram upon the floor. Then I connected up the battery, and the next instant the pale blue glare from the intertwining vacuum tubes shone out.

... "Abruptly I was aware that the candles were all a-flicker in that unnatural wind.... I believe I just squatted there and stared in a horribly frightened, wooden way for some minutes. I shall never be able to let you know how disgustingly horrible it was sitting in that vile, cold wind! And then, flick! flick! all the candles round the outer barrier went out; and there was I, locked and sealed in that room, and with no light beyond the weakish blue glare of the Electric Pentacle.

... suddenly, I knew that something stirred in the corner to the left of the bed. I was made conscious of it, rather by some inward, unused sense, than by either sight or sound; for the pale, short-radius glare of the Pentacle gave but a very poor light for seeing by.

..."Round and round it moved, and round and round I turned. Then, just opposite to one of the 'vales' in the pentacles, it seemed to pause, as though preliminary to a tremendous effort. It retired almost beyond the glow of the vacuum light, and then came straight towards me, appearing to gather form and solidity as it came. There seemed a vast, malign determination behind the movement, that must succeed. I was on my knees, and I jerked back, falling on to my left hand and hip, in a wild endeavour to get back from the advancing thing. With my right hand I was grabbing madly for my revolver, which I had let slip. The brutal thing came with one great sweep straight over the garlic and the 'water-circle,' almost to the vale of the pentacle. I believe I yelled. Then, just as suddenly as it had swept over, it seemed to be hurled back by some mighty, invisible force.

...Suddenly, as I crouched there, I saw what had so nearly given the monster an opening through the barrier. In my movements within the pentacle I must have touched one of the jars of water; for just where the thing had made its attack the jar that guarded the 'deep' of the 'vale' had been moved to one side, and this had left one of the 'five doorways' unguarded. I put it back, quickly, and felt almost safe again, for I had found the cause and the 'defense' was still good. And I began to hope again that I should see the morning come in. When I saw that thing so nearly succeed, I'd had an awful, weak, overwhelming feeling that the 'barriers' could never bring me safe through the night against such a Force. You can understand?

...The next instant the thing made one swift, vicious dart at me, from out of the shadows. Instinctively I started sideways from it, and so plucked my hand from upon the Electric Pentacle, where - for a wickedly careless moment - I had placed it. The monster was hurled off from the neighbourhood of the pentacles; though - owing to my inconceivable foolishness - it had been enabled for a second time to pass the outer barriers. I can tell you, I shook for a time, with sheer funk. I moved right to the centre of the pentacles again, and knelt there, making myself as small and compact as possible.

... A queer indistinct smoke became visible to me, seeming to pour upwards through the ring, and mix with the moving shadows. Suddenly, I realised that I was in more than any mortal danger; for the convoluting shadows about the ring were taking shape, and the death-hand was forming within the Pentacle. My goodness! do you realise it! I had brought the 'gateway' into the pentacles, and the brute was coming through - pouring into the material world, as gas might pour out from the mouth of a pipe.

"I should think that I knelt for a moment in a sort of stunned fright. Then, with a mad, awkward movement, I snatched at the ring, intending to hurl it out of the Pentacle. Yet it eluded me, as though some invisible, living thing jerked it hither and thither. At last, I gripped it; yet, in the same instant, it was torn from my grasp with incredible and brutal force. A great, black shadow covered it, and rose into the air, and came at me. I saw that it was the Hand, vast and nearly perfect in form. I gave one crazy yell, and jumped over the Pentacle and the ring of burning candles, and ran despairingly for the door. I fumbled idiotically and ineffectually with the key, and all the time I stared, with a fear that was like insanity, toward the Barriers. The hand was plunging towards me; yet, even as it had been unable to pass into the pentacle when the ring was without, so, now that the ring was within, it had no power to pass out. The monster was chained, as surely as any beast would be, were chains rivetted upon it.

## From *The House Among the Laurels*

"I got my tape-measure then, and measured out a circle thirty-three feet in diameter, and immediately chalked it out. The police and Wentworth were tremendously interested, and I took the opportunity to warn them that this was no piece of silly mumming on my part; but done with a definite intention of erecting a barrier between us and any ab-human thing that the night might show to us. I warned them that, as they valued their lives, and more than their lives, it might be, no one must on any account whatever pass beyond the limits of the barrier that I was making.

"After I had drawn the circle, I took a bunch of the garlic, and smudged it right round the chalk circle, a little outside of it. When this was complete I called for candles from my stock of material. I set the police to lighting them, and as they were lit I took them and sealed them down on to the floor, just inside the chalk circle, five inches apart. As each candle measured one inch in diameter, it took sixty-six candles to complete the circle; and I need hardly say that every number and measurement has a significance.<sup>1</sup>

"Then from candle to candle I took a 'gayrd' of human hair, entwining it alternately to the left and to the right, until the circle was completed, and the ends of the final hairs shod with silver, and pressed into the wax of the sixty-sixth candle.

"It had now been dark some time, and I made haste to get the 'Defense' complete. To this end, I got the men well together, and began to fit the Electric Pentacle right around us, so that the five points of the Defensive Star came just within the Hair-Circle. This did not take me long, and a minute later I had connected up the batteries, and the weak blue glare of the intertwining vacuum tubes shone all around us. I felt happier then; for this Pentacle is, as you all know, a wonderful 'Defense.' I have told you before, how the idea came to me, after reading Professor Garder's 'Experiments with a Medium.' He found that a current, a certain number of vibrations, in vacuo, 'insulated' the Medium. It is difficult to suggest an explanation non-technically, and if you are really interested you should read Garder's Lecture on 'Astral Vibrations Compared with Matero-involved Vibrations Below the Six-Billion Limit.'

... "It was a queer group that we made sitting there, back to back, with our legs starred outwards; and all around us the strange blue glow of the Pentacle, and beyond that the brilliant shining of the great ring of lighted candles. Outside of the glare of the candles, the large empty hall looked a little gloomy, by contrast, except where the lights shone before the sealed doors, and the blaze of the big fire made a good honest mass of flame on the monster hearth. And the feeling of mystery! Can you picture it all?

... suddenly, one of the men behind me gave out a scream, like any woman, and bolted for the door. He fumbled, and had it open in a moment. I yelled to the others not to move; but they followed like sheep, and I heard them kick the candles flying, in their panic. One of them stepped on the Electric Pentacle, and smashed it, and there was an utter darkness. In an instant, I realised that I was defenceless against the powers of the Unknown World, and with one savage leap I was out of the useless Barriers, and instantly through the great doorway, and into the night. I believe I yelled with sheer funk.

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<sup>1</sup> Dodgson's arithmetic or Carnacki's account is faulty. The circle described was 33ft wide and would have had a circumference of 103.7 ft, giving a spacing of roughly 1ft 3in between candles.

## A Brief History of the Electric Pentacle

The exact date of Thomas Carnacki's first experiments with an electric pentacle are unclear, but all evidence suggests that it was in the late nineteenth or early 20th century, and before 1908, when Carnacki began the process of patenting the device. There has been much debate about the precise nature of earliest form of his invention, but there's an essential clue in his first description: *"I connected up the battery, and the next instant the pale blue glare from the intertwining vacuum tubes shone out."*

This instantaneous response is not typical of the mercury discharge tubes used in later designs, which had to warm up for a minute or two before they emitted much light, while those who still remember valve electronics of a later date would expect valves to glow red, not blue. But a shorter startup time and blue glow is typical of the earliest radio valves, which often contained traces of air – ionized air has a faint blue glow – and of their predecessor, the Geissler tube, a direct ancestor of the modern fluorescent tube.

Geissler tubes were long (up to two or three feet) thin tubes with an electrode at each end, running at around 2 kilovolts but very low wattage, containing just enough air to fluoresce at a pressure of 10 millitorr, a hundred thousandth of normal atmospheric pressure. A suitable power supply was a car battery connected to a Ruhmkorff coil, later known as an induction coil or trembler box. Purchasing this equipment may have been Carnacki's first contact with the Radium Patent Light Company (RPLC Ltd.) of Holborn, London. This company was better known (or notorious) for a range of quack medical devices advertised in most of the cheaper periodicals of the period, including radioactive lamps and electrodes purported to cure a variety of ailments but most likely to make things worse. The exact date of purchase isn't known, since the company went out of business in the late 1930s and most records were eventually pulped during WW2 waste paper drives, but they are known to have sold Geissler tubes for signs and "medical" purposes almost as soon as they were invented.

The main disadvantages of these tubes were fragility, low light output, and the high voltage they ran at. With modern insulation that probably wouldn't be a problem, but in the early 1900s high-voltage insulation was in its infancy, with the main insulators available being porcelain beads and tubes, rubber, and gutta-percha. The latter was an excellent insulator but less flexible than rubber and modern plastics. All were much heavier than modern insulators, an important consideration since a pentacle built to the specifications Carnacki described in the Gateway case would need about 100ft of cable plus connectors<sup>2</sup> and the tubes.

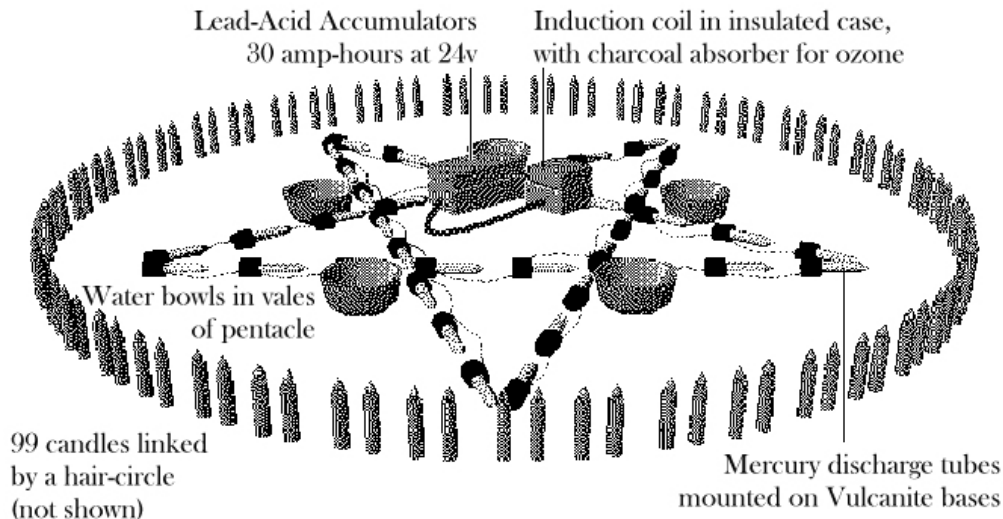
At first Carnacki was happy with the results, but his experiences in the two cases described above highlighted the vulnerability of the early components. Ordinary Geissler tubes could be smashed easily, and just touching one seriously weakened its protection. In 1911-12 he redesigned his system, the main change

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<sup>2</sup> Since the outer circle Carnacki normally used was 21ft in diameter each of the five lines would have been roughly 19.7 ft long. Allowing a little more cable for the angles etc. easily takes this over 100ft. Connectors used in this period were solid lumps of porcelain or Vulcanite, both fairly heavy.

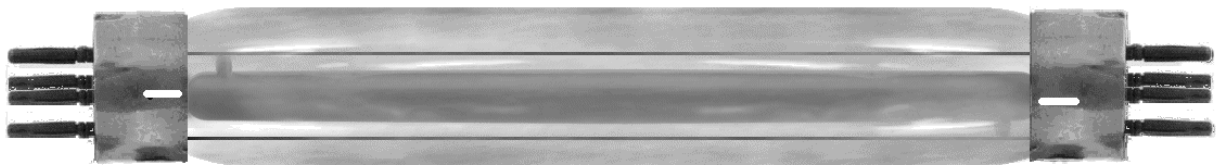
being the use of mercury tubes, a variant of the Geissler design, which ran at lower voltages and produced much brighter light, but needed more power overall.

The first design, usually described as the Carnacki Mk 1, is known mainly from some poorly-reproduced sketches. It used tubes that look a lot like vacuum tubes or light bulbs but were actually u-shaped mercury discharge tubes inside a glass outer container, one of the earliest commercial versions known.



An early version of the Electric Pentacle, possibly from a draft of Carnacki's patent application. The outer ring of candles was probably added by the artist, since Carnacki's method usually used five candles near the water containers or a ring of 66 candles outside the primary circle.

The outer glass sleeve was primarily for protecting the discharge tube, but by chance also absorbed most of the ultra-violet light the tubes emitted. This design was used for Carnacki's patent application but soon proved to be impractical. Since the tubes were only supported at one end and had trailing cables they were easily moved out of position accidentally, while the cables easily became tangled, were easily damaged, and were always a tripping hazard. After a rumoured incident in which Carnacki trod on one of the bases and tripped forward, breaking the tube and falling out of the pentacle he was using, he worked with RPLC Ltd. to come up with something a better for final production.



The answer they came up with was a linear mercury discharge tube built inside a tough outer glass envelope, with conductors running through the outer envelope so that there was no need for separate cables to run the full 100ft required for the pentacle; it was only necessary to supply cable and connectors to bridge the gap between one tube and the next. Several examples still exist in various collections, but there are no known working examples. The illustration

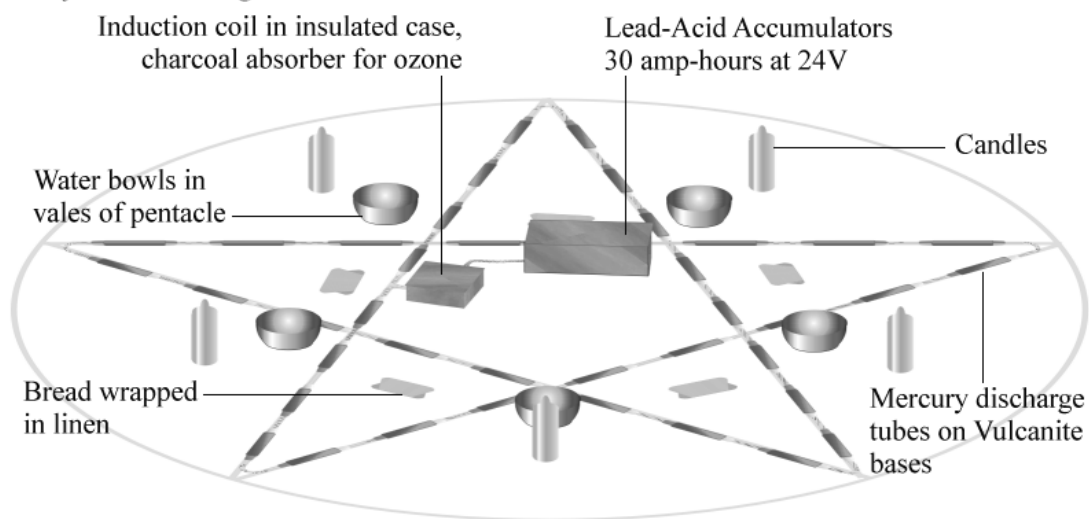


on the previous page is a photograph from the 1912 instruction manual, which was probably processed to make the inner tube darker and more visible; in fact they were made of clear glass, and would not normally darken without very prolonged use.

The tubes were 2ft long, so forty lamps and thirty-nine six-inch connector cables were all that was needed, plus longer connectors to link the circuit to the power supply, a high-voltage induction coil and a 24V battery. The connectors also incorporated an insulating “foot” to stop the tubes rolling.

## ELECTRIC PENTACLE

*This figure illustrates the standard model Carnacki Electric Pentacle, which has room for one or two occupants. Larger versions require more tubes and larger accumulator boxes and are naturally considerably heavier. There is an unavoidable increased risk of electrical faults and tube failure with larger models.*



*British and Empire Patents Pending, Patents applied for in USA and Europe*

MLR

An early illustration of the Mark 2 design, published in *Pearson's Magazine* in May 1914

The 1912 model was a huge improvement, and Carnacki was still using one, albeit with most of the tubes repeatedly replaced, at the time of his last case.

Patents were filed and production began in 1912 but ceased soon after the outbreak of war in 1914, with the company's facilities and craftsmen diverted to the manufacture of radio valves and power supplies needed by the military. By pure chance RPLC's storage sheds on the outskirts of London were bombed during a Zeppelin raid on the night of 2nd-3rd April 1916, and while nobody was hurt the existing stock of tubes was destroyed. The war also delayed the patent application, which wasn't finally granted until July 1917, and production only resumed in May 1919.

Most of the purchasers were involved in psychic experiments: customers definitely included Aleister Crowley and the Psychical Research Society. There are unconfirmed reports that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle spent a night in an alleged haunted house in the PRS pentacle, without incident, while writing his spiritualist novel *The Land of Mist* (1926). Unfortunately it isn't mentioned in the book, which makes no reference to Carnacki's work in the field. Carnacki's diaries mention speculation on one other customer after he saw his name listed in



RPLC's order book: T. E. Lawrence ('Lawrence of Arabia') is believed to have purchased one under his alias of John Hume Ross in 1922, but this may have just been a coincidence of names, since there is no other evidence that he owned one. It's certain that the War Ministry (later the Ministry of Defence) bought three sets at about the same time, but this actually had nothing to do with Ab-Natural phenomena. A Freedom of Information request in 2004 revealed that they were used in experiments to counter the "bugging" technology of the time – the tubes and power supply produced broad-spectrum radio and magnetic interference which it was hoped would "jam" transmitters and microphones placed near the tubes, which were set up in a circle rather than a pentacle. It worked, to some extent, but later methods (unstated) were better and more reliable.

Other customers remain obscure, although at least one set reached America; from 1955 onwards it was displayed in the window of Crystal's Cave, an occult bookshop in San Francisco, but the company ceased trading in 1982 and all stock was sold at auction. The origins and current whereabouts of this pentacle are unknown. Only one is definitely known to survive; until 1993 it was on show in the basement of the Science Museum in London, mislabelled as an advertising sign, part of an exhibit on lighting methods. It was finally identified correctly and removed to safe storage when the museum was refurbished.

Sales were never good but Carnacki continued to renew the patent until it finally expired in 1932. Renewal probably cost considerably more than he earned from his royalties. Sales continued until 1935, after Carnacki's death, but ended when the company's stockpile of components ran out. RPLC went into receivership in 1938, and commercial manufacture of the Carnacki model of electric pentacle then ended, and didn't resume in any form until the 1970s.

Today's ready-made electric pentacles, mostly sold from Chinese manufacturers via eBay, are of very dubious quality; one model even uses red neon tubes, although Carnacki proved that red was an extremely dangerous colour.

Serious researchers generally build their own. Currently the most popular DIY design is based on low power consumption blue/violet/UV discharge tubes sold for insect "zappers", supplied with AC power from car batteries and alternators. Blue fluorescent lights sold for aquariums are also popular for this purpose. A few enthusiasts have even returned to basics and built their own Geissler tubes from scratch. Blue LEDs have been tried, but experiments with mediums suggest that the voltage is too low to serve as a defence. Several sets of plans can be found on line. Readers are **STRONGLY** advised to avoid any plans which suggest using a Tesla coil as the power supply; the voltage is much too high to be useful, and the pentacle will probably be more dangerous than most Ab-Natural threats!

Finally, a word of warning – mains electricity should not be used to power an electric pentacle since it breaks the defence; even if there is a socket inside the pentacle, the flow of electricity enters the pentacle from outside, and so it is not a sealed self-contained system. This may be enough to allow entities to enter.

## Scenario Ideas

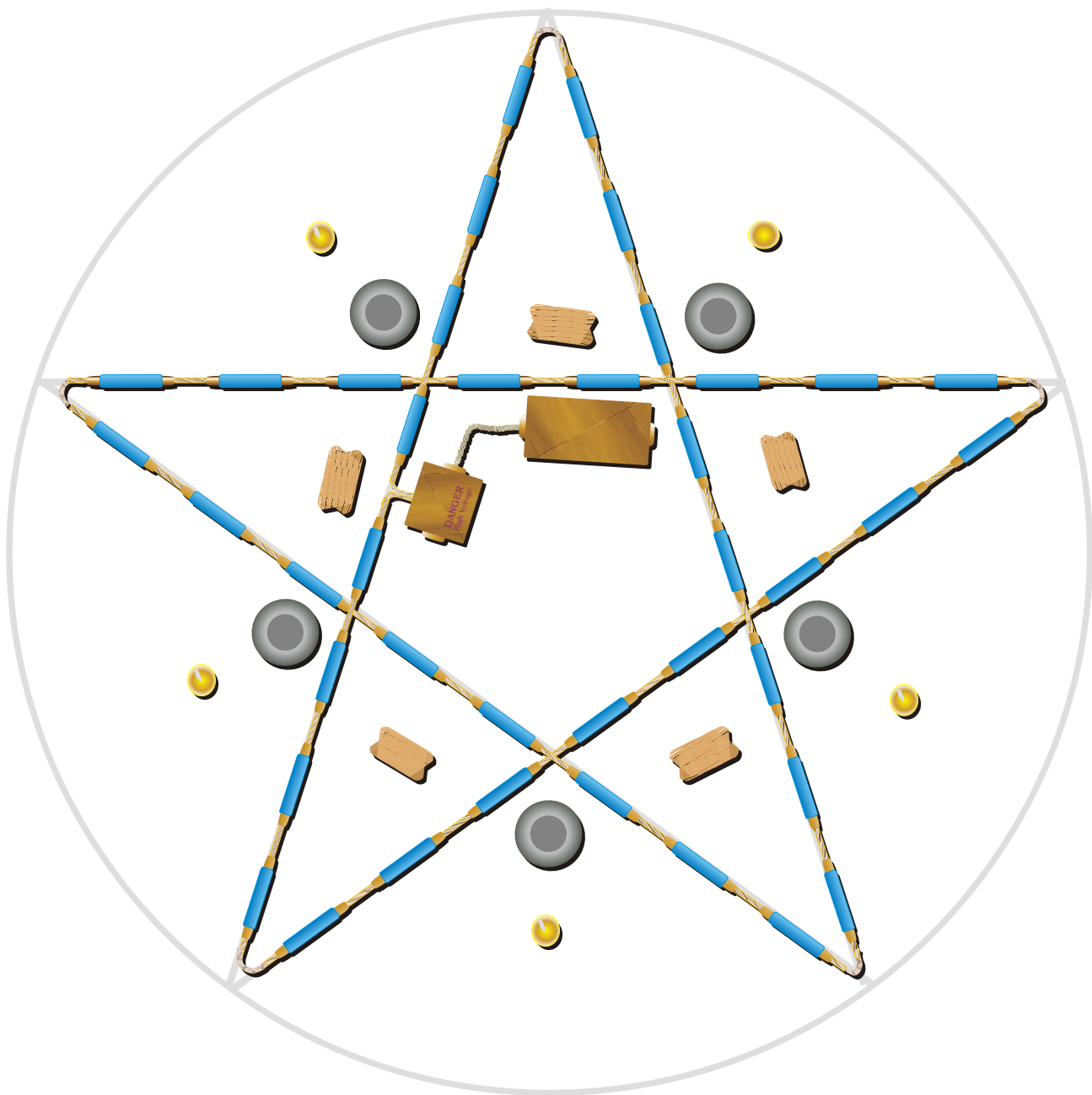
- Carnacki's narrative suggests that the main defensive factor in the electric pentacle was the high voltage maintained in the circuit. Light seems to be almost an afterthought, but his work in other areas (see *The Hog*) later revealed that blue light did offer extra protection against Ab-Natural entities. Does this outweigh the fact that the Mk 1 and Mk 2 run at lower voltages than their predecessor; if it's a compromise, how can the adventurers be sure that it's safe?
- RPLC Ltd. didn't have a stellar reputation; most of their products were quack medical devices, some of them dangerous or at the very least untested. Some of this must have been clear to Carnacki, why didn't he find a more reputable company to work with?
- What was the point of the Mk 1? How was Carnacki convinced to use something that really wasn't up to the job?
- Was the Zeppelin attack on RPLC's workshops really a random accident? If not, who or what was behind it?
- Why did the War Office really want electric pentacles? Was there something more Ab-Natural behind the purchase than it seems? A useful source here might be the *Laundry* novels by Charles Stross.
- Why was T.E. Lawrence interested, if he was? Useful(?) fact – Lawrence first used the Ross name to attempt to join the RAF anonymously but was initially turned away by Captain W.E. Johns, later famed for the *Biggles* stories!
- When the patent lapses in 1932 anyone can start making and selling electric pentacles commercially. Do any of the adventurers want to see if they can make money from the idea?
- When RPLC ceases production of the Mark 2 there will a sudden shortage of tubes. Can the adventurers get in fast and pick up a good stock before the supply dries up completely? Will their later liquidation put any more on the market?
- Why were the RPLC papers pulped?
- Why the long lapse in electric pentacle manufacture?
- Why are the most common models now red?

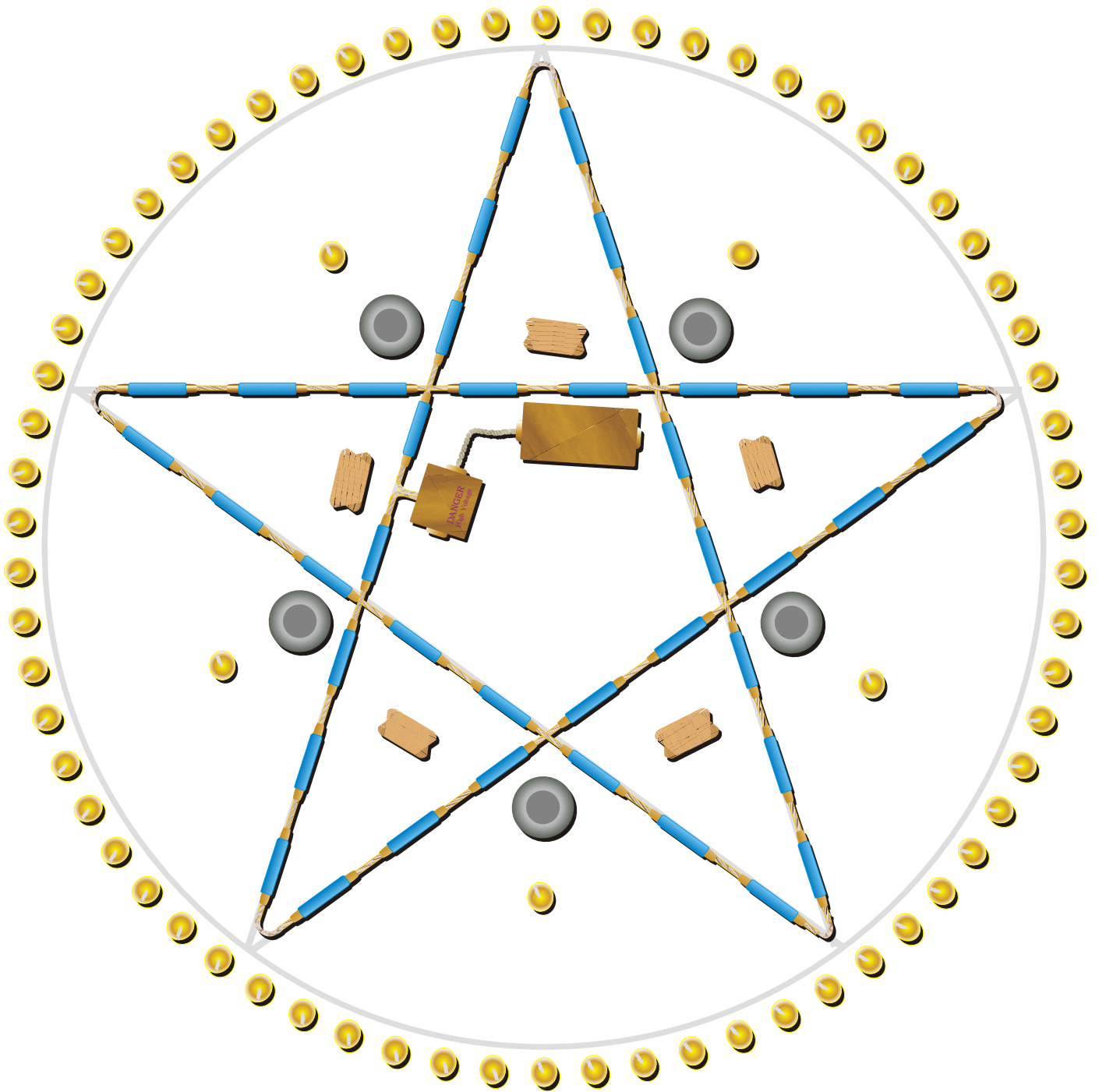
## Floor Plans

The plans on the next few pages show an electric pentacle set up as on page 7, or with 66 outer candles. The first two have no background, and might be printed onto acetate sheet so that they can be overlaid onto any desired surface. The next four use a wooden floor and a stone floor.

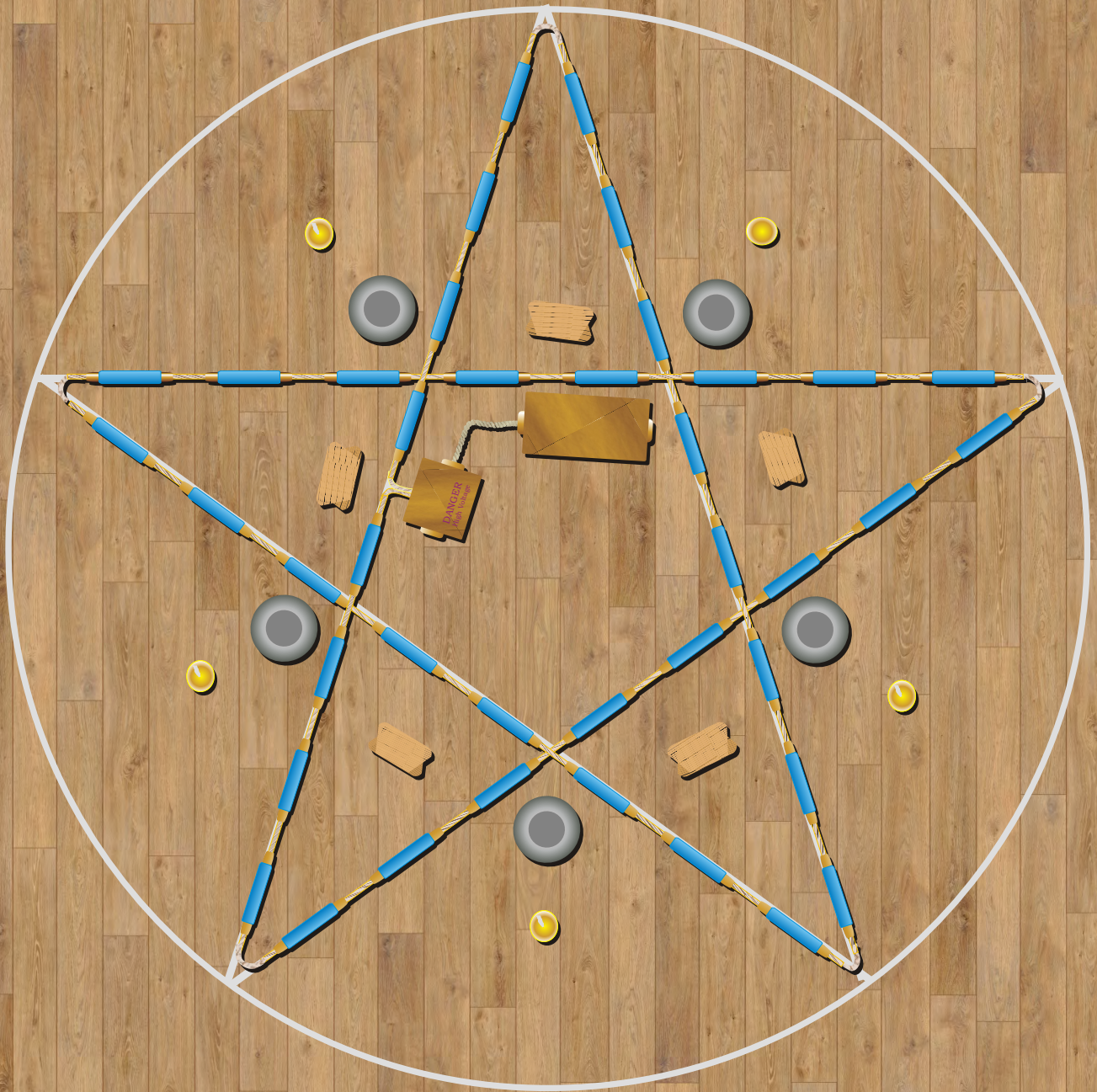
The last one is overlaid on a VERY repetitive multi-layer pattern which might cause vertigo, useful for dream sequences. Maybe the smell of wax candles and buzzing power supply leaves someone hallucinating that they're trapped in a giant beehive...

These pages are vector graphics images and can be zoomed without much loss of image quality. They may be slow to load on older computers.

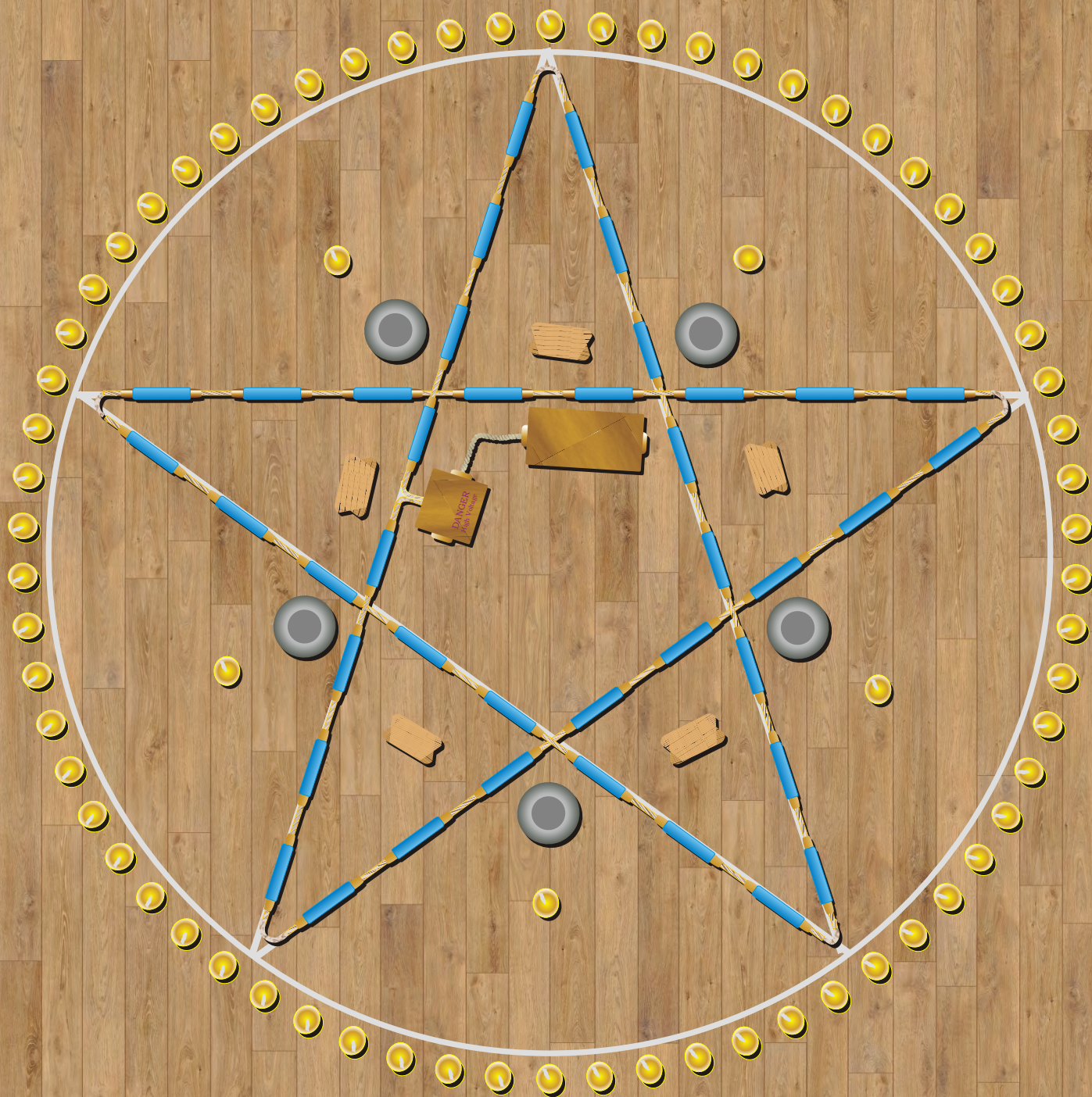




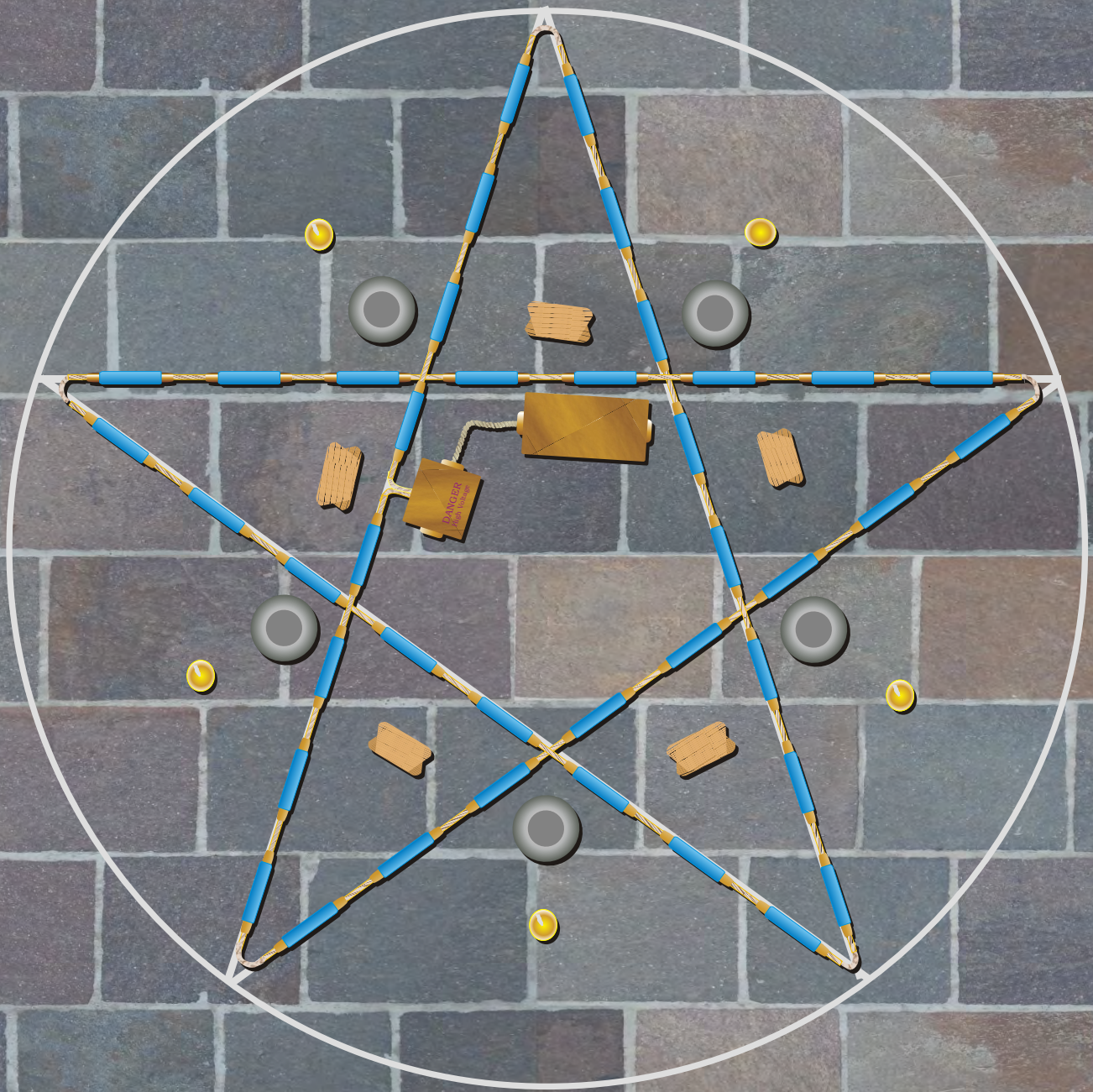








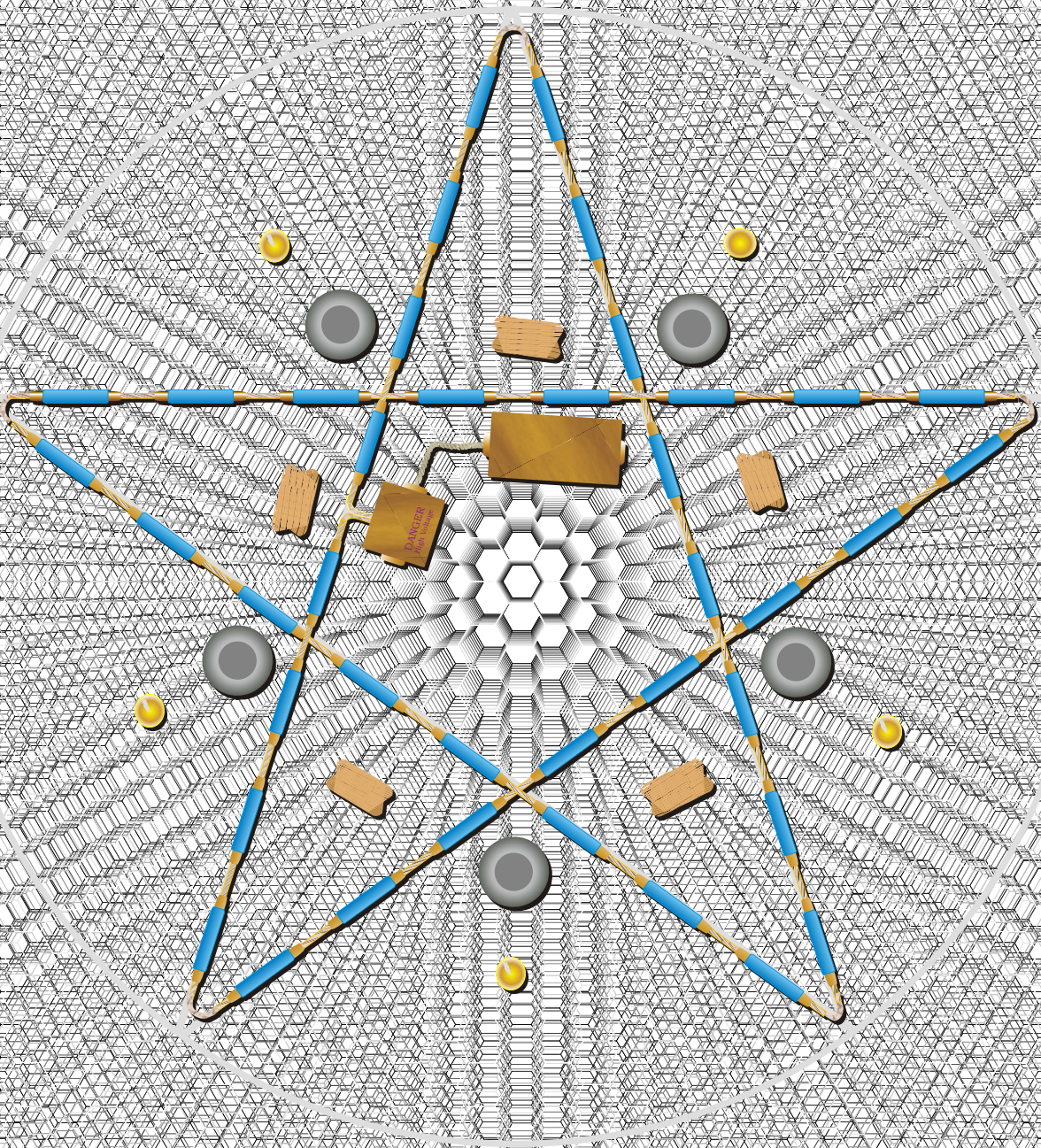














**THE RADIUM PATENT LIGHT COMPANY LTD.**  
**55 SICILIAN AVENUE, HOLBORN, LONDON**  
**TELEPHONE HOL 5434**  
**TELEGRAM RPLC HOLBORN**

**CARNACKI**  
**ELECTRIC PENTACLE**  
**Mk. 2**  
**OPERATING MANUAL**

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**COMPANY LTD., HOLBORN**

**BRITISH AND EMPIRE PATENTS PENDING,**  
**EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN PATENTS APPLIED FOR**

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Compiled by Mr. M. L. Rowland with contributions from Mr. Thomas Carnacki and our technical department etc.

## NOTES

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## Carnacki Electric Pentacle Mk. 2 Operating Manual

### WARRANTY

This equipment is sold checked and with all COMPONENTS in working order, and is guaranteed as follows, subject to use AS INSTRUCTED:

Mercury discharge tubes:	6 months
Battery:	1 year
Induction coil:	1 year
Other electrical components:	2 years

This warranty is LIMITED to NORMAL use only, and does not cover BREAKAGE AND OTHER DAMAGE by impact, fire, water, battery acid, animals or Ab-natural phenomena.

**WARNING:** This equipment operates at very high voltages, and buyers are STRONGLY ADVISED to use a QUALIFIED electrician if any repairs or adjustments need to be made. If you would like RPLC Ltd. to arrange for initial training and assembly after delivery PLEASE book it at the time of purchase – there is an additional charge for this service, and it is not available outside London. Our electricians can also make service calls BY APPOINTMENT, in the London area ONLY.

**DISCLAIMER:** This equipment is sold for experimental purposes ONLY; RPLC Ltd. cannot accept ANY liability for injuries, damage, or death to users if it is unable to resist Ab-natural OR OTHER supernatural forces.

### COMPONENTS

45	Mercury discharge tubes (includes 5 spares)
1	24 volt 30 Amp-Hour lead-acid battery assembly in wooden chest (charging generator NOT included)
2 gallons	Battery acid for above (delivered separately)
1	High-voltage induction coil (“trembler box”) in wooden casing
2	Spare carbon ozone filters for above
39	Pairs high-voltage tube connectors with 6” connecting cables
2	High-voltage tube connectors with 3ft cables ending in a two-pin shrouded plug.
1	Low-voltage high-current cable with connectors for battery and induction coil (length 2 yards).

Spares are priced as follows (excluding delivery)

Mercury discharge tubes	7s 6d each, six for £2 2s 6d
Carbon filters	5s 6d each, six for £1 5s 3d
Battery acid	4s 6d per gallon
High voltage cable	1s per yard (without connectors)
Low voltage cable	2s 6d per yard (without connectors)
" " "	7s plus 2s 3d per yard (with connectors)
Tube connector pairs	3s 6d each, six for 19s

Prices for replacement battery boxes and induction coils are available on request – please note that an additional battery and a more powerful induction coil will be needed for larger pentacles e.g. 80 tubes. A battery charging cable is not included; any cable designed for charging an automobile battery should be suitable.

Some additional components may be needed after assembly, which RPLC Ltd. cannot supply:

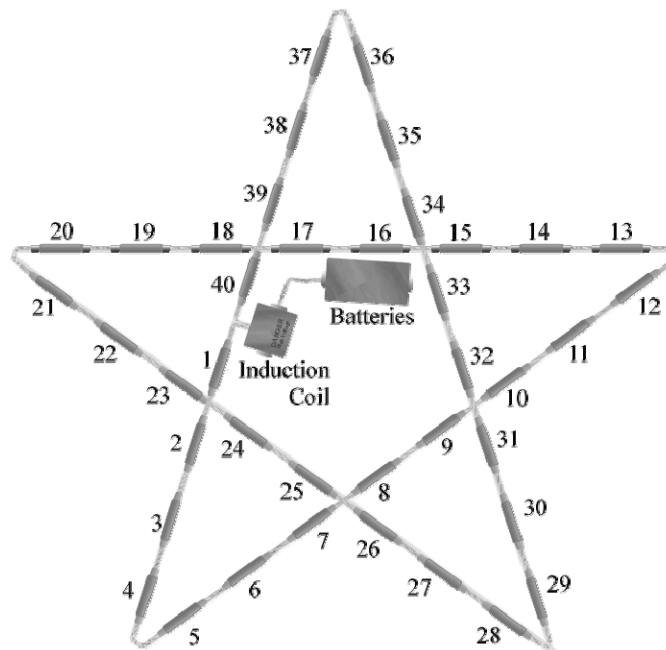
Chalk – five or 71 long-burning candles e.g. church candles, plus spares – matches – five ritually purified water jugs or bowls (preferably difficult to spill) – five unbleached linen cloths – fresh bread – length of braided human hair sufficient to circle around the circumference of the apparatus and candles twice – broom or brush made from hyssop plants – garlic. See Page 8.

## ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS

This equipment has been designed for quick assembly in the field. However, we strongly recommend that buyers familiarize themselves with safety precautions and the steps needed to replace damaged or failed tubes, preferably under the supervision of a qualified electrician.

A typical layout for the circuit is shown below – please note that Mr. Carnacki advises that the BATTERY and INDUCTION COIL MUST be INSIDE the inner pentagon of the pentacle. At the points where cables cross (e.g. where the cable between lamps 1 and 2 crosses the cable between lamps 23 and 24) there is NO electrical connection between one cable and the other.

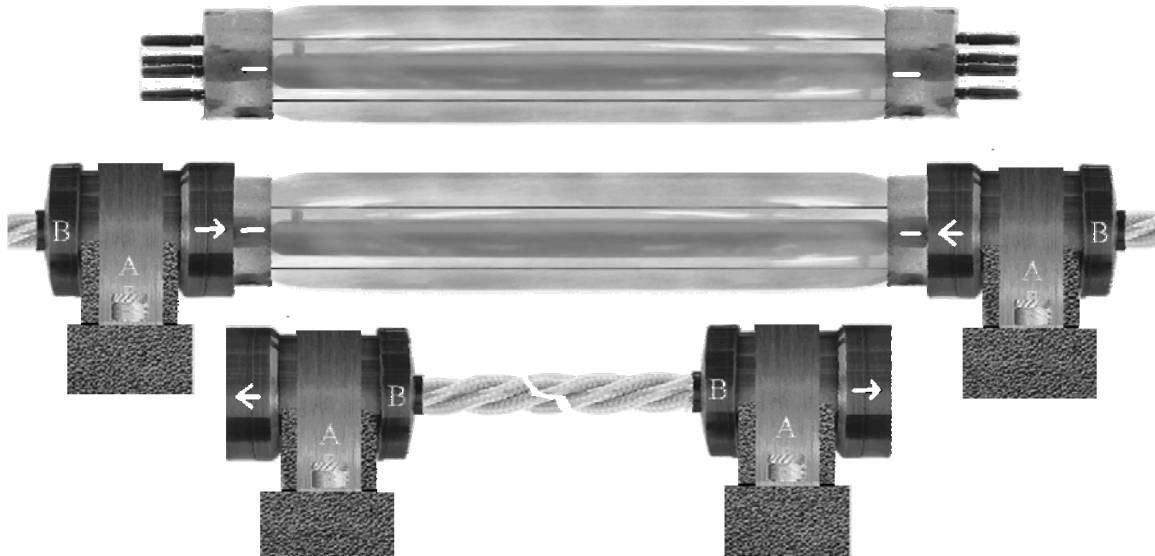
Our special tubes have four connecting pins – two power the tube itself, the other two continue the circuit through to the next tube via the next socket and the high-voltage cable. Since there is a complete circuit connected to the induction coil at both ends it is VITAL that tubes are inserted correctly to avoid a SHORT CIRCUIT – the easiest way to ensure this is to make sure that the sockets and bases are initially the right way up for use, and that all tubes are inserted correctly as in stage 4 below.



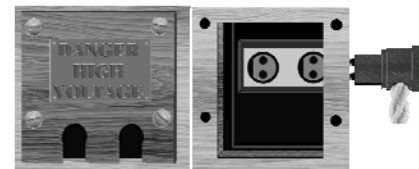
1. Identify all components and if possible lay them out on a flat surface as they are unwrapped. A large clear DRY area is needed for assembly of the pentacle, and it may be useful to position the tubes and holders as they are connected together, rather than trying to move assembled lengths afterwards. Report any damaged or missing components IMMEDIATELY.
2. Open the battery box and fill ALL cells with acid to  $\frac{1}{2}$ " below the filler caps. Replace the caps and leave to stand for several hours, then charge it at 24V DC (e.g. from a generator or the engine of a motor lorry or automobile). Charging may take several hours depending on the capacity of the power supply. If necessary the banks of cells can be disconnected into two 12V or four 6V sets of cells, and each bank can be charged at lower voltage.
3. For safety it's VITAL that nothing should be connected to the INDUCTION COIL box until the rest of the apparatus is fully assembled.
4. Start to connect the tubes as a "daisy chain" of tubes and connectors, starting with the connection between tubes 1 and 2 in the diagram above. To connect one tube

## Carnacki Electric Pentacle Mk. 2 Operating Manual

to the next simply plug it into the socket at the end of the connecting wire (illustrated on the next page). Each end has an ebonite insulating base (A) and the socket itself (B). The sockets have an alignment arrow marked on either side, the tubes have an alignment line marked on the metal cap. The tube should be held so that the arrows and lines are aligned as shown, then GENTLY pushed in so that the four pins of the tube enter the connectors inside the socket without bending or other damage. Please note that the equipment WILL NOT WORK and may be damaged if tubes are aligned wrongly. It's inadvisable to attempt to move more than two or three connected tubes at a time, since DAMAGE to the tubes or connectors may result!



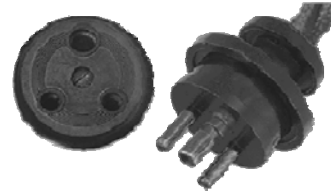
5. Check that the induction coil is NOT connected to the battery box. If it is, disconnect by carefully pulling the low-voltage connection cable plug out from the battery box socket AND from the induction coil socket, and wait at least ten minutes for any residual voltage to dissipate.
6. Move the induction coil box so that the back is convenient for connecting the two longer HIGH VOLTAGE cables to the first and last tubes of the circle (1 and 40 in the diagram on page 3).
  - a. Find the HIGH VOLTAGE connection recess cover, on the back of the induction coil box, and unscrew the four screws holding it in place, to reveal an insulating plate with two of our patented two-pin high-voltage sockets. These are designed so that it is impossible to insert the corresponding shrouded plug the wrong way round, provided that it is not forced.
  - b. Insert the plug from the end tube to the left into the left-hand socket.
  - c. Insert the plug from the end tube to the right into the right-hand socket.
  - d. Replace the cover, and make sure that it is properly secured, with the cables fed out through the two gaps at the bottom of the cover. The cover holds the plugs in place making it impossible for them to be pulled out accidentally.





## Carnacki Electric Pentacle Mk. 2 Operating Manual

7. WHEN THE BATTERY IS FULLY CHARGED locate the three-pin LOW VOLTAGE sockets on the battery box and the induction coil box. They are below the right-hand carrying handles of the boxes.
8. Open the lid of the INDUCTION COIL box and turn the rotary switch to OFF if it is not off already.
9. CAREFULLY plug one end of the LOW VOLTAGE cable into the socket on the INDUCTION COIL box.
10. Open the lid of the BATTERY BOX and turn the rotary switch to OFF if it is not off already.
11. CAREFULLY plug the other end of the lead into the socket on the BATTERY box.
12. The pentacle should now be ready for final testing.



## FINAL TESTING

If the assembly procedure has been followed CORRECTLY the Electric Pentacle is now ready for use. We strongly recommend testing it IN ADVANCE of any use, allowing sufficient time to make repairs or postpone if necessary. The test procedure is as follows:

1. Check that the pentacle is set up in a circuit similar to the one shown on page 3, that it is dry, that there isn't any damage, and that nobody is touching any of the tubes or holders. Pets should be kept out of the way to avoid damage or injuries from biting cables etc.
2. Open the BATTERY box. There is a FOUR position rotary switch with the following positions marked: OFF – CHARGE – OFF – DISCHARGE. It should initially be set to OFF.
3. Open the INDUCTION COIL box. There is a FIVE position rotary switch with the following positions marked: OFF – TEST 1 – TEST 2 – ON – SHORTED. It should initially be set to OFF. There are also a push button and three small lamps marked POWER, TEST 1, and TEST 2.
4. Turn the BATTERY BOX switch to DISCHARGE; this should supply electrical power to the INDUCTION COIL. If all is well the POWER light in the INDUCTION COIL box will be on. If it is not, switch the BATTERY BOX off then check that the cable is plugged in properly and is undamaged, and that the battery is properly charged. For any other problem we STRONGLY advise the use of a QUALIFIED electrician. If it is working, proceed to step 5.
5. Turn the INDUCTION COIL switch to TEST 1 and press the button:
  - a. If the TEST 1 light is glowing and the TEST 2 light stays off the POSITIVE (+) connection is complete and working correctly. Release the button and go to step 6.
  - b. If neither light comes on there is a break somewhere in the POSITIVE circuit, which must be fixed before you continue. It's most likely that one of the tubes isn't in its socket correctly. Turn the BATTERY BOX switch to OFF then the INDUCTION COIL to SHORTED then OFF, locate the fault, and seat it more firmly. For any other fault seek QUALIFIED help.
  - c. If TEST LIGHT 2 comes on, or BOTH test lights come on with low brightness there is a short-circuit between the positive and negative HIGH VOLTAGE cables. Switch off as above, locate the fault, and repair it before continuing. It is most likely that one of the tube sockets is upside

## Carnacki Electric Pentacle Mk. 2 Operating Manual

- down or on its side relative to the next socket in the series. For any other fault seek QUALIFIED help.
6. Turn the INDUCTION COIL switch to TEST 2 and press the button:
    - a. If the TEST 2 light is glowing and the TEST 1 light stays off the NEGATIVE (–) connection is complete and working correctly. Release the button and go to step 7.
    - b. If neither light comes on there is a break somewhere in the NEGATIVE circuit, which must be fixed before you continue. . It's most likely that one of the tubes isn't in its socket correctly. Turn the BATTERY BOX switch to OFF then the INDUCTION COIL to SHORTED then OFF, locate the fault, and make repairs. For any other fault seek QUALIFIED help.
    - c. If BOTH test lights come on with low brightness there is a short-circuit between the positive and negative HIGH VOLTAGE cables. Switch off as above, locate the fault, and repair it before continuing. It is most likely that one of the tube sockets is upside down or on its side relative to the next socket in the series as above. For any other fault seek QUALIFIED help.
  7. Turn the INDUCTION COIL switch to ON. There may be a buzzing noise from the box, which will be less audible when the box is closed, and the tubes should start to glow. It is normal for the tubes nearest the induction coil to start glowing first, followed by the next one in either direction, until all are glowing. If so, proceed to stage 8:
    - a. If there is no buzzing noise and the discharge tubes are not glowing there is a fault in the INDUCTION COIL itself – we STRONGLY suggest a service call from our electrician, the voltage can be VERY dangerous.
    - b. If there appears to be no buzzing noise but some or all of the tubes are glowing the INDUCTION COIL is working properly, and the sound is being absorbed unusually well by the asbestos insulation around it. Proceed to stage 8.
  8. Wait five minutes then check that ALL of the tubes are glowing – you may need to darken the room if it has windows, the light isn't very visible in daylight.
    - a. If all of the tubes are glowing the pentacle and its power supply are working properly. Proceed to stage 9
    - b. If one or two of the tubes aren't working they may be defective. Turn the BATTERY BOX switch to OFF then the INDUCTION COIL to SHORTED then OFF, and replace the tubes as in STAGE 4 of INSTALLATION. Once this has been done switch on again, as in stages 2-7 above, and check the tubes again. Repeat until all tubes are working, then proceed to stage 9.
    - c. If the tubes seem to be flickering on and off repeatedly there is probably insufficient power. This may be the result of a poor connection somewhere in the circuit, or may mean that the INDUCTION COIL itself requires adjustment. Adjustment must be done with the power ON:
      - i. Locate a 1/2" diameter hole underneath the LEFT carrying handle.
      - ii. There is a setting screw recessed approximately 1" into the wood, accessible from this hole. Use an INSULATED screwdriver to turn the screw 90 degrees ANTICLOCKWISE. Check if the lights seem to be flickering more or less.
      - iii. Turn it back to the original position then 90 degrees CLOCKWISE. Check if the light seems to be flickering more or less.

## Carnacki Electric Pentacle Mk. 2 Operating Manual

- iv. If there seems to be no improvement in either direction there may still be an electrical fault. Switch everything off as in stage b and check the circuit again.
  - v. If there seems to be an improvement in either direction then the coil requires adjustment. CAUTIOUSLY turn the screw in the preferred direction, NO MORE THAN THREE FULL TURNS. You should find that there is a point at which the lamps are much brighter, and there is no flickering. Proceed to stage 9.
  - vi. If there is no improvement, and no electrical fault can be found, we must again recommend the help of a FULLY QUALIFIED electrician. Switch everything off as above and contact us to arrange a service visit if you are in London. Outside London we may be able to recommend a local electrician who can help.
9. Once everything is working correctly shut the lids of the BATTERY BOX and INDUCTION COIL BOX and leave it running for a minimum of an hour, checking the following points every 10-15 minutes.
  - a. Is the brightness of the tubes constant? If they seem to be fading slowly it's possible that the battery was not fully charged or wasn't charged properly. It should be adequate for 8-10 hours of normal use. If possible charge the battery again.
  - b. Is there a strong smell of ozone? A slight smell of ozone is normal since the induction coil produces a spark as it operates, but it should mostly be absorbed by the carbon filter in the INDUCTION COIL box. If there is a strong smell or you start to cough the filter may need replacing:
    - i. Remove one of the spare filter bags from its waxed paper wrapping. DO NOT damage the wrapping! The bag is made of muslin and contains black granules which absorb ozone and other harmful gases.
    - ii. Unscrew the PERFORATED metal filter cover (on the back of the INDUCTION COIL box to the right of the HIGH VOLTAGE cable connectors) and remove the muslin bag inside – there will probably be a strong smell of ozone as soon as it is removed – and replace it with the spare filter. Be careful to push the bag back so that it is against the inner wire mesh grille. DO NOT open the bag or put the granules in loose.
    - iii. Wrap the used filter in the waxed paper and put it outdoors to air as soon as possible. Once it stops smelling, it may be thrown out. Filters must not be re-used!
10. The pentacle is now ready for use.



## OPTIONAL ACCESSORIES

If you will be assembling a larger pentacle you will need a more powerful induction coil, which is available to special order, price on application. You will also need a second battery which can be connected to the first – we do not recommend getting a single large battery, since they are heavy and difficult to carry. Instead we can supply an additional battery box with two sockets which is designed to connect between the existing battery box and the induction coil box. While the total weight is slightly higher, the ease of movement more than makes up for it. It is NOT possible to use multiple induction coils in a single pentacle – the most likely result would be lower

## Carnacki Electric Pentacle Mk. 2 Operating Manual

voltage with frequent fluctuations in power and damage to both induction coils. See the technical section on page 11 for more information.

This equipment is supplied in a packing crate. For greater discretion we have fitted trunks giving the impression of normal luggage. They have padded compartments for tubes and the other components.

While we do not normally supply charging equipment or cables – most garages etc. will have them to hand – some users may live in areas that have a DC mains electricity supply of the Edison type. If so, we can provide a charger box which plugs into the mains and uses a dropping resistance to achieve the correct voltage. These are made to order, since they require careful adjustment for the precise voltage in your area, and plug into the battery box or boxes via the low voltage cable socket. Prices on application, please supply full details of voltage etc. when you request a quote.

## OPERATION

Mr. Carnacki suggests the following stages for setting up the equipment as a “Defense” against “Ab-Natural” forces. They should be refreshed before the equipment is used if it is a fixed installation.

1. Measure out a space 21ft in diameter on a DRY level surface.
2. Sweep with a broom of hyssop<sup>1</sup>
3. Draw a chalk circle around the swept area
4. Smudge a broad belt around the chalked circle with garlic<sup>2</sup>
5. Using ritually purified water, applied with the left forefinger, mark the Second Sign of the Saaamaaa Ritual inside the line of chalk, joining each Sign most carefully with the left-handed crescent.<sup>3</sup>
6. For routine work place a lighted candle in the "valley" of each Crescent. . Church candles made of beeswax work well for this purpose; paraffin-wax candles may be unpleasant after prolonged use<sup>4</sup>. For more protection a ring of 66 candles around the circle, linked by hair twined between them, may be preferable.<sup>5</sup>
7. Draw a Pentacle, so that each of the five points of the defensive star touch the chalk circle.
8. In the five points of the star place portions of fresh bread wrapped in clean but unbleached linen
9. In the five "vales" place five opened jars or bowls of the water used to make the "water circle."<sup>6</sup>
10. Set out the electric pentacle so that it overlays the chalk pentacle exactly, as described in previous sections, switch on power, and await results.

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<sup>1</sup> Usually obtainable from herbalists, sometimes found in greenhouses etc.

<sup>2</sup> Readily grown, and can often be found growing wild or in kitchen gardens. Sometimes sold in food stores catering to foreign and immigrant customers.

<sup>3</sup> See Professor Garder's translation of the Sigsand MS and *Experiments With A Medium*

<sup>4</sup> Ecclesiastical supply houses can generally supply suitable candles in bulk at competitive rates.

<sup>5</sup> Wig-makers may be able to help with the supply of braided human hair for a hair circle. A typical 21ft diameter circle, with intertwined hair circling the circumference, will need AT LEAST 66ft of braided hair

<sup>6</sup> Bowls or jars with wide bases are preferable since they are harder to spill. A design similar to a child's feeding bowl or a small tureen might work well. Closed containers and base metal containers such as pewter pots must NOT be used.

### **SAFETY**

This equipment runs at high voltage and **MUST** be handled **CAREFULLY** at all times. While every effort has been made to insulate all components it is possible that damage to the **CABLES**, **TUBES**, **TUBE SOCKETS** or **PLUGS** may cause a **RISK** of **LETHAL** electric shock:

1. **ALWAYS** examine the components as you handle them – if you notice any damage they **MUST** be replaced or repaired
2. **NEVER** touch any of the high-voltage components while they are in use.
3. **ALWAYS** be careful to keep the equipment dry, and work in dry conditions; damp surfaces can **GREATLY** increase the severity of electrical shocks.

**CABLES** may be a tripping hazard, especially in poor lighting conditions. Make sure to keep things **TIDY** while working, it avoids many problems.

The glass discharge tubes contain **MERCURY VAPOUR** and droplets of mercury. Mercury is **POISONOUS**. If any tubes are broken it is **ESSENTIAL** to clear up the broken glass etc. and **AVOID CUTS**, mercury may enter the body through a cut. **DO NOT** wear gold rings etc. while clearing spills, mercury reacts with gold to form an unsightly grey amalgam. **ALWAYS** switch off before dealing with broken tubes to avoid electric shocks!

The **BATTERY BOX** is very heavy and **MUST** be carried with care to avoid dropping it, back injuries etc. **USE THE CARRYING HANDLES** and if possible a wheeled trolley when moving it.

Since this equipment may be used to defend against **AB-NATURAL HAZARDS** it is also essential to take all possible precautions against them:

1. Check that there are no openings **INSIDE** the pentacle that may be used to **BYPASS** the Defence. For example, some manifestations may be able to take advantage of **DRAINS** and other vents in the floor inside the pentacle, or even **OVERHEAD** openings such as air vents and skylights if they are above the centre of the Pentacle.
2. Similarly, be wary of any unusual features inside the area protected that might be indicative of a supernatural **PORTAL**. These might include **UNUSUAL MARKS** or **SYMBOLS**, especially when carved into stone surfaces, or loose objects that in themselves function as portals, such as **RINGS** or **BRACELETS** in magically-significant shapes.
3. When setting up the Electric Pentacle itself be **VERY** careful to avoid damaging **ALL** other elements of the defence; the Electric Pentacle is designed to be an **ADDITION** to earlier forms of protection, **NOT** a complete replacement for it.
4. Avoid **SIGNING PACTS** with Ab-Natural **AND/OR** Supernatural entities.
5. **CANDLES** may be a fire risk if used near **CURTAINS** or flammable furniture. They must not be used for religious purposes after being used as part of a defence.
6. **BREAD** used as a Defence must **NOT** be subsequently eaten!
7. **WATER** used in a Defence must be discarded safely after use, and may not be reused or drunk.
8. Finally, please remember to clear up **THOROUGHLY** after use and erase chalk marks etc., it's safer to start from scratch than attempt to re-use them.

## **TECHNICAL NOTES**

The Carnacki MK 2 Electric Pentacle is a parallel “ring circuit” of forty mercury discharge tubes powered at approximately 500V. The mercury tubes are contained inside an outer protective glass tube which filters out some ultra-violet light. There are connectors at both ends and the outer tube includes conductors for the parallel circuit, so that there is a continuous ring through the wiring and the tubes. Tubes are designed with internal ballast resistors so that the tubes nearest to the power supply at each end receive full power first, with resistance dropping once the tube is active so that the next tube of the series receives more power. This is necessary because these tubes need much more power to start up than to maintain light, and an attempt to power them all up simultaneously would overload the power supply. “Dead” tubes still maintain the continuity of the 500V parallel circuit, and should provide some protection even without their light.

High-voltage power is obtained from an induction coil unit, also known as a “trembler coil” or “trembler box”. This is essentially a mechanism resembling an electrical buzzer which acts as a transformer, converting low voltages to high. They are also used in some automobiles for supplying high voltage to spark plugs. Normally transformers will only work with an AC power supply, but this equipment uses an interrupted DC supply to the same effect – technically it is considered to be a “square wave” AC system, with voltage switching from zero to 500V and back again approximately fifty times a second.

Use of this system explains why it is not currently possible to use more than one coil in a single circuit – it is impossible to synchronise the mechanisms precisely and within a minute or two they would be far enough out of synchronization that the voltage from one was falling as the other was rising, effectively shorting out both coils and probably damaging them.

The battery box contains four 6V batteries, each consisting of three cells. For normal use they are kept connected in series and produce 24-26V depending on charge level. If necessary the individual 6V batteries can be removed for charging at 6V (one battery) or 12V (two batteries) as mentioned on page 4. The batteries are linked in series by strong brass connectors, unscrew the connectors to remove an individual battery. Acid specific gravity should be around 1.25; this should be checked at regular intervals, using a battery testing hydrometer. It may be useful to log the results of tests before and after charging since it can be an early indication of battery problems. The standard battery box has a single low-voltage socket – it is usually used to power the induction coil when the battery switch is set to “discharge”, but it is possible to charge the battery through this socket when it is set to “charge”. If you purchase a second battery box for larger circuits it will have two sockets – one for connecting it to the induction coil, the other for connecting the original battery to it – and the batteries are connected in parallel, for higher output current. Our high-capacity induction coil is designed for the higher current available.

It is inadvisable to connect more than one 24V battery to the standard induction coil, damage may result which may not be covered by our standard warranty.

For more information please contact our technical department by letter, telegraph, or telephone (during office hours), using the addresses on the front page.

We regret that we are unable to advise on technical issues related to Ab-Natural phenomena.

**THE RADIUM PATENT LIGHT COMPANY LTD.**  
**55 SICILIAN AVENUE, HOLBORN, LONDON**  
**TELEPHONE HOL 5434**  
**TELEGRAM RPLC HOLBORN**

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FEMALE HYSTERIA**

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-

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-

**X-RAY TUBES AND FLUORESCENT SCREENS**

-

**N-RAY APPARATUS & DETECTORS (BLONDLOT SYSTEM)**

**&**

**INDUCTION COILS, ACCUMULATORS, AC  
TRANSFORMERS, RECTIFIERS, CABLES &  
SPARE PARTS ETC. FOR ALL OF THE ABOVE**



## Illustrations

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Front Cover	Corel Draw vector graphics image with stone floor background, converted to jpg with art filter.
5 (upper)	Image from the original Carnacki Cylinders (1996), Zing3D graphics program converted to 2-colour gif.
5 (lower)	Image assembled from images of glass rolling pins, valve bases, glass tubing etc. found on line.
7	Corel Draw image converted to jpg, text added
10-16	Corel Draw images, floor textures as below

### Electric Pentacle Instruction Manual

4	Corel Draw image converted to jpg, text added
5 (upper)	Tube as 5 above, tube bases Corel Draw, flex, nuts found on line
6 (lower)	Image created with Paintshop Pro
7	From Wikipedia
8	Edited photo of kitchen jar lid converted to jpg
Rear Cover	Cover of a 1920 printing of Carnacki the Ghost Finder, artist unknown, source Internet Speculative Fiction Database isfdb.org

The stone floor texture was downloaded from <https://architextures.org/textures/591> and used with thanks.

The wood floor texture was download from <https://www.sketchuptextureclub.com/textures/architecture/wood-floors/parquet-ligth> and used with thanks

## Printing Instructions

### As a single book

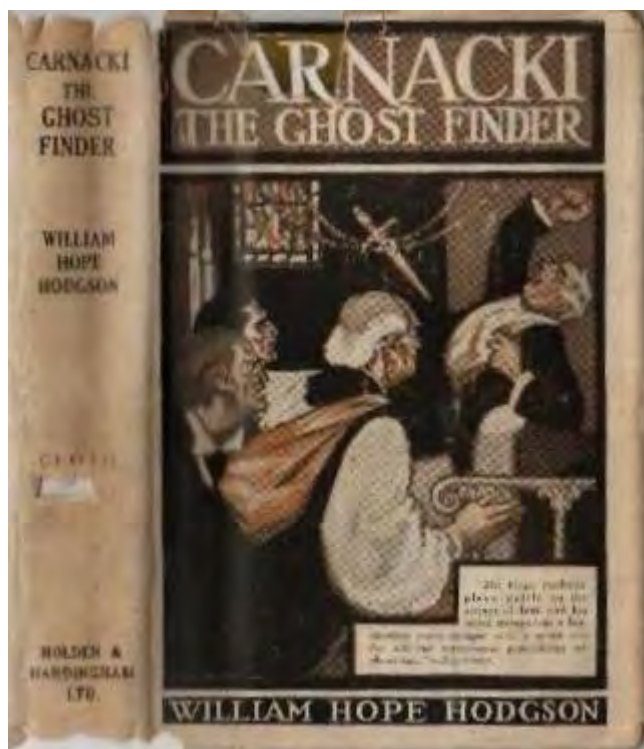
For best results print the front and back covers single sided, on card if possible, and the rest of the book double-sided.

### As handouts etc

Print pages 10-16 (floor plans) single sided. If you can print on clear acetate the first two pages will work well as overlays for other floor plans.

Print the Electric Pentacle Instruction Manual (pages 17-29) as a double-sided booklet; if possible reduce it in size, e.g. to A5 and put two pages on each side as a foldable leaflet.

Recent releases of Adobe Acrobat have a weird problem printing and displaying images with white backgrounds. If some images show or print with a yellow background go to settings /accessibility and set the first settings to “Replace Document Colours” and “Use Windows Colour Scheme” – you may need to try different settings to get a good result.



Cover of a 1920 printing of *Carnacki the Ghost Finder*

## Forgotten Futures IV The Electric Pentacle Handbook

Extra Resources for RPGs  
set in the universe of  
William Hope Hodgson's  
*Carnacki The Ghost-Finder*

by Marcus L. Rowland  
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*"In this last case I had little doubt that I had run up against a supernatural monster, and I meant to take every possible care; for the danger is abominable.*

*"I turned-to now to fit the Electric Pentacle, setting it so that each of its 'points' and 'vales' coincided exactly with the 'points' and 'vales' of the drawn pentagram upon the floor. Then I connected up the battery, and the next instant the pale blue glare from the intertwining vacuum tubes shone out.*

*The Gateway of the Monster – William Hope Hodgson 1910*

This is an extra supplement for *The Carnacki Cyinders*, a role playing supplement for the *Forgotten Futures* RPG, first published in 1993 and updated and converted to PDF in 2022, focusing on one of the most iconic items of this setting – the Electric Pentacle, an amazing cross of weird science and mysticism. It includes an expanded history of the device, floor plans for it in a variety of settings, and a “1913 instruction Manual” usable as a player handout.

The other PDFs for this release are as follows:

*The Carnacki Cyinders* – A worldbook for the setting

*The Pentacle Files* – Adventures, including an all-new scenario by Alex Stewart.

*Carnacki The Ghost Finder* – The original stories with art from their magazine publication, plus a rare chap-book of highlights from the first four stories. There's also a separate file with the chap-book only.

All files have new and greatly improved art, and updated text.  
For printing instructions see page 29.