

secrets

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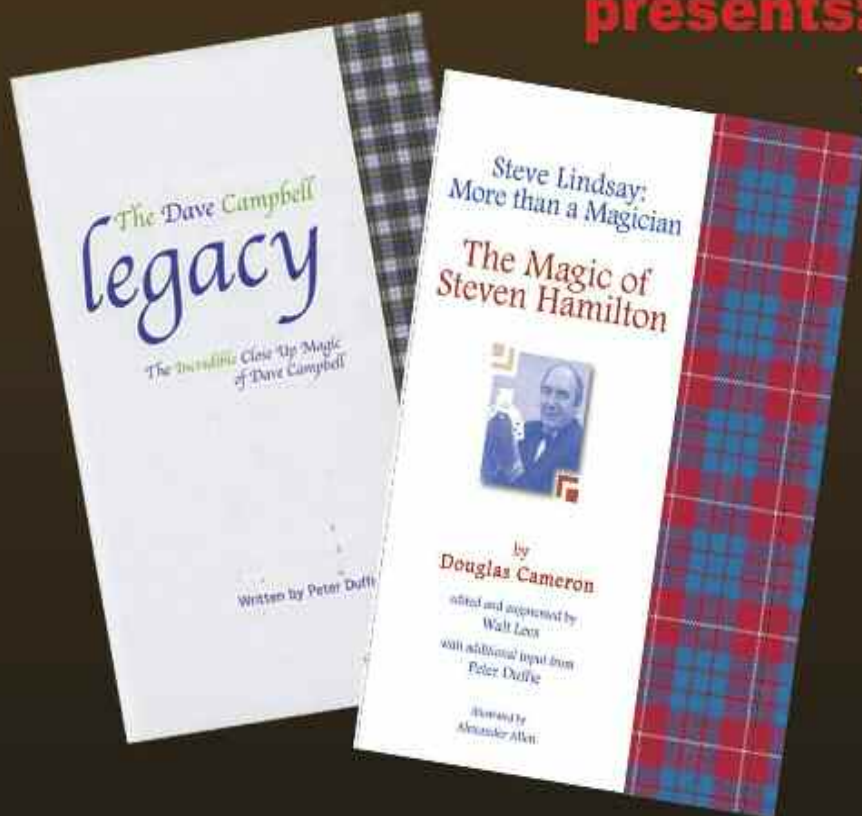
INSIDE
WONDERS FROM
THE WORKSHOPS
COVER CONJURERS
MEMBER PROFILE
AND LOTS OF TRICKS



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WHERE THERE'S A WILL...



Near the end of February about 3,500 magicians descended on the seaside town of Blackpool, in the north of England, for what is (and has been for many years) by far the largest magic convention in the world. It was a huge pleasure to see several YMC Members at the convention and, in particular, to get to see some of the magic that you are working on... If you ever do see me at a convention or event do come and say hello, and if you have a piece of magic to show me then so much the better!

Given it is such a large convention it is no surprise that Blackpool can book many of the finest magicians in the world to lecture and share their magic. It was particularly exciting, though, to realise that the YMC effectively got a sneak preview of two of the main events at the convention at our own convention J-Day (held in the autumn, check the Workshop pages in this issue and mark the date in your diary). At our convention Russ Stevens and Issy Simpson gave a joint talk on the Britain's Got Talent experience, whilst at Blackpool Russ gave a similar talk and Issy appeared in one of the gala shows. One view is that J-Day was a warm up for the main convention, but I like to think of it more a sneak preview of something yet to happen in the mainstream magic world!

As I write this editorial I am preparing for a trip to America where I will visit two famous magic locations: The Magic Castle in Los Angeles and the FFFF convention in upstate New York. The Magic Castle is a bit like an American Magic Circle, though they have more of an emphasis on shows for the public and less on lectures and events for magicians. FFFF is an invitation-only convention for a small number of magicians that is widely viewed as the best convention for close-up magic in the world. As I travel I plan to keep a diary and perhaps to offer you a behind-the-scenes look at both events in a future issue of *Secrets*.

One of the things I was most keen on when I took on the Editorship of *Secrets* over two years ago (how time flies) was to share your views and thoughts on magic in the magazine. One way of doing that is to have a YMC Member write a short report on the YMC Workshops that happen each month. I have been delighted with the pieces that Members have sent me so far but, in recent months, have found it harder to find Members who want to have a go at reporting... If I can't get people to write the reports then a section of the magazine that I love will have to change, so if you have thought about having a go at reporting then don't assume that someone else is already doing it and do get in touch. I would love to hear from you.

Will Houstoun

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Sam Hinch, Luke Oseland and Jack Mawson

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A number of you will have been to the Blackpool Convention in February. It is a huge magic convention; the biggest in the UK, possibly in Europe, maybe even the world! I have never been and each year I keep saying I will go one day.

When I was a young magician, I used to go to the IBM British Ring conventions. They were much bigger than they are now (and Blackpool was much smaller) so they were the convention to go to. I loved them and it was great going back twice in recent years to present YMC Members in a Stars of the Future show, but I was sad to see how small it had become and how few young magicians were there. I do think there is a place for a big convention in the south of the UK.

Other conventions I went to every year included Ron MacMillan's International Magic Day in The Empire Rooms,

Tottenham Court Road and Supreme Super Days at their various locations. Some of you have probably never been to a convention. I am sure you will do, one day and, of course, probably start with our very own J-Day in October. We do our best to have everything, but on a smaller scale.

Competitions are a great attraction at conventions. The British Ring Shield was a highly coveted and fought-for stage trophy at one time. Probably, now, The Magic Circle Stage Magician Of The Year is the top award in the UK. There are more close-up competitions in the various smaller conventions around the country. Competitions are a great motivator to put together a good act. Our J-Day competitions are certainly worth entering when you have an act (not just a string of tricks).

Lectures are also a big draw for conventions. Those of you who come to YMC Workshops are fortunate to have mini-lectures almost every month! But full-length lectures at a convention are experiences not to be missed. Most conventions usually finish with a gala show featuring, very often, the lecturers in full performance.

But a major feature of a good convention – and Blackpool have really perfected this – is the dealers. Now with so much for sale online, it is a rare opportunity to be able to see the props you are going to buy without parting with your dosh. For

news

New Museum Exhibits

The Magic Circle Museum recently unveiled two new exhibits, one focusing on the development of magic over the last half-millennium, and the other examining the relationship between spiritualism and conjuring. It is fascinating to see how far back many recognisable pieces of magic go so do take a few minutes to visit the Museum and take a look when you next visit our Headquarters.



Photo: Mark Hesketh-Jennings

The Magic Circle Close-up Magician of the Year 2018

The Magic Circle recently held its Close-up Magician of the Year competition. The competition was of a high standard and I am delighted to say that past-YMC Member Matthew le Mottée won first place for the second year in a row! Congratulations Matthew.

Trick of the Year 2017

Each year Jamie D Grant runs a competition on The Magic Cafe, one of the largest online forums for magicians, where members can vote for their favourite trick of the year. The winner receives the title and also a special Limited Edition 'Anything Is Possible' bottle. This year congratulations go to The



J-Day we only have enough space for four dealers – I'd love to have more – but for the last few years I have arranged that The Magic Circle Dealers Day and J-Day are on the same weekend so that some Members make a weekend of it. And The Magic Circle very kindly give free entry to Members of YMC with their Membership Cards.

Chatting to friends old and new is another huge attraction of conventions, sometimes late into the night. And sessioning, too, if that's your thing, plays a great part in that. I remember a late-night conversation in the headquarters hotel with Ali Bongo at one of my early British Ring conventions when I recall being so

impressed that such a big name in magic appeared to value the opinions of this young and unknown member.

The Young Magicians Club did not exist when I was your age (oh, how I wish it had) but regardless, conventions are a great way to get bitten by the magic bug! I have said it before... but maybe I'll see you at Blackpool next year! But before that, do make sure J-Day is in your diary.

Magic Circle's own Angelo Carbone for his creation, The Gift. The Gift is a remarkably clever utility device that allows the production of a correct prediction in very fair conditions.



London, often taking part themselves. An amazing collection of close-up magicians presenting superlative magic right before your very eyes. Seeing is believing!

Doors open 7pm, event starts at 7.30pm and finishes at approximately 9.30pm.

All shows are of a universal nature and young enthusiasts are welcomed, over the age of ten.

At Home with The Magic Circle

10 April, 24 April, 15 May

A regular evening of mystery and wonder featuring some of the club's top magicians. This event features history, close-up and stage entertainment.

Doors open at 7pm and the Club Room bar and museum are open. Parlour magic begins at 7.30pm.

During the interval, The Magic Circle museum and the Club Room bar are open once again and you'll have a chance to explore the fabulous headquarters. Then it's time for a dazzling show in The Magic Circle theatre to finish off your evening.

Individuals can book online.

Suitable for ages fourteen and above.



what's on at the circle



Full details of all public events and booking rates can be found at www.themagiccircle.co.uk

Close-Up Magic at The Magic Circle

20 April

This event showcases some of the best close-up magicians available and audiences get to meet the performers and experience the magic in the intimate setting of the headquarters of the world-famous The Magic Circle in

trick

Diary Prediction 1001



Effect

A pocket diary is on the table with a deck of cards. One spectator is asked to name any date and another to name any number from 1 to 52.

They say 23 March, for example, and the number 17. The performer, after showing the cards are all different, turns them face down and counts down to the seventeenth card. This is placed face down on the table. The diary is now flicked through to show a different card has been written in it for every week in the year. The performer finds the week which includes the 23 March. The card for that week is clearly seen to be the Nine of Hearts. The playing card is now turned over... it is also the Nine of Hearts!

Background and Working

I have given this effect a numbered title as there are so many diary tricks and variations out there that this must be at least version 1001! However, I really enjoyed reading Ian Adair's

diary trick, "A Date with a Playing Card," on page 16 in the last issue of *Secrets* and it reminded me of a variation I devised a few years ago but have never published. It is direct, simple to work and allows for a free choice of date and an (apparently) free choice of card. Like Ian's clever effect it also employs the fact that there are 52 weeks in the year and 52 cards in the deck, so each week is allocated a playing card. (With standard Diary Trick presentations, you usually write a card for every single day, so cards need to be repeated throughout the diary,

until all 365 days are covered. Although this is not a big problem, the fact that you must explain that cards are repeated throughout the diary can lead to audiences thinking somehow this is how the effect is done. This presentation avoids that suggestion.

The deck I use is a Svengali deck (where every other card is the same, for example the Nine of Hearts and trimmed shorter, so that you can riffle through the cards and show them all different, as the short cards are hidden in the riffling process). If the spectator gives you an odd number, you can count down and give them the card at that number and it will be one of your force cards. If they give you an even number then count off that number and give them the next card to get to the force. Either way, they end up with your force card! You can, of course, use any other force you like (the cross-cut force, the turn over and cut deeper force, the classic force... look them up!) but I like the fact that I ask for free choice of date and a free choice of number. It means I am treating both spectators in the same way and the Svengali principle lends itself perfectly to this presentation.

The diary is actually two diaries glued together. Buy two inexpensive ones from a discount stationery store (the type that have a PVC sleeve that the bound pages are slipped into). Take the bound pages from two diaries and glue them together, so that the last page of one diary (end of December) glues to the first page of the second one (first week of January). You will usually find blank pages, lists of Saints days, metric conversion tables and other such useful information has been used at the back of the diaries as filler, by removing

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these from
both in the gluing
process, the double diary will now fit
back into a single PVC sleeve and
look like one diary.
Using an HB pencil, which is clear to
see, but will not 'bleed' through the thin pages and be seen
as ink would, write your force card, for example the Nine of

Hearts, on every page from the start of July of the first diary
to the end of June in the second diary. Write it diagonally
across the double page for each week. Then write a mix of
random cards in the front of the first diary (Jan to June) and
in the back of the second diary (July to December). This means
that you can freely flick through the front section of the diary,
to show different cards if they pick a date in the second half
of the year and you can freely flick through the diary from the
back, showing different dates, if they pick a day in the first
half of the year. You don't need to show many pages to
convince them but being able to casually flick through several
pages is enough to show that they are different. You then turn
the diary towards yourself and find their named date in the
central section of your 'double diary' so you show them a
week which says your force card. You now show the week
with the card named, then have the chosen card turned over
and they will match exactly!

wonders from the workshops

YMC Workshop

Saturday 20 January 2018 Reported by Billy Menezes



Sam Hinch and Luke Oseland receiving award from Kevin Doig as 14's and over winner

As we all walked in to the grand Magic Circle and saw our old friends there was a definite feeling that this was going to be a great YMC Workshop, not least because this was the first one this year. We were greeted with old and new faces and as we began to get closer to the official start time the atmosphere grew for the Member of the Month competition. Not only that, but everyone was performing, demonstrating the new tricks they got for Christmas.

Photos: Kevin Doig



Jack Mawson under 14's winner

Once we made our way up to The Theatre, we saw some great acts in the competition. The winner of the over-14s, and also my favourite act, was by Luke Oseland and Sam Hinch who performed a double act, where borrowed mobile phone appeared in a sealed Pringles can. Amazing! Jack Mawson won the under-14s with a great performance where he predicted famous magicians from inside a sealed envelope.

Then we went down to lunch and showed each other some more mind-blowing tricks. Then we went to the



Wayne Fox session

YMC WORKSHOP

Saturday 10 February 2018
Reported by Bailey Barham

Here it was again, another highly-anticipated YMC Saturday, and this one was the YMC Annual Auction. As I arrived outside the big blue doors of The Magic Circle Headquarters, a queue of eager young magicians greeted my eyes.

When we were all led in everyone began playing with their cards and showing each other all of the great new magic that they had learnt over the past month. Then came the time to go up the spiral staircase into The Devant Room,

Photos: Bailey Barham

where the auction would be taking place for the whole day. The auction started off with a very special pack of playing cards, the Fontaine Sleight Edition Deck. This led to a heated start to the auction, with everyone wanting to get their hands on



the cards! The first half of the auction was worked through quite quickly, with many bargains up for grabs including Bang On 2.0 by Marc Oberon, a trick that retails at £100 selling for just £39!

When the first half of the auction drew to a close, everyone went back down to The Clubroom to enjoy their lunch and play with their brand new purchases. Then came the second half of the auction which, again, flew by faster than expected. The finale to this year's auction was a Dutch Style Book Auction, with the books being sold on behalf of former YMC Member Fletcher Ransberry. As the auction finished everyone slowly made their way home, eagerly waiting for the next Workshop to come along....



Scott Penrose My Favourite Books



Marcus Morgan storytelling workshop

lecturers in the afternoon. For this Workshop, the lecturers were Scott Penrose, who went over the top ten books in magic. It was fascinating to get such an insight into such a fantastic magician.

We also got to pay a visit to the amazing Magic Circle Library, where we got to see some amazing books from people like Paul Daniels and Uri Gellar, definitely one of my highlights from the day, as it was my first time ever being allowed into that room!

Another workshop was held by Marcus Morgan, who gave us an insight into how we can use storytelling in our magic.



Finally we saw the great Wayne Fox who fooled the socks of everyone with his amazing card under box routine, which ended with the whole deck appearing under the box!

Overall it was another amazing Workshop! See you all next month...

YMC WORKSHOP DATES 2018

- Saturday 14 April 2018
- Saturday 12 May 2018*
- Saturday 16 June 2018
- Saturday 14 July 2018*
- Saturday 15 September 2018
- J-Day auditions.*
- Sunday 21 October 2018 J-Day.
- Saturday 24 November 2018*

NB All dates with* are Ali Bongo show dates. All dates without* currently have no show.

For Members only. Workshop fee £10.00 paid on the day. Workshops will run from 11am – 4pm and will be held at The Magic Circle HQ (address on page three).

Be sure to bring packed lunch (drinks will be provided free), a deck of cards, notebook and a pen as minimum requirements for the day.

Please note: you must register in advance for each workshop when you receive the email opening registration (normally one week before the workshop). You will receive confirmation that you have successfully gained a place. Email: chairman@youngmagiciansclub.com

If you would like to report on a Young Magicians Club Workshop e-mail me at editor@youngmagiciansclub.co.uk

tricks

PAUL GORDON



Dream Away

The main sleight used in Dream Away is one of my own moves. It was first published in 1996 in *Nocturnal Creations*. It's a palm switch/load. It's not

easy, but it is utilitarian. I'll describe the move first, but do try it and the routine. It is very commercial.

Here's the basic principle: Have a card palmed in your right hand, and hold the face-down deck in dealing grip in your left hand (Fig. 1). With your left thumb, slightly push off the top

card to the right by about three millimetres (Fig. 2).

As the right hand comes over the deck in a squaring action, the top left corner of the palmed card slips under the top right corner of the side-jogged top card of the deck (Fig. 3).

Keeping both hands flat, move the right hand leftward (as in squaring the deck), and let the palmed card square up with the deck so that it ends up second from the top (Fig. 4). Note that the left fingers can help bring the palmed card leftward. The whole procedure, once mastered, is

invisible. It simply looks like a squaring action of the deck.

Here's the routine: You need two red-backed cards (faces are of no importance) and a blue-backed deck of the same physical size. On the backs of both red-backed cards, use a marker pen to write your signature so that they both look identical. Place one card (back outward) in your inner left jacket pocket and one in your right trouser pocket, with the back facing out. When you're ready to perform this routine, palm the "trousered" card in your right hand, and casually (using "the move") load it to second from top of the deck. The beauty of the move is that the back of the card isn't seen. There aren't many, if any, moves in magic that accomplish this.

Say, "Last night I had a dream. In that dream, a card kept

coming into my mind. It was so vivid this morning that I took that card from a red deck and signed it!" Remove the "jacketed" card and show its back only. Point out your signature and return it to the pocket.

"Can you help? As I flick through the cards, say 'stop' at any time." Here, you cut the deck and catch a left pinky break between the two halves. (The red-backed card is the second one below your left pinky.) Riffle Force to the break, and cut double lift to show the face of the red-backed card. Let's assume it is the Four of Clubs. (They think it's blue-backed.) Ask the spectator to sign the face of the card. As you turn the double-face down, re-grip it in right-hand Biddle Grip so that the card(s) is face down. The deck is in left-hand dealing grip. Revolve the right hand palm up to once more show the signature. (This handling also convinces that the card is blue-backed.) As you turn your right hand palm down to return the card(s) to the top of the deck, the left fingers push the signed card (at the face) into full right-hand palm. The blue-backed card is dropped onto the deck (assumed to be selection), and the left thumb openly peels it into the centre of the deck as you cut the deck. The right hand casually drops to your side (card palmed) as you hand the deck to someone to shuffle.

Say, "You recall my 'dream card,' don't you? If it was the same value..." reach into the jacket pocket with the right hand "...as your card..." remove palmed card, back outward "... would you be shocked and stunned? But, if my dream card was your actual signed card..." Flip the card around to show the signatures back and front, and let your patter tail away as they applaud loudly. Hand over the card as a souvenir. End. The jacketed card can remain for repeat performances. If you have it, you can watch me perform this on my 1989 video, *Deck in Hand*.

On the backs of both red-backed cards, use a marker pen to write your signature so that they both look identical.

Fig. 1



Fig. 3





Photo: Will Houstoun

Cover Conjurers

This month's Cover Conjurers takes a slightly different format to normal, because the January cover has so much to offer! Rather than featuring a single performer the story looked at no less than nine different people and their roles in the show, and instead of short changing you with just a short piece about one person, I have chosen a highlight of my conversation with each. The following month's feature was also unconventional, with expert historian Brian Lead telling something of the story of Chung Ling Soo, a Circle Member who died one hundred years ago in March this year. Soo became famous performing as 'The Original Chinese Conjurer' before dying mid-performance, attempting to catch a bullet fired from a gun on a china plate. His death shocked the country, not least when it was discovered that he was actually an American magician and not Chinese at all!



Mini Interviews from The Magic Circle Christmas Show 2017

by Will Houstoun

Scott Penrose: Director of Public Events

Will: The first time I went to the show you were in it and this year you helped organise it. What do you learn from the different roles you have taken in the show?

Scott: I remember you as a young boy coming to the show; our mutual friend Claude Perry told me to look out for you and say hello. I thought of Claude, in fact, when our compère Quentin Reynolds did his Troublewit routine. Claude was brilliant at it too and it's a hard routine to pull off these days without it looking ridiculous.

Fortunately Kate, Darren and I already knew a lot about the dos and don'ts of the Christmas Show as we have been involved in it for some time in differing roles. But, during the run, I was reminded that for the audience the show starts at the front door. The Christmas show is not all about the stage acts, it begins as the public enter the building and they enjoy what our Headquarters has to offer with its magical decor, friendly staff, close-up magicians and museum team.

Will: What is your favourite aspect of working on our Christmas Show?

Scott: Like with any job, if the people are really nice then work will seem less like work. There was a great spirit of camaraderie with everyone involved in the show. Everyone was so wonderful that it did not seem like work at all.

Quentin Reynolds: Compere

Will: What do you think is different about being Compere as opposed to an act?

Quentin: It is much more difficult! You have to know the show, its flow and rhythm. I make fairly detailed notes beforehand with each of the acts about their needs, setting and striking time, from which side they enter and exit so we aren't bumping into each other, and how they want to be introduced. The compere is there to make the acts and the show look good. While the acts are on, I'm monitoring them from offstage, or out in the corridor, lest there be a hiccup that needs dealing with. Really, I'm 'on' for the whole two hours, even though my onstage time is a fraction of that.

Will: What was your favourite aspect of being in the Christmas Show?

Quentin: Basically I'm a solo performer. This was the first time I had the opportunity to work on a show with other acts that was longer than a one-nighter. And, watching manipulator Anson Lee from the wings, I realised that we have much to learn from studying how manip acts get gimmicks in and out of play.



AJ Green: Sound Engineer

Will: What does a typical show involve for you?

AJ: For each and every show, I have to ensure, first and foremost, that if the acts are speaking, they can be heard by everyone in the audience. This involves constantly checking battery levels for the various wireless transmitters being used, monitoring the audio levels of each device as it's being used and making adjustments where necessary. Also, any music that the acts require to be played, at the requested volume levels, at the requested times.

Will: What was your favourite moment or story from the run?

AJ: It's difficult to pull any one thing from the show and label it as my favourite part, there is so much to enjoy and so much happening that I am too busy to notice going on! Some of my friends on the show enjoy getting into the mix, tweaking scripts as it goes on, and I've very much enjoyed getting involved with this as well, writing jokes and helping guide routines and discovering opportunities to extract more humour from certain moments. But at the end of the day I'm not really here to enjoy myself, my time has to be dedicated to ensuring that the performers have everything that they need to entertain our audiences.

Mat Ricardo: Not a Magician

Will: Can you describe your act?

Mat: You'd think, after thirty years of doing this rubbish I'd be able to... I'm a variety artist and comedian. I specialise in what, a hundred years ago, was called 'gentleman juggling'; that is, the dexterous manipulation, juggling and balancing of the kinds of objects that might be found in restaurants, bars and homes. I guess I'm best-known for my twist on a famous example of the genre, the tablecloth pull. I'm the first person in the world to learn to put the tablecloth back on the table underneath all the items, which is either a stunning achievement, or a massive waste of my life. Possibly both.

Will: You describe our Headquarters as a 'Cathedral of lies...' What does being the



only non-magic act on the bill do in terms of how your show plays?

Mat: It's really fun. I always try to find a way to be the odd-thing out in a line-up. It's always enjoyable, comedically, to find a reason to be angry at the world; the clown shaking his fist at God for putting him in whatever situation he finds himself in. And it lets me tell the audience about how magicians are all basically venal liars and should never be trusted. Whereas jugglers are honourable, honest and dashing. It's a public service. It's doubly entertaining bearing in mind the amount of times I have been mistaken for a magician: Which. I. Am. Not.

Andy Reay: Showcase Demonstrator

Will: Can you describe your role in the show?

Andy: I meet and greet the audience as they arrive; I have a laugh and a joke to make them feel welcome and at ease. I do a few miracles to get them warmed up and then I offer them a few trinkets from the magical cabinet of curiosities.

Will: How do you measure success in your work? People leaving entertained, people having bought a product, or something else?

Andy: All of the above. When you walk through the doors of The Magic Circle the

first thing you need to feel is welcome. There is usually someone in every group that has an interest in magic. It's my job to nurture that interest and to give a few clues as to where and how they can begin their magical journey. Everyone that I meet at the sales stand should leave feeling welcome and entertained, and if I can convert that audience into paying customers then I've done my job. It's a bit like being a magician, a mentalist and a hypnotist all at the same time. I've got to work out who is the future magician, who has the kitty and



Photos: Darren Martin

how much money is in it, and then use my skills to recommend which items I think would suit them best.

Darren Martin: Centre Director

Will: How are you involved with The Christmas Show?

Darren: As Director of The Centre for the Magic Arts I'm overseeing the operational side, which includes everything from staffing, promotion, marketing, ticket sales, building maintenance and, this year, I helped produce elements of the event too. We start planning the show over a year in advance; before the current production ends, you're already putting together next year's run. In the run-up to the show, we go through the entire Headquarters to ensure everything is ready to sustain all the wear and tear it is going to endure; the lift is serviced, the ►

fire systems double checked and the Museum Team update and repair the exhibits. One minute I'm sorting out a social media campaign, the next minute my hands are down the back of a maintenance hatch fixing the plumbing, then before you know it I'm proofreading new leaflets and ordering teddy bears. This year I did the production photographs too.

Will: What is different to other shows?

Darren: The sheer number of people coming through. I start work very early at the beginning of the run, to get as much of the daily grind and admin out of the way as possible. As soon as the volunteers and the acts arrive, you're running around with an array of different duties and, before you know it, doors are open and 162 people are coming in. Three hours later, Kaz and his team, along with the front of house staff, turn the building around. The cleaner has 60 minutes to get the place spick and span then another 162 people are in! The Christmas show is different to everything else we do. The sheer volume of volunteers, acts, theatre crew and all the pre-planning make it the highlight of the year, despite the 16-hour days at the start of the run.

Marc Oberon: Different Kinds of Magic

Will: You perform two very different spots in the show...

Marc: Yes! It's rare that I perform the Black Art act and my conventional act together on the same bill, so I relished the opportunity to show two very different aspects to my magic. Several logistical problems needed to be overcome in order to allow the equipment to be quickly set and struck without impinging on the other performer's space. There were also several new effects in the UV show that I devised in the past but which hadn't made it into the act. Working with Chris Wilder and Lauren Chappell helped make these challenging ideas a reality which was exciting. We also had choreographic help from Berni Meehan and Kat and Matt McGurk, which we are most grateful for.



Will: What was your favourite moment from the run?

Marc: There was an equipment failure early in the run and I was desperately trying to fix it between shows, freaking out actually! Then Scott Penrose came to help and brilliantly solved the problem on the spot with elastic, glue and zip ties. This temporary solution works so perfectly that it is now the permanent one!

Katherine Rhodes: A Smooth Running Show

Will: What is your role in the show?

Kate: Once the shows are organised I concentrate on making sure they run smoothly and on time, that everything and everyone is where they need to be, and deal with any issues that arise.

Will: What is your favourite aspect of working on the Christmas Show?

Kate: The fantastic reactions from the public. Not just to the show itself but to our amazing Headquarters and displays. Also that they go a long way to ensuring we can run our Headquarters for the following year.

Neil Henry: The One with the Crunchie

Will: Your material was wonderfully accessible without being stock or hack,

and also felt like it was written for the show in places. How tailored to the show was it?

Neil: I'm glad you enjoyed it! Yeah I kinda tailored a few of my routines for the show. I mean it's billed as the 'Christmas show' which is such a magical time of year anyway, so I had a lot of fun giving the routines a Christmas theme. Every year Max Somerset and I do a one-off magic show called 'Max and Neil's Magic Christmas' and every year we write a completely new show together. Our aim is not to make money from it, but to make everyone feel really excited about Christmas. This year we did it the day before the first Magic Circle show so it seemed like a no brainer to take a couple of my favourite routines to The Magic Circle.

Will: Favourite moment or story from the run?

Neil: There was a great moment in one of the shows when I came on stage and the first thing I said was: "You're probably wondering what kind of magic I'm gonna do for you." In one of the shows a young kid stuck his hand up in the air and said "Spaghetti!!!" I had a little proud glow inside, thinking, "I'm getting quite well known for this spaghetti trick," so I thought I'd push it a little further. "Wow," I said, "and how do you know that?" Quick as a flash he shouted back... "Well, there's a can of spaghetti on your table."



The Fate of Chung Ling Soo

by Brian Lead

The tale of Chung Ling Soo is not a whodunnit.

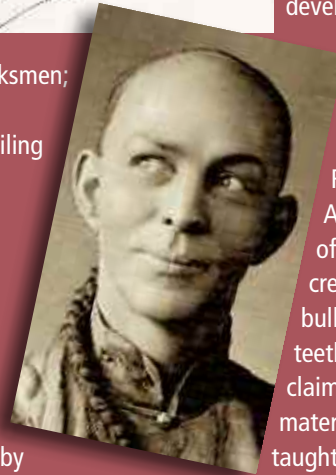
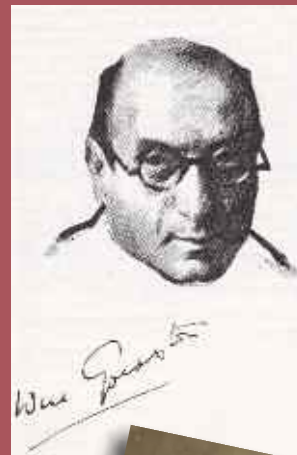
William Ellsworth Robinson was accidentally shot on the stage of the Wood Green Empire on the evening of Saturday, March 23, 1918, while attempting to catch two bullets on a willow-pattern plate. He died in Wood Green Cottage Hospital at five o'clock the following morning. The verdict of the coroner was death from misadventure.

At the ensuing inquest, gun expert Robert Churchill explained that each of the two firearms used in the 'Defying the Bullets' routine (never referred to as the 'Bullet Catch') had a tube beneath the barrel, ostensibly to hold a ramrod. In fact, this tube was also prepared

as a second barrel, containing a charge of gunpowder. The breech block of the actual barrel had a steel plug inserted to render it safe. The detonating fire was diverted into the lower barrel to cause an explosion there, but the bullet placed in the upper barrel was never discharged, as shown in the accompanying illustration from World Illustrated magazine no. 515, "The Story of Magic." Churchill's examination had revealed worn screw-heads in the safety plug of one of the guns, so that when the lower barrel's blank charge had been fired the detonation connected with the powder behind the bullet in the upper barrel, causing it to be discharged. On the night of the accident, both the blank and live charges had been fired from one of the guns. The corrosion which was evident in the faulty weapon was so bad that a screw-hammer had to be used to extract the plug for examination, and this

would also have prevented any tampering with the weapon. Upon testing the fatal gun, Churchill was able to reproduce the same effect, while the other remained intact.

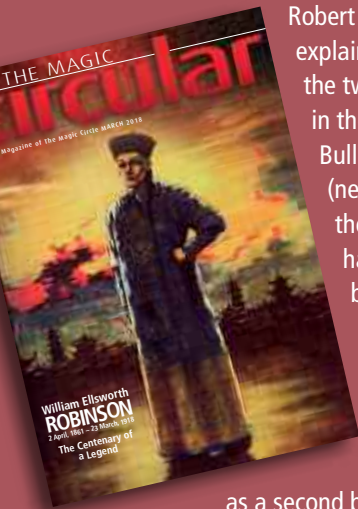
Despite the fact that five shooters are depicted in the publicity posters (influenced, perhaps, by the number shown previously on both the Alexander and Adelaide Herrmann bills), the Soo version employed only two marksmen; a pair of teenagers called Dan Crowley and Jack Grossman, hailing from Salford and Bradford respectively. Performers such as DeLinsky and Professor Taylor appear to have employed full firing squads. The premise for this scenario was that Soo had disagreed with the Boxer rebellion against the British in 1900 and, regarded as a traitor by his fellow Chinese, had been condemned to execution, similar to the way in which



deserters were currently being 'shot at dawn' in the course of the Great War. With right on his side, Soo claimed to be able to catch the bullets fired at him and thus render them harmless.

There was never any question at this point of a bullet being caught in the mouth, largely a development which

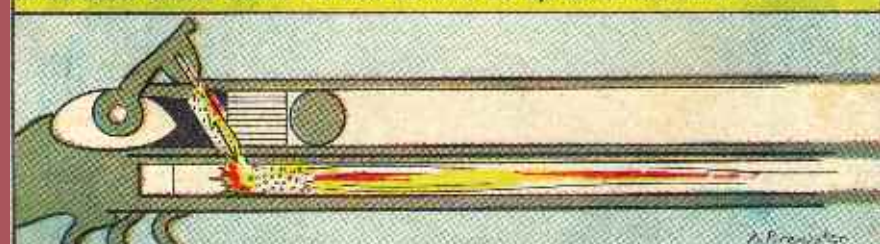
came later with Annemann, Fogel and their like, although both Robert-Houdin and Anderson, the Wizard of the North, are credited with catching bullets between the teeth. Indeed, Anderson claimed in his publicity material that he had taught Queen Victoria how to catch a cannon ball in her teeth!



Chung Ling Soo, who was really an American disguised as an Oriental, used a specially made musket for his bullet-catching trick.



The gun had a tube beneath the barrel which was supposed to house the ramrod. The tube was really a second barrel. The breech lock in the first barrel was plugged. A hole drilled through to the ramrod holder sent the detonating fire to a blank charge in the secret second barrel. The real bullet in the top barrel was never fired.



trick

A Hole in Two

IAN ADAIR



Effect

Three playing cards are displayed: one is regular whilst the other two have a hole punched towards one end. The regular card is sandwiched between the other two cards. Two elastic bands, one at each side of the cards,

are applied, securing them in position. The performer then pushes an artist's paint brush through the holes in both cards, as well as through the solid one between them, a really magical penetration. The paint brush is removed and the set of cards are seen to be secured together. When the elastic bands are removed, the regular card is seen to be undamaged. The cards and bands can be examined.

Requirements

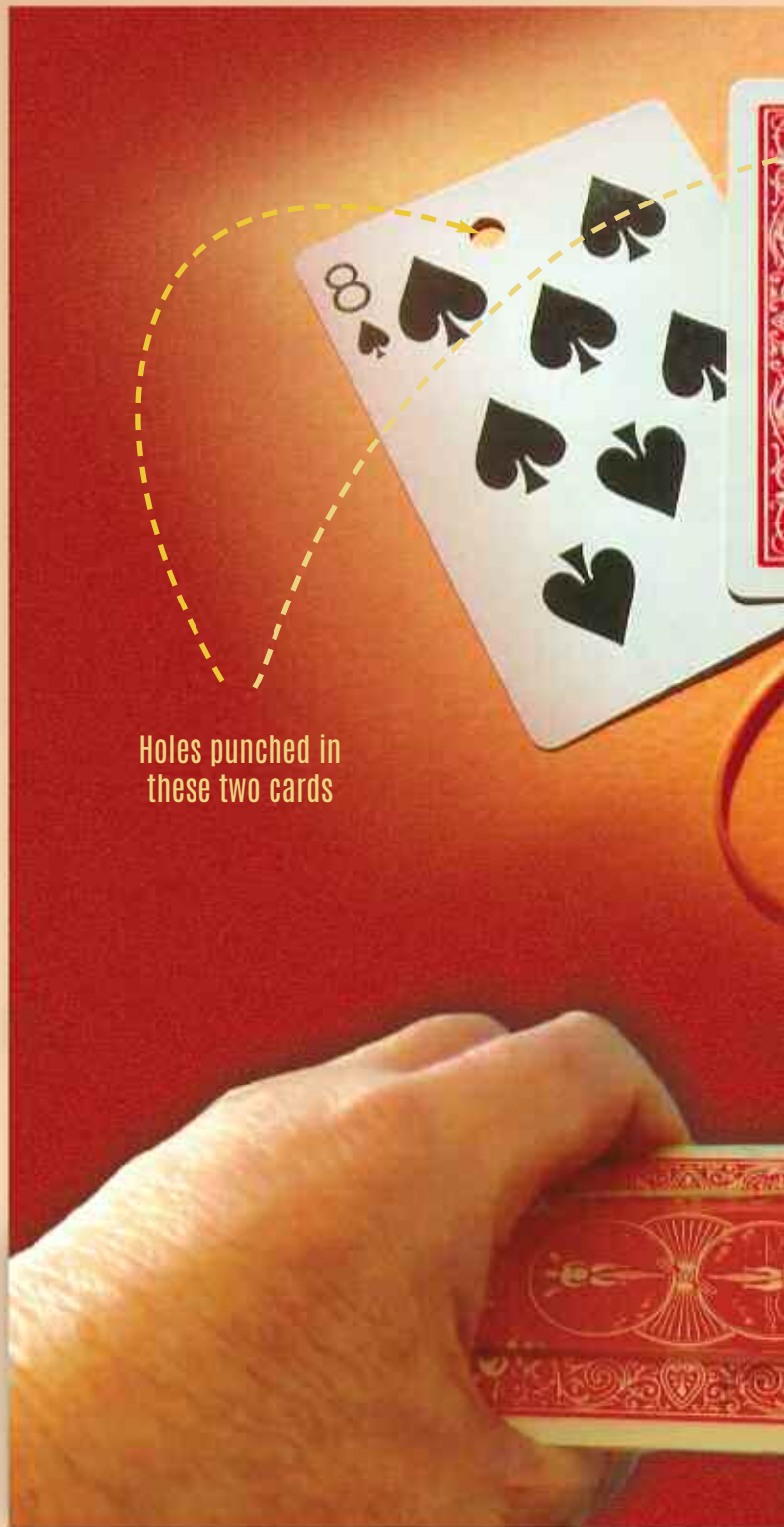
Three regular playing cards, one of which is left untouched and will be known from here as the regular card. The other two are faked. Not only are they tapered on the edges towards one end, but they also have holes punched towards one end of the card. To taper the

cards, use a ruler and a craft knife (with parental supervision if you need it!) and carefully trim, at an angle, a very slight strip off on one side of both cards. When they are squared up and placed on top of each other, the tapered sides should line up. Use a hole punch machine to punch a hole through both of the cards at one end

Two elastic bands. It is important that the bands you use are not tight when wrapped around the set of cards. I have made a point of using very thin bands which are weaker than the more normal thick ones.

An artist's paint brush which has the usual tapered handle. Alternatively, a chop stick or a piece of thin dowel rod will do nicely, as long as it can pass through the

It is important that the bands you use are not tight when wrapped around the set of cards. I have made a point of using very thin bands which are weaker than the more normal thick ones.





holes. Using a tapered rod means that it can be pushed down through the holes and it will stop and jam at central position.

Set-up

The two punched cards should be face to face, with the holes towards the top ends of the cards. Slip the regular card between them and attach both rubber bands, one at each side as illustrated. Have the paint brush nearby.

Working and Presentation

Remove the bands and display the three cards separately. Emphasise the fact that only two of the cards have holes punched in them. Hand out the regular card for examination, explaining it is solid and void of any holes.

Sandwich the regular card between the other two and attach the rubber bands at each end. Now grip the set of cards at one end, as photographed, so the base of the set is clenched within your closed fist.

Because the two outer cards are tapered, the central regular card can be easily felt along the edge of the others. The right-hand index finger and thumb should hold the top corners of the punched cards whilst the thumb of the left hand applies pressure on the protruding regular card. As the set of cards are drawn forward slightly from the hand, the regular card will automatically slide downwards, so it is pulled away from both holes and is no longer blocking them.

At this point, the paint brush is pushed through the holes in both cards. From the audience's point of view, it appears that the paint brush has magically penetrated through the solid regular card. See-saw the brush back and forth for effect.

Remove the brush. Release the pressure with which you are gripping the cards and, thanks to the elastic bands, the regular card will automatically spring back and line up with the others. The set of cards can now be shown at all angles and finally shown as three separate cards, two with punched holes and one that is normal.

If you like, the cards and bands can be left on the table for any spectators who may wish to handle them.

The right-hand index finger and thumb should hold the top corners of the punched cards whilst the thumb of the left hand applies pressure on the protruding regular card.

reviews

Invisible Triumph

by Jim Krenz

Props plus online instruction, 16mins. \$30 (£21) From your favourite dealer. Dealers contact Murphy's Magic supplies, www.MurphysMagic.com

Reviewed by Bob Gill

You may well be sceptical about yet another take on Triumph, especially when it uses a faked deck to eliminate the sleights usually necessitated by Vernon's modern classic. I can't blame you, but I'd still urge you to give this some consideration; it's quite brilliant.

You emulate the original effect without having to make allowances to its straightforward cleanliness. The spectator selects a card from the shuffled deck you have been using throughout your entire set. The spectator is handed approximately a quarter of the deck and shuffles their card into the packet. The remainder of the deck is split between three more spectators, who each shuffle their packets, whereupon the four packets are returned to the table, two face up and two face down.

Now the first two packets are openly, genuinely mixed one card at a time, alternating face up and face down. (During this process, the spectator sees his card, further proving it is really being mixed into the packet.) Then the third and fourth packets in turn are mixed into the group. In between each shuffle, the cards are spread, showing a true mix of face-up and face-down cards. Finally the deck is squared and left on the table. You ribbon spread the cards, showing that they are all face up, with the exception of one face-down card; guess what? It is shown to be the selection.

In the no-nonsense instructional film you get two versions, one with a physically selected card and one with a thought-of card.

A couple of factors to be aware of. As already highlighted,

a gimmicked deck is in play. But it is such that you can use it, with a degree of care over your chosen repertoire, throughout your set without any deck switches. It can be handled by a spectator, even examined (but why would you?). But, as is the case with so many gimmicked approaches to the classics, you end the routine dirty. This in turn affects the reset; it's the work of a minute or three, in private, which won't suit everyone: this is not a serious contender for your walk-around set.

It also needs a working surface; it's not an in-the-hands routine, which will further disenchant some close-uppers. And while it is an easy solution, the routine needs a degree of practice just to commit to memory the sequence of handling.

Cheekily Krenz has taken a true standard of gimmicked decks that you'd never associate with Triumph, and used it in a completely different way to bring about a near self-working version that looks, and works, a treat. If the limitations described above do not put you off, you just might grow to love this one.

Move Zero Volume 4

by John Bannon

Instructional DVD, 142mins. \$30 (£21) From your favourite dealer. Dealers contact Murphy's Magic supplies, www.MurphysMagic.com

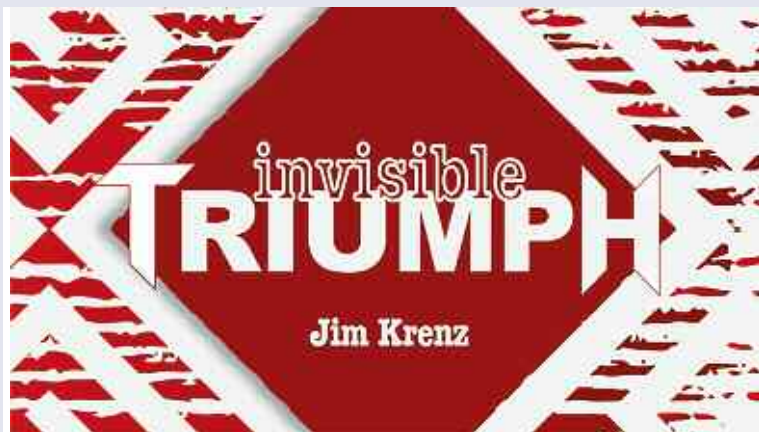
Reviewed by Bob Gill

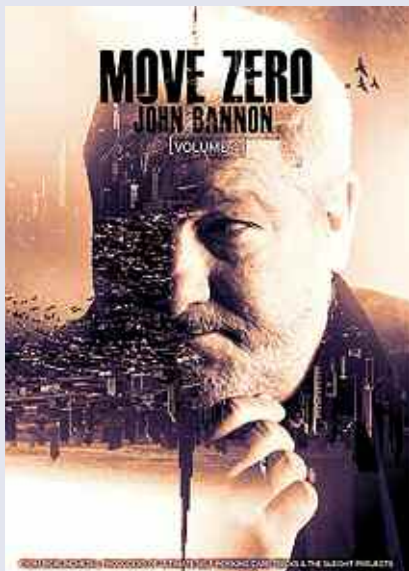
The formula for this series is by now well established: good plots, reliant upon subtle processes that disguise the mechanism behind each effect. Bannon is a thinker, and there is a lot going on within or behind these effects.

In the opener, *Proximity*, the spectator shuffles the deck and then simply thinks of any card. The magician removes two cards, neither of which is the thought-of card. When the deck is spread, the card on either side of the selection is removed and seen to match the two cards chosen by the magician. It's... okay, but I found it rather underwhelming as an effect; one feature that dogs self-working card magic is its tendency to the tortuous: often the method is more impressive and captivating than the effect, and this is one such. However, you discover there's something of an easter egg within: several times out of 52 you get a different but possibly even stronger outcome; you are armed with a multitude of outs.

There's an interview in which he justifies self-working tricks and outlines some fundamental elements of effect construction. He favours tricks that "...challenge people's complacency, surprises them on a number of levels, tightly layered in method, and practical." Who doesn't? He likes adding kickers or garden paths to amplify his plots.

Second Reckoning is an item from *Move Zero Vol 1*, and *Dear Mr Fantasy* and *Destination Zero*, but this time with a different method. A packet of cards is shuffled and the





spectator hands about half of them to the magician. A few more cards are removed and a card is chosen. The name of the card is spelled to and the card is found at that position. An ingenious method that allows the spectator to do all of the handling and shuffling. This certainly improves on the original: the selection is a mental one, and there's no reset because there's no set up. The 'Trickbag' examines

Marlo's Automatic Placement, which despite its title is less a sleight and more a process.

Power Of Poker is a complete overhaul of Alex Elmsley's original Power Poker, which required successive bottom deals. Bannon's handling of the 10 card poker deal requires neither equivoque nor Jonah card. All moves (including equivoques) have been sacrificed for cleanliness. He performs the effect just once, unlike most 10 Card Deal effects that rely on a build of successive tries. It incorporates Bill Simon's 4 Queens principle, another restricted choice. There's a nice little kicker at end that adds to the routine's effectiveness; a clever patter get-in; the spectator can do all the dealing. I really liked the use of jumbo cards in this version, since in the eyes of spectators jumbo cards = no moves.

Depth Charge is a sort-of ACAAN effect, but I got bored just typing the description. There are several layers to the handling that obscure the method, and it looks fair. It uses a multiple slip shuffle force which sounds like something out of *Expert At The Card Table* but is scarcely a 'sleight,' hence qualifying for this set.

Lost in Translation is a whimsical effect that is okay: a little contrived and cutesy for my taste. I can see many magicians liking it.

View to a Skill could be the star of this DVD, being based on Stewart James's Miraskill. Borrowed deck, no setup, volunteer does all the work, nothing added or removed, with a great subtlety that improves on the James original. Worth the price, etc. Go-Figuration is a showcase for Bannon's thinking process; multi-layered methods, subtle manoeuvres, a lot of effect for minimal effort. It is a nice application of Allan Ackerman's Probability Cull.

Triplicity rounds the show off with a demonstration of ESP. A packet of cards is cut off the deck, counted and the number remembered. A packet of cards is removed from the balance of the deck and shown one by one. The card at that number is remembered. The cards are added back to the deck... it's cleverly thought through, yada yada. These

effects just blur into one another.

The whole *Move Zero* series includes some strong material you will be tempted to use. The quality throughout the four volumes remains pretty consistent, and if I sound less than impressed at times it's just that the effects are so typical of what you find on so-called self-working magic films. It's the process-heavy elements that are intrinsic to the genre that take away from the power of the effect, but maybe I just have self-working indigestion.

Scripting Magic Volume 1

by Pete McCabe & 26 Other Guys

Hardback, 6.25" by 9.25", 462 pp., line illustrations, downloadable worksheets. \$50 (£35) From your favourite dealer. Dealers contact Murphy's Magic supplies, www.MurphysMagic.com

Scripting Magic Volume 2: Script Harder

by Pete McCabe & 25 Other Guys

Hardback, 6.25" by 9.25", 445 pp., line illustrations, downloadable worksheets. \$50 (£35) From your favourite dealer. Dealers contact Murphy's Magic supplies, www.MurphysMagic.com
Reviewed by Bob Gill

The author is a professional TV scriptwriter, active amateur magician and habitué of the Magic Castle who has gathered around him some pretty heavy friends. It was a decade ago that he published the first volume of his seminal work, which remains perhaps unique amongst magic theory books in its practicality and the depth in which it focuses on the scripting of magic routines, largely for close-up presentation. And it had some stonking tricks into the bargain.

For some time the author had been threatening a follow-up volume, promising more of the same plus an examination of the actual processes of scripting, and now it has finally come to pass, to the ebullient joy of those of us who care about such things.

If you have the first volume (long out of print) you will want Volume 2; it acts as a natural extension of the first, improving on it in aspects of physicality, design and explanations. But where Volume 2 is a real development is in its teaching style. Volume 1 tells you, while Volume 2 gets you to explore and workshop various techniques, thereby cementing the learning; Volume 1 explores the Why and the What, Volume 2 adds the How.

Pete McCabe's purpose is singular throughout: he works hard to persuade the reader that scripting your magic can only help enhance it. That said he lives in the real world and is alive to the many reasons readers will put forward for avoiding this discipline. So while some might well feel 'scripting' signifies cutesy story telling, in fact there is no fanciful 'once upon a time' approach here. Indeed, his thesis is that 'Scripting' is simply, "... deciding how you're going to present a trick before you perform it." So no purist he; his overwhelming cause lies in ►

examining the relationship between what you're doing and what you're saying.

Some will baulk at the unfamiliar and even daunting practice of physically writing a script; in recognition of this, whilst he gives some guidance on the physical process (such as layout conventions) this isn't about the nuts and bolts of creating and/or writing down words. It is a book about *thinking* about you and your magic, finding interesting things to say in performance, building and maintaining interest in what you're doing and saying, and more effectively framing the presentation of your magic: all to make it more delightful for the spectator (and, perhaps, you).

Mr McCabe addresses head-on the main weakness in so much contemporary magical presentation: the reliance upon ongoing descriptive narrative. What Rafael Benatar calls "magic for the blind," telling spectators what they can easily see for themselves.

Throughout these many routines and interviews you gain insights into how magic can be stronger and more memorable if it is about something larger than *what happens*. But where you do have to explain process, in order to help the spectators' comprehension and memory of what just happened, he provides you with guidance on doing that effectively too.

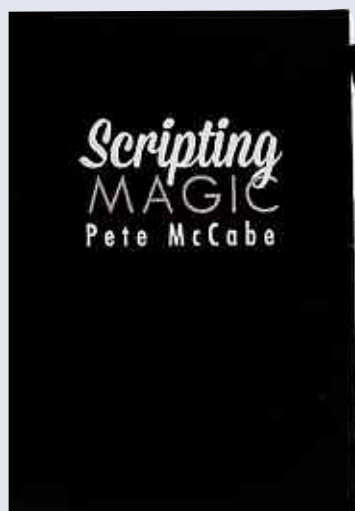
Each of the wide-ranging (and primarily close-up) effects is explained after the script for them, making this a book bursting with strong magic tricks and methodologies. The revised layout and design has greatly benefited Volume 1, along with the addition of illustrations and a little more explanation to

facilitate the learning and execution of moves, with very full crediting and references for further reading.

Nevertheless the script is always the star of the show, as you'd expect: indeed in some cases the script is also the method. And because so many different originators are featured, you are not limited to one man's presentational style and preferences. There are serious themes, gambling and pseudo-scientific demonstrations, light humour and spooky presentations. In some cases he provides alternative presentations to the same effect, to illustrate what a difference the script makes, and why.

The shortcoming most often levelled at Volume 1 was its sparse insight into How To Script; Volume 2 addresses this in spades, containing a great deal of helpful theory and practical advice. The author has borrowed heavily from his experience in improvisation, acting and theatrical structure as well as his track record as a writer and creator. So you get to explore a variety of authoritative models to help you with essentials such as plot, character development, misdirection, motivation, making your props interesting, through nine different exercises. He supplies online links to his worksheets that take these various tools and offer you a structure within which to work; completing any of them will make you think (hard) about your rationale, your performing persona and your presentation. I did not agree with all of his opinions and approaches, and neither will you if you have any experience in presenting magic, and that's as it should be; but I enjoyed being encouraged to consider them, and so will you.

Unlike most theory texts, these are inherently practical, readable books that you will revisit many times if you are at all serious about your magic. Regard them as an essential investment in your magical and artistic development.



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member profile

Jack Mawson Age: 11

How long have you been a Member of The Young Magicians Club?

One year, I am just entering my second.

Who are your favourite magicians?

My favourite magicians to date are Dynamo and Jamie Raven as they both have unique styles of magic.

What kind of magic do you enjoy the most?

The magic I enjoy the most is cards and close-up as they are both very visual and get great responses.

What do you think makes the perfect trick?

The perfect trick to me is something that is visual but that has character to it.

What do you think makes the perfect magician?

To me someone who is being themselves and letting their personality and love of magic shine through makes the perfect magician.

What is your favourite magic book?

The Book of Magic by Bruce Smith as it teaches everything from cards to silks.

What is your favourite magic DVD?

Counts, Cuts and Moves by David Jones because as well as teaching card moves it teaches effects to go along with them.

What is your favourite non-magic book?

The 'Bodyguard' series. It is about teenagers who get recruited to be the bodyguards of famous people.

What is your favourite film?

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Parts 1 and 2 because of the special effects and the storyline.

If you could interview any three people – real or fictitious, dead or alive – who would they be and what question would you ask each of them?

David Berglas: Could you teach me the 'Berglas effect?'
Roger Moore: What was it like playing James Bond?
Chris Bradford (author of the 'Bodyguard' series): Where do you get your inspiration from to write these books?

What is your strongest non-magical performing influence?

My Mum and Dad for their constant support and of course for driving me up to London and back for the YMC Workshops and having to watch me practice many, many magic tricks!

Who is your strongest magical influence?

Jamie Raven as he set a goal in life and achieved it.

Top tip for improving your magic?

Practice makes perfect, always believe in yourself and, the thing that magicians hate the most... Accept constructive criticism.

What do you like best about the YMC?

The lectures, the special guests, making friendships and being around people who share the same interest.

People you would like to thank in magic for either their help or encouragement?

Everyone at the YMC and The Magic Circle for their support and help to develop new tricks and stage presence.

Bonus question from Charlie Robinson: If you could design a deck of cards what would it look like and who would you design it with?

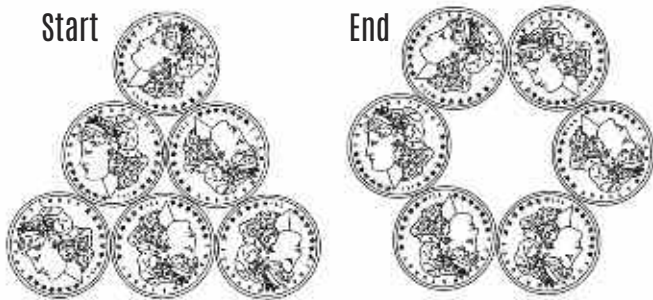
I would have a flower design as each flower is unique, no two are the same so each would be completely different. Illusionist are who I would design it with because they specialise in making their cards unique.



puzzlecorner

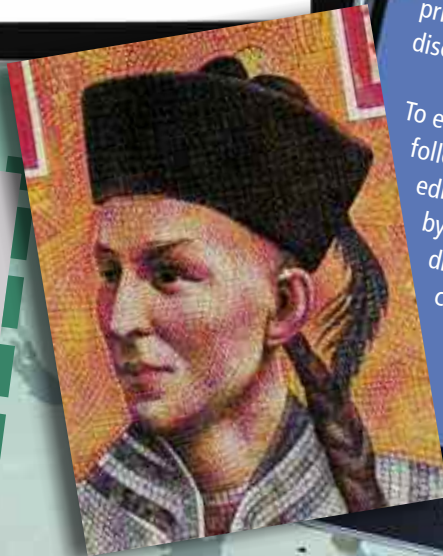
Conjuring Coins

Take six pennies and arrange them in a triangle. Your goal is to rearrange the pennies into a hexagon in four moves. Each move consists of sliding a single penny to a new location. The new location must be touching at least two other pennies at each step.



Last Issue's Answer

Last month's question was as follows: Dynamo's new book contains many secrets, not all of which are magical. One secret is Dynamo's real name, can you tell me what it is? (Clue: His initials are SF). The correct answer was Steven Frayne. Congratulations if you got it correct, and even more so if you were the randomly selected winner!



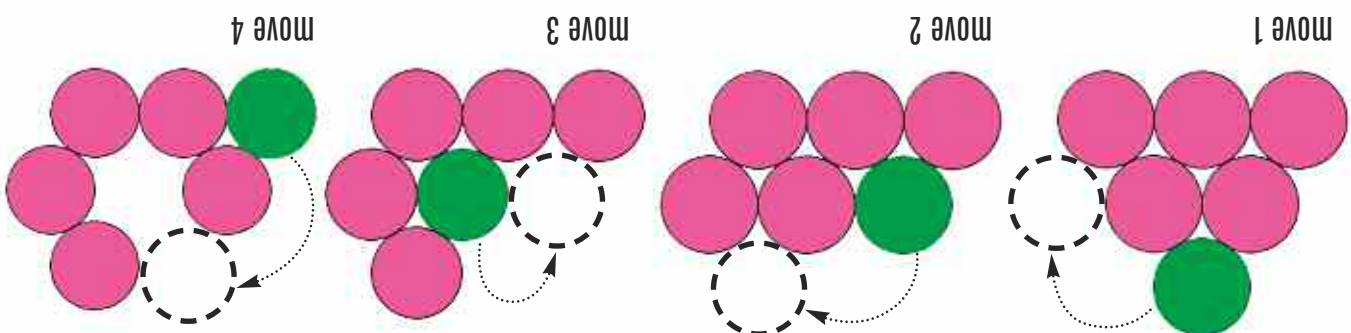
Prize Question

What did Chung Ling Soo use to magically catch a bullet fired from a gun in his famous performances of this classic trick? (Clue: The answer to this month's prize question is something you can discover in these very pages...)

To enter, send your answer to the following question to editor@youngmagiciansclub.co.uk by May 1. The winners will be drawn at random from the correct answers.

Conjuring Coins - Solution

Follow the steps in the illustrations in this box, moving the green coin in the direction indicated by the arrow at each stage.

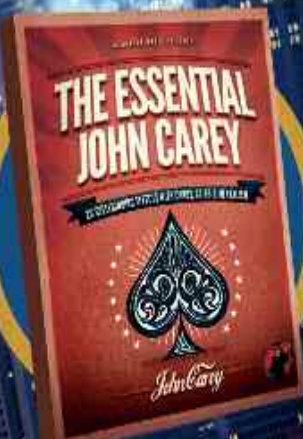




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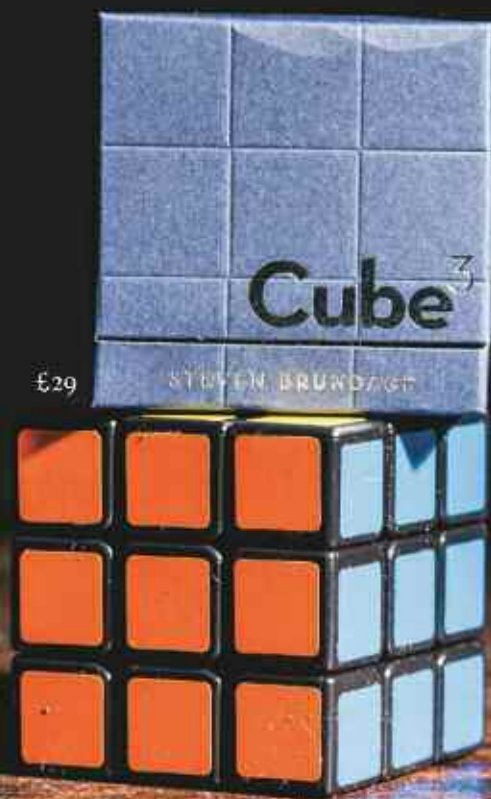
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