

Secrets

THE MAGAZINE OF THE YOUNG MAGICIANS CLUB

VOLUME 24 No 5 OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2017



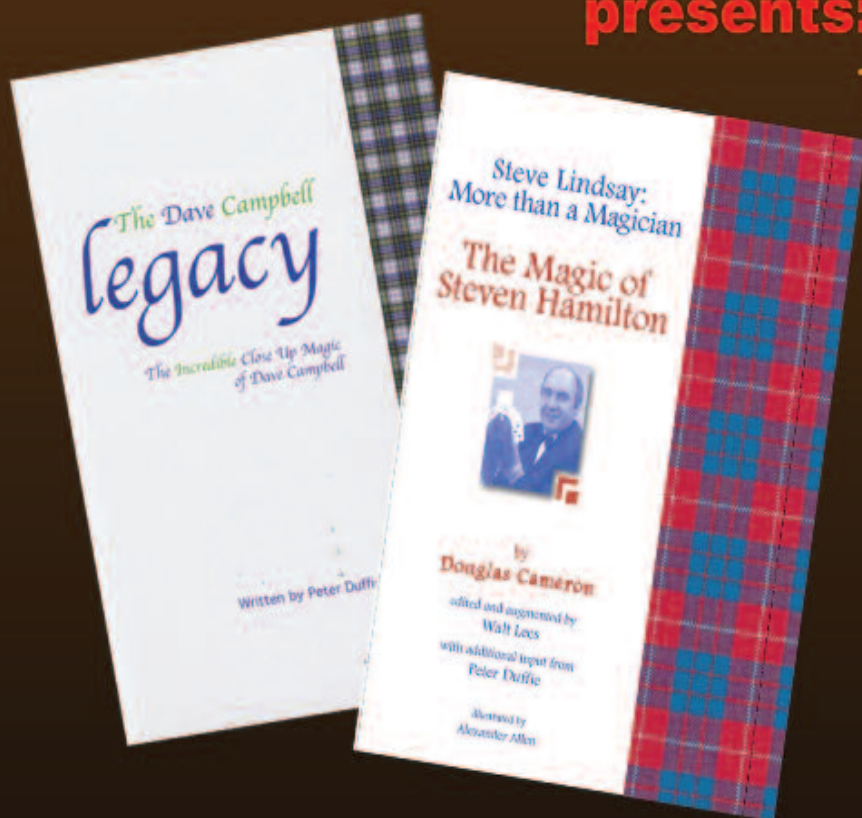
INSIDE
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WHERE THERE'S A WILL...



When I was a Member of the Young Magicians Club, October was one of my favourite months, because both J-Day and The Magic Circle Dealers' Day happen in it! For those of you who are fairly new to YMC, or who haven't been to a J-Day before, it is essentially a one-day magic convention that is put together especially for the YMC. It features shows, competitions, lectures and normally a special guest or two, and I now know, as someone who has been to

magic conventions around the world, it often features events with magicians you don't see anywhere else! If you can go then do, and hopefully I will get to say hello to you there.

The Magic Circle Dealers' Day is a little bit different. The idea is to host a whole collection of magic dealers who hire a table and show off their latest tricks, books and DVDs. It is always a great chance to see the latest magic in person (so much better than on a video trailer, that may not show you how a trick really looks) and there are always people talking magic near the venue. To make it even better Dealers' Day is on a Saturday and J-Day is on a Sunday so you could even do both, for what will probably be the most magical weekend of the year!

Last month I mentioned that I hadn't had any entries for the competition or applications to be profiled in the Member's Profile. I am glad that that has changed and a few people have been in touch for both things. If you are thinking about e-mailing me for either (or asking your parents to) then please do! The Profile is for all Members, new and old, and the worst thing that can happen if you enter the competition is that you don't win and try again next month... so give it a go!

A final word on the contents of this issue. When I heard that ex-Member Callum McClure had decided to take a show to the Edinburgh Festival I was hugely impressed. Not just because he had managed to organise the show itself but also because the festival is hugely competitive with hundreds and hundreds of shows looking for audiences every day. Callum has written a piece specially for *Secrets* that I think will give you an insight into his journey, as well as some ideas if you decide to put a show together, whether for a big festival or just for friends and family. I also know that many of you love card tricks... if you do then there is a secret one buried in the Cover Conjurers section of the magazine this month, and I will know who reads the whole magazine vs who skips to other tricks based on whether people decide to show me it or not!

Will Houstoun

Dr Will Houstoun MIMC
editor@youngmagiciansclub.co.uk



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England



Teller
Photo: Mark Hesketh-Jennings

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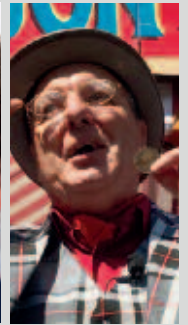
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Editor Will Houstoun
Art Director John Hawkins
Proof Reader Mike Vance
Advertisement Manager Peter Scarlett
secrets@peterscarlett.com
Printed by Perfect Imaging Ltd 020 8806 6630

The Young Magicians Club Team
President Scott Penrose
Chairman Kevin Doig
Secretary Stuart Kelly
Treasurer Dave Andrews
'Secrets' Editor Will Houstoun
Workshop Team
Rob Page
Dave Loosley

For YMC information, workshops, etc.,
contact info@youngmagiciansclub.co.uk

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I like to give you something to ponder in these columns.

Ponder: to think about, consider, muse on, chew over, turn over in one's mind. All of us should regularly reflect, mull over and contemplate about our magic.

Most magicians think they are much better than

they are! Magicians are very poor at taking direction, often believing that they know best. And I am not just referring to young magicians; this applies to all generations! Most actors, on the other hand, are far better disciplined, maybe even lacking in confidence, and happily listen to the advice of a director. There are many reasons for this but one which always grates with me is people telling magicians how good they are when they are not!

Parents are particularly guilty of this. Scott Penrose, our own President (and an extremely good magician), tells how he could never get good advice from his father (another fine magician) because he would only tell him the positives. Scott, though, wisely took advice from other magicians who were more objective.

Husbands and wives can be just as guilty. I know one magician whose wife keeps on saying how brilliant he is. If you keep on hearing that, you cannot help but get an unbalanced view of your own performance. At our local club, we have one young magician who is not great (although he is improving) but the 'kind' members keep on telling him that he is great and pretend to be fooled when they are not! Through no fault of his own, he now believes he is much better than he really is.

When people compliment you on your performance, try to look at their comments objectively, even with a hint of suspicion! What is their motivation for saying how fantastic you are? With parents, it is often that they love you and don't want to upset you. Or it might be that they are so proud of you they see your performance as 'perfect' in their eyes. (And, of course, school friends might be

news

J-Day

Don't forget that the YMC's flagship one-day convention is happening this month, on Sunday 22 October. Last year's J-Day featured lectures, shows, competitions, dealers and a few surprises along the way, so make sure you keep an eye on your e-mails and get your registration in early if you want to go! And don't forget that The Magic Circle Dealer's Day is the day before so you could make a weekend of it...



The Crypt on the Green, Clerkenwell, London

Dealers' Day

Don't forget that The Magic Circle Dealers' Day will be held this year on the 21 October in a new venue, the Crypt on the Green, Clerkenwell, London. Doors are open between 10am and 5pm and entry is free for YMC Members and £5 for non-members.



Marvin Berglas and Richard Jones at J-Day 2016



Billy Roche Menezes

the opposite and say you are rubbish out of their envy for the skills you have. Gosh, it becomes complicated, doesn't it?)

Congratulations to Billy Roche Menezes who recently won the second of our now annual Talent Quest competitions. In this

competition, I invite a panel of professional judges to give feedback after the performance (like *X-Factor*, *Britain's Got Talent* and *Strictly Come Dancing* etc.). My request to the judges is that they use the model I was taught as a school teacher. Publicly they say "What Went Well" and then in private sessions afterwards they give some "Even Better If..." advice. This approach celebrates success but positively gives constructive criticism and seems to go down well with performers and judges alike.

Be prepared to listen to advice. But sometimes two people will give you conflicting views. Listen to both, value the input, but in the end, it will be your decision whose advice you choose to follow.

Now, that's something to ponder!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Doig".

KEVIN DOIG MIMC Chairman

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 27 October and 17 November

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 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 and 24 October, 7, 14 and 21 November

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.



trick

Alphabet Prediction

CHRIS WARDLE



Effect

The performer displays a set of alphabet letter cards (the sort from a lexicon card game, or a 26-card set produced for magicians, or just the letters written onto 26

blank file cards). They are mixed by the performer and placed face down on the table.

A felt-tipped pen is taken and the performer states that he (or she) is committing himself to a prediction before the cards are even touched by a spectator. The spectators watch as the pen is used to draw a bold capital letter 'I' on the performer's palm and his hand is then closed.

A spectator is invited to cut the 26-card deck roughly in half and place the cut off portion to the left of the remaining cards. With his unmarked hand, the performer pick up the remainder of the deck and places it onto the cut cards at an angle to mark the cut.

The performer then recaps what has happened. From 26 letter cards, which were mixed at the start, one has been chosen by freely cutting the deck. Before this took place, a letter of the alphabet was drawn onto the performer's palm, committing him to one letter out of twenty-six.

The upper portion of cards is lifted away by the performer and the spectator is asked to remove the top card of the lower half, the card that they freely cut to. This card is turned over, but it is not an 'I.' it is the letter 'X.'

The effect appears to have gone wrong, as it is not the letter predicted. However, the performer takes the 'X' card and taps the back of his closed palm with it. When he opens his palm, there in the centre is an 'X' and the prediction is correct!

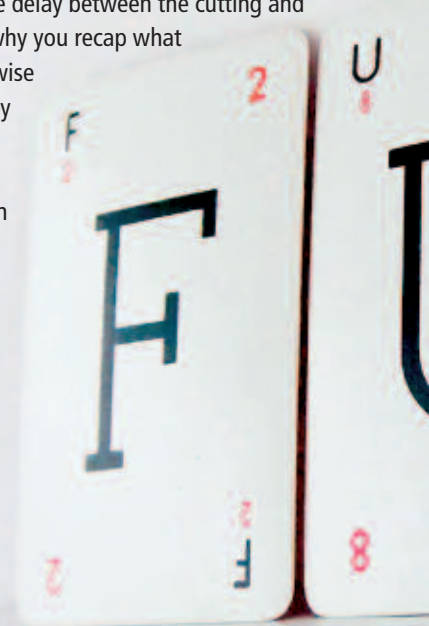
The effect appears to have gone wrong, as it is not the letter predicted. However, the performer takes the 'X' card and taps the back of his closed palm with it. When he opens his palm, there in the centre is an 'X'



Working

This is based on two very old principles which I have combined to create a new presentation. After reading the description of how the 26-card deck is cut, you may be familiar with this forcing method, usually referred to as the Cross Cut Force. All you do is place the letter 'X' card on top of the face-down deck and do not disturb its position when giving the cards a mix at the start. If you follow the description above the force will work itself as the spectator simply takes the top card. You need a time delay between the cutting and the removal of the card, which is why you recap what has happened at that point, otherwise the spectators may realise that they have actually taken the top card.

The appearing cross is based on a very old idea usually worked with ash or charcoal. A line is drawn at an angle across the crease of the palm in ash, the hand is closed and a line is drawn in ash across the back of the hand. This is rubbed in, until it disappears, so when the hand is opened there is now a cross in the palm, as if the ash penetrated through the back of the hand. Ash and charcoal



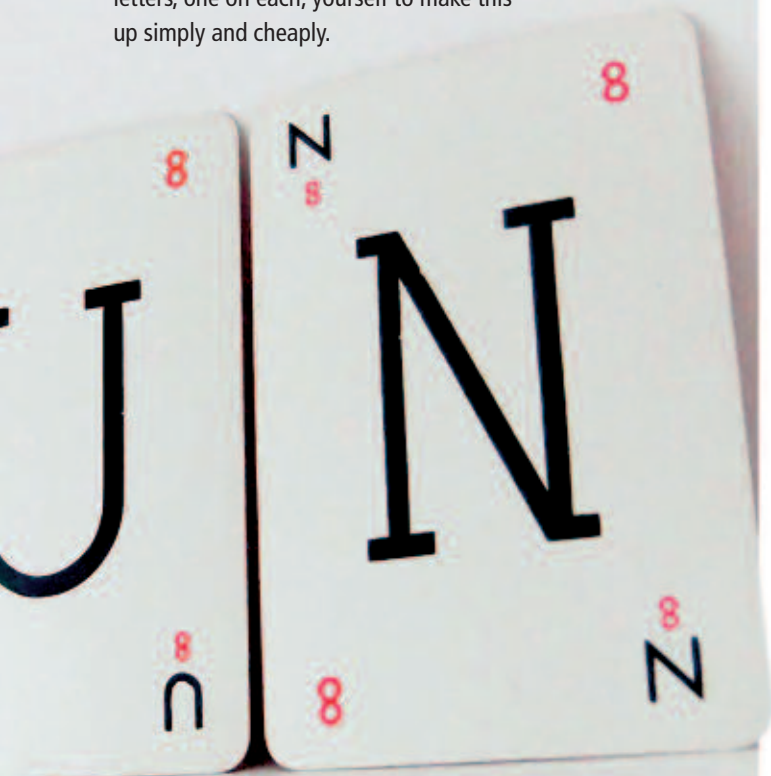
Q
W
C
B

are messy to use and carry around and I wanted to turn the trick into a prediction rather than a penetration. By using a dark-coloured felt tipped pen (do not use a Sharpie as it dries too quickly and also takes more effort to get off your skin!) draw a line across your palm at an angle where the natural lines of your hand are positioned. When you close your hand, the ink from the felt tip marks will transfer where your skin contacts and so an 'I' turns into an 'X'!

You will need to experiment with the size and position of the line you draw for the 'I' so that it looks cross-shaped when you have closed your palm, depending on the size of your hand.

This effect incorporates the 'magician in trouble' plot, in that the spectators think they should have cut to the letter 'I,' but by magic your prediction proves to be correct, so there is a neat moment of surprise built into the routine.

You can buy lettered decks of cards produced in Bicycle or Piatnik stock or you may have a letter card game at home which you can use. Blank postcards or file cards can be bought cheaply from discount stationers and you can write the letters, one on each, yourself to make this up simply and cheaply.



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wonders from the workshops

YMC Workshop Saturday 24 June 2017 Reported by Sam Hinch

This YMC Workshop was certainly going to be a special one. Everyone was incredibly excited to have the chance to hear from Teller, of the famous magic duo Penn & Teller. And this excitement was definitely evident in the clubroom at 11 am as people came in to register. It was sure to be a brilliant Workshop.

The day began fairly typically with people paying the entry fee and then gathering to share new tricks and ideas, but amongst the chatter and card springs, there was shared sense of anticipation to meet a magic legend, not just because we would hear Teller actually talk, but also to hear thoughts and opinions from one of the best minds in magic.

Unfortunately, however, the much anticipated interview was delayed for a while due to bad traffic when Kevin went to pick up Teller and bring him to The Magic Circle HQ! So, as we all sat in our seats (admittedly, with slight impatience), waiting for Teller to arrive, Dave Loosley managed to fill the time by sharing some things he was going to teach later on. He talked about how he structures a stage/parlour scenario and gave some tips on things like packing tricks. He shared a comedic way to start a show, a fun piece that functions like a challenge yet appears magical, and performed a very fooling cards across routine, all of which packed into a very small case.

After lunch we were greeted with some exciting news: Kevin and Teller had arrived and were ready to conduct the interview! Teller had even given up going to see a play which he had planned for the afternoon in order to answer our pre-submitted questions... and we were not disappointed!

Teller talked to us about several topics regarding his career and magic in general. One interesting point was why he chooses not to speak in his performance, explaining



Teller at The Magic Circle

Photo: Mark Hesketh-Jennings

that he had no interest in the odd patter used by magicians, so he simply decided to use no patter at all! He also talked about his creative process for inventing effects, specifically the inspiration behind his famous Miser's Dream with fish.

Another intriguing topic that was brought up was his relationship with his magic partner, Penn, and how they don't classify themselves as 'friends' yet work really well together when it comes to magic. He said that that was the key feature he was looking for when being in a magic duo (or, previously, trio as was also pointed out); not necessarily someone to see a film with, but someone to work with, an important priority.



Dave Loosley to the rescue

In my opinion, one of the most thought-provoking topics of conversation was Penn & Teller's reasoning for revealing magic secrets in their act. Essentially, Teller said that they tend to expose methods that are commonly known to laymen, such as marked cards, or they keep the methods vague (e.g. "All blindfolds used by magicians are fake"). It was interesting to hear why they choose to expose magic secrets and this did get me thinking after the Workshop.

After the interview, we all went back down to The Clubroom for pictures and autographs to close a truly memorable and one-of-a-kind Workshop.

YMC Workshop Saturday 15 July 2017 Reported by Billy Menezes

So this month's YMC was a bit different as it was the Talent Quest, where Members are asked to perform a stage act. This year we saw some great acts and some great tricks. A few of my favourites were Matty Turner's cut and restored strawberry vines and Amos Wollen's cups and balls routine. It was an extremely tight competition, as most acts were only created in under a week, and everyone performed great. In the end Amos Wollen came third, and Sam Hinch came second, very well deserved, and in first place was myself, which I was extremely happy about! So I thought it would benefit people for me to write about how to create an act, because you could be performing in

Talent Quest next year.

Ok, so you need to perform an act. But you don't know where to start. Well don't worry. Hopefully this will help you begin planning your act. First you need to decide whether you want to perform a stage act or a close-up act, however this also depends on who you are performing for and where you're performing. If you've been booked for a walk-around gig you probably won't want to stuff some doves in your jacket pocket. However, at the opposite extreme, you don't want to be doing magic with objects the audience won't be able to see from the stage.

Once you know if you're performing stage or close-up, you need to create an

atmosphere for your magic. Do you want to make the audience laugh, feel sad, or be scared? If you know this you can also start



Billy Menezes. Talent Quest 2017 winner

Photo: Kevin Doig

YMC WORKSHOP DATES 2017/18

- Sunday 22 October 2017: J-Day
- Saturday 25 November 2017
Mentors Day*
- Saturday 20 January 2018*
- Saturday 10 February 2018:
Annual auction
- Saturday 10 March 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



Norman Gee Card Workshop



Alex Joseph Rope Workshop



The Judging Panel Talent Quest 2017
to build a character for your act. Now characters aren't always necessary, however they can really enhance your performance, and really set the atmosphere for your performance.

Now you're probably thinking, what about the tricks? It is a magic show, at the end of the day! You are going to want to pick tricks that go with your act, so don't try and fit in the newest trick you've brought if it has nothing to do with your act. Furthermore, you don't want to bore your audience with twenty tricks! If you are



Martin Cox Comedy Workshop
performing close-up, three tricks are perfect. Think about it as a three-course meal: the starter is short but hard hitting, next the main course is a bit longer but impressive and finally the desert a nice end to the performance but also something that leaves them speechless. If you are doing stage you want maybe four or five tricks, depending on the length of your act.

Another point is to think about music and how it would complement your act to make it better. It is also very important, but easily forgotten, to think about what you wear



Scott Penrose giving feedback
whilst performing. When I perform close-up I will wear a shirt, suit jacket and jeans. If you are doing stage, try to look smart, or if you are presenting yourself as a character, dress as they would and even move like them. Also remember that in competitions you can be marked down on your appearance!

I hope these tips help you, and remember to always enjoy yourself whilst performing!
[Sessions were also presented at the workshop by Martin Cox, Norman Gee and Alex Joseph. Ed.]

Photo: Kevin Doig

On Comedy

by Martin Cox

For this Workshop I decided to present a short talk on the subject of comedy. I talked about mind mapping (you can find out more on Tony Buzan's website www.tonybuzan.com) and how I write my comedy material. First I work through this list of questions:

- What: what is it?
- When: when was this?
- Where: where is this talking place?
- Why: why are you doing this?
- Who: who is it?

Based on your answers to these questions you will have lots of raw material around which to write your jokes. It is also important to remember that not everyone will like your comedy. This can be hard to

accept but if you can you will be a happier and more confident performer.

It is also really important to remember that, whilst magicians seem to think it's fine to use other people's material, comedians do not. If you are going to try comedy magic then you should certainly look at what lines other people are using, and why they work well for them, but try to use more original material in your performances. You will be a better, and funnier, performer if you do.

Patter Ye Not

by Dick Passingham

Frankie Howerd.

There was a variety comedian when I was young called Frankie Howerd. He was known for his repeated sayings, and one of them was "titter ye not." To titter means to laugh and when the audience was laughing Frankie Howerd would increase the laughter by exhorting them to "titter ye not."

Well, a good motto for magicians would be 'patter ye not.'

Magicians are the only people who engage in it, apart from Cockneys. It is a leftover from Victorian and Edwardian times when it was thought that magic tricks needed to be dressed up in fake stories so as to make them more amusing.

But we are now in the Twenty-First century. You don't hear David Blaine or Dynamo telling how they went into a magic shop and were sold a trick in which you take one, two, three,

four, five, six cards and throw away one, two, three... The spectators know perfectly well that you didn't go into the magic shop and buy it. The truth is that you probably read how to do the trick on the web or bought a DVD. And you don't hear Derren Brown or Luke Jermay come on and say that they met a mystic in the East who taught them how to read minds... Today, this kind of thing would take away from their act, not add to it.

So why do the instructions that come with the tricks still contain silly little stories and fatuous jokes? Are the tricks not good enough to stand on their own? And anyway why repeat the instructions. We are meant to be fitting the tricks to our own style.

Furthermore, you don't have to tell stories to be funny. Watch Noel Britten, John Archer or Ian Keable. They get most of their

jokes from their interactions with the spectator beside them or the audience in front of them. In other words the laughs come from situations, not stories.

And there is an over-riding rule. This is: 'don't be fake.' Audiences can smell out a fake from miles away. So how does John Archer ►

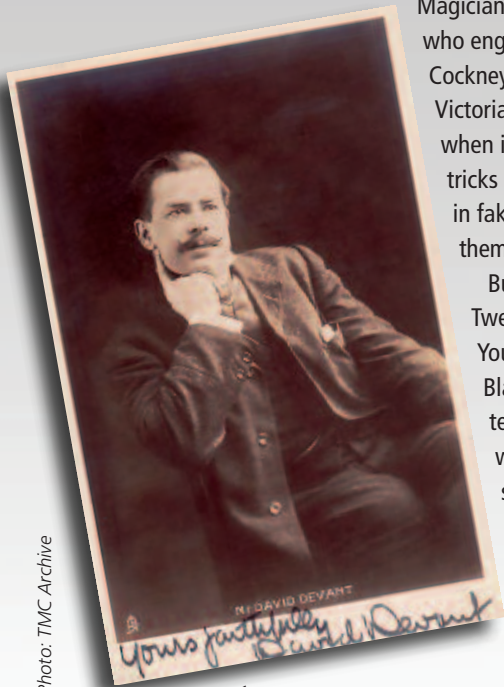


Photo: TMC Archive

David Devant



John Archer



come on? He says: "My name's John Archer and I'm a comedy magician." Plain and simple: it says what it does on the tin.

The fact is that audiences have changed. In Edwardian times David Devant performed to variety audiences and like other variety performers he would pepper his act with witty sayings. I doubt that the people who now flock to hear Peter Kay at the O2 arena would find these funny at all.

And it's not just the adults; children have grown up, too. I used to do kids shows and one of the tricks involved two wooden models of rabbits that differed in a colour, one red and one yellow. I lowered wooden covers over them and the red rabbit on the left was now on the right. You couldn't get away with that with kids who spend much of their spare time on their mobile or gaming on their Xbox.

Noel Britten



And while we are on the subject, what about the way we dress when performing? I notice that many of the male entrants to the Young Magician of the Year still wear formal clothes, such as a tuxedo and black tie. You don't see many stand-up comedians who dress this way, certainly no comedians in comedy clubs. I am an old man of 74 and I refuse to go to any event that requires me to wear a black tie. Life has just become very much less formal.

The issue is not just patter. It's the whole way that we present ourselves to the modern public. And as you are the people who decide what direction we should be taking it is important that you think about these things.

INTRODUCING OUR NEW SECRETARY

[Earlier this year Stuart stepped into the role of secretary for the YMC. No doubt lots of you will meet him at Workshops or talk with him about your Membership or renewal needs, so I asked him to write a brief 'hello' for *Secrets*. Ed.]

Greetings!

I am Stuart Kelly, your new secretary. I have been asked to write a few words about myself as an introduction, so here goes.

I am a vertically challenged, hairy person who can do a passable imitation of Father Christmas any time of the year! I came to magic later in life although I've always loved watching it. But I was finally ensnared only a few years ago when I attended classes and was bullied into auditioning for the Magic Circle. One of the best days of my life. It has led me to meeting loads of wonderful people (and a few really strange ones, but we won't go there), learning so much about magic and about myself, and having lots of fun.

I'm not a big fan of large stage illusions, although I definitely appreciate the skill involved in performing them. I'm much more a parlour or close-up merchant. My fingers are getting a little arthritic, so a really good way to annoy me is to do really complex card flourishes where I can see them!

I'm really pleased to have the opportunity to help out with YMC and I look forward to getting to know you guys and watching you develop as magicians.



member profile

Charlie Robinson

Age: 14

How long have you been a Member of The Young Magicians Club? Since I was 10 (four years).

Who are your favourite magicians? Derren Brown, Dynamo, Doc Eason, Max Butler, Kieron Johnson, Dave Jones, Steven Bridges and Will Houstoun (mainly because of Freak).

What kind of magic do you enjoy the most? Close-up, because it is right under your nose and yet you still don't know how to do it. Also mentalism and stage for their pure impossibility.

What do you think makes the perfect trick? Something visual that leaves the magic in the spectator's hands, such as when I produce ice from fire.

What do you think makes the perfect magician? Someone who can perform both stage and close-up and has a wide range of effects from cards to coins to mentalism.

What is your favourite magic book? This is a hard one. Either the *Tarbell Course in Magic* or the *Card College* series.

What is your favourite magic DVD? Another hard one, either *Card Under Glass* by Doc Eason or *Element* by Kieron Johnson.

What is your favourite non-magic book? The *Deadtime Stories* series because it gives me inspiration for my haunted and ghostly magic (such as a séance).

What is your favourite film? *Now You See Me* because of the piranha illusion and the force at the start.

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?

Houdini: what made you get into escapology? Jesse Eisenberg: what was it like being in *Now You See Me*? And finally, Lance Merrell, the director of Bicycle decks and the United States Playing Card Company: how do you come up with deck designs?

What is your strongest non-magical performing influence? Probably my Dad first, then after him, the rest of my family.



What is your strongest magical influence? Max Butler, who got me started in magic in the first place.

Top tip for improving your magic? The only way to practice an effect is to go out and perform it to any audience.

What do you like best about the YMC? The wide range of lecturers, the hour or so before the competition and, lastly, the monthly competition.

People you would like to thank in magic for either their help or encouragement? Max Butler, Kieron Johnson, Dave Bonsall from Propdog, Dave Jones and my mates in magic.

Bonus Question from Mitchell Kettlewell: What is your favourite piece of magic that you personally perform? Either Bill in Lemon, Anniversary Waltz or Card Under Glass.

If you would like to be featured in the Members Profile then contact me at editor@youngmagiciansclub.co.uk

DECEPTION



Taking My Show to Edinburgh

by Callum McClure

In September of 2016, I decided that I wanted to put on a show at the Edinburgh Fringe festival. It's something that I have always wanted to do, but never had enough time to plan and organise it all. This year was the year to do it, so that's exactly what I did.

I had performed stage magic at events before but for only twenty minutes at a time. This was material that I had worked with for many years and really loved to perform but didn't fill the hour slot that I wanted to do. This is what really kick-started the work into something that was different and I hadn't seen lots of magicians do: technological magic. Now you are all thinking about the same kind of magicians, people who use iPads and D'Lites, but that's not the technology that excites me. I wanted to venture into robotics.

Having studied computer science at A-Level and continuing it at university, I knew how to program and manipulate motors in a simple way. Working with robotics live involved much more work to create a program to interpret what was happening on stage and adapt accordingly with four motors at once. This challenge was really exciting for me to take on, especially when it had to work seamlessly in the show without me having a chance to correct it if it went wrong. Although this was far more complex than the applications I used to write, this unknown, this blank slate only drove me to work harder to make it happen. After I had ordered and assembled the robot and got a working version of the code, the real fun began. Using a vacuum pump attached to a plunger, I tested out lots of different magic principles and effects with the robot. I started with a chop cup routine, then a matrix coin effect and onto effects like Tiny Plunger. These worked surprisingly well given that the only things I had to put into the project were months of programming, much worrying and copious amounts of coffee.

By this time I was getting closer and closer to the festival and I hadn't yet booked anything. I researched all of the venues I had loved from previous years visiting the fringe and checked out the availability and costs associated. As my first one-man show at the fringe, I felt that I couldn't afford to perform in the

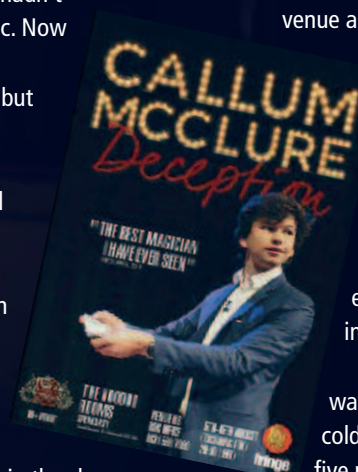
established venues. At this time I turned to the Free Fringe, where I had seen lots of successful and great shows before. I researched the different types of free fringe and applied to PBH's Free Fringe. This was a huge relief and allowed me to focus on the show, rather than funding it all. To my surprise, PBH accepted my application and gave me a really great slot in a really lovely venue. The offer was for a 20:10 slot in a lovely cabaret style room with 50 seats! This was absolutely perfect, so I accepted and proceeded with the show.

By this point, I had lots of the elements of the show together and was trying to integrate the robot into more of the show. The problem now came as there were sightline issues with the top of the table. Projecting the table seemed like an obvious choice but for an Edinburgh show, there is practically no set-up and pack-down time. Having to set-up a camera and projector would only add to the set-up time of the robot and tricks so it had to go.

Very close to the deadline for sending publicity material to the venue and getting my posters sorted, I didn't know how much of a role the robot could actually play within the show. This combined with a few technical issues made me omit the robot from the publicity to avoid disappointment. Two weeks before the date on which I planned to travel up to Edinburgh, the robot was fully functioning. It had two programmed tricks and even a little Pixar-like personality, to interrupt and interject during the show.

After many challenges and hours of hard work, I was finally at The Fringe. After flyering in the rain and cold all day, it was such a relief to find that I had not five people for my show but thirty. I was so relieved that there were people that had come to see my show after all the work I had put in. It was wonderful to share that act with so many people.

I have taken so many wonderful things away from the 2017 Fringe and I would definitely do it again. The connections I have made with other performers and magicians at the Fringe have been phenomenal. To be at the largest arts festival in the world with some of the greatest performing artists is brilliant in itself. Everyone was so friendly and kind to welcome a new performer to the event. Confidence in my own work and myself is a huge thing I have learned. I now know that I can face challenges head on and succeed in what are such daunting tasks.



Not Magic But...

The Magi and Th

I have been involved in magic and music since childhood. I come from a musical family so music is in my blood. My interest in magic was mainly through my uncle, who owned a pub where the local magic club were regulars. After a few drinks, they would teach my uncle magic tricks which he would then perform for me and my cousins. I remember one particular trick where my chosen card would vanish from the deck and appear in the corner of the room inside a balloon which I would pop. For years, I begged him to teach me how to do it until one day, when he obviously thought I was old enough, he showed me. I still perform this trick sometimes.

Music took over my life in my teens; I had my own band and my lifelong fascination with recording techniques and processes began. These days, music is my main career and I am lucky enough to have worked with artists such as London Grammar, Birdy, Halsey, Kylie Minogue, Paul McCartney, James Morrison, Rae Morris, Aurora, Bloc Party and many others.

Magic took a back seat in my life for a long time, until the year 2000 when my then

by Tim Bran mmc

girlfriend (now my wife) took me to a magic shop in San Francisco. I left the store with bags full of great new effects and props and a renewed passion for magic. When I returned to the UK, I was lucky enough to meet a 'coven' of world-class magicians who are still my friends to this day. Fairly quickly, I started doing magic gigs alongside my music – I had stopped touring with bands and mostly did studio work, so the magic naturally replaced the performance part of my music life. In 2006, I joined The Magic Circle and embarked on both a magical and musical career. I have subsequently realised how similar the two 'jobs' are.

My job as a record producer is to capture the best performance of a song from an artist, to create the atmosphere that enables that moment; to choose the right studio, musicians and engineers for the project. I am constantly thinking about what a song might 'need,' about how to communicate emotion to the listener, about how the song can *connect*. In both music and magic,



e Muse



The art of leading the listener/spectator through the narrative of a song/trick is key, and both record producer and magician take the audience/listener on a journey from expectation to completion.

I am trying to connect with others, but there are other comparisons too...

For example

The song = the effect/trick.

The intro = the introduction patter.

The verse = telling the story; setting the scene.

The pre-chorus = the buildup.

The chorus = the reveal/surprise.

The art of leading the listener/spectator through the narrative of a song/trick is key, and both record producer and magician take the audience/listener on a journey from expectation to completion.

For a musical or magical performer, the pattern of skills development is also very similar: you start by learning the basics and playing 'cover versions' (performing other people's tricks). Then you progress to adapting other people's work into your own style, finding what styles you prefer and resonate with your character or voice. Then you possibly go on to create your own work.

Another similarity is using psychology when recording in the studio, which is commonplace for me. For example, I was producing a singer who just couldn't hit the high notes on a particular song. I knew he could do it and that it was all in his mind,

so I decided to use misdirection. I asked him what he imagined when he was singing the song, and he said, "Walking through the countryside." I searched for a video clip of countryside scenes and placed it in front of him while he sang. He then hit all the high notes easily because his mind was distracted from the idea of not hitting them!

Another example is when a friend of mine was producing a band where the bass player had 'red light fever,' meaning he would freeze up every time the record button was pressed. My friend got the engineer to read poetry into the bass player's ear while he was playing to distract him. He played perfectly!

Balancing my two loves, magic and music, seems to work out well for me. Anytime the music goes quiet, I fill the time up with magic gigs, conventions, and visits to The Magic Circle. Just hanging out with my magic friends will always be one of my favourite ways to pass the time; there is so much to be gained from just 'jamming' with friends. There I go again, using another music term!

You can find out a bit more about Tim's work on his website, www.timbran.com

Cover Conjurers

In this month's Cover Conjurers only one cover story is featured, because the August Circular was all about TMC's new Membership Card and the tricks you can do with it. You won't miss out though, as we still have an excerpt from the Cover story on Jon Marshall's sideshows and Paul Gordon has specially adapted the trick he wrote with the Membership Card to work for you! (You will need to know some basic card moves though; tilt, a slip force and a simple false shuffle. If you don't know these yet then look them up before coming back to learn Paul's trick!)

Jon Marshall: Resurrecting Sideshow

Interviewed by Will Houstoun



Headless Lady poster

Will Houstoun: One thing that you seem quite proud of is the fact that you've got original elements, like some of the original props or the original show fronts, in your shows. How important do you think that is?
Jon Marshall: I think it's important that these old sideshows are preserved. And the fact that they are going out, and new audiences are seeing them, and seeing the original shows, I think that's important. I suspect not all our audiences realise that they are looking at the actual show front that their grandparents would have seen in the '50s when they were on holiday but sometimes it happens. In Blackpool, when we presented the shows in Showzam!, a guy came in on a bus from Burnley. He was in his 80s and he said, "I remember going to see that show when I used to come and stay with my aunt in her boarding house, next to the promenade in Blackpool. I saw the Headless Lady and it always impressed

me that she had blood around the junction where the tubes go into her neck." I went back to the original photos with a magnifying glass and sure enough there are specks of blood. And that afternoon our Headless Lady was suitably bloody!

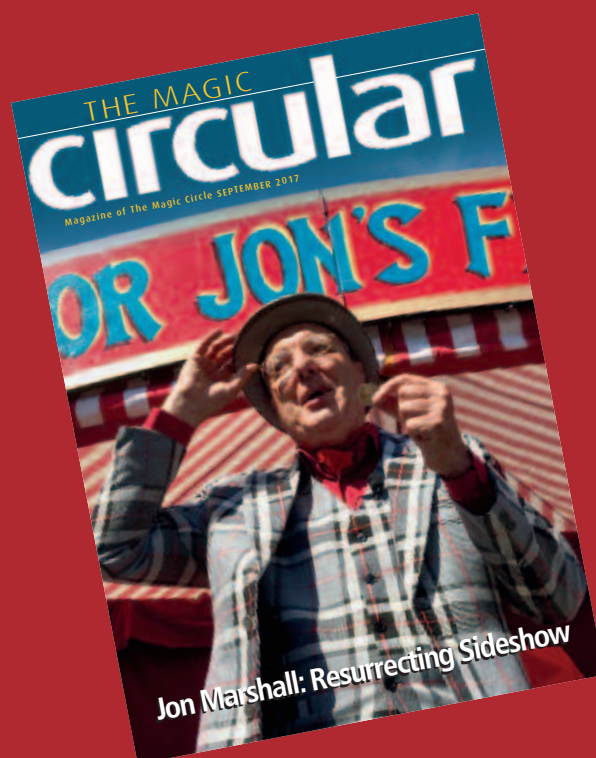
Will: Have you ever made a show from scratch?

Jon: Jon Gresham had a show called The Butterfly Girl which he presented in Rhyl and Scarborough. He claimed it wasn't one of his most successful shows, he said it was too pretty-pretty. Basically it was a girl's head on a Sphinx Table with a butterfly body and wings. Well by now we'd already recreated Jon Gresham's Living Half-Lady with the original show fronts so already had something with a table and the idea of doing another version of that didn't appeal to me.

All we had was a photograph of the outside of the show so we wondered how we could recreate this show without using a Sphinx table or something like that. I was around at Eddie Dawes's house and he has a stock poster of Dr Lynn's Thama, a Living Half Lady on a swing, in his magic den. I was looking at it and I thought, "Crikey, could we use that image, that Victorian



Mummy Sideshow





Butterfly Girl Showzam, Blackpool

black-art effect, as a Butterfly on a swinging perch?"

Will: ...and could you?

Jon: We could! We were commissioned to create a new show by the Blackpool Council. A great friend, called Mark Copeland, who is a brilliant artist, designed and painted the frontage and our team constructed the rest of the apparatus. It has to be suspended and we have ships' chandlers in Hull, so it was the perfect place to be. We had great help in finding the thinnest possible wires to suspend the girl safely.

Will: Did you make any changes to the method as it developed?

Jon: Well, if you have a black art effect and you've got bare light bulbs shining as a blinder into the audience, I think it's always a little bit crude. Well, in Sam Sharpe's book, *Optical Secrets*, he describes a more subtle method of using blinders. We thought we'd try that. The problem was that part of the apparatus was being made in Bury St Edmunds, part in Bradford, part in Hull, part in Caterham and Daisy, the girl who was coming up to perform it, lived in Margate. All this had to come together in Blackpool for the Showzam! festival and I had no idea whether the illusion would work. Would it be deceptive? How would people react? Luckily it did work and people reacted well.

A Guaranteed Card Trick

by Paul Gordon

A spectator is invited to choose a card from the pack as you offer to show them a brand-new trick. As a reassurance that they won't have to deal with the awkwardness of something new not working you explain that you are a Member of The Young Magicians Club and show them your Membership Card, putting it next to a folded piece of paper that you say is a guarantee for the trick. They return the card to the deck and then the cards are shuffled. Asking for the name of the card you then spell to it, ending on the selection. As a second surprise you show them the guarantee, which turns out just to be the name of their card written on the piece of paper. As a final kicker you produce the other Fours.

Set-up

Remove the four Fours from the pack and put them on top of the deck, with the Four of Clubs uppermost. Remove a random card from the pack and insert it in the third position down in the deck. You should now be in position with the deck in the following order: Four of Clubs, any Four, random card, two more Fours and the balance of the pack. Write "Four of Clubs" on a piece of paper and keep it with your YMC Membership card.

Performance

Mention that you are working on a brand-new card trick and would like to show it to your spectator. Mention your YMC Membership show your spectator your Membership Card and the guarantee piece of paper.

False shuffle the deck, maintaining the five-card stock on the top of the pack (I use a jog shuffle, though any technique will work). Force the Four of Clubs from the top of the pack without disturbing the remainder of the stack (a slip-cut force works well for this) and ask your spectator to remember the card. Take the card from your spectator and pretend to put it in the middle of the pack but really get it into the sixth position from the top using tilt.

Shuffle the pack by giving them one Straddle Faro. Briefly, cut off a packet of about ten cards and weave them into the centre of the pack (Figure 1). Don't push them square, however, and instead use them to pull the interwoven cards out from the centre of the deck. Put the faroed packet on the top of the deck and give it a waterfall to complete the shuffle (Figure 2).

Ask for the name of the selection. When the spectator says, "The Four of Clubs," spell 'four', dealing 4 cards from the top of the deck into a tabled pile. Spell 'of' and deal 2 cards into a second pile. Spell 'club' and deal 4 cards into a third pile. Finally show the next card, the 's' of 'clubs,' and reveal it is the Four of Clubs.

As your spectator reacts to the location of their selection, remind them that as a YMC Member the trick was guaranteed to work and show them the proof, opening the slip of paper to reveal their card written on it. This is the second climax.

Finally, for the kicker ending, turn over the three tabled piles to reveal that the other three Fours have been found at the face of each packet. Ta-da!



Figure 1

Figure 2

reviews

The Reputation Maker

by Harry Robson & Matthew Wright

77 min Instructional DVD. \$24.95 (£19.37), from your favourite dealer. Dealers contact Murphy's Magic supplies, www.MurphysMagic.com

Reviewed by Bob Gill



Many have attempted to explain Think a Card, primarily in books, notably Lewis Ganson's *Dai Vernon's Vernon More Inner Secrets Of Card Magic* and more recently Thomas Baxter's *A Card Merely Thought Of*. Even the most ardent bibliophile will concede the printed word is not the way to master the technique required in this boldest and most direct of effects. Hence both Riding and Mason put their approaches on film, and indeed Matthew Wright included a version on his *Unusual Suspects* DVD.

The two stars of this DVD set out to produce it as a definitive guide to the technique, in the belief that it had never been done justice before, and that too many magicians were fearful of attempting it. Be that as it may, this is a go-to effect for both these busy performers, and that familiarity shows in how relaxed, confident and smooth they both are throughout. The production values are good, employing a variety of camera angles including over the shoulders and focussed on the spectator's eyes (in this instance very much the windows to their souls). There is an informal style, with much of the content consisting of a conversation between the two of them, which makes for a highly watchable film.

Matthew and Harry have slightly different approaches to the 'think of' process, which provides helpful teaching since you come to realise how easy it is to personalise your own approach. They also spend an equal amount of time showing different ways to reveal the card, sometimes settling for simply naming it; producing it magically; or showing they predicted it. Matthew explains a useable variation involving a card with money clipped to it, based on Sankey's Paperclipped, as well as tipping a doozy of a force from Dani DaOrtiz.

Meanwhile Harry explains a thought-of card from a fan. For the

cautious, Harry offers a version using a faked deck (actually the Koran 101 Deck) that's as close to self-working as you will get (an effect Harry put out some years ago as *Yesterday's Dream*). I recognise his good intentions, but this rather grated as it's the purity of this effect that is so enticing; a regular deck of cards (borrowed and shuffled by the spectator if you wish) is quickly spread and a spectator merely thinks of any card they see. Despite the freedom of choice and genuineness of handling, the performer is *immediately* equipped with the card's value: quick, clean, compelling.

Their enthusiasm and obvious love for the effect are infectious, and having watched this once you find yourself convinced you just might pull it off: particularly thanks to the inclusion of several live performances. And without reliving a somewhat unsettling loop of a burly northern ex-boxer repeating the effect five dozen – that's three-score – times; not that I was counting.

Genetics 2

by Sean Goodman

Props and Online Instruction. £30 available from www.simplymagic.co.uk

Reviewed by Bob Gill

Sean Goodman is a nice man. And a clever one. He's also a commercial, busy performer who releases several of his working routines from time to time, sometimes through the mainstream dealers, sometimes through his own site.

It's *de rigueur* these days to describe anything practical and commercial as a 'worker.' It's difficult to find a more suitable term, however; not just because it is, in the right hands, a working tool, but because you need to be a worker to get the most out of this. Not because it's sleight-ridden, because it is simple to carry out the mechanics, but you need performing experience to bring this alive in the hands of real people.

The trick at its heart is strong; how can it not be, when it is yet another Out Of This World? But the experienced performer who works tables and weddings will delight in the badinage and byplay this routine generates. It also has the enormous benefit of being a routine involving pictures rather than another card trick.

The concept is delicious: you explain that men and women think



differently and like different things. To illustrate this, you show some cards bearing pictures of various everyday items and suggest that some will appeal to men and some to women. But rather than apply genetic stereotyping, you invite each of the couple to choose items at random and not be afraid to doublethink or catch you out.

In true OOTW fashion the pictures are offered to the couple in turn for them to decide whether to keep or pass on each item depicted. For the dénouement, the man's selections are turned over and they all have blue backs bearing the classic male icon, while the woman's have pink backs showing the female icon.

There's a lot to like here. It is easy to do, the premise is strong and appealing to men and women alike, it invites spectator interaction and is magically strong, too. The 26 cards provided are nicely produced; they are printed on poker card stock, and so handle just like the playing cards you're used to. The images are carefully chosen to give you plenty of room for banter and interplay. There are a couple of subtleties at work that make the handling a doddle, and demonstrate the extent to which Sean has worked with this routine over several years.

You get a link to an online film that turns out to be extremely clear with several alternative presentations and handlings. You can of course apply any OOTW methodology you favour, but even as a die-hard OOTW fan I must say that Sean has some nice handlings here that I'm more than happy to stick with. He comes across well and I enjoyed his discussion of getting the best out of this routine.

Depending on which approach you take there is a tiny reset involved, between performances, but for my money the version in which the spectators shuffle the cards and which resets instantly is a winner. For best effect a table is preferable, but you could use people's hands as a stand in.

If you work tables and would welcome a vehicle to help you engage with couples in your audience, you can buy this from the originator with confidence. Top marks.

Cartoon Capers

by Gary Jones

Props and 24 min downloadable film. \$19.95 (£15) with free shipping to UK. Available for www.penguinmagic.com
Reported by Bob Gill

The Moving Hole concept has a rich modern history, a much-travelled notion that has inspired dozens of creators (as well as the inevitable attendant copyists). Alex Elmsley's Puncture seems to have kick-started the contemporary interest in moving holes when it first appeared in the rather wonderful *Phoenix* magazine as far back as the early '50s, then subsequently reprinted in the completely wonderful *The Collected Works of Alex Elmsley*.

Michael Weber picked up on the concept in his *Lifesavers* book, but it was another Michael – Close – who brought the effect to prominence in his *Workers* set, using business rather than playing cards, in what always struck me as a rather drawn-out and cutesy effect: something you couldn't accuse this version of. (In method this is the grandson of Michael Close's seminal Portable Hole, as, indeed, are the majority of the versions of this effect I've handled.)



Into the limelight steps Gary Jones, surely contender for the most prolific magician in this country, and whose name on a product can be relied upon to deliver clarity of effect with simplicity of methodology. And so it applies here: a lo-tech approach combines with visual clarity of effect to produce a workable, desirable trick.

Gary's title refers to moving 'Acme Portable Holes' from the Roadrunner cartoons, with good reason: the effect is simply that you take a hole from one card and move it to another.

Well, perhaps not quite that bald: the card you transfer the hole to... is their signed, chosen card... and not just signed a little... signed all over its face, several times, up and down. So when the hole appears in their card it even removes part of their signatures; the card can then be left with them as an impossible-looking souvenir (with no switching).

And at the risk of sounding too good to be true, this is achieved with straight-forward handling; it uses a gimmick, supplied, that is easy for you to make and doing so is the work of seconds. Which is just as well since, if you want to perform this whilst table-hopping, you're going to be making a lot of these gimmicks (since you forfeit one at each performance).

The film is well shot, in typical Penguin style, and Gary once again shows what a good teacher he is. He breaks the routine into its component parts, and even goes to the trouble of explaining in detail a couple of very simple, standard moves. Truth be told, there is a (small) risk of pitfalls given the nature of this gimmick; Gary shows the attention to detail that only comes from constant performance, with many small, invaluable, practical tips that will save you from getting into trouble. At just over 20 minutes this is no drawn-out explanation; the effect is not complex enough to merit more running time.

There's not a lot more to be said: look at the trailer, and if you like what you see, then you can rest assured this will deliver that effect cleanly and pretty simply. In an effort to find fault, I'll say I'm not completely convinced by the cost of the package: this could have been a download at half the price, or an item starring in one of Gary Jones' many multi-effect DVDs, since you will be making the props yourself. But for less than £20 you get a worker, ready to go, after perhaps an evening's work (at most) to smooth the handling and master the presentation.

puzzlecorner



1

2

3

4

Name That Trick! These four illustrations all represent well-known magic utilities or moves, but can you work out what they are? Clue: Say what you see...

Prize Question

The winner of this month's competition will receive a copy of Will Houstoun's *At the Table Lecture*. To enter, send your answer to the following question to editor@youngmagiciansclub.co.uk by November 1. The winners will be drawn at random from the correct answers.

Teller is on the cover of this issue of *Secrets* and also visited one of the YMC Workshops. He is famous for performing with his partner Penn Jillette, but before they became well known both Penn and Teller performed in a trio with another performer. **What this third performer's name?**



Last Issue's Answer

Last month's question was as follows: The Magic Circle's Young Magician of The Year competition 2017 recently took place at our Headquarters and was of an excellent standard. What year will the next competition take place? The correct answer was 2019. Congratulations if you got it correct, and even more so if you were the randomly selected winner!

Name That Trick - Solution
The moves are 1 Double Lift, 2 the Key Card, 3 the Second Deal, 4 TopIt.

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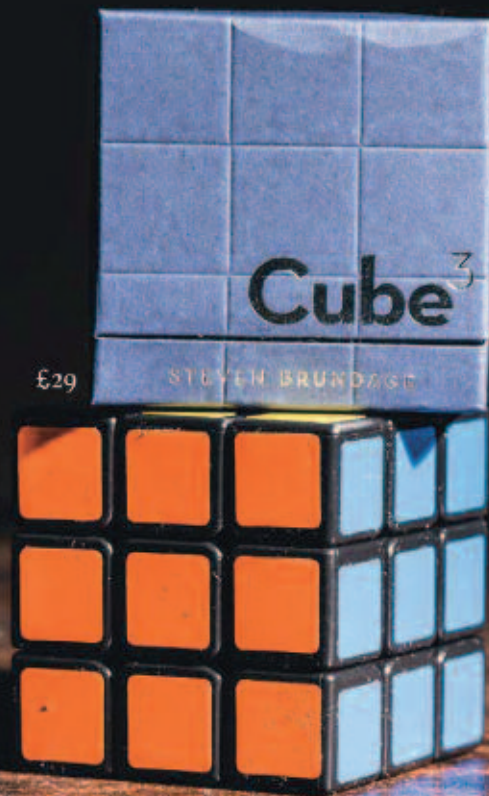
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