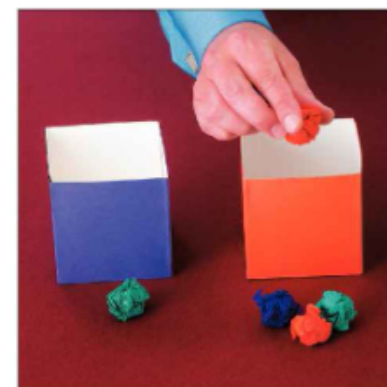




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THAN 2500 EASY-TO-FOLLOW COLOUR PHOTOGRAPHS

NICHOLAS EINHORN

GOLD STAR MEMBER OF THE INNER MAGIC CIRCLE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL BRICKNELL



In loving memory of my brave auntie, Jean Cohen.

This edition is published by Hermes House,
an imprint of Anness Publishing Ltd,
Hermes House,
88–89 Blackfriars Road,
London SE1 8HA;
tel. 020 7401 2077; fax 020 7633 9499

www.hermeshouse.com; www.annesspublishing.com

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contents

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Introduction | 8 |
| Magicians' Equipment | 12 |



history of mystery 14

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Magic and Magicians through the Ages | 16 |
| Magical Inventors | 18 |
| Literary Experts | 20 |
| Magical Venues | 22 |
| Comedy Magicians | 23 |
| Close-up Magicians | 24 |
| Illusionists | 26 |
| Television Magicians | 30 |



close-up magic 32

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Up Close and Personal | 34 |
| Pen-go | 36 |
| Let there be Light | 37 |
| Rising Ring on Pencil | 38 |
| Gravity-defying Ring | 40 |
| The Bermuda Triangle | 42 |
| Unlinking Safety Pins | 44 |
| Pin-credible | 46 |
| Safety Pin-a-tration | 47 |
| Domino-way | 47 |
| Escaping Jack | 48 |
| Spooky Matchbox | 50 |
| Swapping Checkers | 51 |
| Magnetic Cards | 52 |
| Picture Perfect | 53 |
| Sweet Tooth | 54 |
| Zero Gravity | 55 |



card magic 56

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Luck of the Draw | 58 |
| Basic Card Techniques | 60 |
| The Hand | 60 |
| Dealing Grip | 60 |
| Mechanics' Grip | 60 |
| Biddle Grip | 60 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Dribbling Cards | 61 |
| Two-handed Spread | 61 |
| Squaring the Cards | 62 |
| Swing Cut | 62 |
| Charlier Cut | 63 |
| The Glimpse | 64 |
| Out of the Box Glimpse | 64 |
| Square and Glimpse | 64 |
| The Braue Reversal | 65 |
| The Glide | 65 |
| Double Lift and Turnover | 66 |
| Snap Change | 67 |
| Ribbon Spread and Turnover | 68 |
| Shuffling Cards | 70 |
| Overhand Shuffle | 70 |
| Table Riffle Shuffle | 71 |
| Weave Shuffle and Waterfall | 72 |
| Self-working Card Tricks | 74 |
| Sense of Touch, The Four Burglars | 74 |
| Hocus Pocus | 76 |
| Reversed | 78 |
| Face Value | 79 |
| The Indicator | 80 |
| You Find It! | 82 |
| Instant Card Revelation | 84 |
| The Next Card is Yours | 85 |
| Do as I Do | 86 |
| Invisible Traveller | 88 |
| Impossible Card Location | 90 |
| Magic Time | 92 |
| Spectator Cuts the Aces | 94 |
| Four Card Poker | 96 |
| Spell-a-card | 98 |
| Controlling a Card | 99 |
| Finger Break | 99 |
| Thumb Break | 99 |
| Double Cut | 100 |
| Double Cut Control | 100 |
| In-jog Dribble Control | 101 |
| Run and Back Control | 102 |
| Simple Overhand Control | 103 |
| A False Cut | 104 |
| Card Tricks Requiring Skill | 105 |
| Countdown | 105 |
| Gliding Home | 106 |
| Trapped | 108 |
| Card through Handkerchief | 110 |
| Card on Wall | 112 |
| Cards Across | 114 |
| Card Under Glass | 116 |
| Forcing a Card | 117 |
| Hindu Force | 117 |
| Slip Force | 118 |
| Cut Deeper Force | 118 |

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Cross Cut Force and Prediction | 119 |
| Special Gimmicks | 120 |
| Pips Away | 120 |
| Changing Card | 122 |
| Find the Lady | 124 |
| Card through Tablecloth | 126 |
| Rising Card from Box (Version 1) | 128 |
| Rising Card from Box (Version 2) | 130 |
| Card to Matchbox | 132 |
| Kiss Me Quick | 136 |
| Advanced Flourishes | 138 |
| Thumb Fan | 138 |
| Pressure Fan | 138 |
| One-handed Fan | 139 |
| One-handed Reverse Fan | 139 |
| Giant Fan | 140 |
| Comedy Card Force | 140 |
| Card Spring | 141 |
| Back Palm | 142 |



money magic 144

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| A Good Run for Your Money | 146 |
| Easy Money Tricks | 148 |
| Linking Paper Clips | 148 |
| Double Your Money | 149 |
| Suspension Bridge | 149 |
| Bending Coin (Version 1) | 150 |
| Heads I Win! | 150 |
| The Pyramid Game | 151 |
| Coin Con | 151 |
| Impossible Coin Balance | 152 |
| What a Mug! | 152 |
| Mugged Again! | 153 |
| Penetrating Banknote | 154 |
| Magnetic Money | 156 |
| Basic Coin Techniques | 158 |
| Finger Palm and Production | 158 |
| Thumb Clip | 158 |
| Classic Palm | 159 |
| Downs Palm | 160 |
| Downs Palm Production | 160 |
| Bobo Switch | 161 |
| Coin Roll | 162 |
| Coin Vanishes | 163 |
| French Drop | 163 |
| Thumb Clip Vanish | 164 |
| Fake Take | 165 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Sleeving a Coin | 166 |
| Coin in Elbow | 167 |
| Universal Vanish | 168 |
| Gravity Vanish | 169 |
| Vanishing Coin in Handkerchief | 170 |
| Handkerchief Coin Vanishes | 172 |
| Clever Coin Vanish | 173 |
| Dissolving Coin (Version 1) | 174 |
| Dissolving Coin (Version 2) | 175 |
| Escaping Coin | 176 |
| Coin through Hole | 177 |
| Coin through Ring | 178 |
| Coin through Coaster | 180 |
| Coin Wrap | 182 |
| Magic Papers | 184 |
| Coin Vanish from Matchbox | 186 |
| Pencil and Coin Vanish | 187 |
| More Money Tricks | 188 |
| Switcheroo | 188 |
| Coin through Table | 189 |
| Coin through Handkerchief | 190 |
| Marked Coin in Ball of Wool | 192 |
| Coin in Egg | 194 |
| Coin in Bread Roll | 195 |
| Coin through Pocket | 196 |
| Bending Coin (Version 2) | 197 |
| Coin Cascade | 198 |
| Concorde Coin (Version 1) | 199 |
| Concorde Coin (Version 2) | 199 |
| Appearing Money | 200 |
| Paper to Money | 202 |



match magic 206

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Mix and Match | 208 |
| Match through Safety Pin | 210 |
| Self-extinguishing Match | 210 |
| Broken and Restored Match | 211 |
| Vanishing Match | 212 |
| Vanishing Box of Matches | 213 |
| Take Cover | 214 |
| Static Match | 216 |
| Jumping Match | 216 |
| Lit Match Production | 217 |
| Match through Match | 218 |
| Matchbox off String | 219 |
| Burnt Match in Matchbook | 220 |
| Box it | 222 |
| Numbers Up | 222 |
| Fish! | 223 |
| Cocktail Glass | 223 |



string and rope magic 224

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Learn the Ropes | 226 |
| Cut and Re-strawed | 228 |
| Indestructible String | 230 |
| Jumping Rubber Band | 232 |
| String through Arm | |
| (Version 1) | 233 |
| String through Arm | |
| (Version 2) | 234 |
| String through Ring | 234 |
| Rope through Neck | 235 |
| Rope through Neck | |
| Again! | 236 |
| Hunter Bow Knot | 237 |
| Impossible Knot | 238 |
| Slip Knot | 239 |
| Cut and Restored Rope | |
| (Version 1) | 240 |
| Cut and Restored Rope | |
| (Version 2) | 241 |
| Rope through Apple | 242 |
| Ring on a String | 244 |
| Chinese Coin off | |
| String | 245 |
| Beads of Mystery | 246 |
| Enchanted Ball | 248 |
| Ping-pong Balance | 249 |
| Rising Tube Mystery | 250 |
| Interlocked | 253 |
| Impossible Link | 254 |
| Escapologist | 256 |
| Lord of the Rings | 257 |



silk, thimble and paper magic 258

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Make Something of It | 260 |
| Silk Magic | 262 |
| Simple Silk Production | 262 |
| Mid-air Silk Production | 263 |
| Production Tube | 264 |
| Blended Silks (Version 1) | 266 |
| Blended Silks (Version 2) | 267 |
| Silk through Glass (Version 1) | 268 |
| Silk through Glass | |
| (Version 2) | 270 |
| Rose to Silk | 272 |
| Milo the Mouse | 274 |

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Pencil through Silk | 276 |
| Silk Vanish | 278 |
| Milk to Silk | 280 |
| Obedient Handkerchief | 282 |
| The Trick which Fooled | |
| Houdini | 283 |
| Thimble Magic | 283 |
| Jumping Thimble | 283 |
| Thimble from Banknote | 284 |
| Thimble Thumb Clip | 285 |
| Vanishing Thimble | 285 |
| Thimble from Silk | 287 |
| Thimble through Silk | 288 |
| Paper Magic | 289 |
| Telekinetic Paper | 289 |
| Cut and Restored | |
| Newspaper | 290 |
| Walking through a | |
| Postcard | 291 |
| Snowstorm in China | 292 |
| Jacob's Ladder | 296 |
| Jacob's Tree | 298 |



party tricks 300

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Life of the Party | 302 |
| Rolling Straw | 304 |
| Jasper the Ghost | 304 |
| Straw Penetration | 305 |
| Trip to China | 306 |
| Clinging Cutlery | 306 |
| Bending Knife | |
| (Version 1) | 307 |
| Bending Knife | |
| (Version 2) | 307 |
| Floating Bread Roll | 308 |
| Bouncing Bread Roll | 310 |
| Vanishing Glass | 311 |
| Torn and Restored | |
| Napkin | 312 |
| Sugar Rush | 314 |
| Sugar Rush Uncovered | 316 |
| All Sugared Up | 318 |
| Two in the Hand | 320 |
| Knife and Paper Trick | 322 |
| The Cups and Balls | 324 |
| Removal Man | 328 |
| Defying Gravity | 329 |
| Sticky Fingers | 329 |
| Saucy Beggar | 330 |
| Magnetic Credit | |
| Cards | 331 |

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Unburstable Balloon | 332 |
| Torn Wallpaper | 333 |
| Bottomless Mug | 334 |
| Relight My Fire | 334 |
| Lighter than Light | 335 |
| Comedy Rising Match | 336 |
| Robin Hood Meets | |
| his Match | 336 |
| Matchbox Challenge | 337 |
| Uncrusher! | 337 |
| Finger Mouse | 338 |
| Bumblebee Eggs | 340 |
| Banana Splitz | 341 |
| Invisible Coin Catch | 342 |
| Laughter Lines | 342 |
| A Good Head | |
| for Money | 343 |
| The Shirt Off Your | |
| Back | 344 |
| Snag! | 345 |
| Loose Thread | 345 |
| Blow Your Nose | 346 |
| Broken Arm | 346 |
| Broken Nose | 347 |
| Popping Your Joints | 347 |
| Dead Man's Finger | 347 |
| Tie Through Neck | 348 |
| Beer Money | 348 |
| Fake Scars | 349 |
| Smiling Queen | 350 |
| Origami Rose | 351 |



stunts and puzzles 352

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Puzzle it Over | 354 |
| Follow the Leader | 356 |
| Still Following the | |
| Leader | 356 |
| Hypnotic, Magnetic | |
| Fingers | 357 |
| Wand Twist | 357 |
| Floating Arms | 358 |
| Pepper-sepper-ation | 358 |
| Table Lock | 359 |
| Broom Suspension | 359 |
| Time for a Shower | 360 |
| Inverted Glass Trick | 361 |
| Suspended Animation | 362 |
| Straw Bottle | 363 |
| The Rice Lift | 363 |
| Balancing Skill | 364 |
| Floating Banknote | 365 |

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Card Flick | 366 |
| Immovable | 366 |
| Try and Stand Up! | 367 |
| Surefire Bet | 367 |
| Lift Me if You Can | 368 |
| Superman | 369 |
| X-ray Vision | 370 |
| Penny Pincher | 370 |
| The Great Olive | |
| Challenge | 371 |
| The Trapdoor Card | 372 |
| Salt and Pepper | |
| Separation | 374 |
| Crazy Corks | 375 |
| Quickness of | |
| the Hand | 376 |
| Love Match | 376 |
| Drink Problem | 377 |
| A Cutting Problem | 377 |
| Letter of Resignation | 378 |
| Bullseye | 379 |



mind magic 380

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| A Meeting of Minds | 382 |
| Coin Under Bottle | |
| Tops | 384 |
| The Pyramid Game | 385 |
| Riddle Me This | 385 |
| Just Chance | 386 |
| Money Miracle | 388 |
| Topsy-turvy Mugs | 389 |
| Hide and Seek | |
| Solo | 390 |
| Hide and Seek | 391 |
| Calculation Sensation | 391 |
| Total this Sum | 392 |
| Impossible Numbers! | 392 |
| Human Calculator | 393 |
| Dice Divination | 393 |
| 1089 | 394 |
| 1089 - Book Test | 394 |
| Double Book Test | 394 |
| Black Magic | 395 |
| Temple of Wisdom | 395 |
| Ash on Arm | 396 |
| "X" Marks the | |
| Spot | 398 |
| Whispering Jack | 400 |
| Tri-thought | 402 |
| The Big Prediction | 404 |
| Impossible Prediction | 405 |



optical illusions 406

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Don't Believe Your Eyes | 408 |
| Common Optical | |
| Illusions | 410 |
| Which is Longer? | 410 |
| Small, Medium, | |
| Large | 410 |
| How many Shelves? | 410 |
| Shrinking Haze | 410 |
| Connecting Line | 411 |
| Full to the Brim | 411 |
| All Square | 411 |
| Odd Ball | 411 |
| Straight or Crooked? | 412 |
| Scintillating Illusion | 412 |
| Parallel Lines | 412 |
| Inuit or Warrior? | 413 |
| Young or Old Woman? | 413 |
| Rabbit or Duck? | 413 |
| Towards or Away? | 413 |
| Shrinking Pen | 414 |
| Floating Sausage | 414 |
| Hole in Hand | 414 |
| Ship in a Bottle | 415 |
| Emily's Illusion | 415 |
| Stretching Arm | 416 |
| Pinkie Down | 416 |
| Thumb Stretch | 417 |
| Thumb Off | 417 |
| Impossible! | 418 |
| Boomerang Cards | 419 |
| Stamp it Out! | 420 |
| East Meets West | 420 |
| Two in One | 421 |
| Height of Failure | 422 |
| Clip the Queen | 423 |
| Shrinking Wand | 424 |



stand-up magic 426

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Steal the Show | 428 |
| Genie in a Bottle | 430 |
| Needles through | |
| Balloon | 432 |
| Vanishing Glass of | |
| Liquid | 434 |
| Going into Liquidation | 436 |
| Liquidated Assets | 437 |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Magic Photo Album | 438 |
| Multiplication Sensation | 439 |
| Spiked Thumb | 440 |
| Square Circle Production | 442 |
| Mini Flip-flap Production | |
| Box | 444 |
| Switching Bag | 447 |
| Picture Perfect | 447 |
| Candy Caper | 449 |
| Magic Circles | 450 |
| Crazy Spots! | 452 |
| Incredible Prediction | 455 |
| Trooping the Colours | 456 |
| Paper Balls Over | |
| the Head | 458 |
| Vanishing Mug of Liquid | 459 |
| Incredible Blindfold Act | 460 |
| Watch This! | 461 |
| Second Sight | 463 |
| Excalibur's Cup | 464 |
| Anti-gravity Glasses | 465 |



stage illusions 468

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Show Stoppers | 470 |
| Comedy Levitation | 474 |
| Mini Me | 475 |
| Houdini Outdone! | 476 |
| Flip Flap Production | 478 |
| Bowl Vanish | 480 |
| Victory Cartons Illusion | 484 |
| Cutting a Person in Two | 486 |
| Metamorphosis | 487 |
| Tip Over Box | 490 |
| Out of Thin Air | 492 |

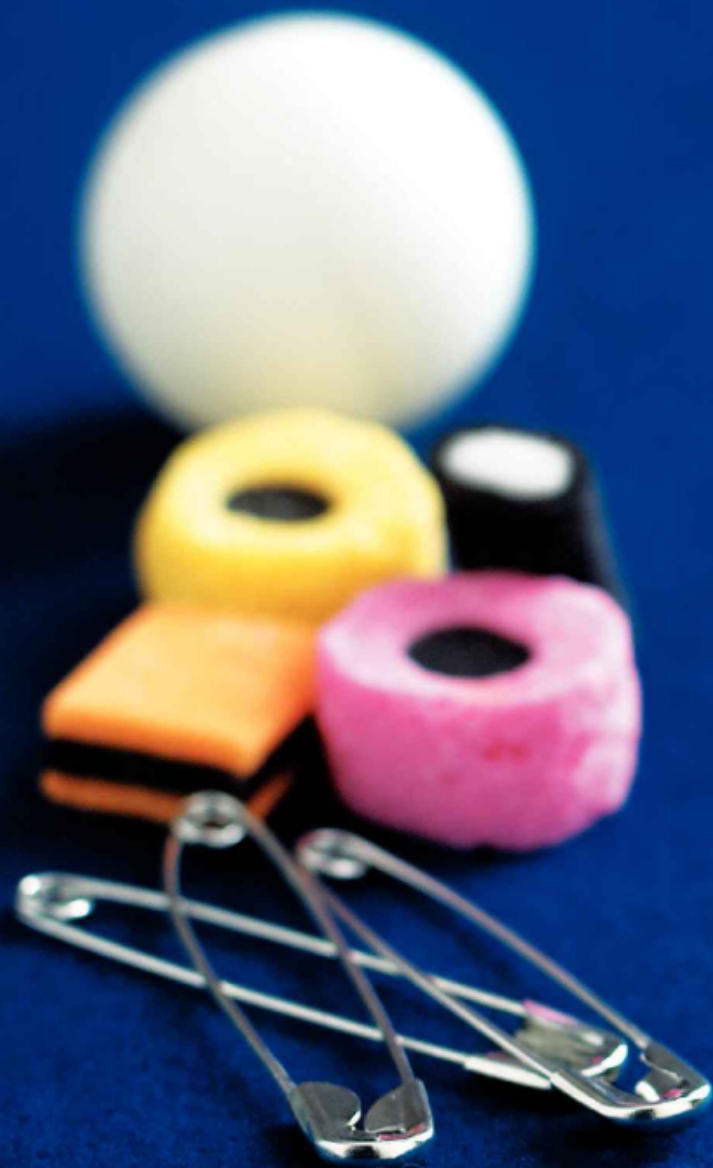


putting on a show 494

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Practical Considerations | 496 |
| Magic Wand Invitations | 498 |
| Setting the Stage | 499 |
| A Sample Act | 500 |
| Sample Running Orders | 501 |
| Glossary | 502 |
| Where to Learn More | 504 |
| Magic Shops | 505 |
| Index | 506 |
| Acknowledgements | 512 |

close-up magic

In this chapter you will find over 40 magic tricks. Most of these routines use ordinary objects that can be found around the house, and several of them can be performed without any preparation at all. While some use simple sleight-of-hand, others require a minimum amount of skill. Once you have learnt a few of these close-up tricks, you'll be able to perform to an audience in no time.



up close and personal

Performed directly in front of the spectator, close-up magic uses small, familiar props such as banknotes, coins, handkerchiefs, pens, fruit, keys, playing cards, string, and lots more besides. As soon as magicians learnt to manipulate these small objects they began using them in tricks, although the term "close-up magic" did not come into use until the 20th century, when its rise in popularity was assisted by several magicians who inspired a generation of magic artistry.

Dai Vernon (1894–1992) was a Canadian-born magician who moved to the USA and worked as a silhouette cutter before his magic began to impress all who saw him. Early in his career he baffled Harry Houdini, who used to boast that he could not be fooled, with one of his sleight-of-hand tricks. Even though he repeated it over and over again (some say seven times) Houdini could not see how Vernon accomplished his miracle. During the 1960s Vernon moved to Los Angeles to spend as much time as



Above: Ricky Jay is of the world's finest exponents of sleight-of-hand. He is also an established actor and has appeared in many classic films, including as the villain Henry Gupta in the James Bond blockbuster *Tomorrow Never Dies*.

possible at the Magic Castle in Hollywood, and people travelled from all over the world in the hope of spending even a small amount of time with this master of magic, who became affectionately known as "The Professor". His most famous tricks were his versions of the classic Chinese Linking Rings and the legendary Cups and Balls. The urn containing his ashes remains on display at the Magic Castle, and he will always be one of the most important names in magic's history.

The Expert at the Card Table by S. W. Erdnase, published in 1902, explained many previously unknown card moves and secret ways of cheating at card games. The biggest mystery of all, however, is the identity of the author, since S. W. Erdnase never existed. Spelling the name backwards gives E. S. Andrews, which could be a clue, but to this day no one knows who really wrote the work.

This revolutionary book gave fresh insights to many card tricks and among the many people who may have been inspired was Ed Marlo (1913–91). Marlo could perform magic with all kinds of objects but specialized in playing cards. His techniques were so far ahead of their time that he quickly became a major authority in his chosen area, publishing over 2,000 of his sleights and tricks. It is worth noting that many gambling cheats have used similar moves, and in the early 20th century crooked gamblers and magicians sometimes exchanged ideas. In fact, Dai Vernon searched extensively for notorious card cheats in order to learn their secrets and apply them to his magic tricks.

Another legendary name in close-up magic is Tony Slydini (1901–91). Originally from Italy, this famous magician moved to the USA around 1930 and was the East Coast's answer to Dai Vernon. Slydini was a master of misdirection and applied layers of psychology to his magic to enhance his illusions. He was one of the first to teach his use of psychology as part of his overall strategy for bringing out the artistry in magic, and his methods are still used and respected today. One of his most important messages was to *be natural* when executing a sleight. Your hand may be secretly holding a coin, but if you hold your hand in a natural way no one will guess. Of course, when you think about doing this it is actually quite difficult: if you try too hard it inevitably looks unnatural. Try it. Rest a coin on the tips of your curled fingers and hold your hand in such a way that it looks empty. Not easy, is it?



Left: Tommy Wonder was a superb magician and inventor. His creativity and originality were unparalleled and he was one of the most popular acts to be seen at magic conventions all over the world.

Right: Michael Ammar is a former FISM winner. He has worked as a magic consultant for David Copperfield, Siegfried & Roy, Doug Henning and even Michael Jackson. He has written several books and is one of the most popular magicians on the worldwide magic lecture circuit.



The reality is that many are not improvements at all, but backward steps. It is too easy for anyone to blitz the magic fraternity with a never-ending stream of inferior products. But while hobbyists and even some professionals are happy to perform tricks using specially made gimmicks in place of sleight-of-hand, there are still those who prefer to do things the old-fashioned way.

There are many brilliant close-up magicians around the world today. It would be impossible to name them all, but among the most respected are Ricky Jay, Bill Malone, Michael Ammar and David Roth from the USA, Juan Tamariz from Spain, Guy Hollingworth from Britain, Lennart Green from Sweden and, until his death, Holland's Tommy Swender.

Every three years the world's finest magicians gather at a convention called FISM (Fédération Internationale des Sociétés Magiques). Held in a different country each time, this is the Olympics of the magic world. Among the most exciting events are the competitions, at which the top talents compete for the FISM Grand Prix. Competing in The Hague in 2003 was one of the most nerve-racking experiences of my own performing career. I was placed joint second in the micro magic category with Shawn Farquhar from Canada. The winner was America's Jason Latimer.

Some of the greatest magicians in the world will have performed many of the wonderful magic tricks in this chapter. Now it is your turn to learn them and begin your journey as a close-up magician. Practise hard and – who knows? – maybe *you* will be a future FISM award winner. After all, everybody has to start somewhere.

Slydini inspired a whole generation of magicians to increase the power of their magic by acting naturally and applying psychology. In a sense, his work is the antithesis of the popular notion that the hand is quicker than the eye. Slow moves can be just as deceptive if they are performed well.

Today, close-up magic is the most popular area of magic. This is because it costs very little to learn a simple trick – the only real investment is time – and opportunities to perform are increasing. In an age in which people frequently spend vast sums on entertaining there is scope to make a decent wage performing close-up magic at private parties and corporate events.

Advances in techniques and technology over the past 50 years have led to a massive growth in the magic industry. Almost daily there are new tricks to learn and buy, but far too many are simply poor copies or so-called improvements of existing tricks.

pen-go

A pen is wrapped up in a piece of paper and the paper is slowly torn into pieces, the pen having vanished into thin air! Actually it doesn't disappear into thin air – it flies up your sleeve, but no one sees it go.

The pen is on a special gimmick known to magicians as a "pull". It's best to use this trick as part of a longer sequence or routine that requires the spectator to write something.



1 Attach the lid of a pen to a piece of elastic approximately 30cm (12in) long (depending on the length of your arm). At the other end tie a safety pin. You will also need a piece of paper a little longer than the pen.

secret view



2 Fasten the pin inside the top of your right sleeve, so that when the elastic is loose the pen hangs just below your elbow. When you are ready to begin you will need to pull the pen down your sleeve secretly and hold it by the lid. Pull the pen out of the lid when handing it out for use. When it is returned, re-cap the pen, ensuring the elastic stays hidden behind your right wrist.

secret view



3 Begin to wrap the paper around the pen, making sure that the elastic is still hidden from view from the front. This picture shows the starting position as seen from behind, with the pen at one corner of the paper.



4 From the spectators' point of view the elastic is completely hidden by the back of your hand.

secret view



5 Wrap up the pen by rolling the paper loosely around it.

secret view



6 Hold the pen and paper loosely in your right hand.



7 Allow the pen to slip out of the paper and up your sleeve. The tube of paper will hold its shape.



8 Rip the paper tube in half and then tear it into smaller pieces. Finally, throw the pieces of paper up in the air for a dramatic finish.

let there be light

You show the spectators an ordinary light bulb, which you then screw into your empty fist where it immediately begins to glow. After a few seconds it "switches" off and you hand the light bulb to the spectators

so that they can check it has not been prepared in any way. You show your empty hands and take your well-deserved applause. This trick also requires a "pull".



1 Prepare a pull by tying one end of a piece of elastic approximately 30cm (12in) long (depending on the length of your arm) to a safety pin and the other end to a miniature flashlight. The flashlight needs to be one that operates at the push of a button rather than with a switch that needs to be pushed up or down. You will also require a frosted light bulb.

secret view



2 Fasten the pin inside the top of your right sleeve so that when the elastic is loose the flashlight hangs just below your elbow. Hand the light bulb out for examination. Meanwhile, secretly position the flashlight in your right hand, as shown above. It is important that you practise doing this in such a way that no one sees what you are doing.



3 Retrieve the light bulb from the audience and hold it in your right hand, as shown. Show everyone that your left hand is empty and then hold it in a fist under the bulb.



4 This secret view shows how the tip of the flashlight is resting against the side of the light bulb. From the front the audience will not be able to tell what is really happening.



5 Slowly pretend to screw the bulb into your left hand. As you do so, activate the flashlight by covertly pushing the button with the fingers of your right hand. The bulb will glow just as if it were screwed into a light fitting.



6 Unscrew the light bulb from your fist, meanwhile turning off the flashlight, and show that your left hand is still empty. ►