



Shell Game

A Monthly Newsletter for the London Magic Community
December 2025

Volume 19, Issue 4

November's meeting

It was a brand-new theme we never have tried before for November – One Item Magic! These would be effects that use just one item.

Peter Mennie started us off with a terrific torn & restored card effect from **J.C. Wagner** – his famous “*T & C Card*”. He then generously gave us all playing cards and walked through the effect several times so we could all learn it!

Mark Hogan showed a way to choose a spectator by firing a paper rabbit into the crowd which floated down gently to the ground. He then did **Kyle Littleton's** “3G”, where a package of gum changes brands 3 times! He also performed **Nicholas Einhorn's** “*Word in a Million*”, where Mark was able to determine any word chosen from a regular book! Lastly, he broke all the rules and presented his sponge ball routines about Martians (he said they were clones, so it was still one item??), which included the “*10 Count*” - which fooled the pants off **Al Coombs**!

Our guest for tonight, **Harvey Poole**, showed off his homemade wooden magic case as well as his homemade *Pom Pom Sticks*. He also did some rubber band magic, including two linked bands that switch places and then unlink – all in the spectator's hands.

Andrew Olmstead performed a wonderful **David Parr** effect where the spectator chose one of the invisible coins, as well as if it was heads or tails up –

Next Meeting:

Date: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10

Time: 7:00 PM

Topic: PASS THE DECK!

**Location: Crabby Joe's Restaurant (NOTE THE CHANGE
IN LOCATION!)**

276 Dundas Street, London (downtown)

and that coin (with the proper orientation) was under Andrew's hand all the while!

Al Coombs made his wedding ring disappear and reappear in his hand, then on top of a spectator's hand, then on top of their shoulder! As a big finish, he made his wedding ring switch places with a finger ring – inside his pocket! And **Peter Skells** had an ingenious way of knowing the position of any card in his deck!

Turns out there's a lot of magic you can do with one item! Thanks to everyone for coming out and sharing

Mark Hogan

December's meeting

DATE: Wednesday, December 10

TIME: 7:00 PM

**PLACE: Crabby Joe's Restaurant (NOTE THE CHANGE IN LOCATION!)
276 Dundas Street, London (downtown)**

TOPIC: PASS THE DECK!

It's time for the return of a challenge that we haven't done in quite some time. The premise is easy: We pass around a deck of cards to everyone, and we're asked to do a trick using it. If you can, pass the deck and you're still in the game. If not, you're out. We just keep doing this until we're out of tricks or they kick us out!

The deck starts as an unopened, complete, ordered deck – but it may not stay that way. The trick can involve shuffling the cards, destroying cards, ... - you don't know the state of the deck you'll be passed.

The good news is we all get to see a lot of magic to use with any deck of cards. So practice any borrowed, shuffled deck tricks you might know, and see how long you can stay in the game in December!

We Want Your Reviews and Tricks!

Please send any original reviews, magic tricks or routines to:

magic_london@yahoo.ca

News Of Interest



Woman tricked her way into the Magic Castle

(BBC.com)

A magician who tricked her way into the *Magic Circle* has been granted membership - 34 years after she was kicked out.

Sophie Lloyd says she disguised herself as a man to fool examiners into letting her join the elite society in 1991, at a time female magicians were not allowed to be members.

When the Circle announced it was permitting women to join later that year, **Ms Lloyd** revealed her deception, prompting the society to expel her at the very same meeting it admitted its first female magicians.

Following a public search to find her, the Circle has now apologised to **Ms Lloyd** and presented her with a membership certificate.

"I'm beyond thrilled," **Ms Lloyd** told [Radio 4's Today programme](#) on Thursday.

In the late 1980s, **Ms Lloyd** was studying at a school of mime in London where she befriended magician **Jenny Winstanley**.

"Jenny was increasingly frustrated that women, including herself, could not join the Magic Circle," **Ms Lloyd** said. "So she came up with an idea to infiltrate the society by having me dress as a man. She couldn't do it herself as she was too recognisable."

It was a colossal undertaking. **Ms Lloyd** had worked as Miss Winstanley's assistant at gigs but hadn't performed magic on her own, so had to learn.

She invented a new identity - **Raymond Lloyd** - and spent about two years studying the character. She disguised herself with a wig, body suit and "croaky" voice. She wore gloves to hide her feminine hands.

There was nothing she could do about her height - 5ft 2in (1.57m) - so instead she styled Raymond as a "young-looking, 18-year-old," with some facial "fluff", she told Canadian broadcaster [CBC](#) in 1991.

Ms Lloyd told the *Today programme* that her character was "totally believed." She had no problems wearing the body suit, but the gloves made it "very hard" to do sleight of hand tricks, she said.

By March 1991, **Ms Lloyd** was ready to have her skills put to the test. Rather than being scrutinised at the *Magic Circle's* headquarters - which **Ms Lloyd** and **Miss Winstanley** deemed too risky - Ms Lloyd opted to invite the society's examiners to a 20-minute performance at a working men's club in front of 200 spectators. To cover up her voice, **Ms Lloyd** said Raymond had laryngitis.

Ms Lloyd even stayed for a drink with one of the examiners after the show.

A week later, **Ms Lloyd** was told she had been granted membership to the Circle.

For months, **Raymond Lloyd** performed magic and even socialised with other *Magic Circle* members.

When **Ms Lloyd** and **Miss Winstanley** later heard the society was going to begin accepting female magicians as members, they decided to come clean about their deception and **Miss Winstanley** told the society about it over the phone.



But the *Magic Circle* did not take kindly to the news. The duo got a letter saying that Raymond had been expelled, and in October 1991, at the first meeting accepting women into the society, **Ms Lloyd** was kicked out.

"We couldn't get our heads round it," **Ms Lloyd** said.

Ms Lloyd spent about 10 years performing across the country as a magician, including performing anti-bullying shows, before she moved to Spain, where she took early retirement and has been involved in animal rescue work. **Miss Winstanley** went on to run a pottery firm in Norfolk, before she died in a car crash in 2004.

The *Magic Circle* started a search for **Ms Lloyd** last year.

"I felt it important that the *Magic Circle* should be able to recognise Sophie as the role model for women magicians, as well as show that we are now a completely open society," said **Laura London**, the society's first female chair.

Ms Lloyd only found out about the search for her when her sister sent her a link to an interview. Initially reluctant to join the society because of the amount of time that had passed, she eventually decided to do it to honour Miss Winstanley's legacy.

Today, the *Magic Circle* is still heavily male-dominated. The society has around 1,700 members, of which 5% are women.

Ms Lloyd received her new membership certificate at an event at the Circle's London headquarters, which featured performances by five magicians and attended by both members of the society and the general public. **Miss Winstanley** was also recognised at the event.

"This is for Jenny, really," **Ms Lloyd** said. "I just think Jenny would have loved it."



Three Tiny Pieces of Wisdom

(Joshua Jay)

For this week's Edition, I wanted to share my pre-show ritual. It's also my cure-all for any stage fright or nerves I'm feeling at a particular show, and it's my way of setting myself up to be the best I can be.

It's three tiny pieces of wisdom, given to me by wiser, smarter friends, and I have them written on an old-stained piece of paper I keep with me at every show. I later had these printed up on little cards that I would give away to young magicians who attend my shows.

Other bits of advice have fallen away, but the three things I'm about to share have become my mantra—my pre-show ritual—and they are the twenty words I fill my head with just before beginning a performance

Tonight is part of the process

I'm hardest on myself when a performance or a trick or a line don't do what they're supposed to do. I blame myself because I think, sometimes correctly, that it's my thinking or judgment that has failed me. *Why didn't I come up with something funnier? This isn't knocking them over like I had hoped.* Or the dreaded vagueness of, *This is missing something.*

But when I remember that every performance is part of that same process, it gives me comfort. *Tonight won't be perfect, but it will get me one performance closer to it.* And "Tonight is part of the process" also reminds me of the upside of honing the performance in real time: the thrill of a mid-show insight that can become a hard-won, permanent detail of the piece.

Perform like it's the first time and the last time

When I read these words, I think about this old musician's parable. An orchestra is about to begin a performance of **Beethoven's** "Fifth Symphony," arguably the most famous piece of classical music. Backstage, the conductor

says, "I know all of you have played this piece innumerable times, and the audience has heard it many times. But tonight, I want you to play for two distinguished guests. One is a little girl who is hearing **Beethoven's** 'Fifth' for the first time. The second is an old man, who will be hearing it for the last time."

Enjoy the Show

I don't believe in rules for performance, because I can always think of exceptions and discrepancies in the arbitrary lines magicians draw. But, to me, this is an unbreakable rule: audiences can *always* tell when a performer is enjoying themselves. And I can think of plenty of performers I admire in other ways, but who exude a distinctly bothered, indifferent energy onstage. You can *sense* when someone isn't having a good time, and that will doom a show as much as any other factor.

"*Enjoy the show*" is *always* the last thing I say to myself before I walk onstage.

I hope this helps. I first talked about this concept on *Six Impossible Things*, a comprehensive collection of my off-Broadway show and more than three hours of explanations afterward. It talks about how to put a show together, I explain my material in the show, and I go over all the details you need to develop original material of your own. If you'd like to check it out, it's [HERE](#).

Joshua Jay

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The Shell Game is a free newsletter sent to members of the London Magicians Guild and other people in the community interested in magic.

Opinions expressed do not reflect the views of the London Magicians Guild.

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