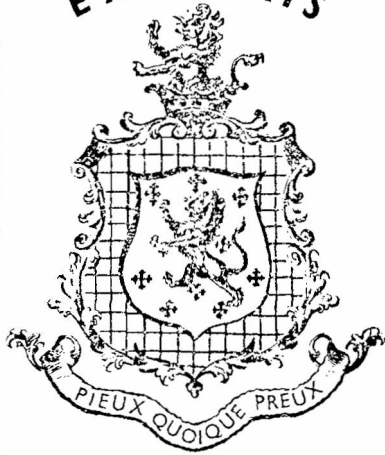


DENNIS

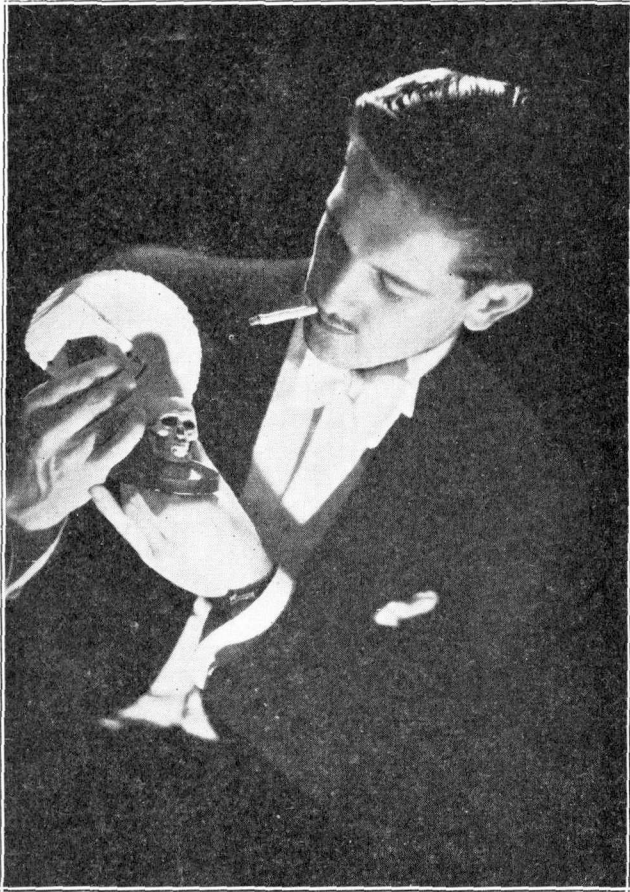
THE
FIRST BOOK
OF
WILLIAM

A
GOODLIFFE
PUBLICATION

EX LIBRIS



— WILL ALMA —
M.I.M.C. (LONDON)



THE CULPRIT

**THE
FIRST BOOK OF WILLIAM**

BY

BILLY McCOMB

Illustrated by the AUTHOR

With Cover Design by DENNIS

WILLIAM McCOMB
273 COLLINS STREET
MELBOURNE, VICT.

A
GOODLIFFE
PUBLICATION

Dedicated to my Mother ——
who unwittingly raised a genius.

FIRST PUBLISHED JANUARY, 1947.

PRINTED IN ENGLAND,
and Published by
GOODLIFE THE MAGICIAN, 6, COLONNADE PASSAGE,
BIRMINGHAM, 2.

INTRODUCTION

ALL SORTS of odd, strange and curious people approach the Magical Publisher, begging him to put out books which they have written. As anyone who reads much of our present-day magical literature will know, that which gets published — i.e. the books in which the publisher has sufficient faith to lay out the production costs — is frequently not all that could be desired, from which the discerning man will deduce the quality of some of the material which gets rejected!

I realised, when I started my publishing career, that if purchasers were to have faith in the books put out under my imprint, it would be very necessary to seek out potential authors with practical ideas. Hence I was delighted to meet, some months back, a visitor from Northern Ireland who was positively bubbling over with just such notions. This young man's name was Billy McComb; like all the best magicians, it was immediately apparent that he was not quite "all there" (in his spare time he is a medical student, and we all know about them).

A brisk, breezy, non-stop talker, a great showman, versatile and volatile, Billy "sold" me forty-nine bright ideas in one Sunday afternoon session at my home — ideas ranging from pocket-trick wrinkles, through the best glass-to-glass glue to glue glass to glass (if you follow), to presentations for stage illusions. As I listened, fascinated, to his monologue (even I could not "get a word in edgeways"), I realised that here was one of the potential prizes of a publisher's life — and when he did eventually pause for breath, I put the proposition: How about a book? Billy fell for the idea, he

wrote the book (one afternoon during a medical lecture), Fabian re-wrote it, and, in a word, THIS IS IT! — which I had intended to be the title of the work; but Billy had another idea, so here without further ado, is “The First Book of William,” which I present with some pride, because but for me, you, dear reader, would be missing a lot of pleasure and a host of good things.

Gardner.

PREFACE

WHETHER or not you feel that a straight-jacket should accompany every copy of this book sold, the blame does not attach to me. I'll accept full responsibility for the ideas contained herein, but the idea of the book itself is Goodliffe's.

Should any dealer decide that he would like to make up for sale any of these ideas, may I make one request? Do write to me and tell me of your intentions, will you? I have all the original apparatus mentioned and could probably save a lot of experimenting. Besides that, even if there's no law of copyright applicable to magic, I do think courtesy should at least have a place in the art.

Finally, before you start to read at all, will you make a mental promise that you will try out at least one of the tricks? Remember, "Soft Soap" lay between the covers of "The Magic Wand" for years until some enterprising wizard took it out and made a best-seller of it.

BILLY McCOMB

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The Author was born in Ulster on April 12th, 1922 . . .
It was bad everywhere that year.

Doesn't remember when he began magic-making. Has been doing it from as far back as he can remember. Nobody else in his family ever delved in the art . . . there is no previous evidence of insanity in the family.

Started in Queen's University, Belfast, as a medical student, after having done the B.Sc. course. Hopes to qualify in 1947, if he can spare the time from his magic.

Has several other strings besides magic. Appeared in several films made by Irish Film companies. Cartoons for odd magazines. Has taken on many pupils in magic, including a magicienne who has made a name for herself in Ireland.

Finally, he believes in entertainment first, magic second. Favourite Tricks: Razor Blades and Vanishing Stick in Newspaper. Favourite Magician: Robert Harbin. Favourite Book: The Tarbell Course. Favourite Dislike: Getting assistants from the audience. Vices: Smokes a pipe, and talks Magic until 4-0 a.m. when in the company of Magicians.

CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	7
Biographical Note	8
William's Torn and Restored Newspaper Presentation	11
William's Bicycle Tyre	12
William's Ice Cream Production	14
More About Ice Cream	16
William's Fantastic Fez	17
William's New Glove Opening	20
William "Dicovers" "Multicore" Solder	22
William's Attache Case Production	24
William's Invisible Paint	26
William on the subject of "Stung"	28
William's Invisible Pipe	30
William's Hot Book	32
William's Comedy Card Flight	34
William passes on some Tips	36
Assorted Gaglets of the William Brand	37
William's Poker Hand Trick	39
William amid the Fakirs	42
William's Fantastic Table	44
William's Floating Ball Routine	46
William Turns Gravity Upside Down	49



The Frontispiece is from a portrait by
Louis Morrison of Belfast.

THE FIRST BOOK OF WILLIAM

SPASM 1:

William's Torn and Restored Newspaper Presentation

LIKE many others, I believe that until magicians learn to present the effects they have got, there is not much object in learning a whole host of new ones. With this idea in mind I'm passing on to you my method of dressing the old torn newspaper trick.

As the wizard walks onto a stage lit by coloured footlights, he is picked up in a white spot. He is reading a newspaper. The spot suddenly shifts to the opposite side of the stage. With a guestore of annoyance the magician lowers his paper and walks across the stage into the spot. No sooner is he settled to read his paper than the spot again shifts back to the entrance. Thoroughly chagrined the wizard walks centre-stage and proceeds to tear up the newspaper, no sooner has he done so, than . . . the spot settles centre-stage. Standing in the spot the magician is seen holding portions of torn newspaper in both hands. Looking up at the source of the spot he moves his lips in silent profanity. He restores the newspaper and shakes it out. The applause of the audience startles him into reality and he commences his act. I don't care what method you choose to use to bring about the restoration. You can have clips, elastics up your sleeve, and hold-outs flying up and down your lapels if you wish. Personally I 'll still stick two newspapers back to back . . . and still baffle a lay audience. Magicians don't pay my fees.

William's Bicycle Tyre

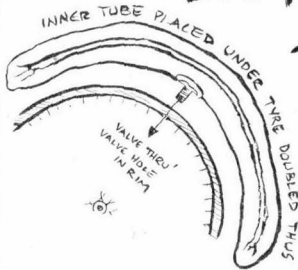
THE EFFECT of this original trick is as follows: The magician shows a bicycle wheel fitted with a tyre. The wheel is bounced on the stage to show that it is blown up. The valve is unscrewed and air let out of the tyre. Leaning over into the Stalls the magician requests a member of the audience to feel the tyre and satisfy himself that it is really flat. The wheel is then stood on the performer's table and the tyre can be seen to spread flat as further proof. The magician blows several times in the direction of the tyre, leans over the footlights and asks someone to reach out and press it. It is found to be blown up to a good extent. As further proof the performer drops it on the stage and it bounces right up into his hand again.

THE HOW:

The inner tube of the tyre is not placed right around the rim. It is folded in two with the valve in the centre. The valve is placed through the valve-hole as usual. The cover is then put on. If the inner tube is pumped up it will be seen that only one side of the tyre will be blown up. The other half, since it has no inner tube in it, will be flat on pressing it; but due to the elasticity of the tyre itself it will appear full-blown. If you lean over the foots to a member of the audience he will only be able to reach the half portion of the tyre that is away from you. Therefore you have control of whether he feels the tyre soft or hard. As regards letting the air out of the tyre at the outset, you only appear to unscrew the valve. If you put your tongue against your teeth as if you were going to say the word "THUMB," only stop at the "th" part, you get a sound that is exactly like a tyre deflating. Besides that there is no movement of the lips. It is also quite natural to put your head close to the valve as you release the air.

WILLIAM'S BICYCLE

TYRE



PRETEND TO UNSCREW VALVE & MAKE HISsing NOISE



William's Ice Cream Production

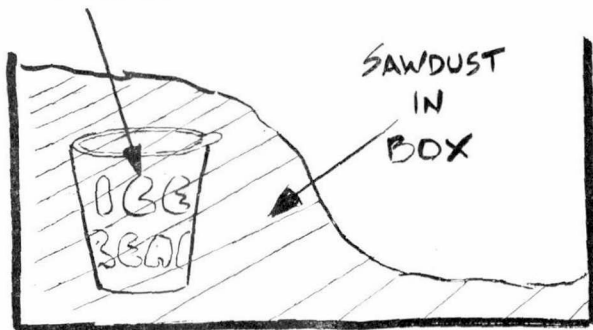
TO THE lay mind there are few things harder to mess about with than Ice Cream. It's hard enough to eat the stuff without dripping it all over the place. To the best of my knowledge the only time I've ever seen Ice Cream mentioned in magical literature was in a copy of the "JINX" under the title of "Brrr!" by Otis Manning. So don your fur-lined thumbtips and try this trick.

D'you remember the old trick where the wizard apparently fills a container with confetti, puts a lid on it, make a short address to the audience lasting about ten minutes and then just prevents them from going to sleep by producing some drinkable liquid from the container? Let's modernise it, shall we? Magician picks up an empty ice cream carton. Throws it in the air and catches it. Crosses to a small box of sawdust and scoops up several carton-fuls of it. On the last scoop he swops for a full carton of ice cream, covered with its usual cardboard top. Some of the sawdust still remains on the top of the carton, so it looks as if it is genuinely filled with sawdust. In placing a small silk over the carton the magician blows at the top thus causing the surplus sawdust to fly off, and in lifting off the silk he also lifts off the cardboard top by means of its usual little tab at the edge. Sawdust to ice cream! One very hot night I had occasion to play cabaret in front of a fat perspiring band leader. On the way to the show I dropped off and bought these props. worked the trick and handed the band leader the ice at the end of the act. It got a great reception for me that night. Why shouldn't it do the same for you?

WILLIAM'S

ICE CREAM

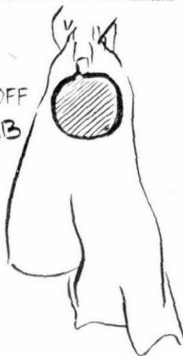
LOADED
CARTON HIDDEN
UNDER SAWDUST PRODUCTION



SURPLUS
SAWDUST
BLOWN
OFF
UNDER
COVER



CARTON
COVER
NIPPED OFF
BY ITS TAB
UNDER
SILK



OF PLACING SILK OVER CARTON.

Wm

More About Ice Cream

WHILE we're on the subject of Ice Cream I've several ideas on the subject I'd like to pass on to you. Maybe you'll like them; maybe. In either case, you're going to get 'em.

IDEA 1.

Why not pour (?) milk from your fake pitcher into a carton already full of ice cream, then place a plat on top, invert the lot quickly, and place on a boy's head. Suggest that if he cares to reach up and reverse the carton, he might get a surprise. The unfortunate child thinks the surprise is a shower of milk and refuses to do it. Magician does so and spoons out the ice onto the plate and gives it to the boy, saying "This trick's not so hot . . . look!"

IDEA 2.

You could work "Say When" or the U.S. "Liquid Appear" with SOFT ice cream. Vanish an Ice Cream Wafer in "Absorbo" Newspaper. Produce Wafers from a "Dove Pan."

IDEA 3.

Why not work a full act as an ice cream vendor. Bicycle with the usual box business on the front. Freezer taken from inside is actually a "Ghost Tube." Fair customer could be produced from the box part of the bicycle after it was shown empty by the tip-over box principle.

IDEA 4.

You COULD discard the silk from your "Stick to Silks" and fill the stick with ice cream . . . but I'd hate like hell to see you work it!!

William's Fantastic Fez

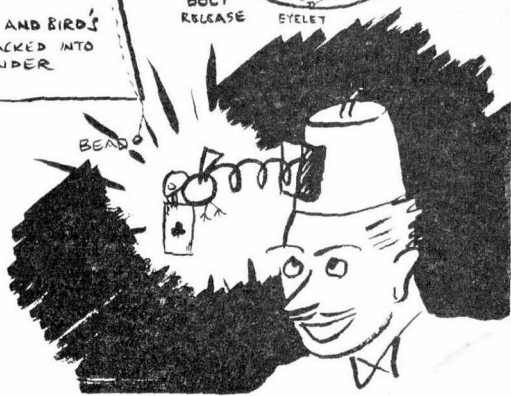
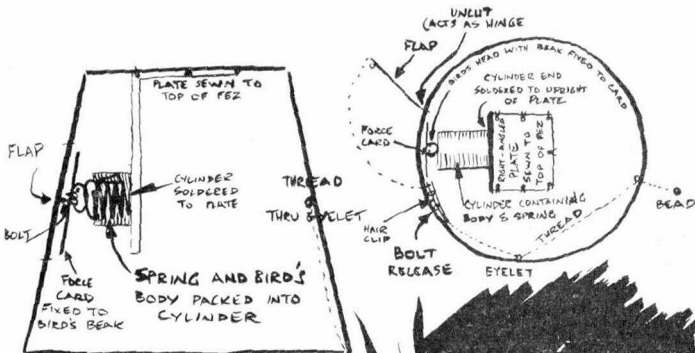
POSSESSING a fez and wishing to find a new way to reveal a chosen card, I evolved the following trick.

Cards thrown to a spectator. Spectator invited to look at any card and throw back the pack. Magician explains that to reveal card he has to go Oriental and pass into a trance. Explains also that when he is in a trance, audience will probably not notice any difference. He dons fez, shuffles pack and triumphantly takes off a card. It's not the right card. He explains that he's probably not "sufficiently entranced" and tries again; still not right. "I'll have to think on this," he declares. He lifts his fez, drops the cards inside and replaces it on his head. Suddenly a small flap on the front of the fez opens and a very dowdy looking cuckoo flies out on the end of a large spring with the chosen card in it's beak. Daft, I know, but it's the sort of thing modern audiences go for.

THE HOW

Pack thrown to the spectator is composed of cards all the same with the exception of the bottom card. It has an elastic band round its middle. Spectator peeks at a card—naturally it's the force card. Whilst he does this, you pick up the fez off your table and palm up two indifferent cards along with it. When pack is thrown back to you, get these cards on top of the deck so that when you take off the elastic they are the top two cards. All this is easily enough done in taking the fez from your hand and placing it on your head. Go through any sort of shuffle, fan out the cards and produce the two indifferent cards as your idea of the one chosen. Then let fly the Cuckoo. Now the construction of the Fez. Get cue of a pretty dark colour. Cut out a small door in the front of it just large enough for a playing card to come through in

WILLIAM'S FANTASTIC FEZ!



Wm

an upright position. Leave one side of the door uncut to act as a hinge. To the top inside of the fez sew a right-angled plate of tin, the angle of it coming down parallel to the door, and right behind the door solder a small cylinder of tin to the plate to accommodate the spring and cuckoo, with the exception of its beak which protrudes outside the cylinder. Solder the free end of the spring firmly inside the cylinder to the tin plate. In the cuckoo's beak fix the force card. Preferably use an ace . . . it can be seen better in a large hall. Mine is the Ace of Clubs. It must be fixed so that when the bird is extended on its spring outside the door, the card faces dead on to the audience.

The door holds the bird inside the cylinder, by pressure against the mouth of it. The card lies against the door on the inside. To release the door catch and cause the cuckoo to spring out you have a small bolt affair fixed up. A small wire ring sewn to the edge of the door and a corresponding ring sewn to the fez opposite the opening are held in apposition by a bobby-pin or hair-clip which has one bar slid through the two rings. A thread is attached to the end of the clip and is guided by means of more rings sewn to the fez till it arrives at the back. There it culminates in a small bead. This hangs unnoticed against the hair at the back of the head (unless you're bald). Cards can be thrown into the fez without gumming up the works. Scatch head in perplexity, pull bead, and there you are!



William's New Glove Opening

FOR a long time now performers have, as a matter of course, opened with the "Stick to Silks" and then with a "Thank-God—I've-got-that-off-my-chest" air they go into their normal routine. In an effort to get over that I devised the following. It has speed, surprise, novelty. Everything.

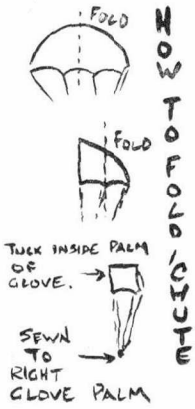
Magician enters to a fast musical motif. Quickly removes his gloves. Flings them into the air. A small red parachute suddenly bursts open. The gloves float down gracefully into the performer's hat held out to receive it.

THE HOW

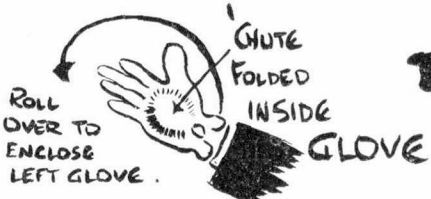
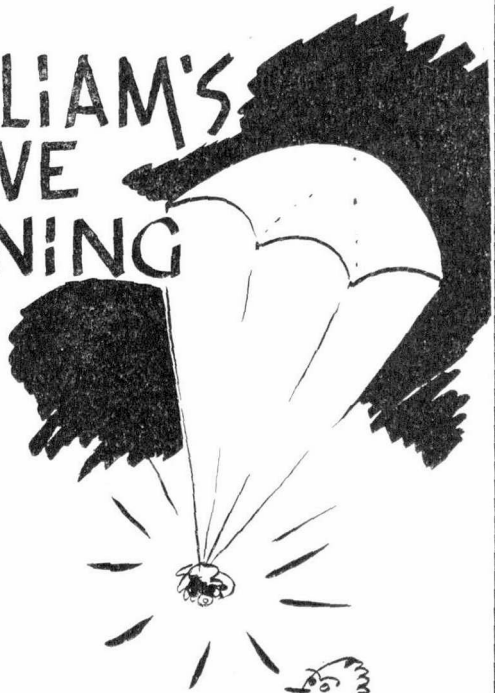
Very simple. Inside the right glove you have one of those little parachutes the R.A.F. use to attach flares too. Take off the left glove first. Hold it in the right hand and pull off the right glove over it so that it is imprisoned inside the right glove. Chuck the whole lot in the air, whip off your hat, and catch the gloves in it as they sail down. I'd advise that you don't try this in drawingroom shows. You won't get sufficient height to throw the gloves up far enough for the 'chute to have a chance to open.

You could, of course, change the gloves to a bouquet. The flowers would then float down on the parachute into the hat. Personally I've tried both methods and find the flowers in springing open tend to get mixed with the strings of the 'chute, so that it all opens lop-sidedly.

WILLIAM'S GLOVE OPENING



HOW TO FOLD CHUTE



William “discovers” “Multicore” Solder

ONE DAY, in the throes of soldering a gimmick, I got to thinking about the solder wire I was using. It was a long wire business with holes bored right up the middle. It can be bent in the oddest shapes, and can then be unbent just as easily. Two ideas came to me.

IDEA 1.

Get a length of coreless magician’s rope, about 18 inch in length. Cut off a piece of “Multicore” solder wire an inch shorter than the rope. Buy a feather flower in Woolies and you’re all set. Dye the rope green, stick the wire up the rope, sew it into position inside, and fasten the flower onto one end of the wire now inside the rope. If you hold the end of the rope so that the flower sits upright, you’ll find that if you blow hard at the flower it will wilt most realistically. In other words a perfect “Wilting Flower” for about half-a-Dollar.

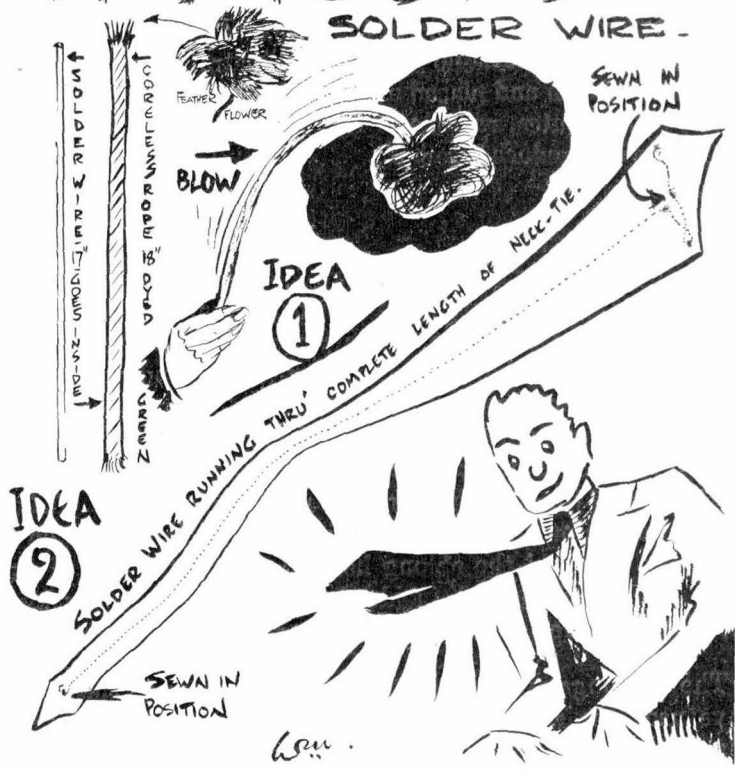
IDEA 2.

Get your favourite tie and stick a length of ye “Multicore,” solder wire inside it from end to end. You’ll find it will tie as usual without much difficulty. Now imagine the fun you can have on and off-stage. You can catch the two ends of your tie and pull them up to the horizontal. They’ll remain there stuck out like a chromium-plated thumbtip. What’s more you can then pull them apart at right angles. I’ve had plenty of merriment out of this gag. Have a go at it.

AUTHOR’S NOTE: Wonder what the “Multicore” solder people would pay for the advert?

W^m DISCOVERS "MULTICORE"

SOLDER WIRE.



William's Attache Case Production

THE EFFECT of this stunt is as follows: Magician talks about having spent a holiday abroad. When coming thru' the Customs, he merely showed an empty suitcase, but on arrival home he opened the case and produced all sorts of unrationed and dutiable goods. To illustrate this an empty suitcase is shown and placed on a small stand. Silks, jewels, boxes of chocolates, cartons of tea, eggs and what have you, are forthwith produced from it.

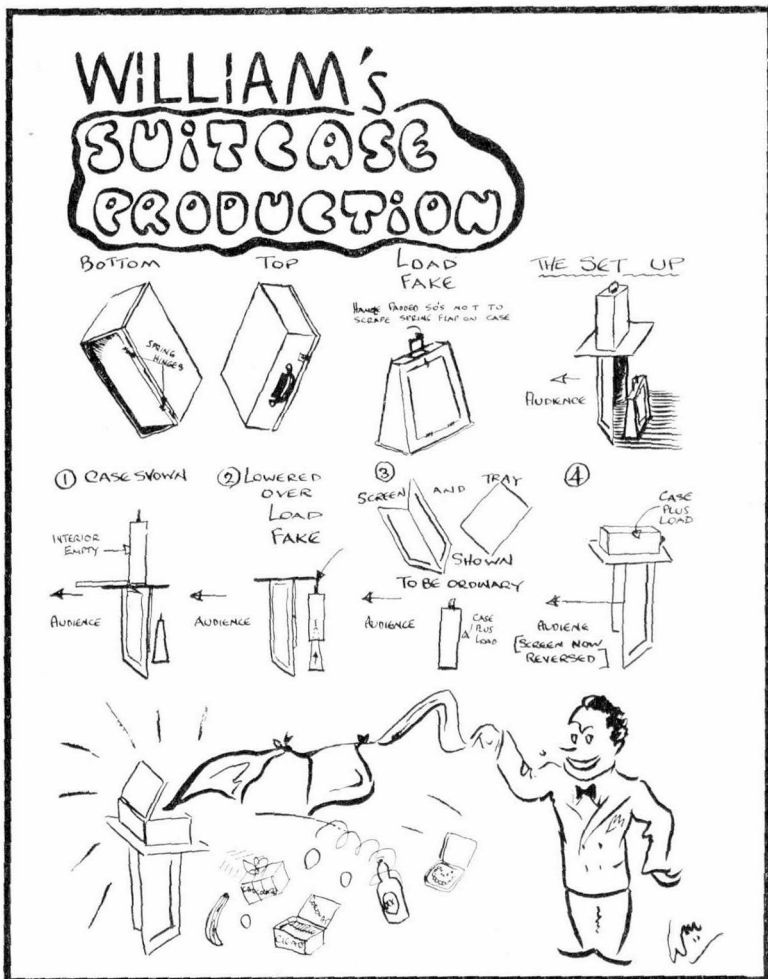
THE HOW

For this you require a tray, a two-fold screen which reaches right down to the floor, a special load fake, and a "fixed" suitcase. The latter is an ordinary case with a pair of spring hinges fixed to the side opposite that with the handle attached. The resultant spring flap hinges inwards. An oblong hole is cut between the attachments of the handle. The special load fake consists of a box which will slide thru' the flap in the bottom of the case and practically fill the interior. It has a wire handle on the top of it which can be grasped when it protrudes up thru' the oblong hole on the handle side of the case. When the load is inside the case it can be got at by a lid with a simple catch on the lid side of the case.

The workings of the trick will now be obvious to those who have used the old "Kellar" Flower Growth. The case is demonstrated to be empty. It is placed down behind the screen and covers the load. The wire handle of the load comes up through the hole under the case handle. The tray and screen are now picked up, shown and the tray placed on top of the screen. The screen is placed with the hinge side at the back. The case is now picked up plus the load. Load handle and case handle being gripped together. The case

plus load is dumped onto the tray on the screen, opened, the catch of the load lid released, and the loaded stuff wheeled out.

In case you're interested in Fitzkee's "Trick Brain" idea, this trick was developed as a result of my first attempt at inventing tricks by means of it.



William's Invisible Paint

LATELY we've had striped paint mentioned in magic. This set me thinking along the lines of vanishing paints and so on. Eventually I got around to invisible paint . . . and the following trick evolved itself.

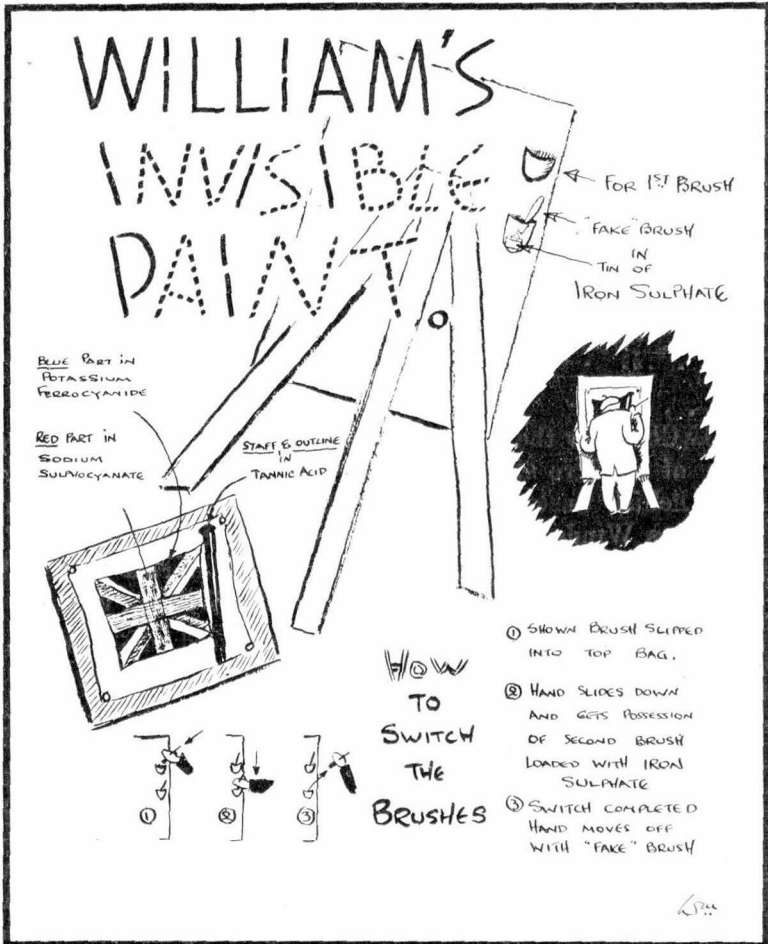
First of all it's a chemical effect. Don't let that scare you—I've worked it often. And you don't have to worry about weighing and measuring chemicals.

The effect is as follows: Magician says that, in painting, half the mess is usually due to paint dripping from the brush or dripping over the edge of the can. To counteract this he has invented his famous invisible paint which does not manifest itself until it actually is painted onto the article.

To demonstrate this he picks up a bottomless paintcan and shows the inside. He then shows a paintbrush and flips the bristles over his hand several times to show the absence of any paint on it. A piece of paper is pinned to a board resting on a small easel. Straight away the brush is dipped in the invisible paint tin and a Union Jack or Stars and Stripes is painted on the paper.

In the old chemical spirit painting the chemical required to bring up the colours on the treated paper was sprayed on. In this method the only thing is to dip the brush in the chemical and paint the treated paper with it. Beforehand, a Union Jack is pencilled out on the paper with an "H" pencil having a sharp point. The outline can be seen close-up, but at more than a yard it can't be seen at all. The red parts of the flag are painted on previously with a solution of SODIUM SULPHOCYANATE, the blue bits with the strong solution of POTASSIUM FERROCYANIDE. If you wish to put in the flag-staff and outline the flag, do so in TANNIC ACID. The brush is loaded with a solution of IRON SULPHATE required to "develop" the above chemicals.

This loading is done in rather an ingenious manner. When the magician approaches the board it is quite a normal movement for him to hold it at the side on several occasions with the hand which is also holding the brush. At this point the brush is switched. There are two bags at the back edge of the board. The top one is held open to receive the ordinary brush. The bottom one has a brush already in it with its bristles reposing in a small tin of IRON SULPHATE in the bottom of the bag. I personally find that if the top bag is just below shoulder level and the lower bag about elbow level, the switch is best made by a sort of sliding movement of the



hand down the left side of the board (stage left). The ordinary brush is dropped into the top bag and the hand slides down and grips the lower brush between the second and third fingers. The loaded brush is then removed in a casual unhurried movement and you start to paint.

The dipping now and again in the bottomless can is just misdirection. It takes the audience's attention to the tip, and as it has nothing whatsoever to do with the functioning of the trick it is therefore excellent misdirection.

I think you'll be pleasantly surprised to see how brightly the various colours come up on a mere touch of the IRON SULPHATE.

Don't forget to wash your paws after you've painted on the POTASSIUM FERROCYANIDE. It's pretty poisonous stuff.



SPASM 10:

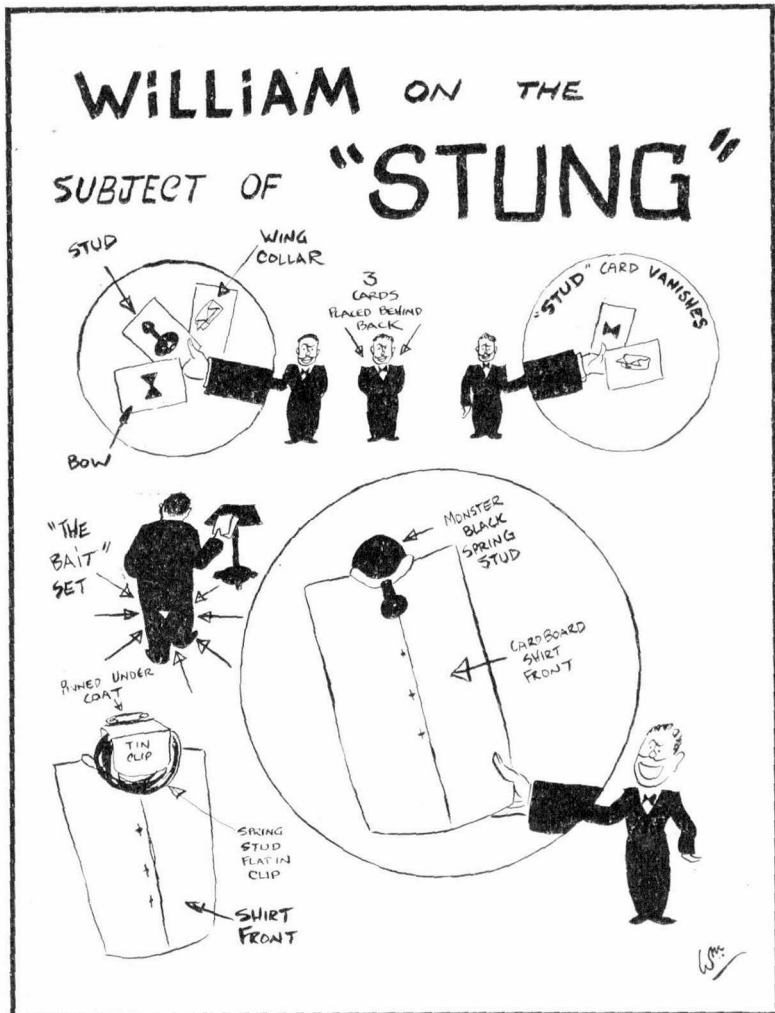
William on the subject of "Stung"

SINCE I saw the ordinary version of "STUNG" at the age of ten I've always thought very highly of it. It got hellish hackneyed so I laid off it till those magical geniuses Windsor and M'Athy produced "Pink Elephants." When practically every wizard in Ireland started to "Pink Elephant," I decided to branch out with a William version.

Magician tells the story of the fellow wizard who was rushing out to a show and dropped his collar stud. He shows three cards. One has a picture of an evening tie, another a collar, and the last one a large black collar stud. Using the "Pink Elephants" principle vanish the Stud card in the following way. Put the three cards behind your back. Square them up. Squeeze. That works the works and the stud card is gone on fanning out the cards. Go back to your table and place the cards on it. The audience see a small triangle of card at the base of your coat. As usual they demand to see

what you have pushed up your coat, thinking it is the vanished stud card. The "card" is pulled into view and proves to be a shirt "dicky" with a large black spring stud stuck in the stud-hole!

A piece of tin is bent into clip form to hold the spring stud in the flat position. As the stud is attached to the cardboard shirt front, this clip also holds the "dicky." A safety pin is soldered to the clip, and by this it can be attached under the coat so that a small triangle of "dicky" shows.



Incidentally I'm presuming that you don't commit the crime of turning your back on the audience whilst on the stage. Therefore the cardboard does not show till you purposely expose it. The spring stud is just coiled spring in stud shape, covered with black velvet.

I haven't been able to contact Tommy Windsor to see if it's all right working the William version on his principle as yet. If I've trespassed, I'm sorry.



SPASM 11:

William's Invisible Pipe

MANY years ago in a Laurel and Hardy flick, I saw the following trick. For ages I've tried to think out a solution. I've put the idea up to several magicians but they all seem to have given it up.

The effect was that Stan Laurel closed his left hand into a fist. He stuck his left thumb upright and placed it in his mouth like a pipe-stem. Smoke then issued from his fist. On opening his hand it was seen to be quite empty.

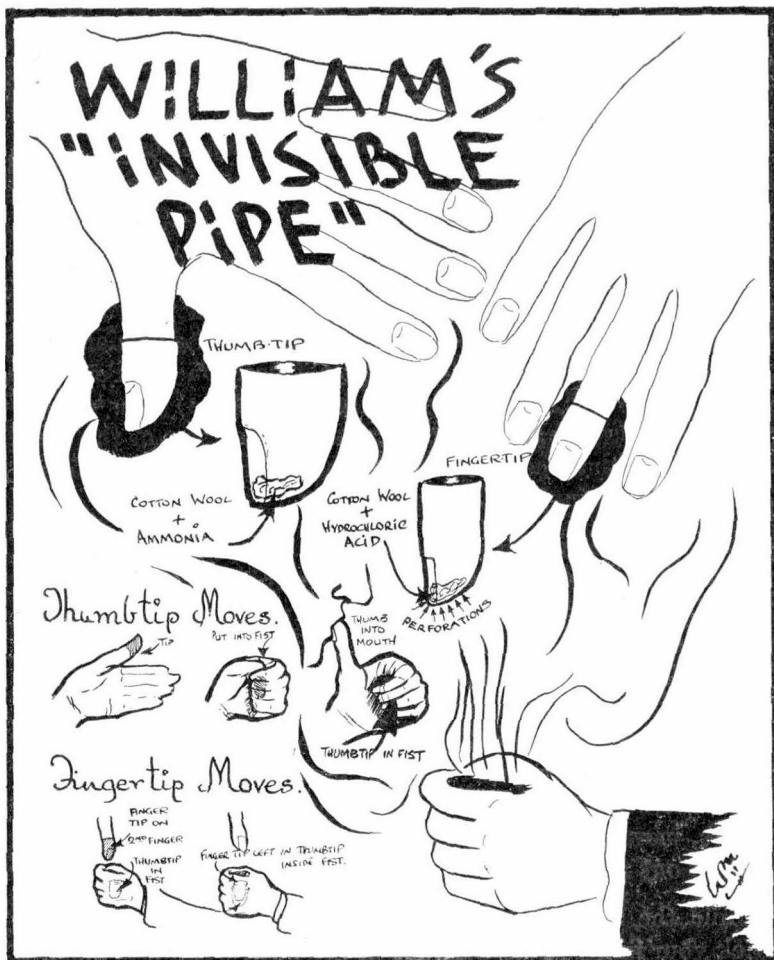
THE HOW

Get a thumb-tip and perforate the extreme tip with several small holes. Do the same with a finger tip. Put a small wad of cottonwool inside both tips. Drop some dilute Hydrochloric Acid into the finger tip and some strong ammonia into the thumb-tip. Put the thumb-tip on the left thumb, and the finger-tip on the second finger of the right hand.

To present the trick, close the left hand into a fist with the thumb inside it. Withdraw the thumb, leaving the tip in the fist. Stick the left thumb in your mouth. In apparently pushing the invisible tobacco down into the fist, leave the finger-tip in the fist inside the thumb-tip. The ammonia fumes then pervade upwards, meet the Hydrochloric fumes

and form fumes of ammonia chloride which is white smoke. To get the tips back in position on the digits, reverse the procedure.

I know Hydrochloric Acid is a corrosive poison, but in a dilute state it is still effective and it is not in contact with the finger for sufficient length of time to cause any damage. In fact I stuck on my finger-tip with fairly concentrated acid in the cotton wool for fifteen minutes to see. Guinea pig for my art!!



William's Hot Book

I 'VE always liked the Firebowl effect. It's rather ingenious. Besides that, flames look good on the stage. Provided, of course, they aren't consuming the performer.

The effect of this trick is that the magician picks up a very luridly-covered book with some title like "Nights in Paris." He opens the book. Flames shoot out of it. He says, "Uh-huh, too hot for me," closes the book and lays it aside. Just a quickie.

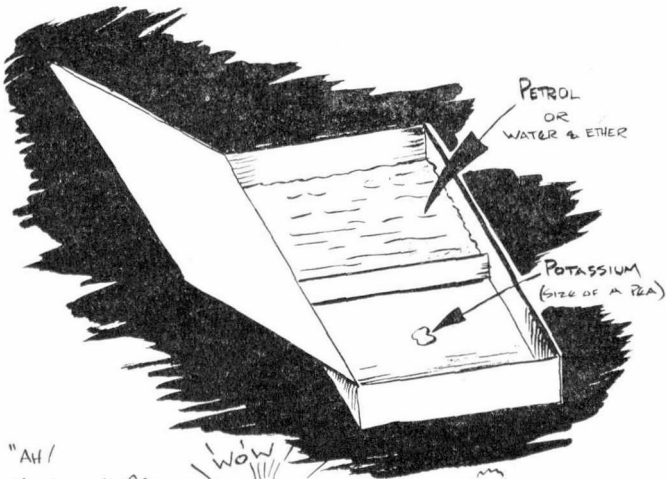
THE HOW

The book is made out of brass. The edges are painted white and the gaudy cover with an easily seen title is glued on. It lies flat on your table. The inside is gimmicked so that on raising the book to an upright position the Petrol or Ether and water (whichever you prefer to use) runs onto a piece of potassium and is thus ignited. The spine of the book is hinged so that the whole, before being painted, looks like a brass box opening in the centre.

In the centre of the inside there is a low partition. The upper side of this is half-filled with petrol. (I personally use "Ronsonol") In the other side of the partition a small piece of potassium the size of a pea is placed. ALWAYS USE TWEEZERS WHEN WORKING WITH POTASSIUM AS THE HEAT OF YOUR HAND IS SUFFICIENT TO SET IT ALIGHT. All you have to do now is to pick up the book raise it upright, quickly put it to the horizontal again and open it. The whole inside of the book flares up. To put out the flames, merely close the book; the air being excluded, the fire will go out right away.

Hold the book pretty far out from your clothes and don't stick your fingers over the edge of the book when it is open.

WILLIAM'S "HOT BOOK"



"AH!
HOT LOOKING
NOVEL!"



Wow



"TOO
HOT
FOR
ME!!"
WM



William's Comedy Card Flight

D'YOU remember that old stunt where you seat a spectator in front of you and vanish a silk by waving it up and down and eventually throwing it right over his head? The spectator looks very perplexed, and even if the audience do see how it is worked, they are delighted to see just how easily the average person is fooled. Anyhow, I like this effect, and deplore the dearth of such mirthprovokers. That led to the invention of this trick.


The magician gets a spectator to choose any card out of a pack thrown down to him. He is asked to sign the card and bring it up on the stage. There he is requested to place it in a small clip fixed to a stand on your table. He is then given a sealed envelope to hold. When asked to remove the card out of the clip he is surprised to find it has now gone. On opening the sealed envelope he finds his actual signed card inside. The audience see how the whole trick is worked, but the spectator sees nothing.

THE HOW


Provide yourself with a pair of lazy-tongs which can be extended at least four feet. Place an envelope with the flap lying open in your right coat pocket. When spectator puts his card in the stand, you invite him to sit on a chair placed to the stage left of the table and about a foot or so nearer the footlights. The tongs are hooked onto the back of the chair and you get them onto the thumb and forefinger of the right hand. The spectator is now given the pack with the left hand and told to look through it and see if there is a duplicate of his card in the deck. This keeps him beautifully happy whilst you extend the tongs in the direction of the card in the clip. A piece of wax on one of the terminal limbs of the tongs will stick to the card, and you can retract the tongs, thus bringing

the card back to you. Hook the tongs on the back of the chair, remove the card and slip it into the envelope in your pocket. Pull this out of your pocket, hold it up to the now delighted audience, moisten it and seal it. If the laughter causes the spectator on the stage with you to look round make a wry face and say "I don't like the taste of gum do you?" He'll think your displeasure at licking the flap of the envelope was the cause of the merriment. Hand him the envelope. Ask him to take the card out of the clip. He finds it gone and subsequently in the envelope he is holding.


WILLIAM'S COMEDY CARD FLIGHT




SECTATOR CHOOSES CARD, SIGNS IT AND PUTS IT ON STAGE...




SECTATOR SIGNS BACK TO LAUGH FOR INDICATED... MAGICIAN SIGNS LAZY TONGS FROM BEHIND CHAIR...



SIGNED CARD LIFTED IN TONGS... SECTATOR STILL LOOKS THEM' BACK...

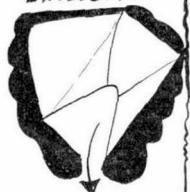


LAZY-TONGS RELEASED BEHIND CHAIR... CARD PLACED IN ENVELOPE SHOWN TO AUDIENCE...




PROPS

ENVELOPE.




IN
RIGHT COAT
POCKET.

LAZY-TONGS





DIACRYLON
WAX

**CARD
CLIP**



**AND
I WOULD SUGGEST**





The tong part has to be worked slickly. It also has to be done so that the audience can see what's happening. As you are on the left of the assistant and partially behind him, he will not see you obtaining the card or inserting it in the envelope. It does not matter if he sees the envelope being closed as he does not suspect it.

My set of lazy-tongs was made in an Aircraft Factory out of light aluminium. They have the terminal limb ends bent at right angles with one inner edge smeared with diachylon, this being the best wax for card work that I know of.



SPASM 14:

William passes on some Tips

FOR ages I've carried a thumb-tip about with me as standard equipment. I've carried it in a trouser pocket with keys and so forth and yet it has never chipped. Why? Well I got one of those finger tip rubber thimble things that bank clerks use for counting cheques to save licking their fingers. You can get them in all sizes and they just cover a thumb-tip perfectly. In the pocket you can sneak on your tip and then roll off the rubber thimble affair.

If you use milk in your act, don't bother carrying a pint bottle with you. Obtain some "Stephen Young's 303 Combined Cleaner and Rust Preventer." It can be got in any rifle suppliers. Two or three drops with water makes about half a pint.

Do you find that when you are extending your stick for the "Stick to Silks" the ferrule slips out of your hand and you have to start all over again? To prevent this, solder a piece of metal or a small washer about the size of a sixpence onto the end. It can then be easily gripped. Another idea is to bore a hole transversely through the end. Knock a nail into your dressing room bench. Snip off the nail-head. Stick the hole in the ferrule over the nail and it will be held in position whilst you draw out the stick.

Incidentally, the very best method of removing grease paint of any variety is to use medicinal paraffin, obtainable at any chemists.

Assorted Gaglets of the William Brand

☉ In my thimble routine I use two gags which rather help to relieve the monotony of a lot of sleight of hand. The first is, in searching my pockets for a thimble passed into it, I withdraw my hand in annoyance with a mouse trap closed over the fingers. The second is, when I am removing the thimbles at the end I get an extra laugh by removing a celluloid "sixth" finger with a thimble glued on the top of it.

☉ If at the end of my act I produce a spring snake as provided by the redoubtable Max Andrews, I throw it to the stage when, due to the spring it bounces a couple of times. I whip out a revolver, shoot at it, pick it up, lay it around my neck; a member of the orchestra jumps up with a box looking like a press camera, he lets off a magnesium bulb. I bow, and walk off.

☉ If I decide it is worthy of me to go rather "broad" I walk to the side of the stage where a long rope with a tassel on one end (like a bell rope) hangs. I pull the rope to call my assistant. Some bird off-stage pours water from one bucket into another. I raise my eyebrows in shocked surprise, eye the bell rope and go into my next trick.

☉ Occasionally I have a bust devoid of hair or beard at the back of stage. I pick up a large bottle marked "Hair Restorer" go back to the bust, sprinkle some over it, and a large mop of crepe hair and a huge beard suddenly appear on its head and face. Good for a laugh.

☉ If I had three of those Yank light bulbs that can be lighted by a switch at the bottom, I would line my "Cups and Balls" cups with dentist's rubber dam, and finish the routine by producing Three Lighted Bulbs, to throw a little light on the whole trick.

● If I started my act as a drunk, and decided I would like to sober up and do some serious tricks, I would show a mug, pick up a carton marked "Strong Coffee Beans," pour some into the mug switch behind carton in putting it down for a cup of steaming coffee. Drink same. Sober up quickly, and go into the serious stuff.

● When I get to the smallest set of Diminishing Cards, I put one on the stand, and strike a match and hold it near the wee card "so that the audience can see it better." You could take a light bulb from your pocket and use that.

● Quite frequently I fill my Evap. jug with the "milk," drop in some red ink and use it as a "Blood Transfusion" into a chap's ear. Did it at a Medical Dinner once and it went enormous.

● A good gag I've used on occasion is to get a bloke, fit a thin slat of plywood to the back of his arm with two straps, one round the fore arm and one round the biceps, catch him by the hand to shake it, and bend the arm. There's a crack and I say "Sorry old man . . . did I break your arm?"

● If you appear before a rope-weary audience, get a piece of rope and stick a length of strong wire up the inside. Say "We will now do a rope trick." Get two chaps to hold the ends and another to cut. Nobody can cut the damn thing. So you say "No cut . . . No rope trick . . ."

● Now and again I vanish a prop. dead rat in a "Devil's Hank." Immediately afterwards I get a good laugh by frequent use of a "Flit" spray up my sleeve.

● If you get ten pint glasses and glue an up turned half-pint glass inside each with some "Canadian Balsam" (the only really good waterproof glass-to-glass glue you can get), you can perform the amazing feat of drinking a pint of stout after each trick by pouring stout between the two glasses. I don't touch the stuff, so Sarsaparilla looks just as good. I take my bow at the end of the act, with a **GOLDFISH BOWL** of the stuff under my arm.

William's Poker Hand Trick

WE ALL know those facetious people who say "I wouldn't like to play cards with you." I suppose in time some wise old wizard will find a really good retort for that remark. Personally I'm always at the latter part of a card trick when they say it, and, by force of habit I'm always culling the five cards I need for the following trick. Before we start, may I say a couple of things.

First, if you are expecting a lot of fancy sleights that will need lots of practice . . . forget it. This is not that sort of book; if you want to break your fingers in an endeavour to entertain well, there are books guaranteed for that purpose. Secondly if you can't misdirect or you're not a showman . . . turn on to the next Spasm; this isn't your meat. If on the other hand you want to paralyse a few people, want them to talk about you, or feel, as I do, that magic is entertainment first and sleights afterwards, take my hand and we'll go through this together.

The main effect is that you give a person a pack of cards to shuffle. You suggest a game of nap. Tell him to deal out as many hands as he wishes, each consisting of five cards. You ask him which hand he wants you to take. With the remark that you don't know anything about playing nap . . . except that when you spread out your hand everybody gives you all their stakes . . . you spread out a Royal Flush on the table.

THE HOW

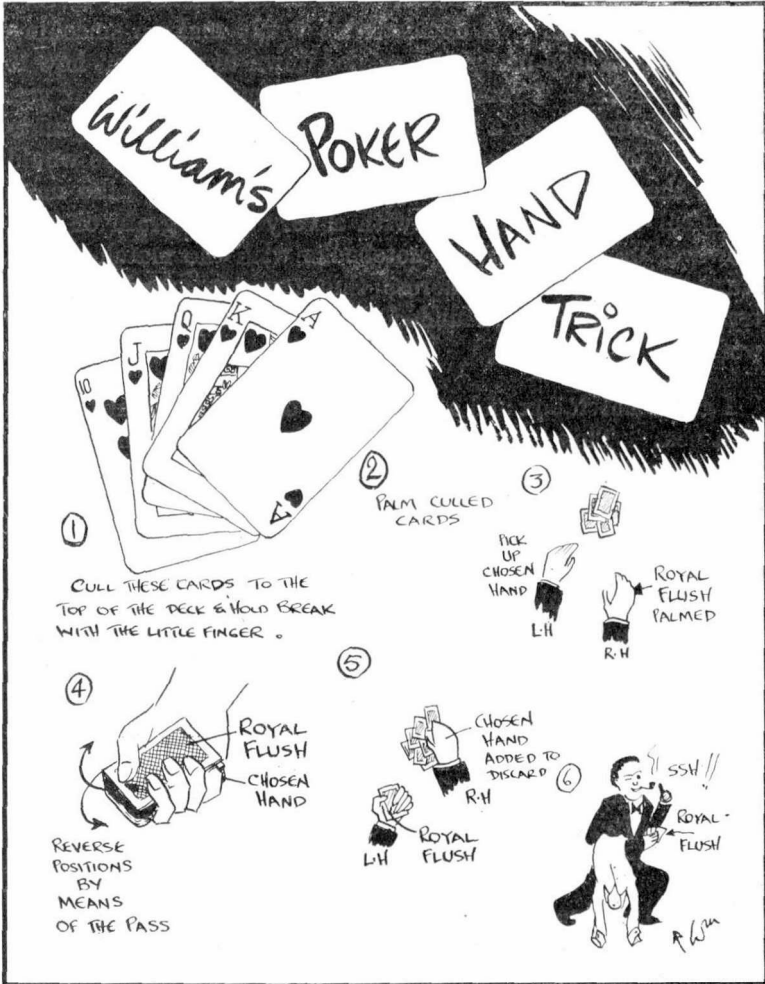
As a matter of psychology, if you do about four card tricks one after the other pretty quickly, and then stop for a while and idly toy with the cards, you'll find some bright person comes up with "I wouldn't like to play cards etc." Pick them up on that. Whilst toying with the pack you've slipped

the Ten, Jack, Queen, King, Ace of Hearts to the top of the deck with your little finger holding a break between them. In squaring the pack to hand it to the comic one, palm off the top five cards. This is never detected even if you palm as badly as I do. Reason is that you look at them and say "Here, Let's have a shot at a wee game of something . . . what about nap?" Funnily enough, I've had them swear afterwards that they themselves suggested the game. Now you've got to keep the culled cards hidden in your palm till the cards have been shuffled and the various hands dealt. I always smoke a pipe . . . from dawn to dusk in fact . . . so I grip my pipe with the hand palming the cards and hold it about level with my middle coat button. Nobody yet has ever thought this natural movement served to hold palmed cards undetectably. Some magicians I've taught this effect to, always perform it kneeling on a drawing-room rug or carpet and sit back on their haunches with their palms resting on their thighs, whilst the spectator goes through his manoeuvres.

Anyhow, the hands have been dealt out. Magician asks which hand he has to take. When told he reaches out and takes it with his left hand. (I'm presuming you palm with your right hand). Place the cards under those palmed in the right hand, and with a pointing-waving gesture of your now-empty left hand say "Just chuck the pack onto the table" (or what have you). This draws attention to the pack and at that moment your left hand draws back to the right hand. Immediately you transpose the chosen hand to the top and the culled hand to the bottom position in your right hand. This is done by means of the ordinary common "pass." The chosen hand is straight-away palmed. Get your dealer to choose any of the other hands. Plonk your right hand plus the chosen hand palmed on top of the rest of the cards left over and secretly add the palmed cards to the discard as you sweep it up and replace it all onto the pack. To do this the culled hand is taken into the left hand again. Now the position is as follows. Your dealer has some nondescript hand. You have a Royal Flush. And the pack of cards is otherwise complete. This latter is necessary 'cos they dive for the pack to count it after the denouement. Try it on Brother George.

You'll get rather a thrill at being able to astound a person with such a ridiculously simple trick.

I find these cards tricks where you choose a card, remember the number down, cut into three piles, choose one pile, throw the rest in the fire, spell out the name of the card and so on only serve to bore any modern folk. The most boring evening I ever spent was watching one of the world's foremost card experts do tricks for me.



William amid the Fakirs

SOME time ago I read an account of how the fakirs of India can cause a match to burst into flame by merely gazing at it. I decided this would make a smashing talk-provoker at a party so I settled down to work out how it could be done. I remember reading somewhere that if you smear glycerine onto a few grains of potassium permanganate and wait for about two to three minutes, the glycerine would cause the potassium permanganate to ignite. Like most chemical tricks I took this with a very large grain of salt. However on searching my notebooks with the match-gazing stunt in mind, I came across this formula and decided to try it out. To my unbounded delight I found that it actually works.

I got a match box and a small piece of sponge about the size of a pea. This I glued with Seccotine to the corner of the matchbox tray. I then got several red-tipped matches, and smeared then on one side only with a small amount of Seccotine just below the heads. When the glue became tacky, I put the matches in contact with some potassium permanganate, so that the crystals stuck to the glue. The sponge I soaked in glycerine by means of an eyedropper. All I had then to do was to gather my crowd in front of me taking care none were behind me in case they noticed the chemical on the back of the match. I drew a match out of the box passing it over the sponge on the way out, so that the chemically prepared head got smeared with glycerine, held up the match and gazed at it. After a few minutes of great "concentration" the match suddenly flared up.

The glycerine acts on the potassium permanganate and ignites it and this in turn ignites the match-head. You'll find that your audience, especially the female element, will

gaze at the match just as intently as you. The sudden ignition will give them quite a start and you'll hear a lot of "Ohs" and little shrieks of amazement.

Just a reminder . . . Don't muck about too much with the potassium permanganate. It is explosive when in contact with certain other chemicals.



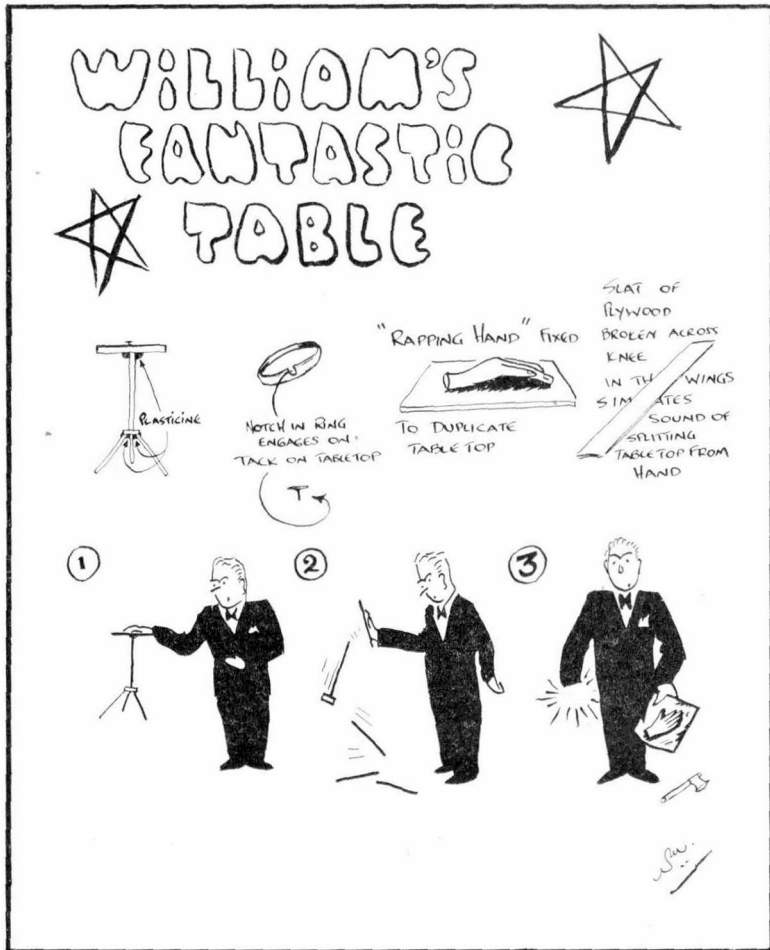
William's Fantastic Table

IF YOU like a short comedy interlude here and there in your act, I would suggest the following routine. Again this is an example of how you can take a very old idea and make something of it that will be acceptable to a modern, sophisticated audience. D'you remember the old stunt of the Floating Table? It all depended on a small tack driven into a light table and a finger-ring with a notch in it which would engage under the head of the tack. When you raised your hand the table rose with it.

Right. The modern effect is as follows. The magician is talking about his various props and how they have been carried all round the world with him on his various tours. As he lays his outstretched hand on one particular table, he says "Now this particular table has stuck to me for a long time." As he withdraws his hand he finds the table has actually stuck to the palm. As he shakes his hand in an effort to get rid of it, the legs fall off, then the centre rod drops to the stage. No matter how much he waves his hand the table-top remains stuck to his palm. With a muttered apology he walks into the wings. There is a splintering noise, a yell, and the magician walks on-stage again. In his left hand is seen a very badly battered table top with a **HAND STILL STUCK TO IT**. His right sleeve is seen to be empty.

Very little explanation is necessary. Your right palm sticks to the table top by means of the finger ring plus notch engaging under the tack driven into its top. The centre rod is joined to the top by means of a large lump of plasticine. The legs in turn are fastened to the bottom of the centre rod by smaller lumps. If shaken, the legs drop off first. On shaking again the centre rod will part from the top.

Off-stage you have a slat of plywood you break over your knee for effect, you then yell, tuck your right hand up your sleeve so that the sleeve seems empty, pick up a splintered and battered tabletop with a "Rapping Hand" nailed thereon . . . and make your appearance.



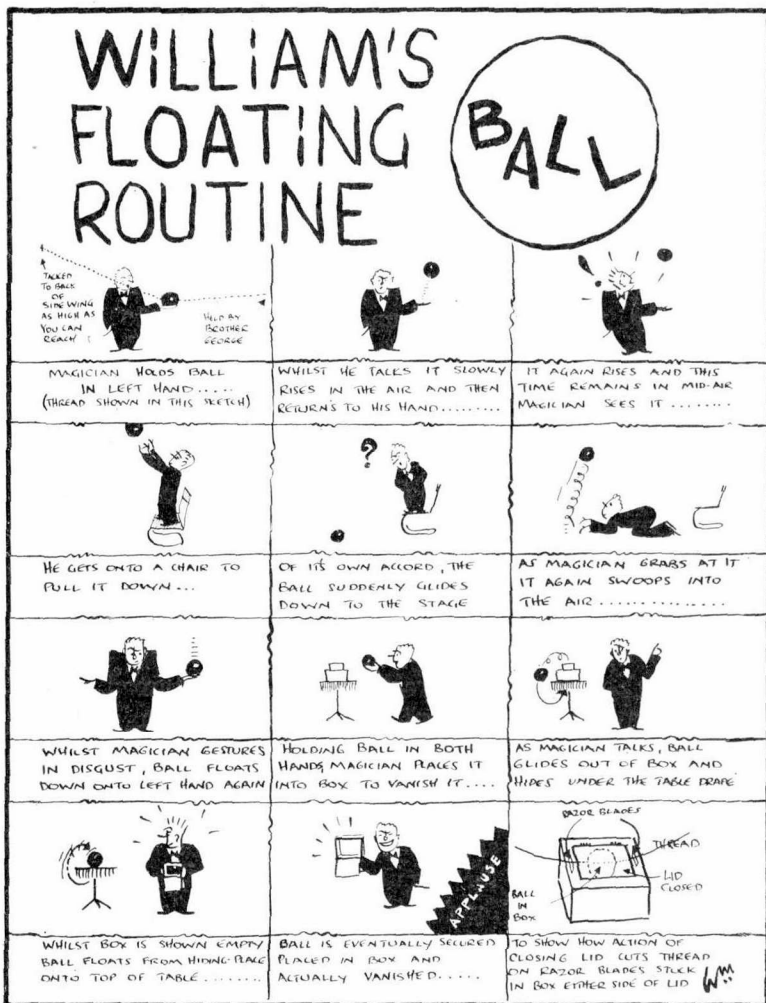
William's Floating Ball Routine

I 'VE ALWAYS liked the old floating ball stunt. Unless you are in the most humble church hall or the drawing room you can always work it, provided you douse your footlights. As to the best method . . . well, until I can get one of Karson's "Zombie" balls from the States, I'll still use the horizontal thread across the stage. Give one end to brother George to hold in the wings, the other end is pinned as far up as you can reach at the back of the opposite wing. The only other prop beside the ball is the well-known "Flip-over" vanishing box. On either side of the lid a piece of razor blade is stuck, sharp end facing upwards. This stands on a small table right centre.

Magician enters, picks up the ball, and announces that he intends to vanish it in the box. The ball rests on his outstretched left hand as he talks. As if to stress a certain word the wizard wags his left forefinger at the audience! Suddenly he realizes that the ball has been left in mid-air, and replaces his hand under it again. That the ball has defied gravity, seems to have astounded him. Continuing his discourse, the ball starts to rise slowly into the air.

When the merriment of the audience brings to the magician's attention that things are not as they should be, he looks to the erring ball, which drops back onto the palm again as if it had never moved. As the wizard starts talking again, the ball soars up into the air once more, and remains there. The magician looks at it in astonishment; tries to reach it; can't; so he gets a chair and stands on it. Just as he makes a grab at it, the ball floats silently down onto the stage. This leaves the harassed sorcerer standing on a chair completely dumbfounded. Getting down from his perch he grabs at the ball again but once more it floats up into air.

With a gesture of disgust the magician stretches his hands palm upwards out from his body. The erring ball slips down onto his palm and remains there. Holding the ball in both hands lest it should float again he announces that he is going to put it inside the box, pronounce a magic spell and cause it to disappear completely. The ball is laid in the box; it sits in the fake compartment at the top. The magician stands at the side of the box and pronounces the magic words "Hopscotch bananas"; whilst this is being done the ball slyly floats



up out of the box, forwards and down under the drape of the table. The box is closed and picked up. Opened, it is seen to be empty. The audience laugh and shout that it is under the table. As the wizard walks back to the table the ball slides out from under the drape and floats up till it rests on the table top. The magician grabs it, puts it into the box, into the fake compartment. He closes the lid. This, due to the razor blades on either side of the lid, has the effect of cutting the thread. The box can thus be lifted up and "flipped-over" to show that the ball has actually disappeared.

You must give the idea that all the floating business has occurred due to an inherent mischievous nature in the ball. The audience must at all times get the impression that this is no magic worked by you. Merely the ball behaving badly in public to annoy you, after the manner of a naughty child.

Little explanation is required. Brother George at the other end of the thread does all the ball moves by raising or lowering the thread. Notice that the ball has no occasion to move horizontally. I've always found that this leads to threads being tugged and broken, or the ball performing rather "suspicious" jerky movements which may give more than a hint of thread.

If you want to work the hoop-passing moves you will have to lay the box inside the "Magic Circle" of wood or what have you. This gives scope to pass the ball through the hoop or float down through it. Or you could use a fishing net to try to catch the ball. The net has a hole through the bottom of it sufficient for the ball to pass through. You could pass the net over the ball express disgust at the hole in the net and cast it aside. Your only move really is to cut the thread on the razor-blades as the ball is put into the box. I suggest you get some person you know well like a brother or sister or at least a good friend to work the ball manoeuvres. Stage-hands should in most cases be regarded as "trained assassins." I've had them rising cards and so forth for me and they're quite liable to go off for a quiet smoke and leave you commanding cards to rise for the rest of the night.

Undoubtedly modern audiences prefer comedy. If you're going to go out on a stage and do Hoffmann stuff in the

Victorian style you're going to make a howling ass of yourself as sure as thumb-tips shouldn't be painted red, white and blue.

You are competing in any show with singers, dancers, and instrumentalists — all of whom have moved with the times. Only magic, it seems, has stayed static. That is why you see copies of theatrical papers with dozens of magician's cards in the "dates wanted" columns. Just inject a little bit of "tongue-in-the-cheek comedy into your act and your magical act will rise from the ridiculous to the sublime. Elsewhere in this book you will find my presentation for the Torn and Restored Newspaper. Walk out onto a stage and just tear and restore your paper. I'll guarantee you'll get a smattering of applause and that's that. Do it as described with the lighting effects . . . if you don't find a difference, go back to the "Pig and Whistle" and ask for your job back.



SPASM 20:

William Turns Gravity Upside Down

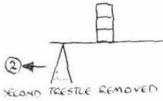
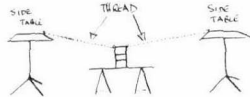
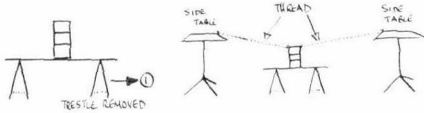
EVERYONE expects a magician to do the impossible. In this trick this is exactly what he does do. It was inspired by the fact that so many people use one table at each side of the stage during their acts. It seemed rather a pity that no one seemed to realize that a thread stretched between them would permit of many floating tricks without having to string threads across the stage beforehand.

This effect is that a board is stretched between two small trestles with three bricks, one on top of the other, resting on the board. The magician removes the first trestle, and the board remains horizontal in mid air, with the bricks still in

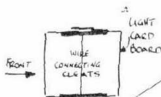
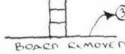
WILLIAM

tuens Gravity

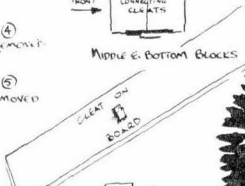
NMOCI-3CISdN



CLEAT UNDER TOP BLOCK



MIDDLE & BOTTOM BLOCKS



TOP BLOCK REMAINS IN MIDDLE - THEN BOARDS TO STAGE ON COMMAND



position. The other trestle is then removed, leaving the bricks still on the board which has no support whatsoever. The board is then removed and the bricks remain suspended. The bottom brick is taken away and the other two remain. So on till one brick remains. On command it drops to the stage. In other words the wizard has turned the law of gravity upside-down.

The props required are as follows. Two bricks made of light cardboard, one made of light wood, a light board, and two plywood trestles. The centre and lower bricks are the cardboard ones. The top brick is wood. They are gimmicked as follows: The wood brick has a cleat on its base. This engages into a cleat on top of the middle brick. This is joined by means of a piece of wire to another cleat on the bottom side of this middle brick. This wiring allows of a great amount of weight being thrown on the cardboard bricks without causing them to tear apart. The bottom brick is cleated in the same manner as the middle one. The cleat on its lower surface fits into a similar cleat on the top of the board. The whole business rests on the two trestles. The two tables are placed at either side of the stage with your other props for the rest of your act set on them. A thread (I suggest a dark green No. 10 silk . . . Dark green is not so easily seen as black, a fact few magicians know) is running between the tables. The top brick has a strong but thin piece of surgical wire running right through it near the top. The ends of the wire are bent into a hook form. This is hooked onto the thread, which is drawn taut and fixed to the tables in that condition.

Wizard trots out and explains he intends to reverse gravity. He removes Trestle No. 1, then Trestle No. 2. Board then taken away. Blocks drawn off one by one. The last block commanded to drop. Bows. Manager of theatre calls police and fire-brigade to pacify over-enthusiastic audience. Magician sends William cheque for £1,000. William drunk.

FINIS

If you read and enjoyed "THE FIRST BOOK OF WILLIAM" and would like larger helpings of Magic, you should read and enjoy **Abracadabra** the world's ONLY magical weekly, edited and issued each Saturday by the publisher of this book. Every live magician takes **Abracadabra**, because it gives all the magical news, views and reports from all over the world, plus new tricks, new routines, new ideas, all fully illustrated and nicely printed in handy pocket format. 8½d. in stamps will bring you a sample copy and an Order Form on application to Goodliffe, 6. Colonnade Passage, Birmingham. 2, England.

ALMACP
793.8
M13F