

# MAGIC & ILLUSION



## ★ FIRST MAGIC SOCIETY TO BE FEATURED ON A NATIONAL STAMP

The UK's Royal Mail issued a series of five interactive stamps on 15 March 2005, marking the centenary of the Magic Circle (UK), one of the oldest society of magicians in the world. The issue features another first – a “scratch and reveal” 1st Class stamp. Rubbing it with a coin it could reveal either a ‘heads’ or ‘tails’ image.

## ★ HIGHEST POPULATION OF MAGICIANS PER CAPITA

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, has more resident magicians than any other, with 351 – equivalent to one in every 1,862 people.

## ★ MOST PROLIFIC QUICK-CHANGE ILLUSION ARTIST

Arturo Brachetti (Italy) changed costume 22,500 times during

250 performances of the show *L'Homme Aux Mille Visages*, Paris, France, in 2001–02. His quickest costume change, including shoes, is 2 seconds, from black tail suit to white in full view of the audience.

## ★ MOST STRAIT JACKET ESCAPES IN 8 HOURS

James Peters (UK) escaped from a strait jacket a total of 193 times in eight hours in Chelmsford, Essex, UK, on 27 September 2003. His fastest escape was achieved in 56 seconds.

## ★ HIGHEST SUSPENSION STRAITJACKET ESCAPE

Scott Hammell (Canada) escaped from a regulation straitjacket while

## ★ MOST VALUABLE MAGIC POSTER

Houdini's *English Water Torture Cell* (pictured), a lithograph made by Dangerfield Printing (UK), was auctioned on 25 May 2000 at Christies, London, UK, and purchased by Norm Nielsen (USA) for £30,000 (\$44,669).

A *Houdini Water Torture Cell* lithograph by Strobridge was sold by CRG Auctions in Las Vegas, USA, on 30 October 2004 for \$55,000 (£29,930) to David Copperfield (USA).



suspended by a rope hanging below the basket of a hot air balloon traveling at a height of 2,194.5 m (7,200 ft) over Knoxville, Tennessee, USA, on 13 August 2003. The rope from which he was tied to hung 15.24 m (50 ft) from the basket.

## ★ LARGEST DISPLAYED MAGIC POSTER COLLECTION

There are 587 magic posters on display within the collection belonging to Norm and Lupa Nielsen (both USA). The collection, which was started in 1991, includes 34 Houdini posters – 14 of which are coloured lithographs (four are 3-sheets and two are 8-sheets) and 64 Chung Ling Soo lithographs.

## ★ DEADLIEST MAGIC TRICK

At least 12 people (eight magicians

and four bystanders) have been killed during the bullet catching trick, where at least one gun loaded with a marked bullet is fired at a magician, who appears to catch the bullet in his teeth. Even though the feat involves illusionary elements, it is fraught with danger. The most famous death has been Chung Ling Soo (USA, b. William Elsworth Robinson, 1869–1918), who was shot on stage at the Wood Green Empire, London, UK, on 23 March 1918.

## ★ MOST CHINESE LINKING RINGS LINKED SIMULTANEOUSLY

Organized by magician Monty Witt (USA), the longest linking ring chain totalled 534 rings and was performed by 129 magicians at the Magic Convention for the International Brotherhood of Magicians held in Cleveland, Ohio, USA, on 3 July 2004.



## MOST LIVING CREATURES PRODUCED DURING A MAGIC PERFORMANCE

Penn & Teller (USA) produced more than 80,000 bees during their television special, *Don't Try This At Home*, filmed in 1990.

## DAVID COPPERFIELD

**David Copperfield (USA) has 12 Guinness World Records – more than any other magician. He talks to us about his achievements.**

### Who inspired you to become a magician?

Magic was something that I always had a feeling for, I just seemed to be good at it. I loved movies and all the fantasy and wonder that they create, but magic is what I did well. I tried to combine the two. So the answer would be lot of people who were working in film, including Walt Disney, Orson Welles, Frank Capra and Victor Fleming.

### What is your favorite magic illusion of all-time?

Of the things that I've invented I'm very proud of Flying, especially flying into the plexi-glass box. I also like the Death Saw and the Lottery piece with the car that appears surrounded by the audience.

### Of your career so far, what are you most proud of?

What I'm proudest of is Project Magic. It's a program that I created that uses magic as a form of therapy for people with disabilities. It is being used in 1,000 hospitals in 30 countries around the world.

### Can you see yourself ever retiring or slowing down?

Why? My work is my play. I get to enjoy one of my passions every time I do a show. Why would I want to give that up?

### What's it like to be a Guinness World Record holder?

It's a great honour to be in the same company as the fastest baked bean eater! I remember reading the *Guinness World Records* as a kid. To be recognized by it is amazing.



## ★ MOST CONSECUTIVE MULTI-COIN ROLLS

Jeff McBride (USA) simultaneously moved eight silver dollars around the fingers of both his hands (four per hand) using the classic coin roll technique, each completing 18 consecutive coin rolls in a time of 5 min 43 sec at the Magical Arts Center, Las Vegas, USA on 17 July 2004.

## ★ FASTEST ESCAPE FROM A PAIR OF HANDCUFFS UNDERWATER

Matthew 'Matt the Knife' Cassiere (USA) escaped while fully submerged in a lake in a time of 11.12 seconds at Johnston War Memorial Park, Rhode Island, New England, USA, on 30 October 2004. The handcuffs belonged to Sgt Daniel Parrillo (USA) of Johnston Police Department.

## ★ MOST GENERATIONS OF MAGICIANS

The Bamberg family comprised of six generations who excelled in the art of magic for over 200 years. The first was Eliaser Bamberg (Netherlands, 1760–1833), who was a sleight-of-hand expert with a secret compartment in his wooden leg and called himself 'The Crippled Devil', and the last of the dynasty was David (UK, 1904–74), performing as Fu Manchu.

## ★ FASTEST ESCAPE FROM PRISONER TRANSPORT IRONS

Mike Sanford (USA) escaped from a pair of regulation prisoner transport irons in 1 min 54.34 sec at Sammamish, Washington, USA, on 31 October 2004.

## ★ HIGHEST SELLING MAGIC MAGAZINE

*MAGIC: The Magazine for Magicians* is published monthly by Stagewrite Publishing, Inc., Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, and has an international circulation of 9,049. The magazine was first published in September 1991.

### David Copperfield's Guinness World Records

- ★ Most tickets sold worldwide by a solo entertainer
- ★ Highest career earnings as a magician
- ★ Highest Broadway gross in a week
- ★ Largest Broadway attendance in a week
- ★ Largest international television audience for a magician
- ★ Most magic shows performed in a year
- ★ Largest private collection of magic artifacts
- ★ Most valuable magic poster
- ★ Most arena magic shows in a year
- ★ Largest work archive
- ★ Highest annual earnings by a magician
- ★ Largest illusion ever staged

## LOWEST DEATH → DIVE ESCAPE

Robert Gallup (Australia) was leg-manacled, handcuffed, chained, put into a secured mail bag and locked in an 0.74-m<sup>2</sup> (8-ft<sup>2</sup>) cage before being thrown out of a plane at 5,485 m (18,000 ft) above the Mojave Desert, California, USA. A minute before impact and travelling at 240 km/h (150 mph), he escaped to reach his parachute secured on the outside of the cage and deployed it with enough altitude to land safely.





LARGEST...

★ DISPLAYED MAGIC POSTER COLLECTION

There are 587 magic posters on display within the collection belonging to Norm and Lupa Nielsen (both USA). The collection, which today consists of approximately 2,000 contemporary and vintage posters began in 1991, with two Fu Manch posters that were in pieces, out of which was made one to frame. Within the collection are 34 Houdini posters, 14 of which are coloured lithographs (four are 3-sheets and two are 8-sheets).

★ STONE LITHOGRAPH MAGIC POSTER

Magic and circus posters produced at the end of the 19th and beginning half of the 20th century were printed using a now defunct technique known as stone lithography. Each “1-sheet” size (71 x104 cm; 28 x 41 in) of a full-colour poster required at least four sheets of limestone hand-prepared by artists. Magicians would frequently print one, three and eight sheets posters to publicize their shows. The largest ever was a massive 28-sheet poster printed in 1895 by the Strobridge Lithograph Company (USA) for Frederick Bancroft (USA). It measured 2.74 x 7.62 m (9 ft x 25 ft) and required at least 140 sheets of limestone to produce. Bancroft’s publicity material was considerably more notable than his performances.

★ LARGEST PRIVATE COLLECTION OF MAGIC ARTEFACTS

David Copperfield’s (USA) International Museum and Library of the Conjuring Arts, which began in 1991, contains over 150,000 items, dedicated to preserving the history of the art of magic by providing a permanent home for props,

books and other historical ephemera related to conjuring. The collection, housed at a 2,601 m2 (28,000 ft2) building in Nevada, USA, has 90,000 items on display.

MOST...

★ MOST GENERATIONS OF MAGICIANS

The Bamberg family comprised of six generations who excelled in the art of magic for over 200 years. The first to enter the business was Eliaser Bamberg (Netherlands, 1760–1833), who was a sleight-of-hand expert, and the last of the dynasty was David (UK, 1904–74), performing as Fu Manchú.

MAGIC SHOWS PLAYING AT ONE TIME IN ONE TOWN

Excluding review and variety shows, as of 1 March 2005 there were 11 magic shows playing in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA:- Steve Wyrick (USA) at the Aladdin, the World’s Greatest Magic Show (Various) at the Greek Isles, The Mac King Comedy Magic Show (USA) at Harrah’s, Showgirls of Magic (Various) at the Hotel San Remo, Lance Burton (USA) at the Monte Carlo, Steve Dacri’s Extreme Magic Close-up Show (USA) at O’Shea’s, Collin Foster: Quicker Than the Eye (USA) at The Plaza, Penn & Teller (both USA) at the Rio, the Amazing Jonathan (USA) at the Riviera, Rick Thomas (USA) at the Stardust and Dick Arthur (USA) at the Tropicana.

ONE HANDED CARD SCALES IN A MINUTE

Jeff McBride (USA) was able to single-handedly spin or “scale” 106 playing cards from his right

hand to clear a set distance of 3.6 m (12 ft) within 60 seconds at the Magical Arts Center, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA on 17 July 2004.

COPIED STAGE ILLUSION

Invented by Robert Harbin (South Africa) in 1965, the Zig Zag girl is the most popularly performed stage illusion in the world. A girl, standing in an upright cabinet, is apparently cut into three pieces and has the middle of her body pulled to one side. It was copied so quickly that Harbin published a highly- priced book in 1970 (limited to 500 copies) which allowed each purchaser to build one version of the prop. It is estimated that at least 15,000 Zig Zag illusions have been built to date, meaning that 14,500 are unauthorised copies.

EXPENSIVE MAGIC SHOW EVER STAGED

Siegfried and Roy at the Mirage, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA starring Siegfried Fishbacher and Roy Horn (both Germany) cost over \$28 million (then £16 million) to stage when it opened on 1 February 1990. The show, which featured dozens of wild animals including an elephant, a giant mechanical dragon that breathed fire and a cast of 60, closed after its 5,750th performance on 3 October 2003 after its co-star Roy Horn was seriously injured by a white tiger called Montacore.

DAVID COPPERFIELD RECORDS – probably to be listed in interview? KEREN, you can leave this as overmatter, to be incorporated into INTERVIEW BOX MAGICIAN WITH MOST GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS David Copperfield (USA) holds a record 12 Guinness World Records.

MOST TICKETS SOLD WORLDWIDE BY A SOLO

ENTERTAINER

From the period 1984–2004, the magician David Copperfield (USA) has sold 39,690,000 tickets to his shows.

HIGHEST BROADWAY GROSS IN A WEEK

David Copperfield’s five-week run of his show [ital]Dreams and Nightmares[ital] at the Martin Beck Theatre, New York City, USA, saw it gross \$4,180,000 (€XXXXX) during the week of 15 to 21 December 1996. Tickets were priced at \$67.50, \$55 and \$20.

LARGEST BROADWAY ATTENDANCE IN A WEEK

David Copperfield’s two-hour-long show [ital]Dreams and Nightmares[ital], at the Martin Beck Theatre, New York City, USA, was seen by 41,800 people during the 19 performances shown in the week of 15 to 21 December 1996.

LARGEST INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION AUDIENCE FOR A MAGICIAN

TBC

MOST MAGIC SHOWS PERFORMED IN A YEAR

David Copperfield (USA) performed 642 shows in the USA, Canada, Mexico, Austria, Switzerland, Holland and Germany in 1994. Of these, 246 were in arenas in Europe and the USA.

LARGEST PRIVATE COLLECTION OF MAGIC ARTEFACTS

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MOST VALUABLE MAGIC POSTER

The highest price paid for a magic

poster was achieved by Houdini’s c.1912 English Water Torture Cell, a lithograph made by Dangerfield Printing (UK). The poster, which measures 2.22 x 1 m (7 ft 3.5 in x 3 ft 3.48 in) was auctioned on 25 May 2000 at Christies, London, UK, and was purchased by Norm Nielsen (USA) for €30,000 (\$44,669) (excluding buyers premium of 17.5%). An Houdini Water Torture Cell lithograph by Strobridge, once belonging to the Sidney H Radner Collection, was sold by CRG Auctions in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA on 30 October 2004 for \$55,000 (€29,930) (excluding buyers premium of 15%) to David Copperfield (USA).

LARGEST WORK ARCHIVE

Housed in the same building as the International Museum and Library of the Conjuring Arts, David Copperfield has maintained an archive of his own work consisting of 61,673 items (newspaper, clippings, photos and articles), dated from 1975 to 2004.