



THE ART OF TRICKERY: HOW MAGICIANS ARE SEEN IN PAINTINGS, PRINTS AND CARTOONS

IAN KEABLE

The Arts Society Fylde
Lowther Pavilion Theatre
2 July 2024 at 2.00pm

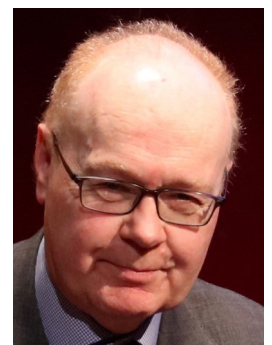
There's a fair chance that the word "magician" may conjure up (as it were) a couple of names from the past - David Nixon, or Paul Daniels or, just like that, Tommy Cooper: all very much in the tradition of the variety show and light entertainment. Or Merlin, perhaps, or Gandalf (no, hang on, wasn't he a wizard?).

On his first visit to The Arts Society Fylde, Ian Keable is looking more at how magicians have appeared in art throughout the centuries, in paintings, satirical prints or cartoons. Early artists used the magician to symbolise the mysterious and the unknown, associating them with astrology. In the 16th century, Pieter Bruegel and Hieronymus Bosch produced two of the most famous and striking pictures of the conjurer performing the Cups and Balls trick. The 18th and 19th century saw a proliferation in engravings and lithographs showing the magician both indoors and on the streets. Cartoonists and satirists delighted in linking politicians with skulduggery with images of them featuring the Three-Card Trick, Vanishing illusions or pulling a Rabbit out of the Hat. Journalists still speculate about whether the Chancellor is going to do just this in a Budget speech - somehow forgetting (spoiler alert) that you have to have put the rabbit into the hat in the first place.

An intriguing and entertaining topic for the final lecture of this season. We meet again on 4 September to hear Connie Gray speak about the Golden Age of Fashion Illustration. In the meantime, let's hope for good summer weather!

IAN KEABLE

Ian Keable gained a First Class degree from Oxford University, qualified as a Chartered Accountant and then became a Professional Magician. He is a Member of The Inner Magic Circle. In 2014 he published *Charles Dickens Magician: Conjuring in Life, Letters & Literature*. He now divides his time between performing magic, giving talks and researching and writing. His latest book is *The Century of Deception: The Birth of the Hoax in Eighteenth-Century England*.



SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Hiding The Elephant: How Magicians Invented the Impossible, Jim Steinmeyer, Arrow, 2005

The Magic Book, Mike Caveney, Jim Steinmeyer, Ricky Jay, Taschen, 2018

Image: *The Conjurer*, Hieronymus Bosch (c1450-1516)(or his workshop), c1502, Musée Municipal, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France (public domain)