



If anyone speaks to P&T via e-mail or in person, tell them Britain is ready for some more!! —Mark "I-Can't-Stop-Humming-Lift-off-to-Love" Vent, U.K.

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# Two Yanks at Oxford

On April 22, 1996, Penn and Teller followed in the steps of Mother Teresa, his holiness the Dalai Lama, and Richard Nixon:

We were driven out to Oxford by a very Oxford-type guy. We were tired and I slept in the back seat and Teller slept in the front. The driver brought us to a beautiful library, which was our dressing room. Teller took his camera and got a tour of Oxford while I sat and read poetry. It's the part of college that I always wanted, but I knew I would never get at college. —Penn.

Paul Kenward, president of the Oxford Union Society, took me on a tour of his favorite spots on campus. He led me through an arched wooden door in a wall and pointed to a distant silver band on the landscape. "That," he said, "is the river where the Rev. Dodgson went rowing on that famous July afternoon." —Teller.

They fed us bad chicken and we sat with students. They were talking about how cool they are to be at Oxford and about money, and that's okay because I couldn't understand them because I'm really not good with accents. —Penn.

Lots of the colleges at Oxford provide the kids with personal servants to empty the trash, do the laundry, etc. One kid at christ Church had a fleet of

helicopters land in his quad to take his guests to his birthday party at the family country house. —Teller.

We did a photo shoot. One photographer kept yelling, "Look over here, at the center" and he wasn't in the center. I said, "Who are you with, the *Daily Solipsist*?" —Penn.

As Penn and I started towards the Debating Chamber, I noticed a roomful of students gathered around a TV monitor. This was how the overflow crowd that couldn't fit into the main hall was going to see us. I said to Penn, "Let's show them what we really look like so they'll know what they're watching on the monitor." We went in and exhibited ourselves life-size. They gave us an ovation for remembering them. —Teller.

The hall was packed, really packed, with people sitting on the floor. We did Handstab, Needles, and 10 in 1. We then took over an hour of questions. We made it very clear that there is no god, we hate drinking, and Uri Geller is an ass. We also talked about art. —Penn.

Afterwards, we both had to pee really badly. We ran from the debating chamber to the men's room. When we came out, we found that all the students had stayed in their places. I must say it was a bit unnerving to exit the toilets and see hundreds of kids waiting patiently for us to finish taking a leak. —Teller.

# What Teller Blabbed at the Magic Castle



In our previous issue, Penn reported that he kept his mouth shut while Teller accepted their Magicians of the Year award from the Academy of Magical Arts. Here's what the little guy said at the banquet in March:

**M**y name is Teller, and this is my partner, Penn Jillette. We are Teller and Penn.

About 1981 we were having a hard time. We had been members of the three-man group, the Asparagus Valley Cultural Society, which had just broken up. We'd promised ourselves we'd never take jobs outside show business, so, instead of working as waiters, we kept afloat by street-performing and doing six-show days at summer fairs. We had been working at the Minnesota Renaissance Festival and we were sitting in—what was that diner, Penn? Jimmy's Lemon Tree? [Penn nods.] I was noodling with Cups and Balls moves, using rolled-up napkins and empty water glasses—an annoying habit I no doubt share with 90 percent of the people in this room. Now, in our street act, I did the trick with pewter goblets, but here at the diner I noticed a wonderful thing: if I did the classic load—the one where you tip a ball off an inverted cup and simultaneously slip a palmed ball under-

neath—the misdirection was so powerful that even when I did it with a CLEAR TUMBLER, the viewer didn't notice the move.

Penn got very excited by the intellectual concept of doing something where the eye could see the moves, but the mind could not comprehend. So we devised a four-handed razzle-dazzle Cups and Balls routine, where even though the cups were clear plastic, the effect was still amazing.

In the winter of 1982 we found ourselves in Hollywood, playing a little theater called the—what was it, Penn? [Penn nods.] Yeah. That one. It was our first legit theatre run in a few years, and I remember—thankfully—the help we got from our magician friends. The show featured our Cups and Balls, but by now we had decided that rather than present it smugly (“Look how clever we are! We can fool you even with clear cups!”), we would try to be more polite and funny—to LET the audience realize they'd been fooled, rather than shoving it down their throats. So Penn's patter announced that we would expose the trick and the audience got to notice on their own that we had—well—failed.

The theatre was just down the hill from the Magic Castle. So, people started asking us what magicians thought of our “expo-

sure.” Naturally, we claimed magicians were terribly upset, and that the Magic Castle had banned us. Then magicians from the Castle started to come to the show. Some got the joke. Blackstone said with his resonant, savvy precision, “Ah, I see. The hatred of magic is the departure point for your comedy.”

But my partner, Penn, is a very good liar. And there were some magicians who came and believed what Penn said instead of what they saw with their own eyes. They even believed him when he told them they were outraged. And they went a little batty.... But, if you have to go batty, gosh, magic is a great thing to go batty over. Magic is entertainment, showbiz, fiction—by definition harmless. There's nothing about magic but good. And our little tempest in a top hat was particularly good for Penn & Teller, because the press picked it up as “news.” The media were actually paying attention to entertainers arguing philosophically on the ethics of make-believe! Before we knew it our career was back on track and we were headed for Broadway and—tonight. So, speaking for Penn and myself, let me say: thanks. We can't tell you how much we appreciate this honor. And we can't tell you how much we're going to deny it. —  
*Teller.*

# Penn's Henge Binge

My date and I took a train from London to Bath and then drove out to Stonehenge. We got to Stonehenge in a light drizzle. It was looming on the right and I was looking at the busses parked on the left and I missed it. We drove up to Stonehenge and I missed it as we drove up. I would not be a good explorer.

They have it fenced in with a tunnel going to it from the other side of the street so they can charge. I'm glad they're charging for it. Things they charge for are always better.

They have these cool little speaker things you carry from point to point and they tell you all about it. Because of my visual sense and how much I enjoy looking at things, I could probably enjoy sightseeing just as much by getting the tour tapes and BOTs [books on tape] and sitting at home and listening. But, I love listening to guide tapes and the site they're talking about is a really nice place to do it.

I like the way Stonehenge looks. If I could have gotten closer like you could 10 years ago, I

tion keeping all that together—well, you can do some amazing goddamn. I kept wondering why they haven't built a copy of the original (unbroken) somewhere—like Las Vegas. How much would it cost to build a 1:1 scale model of Stonehenge (of stone but not those actual stones, like concrete or something) in my backyard in Las Vegas? Anyway, I liked it. It's really pretty and green out there and there are sheep and I liked the burial mounds and, as far as I can see, there's no mystery. It's nutty goddamn that religious people do and while they're doing it—what the hell—build a calendar, too. I liked the whole tape except for the part that said you could feel it was a magic spot. They also talked about the two kinds of rock and said the bluestone always felt warmer to the touch. Well, first of all, we didn't think it did (they have samples) and second—well, why would that happen? I was very taken with Stonehenge. I bought a

we decided to blow off Meatloaf and tour the English countryside. We drove through lots of green hills and sheep and old walls and castles and thatched roofs and narrow roads. We listened to the radio and had a good time. We went to a town called Wells. It's a city from like the 13th century or something stupid. I guess it was a walled city like we have in Vegas. We were starving and we stopped at a fish and chips shop and had a young boy wait on us. On the menu was "two faggots and gravy." So we asked the kid what

two faggots and gravy are. "I don't know what they are," he said, "but they're nice." What a great answer.

Well, I wanted fish and chips and my date wanted chicken, so we never found out what two faggots and gravy are. I'm okay with that. Maybe now I know enough about faggots: they're nice.

We got to a bishop's castle too late to go in but we walked around. Man, these evil goddamns had it made. He had a moat with swans and ducks. The swan kept biting at a light. I think he saw his reflection in the glass cover and he kept biting. Man, they are big

mean birds and stupid, too. I like them. We walked around the moat and there are all these benches and they have plaques on them: "Mr. & Mrs. Henderson—Pasadena, California," and so on. I liked that. We went to the big church and we went in and they were having a service and, man, I didn't like that. I love spending money on Stonehenge souvenirs and museums because I want to see them spend that money, but I wouldn't give a goddamn penny to this old church—I just wanted to get out of there and we did. They have the town preserved just perfect and people live there. It's like Historic Old Deerfield, Massachusetts, and, although Wells is pretty and historic, it makes me crazy that people can't do what they want with their own houses. And then I think, hey, it's their hobby. They're like Trekkies and this is what they do, they live in old houses, and then I like it and I'm okay with it. It was all very beautiful and very stone, but there wasn't audio commentary so I didn't like it as much as I could have. But, I got to laughing about the biting swan and I got to hate the church again and that's a good day for me. My date drove us back to Bath and we got the train back in time to miss Meatloaf. —Penn.



wouldn't have known what to do. I don't want to touch things and goddamn them up, so I was fine where I was.

You know, when you have slave labor and time spans generations and you have supersti-

little metal model of what it looked like before it got run down and I bought an elaborate book about it. It got me thinking.

My date and I were supposed to see Stonehenge and then hurry back to town to see Meatloaf, but

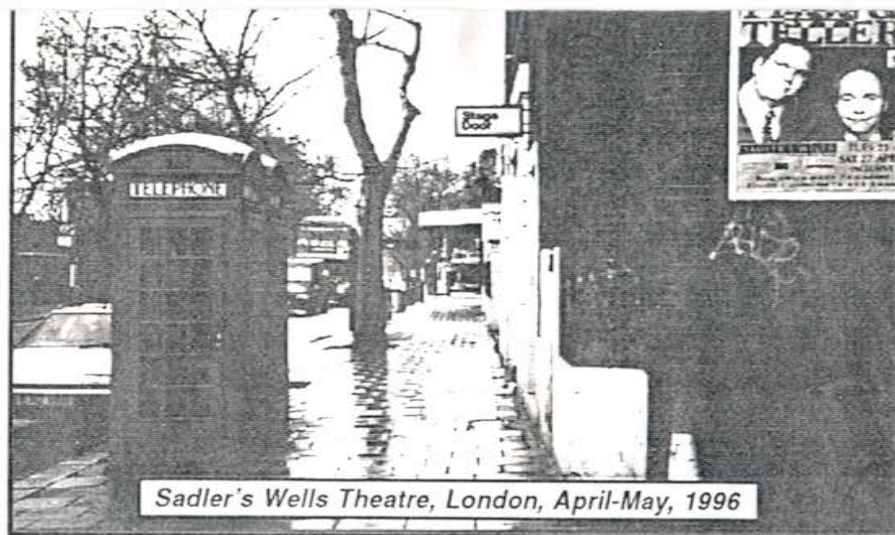
MOFO KNOWS

Written mostly by Penn and Teller.

Almost everything else by T. Gene Hatcher, with special thanks to Glenn Alai; Krasher; and Dan Maizner of alphagraphics.

There's fresh P & T at <http://www.sincity.com>

Teller pays tribute to bikinis in the July, 1996, issue of *GQ* magazine on sale now.



Sadler's Wells Theatre, London, April-May, 1996

## BRITISH COMPLIMENTS / AMERICAN COMPLIMENTS

It was indeed a pleasure to be invited to the world famous Oxford Union to witness the antics of a certain Mr Penn and Mr Teller. The pair chose the Union as the venue for their first UK appearance prior to their appearances at the Sadler's Wells Theatre.



Their tremendous welcome was suitably edified [sic] by the three effects which followed—card stab through the hand, "The Needles" and fire eating. They were fantastic! No

flashy props, music, special effects or complicated lighting. Just raw talent and showmanship, perfectly tuned over the years.

A blunt question and answer session revealed just how intelligent they both are and the extent to which they have mastered their craft. Honest and controversial responses regarding magicians were also given. Penn and Teller—ignore them at your peril! —Chris Dugdale, *Abra* magazine, issue 2623.

I read with great interest Chris Dugdale's review of the Penn and Teller show (*Abra* 2623). I'm so pleased that he thought they were wonderful. I wonder what he

would have thought of them if they had called *him* a "scum bag"? Perhaps it is some strange kind of American compliment they have bestowed upon me, or perhaps they are just ignorant and rude. It's certainly a strange title when they admitted to a *Daily Mirror* reporter that they had never seen me or any of my shows. —Paul Daniels, *Abra* magazine, issue 2625.



Submitted by Ian Keable.



**MOFO SEES**

July 5 — July 6  
Claridge Hotel and Casino  
Atlantic City, NJ

July 13 — July 14  
San Francisco  
Symphony Orchestra  
Davies Symphony Hall  
San Francisco, CA

July 17  
Tonight Show with Jay Leno  
NBC-TV

July 28  
Just for Laughs Comedy Festival  
Montreal, Canada

August 1 — August 7  
Bally's Las Vegas  
Las Vegas, NV