

Harrogate society of magicians



Issue 11 : November 2009

President - James Ward MMC

Editor - Neil Bradley-Smith

[Online Newsletter](#)

Presidential

Another month, another Presidential. That's the bad news. The good news is: there are just 17 to go before my successor takes over and things get back to normal.

In the meantime, it's been a busy few weeks for us all, what with the Staveley and Ripley Town Hall shows. I hope everyone's enjoyed themselves. I certainly have and found both events a valuable experience, Ripley in particular. I hadn't realised how exhausting it can be to compere a show – but great fun, too, as long as you don't get the acts mixed up and forget all your best punch lines.

Every performance can teach us something. Things invariably go wrong at some point and, as Brian has often remarked, you don't really know a trick properly until they do. Up to that moment, you know the mechanics of the trick, and how to present it under ideal conditions. But how do you react if, say, the cards are dropped and your stack is ruined? Or a helper gives you the "wrong" reply or misunderstands your instructions? Possibly a prop has been loaded into the wrong pocket or a fuse blows just as you're about to launch into a musical routine – what then?

Let's face it, just about anything that can go wrong, will go wrong eventually. It's good to learn from mishaps as they arise, but even better to anticipate and prepare for them first.

Every trick can be broken down into several stages and, to prepare for the worst, ideally you should ask yourself at each stage: what could go wrong here, and, if it does, how can I best go on? So, if, for example, the trick relies on a stacked deck, and the cards are dropped at the outset, how would you continue? Can the trick still be done or do you need to effortlessly move into another one?

Remember: unless you've committed yourself to a particular course of action, the audience has no idea where the trick was heading, and that alone may provide your escape route. But possibly the trick can be salvaged – as long as you've prepared yourself for potential problems. Again, if a question can be answered in more than one way – and this is especially important where the anticipated reply is the set-up for a joke – ask yourself what other answers a spectator might legitimately come up with, and prepare an adequate response.

Hopefully, nothing will go wrong – most of the time. But, when it does, you'll be ready and, with luck, your audience will be none the wiser but, hopefully, all the more entertained.

I'm preaching to the converted here, of course, but I needed something to fill up the space. And you probably haven't read this far anyway. In which case... (No, on second thoughts, maybe not...)

Till next time, remember: never try to saw an assistant in half with a blunt blade – unless they've really annoyed you.

J

This Is Your Life : Marcus Hill

Marcus, who was born in 1962, first got into magic when he was young and received a magic book as a present. Being interested in all things make-believe, he liked the idea of making things appear and disappear. His stage name was 'Marvo', which he probably took from his love of 'Marvel' comic books. (He once had a letter published in Spiderman!)

His first magic show was for his neighbours. He dressed in a hat and black cape and performed several tricks, among them a ball and rope trick, a well table and a top hat production.

Marcus went to university in Sheffield where he obtained a degree in PE. He told us how he loved doing sport all day long as part of his education. He then went on to be a PE teacher in Liverpool.

The other passion Marcus has is music, and whilst teaching he decided he wanted a career in the music industry. When he left his school in Liverpool, as a leaving present, he was given a Gold Disc of a record that he had recorded earlier in his life. The record was called 'Stranger to a friend' - of which he sold 100 copies (although he still has hundreds left in his garage!)

Marcus married his wife in 1986 and they had a daughter a few years later.

Magic took a back seat between the age of 15 and 46, at which point he joined the IBM. Our very own Brian was on the judging panel for his IBM audition and George was on the panel for his HSM audition. He passed them both and is now a fully fledged member of both.

As mentioned earlier, Marcus had his first letter published in a Spiderman magazine and after coming back into magic decided he wanted to write about magic. ABRA was the natural choice and, though the magazine is no longer with us, he contributed many articles, interviews and tricks. He is also a regular contributor to the Budget. His first published effect was a variation on a trick by Bob Ostin. Because he thought it was sufficiently different – and liked Marcus's approach – Bob was happy for Marcus to publish it under his own name. The effect was called 'Just Passing Through'.

Marcus has kept up his passion for music and is now in a duet called 'Singing Aloud', which, among other places, performs in nursing homes for stroke victims. His latest gig, at the weekend, was for an audience of two people - until one went to the toilet!

A great talk, thanks Marcus.

Meeting Theme : Spooky Magic

Stevie B

Stevie started the evening by showing us an effect he planned to perform at the Ripley Show, a 6 card repeat style effect. It involved 4 cards, 2 'hole' cards and 2 'whole' cards. The effect was very funny, and the patter was quick fire! A great effect which I'm sure everyone will enjoy.

He then showed us a spooky effect using 3 cards, Chung Ling Soo, Houdini and Tommy Cooper. Neil and Stuart helped – Neil chose a card which was correctly guessed even though Neil lied about the card he had chosen. Stuart chose another card which no one else knew, again correctly guessed, even though they had been mixed under the table. A fantastic effect! Thanks Steve.

Mike Coyne

Mike was next with a golden key effect. He told us the story of the Spanish Inquisition and the horrible things they did to other people. The key took the spirits of all this and was able to move the end of the key down the barrel where it then welded itself in place when the killings and other horrible things stopped. A spooky effect with a horrible story!

Bob McBratney

Bob showed us "The Web" a strange effect with 4 cards. Each card was blank which were to represent a mirror. He then told us about a strange thing that happened when he went to bed – all of the mirrors ended up with cobwebs all over them... The finale of the effect was the spider appearing of the back of Stuart's hand!

Clive Cullum

Clive showed us a few quick fire effects; the first was his ghost silk, a folded silk on a table that was moved by the spirits! The second was the spirit coin. The coin was placed on Stevie's hand and was able to jump about! Clive definitely summoned the spirits!

Adrian Salamon

Adrian showed us that ghosts were all around by photographing it using Bob's mobile phone... SPOOKY!

David Hird

David showed us an effect that he first saw performed by Dante using huge stage lamps. David's version was slightly smaller. On the table were 3 candles, the rear of which was the spirit light. Although lit it would refuse to light a piece of newspaper, very strange! Thanks David.

Jim Ward

Jim started by telling us the story of Chung Ling Soo who whilst performing at the Empire Theatre in 1918 was killed during his performance of the bullet catch; an effect which he had performed for years.

He asked Bob to roll 2 dice and add the values of each together. Bob then dealt that number of cards onto the table. Jim then asked Bob to deal 1 card for each letter of Chung Ling Soo's name (12 cards)

At the end of the effect the card that Bob had stopped on was infact the only card with a photograph on. This was a photo of Chung Ling Soo!

Brian Knowles

Brian presented us with a small house which he showed us was empty. After playing the Ghostbusters theme tune the roof of the house started to rise and out came a small ghost. This happened a couple of times.

He then showed us a similar effect with a 'ghost box'

Marcus Hill

Marcus's effect began with a story of 3 black lucky brains that he bought whilst on holiday! He placed 2 brains into his hand and 1 into his pocket. The first time he did this they all arrived back in his hand. The second time a green brain appeared, the third a red one joined the green and the third a yellow joined leaving the 3 brains to have changed colour. Throughout the effect the story continued with Marcus wanting a more deluxe version of the lucky brains, obviously to bring more luck.

The finale was the 3 coloured brains merged together to produce a large multi coloured brain. A spooky and funny effect. Thanks Marcus.

News

Next April – Whixley Show – Added November 09

We also discussed the possibility of a cabaret style show at Whixley village hall. This is a charity event and is also supporting the headmaster of the school who is retiring.

Obviously we are still at the very early stages with this one, and I'm sure we will have more information closer to the time.

Magic Books by Post – “Mystery Magazine” – Added November 09

Magic Books by Post are releasing a new magazine! This is sort of replacement for ABRA! To start with the magazine will be free to customers of Magic Books by Post and £2.25 for all magicians who wish to receive it.

The first issue will be released on 7 November 2009.

Further details available at www.magicbooksbypost.co.uk

Where to Find Magic

Derren Brown – Enigma Tour 2010

Derren Brown has released new tour dates for his Enigma Tour. The show came to the Harrogate International Centre last year and sold out in record time.

Further details available at www.derrenbrown.co.uk
Tour dates available here www.derrenbrown.co.uk/blog/tour-dates/

The closest venue to Harrogate is at the Bradford St George Theatre. To book your tickets visit the theatre booking page - [here](#)

Blackpool FISM World Championships 2012

The Fédération Internationale des Sociétés Magiques (International Federation of Magic Societies)

FISM is coming to Blackpool for the 2012 Magic Championships. The Federation was created in 1948 and today consists of 82 clubs, both national and international, as well as national Federations which represent over 50,000 Magicians from 44 countries.

Date: 9-14 July 2012
Venue: Blackpool Winter Gardens Grand Theatre and Tower Ballroom.
Price: Opening registration price (before 31st March 2010) £407 / €450

Further details available at www.blackpoolmagic.com
or by emailing arthurcasson@aol.com

Lee Hathaway's Lottery Prediction

For those of you who saw Derren Brown's Lottery Prediction last month this is a must see! Magician Lee Hathaway performed his version of the Derren Brown effect at the Southport Convention Fringe!

WARNING: SOME STRONG LANGUAGE

[Lee Hathaway Effect](#)

The Academy of Magic

The Academy is the platform for magicians to learn, create, develop and share their knowledge of magic. They offer a video on demand service, forum and mentor scheme where you can get detailed feedback from some of the world's top magicians. You can session and chat with other magicians via the live multi-video tool which is fantastic to increase your knowledge.

The main reason I joined was for the live lectures via video link which costs just £5 per lecture. The last lecture was held by Etienne Pradier and the next is on 8th November featuring James Brown. You can ask questions to the lecturer right from your computer which is great!

For more information about the Academy go to www.academyofmagic.com

Next online lecture:

James Brown
8th November 2009
19:30 GMT

Clive Cullum Talks Southport

This is just a short report on the Convention held in Southport. It was of course nice to meet old friends and to make new ones. The newly extended Floral Hall was impressive and gave ample room for all that was going on and particularly gave a good facility for the dealers. I thought it was a very worthwhile convention with informative lectures and good shows. The only thing not quite up to standard was the Shield (Stage) Competition. Two prizes (comedy and originality) were not awarded.

Ali Bongo introduced at Eastbourne last year an event called the Micro Magic Marathon when for an hour about 15 performers go from table to table in a mock restaurant setting. About 18 - 20 tables were placed in the Floral Hall with seats grouped around them. I was one of the performers and it was quite an endurance test!! My act involved entirely polo mints (mini, standard and large) I had worked out that things used went back to the same pockets to be all set for the next table. I did not count how many tables I visited but it was a lot or most. Although an endurance test it was surprisingly enjoyable and I will do it again (with a different act) next year. The "winner" (no cup is awarded - just a bottle of champagne and the honour) was Faye Presto who should be known to all of you as a well known London main venues performer and of course very experienced in this type of performance.

Of the lectures I thought Henry Mayol and Thom Peterson in particular had some very original ideas. A Spanish couple Brando and Sylvana gave some very sound advice on presentation and creating magic. For those who like complex coin work Hayashi's work was good. To see Terry Herbert in action before an invited audience of children was informative as to reactions.

In the close-up competition more and more performers are it seems using computer screens when timing becomes important. One young performer staged the threaded needles from mouth with a nice touch of getting a spectator to inspect his open mouth with a torch. An effect not often seen nowadays. Another effect making a come-back was anti-gravity glasses performed on the "Stars of the Future" show. Also of interest was a nice twist or added feature to the tossed out deck effect.

As to the shows including the final Gala all the comperes (Paul Ray, Tony Stevens, Tony Rix and the Irishman Aonghus McAnally) were exceptional. There were several illusionists with very modern illusions. David and Dania with their quick change act performed on the Gala Show. They had also earlier had a Q and A session about their performing lives interviewed by John Pye. I asked whether they used Velco, press studs or both to receive the answer (to the amusement of those present) "come to our workshop"!! John Kimmons was a skilled ventriloquist.

Eddie Dawes who has for the past 24 years introduced the Friday afternoon show with an emphasis on referring to performers of the past said that this was his last show.

One lecturer and performer on the Gala Show (mentalism) was Australian Sean Taylor. I discovered that he lives in a Sydney suburb called Beecroft which adjoins my son Paul's suburb of Epping and he has a magic shop in Chatsworth also nearby. I told him that during our planned 8 weeks stay in Australia November to January I hoped to visit the Sydney Ring and a suburb club I visited 12 years ago Genii's at Parramatta.

There was an auction of props for the Welfare Fund conducted by Derek Lever in humorous mood. I didn't bid for anything but as you may know it is interesting to see the different effects. At the dealers I bought two items but I will not say what they are other than nowadays I usually only buy all purpose items. For the first time i did not buy any books even second hand ones!

The Gala Show ended with a stage full of flowers - a beautiful sight and reminiscent of Dino's act. He used to dart his flowers into the stage whereas this performer used flowers with built in folded stands. The performer was not listed in the programme so I cannot give the name. It must take hours to fold up the dozens and dozens of flowers used. I will bring the programme (if I remember) to the next meeting for anyone who is interested to see.

The next president is Shirley Ray and she has promised me that she will visit our Society. The next Convention will be at Eastbourne from 22nd to 26th September 2010.

Clive Cullum

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Members Present

Stevie Bellerby
Neil Bradley-Smith
Stuart Broadbank
Mike Coyne
Clive Cullum
George Fowler
Marcus Hill
David Hird
Brian Knowles
Bob McBratney
Adrian Salamon
Jim Ward

Apologies for Absence

Dan Curston
Denys Hollis
Rex Stott

Next Meeting

“This is Your Life” – James Ward
Christmas Magic

Meeting Date & Time

16th November 2009
20:00