

Harrogate society of magicians



Issue 10 : October 2009

Presidential

For those of us who don't perform regularly, two shows in five weeks offers a rare chance to stand in front of an audience neither known nor related to us. Though numbers were down this year, I thought the Staveley and Copgrove Show was a great night out and a good advertisement for the Society.

People join magic clubs for a variety of reasons and not all necessarily want to perform. It can be a daunting occasion, whether you're experienced or not. Tricks go wrong, jokes fall flat, and vital props are sometimes loaded into the wrong pocket with disastrous results. But enough of my act. It's still a great feeling to stand in front of an audience and realise they haven't yet lynched you.

For the past couple of years we've had a fairly settled squad. As the Society grows, perhaps we'll have to 'rotate' players to ensure everyone gets a fair crack of the whip. Having said that, interestingly, the programme for the Society's very first show, on Friday, 30 April 1948, listed no fewer than eleven acts, with five performances in the first half and six in the second. We only had six stage acts in total at Staveley, so perhaps we're not yet bursting at the seams.

In addition to seven magic routines (two of them double acts), that first show also boasted a singer and a comedian (who each appeared twice). Of course, we had our own resident comic, Mike Coyne, warming up the audience at Staveley, so possibly all we really lack is a singer to complete our ensemble. I look forward to hearing you all audition at the next meeting. We have a piano at the club, and I'm sure one of us can manage 'chopsticks', so there's no excuse.

Our show at Ripley Town Hall on Friday, 30 October will be very different to Staveley and Copgrove but, hopefully, will be just as much fun and another useful experience for all involved. As others have remarked, it's encouraging that a club of our relatively small size seems to have no problem putting a show together. I'm sure this is in part due to the fact that we support each other, don't take ourselves too seriously and want, more than anything else, to have a good time and hope that others do, too.

Long may it continue!

And now, who wants to sing first?

Till the next time, keep your silks smooth, soft and safely out of the reach of strangers. Something like that.

J

This Is Your Life : Rex Stott

Rex, a regular on the WI circuit, began with the amusing 'string of sausages' effect with which he opens his talks in village halls around the county. He told us, to paraphrase a famous comic [I think it was a comedian – but his name escapes me – sorry!], that every good story should have a beginning, a middle and an end – but not necessarily in that order. And his talk, he promised us, would be no different.

Unlike some members, magic has not been a regular part of Rex's life. Indeed, he told us, though he discovered magic when young, for reasons which would later become obvious, for most of his life he hasn't been involved with it at all. Early on, however, he and his brother put together and performed a successful double act, earning money while having fun at the same time. As a reminder of those days, Rex brought along a faded Union Flag – the very one (as photos were able to prove), which covered the tables on which he once used to perform.

He also brought along several other mementos, among them an ancient copy of The Wizard comic, and a photo of himself and his brother which, horrified by the look on their young faces, their mother refused to hang in the house. To dispel any doubt about his physical appearance, however, Rex also produced several other photographs to prove that he was in fact a devilishly handsome young man – almost as good-looking as Mike Coyne in his youth!

Rex gave up magic when he went to university, opting to concentrate on his music (he's a keen jazz musician), his studies and his career. While at university, he met his future wife, Janice, and, after earning his degree, Rex became a primary school teacher, rising to become deputy headmaster before moving into local government. Many years later, following local government reorganisation, he opted for a redundancy package and early retirement.

A 'free man' again, Rex threw himself back into magic, but not before suffering a near-fatal heart attack while swimming, and which left him clinically dead for several minutes. Fortunately, he made a full recovery and went on, as secretary at Hull Magicians' Circle, to oversee the club's dramatic expansion. One of Rex's first acts, as secretary, was to book Michael Ammar, after which the club never looked back.

Eventually, Rex left the area, joined York Society of Magicians and became (and still is) secretary of that club. In agreeing to take on the role, Rex – keen to encourage a new generation of magicians – insisted that he be allowed to set up a youth section. The group was duly established and is now a thriving part of the York magic scene.

Rex ended a very entertaining evening – much as he had begun it – in the same way he closes his WI talks. Having shown us an early wand and 'Good Bye' banner prototype, he treated us to a burst of poetry, before unfurling another banner that left him clutching a hot-water bottle, and ready for bed in a fetching pair of red-striped pyjamas and matching night cap!

Thank you for your talk, Rex!

WRITTEN BY JIM WARD

Meeting Theme : Escapology

David Hird

David showed us his version of a domino effect from the Roy Field and Paul Freeman lecture earlier in the year. On a stand were 3 cards, numbered 1, 2 and 3. He then displayed a double blank domino card which was put in a full view throughout the effect. After having 3 different domino cards selected and placed over each numbered card on the stand, a number was chosen and when the double blank prediction was revealed it had changed into the selected domino. A fantastic handmade effect by David. Thank you.

Stevie B

Stevie's Shanghai shackle came next - a small metal tube with 2 holes in the top and 2 pieces or ropes. Originally made out of bamboo these were one of the first forms of restraint. Stevie told us the story of how they were first introduced and used whilst the effect was set ready. The ropes are passed through the tube and fed through the holes in the top. Steve then placed his hands through the loop in the ropes and asked Bob and Stuart to help by holding the ends of the rope. The escape began.... Unfortunately Stevie forgot to do the 'secret' move and so couldn't escape the first time! He then reset the effect and tried again this time the effect worked perfectly and looked fantastic. I made my own the next day out of some pipe although admittedly it doesn't look as posh as Stevie's but does a pretty good job! Thanks Stevie, great effect as always!

Bob McBratney

Bob showed us his version of the classic electronic release handcuffs. His comedy approach made the effect very funny and I think is the only way to use the prop.

Very entertaining! Thanks Bob

Brian Knowles

Brian started by showing us an older escape using a length of rope and a silk handkerchief - a very good effect.

Then came his unintentional 'comedy' escape routine. His first escape was a mail bag and handcuff escape which was very entertaining and Brian managed to escape in record time! The second was a straight jacket escape which I think came from his days working at the mental hospital! Another fantastic and entertaining escape! Brian's escapes were, as I'm sure you will agree, great fun to watch! We then saw Brian's huge collection of handcuffs some very old and some a little more modern, all made by the company who currently issue the police with their handcuffs, Hiatts who have been around for 100 years+

Thank you, Brian.

News

Ripley Show - Roddy Scott Foundation - Added October 09

We have set the date for the Ripley Show which is the 30 October 09 at the Ripley Town Hall. Jim has uploaded Marcus's and Mike's routines to the members area of the website so check there for details. Doors for the event open to the public at 6:30pm and the show starting at 7:00pm.

Not sure what time we can access the venue but I'm sure we will get confirmation closer to the date.

Where to Find Magic

Derren Brown - Enigma Tour - New Tour Dates

New tour dates have been announced for Derren Brown's Enigma Tour. Derren is visiting Theatres that he didn't perform at this year as well as re-visiting some that he did.

At the moment the closest venue is at the Bradford St George's Theatre on 3rd and 4th April 2010.

www.derrenbrown.co.uk for tour dates

Blackpool - FISM 2012

FISM World Championships 9 - 14 July 2012
Blackpool Winter Gardens Grand Theatre and Tower Ballroom.
Registration price €450 euros

www.blackpoolmagic.com
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Members Present @ Meeting

Stevie B, Neil Bradley-Smith, Stuart Broadbank, Clive Cullum
George Fowler, Marcus Hill, David Hird, Brian Knowles
Bob McBratney, Rex Stott, James Ward.

Apologies for Absence:

Dan Curston, Mike Coyne, Denys Hollis, Adrian Salamon.

Next Meeting

Spooky Magic

This is Your Life : Marcus Hill

Meeting Date & Time

19 October 2009 @ 20:00