

Harrogate society of magicians



Issue 9 : September 2009

Presidential

Why are you a magician? Many of those asked this question will reply, “I was given a magic set for my birthday”, or “I had an uncle/father/milkman who showed me tricks when I was young and that was that”.

But that describes the moment you “found” magic, not why it hooked you. I remember the first time I saw a free climber ascend a mountain using only her hands and feet, and others scale the outside of tall buildings without a rope or safety net in sight. I was “hooked”, but not to the extent that I rushed out and tried to climb onto my roof – with or without a ladder.

So what is it about magic that especially appeals? It can't be just the “puzzle” element, because many of us are driven by an urge to perform, not a wish to unravel, or create new, secrets. Yet nor is it just performance, either – after all, not everyone is keen to stand up and “entertain”. Nor is it necessarily a wish to master complex digital skills; many magicians are content with simple self-workers.

Doubtless, to some degree, it's a mix of reasons and we're all driven by different motives. It may be that understanding your own reasons for being a magician won't alter or improve your approach in any way. Then again, is it a question you've ever asked yourself?

Personally, I'm a fan of the “toys for boys” school of thought. We are all Peter Pans, with no great wish to grow up. And looking around, who can blame us? Magic is, at heart, a world of childish fantasy. True, though many tricks are simple, others are based on complex, rigorous thinking that would not be out of place in a practical or scientific environment. But the end result is avowedly – and unashamedly – to create a world of make-believe.

At the end of the day, we stand in front of people and say things like, “Look, I've cut this rope in half and now I'm going to put it back together again”; “Over here I have a coloured hanky and I'm going to make it vanish”; “Here are some little sponge bananas and look, I've just pulled a coin out of your ear.” And so on.

While, as magicians, we may need to be serious about what's involved in our work, and how we practise and present it, the one thing we can't afford to take too seriously is ourselves.

Like it or not, we can never afford to truly grow up. Because the moment we do, we

lose the magic.

Not to mention that Vernet thumb tip I haven't been able to find for several weeks.

Till next time – keep your wands clean and shiny.

J

This Is Your Life : Neil Bradley-Smith

Neil was born in Harrogate in 1988 and attended King James School in Knaresborough until 2005 where he had studied Law, Psychology and Drama in Sixth Form.

After he left school he went to work for one of the largest stand alone family lawyers in the country, Stowe Family Law, where he worked in the accounts department for 2 years as an accounts assistant and credit controller.

In April 2007 he ran away to the circus. (Literally!) where he was the illusionist and comedy actor for the summer season, travelling all over the south of England, from Southampton to Essex to North Wales. He was also the illusionist during the week long Halloween stand in Portsmouth.

During his time on the circus Neil learnt all the tricks of the trade from stilt walking and unicycling to fire eating and breathing.

After the season finished Neil returned to normality (if you can call it that!) and started working for Sainsbury's as a temp over the winter months whilst he waited for the circus season to start again.

The summer season came and went and Neil decided to stay at Sainsbury's and further his career in retail. He is currently a Trainer for the company training colleagues both in store and across the region which consists of over 20 stores.

Neil's interest in magic began when he was 4 years old and received a Sooty Magic set for Christmas. For his 5th birthday Neil wanted a magician and so along came Uncle Arthur! This was his first magic performance! His interest grew over the years and on a family trip to the beach he saw the Chuckle Brothers live tour. During the show an illusion company help the 'magic' of the show along. Neil decided that he wanted to be the illusionist when he grew up! (unlike other children that say this, Neil did actually grow up to be that illusionist on the circus!)

Outside of work and magic Neil is a keen water skier and has been a member of Calm Water Bay Ski Club in Knaresborough for 8 years. He is also a qualified water ski boat driver. Neil's other passion are horses. He is an experienced horse rider and has been riding for 15 years. Due to his experience Neil also teaches others to ride and is a riding instructor.

Neil's this is your life talk was shorter than most but he has certainly managed to cram a lot into his 21 years!

Thanks for your talk Neil.

Meeting Theme : Magic with Flowers

Stevie B

Steve started the evening off with some great balloon modelling - first with his flower balloon and then with a huge variety of other balloons! He also showed us how to make a rose from a paper napkin, a great idea for the ladies!!

Marcus Hill

Up next was the amazing money tree from Marcus! As well as a great card trick where flowers appeared on the blank cards!

Brian Knowles

Brian showed us some more vintage magic effects with his large blossoming flower, another great effect from the master! We also saw water appear from nowhere and some more blossoming flowers. Brian's finale was an appearing spade!

Bob McBratney

Bob's comedy baking routine had everyone laughing - although I think he misunderstood the theme for the evening with an effect using 'flour' not 'flowers'!! Oh well, maybe he will get it right next time! Thanks, Bob!

David Hird

David showed us another classic effect, with a fantastic bouquet appearance.

George Fowler

George also showed us a bouquet appearance, and with some guidance from Steve he fooled us a second time, only this time without the cover of a cloth/handkerchief. Great stuff, George!

Clive Cullum

Clive showed us a clever optical illusion by taking 15 girls and making one vanish! We then moved on to Clive's favourite pastime... Girls on playing cards, nothing to do with flowers but certainly very interesting!! (and slightly worrying!) Thanks, Clive.

News

Annual Show – Staveley

As every should be aware the Staveley Show has been set for Friday 25th September starting at 7:00pm. We will be able to access the hall from about 5:30pm to enable everyone to get set in good time.

Neil will be filming the event again this year and Jim will be talking to us about the publicity disclaimer at the meeting on Monday.

Auditions

If you were present at the August meeting you will know that Stuart and Adrian passed their auditions and are now fully fledged members of the Society.

Unfortunately Dan wasn't able to make it to the meeting due to work commitments but I'm sure when he is able to return he will be completing his audition.

Where to Find Magic

Blackpool

FISM World Championships 2012

Blackpool Winter Gardens Grand Theatre and Tower Ballroom
Opening registration price 450 euros

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

9-14 July 2012

Members Present @ Meeting

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

Apologies for Absence:

Dan Curston, Mike Coyne, Rex Stott.

Next Meeting

Escapology

This is Your Life : Rex Stott

Meeting Date & Time

21 September 2009 @ 20:00