

STARS ARE BORN

Newsletter of the Society of Irish Magicians

JANUARY 2010

✚ SIM'S 70TH
ANNIVERSARY.

✚ THE SOCIETY'S
LIBRARY.

✚ BE A MENTOR

ARCHER SCORES A BULLSEYE!

What can you say about the December meeting? Was it not one of the most memorable in many years? To those who missed it we can only offer our sympathy: it was a near-perfect mix of magic, comedy, nostalgia, memories, old friends, new friends, and magicians from the four corners of our green isle swapping yarns and buying one another drink. All this and a birthday cake, free coffee and mince pies into the bargain! And all for nothing? Is the Council out of its collective mind or what?

Let's put down a marker on this one: the event was a stylish, well balanced night of exuberant good fun and magical bonhomie. But – and this is important – such events don't *just happen*. They require careful planning and an overwhelming commitment of time, personal resources and work, work, work on the part of a small coterie of dedicated

members. If I mention Brendan Byrne, Nevin Cody, Joe Fortune, Pat Fallon, Neville Wiltshire and Ciaran MacCormack it is only because these are the first names that spring to mind not only with this event, but also with most of the Society's activities. I am also aware that there may be others that I have missed. My apologies. Stand up gentlemen and take a well deserved bow.

And what can you say about **JOHN ARCHER?** He was the perfect choice and pitched his lecture and performance with practised ease at an audience that soaked him up like a grateful sponge.

To see a master of his craft in full flight, improvising on the impromptu situations that his audience afforded him was a sheer joy to behold. Not only was the magic good, but the comedy was masterful.

The blindfold routine plays for about twenty minutes and uses only a few dollar coins and a roll of Duct Tape. A practical and exuberant interpretation of 'playing a blinder.'

This is on one of John's DVDs, but anybody thinking that they will even approximate his presentation would be wrong. The audience handling skills, the asides, and the seamless methodology are the result of years of performing it before live audiences. And time after time that seems to be the magic key: actually doing it before a live audience, again

and again. But where, nowadays, can you get that? Your editor remembers the Sunday evening variety shows and performing at possibly two or three venues and getting across the city with a case full of props; or the 'smokers' and dinners and cabarets on Saturday nights: all grist to the mill. Or even better still, the fit-ups with their eight shows weekly non stop over a period of anything up to six months. These opportunities no longer exist except for a privileged elite, the 'pros' in the Society, who work constantly and hone their skills accordingly. And it shows. By Heavens but it shows. One of the outlets left is the Society's monthly meetings, where there is ample opportunity to try out material. Could that form the basis for a new Years Resolution? To avail of every opportunity to practise your art with real people. Okay, let's accept that an audience of magicians is not really the ideal audience: but it's worth trying to crack it. If for nothing else but to get that extra bit of confidence which enables you to stand up and do your thing with aplomb before your peers. Here's to 2010, and lots more magic!



MORE GLEANINGS FROM A MAGICAL BOOKWORM

by Michael Thurston

This month I'm leaving my magic books resting in peace and instead I'm going to mull over some thoughts regarding another library of magic books. In my early days in magic this was a library I used with great regularity and with no regrets. I am writing about the library of our own society.

At the AGM it was mentioned - almost as if it were a problem. Maybe it is; a large collection of books is never easy to store. Back in the early seventies many members used the library facility. Our young librarian (alas no longer interested in our noble art) brought a case load of books to each meeting and the business was carried out after the main meeting.

Tony Griffith (our recent lecturer) has an interesting section on page 38 of *Further Reflections* entitled **I don't read books!** It ends with these words: "My own experience is that books can

inspire you to use your imagination and become creative. I believe those in our fraternity who only watch DVDs are missing out on part of our rich heritage."

I fully endorse his view. Yet I realise that we may be voices crying out in the wilderness. Nevertheless if magicians did read more they would realise that a lot of today's 'new' magic is not so much 'new' as revamped!

Our society library is part of our unique 'rich heritage', built up with great care over half a century. If it has now become a problem then I suggest that we as a society deal with it. It would seem, having listened to many comments, that the general resolve would be to unload the library in some way. If it is not being used this might be the proper course. The question then is 'How?'

My first solution would be to give it all to me!!! Seriously, a solution must be found and the sooner the better. Books do not improve from being left lying around. But remember that books - properly cared for - don't get scratched, don't jump when you're in the middle of a paragraph, and don't get jammed in any ruddy machine.

As this is a special year for our society one suggestion might be to bring back the trick of the month competition, and give two books as prizes - this would unload the best 24 books in the collection. The library could be put on sale at the Belfast convention. This should help the society's finances. The remainder

could be put in the next auction.

Just suggestions - the meanderings of a magic bibliophile.

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THE BENEFITS OF BEING A MENTOR

by

Eric and Muriel Sharp.

So you have many favourite tricks and routines, you are getting towards retiring, you can't or are reluctant to part, but you don't want these good tricks and routines you have honed over the years to die with you, what do you do? The answer? Find a protégé.

Way back in 1973 we received a letter saying that the writer agreed with everything we wrote about magic in the various magazines to which we were then contributing; that he was a young student hoping to become

a teacher. He was interested in magic but only wanted to do a bit of Magic part time etc.,

We liked what he said and invited him over for a week. He came with us to every show, returned home and has been a pro magical entertainer ever since, Television, public shows, IBM shows etc., You've probably guessed by now he's your past president **Quentin Reynolds**.

He did not like Punch and Judy until he saw ours. He soon picked that up. He visited us frequently learning all the time until one day we said 'there's not much more we can teach you now, just one tip, put any surplus money into property' He did just that. We had judged him right: he was an excellent pupil.

One has to be a good judge in these things or one is wasting one's time.

We had someone who was living here in S. Wales who was on School master's wages but hated it and was doing magic when off school at quite high fees, However, in spite of his headmaster's

wage, his income from children's shows, and was single and living on his own, it soon became apparent that he was not prepared to invest money on P&J equipment or P & J figures which we did not make. We did not waste our time on him any further.

Six years ago a seventeen year old youth came to us and asked as to teach him P & J and Magic, we judged him to be genuine and gave him tuition up to two hours a week (all free, we never charged or made a profit). After six months he competed against 3000 at Pontins holiday camp at Blackpool and won a place as entertainer, after a short time he became camp entertainer. A couple of months later he was head hunted on word of mouth as camp entertainer at Butlins Minehead. A short time later a cruise ship wanted him but he was too young, however, a video of him performing overcame that. Currently he has five months contract each year at a large theme Pleasure Park and owns a Children's Pleasure complex, quite an achievement considering

when he first came to us straight from school he had not a penny in savings.

Even more recently two twelve year olds requested that we teach them Magic. We took them on, on the same terms: no profit by us. And a year later when both thirteen years old entered a **GO AS YOU PLEASE** competition, one came first the other third. Unfortunately they are so involved in sport and lessons they have had to put magic on hold. Parents know best??

This has given us great pleasure over the years and still does even at eighty eight years of age, it keeps us going so to speak.

It gives us a good excuse to attend conventions to look for tricks to recommend, great fun, very interesting., it's our teenage magic days all over again.

So, to extend your magic life, why not become a mentor to some budding magician. You've a wealth of experience just waiting to be tapped.

Happy New Year from both of us.

SOME MEMBERS MAY NOT HAVE ACCESS TO A COMPUTER OR TO EMAIL. A LIMITED NUMBER OF PRINTED COPIES WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS ON OUR SOCIETY MEETING NIGHT.



Society of Irish Magicians Programme of Events 2010

January 2010 : Lecture by David Penn.

February 2010: Auction.

March 2010: The Blackpool Appraisal

April 2010: Workshop



WE WISH ALL OUR MEMBERS AND READERS A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A NEW YEAR FULL AND PLENTY WITH GREAT MAGIC.



NEXT MEETING

TUESDAY 5TH JANUARY

8.00 pm sharp

DAVID PENN LECTURE

CASSIDY'S HOTEL,
CAVENDISH ROW, UPPER
O'CONNELL ST. DUBLIN 1

OUR JANUARY MEETING, USUALLY A LOW KEY AFFAIR NOW COMES BLAZING IN WITH A LECTURE FROM DAVID PENN.

DAVID PENN is a close up magician, corporate magician, illusionist, TV star, and creator and consultant. He is much in demand, and the Society of Irish Magician's is proud to be able to offer this night to its members. Admission to paid up members is free. Bona fide members of other societies are invited to attend: the fee is only a paltry €15.

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