

OUR SIDE *of the Pond*



By Elizabeth Warlock

The pace is gathering speed as we head towards the Festive Season with magical activities abounding, even though the daylight hours are getting shorter and the evenings lengthening with each passing day. These events include The Magic Circle Annual Awards Banquet taking place at the Bloomsbury Holiday Inn in London on the twenty-first and at the end of the month the International Weekend, originated by the late Ron MacMillan and still run by the MacMillan family headed by his son Martin. One can always be sure of seeing some great magic at this event, and this year is no exception. The star-studded bill will include the legendary Rene Lavand, who is guest of honour, as well as Tina Lennert, Brett Williams, Geoff Williams, Leo Nifosi, and Noel Britten. This annual convention has always been held in the Euston area, but this year the venue has been moved to Blackfriars by the Thames, near to both St Paul's Cathedral and the City of London. The events will take place in the Mermaid Theatre, which we understand has ideal conditions for magic.

Our congratulations go to British Ringer Jack Delvin who was elected president of The Magic Circle for a term of five years at their Annual General Meeting held on September 7. Jack was vice-president to President Ali Bongo, who sadly died just a few months after taking this prestigious office. As president of The Magic Circle, Jack now joins such luminaries as David Devant, Nevil Maskelyne, David Berglas, Michael Bailey, and Alan Shaxon.

This charming man has been in magic

all his life, having been introduced to it at the age of six. He learned much from reading *The Yellow Peril* magic books, and then gained further experience by managing the magic section of a large London store. With a professional act of miscellaneous stage magic, he went on to tour the clubs in Europe and the world. Now, apart from presenting full-evening shows and lectures around the country, he manages to find time to do an enormous amount of work for TMC in various capacities. He can be seen every Monday evening in the clubroom and during the summer recess in July and August has been organizing the Summer School, nine consecutive weeks of magic instruction for eager-to-learn members. We wish him a very happy term of office.

Congratulations also go to Scott Penrose who has been elected vice-president. Son of magician John Penrose, he also grew up in magic, so it was no surprise Scott followed in his father's footsteps, becoming a very accomplished manipulator with a dove act that won him numerous prizes including that of TMC Stage Magician of the Year in 2000. It is only in the past six years that he has devoted himself full time to magic. Prior to that he was a stockbroker in London's financial district, something that has made him a great asset to TMC on the business side of things. Although known to magicians as a performer and lecturer, John's main work these days is mostly as a magical consultant for feature films, television shows, and theatrical productions for which he has designed and built illusions and special effects. So successful has he

been that he is sought after by such names as Andrew Lloyd Webber and Cirque du Soleil.



Derren Brown

That very talented mentalist – or psychological illusionist, as he is known to the general public – Derren Brown has become almost a household name in this country through his numerous television series and theatre shows. He is particularly popular with those in the twenty to forty age group, who regard him almost as a pop star. Derren’s latest television venture has been to predict the National Lottery numbers for Saturday, September 5. I should explain that the lottery is held twice a week on each Saturday and Wednesday, with the chance to win a million pounds or more. The odds of winning are one in fourteen million, and the winning numbers are always drawn randomly from a machine, live on BBC1 television. Derren attempted to do this on a special programme devoted entirely to this event on Channel 4 that ran concurrently with the BBC1 programme, and it gained him national publicity. This was followed the next Wednesday with another full hour’s viewing, with Derren explaining to viewers how it was all done with a number of experiments with members of the studio audience who gradually built up to actually picking the winning lottery numbers – having seen the

program, the general feeling at the end was that he never gave away his real secret of actually picking the winning numbers in question, despite the fact he successfully predicted the numbers for that night. One man later claimed on YouTube that he had found the secret behind the illusion. Only Derren would know if he was correct, but in any case, as he said at the end, “It is a trick.”

It was a great idea from Derren and his team that included actor/mentalist Andy Nyman and the producers Objective Productions, headed by former prize-winning magicians Andrew O’Connor and Anthony Owen, who have been behind so many successful magical shows on television. And it’s interesting to note that Derren is a fine card worker, as was witnessed many years ago at a convention before he ever went into mentalism and became the star he is today. In addition, he is a fine artist and has recently had a book published showing his cartoon-like portraits of many famous names.

Tyler Wilson is not a name that immediately springs to mind when it comes to card magic, although I am sure that it will not be too long before it does. Hailing from Calgary, Canada, he performed just one trick in a workshop at The Session, the now annual close-up convention held in Gloucester and organised principally by Andy Gladwin. In September, Kerry Scora persuaded Tyler to return to this country for a lecture tour, with one of his stops being the British Magical Society here in Birmingham for the first meeting after the August break.

So it was with much anticipation that the audience gathered to see this tall young guy with a different approach to magic. He, while not entertaining in the true sense of the word, was certainly advanced technically, giving much food for thought for those only interested in moves and baffling each other...of which there seem to be many around. There was a version of Cardwarp, the trick that brought Roy

Walton to international fame, a spelling trick, Rough and Smooth, a version of Paul Gertner's Unshuffled, a clever effect in which a signature and message appears on the edge of the deck and which with just a mere flip of the cards can change, and a mental effect in which he had a member of the audience give a six-figure number that was later found written in an envelope that had been given to someone for safekeeping at the beginning of the lecture. This was definitely magic for magicians.

But if you were looking for entertainment at the close-up table, you had to look no further than Will Gray, a busy professional from the Leicester area who came third in the Zina Bennett Close-up competition at the British Ring convention last year and appeared at FFFF for the first time. Looking smart and with his bright and happy manner, Will showed some dozen effects in his lecture at the BMS that have made him a popular performer at trade shows and in the corporate field, working for such companies as HSBC, Land Rover, and Volkswagen. He is also on the team of magicians that entertain in the hospitality rooms at the home matches of Manchester United Football Club. Included among the effects seen and explained was a very different and mystifying version of Coins Across concluding with a Jumbo coin production, Ambitious Card using a drawing of a rabbit instead of a normal card, a production of a live goldfish in conjunction with the Phil Deck, a chosen card caught between the two Jokers, a prediction effect using a Monopoly board, and much more. It was good commercial magic and the members showed their appreciation at the end with sustained applause.

We are so pleased to welcome Thom Peterson once again to this country, not just on a lecture tour this time, but as a resident. Even more welcome is the fact that he will live right here in Birmingham, where he will share his life with Annabel de Vetten, an artist of no mean feat who is

fast making her mark with her magical-themed paintings and in particular her designer playing cards which are becoming such a popular item with many magicians. Thom not only possesses fine technical abilities, but has a charismatic personality which makes him a much-sought-after close-up performer for all types of shows inside and outside the magical world. He cannot fail to be a success, not just in this country but also across the Channel in Europe.

The sixth Kidology conference took place once again in Wolverhampton on September 8th and drew a bumper crowd to enjoy a day devoted entirely to children's magic. It included a dealer's demonstration and four superb lectures by Ali Cardabra, Derek Lever, Michael Diamond, and the current International Children's Entertainer Champion, Michael J Fitch.

Safire (Jane and Stuart Loughland) are probably the busiest illusionists in the country, having just completed one hundred six performances of *Chuckle Trek: The Lost Generation* in over sixty theatres throughout the UK. This is the show presented by The Chuckle Brothers, a great favourite with children on BBC television. Now Safire is performing their own shows, *Kamakan Live* and *Montrous*. During the Christmas season they will appear again with the Chuckle Brothers in *A Christmas Chuckle*. They will be performing a themed illusion spot as well as their Magic Light Puppets.

Word from Nathan Croft, who left these shores last April for Australia to take up a post with Melbourne University, is that he is now establishing himself with local magicians and societies like the Australian Society of Magicians and Ring 84. He has already attended a number of lectures as well as many card sessions with Dave Wright and other experts in that field. We wish him continued success in magic and his research work as a scientist.

I'll be with you again next month.

Sick & Convalescent I.B.M. Members

SICK AND CONVALESCENT COMMITTEE

HAROLD TWADDLE/CHAIRMAN

2702 128th Street, Toledo, OH 43611 • htwaddle@aol.com (419) 726-4911

KEVIN CARNEY 101 Rue De LaPaix, Slidell, LA 70458 • kmcarney@charter.net

JERRY ARGETSINGER 91 Saddlehorn Dr., Rochester, NY 14626 • GSArget@aol.com

WALLY WILLIS Golden Living Center, 305 Fremont St., Anoka, MN 55303

• wallywillis@msn.com

BRENT A. LIPP 927 North 4th St., Quincy, IL 62301 • balipp@magician.org

Send Mail To:

Gladys Christenberry, 110 Mark Twain Dr., Apt 1, River Ridge, LA 70123

Edward Rosenthal, 15436 N. 64th St. #114, Scottsdale, AZ 85254

Triny Peller, 24132 Delphi St., Mission Viejo, CA 92691

Meyer Papermaster, 7105 N. Navajo Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53217

William Miesel, 2215 Myrtle St., Erie, PA 16502

Ed Hurtubis, 1624 Lakeshore Dr., Ft. Collins, CO 80525-2476

Bruce Allen Wieter, Rock Island Nursing Home and Rehab Center,

2545 24th St., Rock Island, IL 61021

Malcom Yaffe, 3 Moorland Leys, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS17 5BD, U.K.

Lucy Simonsen, P.O. Box 723, Torrington, WY 82240

Roger Barr, 883-B Liverpool Circle, Manchester, NJ 08759

Henry Smith, 78 Thames Drive, Taunton, Somerset TA1 2TE England

Frank Fendt, 848 Broadway, Buffalo, NY 14212

Charles F. Grasser, 5702 Angola Rd., Lot 186, Toledo, OH 43615-6359

Allen Wilkinson, 4832 Amsbury, Toledo, OH 43612

Ron London, 88 Maples Park, West Lafayette, IN 47906

Brian Wright, 2A, The Grove Hillhead, Fareham Hants, PO14 3PG England

JoAnn Elliott, 8841 Sunview Rd., Reynoldsburg, OH 43068

Fred Watson, Shadow Mountain Health Care Center,

11150 N. 92nd St., Scottsdale, AZ 85260

Jack White, 4288 Arguello St., San Diego, CA 92103

Jim Flanigan, 821 6th St. SW, Washington, DC 20024-3803