



Southend Sorcerers Society
Tel: 01702 297983

SOUTHEND SORCERERS FEBRUARY 2020 NEWSLETTER

2020 MEETINGS AND EVENTS

1st Mar Club Night
12th Apr Annual General Meeting
3rd May Stage Competition
7th Jun Lecture – Paul Gordon
5th Jul TBC

2nd Aug Club Night
6th Sep Close Up Competition
4th Oct Lecture - TBC
1st Nov Props Auction
6th Dec Xmas Fun Night

2020 CLUB SHOWS

6th Mar All Saints School, Maldon
w/c 10th Aug Dixon Studio Shows 'As if By Magic!'

CONTACTS

President - Adrian Fox
01702 297983 / 07711 982890
adrian@adrianfoxmagic.co.uk

Vice President – Oliver Ward
07538 178182
oliverwardmagic@icloud.com

Treasurer – Tracy Wise
01702 597002
tracywise@hotmail.co.uk

Secretary, Membership & Librarian – Ryan Young
07854 634592
ryangyoung@hotmail.co.uk

Club Shows Secretary – Richard Graham
07951 441333
richard@richardgraham-magic.co.uk

LAST MEETING – 2nd FEBRUARY – MORGAN & WEST LECTURE



On 2nd February we were treated to a brilliant night's lecture from the amazing Morgan and West. They've been performing as a double act for many years and have been wowing audiences with their incredible range of shows for a long time. They're also one of the acts that have fooled Penn and Teller in their renowned TV Series. As they're right in the middle of their 'Unbelievable Science' tour, we really appreciated them taking time out of their busy schedule to come and see us – in fact they'd performed in London just that afternoon!

They started the evening with a performance and explanation of their 'Thought of Cards Across' routine, a brilliant new version of the classic effect where a card travels from one spectator to another with no visible means of getting there. Their version is certainly effective and uses some very cleverly created cards from Card Shark – the routine cuts out any strange moves and looks simply as though the move of the card has been achieved by doing absolutely nothing!

This was followed by 'A Very Quick Trick', their take on the old bottle and glass routine, but with only one bottle in view at any time and a lot of comedy byplay. Some clever thinking and routining were employed to make the whole effect much stronger and funnier than the original.

Next we were treated to their 'Ring in Paper Bag' effect, where a borrowed ring is lost amongst hundreds of other rings and appears threaded onto a ribbon which has been passed right through both sides of a paper bag. Some clever thinking about the structure of the bag made the effect very fooling indeed – and it was yet another example of how they approach routines to make them much stronger and more entertaining.



After a short break, they showed us part 2 of the lecture – 'Coding in the Pub'. Morgan and West are well known for their coding work, where one of them passes information secretly to the other using a combination of verbal and body language cues. This part of the lecture was a simple look at just how easy it can be to accomplish that sort of thing, and everyone had the opportunity to try and decode things as part of the demonstration. They started with a simple code to transmit the number of cards cut from a full pack by a spectator. This used a marked, stacked deck of 49 cards, with the mark on each card showing how many cards had been removed above it after the cut. This number was then transmitted using body language including the position of the legs (wide apart or close together); the position of the head (looking up or down); and hand positions. Everyone soon got the idea in this straightforward demo.

Next, more body language was used to transmit the colour and suit of a chosen card; and finally, the full value of a card was cued using a binary code and finger positions, combined with arm positions; all very clever and well thought through. Morgan and West were keen to encourage us to come up with our own codes using key words or body language, and they finished the evening with a demonstration of their 'coins in the glass' effect, where one of them is able to transmit the value of a handful of coins using verbal cues. It was a masterful example that has clearly taken years for them to perfect.

A brilliant evening then, which was clearly enjoyed by all who were there. They had a few items on sale and a lot of people picked up various things - including a book that analyses the whole performance of a number of effects, from scripting ideas to staging techniques. Titled 'Parlour Tricks', it's a very interesting read!

Also at the meeting, new junior member Emma Cornish was presented with her membership certificate and badge, having passed her audition at the January meeting. Welcome to the club Emma – it's brilliant to have you with us and we hope you enjoy your membership! I know that everyone will help to make you feel welcome. Another prospective junior, James McMillan, also took his audition at the meeting – well done James!

Thanks go to Oliver Tabor for allowing us to hold the meeting at his Red Brick Barn, and to Rick, Nathan and Don who got the evening off to a fine start with some of their favourite packet tricks.

NEXT MEETING – 1st MARCH – CLUB NIGHT



Our March meeting is one of our ever popular open club nights, where there'll be an opportunity to simply mix and mingle with other members and share your favourite routines and effects. If anyone has anything they need help with, this is the perfect chance for you to have a chat with people who may be able to point you in the right direction.

For those that went to the Blackpool convention this year, it's also a chance to discuss favourite sessions and effects that featured, and maybe to share some of the new routines that you might have bought.

NEXT MENTORING SESSION – MARCH – STAGE TECHNIQUES

Our next mentoring session at the March meeting is a chance to have a basic look at stage techniques – with the Dixon shows coming up in August, it'll be useful to sit and have a chat about things we've learned from performing on stage in the past. We ran a close-up audience management session last year and were asked if we could do something similar for stage work, so here's your chance to contribute your ideas and thoughts. This session has been a long time coming!



This is a huge subject, so it may run for longer than the usual 30 minutes, but the hope is that by the end everyone will have at least picked up some tips and techniques for performing on stage. We'll look at getting on and off stage, how to take applause and applause cues, how to get the audience on side, and choice of material. We'll talk about voice and how to use it to best effect, body language, and use of things like microphones and music. Adrian will lead the discussion, but as usual this is an open forum and it's there for everyone to get involved and chip in their ideas. As a club we should encourage more of our people to explore stage magic when the norm these days is to stick to close up magic. But working on stage is a wonderful experience and can be really rewarding, so hopefully this session will encourage more people to think about giving it a go.

This month the session will start at 7.30 sharp as it's a club night and it doesn't matter too much if we overrun, but don't be late and we hope to see you there.

CLUB SHOWS



If you'd like to perform at any of our future shows, either with close-up magic or as a stage act, then please contact Richard Graham on 01268 783202. Rick will also provide details of venue addresses, times and directions as required.

LAST SHOW

Our last club show was at Wentworth Primary School in Maldon on 8th Feb. Rick reports:

‘A huge thank you to everyone who attended our club show yesterday evening in Maldon. I thought it was one of our best shows with great performances and a lovely, appreciative audience, with well behaved children!

Very well done to Finlay Southgate and Nathan Fitzpatrick who performed in their first club show for us - here's to many more!

Huge apologies to our Dream Team, Carol, Audrey and Angela and also Andy Smith whom I forgot to thank publicly at the end of the show for their contributions - sorry guys.’

Well done and thanks to everyone who was involved in this brilliant show!

NEXT SHOW

Our next show is coming up shortly and Rick is still looking for volunteers to help out:

Date: 6th March

Venue: All Saints School, Hylands Drive, Maldon CM9 6HY

Times: 7.30pm start, finish at 9.30pm – please be there by 7pm to be ready for a prompt start

Thanks to all our members who have already agreed to help out at this show.

Current performers:

Close up: TBC – please let Rick know ASAP if you can help. We need around 10 close uppers please.

Stage: Richard Graham, Adrian Fox plus one other – please get in touch ASAP if you can help.

Compere: Adrian Fox

Stage Manager: Andy Smith (TBC)

Dream Team: Audrey Heddon, Angela McMillan, Gill Fox

For those of you performing at our shows for the first time, and for those who might welcome a refresher, our Performers’ Charter describes details for etiquette and performing in our club shows. You can find it on the club website here: <https://www.southendsorcerers.com/members-only>
The password for the members’ area is jimmy.

MAGIC NEWS – BLACKPOOL CONVENTION 2020



Wow! What an amazing weekend this was and probably right up there as one of the very best conventions Blackpool have ever staged!

Attended by over 4000 magicians, it was at times a bit cramped and for some of the lectures it was difficult to get in with long queues, but the gala shows, the dealers and the profile of the lecturers made it all so worthwhile.

Blackpool is the world's biggest magic convention, and this year with names like Lance Burton, Mac King, Max Maven, Ben Hart, Michael Ammar, Jay Sankey and loads of others, it was quite an incredible line up.

There were over 150 dealers with magic of all sorts on sale, from cheaper items to things costing over £1000 – too expensive for the likes of me, but lovely to see them up close. And of course a lot of dealers were releasing new items at the convention too, so plenty of time was needed over several visits to the dealer hall just to try and take it all in.



The evening shows were superb too. On the first night we were treated to Lance Burton and Friends – Lance had retired a few years ago, but is now getting back on stage infrequently and performing again. I saw him at the Monte Carlo Hotel in Vegas many years ago, and he still has the same wonderful stage presence, even if he's not performing the big illusions any more. It was so nice to finally get to meet one of my magical heroes – and even better to discover that he's a really nice guy!



The same can be said of Mac King – he was undoubtedly the hit of the convention. At his lecture, he received a standing ovation when he walked on stage that went on for ages – and that was before he'd actually done anything! He was so blown away by the reception – you could see how much it meant to him. And when he put on a late night show, which started at 11.30 pm, it was so full that people had to be turned away. He was brilliant!

The other huge hit for me was a one man show called 'Solo', staged by quick change artiste Arturo Brachetti. This was an incredible piece of theatre – probably the best I've ever seen (and that's saying a lot!). With music and lighting effects, amazing costume changes, and the story line (which was about his life), it was simply a magnificent piece of work. The sad thing is, it's impossible to describe it and get any notion across of what it was actually like – just ask anyone who was there.



Another great show was staged by The Evasons, a mind reading duo who amazed the audience with their ability to send and receive information to each other. For around 45 minutes they held everyone spellbound. There's no way you could even guess at how they were doing things – obviously there must be some sort of coding going on, but with Tessa blindfolded and with her back to the audience; and with minimal words coming from her partner, some of the information she somehow just knew was absolutely incredible.

In terms of lectures, the pick of the bunch for me included Ben Hart who had some brilliant ideas and routines to share; and Max Maven who showed us some of his favourite mentalism pieces. The lecture theatre was rammed for his session as expected.

All I can say in conclusion is that if you've never been to Blackpool before, it's something you should seriously consider doing as it's a weekend like no other. A gold ticket gets you into all the shows, lectures and dealer rooms, so you do get an awful lot for your money. But be prepared to be completely mindblown by it all!



Next year, it appears that Criss Angel is one of the headliners no less – but beware, it seems that he's not actually performing as such and is only there to lecture. Shame!

Here are a couple more photos.....



The Mac King lecture audience!



The huge dealer room.

At the last count we think there were around 15 or more Southend Sorcerers members at the convention, so we were certainly flying the flag for our part of the world. If you attended, let us know what your favourite parts were; and what you spent your hard earned money on! Also, do let us know if you're planning to go next year as it would be great if we could arrange a meet up somewhere.

AGM ARRANGEMENTS

AGM
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM is coming up in April and you may have noticed that we have to hold it a week later than usual, on 12th – apologies for the change but circumstances mean that we can't actually run the meeting on the 5th. It's the time when all of the existing committee stands down to be replaced by a new committee for the coming year, and, as always, committee posts are open to any member to apply for.

If anyone is keen to stand for a committee post this year, please get in touch with one of the current members and we can explain what the different roles involve. It's an important part of how the club is organised and remains successful, so if you'd like to help and obtain experience of running a club like ours, do let us know.

Please also note that if you have anything you'd like to discuss at the AGM that's not on the usual agenda, we do need advance notice as we may not be able to accept 'any other business' items on the night. Thanks for your co-operation.

FINALLY, AS USUAL, SOME NEW MAGIC TO CHECK OUT

Mentalism

POCKET NIGHTMARE by Max Maven

This was one of the items Max Maven had for sale at the Blackpool convention, and it sold out completely – especially after his performance of the effect in his lecture.

Basically, the performer informs the audience that they will perform an effect with only one hand so as to make sure that everyone knows that sleight of hand is impossible. So one hand is placed in their pocket while the other holds a pack of cards. The spectator peeks at a card in the deck. The magician then is able to divine the card that the spectator is only thinking of. The deck is then given to the spectator who is invited to search the deck for their card only to discover that it has completely vanished. The magician said they would do the trick with only one hand, but they did not specify which hand. The magician removes their other hand from the pocket holding the vanished card.



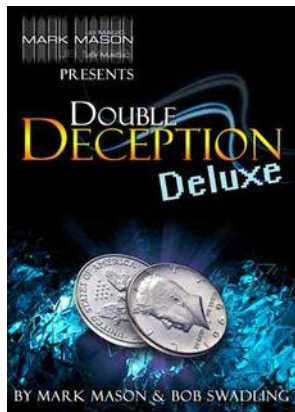
Taught in detail by Max Maven, including a complete history of the effect, Pocket Nightmare is ready to go right out of the box. This effect is devastating to an audience, especially because the gimmicks do all the work for you while hiding in plain sight. It's a pretty brave move to give a heavily gaffed deck to a spectator to search through, but I've tried it a few times and it works brilliantly.

Pocket Nightmare costs around £35 and you can watch a demo of it here:

<https://www.propdog.co.uk/Max-Maven/pocket-nightmare-max-maven>

Coins

DOUBLE DECEPTION by Mark Mason and Bob Swadling



These are hard to come by and I've wanted a set ever since I saw it at Blackpool last year – so this year I picked up one of the few available from JB Magic. Not cheap, but the effect is brilliant.

You take two £2 coins and place them in a silk or napkin being held out flat by two spectators. Then you reach under the silk, grab one of the coins and pull it through the material. The spectator sees it happen as you end up with one coin in the silk and the other in your other hand. Very visual magic and totally baffling to the layperson - you can even have the spectator pull the coin through the material themselves!

Of course this uses gaffed coins, but the updated flipper design uses no rubber bands and is very deceptive while being made to last with no repairs necessary, unlike the old version. It's available in a half dollar version too if you prefer to use US coins.

You can see the effect here, where the price is around £70 – out of stock right now though.

<https://jbvtv.co.uk/p/j-b-products/double-ception-2-set-by-mark-mason-bob-swadling>

Paddles

HOWZAT by Michael J Fitch

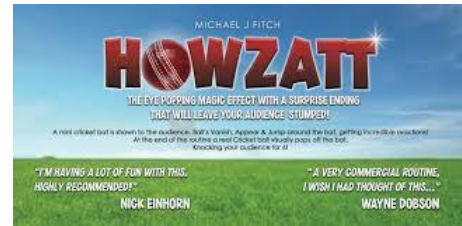
Here's a lovely cricket themed paddle routine from old friend Michael J Fitch. It's a perfect reason to use a paddle in a magic trick – this one is a mini cricket bat!

The magician brings out a small cricket bat and a red pen. Then the game starts with three red balls drawn on both sides of the bat. The balls disappear and re-appear several times as the magician explains that the idea is to find the best place on the bat to hit the ball. In the end there's only one ball left on the bat and this is flicked to jump off and into the spectator's hand as a real mini cricket ball.

It's a lovely routine that works extremely well with a lay audience and has several stages you can work through or leave out as you wish. You get the bat, the pen and the ball in the package and the routine is really easy to do.

Howzat costs around £30 and you can watch the performance here:

<https://www.alakazam.co.uk/howzatt-by-michael-j-fitch.html>



Smoke Systems

NOTHING 2.0 by Bond Lee



For years people have been searching for the perfect smoke device and at last this might be the one. Why? Well, it is small approx 44mm x 24mm x 14mm. It is remote controlled and works over 10m away in tests. It can produce smoke multiple times (around 10 in tests) before needing refilling which takes seconds if required, enough for your average gig. Plus it's quiet in operation.

Nothing 2.0 is a smoke device so small that you can use it almost anywhere.

The quality and look is improved, the main unit charges by USB and the remote uses a button type replaceable battery. Included in the package you get the smoke device, a remote control, a smoke unit charger, smoke fluid and a wrist strap.

If you've been looking for a smoke device, this latest version might be worth checking out.

Not cheap at around £115 but it looks pretty good and it's tiny. You can see it here:

<https://www.saturnmagic.co.uk/saturn-magic-shop/nothing-20-remote-control-smoke-device-by-bond-lee.html>

That's about it for this month everyone – send any articles for next month's newsletter to Adrian for publishing.